

**EDWARD MACDOWELL; A  
GREAT AMERICAN TONE  
POET, HIS LIFE AND MUSIC**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649020232

Edward MacDowell; a great American tone poet, his life and music by John F. Porte

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**JOHN F. PORTE**

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EDWARD MACDOWELL

13

*I do like the works of the American composer MacDowell! What a musician! He is sincere and personal—what a poet—what exquisite harmonies!*

*Jules Massenet.*

*I consider MacDowell the ideally endowed composer.*

*Edvard Greig.*





*Edward M. Powell.*



# EDWARD MACDOWELL

A GREAT AMERICAN TONE POET  
HIS LIFE AND MUSIC

BY

JOHN F. PORTE

Author of

*Sir Edward Elgar, Sir Charles V. Stanford, etc.*

WITH A PORTRAIT OF EDWARD MACDOWELL  
AND MUSICAL ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

LONDON :

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & CO., LTD.  
BROADWAY HOUSE, 68-74 CARTER LANE, E.C.

1922



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## FROM MACDOWELL'S COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LECTURES.

(Published as *Critical and Historical Essays*).

APR 27 1936

*For it is in the nature of the spiritual part of mankind to shrink from the earth, to aspire to something higher; a bird soaring in the blue above us has something of the ethereal; we give wings to our angels. On the other hand, a serpent impresses us as something sinister. Trees, with their strange fight against all the laws of gravity, striving upward unceasingly, bring us something of hope and faith; the sight of them cheers us. A land without trees is depressing and gloomy.*

*In spite of the strange twistings of ultra modern music, a simple melody still embodies the same pathos for us that it did for our grandparents.*

Dissect

*We put our guest, the poetic thought, that comes to us like a homing bird from out the mystery of the blue sky—we put this confiding stranger straightway into that iron bed, the "sonata form," or perhaps even the third rondo form, for we have quite an assortment. Should the idea survive and grow too large for the bed, and if we have learned to love it too much to cut off its feet and thus make it fit (as did that old robber of Attica), why we run the risk of having some critic wise in his theoretical knowledge, say, as was and is said of Chopin, "He is weak in sonata form!"*

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

*In art our opinions must, in all cases, rest directly on the thing under consideration and not on what is written about it. Without a thorough knowledge of music, including its history and development, and, above all, musical "sympathy," individual criticism is, of course, valueless; at the same time the acquirement of this knowledge and sympathy is not difficult, and I hope that we may yet have a public in America that shall be capable of forming its own ideas, and not be influenced by tradition, criticism, or fashion.*

*Every person with even the very smallest love and sympathy for art possesses ideas which are valuable to that art. From the tiniest seeds sometimes the greatest trees are grown. Why, therefore, allow these tender germs of individualism to be smothered by that flourishing, arrogant bay tree of tradition—fashion, authority, convention, etc.*

*No art form is so fleeting and so subject to the dictates of fashion as opera. It has always been the plaything of fashion, and suffers from its changes.*

1936-1937