

1700 N. Cascade Avenue  
Colorado Springs, Colorado  
August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1901

To the people of Colorado Springs in the year 2001.

It is with mingled feelings that I begin my letter to you who are as yet unborn and unconceived, undreamt, unthought of! There is something inexpressibly sad to me in the thought that we can never reach you, never know how you receive our words sent in this manner, never know how much or how little you sympathize with us and feel gratitude for our small achievements.

It has struck me frequently within the past few weeks, how much this idea of sending you of the 2001 year letters, has influenced our thoughts. We find ourselves unconsciously speculating on your point of view and wondering if this or that will interest you as it does us, if you will love the things we do and if this chest containing these letters will be as interesting and valuable to you, (so far as giving you an insight into our lives and doings,) as we hope.

As I write I find myself wondering if you also use a pen – if your spelling is this same miserable unphonetic one and if your heart tingles with the thought of we who are dust as mine does with the thought of you who are as yet nonexistent.

Writing these letters to you who will not be born for many years, – many years after we who write them are dead – makes us realize as we have never realized before, how fleeting is life and how short and precious are the few years allotted to us. In this busy hurried life of ours we have but little time to think of Death – inevitable as we know it to be – we never think of it, never grasp that it can come and take us into the unknown, – but lately we have felt it as never before, felt it sadly, but not bitterly, for in you we hope to be reborn. And in and from you we hope for the achievement of our hopes.

All that we have done and accomplished must seem very small and meager to you a hundred years hence, and I rather hope that your successes will be such as to make that feeling possible, – but after all you should think of us with kindness, remembering that we were the pioneers and without our humble work it would be hard for yours to be.

I wonder if you too will love music and will have kept our reputation of being one of the most cultivated and musical of places. When I remember what we have done in the last ten years, there seems almost no limit as to your opportunity in the next hundred.

I was but nine years old when we moved here fifteen years ago, but I well remember the meetings of the Musical Club then held in what is now the museum in Palmer Hall of Colorado College. All the amateurs in town participated, (and we had a good proportion of them,) and the Club was well supported for many years. Gradually, as the population changed, it died out, to be reborn some years and called “The Ladies’ Musical Club.” There were but a dozen or a dozen and a half members and they met at each other’s houses for a musical afternoon every two weeks. Ten years ago they again held meetings in Palmer Hall and I remember first playing for them there. The audience was so appreciative and large that winter that the club determined to

spread out and give others the chance of belonging. For two years, however, nothing much was done, – some of the leading musicians of the town, – Mrs. Pearson, Mrs. Tucker, etc. gave recitals but that was all. About 1894-1895 the plan was carried out and Miss Henry's Kindergarten Rooms, (on the north west corner of Cache la Poudre and Nevada), were engaged. That same winter there came to town a young musician, (he was but twenty two), for whom all the music-lovers of Colorado Springs felt the deepest and sincerest gratitude, for to him more than to any other person do we owe our musical growth and improvement. Rubin Goldmark came out here for his health and for some years worked with and for us in the pursuit of art.

If he lives to do the work he has laid out for himself, we feel sure that his name will not be unknown to you but that he will live in his beautiful music. Having been accustomed to the musical circles of Vienna and New York, he did not complain when placed in our midst, did not groan at our crude efforts, our ignorance and stupidity, but on the contrary, set himself cheerfully and modestly to the task of educating us and helping us along. In looking back it seems to me that the day he first joined the "Musical Club," ("Ladies" as a distinctive adjective had been discarded), and played Schumann's beautiful "Études Symphoniques" for us marks a new epoch – a new era in the musical life of Colorado Springs.

That year he organized and led a chorus of female voices, – introduced the playing of Beethoven's and Schumann's symphonies, (they were played eight-handed on two pianos), and while some of the performances were not all that could be desired they at least made us acquainted with some of the most beautiful of orchestral pieces. About this time, Mr. Goldmark also began giving small, informal talks to the Musical Club on music in general, musical forms, (the sonata, symphony, etc.) and more especially on the numbers performed at the meeting. The club grew so rapidly that the next year we were forced to move into larger rooms and chose the "Kinnikinnick," (south-east corner of Cache la Poudre and Tejon,) – that soon became overcrowded, so for a year we held our meetings in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church on North Weber Street, and upon the completion of Perkins Hall, we decided to hold our meetings there and believe that he have finally found a place which will continue to be large enough for our needs and requirements for some time.

Seven years ago we had about forty members, – we now number three hundred and fifty – counting of course all the members: honorary, associate, active, and pupil.

Six years ago Mr. Goldmark introduced chamber music and we enjoyed his rendering of Schumann's, Beethoven's Dvorak's, Schubert's Tschaiakowsky's etc. trios, with the help of Messrs. Schubert and Dopf. Mr. Schubert played the cello very passably and Mr. Dopf filled all necessary requirements on the violin. They were neither of them great artists and not in the same class with Mr. Goldmark, but there were the best we had so we made the best of them and did not waste time in wishing for something better.

In 1896-1897 Mr. Goldmark organized the Colorado Springs Choral Society. There had been another Choral Society of the same name here about ten years before and they had given several cantatas with great success, but it had gone to pieces with the death of its very excellent leader, Mr. Broad.

Mr. Goldmark's Choral Society met with the cordial support of the citizens of Colorado Springs,

and we prided ourselves on being one of the few self-supporting Choral Societies in the world, having come out with a surplus of about two hundred dollars every year of the three it existed.

I had the pleasure and honor of being the accompanist and so had the opportunity of seeing and noting more than anyone else the growth and improvement of the chorus from week to week. We met for two hours every Monday evening and remember with enthusiasm the inspiration and delight given.

We gave two concerts a year, making six in all, and for the first two years I accompanied them alone at the piano. During this time among other selections we gave three choruses from Rubenstein's "Tower of Babel", selections from Mendelssohn's "Loreley", Max Bruch's "Fair Ellen," Gade's "Earl King's Daughter", etc. etc. etc. In December 1897, we gave "The Messiah." I have no doubt but that in a hundred years that glorious Messiah of Handel's will be as much loved as it is now and I also have no doubt but that you will have many performances of it with a larger chorus and orchestra than we ever aspired to, – but of this I am very sure, – that your chorus will be no more perfectly trained than ours was, and that your voices will be no more exquisite.

As an accompaniment to the "Messiah" beside the piano we had four violins, one viola, two violincellos, on contrabass, one flute, one clarinet, one cornet, and one trombone. We rehearsed for about four hours every day for ten days before the concert and more than once were so heavy hearted and discouraged that we felt strongly tempted to abandon the hope of having an orchestra and simply leave all to the piano.

Now that I have only the memory of those rehearsals, I find myself smiling at the ludicrous situations. I can see Mr. Goldmark seated on a small tea table (that being preferred to a chair on account of its superior height), vainly endeavoring to keep his scattered performers together. The flutes were a half a tone higher than the piano, and the day of the concert the piano to be used in the evening had to be tuned seven times to make its pitch approach that of those abnormally high flutes. To make matters worse, the tuner was intoxicated and for a while it seemed as though the orchestra could not be used after all those exhausting hours of work. No one wanted to play second violin either and many of our fellow townspeople spoke most discouragingly against attempting orchestral accompaniments. In spite of all these things we had to contend with, the concert was a most brilliant success, artistically and financially.

I shall never forget the thrill given me by that glorious "Hallelujah Chorus" sung with all the majesty of a great chorus. It was superb and people who had heard it given in all the big cities of the world said they had never heard anything more masterly! – Our chorus numbered barely a hundred voices, but I have never heard their superior in enunciation, attack, and rich melody.

For you, I dream of a great chorus of five hundred voices but I can wish you nothing better than the finish and true artistic quality which characterized ours.

For various reasons Mr. Goldmark was unable to accept the position as chorus conductor for the following years so it fell to pieces as things are apt to do when they have lost their leader. Last year (1900-1901), however, Mr. George H. Crampton consented to organize and lead a chorus,

so the pieces were gathered up and the "Colorado Springs Choral Society" was remoulded into the "Philharmonic Society." This organization is as yet too young to bear criticism, either favorable or unfavorable, but our hopes for it are many.

Six or seven years ago it was suggested to Mr. Goldmark to write some lectures on the Wagnerian Tetralogy. Mr. Walter Damrosch delivered some with great success in New York, and it was urged that we who were so cut off from opera here might find entertainment and instruction from lectures on "The Rheingold", "The Valkyrie", "Siegfried", and "The Dusk of the Gods".

Following this suggestion, these lectures were written and delivered for five consecutive winters, – the first three under the auspices of the Musical Club – the last two independently. Three years ago a lecture on the "Meistersinger" was added and last year "Parsifal" and "Tristan and Isolde" were also included. The way of delivering the lectures was most delightful, for we were told the story of the opera with illustrations on the piano, while the principal motions and their meaning was explained, while Wagner's spirit infused the whole with life.

It was truly wonderful how the speaker and audience would enter into the music drama and it had its educational side as well, for while most of the inhabitants of Colorado Springs have never either seen or heard any of Wagner's matchless operas, most of them know the music very thoroughly, while the story seems that of an old and familiar friend. From the foregoing, it will be seen that Rubin Goldmark was the moving spirit in our musical circles the last seven years. But in writing of his extraordinary talents, (it might almost be said "his genius," for he is a brilliant composer, a remarkable leader, and the best teacher of "Harmony," "Counterpoint," "Composition" and the piano, that I know), it must not be forgotten that we had some other talented musicians to help us in our upward work.

Mr. Albert C. Pearson, – a most lovable kindly soul, – has for many years been one of our musicians. A fair pianist, he is a composer of no mean merit, and several years ago amateur talent gave "Below Zero," a most charming and melodious little operetta of his.

We have two sopranos of rare merit. Mrs. Courtland Palmer sang in grand opera in Paris and she has a tremendous voice, rich and lovely, and perfectly trained. Our most popular songstress, however, is Mrs. Fannie A. Tucker, – not being gifted with Mrs. Palmer's volume or splendor, – she still has a really exquisite soprano, of an entrancing bird-like quality and she has always been so gracious and obliging, so modest, so glad to oblige and please that had she been gifted far less than she is, she could not help being loved and admired. – I hope you have a Mrs. Tucker! – Last year when the George Henschels were our guests, the great artist and master heard her sing and told me subsequently that he had rarely heard a more beautiful voice more perfectly trained. Musical Colorado Springs fairly bristled with pride after that, – Mrs. Tucker alone remaining unmoved.

Miss Oma Fields is one of the pianists in whom we take especial pride, Mrs. Hawkins is another, – but as the list of active members of the "Musical Club" numbers over fifty, I cannot stop to enumerate them all.

Three years ago the president of the "Musical Club," Mrs. Leslie J. Skelton, and the once-president, Mrs. A.E. Touzalin, both women of rare energy, enthusiasm, and executive ability, conceived the idea of raising a concert course fund. Subscription tickets costing five dollars were to be sold, entitling the owner to a seat at four concerts. The idea was laughed at by many of our most prominent citizens who considered the undertaking too ambitious a one for our community. However, it was tried with most surpassing success. We obtained our artists at reasonable prices as they would stop here on their way to, or from, the western coast. The first year we had piano recitals from the two greatest pianists, Mrs. Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler and Madame Carreño, a song recital by Katharine Fiske, and the matchless Kneisel String Quartet brought the season to a highly satisfactory close.

I remember with amusement Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler's piano recital which was the first of the series. She gave us a magnificent program including Beethoven, Bach, Schumann, Brahms, etc. and the audience was spell-bound and enthusiasm was intense if suppressed, for we considerably abstained from applauding, (our manner of doing this is by clapping the hands noisily together, – a rather barbaric custom which I hope you will have dispensed with) in the fear of exhausting our artist by repeated recalls and "encores." After the concert we had her very informally with some of our musical townspeople at our house and she berated us roundly for our "cool reception" of her. Of course, she was but semi-serious for the quiet and intent attention of the audience had proven our interest, but we learnt our lesson and now "encore" and "re-encore" our performers and have therefore earned the reputation of being a most cordial and appreciative audience. Among the artists included in the concert course series this last three winters, we have had the pianists Godowsky, de Pachmann, Stambourg – among singers Lillian Blaurate and the Henschels, etc. etc. etc. After almost all the concerts we hold the same small informal reception up her (in our home from which I am at present writing), and more than once have I been told by the visiting artists that they gave Colorado Springs people much deeper and heavier music than they would venture to give other small or Western towns. From the foregoing, it will be seen that the town is thoroughly interested in all that is best musically, and while we have now only about half a dozen concerts yearly from outside talent, we nevertheless have what we have of the very best procurable, and hope the time is not far off when we may be able to afford much more.

In the home talent we find a great lack of players of stringed instruments – most of our town artists are either singers or pianists. The hotels, ("The Antlers" and "The Alamo," as well as the "Alta Vista,") are provided with small orchestras of four or six pieces, but while the "ensemble" playing is very fair for the most part – they are apt to be most indifferent soloists, good ones not being attracted by small salaries and the few musical advantages afforded a town with barely thirty thousand inhabitants.

We have a good number of excellent organs in the city. Almost every church (certainly every one of means) boasts a pipe-organ and Perkins Hall has a very good one, – probably the best in town.

What we are wishing for at present, (and hope to have within a few years), is a permanent orchestra of twenty-five pieces. We feel sure that it would have the interested support of the community and enable us to become acquainted with orchestral numbers which must now be painstakingly prepared on the piano. Besides its educational tendency, it would afford us many

pleasant hours and much elevated and elevating pleasure.

We believe and hope that you of the year 2001 will have a great orchestra, comparing favorably in size and perfection with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, – at present the most perfect organization of its kind in America.

The “Midland Band” is a brass band of superior excellence which holds concerts during summer evenings in the North and South Parks of the city. The crowds which assemble to listen and admire, (especially those of the poorer classes who are unable to afford the concerts given in halls during the winter), bear witness to the popular hunger for music.

My imagination knows no limit when thinking of your possibilities for musical growth and improvement here. The people are cultured and educated – they love art and want the best. May you be able to give it to them and keep up the high plane of cultivated taste!

Our hopes for you are many, may you realize them all. We have sown the seed – may you so water it that it will keep on growing until it bears fruit, the splendor of which would dazzle our [cursed? closed?] eyes.

Leah Lucile Ehrich