

## 18. Hunting Piece

### Op. 1 (1880)

Dorsey W. Hyde

(born. c. 1862-?)

arr. William Melton

#### **Hyde, Dorsey William**

(born 25 September 1852 in Crawford, Pennsylvania; died 30 April 1942 in Gilmanton, New Hampshire)

Dorsey W. Hyde was the first child of banker Charles Hyde and his wife Abbey, née Pesley. Nine generations before, in 1633, ancestor William Hyde had left England to settle in Hartford, Connecticut. Dorsey's great-great-grandfather Elijah Hyde was a cavalry Major in the Continental Army and a friend of the first governor of Connecticut, Jonathan Trumbull. Dorsey's mother died when he was seven, his father remarried, and the family moved to a spacious house in Plainfield, New Jersey. There the boy was raised with four younger half-siblings, among them Charles Jr., who would become a banker and railroad president.

Then Dorsey, already a talented pianist, was packed off to Berlin for lessons with Friedrich Kiel, a celebrated contrapuntist whose many students included Ignaz Jan Paderewski, Charles Villiers Stanford, Frederic Hymen Cowen, Arthur Somervell, Rikard Nordraak, August Bungert, and Hugo Kaun. Kiel was more than just an expert technician; Siegfried Ochs wrote, 'I do not believe that Kiel ever had a student that did not think of him with affection'. Certainly Hyde flourished under Kiel's tutelage, and his *First Thematic Fantasia* for piano, Op. 7, of 1883 was dedicated to his teacher. Ten further compositions for piano appeared in print over the next few years, one in an orchestration by the Berlin master Philipp Scharwenka.

After his return to the U.S., Hyde accepted a post at New Jersey's Hotel Netherwood, a popular summer destination only fifty rail minutes from New York City. There he played piano and led the 'excellent orchestra in attendance day and evening, which serves to cheer and delight the many guests and others at this resort'. Hyde published dance music collections bearing the Netherwood name, but his first mention in the *New York Times* was in a less favourable light — he was sued for breach of promise by a certain Carrie Worther in 1885. Her demand of \$10,000 in damages was evidently resolved, as Hyde was free to marry Katherine Monteith Clarke. By 1920 the composer, his wife, and their four children had relocated to comfortable lodgings in Boston. After a career of composing, performing and teaching Dorsey Hyde retired to Gilmanton, New Hampshire. There he died at the age of 89 and was buried in nearby Beech Grove Cemetery.

Hyde's *Hunting Piece (Jagdstück)*, Op. 1 was published in 1880 by Raabe & Plothow of Berlin (plate no. 36732). Dedicated to his 'dear parents', the work begins with a jovial *Allegro moderato* hunting motto. This is followed by a harmonically surprising *Lento*. When the opening returns it builds to *fortissimo* before yielding to a coda that diminishes to a hushed, *pianissimo* close.

*Text by William Melton*