



CHAPTER

27 Teresa Carreño: “Such gifts are of God, and ought not to be prostituted for mere gain”

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Abstract

Over the life of *Dwight's Journal of Music (DJM)* (1852–1881), many readers witnessed or read about sensational concerts given by child prodigies such as Madame Louise Abel, Adelina Patti, Arthur Napoleon, and Willie Barnesmore Pape. This chapter examines earliest appearances of the Venezuelan pianist and composer Teresa Carreño (1853–1917) on the concert stage in the northeastern United States. Primary sources documenting her reception over a two-year period (1862–1864), specifically in the pages of *DJM*, are examined. Dwight's mixed reviews of Carreño, who was dually portrayed as a talented musician and as a child who should be sheltered and whose gifts should “not to be prostituted for mere gain,” are discussed in context with other primary sources that aim to provide a better understanding of the circumstances leading to her entrance onto the concert stage and the beginning of what ultimately became a lengthy and prolific career.

Keywords: Teresa Carreño, child prodigy, John S. Dwight, musical criticism, performance reception, nineteenth century United States, concert management, social aspects of music

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Introduction

In November 1862, when eight-year old Teresa Carreño (1853–1917) made her musical debut in New York City, child prodigies were no longer a new phenomenon in the eastern United States. As noted by American historian Peter Benes in “Child Performers and Prodigies in New England, 1795–1830”, “child performances mushroomed after 1800 and especially after the War of 1812 when a new generation of parents saw golden opportunities opening for them”.¹ Local papers featured advertisements and reviews of sensational concerts given by child prodigies, such as Italian soprano Adelina Patti (1843–1919), Portuguese pianist Arthur Napoleon (1843–1925), and American pianist Willie Barnesmore Pape (1850–1901). As the public's awareness and documentation of prodigies became more commonplace in newspapers or journals devoted to music, criticism of and even outright opposition to the display and exploitation of child prodigies also became more common. This opposition was often based on poor scientific hypotheses or the social expectations or moral values of that period. Newspapers or magazines, such as *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, edited by Sarah Josepha Hale (1788–1879), an advocate for better educational opportunities for women, featured stories which served to instruct women on their role and responsibility for the moral upbringing of their children.

Mrs. Smith has but one little child. Of course it is a prodigy. She is a pretty creature, and would be interesting were she not so precociously clever ... Who will be clever enough to be a fit husband for

her when she grows up! ... The question is, will she ever grow up? There are many small swelling hillocks in churchyards, under which sleep many precocious children. The bud—as in a mild winter, the mistaken primrose—pushes out its colored point too prematurely, and the first frost kills it. Two results invariably occur from the too early development of the growing faculties. Either the child, which was the pride of our heart, and the light of our home, droops and withers from us when most interesting; or the overworked brain loses its power, and the “portent” in infancy is the “stupid” of maturity.²

p. 622 As evidenced in the above article “Precocious Children,” from *Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine* published in February 1859, the mothers of prodigies were cautioned—outright warned—of the potential health risks their child could suffer if their talent was exploited at such a young age, or, even worse, the possibility that their daughters would never find a suitable husband. Although the anonymous author of this article does not specifically discuss public performances, it is probably safe to assume that mothers of precocious children would also be discouraged from displaying their young girls on a public stage. In addition to these fictional stories, targeted criticisms or words of caution towards prodigies frequently appeared in music periodicals.

This chapter will examine Carreño’s earliest appearances on the concert stage in cities and towns in the northeastern United States through a review of primary source documents, including performance reception. Reviews written by one music critic in particular, John Sullivan Dwight (1813–1893), who abhorred virtuosos and prodigies alike, took aim at Carreño, sharing his words of caution and warning through reviews in his journal. His reviews in context with other primary sources will allow us to better understand the circumstances of her entrance onto the concert stage and the initial beginnings of what ultimately became a lengthy and prolific career.

A musical prodigy arrives

Carreño, a Venezuelan child prodigy, arrived in New York City in late August 1862.³ The voyage from Carácas for eight-year-old Carreño, her parents, a younger brother, her grandmother, and her father’s brother, wife, and children began in late July. Unfortunately, their departure from Carácas, could not have been timed worse, for the United States was in the midst of a Civil War; although most politicians and citizens expected the war to be over by 1862, it continued for two more years making it exceedingly difficult for any type of lengthy travel along the eastern side of the United States, as well as across the Atlantic. Despite these difficulties, the Carreño family settled in New York City and within a few weeks, Carreño had the opportunity to perform for one of her greatest contemporaries, American pianist and composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869).

p. 623 As in the case of Teresa Carreño, the decisions made by a parent to promote their child as a musical prodigy may not always be clear or well documented. Why did Carreño’s father, Manuel Antonio (1813–1874), previously a Minister of Finance in Venezuela, as well as an amateur musician, author of several articles, and an extremely popular etiquette book, choose to relocate both his own and his brother’s family to the United States in the midst of the Civil War? There is little documentation regarding this decision and one can only speculate, but it seems likely that the Federal War (1859–1863) between Venezuela’s Conservative and Liberal Parties, as well as the return to power of dictator José Antonio Páez (1790–1873) (Conservative), may have played a role in their decision to leave their homeland.⁴ It is also unclear as to how Manuel Antonio and his brother Juan de la Cruz Carreño, a lawyer, planned to support their families financially in New York. There is evidence that Juan had traveled to the United States in the mid-1850s, possibly to assist with the publication of Manuel Antonio’s book.⁵ Following their arrival in 1862, advertisements for a patent medication called “Tropical Balsam” began to appear in the New York papers, as well as in other locations, which coincided with Carreño’s concert tours.⁶ If the Carreño Brothers selling this medicinal balsam are one and the same, then it seems that they were quite entrepreneurial and may have relied on income from a variety of sources, including publishing, practicing law, patent medicine, music lessons, and most of all, Carreño’s performances.

One thing is clear, however, Carreño’s entrance onto the public stage in New York was not unplanned, as otherwise suggested by Marta Milinowski, an early Carreño biographer.⁷ According to biographical articles printed throughout her career, Carreño began formal music lessons with her father, Manuel Antonio, around the age of six or seven and became known for her musical talents in her home country.⁸ Prior to their

departure from Venezuela, articles published between May and July 1862 in *El Independiente* and *El Vigilante* proclaimed the eight-year-old Carreño a musical prodigy, and described her future travel plans to the United States and Europe where she would perform and continue her musical training.⁹ This type of publicity suggests that Carreño's father must have disclosed his intentions to publicly debut his daughter in the United States and Europe, hoping that these Spanish periodicals would be read by Spanish-speaking New York audiences or reprinted in New York's Spanish-language newspapers, such as *El Continental* or *La América*.¹⁰ This may have been his first attempt to promote his daughter to the Hispanic population of New York.

In September, shortly after Carreño's arrival in New York City, she performed privately for Gottschalk who had just returned from Saratoga, New York, and was staying with his friend Louis Descombes at his home and piano showroom.¹¹ Gottschalk endorsed Carreño in a letter to New York impresario Lafayette F. Harrison, writing, "I intend to devote myself to her musical instruction. She *must* be something great and she *shall* be".¹² Although Gottschalk continues to be referenced by scholars as one of Carreño's early piano instructors, it is unlikely that he continued to give her lessons beyond October 1862, as evidenced by their respective touring schedules. In November 1862, Gottschalk was booked for 21 concerts over 20 days stretching from as far north as Portland, Maine, down to Baltimore, Maryland, while Carreño performed in the New York City area.¹³ He continued to tour extensively throughout the United States and Canada through September 1865, after which he left for South America.¹⁴

Harrison wasted no time in scheduling Carreño's concerts, alternating them with Gottschalk's sensational second series, which began in September 1862. Carreño's appearance was well planned, as she appeared only a few months after the Irving Hall's renovation and in the midst of Gottschalk's popular concert series. Her concerts were advertised daily in various New York papers and her image was available on a *carte de visite*, both alone (see Figure 27.1) and posing with fellow prodigy William Barnesmore Pape. Harrison most likely capitalized on the brief teacher-student relationship between Gottschalk and Carreño, heightening the public's interest as well as increasing his own earnings. However, this tactic may have made Carreño more vulnerable to Dwight's criticism, which largely focused on her age, gender, and choice of repertoire. In addition, Dwight's reverence for German repertoire and training may have also played a role in his dislike of Carreño, especially since her primary musical training was with her father, the son of a Kapellmeister at the Carácas Cathedral, and briefly with a German musician in Venezuela.¹⁵



Carreño at the piano, c.1862 in New York City.

Source: Brady, Matthew B. (1823–1896): Teresa Carreno, 1862. Washington Digitale (1) DC, National Portrait Gallery Smithsonian Institution. Glass plate collodio negative. Image 8.9 × 5.9 cm (3 1/2 × 2 5/16”). © 2014. Photo Nat. Portrait Gall. Smithsonian/Art Resource/Scala, Florence.

Following the success of a private soirée on 7 November 1862, held at the newly renovated Irving Hall, Harrison scheduled Carreño’s public debut on 25 November.¹⁶ Over the next three weeks, she gave approximately ten public concerts. William Henry Fry, an American music editor for the *New York Tribune*, described Harrison as a “new breed of impresario” who “coincides, cooperates, nay, undertakes solely, we learn, those entertainments for the public. This is a new phase of concert-hall keeping. We know of operatic managers, but we do not know of another person who is a concert manager, a lessee of a music hall, independent of all other attractions, having the audacity to act like Mr. Harrison”.¹⁷ As Dwight would say, Harrison was running a musical enterprise, often booking two performances a day and scheduling music festivals in order to attract large crowds, as well as keeping ticket prices low, generally between 50 cents and \$1 per ticket. Charles Bailey Seymour (1829–1869), English critic for the *New York Daily Times*, commented on Harrison’s management style, writing that “the concerts now being given by Mr. Harrison at his beautiful hall are by far the best that we have had in the City for many years, being as remarkable for their cheapness as their excellence. It is not strange that they are attracting the undivided attention of the musical public and reversing the theories of management”.¹⁸ Virtuosos, including Gottschalk, as well as prodigies were nothing new to Harrison. Earlier that same year, audiences had heard piano prodigy Willie Barnsemore Pape and violin prodigy Master Bernardo on 1 January, followed by the 11-year old piano prodigy Master Isaac Rice from Philadelphia on 28 April.

On 15 December, in the *New York Tribune*, Fry announced the arrival of another prodigy, eight-year-old Teresa Carreño, writing: “The latest novelty offered by Mr. Harrison is in the shape of a little girl”.¹⁹

Although Carreño's father did not leave behind correspondence or memoirs, which could have provided details about her early career, the press printed their own impressions of Carreño. For example, she was hailed as an "artist of first-class sensibility" with a "delicate skill with which she executes passages that are ornate or obscure", a skill, which they claimed, belongs "to the better rank of performers, and are in fact characteristics that cannot be attained by study".²⁰ Her physical demeanor and stage presence were frequently described in various newspapers, often depicting her as a prodigy, yet ultimately, still a child. For example, on 14 January 1863, *The Daily Palladium* printed a description of Carreño as

A black eyed, black haired handsome, dignified (for her years) little girl of eight years, [who] steps upon the stage alone, proceeds quietly and quickly to the piano, arranges herself upon the stool, (the hardest part of her task, apparently), runs her fingers up and down the piano, in accordance with the usual custom, and immediately dashes off with her performance. This over, the little genius makes a bow and runs off the platform, as youth of her age are most apt to do on other occasions.

In addition, newspapers printed various facts about Carreño's music education, including her ability to learn Gottschalk's *Jerusalem* in two days or Thalberg's Fantasy on "Norma," in only five days. Since Carreño was a new arrival in the United States, it is more than likely that her father provided biographical information and other facts to the press, with the intention of astonishing the public, as well as promoting his daughter.

John Sullivan Dwight's views on musical prodigies

One of the more prominent music critics of the 19th century, John Sullivan Dwight, was well known for his criticism of virtuosos, specifically American pianist Louis Moreau Gottschalk, whose performances he called "clap-trap!" Dwight was an idealist with strong purist and Germanic views of music, which he emphatically shared with his readers.²¹ As the public's interest in musical prodigies grew, so did that of many music critics who were now becoming equally as enthralled with this display of new juvenile talent. Shortly after Carreño's arrival in the United States, at the age of eight, critics hailed her a "musical phenomenon", a "little musical genius", and "the most astonishing musician".²² Dwight, however, had been a critic of virtuosos, as well as prodigies, for at least two decades prior to Carreño's appearances in New York. Before establishing his own journal, he was a contributor to the *Harbinger* (1845–1849), a newspaper devoted to social and political progress. In an 1845 *Harbinger* article, Dwight expressed his view on "the virtuoso age in music", in which he compared "the virtuoso to a gladiator" who has "to contend with that most formidable foe, the extravagant demand of a pampered public taste for some new miracle that shall swallow up the miracle of yesterday, like Aaron's rod".²³ Dwight would make similar statements in his future writings about prodigies, placing blame for their popularity and acceptance, if not wholly then partly, on the audience itself. Dwight called these audiences, a "new public", but in reality, this audience who preferred variety type concerts, opera, or "monster concerts" (such as the Gilmore National Peace Jubilee Concerts) had always existed (see Figure 27.2).²⁴



Great Peace Jubilee at the Boston Coliseum, Boston, MA, June 1869.

Source: Soule, John P. "National Peace Jubilee and Musical Festival." Boston. June, 1869. Coliseum Interior. Boston Public Library, Print Department.

Although by the 1860s, American audiences in cities across the northeast had gained more exposure to symphonic music and professional orchestras, their appetite for virtuosos, prodigies, and musical entertainments showed no signs of abating. Dwight took notice of this in his 1861 *Journal of Music* article "Popular Concerts", and provided the following social commentary about concert goers.

There is a large class of persons, who either from a natural defect, or want of practice in listening to the best, or from a habit of listening to bad music, are unable to find enjoyment in what some people sneeringly term "classical" or "scientific" music ... In short, we cannot expect people as a mass to like what is best, to have a tendency for the ideal ... The mass of people remain children, intellectually and morally. And therefore they ought to be treated as such.²⁵

p. 628 Although the public enjoyed prodigy concerts, some critics were wary of these young artists; for example, in 1862, Henry Cood Watson (c.1818–1875), a critic for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, wrote: "Infant prodigies are rare—Heaven be praised!"²⁶ Dwight was not only wary of prodigies but also questioned the hidden agenda of the manager or parent. While some prodigies were likely exploited by their managers or parents for financial gain, there are also cases of child prodigies who traveled and performed with their entire families for the economic survival of the family. For example, as noted by Benes, in 1819, Philip Lewis "opened in Boston with an 'extraordinary' concert with four of his children; two years later, after performing in the southern states, he apparently added a fifth child in 1821".²⁷ The only way Mr Lewis was able to support and keep his family together was through traveling performances.

Carreño's concerts were announced and reviewed in *Dwight's Journal* between 1862 and 1864, her first two years in the United States. However, Dwight's only lengthy reviews of Carreño were those of her performances in his hometown of Boston, which took place during 1863. From Carreño's first appearance in New York on 7 November through her last on 22 December, music critics, musicians, and the public alike had the opportunity to hear this newly arrived prodigy. At her first public debut in New York, she performed Hummel's *Rondo Brillant* accompanied by a string ensemble led by Theodore Thomas, Thalberg's *Fantasia* on "Moses," a Dohler nocturne, and Gottschalk's *Jerusalem*.²⁸ A *New York Times* critic proclaimed that "she deserves to be ranked, not as a child-wonder, who at the age of eight years has vanquished nearly all the technical difficulties of the piano, but as an artist of first-class sensibility".²⁹

Initially, Dwight did not seem to take much notice of Carreño; only a brief mention appeared in the 13 December 1862 issue of his journal. It read: "Miss Carreño is a great attraction and her playing is so wonderful that many have questioned the correctness of her age. A certificate from the Spanish consul certifies that she is but eight years of age".³⁰ Not until 10 January 1863 did Dwight share his honest impression of Carreño after her performance at the Music Hall on 2 January in Boston, Massachusetts. In this review, he stated: "Little Miss Teresa Carreno is indeed a wonder. We do not care much for 'prodigies', but this one did interest us ...". He continued with positive remarks about her technique and skill, interjected with statements about her childish demeanor, as well as her ethnicity, writing:

A child of nine years, with fine head and face full of intelligence, rather Spanish looking (she is from Carácas), runs upon the stage of the great Music Hall, has a funny deal of difficulty in getting herself upon the seat before the Grand Piano, runs her fingers over the keyboard like a virtuoso, and then plays you a difficult *Notturmo* by Dohler, with octave passages and all, not only clearly and correctly, but with true expression ...³¹

p. 629 He ended his review with a pleading request: "There can be no doubt of real talent here; may it only have wise training, and not be early wasted before publics! It is too precious for continual exposure. Such gifts are of God, and ought not to be prostituted for mere gain".³² Dwight's overall assessment of Carreño's musical abilities seemed positive, but he still felt it necessary to caution Carreño and her father about wasting her talents on an immature audience.

Was there any truth to Dwight's warning? Would Carreño's gifts be displayed and promoted simply for financial gain? It seems that New York manager Harrison's intention was to capitalize on Carreño's talent and schedule as many concerts as possible. But what role did her father, Manuel Antonio play? Her biographer Milinowski claimed that Carreño's father was coerced into rushing his daughter's entrance onto the public stage, mainly due to financial hardships, leaving Harrison solely responsible for exploiting her. She also provided an ambivalent explanation for Manuel Antonio's decision to debut his daughter to the New York public in November 1862. Milinowski wrote:

Last night not only Teresita but he himself had succeeded. The thwarted dream of becoming an artist in his own right was now coming true in his pupil, his daughter, and the disappointment of seeing his career as Minister of Finance ended by one of Venezuela's all-too-frequent revolutions had at last found potential compensation. By nature an unselfish idealist and a teacher, Manuel Antonio might at fifty still find fulfillment as a guide to unfolding genius.³³

Milinowski placed blame on Harrison for exploiting Manuel Antonio and his daughter, primarily by booking performance after performance, as well as not sharing agreed-upon earnings; yet, she identified Manuel Antonio's vicarious realization of success.³⁴

We may never know if Carreño's father was misled by Harrison, but as her parent, one would think that he should have maintained some control over the number of appearances and destinations his daughter traveled to. Instead, after the 11 public concerts in and around New York ended in December 1862, nine-year-old Carreño and her father immediately set off for Boston where she was then managed by a new impresario, George Danskin. Her concert schedule showed no signs of slowing down; she appeared at least 21 times between 2 January and 2 February in multiple cities across Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, occasionally performing twice a day (see Table 27.1).³⁵ Over the course of her career, especially following her prodigy years, Carreño would perform in as many as 140 concerts during a single season.³⁶

Table 27.1 Carreño's early performances between November 1862 and February 1863

Date	Venue	Location
7 November 1862	Irving Hall, Private concert	New York, NY
25 November 1862	Irving Hall, Debut	
29 November 1862	Irving Hall	
2 December 1862	Irving Hall	
4 December 1862	Irving Hall	
9 December 1862	Irving Hall	
11 December 1862	Irving Hall	
13 December 1862	Irving Hall, Matinee	
13 December 1862	Irving Hall	
18 December 1862	Benefit concert, Private concert	
22 December 1862	Academy of Music, 9th Birthday Concert	
2 January 1863	Boston Music Hall, Debut	Boston, MA
8 January 1863	Boston Music Hall	
9 January 1863	Lyceum Hall	Salem, MA
10 January 1863	Boston Music Hall, Matinee and Juvenile Festival	
11 January 1863	Boston Music Hall	
12 January 1863	Howard Hall	Providence, RI
13 January 1863	Chickering Hall	Boston, MA
14 January 1863	Music Hall	New Haven, CT
16 January 1863	Washburn Hall	Worcester, MA
17 January 1863	Boston Music Hall	
18 January 1863	Boston Music Hall	
19 January 1863	Roger Williams Hall	Providence, RI
20 January 1863	Lyceum Hall	
23 January 1863	City Hall	Cambridge, MA
24 January 1863	Boston Music Hall, Children's Matinee	
24 January 1863	Boston Music Hall	
27 January 1863	John Eliot School,	Boston, MA
28 January 1863	Chickering Hall	
29 January 1863	Perkins Institution for the Blind	Boston, MA
30 January 1863	Boston Music Hall	
2 February 1863	City Hall	

These dates and locations were gathered from primary sources available to the author. It is possible that there were other private performances, which were not documented or unavailable.

During her performances in New York, Carreño had brief periods of rest, during which she must have practiced, learned new repertoire, and rehearsed under her father's or, briefly, Gottschalk's direction. An article, printed during her return to the United States in 1872 at the age of 20, offers some insight into Carreño's practice regimen, at least during a period of two years prior to her debut in the United States. According to Carreño, she was only allowed to practice exercises on a daily basis for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon.³⁷ Her hours of practice, as well as general talent, resulted in positive feedback from reviewers who compared her to Gottschalk and Thalberg, and praised her clarity of tone, power, and expression, as well as her

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ability to perform lengthy compositions, such as Thalberg's *Fantasia on Rossini's "Moses,"* Op.33 or Prudent's *Caprice sur "Ernani,"* in one concert, all from memory.

In several programs, in addition to solo piano works, she performed with other artists and ensembles, including Theodore Thomas (violinist) and the Boston Philharmonic. According to concert reviews and announcements of her New York concerts, her repertoire was quite varied and included works by Gorla, Prudent, Thalberg, Gottschalk, Hummel, Dohler, Mendelssohn, and Rosellen, as well as her own compositions. For her appearances in Boston and other northeastern cities during January 1863, she added works by Chopin, Herz, Godefrid, Beethoven, and Danskin. Her appearances during January 1863 were often scheduled back to back, and with travel taking up the majority of the day Carreño did not have much time to recuperate, attend school, or enjoy the same activities as other children her age. It is unclear when she had the time to learn the new works added to her repertoire, but it is likely that she rehearsed them on the road, between concerts, as well as before her arrival in the United States.

Carreño, a nine-year old girl, traveled and performed in a period of one month almost as much as 34-year-old Gottschalk. Other than a scrapbook of reviews cut out from newspapers, kept by her father to document her concerts between 1862 and 1868, neither Manuel Antonio nor Carreño documented any impressions of these tours in their own words.³⁸ One can see, however, how Gottschalk experienced his endless concert tours and imagine the discomfort and stress it may have placed on a young girl. Following one of his tours, which ended in December 1862, Gottschalk wrote:

I have given eighty-five concerts in four months and a half. I have traveled fifteen thousand miles by train ... A few weeks more and I would have become an idiot! Eighteen hours a day on the railroad! Arrive at seven o'clock in the evening, eat with all speed, appear at eight o'clock before the public. The last note finished, rush quickly for my luggage, and en route until next day, always to the same thing ...³⁹

Milinowski attempted to transfer the blame for exploiting Carreño onto Harrison. She wrote:

For a child and a novice, five concerts in three weeks were enough, decided the father. The insatiable Mr. Harrison thought otherwise. He conceived the master trick of his career. With his usual effrontery, he asked Manuel Antonio to give him a farewell concert on Teresita's ninth birthday, and to let him call it a benefit for her. Manuel Antonio, not realizing to what he was committing himself, politely consented ... At least artistically the success was unqualified. Teresita had won and kept her laurels. New York was hers. The way, in whichever direction she cared to travel, was paved.⁴⁰

It seems evident that if Carreño's father had any concerns for her health and general education, he continued to treat her like a commodity.

Following several Carreño concerts in the Boston area, Dwight again turned his attention to this prodigy. In an article from 17 January 1863, he reviewed her solo concert on 13 January at Chickering Hall.⁴¹ At this concert she performed six works: a Thalberg *Barcarole*, Gorla's *Grand Fantasia on Themes from "Il Trovatore,"* Mendelssohn's *Andante and Rondo Capriccioso*, a Chopin *Nocturne*, Herz's *Grand Fantasia on "I Puritani,"* and Dohler's *Nocturne* dedicated to the Princess Belgioso.⁴² Dwight respected her ability to perform all of these works in a single program and commented positively on her "great strength of hand and arm" and how "her execution, although laboring occasionally, was clear, brilliant, facile, and precise".⁴³ But Dwight again preached about the dangers of continuous exploitation, which could result in "abnormal and excessive tasking of the brain" and how "the body must be saved from the deformity that might result from undue exercise of certain members". As in his earlier review, Dwight cautioned Carreño

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and her father, “O treat it [talent] reverently and tenderly; educate it, save it, and not let the temptation of dazzling success or gain exhaust it ere its prime!” Although in a much later interview with Harriette Brower (1869–1928) Carreño shared that during her training under her father, she was taught to criticize her own work and then correct it, it seems that not all criticism was welcome or shared with her.⁴⁴ Manuel Antonio did not include a single review from *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, or any others that may have contained negative criticism, in the scrapbook he so carefully put together for his daughter. It is possible that he may not have read these reviews, but if he had, then it seems he purposefully omitted them from the scrapbook, possibly to spare his young daughter’s feelings, or to shield her from any negative comments.

Prior to Carreño’s departure for Havana, Cuba, in the spring of 1863, *Dwight’s Journal of Music* printed an especially lengthy review of her performance with the Boston Philharmonic under the direction of Carl Zerrahn (1826–1909) at the Music Hall on 24 January.⁴⁵ Dwight took offense at this performance, from the repertoire and program, to the audience in attendance, as well as the liberties given to Carreño. He began his review, as follows:

Mr. Zerrahn’s *coup d’etat*, last Saturday evening, by which he filled the Music Hall while emptying his programme, was one of those successes on which we can congratulate him in a material but not in an artistic point of view. It drew together a great public, a new public, but in so doing ceased to be, in the established acceptation of the word, “Philharmonic”.

p. 633 Dwight’s point of contention was the absence of a symphonic work. He considered the symphony “about as indispensable to a Philharmonic concert as the altar at the junction of the nave and transept to a cathedral”, but it was omitted in order to feature a “wonder child” [Carreño]. In addition, he believed that this maneuver was done primarily to draw a specific type of audience—an audience who preferred entertainment and musical variety, rather than serious or “classical” music.

Carreño performed three works on the program: in Part I, Mendelssohn’s *Capriccio brillante* with the orchestra, in Part II, Rosellen’s Fantasia from “I due Foscari,” and Prudent’s Fantasia from “Lucia.” In addition to featuring Carreño, the Boston Philharmonic performed Beethoven’s Overture from *Leonora* and Schubert’s Orchestral Transcription of *The Erl King*. Although Dwight disapproved of the majority of this program, he commented positively about the “only two classical selections, the *Capriccio* and the *Leonora* Overture, which offered but an incidental slight resistance to the general wayward drift”.⁴⁶ What was his evaluation of Carreño’s performance? Overall, Dwight gave her credit for performing difficult works, such as Mendelssohn’s *Capriccio*, commenting that she performed “marvelously well for a child”, but he assured his readers that “the full conception of such music must be beyond her”. Dwight also drew attention to the fatigue apparent in all of Carreño’s pieces that evening.⁴⁷ Her fatigue was most likely due to an earlier matinee performance given for children and their families. Whilst obviously talented, one can only imagine how the stress due to daily or sometimes twice-daily performances, taxing even to adult artists, would impact a nine-year old child.

Using his journal as a vehicle for education, Dwight’s mission was to educate his readers about music that represented balance and formal clarity. Unfortunately, the ways in which he approached this task often came across as critical or cautionary. He was unable to write a concert review without inserting his own moral or philosophical views. This is apparent in his reviews of virtuoso musicians, especially Gottschalk and Carreño. One of Dwight’s chief complaints about concerts performed by virtuosos and prodigies was their choice of repertoire. Since the mid-1850s, Gottschalk performed not only his own very popular compositions, such as *Last Hope* or *Marche de nuit*, but also Liszt’s Fantasy on “Lucia”, Mason’s *Silver Spring*, or Thalberg’s Fantasy on “Norma.” The repertoire for these types of concerts had not changed much over the previous 10 years, as visible from Carreño’s programs during her first two years of concert performances in the United States (see Figure 27.3).⁴⁸ She often performed the same works debuted by Gottschalk a decade earlier. This was most likely due to several factors: popularity of this type of repertoire, audience expectation, and the rise in musical enterprises.

ADIEU TO BOSTON.

TERESA CARRENO'S

FAREWELL CONCERT

—AND—

LAST APPEARANCE,

—WILL TAKE PLACE AT—

THE BOSTON MUSIC HALL,

ON FRIDAY EVENING, JANUARY 30th, 1863.

NOTE.— It is with great reluctance that Teresa Carreno announces her last performance in the city of Boston, where she has been received with so much kindness, and where it may be said that her artistic reputation was first recognized and honorably acknowledged.

To render the programme for this Concert as attractive as possible,

TERESA CARRENO

will perform the Caprice, by Mendelssohn, as played by her at the

PIANOFORTE CONCERT

on Saturday evening, and by which she achieved a success unparalleled in musical history, and was honored with the

A GOLD MEDAL.

She will also, for the first time in public, play

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SOLOISTS:

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Mr. **SUCK**, Violinist,
Mr. **BAUMBACH**, Accompanyist.

PROGRAMME: Part First.

1. OVERTURE "Fidelio".....	BEETHOVEN
BY THE ORCHESTRA.	
2. POLACCA—From Lindu di Clémence—O live all quiet nation.....	DOSTOEVSKI
Miss ADDIE S. RYAN.	
3. SONATA PATHETIQUE—First time in public.....	BEETHOVEN
TERESA CARRENO.	
4. ELLEN—By request.....	TANZY
Violin Solo, Mr. H. SUCK.	
5. THE PRAISE OF TEARS.....	SCHUBERT
Transcribed for ORCHESTRA.	

PART SECOND.

6. CAPRICCIO BRILLIANT.....	MENDELSSEHN
Piano-Forte Solo, TERESA CARRENO.	
<small>With changed Arrangements, as performed at the Piano-forte Concert, Saturday Evening.</small>	
7. THE MERRY WIDDS—By request.....	GERARD
Miss ADDIE S. RYAN.	
8. VIOLIN SOLO.....	TANZY
Mr. H. SUCK.	
9. "L'ADIEU"—Valse, composed and Dedicated to the Ladies of Boston, by TERESA CARRENO.	TERESA CARRENO.
10. OVERTURE "Bruselle".....	BOITARD
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Concert Program, 30 January 1863.

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p. 634 If Manuel Antonio had read *Dwight's Journal of Music*, he apparently did not pay much heed to Dwight's warnings about protecting Carreño's talents from exploitation. Although the circumstances under which he and his family came to the United States and decisions he made with regard to Carreño's musical career during 1862–1864 are not well known, what can be deduced from her concert schedules and reviews makes one question Manuel Antonio's actions related to his daughter's musical career. Unlike some prodigies whose careers ultimately ended within a few years of their debut, Teresa Carreño's career flourished for over 50 years, both in the United States and internationally until her death in 1917. Following her tours in the United States between 1862 and 1864, Carreño went abroad to Europe and England where she continued her training and performances until 1872. These 10 years must have instilled in her a serious work ethic, yet her early entrance into a music career must have robbed her of the joys of childhood experienced by other children her age. Following her father's death in 1874, Carreño continued to sporadically collect newspaper clippings and concert programs, as well as keep track of her concert schedules, contracts, and

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repertoire, which allow one to visualize and comprehend how grueling and strict her life must have been as a concert artist.⁴⁹ Fortunately, Dwight's premonitory words to Carreño and her father, about the fate that would await her if her talents were exhausted at such a young age, never did come true.

Conclusion

During Carreño's prodigy years and early career in the United States, her repertoire included works, which Dwight's "new public" would have enjoyed; lighter sentimental pieces, such as Gottschalk's *Last Hope*, or popular songs, such as Thalberg's Variations on "Home, Sweet, Home." When she gave a private recital for President Lincoln and his family in October 1863, she performed several works by Gottschalk, as well as Lincoln's favorite ballad, *Listen to the Mockingbird*.⁵⁰ Over the course of her career, however, especially during the last decade of the 19th century, American audiences demonstrated a greater propensity for classical repertoire, rather than the lighter music of the previous decades. Piano recital programs began to more closely resemble those in Europe, featuring works from different periods by past and contemporary composers. Carreño added works by composers representing various genres and periods, while on occasion still performing some of her favorites from her early years as encores, such as her own composition *Kleiner Walzer*. Moreover, she became a sought-after soloist for piano concertos, including Saint-Saëns' C minor, Grieg's A minor, and Beethoven's no. 5 in E-flat major. While Dwight may have objected to her repertoire selection during her early career, as well as warned her not to give away her talent to soon, Carreño maintained a successful career well into the 20th century. In addition to her prolific career as a pianist, she composed approximately 40 works for solo piano, one of her most popular being the *Gottschalk Waltz*, which she dedicated to Louis M. Gottschalk, and published during 1863.⁵¹ Carreño also tried her hand at opera and debuted as Zerlina (soprano) in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in February 1876 at the Academy of Music in New York City.⁵² Occasionally if a singer in her troupe was unwell, she would take their place in an operatic production; however, this did not continue beyond the 1880s.

p. 636 As demonstrated by Willa Cather's eloquent recollection of Carreño's performance in 1901 in Washington, DC, she showed no signs of slowing down. At this concert she performed an astonishing 15 works by Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt. Cather wrote:

It was the Schumann Fantasy in C Major that Carreño found the medium for her overwhelming individual power ... the coloring of these last numbers was of course incomparable. The terrific power of the woman is as amazing as ever, the commanding, militant attack and the panoramic impressions of purple and crimson that somehow are left on the brain by the barbaric splendor of sound, this opulent richness of one, were as vivid as ever.⁵³

Although Dwight's conviction that prodigies were regularly treated as commodities may have been true, it is difficult to say with certainty whether Manuel Antonio intentionally placed his daughter on the stage solely for financial gain. The number of appearances she made after her arrival in the United States was certainly very high for someone so young, and can be viewed as exploitative. We may never fully understand the circumstances under which her father agreed to the contractual terms laid out by Lafayette F. Harrison in New York City or George Danskin in Boston, Massachusetts; nevertheless, he allowed his daughter to perform in daily, sometimes twice-daily, concerts. When Carreño first appeared on the concert scene at the age of eight, Dwight may have recognized her talent, yet he viewed her as another child prodigy whose time on the concert stage was short-lived. However, Carreño managed to sustain a successful career for over 50 years and became known as one of the leading women pianists of her time.

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Notes

- 1 Peter Benes, “Child Performers and Prodigies, 1795–1830, in New England,” in *The Worlds of Children, 1620–1920* (Boston, MA: Boston University, 2004), p. 198.
- 2 “Precocious Children,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine* (February 1859), p. 58.
- 3 Her arrival in New York City was announced in the *New York Herald*, October 27, 1862. “Mlle. Teresa Carreno, the little lady in question, is from Venezuela, and is only eight years old. Her education has hitherto been confined to the care of her

- father and one or two other amateur musicians. She is a pretty and intelligent little creature, and is in every respect like a child of her age except in her performance. She plays the works of Thalberg, Prudent, Gorla and other modern composers with a facility of execution that is truly wonderful. Her reading of the difficult compositions which she plays is entirely her own, she being too young to have made studies of interpretation. This is in all cases refined, and often original and striking. Her power of touch, execution and style of phrasing are such that if one were to hear without seeing her it would be difficult to make him believe that it was the performance of a child.”
- 4 Mirla Alcibiades, *Manuel Antonio Carreño* (Biblioteca Biografica Venezolana, 2005), p.98.
- 5 Manuel Antonio Carreño, *Manual de urbanidad y buenas maneras para uso de la juventud de ambos sexos ... precedido de un breve tratado sobre los deberes morales del hombre* (Nueva York: D. Appleton, 1854).
- 6 Advertisement for Tropical Balsam, prepared by Carreno Bros & Co. *New York Times*, 6 November 1863, p. 7.
- 7 Marta Milinowski, *Teresa Carreño, “By the Grace of God”* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940).
- 8 For examples, see: *El Buen Sentido* 6 December (1862); *La América* 17 December (1862); *La Crónica* 12 March (1863); *Church’s Musical Visitor*, October (1872), p. 5.
- 9 Teresa Carreño Papers. Folder 11.1, Scrapbook I, May 1862–July 1868. Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries. Includes clippings of various Spanish-language articles.
- 10 Teresa Carreño Papers. Folder 11.1, Scrapbook I, May 1862–July 1868. Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries. Includes clippings from *El Continental* (22 September 1862, 15 November 1862, 2 December 1862, 1 January 1863), *La América* (15 November 1862, 17 December 1862), and *La Crónica* (12 March 1863).
- 11 S. Frederick Starr, *Bamboula! The Life and Times of Louis Moreau Gottschalk* (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 326; cites Milinowski and letter from Gottschalk to Lafayette F. Harrison. See also *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* (8 November 1862); George C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927), Vol. 7, p. 528.
- 12 Letter from Gottschalk to Lafayette F. Harrison in Teresa Carreño Papers. Folder 11.1, Scrapbook I, May 1862–July 1868. Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.
- 13 Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Jeanne Behrend, and S. Frederick Starr, *Notes of a Pianist* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 90–1.
- 14 Gottschalk remained in South America until his death on 18 December 1869 in Brazil.
- 15 The majority of biographical articles state that Carreño demonstrated musical talent from an early age (two years), but her musical education did not begin until around the age of six and a half or seven, under her father’s direction. In one article (*La Crónica*, 12 March 1863) the author cited that she studied with a German musician, Julio Hohene, for about four months prior to her departure for the United States in 1862.
- 16 Vera B. Lawrence, *Strong on Music: Vol. 3, Repercussions, 1857–1862* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 524. On 18 September 1862, Harrison reopened Irving Hall with a Theodore Thomas concert, “after a massive and highly publicized renovation of its visually unsatisfactory, albeit acoustically acceptable, interior”. Previewing it at a private showing for distinguished guests, the *Times* (25 September 1862) perhaps excessively proclaimed the new Irving Hall the most beautiful music hall in the United States, “or, perhaps, the world”. See also Dwight’s *Journal of Music* (20 September 1862), p. 200. Irving Hall was considered acoustically excellent, but horribly uncomfortable concert rooms in New York.
- 17 William Fry, *New York Tribune* (15 December 1862). See Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, pp. 521–2.
- 18 Charles Bailey Seymour, *New York Daily Times* (22 October 1862).
- 19 William Fry, *New York Tribune* (15 December 1862). See Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, p. 525.
- 20 *New York Times* (28 November 1862), p. 5.
- 21 “Gottschalk has been giving here four concerts; but such concerts as his do little for Art. What a pity, not to say shame, that an artist of such eminent talents should descend to so much clap-trap! He reminds one of a remark said to have been made by Liszt, that in the United States the public seemed to care more to see an artist, than to hear him. Thus Gottschalk seems to think, that the animal must make a show.” [signed] X. *Dwight’s Journal of Music* (13 December 1862), p. 302.
- 22 *New York Herald* (27 October 1862); *Salem Register*, LXIV, 3, (8 January 1863), p. 2.
- 23 Michael Broyles, “Bands, Opera, Virtuosi,” in *Music of the Highest Class: Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 287.
- 24 In 1869, Patrick Gilmore led the National Peace Jubilee, a week-long festival of concerts, at the Coliseum in Boston. The concerts featured a 1,000-piece band and a 10,000-member chorus, and attracted over 50,000 spectators to each concert. See: Stephen Puleo, *A City So Grand: The Rise of an American Metropolis, Boston 1850–1900* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2010).
- 25 Bill F. Faucett, “American Musical Culture: Traditions, Conditions, and Outlook,” in *Music in America 1860–1918: Essays, Reviews, and Remarks on Critical Issues*. (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2008), pp. 222–3.
- 26 “Weekly Gossip—Music, Drama, Etc.,” in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* (8 November 1862), p. 107.
- 27 Benes, p. 204.
- 28 *New York Daily Tribune* (15 November 1862), p.7.
- 29 *New York Times* (28 November 1862).
- 30 *Dwight’s Journal of Music* (13 December 1862, vol. 22, no. 11), p. 294.
- 31 *Dwight’s Journal of Music* (10 January 1863, vol. 22, no. 15), p. 327.
- 32 *Dwight’s Journal of Music* (10 January 1863, vol. 22, no. 15), p. 327.
- 33 Milinowski, p. 10.
- 34 Unfortunately, no documentation between Harrison and Carreño which could shed light on their agreements regarding Teresa’s performances and schedule has been uncovered.
- 35 The listed performances are documented in newspaper publications and can be viewed on the website *Documenting*

- 36 *Chicago Daily Tribune* (18 April 1875), p. 3.
- 37 *Church's Musical Visitor* (October 1872), p. 5.
- 38 Scrapbook I contains reviews from several Latin American periodicals including *El Independiente* (Carácas) (27 May 1862; 15 July 1862) (this publication was short-lived, founded on 9 April 1860 and defunct in 1863), *El Buen Sentido* (Carácas) (6 December 1862), *El Vigilante* (Puerto Cabello) (30 July 1862; 31 July 1862; 1 August 1862). Several of the articles printed in these Latin American periodicals pay tribute to the young prodigy, Teresa Carreño, comparing her to Mozart and announcing her upcoming trip to the United States, as well as other destinations, including Havana, Cuba, London, England, and Paris, France. These articles provide biographical information about her family lineage and her immediate family.
- 39 S. Frederick Starr, *Notes of a Pianist* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 102.
- 40 Milinowski, pp. 36–7.
- 41 *Dwight's Journal of Music* (17 January 1863), p. 335. “Here was indeed a task for a little girl of nine years. The mere physical exertion required in playing through so many pieces of great length, and full of all the modern difficulties of execution, made it a wonder that she should succeed at all. But she has great strength of hand and arm, and her execution, although laboring occasionally, was clear, brilliant, facile and precise. Yet all this would not make it interesting, except painfully. What catches you at once, and makes it pleasant to listen to her, is that you feel she has a true musical accent; the chords are struck, the passages are phrased, expressively ... The danger is lest her talent, by such early continual exhibition and exposure, should all run to waste in superficial, showy music; and no less, that such abnormal and excessive tasking of the brain should wear the life out soon ... Would it not be wiser to let the music lessons fall into the background for a year or two, and give the time to *general culture*, physical and mental? The body must be saved from the deformity that might result from undue exercise of certain members; already the arm appears almost unnaturally large ...”
- 42 *Dwight's Journal of Music* (17 January 1863), p. 335.
- 43 Another review of Carreño's concert, as well as a biographical article, can be found in *Dwight's Journal of Music* (24 January 1863), p. 343.
- 44 Harriette Brower, *Piano Mastery: Talks With Master Pianists And Teachers, And an Account of a von Bülow Class, Hints On Interpretation, by Two American Teachers (Dr. William Mason And William H. Sherwood) And a Summary by the Author* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1915), pp. 160–7.
- 45 *Dwight's Journal of Music* (31 January 1863), p. 350.
- 46 *Dwight's Journal of Music* (31 January 1863), p. 350.
- 47 *Dwight's Journal of Music* (31 January 1863), p. 350. “But how did charming little Miss Teresa play the difficult and classical ‘Capriccio,’ and play for the first time with orchestra? Marvellously well for a child, but less well than with the more familiar tasks before her. For she *is* human, and with how much so ever genius, subject to the laws of child-humanity. The full conception of such music must be beyond her; and in the execution she seemed to labor more than usual, lacking sustained force for the whole. But she kept good time, and brought out the most of it clearly, firmly, and even gracefully. Indeed, whether from the excitement of the new and formidable position, or in consequence of the concert she had already given a few hours before, there were symptoms of fatigue in all her pieces. The presentation of a medal, in the name of the Orchestra, though well deserved, was not the least un-Philharmonic feature of the ‘enterprise.’”
- 48 Vera B. Lawrence, *Strong on Music: Reverberations 1850–1856* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Appendix 5, pp. 770–85.
- 49 There are two known scrapbooks. Scrapbook I, May 1862–July 1868, was begun by her father; Scrapbook II, 1877–1885, contains clippings collected by Carreño, but these are not well organized or in chronological order. Folder 11.1 Scrapbook I; Folder 12.1 Scrapbook II. Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.
- 50 See interview in *Montgomery Advertiser* (12 February 1911).
- 51 Teresa Carreño, *Gottschalk Waltz*, (Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co., c. 1863). Johns Hopkins University, Levy Sheet Music Collection, Box 104, Item 044, <http://jhir.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/32132>.
- 52 See review in *Cincinnati Enquirer* (5 March 1876), p. 5. “On Friday last Mme. Titiens appeared in Don Giovanni at the Academy of Music. The interest of the performance was heightened by the debut on the lyric stage of Mme. Carreno-Sauret, for several years extensively known as a pianist of considerable ability. Mme. Carreno-Sauret sang ‘Zerlina,’ and made a favorable impression with regard to her future career. The lady has a mezzo-soprano voice as yet only partially developed. Although she sang suffering from stage fright, yet she was forcible both in her singing and acting. The debutante, a pretty brunette, is a Venezuelan by birth, and a thorough musician. On Saturday last Mme. Titiens appeared for the last time for some weeks before a New York audience.”
- 53 Willa Cather. *The World and the Parish, Vol. 2* (ed. William M. Curtin) (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 796.