‘A Vestibule of Song’: Morris and Burne-Jones in Chicago

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Two narrow windows, either side of the doorway from street to vestibule, guard the main sanctuary of the Arts and Crafts interior of the Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago. Morris & Co. stained glass is rare in the United States beyond the East Coast, but these windows are lovely examples of designs used multiple times by ‘the Firm’ in other commissions, primarily in Anglican churches in England. Burne-Jones’s slender, haunting female figures represent two virgin saints of early Christian Rome and Antioch martyred for their faith; Saints Cecilia and Margaret. Cecilia is dressed in deep blues; her body, forming the S-curve of medieval paintings, and shown in three-quarter view, stands against a background design of realistically-rendered, deep-green lemon-tree leaves with their fruit; blue-green grass grows under her feet. Margaret, robed in shades of deep red, and holding a green palm of martyrdom by her right side, strides toward the viewer. She is shown against a visually very different background of stylised foliage painted on diamond-shaped lozenges of clear glass. Each saint is accompanied by her identifying attribute. Cecilia, long invoked as a patron of music, carries a small portable organ. Beneath Margaret’s feet lies a magnificently-coiling dragon, reminding viewers that she has been miraculously disgorged from its satanic jaws; she was often invoked as protector by women in childbirth. Irregularly-shaped panes of richly coloured glass, in some places overpainted with delicate patterned detail, have been fitted together in order to construct both windows.

What are these windows doing in a nineteenth-century Presbyterian church in the American Midwest? Why these particular saints? Indeed, why are Anglo-Catholic saints there at all? In what follows I wish to tease from the history of these windows a less familiar story about music as it unites Morris, Burne-Jones, and a church in Chicago. Morris & Co.’s prestige in visual design, together with accidents of circumstance which made these windows available, certainly played a large role in their transatlantic journey. Yet as I hope to show, it is particularly appropriate that Saints Cecilia and Margaret should stand in the vestibule of this
church, as lasting testimony both to the long friendship between their creators, and to the influence of Ruskin, Morris, and Burne-Jones in turn-of-the-century Chicago.

Saint Cecilia may today be most familiar in England from the poetry and the music she inspired during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as the Ode to St Cecilia first performed at the Musical Society of London’s annual celebration of her name day, 22 November 1692. The music, by Henry Purcell, is probably better known than the text, by the Irishman Nicholas Brady. Brady’s lyrics are based, however, on John Dryden’s ‘A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day’, written during 1687, and later set to music by George Frederick Handel. Handel’s oratorio was composed for another London Musical Society’s St Cecilia’s Day celebration, in 1739. Brady’s text, like Dryden’s, invokes Cecilia as the presiding saint of a more than earthly music:

Hail! Bright Cecilia, Hail! Fill ev’ry Heart!
With Love of thee and thy Celestial Art. [lines 1–2]³

Her ‘Celestial Art’ is inspired by a sacred harmony – the music of the spheres ‘Who in the Heavenly Round to their own Music move’ [line 28]. Cecilia’s own instrument, however, is the organ:

With that sublime Celestial Lay
Can any Earthly Sounds compare?
If any Earthly Music dare,
The noble Organ may. [29–32]

Brady’s Saint Cecilia (and Dryden’s) ‘oft convers’d with Heaven’, listening to ‘Some Angel of the Sacred Choire’ who ‘Did with his Breath the Pipes inspire; /
And of their Notes above the just Resemblance gave’ [34–37]. The organ which Cecilia plays is thus a sacred imitation, reproducing the sound which is ordinarily inaudible to mortal ears, of the moving celestial spheres. According to theory attributed to the ancient Greek mathematician Pythagoras to which these late seventeenth-century works allude, such resonance was thought to be derived from mathematical relationships which govern both the vibrations of musical tones and movements of sun, moon, earth, and stars. The celestial music imitated by the tones of Cecilia’s organ therefore neatly combines ancient Greek science with the story of an angel-conversing Christian saint.

Visual representations of Cecilia almost always include some reference to music. While a number of Renaissance paintings depict her with a lute or viol (instruments common at the time), she is more frequently shown, as in the Burne-Jones window design, with an organ, often a small or portative instrument which can be held next to the body with one hand and played with the other. Probably the most famous image of this type is Raphael’s ‘St Cecilia’ altarpiece,
widely reproduced in engravings. Raphael’s Cecilia is depicted at the moment when she supposedly turns away from earthly music in a kind of religious trance, as if moved by an unsounded music. She has let drop her arms, still holding her organ, while raising her head to heaven, and a cloud of angels who sing from an open book; other instruments lie discarded at her feet, as if she exclaimed, ‘With that sublime Celestial Lay/Can any Earthly Sounds compare?’

Association of Cecilia with music does not however, enter her story until the late thirteenth century. Identification of her music with the organ may also be based on a creative misreading of a medieval text describing the crucial scene of the saint’s communications with her guardian angel. One of the best-known and earliest accounts of her life is Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend*, printed in Latin ca 1290, and in English by William Caxton in 1483. A few years later, Geoffrey Chaucer followed Caxton’s text closely when, in *The Canterbury Tales*, he retold Cecilia’s story as the ‘Second Nun’s Tale’. In Caxton’s translation, the *Golden Legend* describes the relevant scene thus: ‘and hearing the organs making melody, she sang in her heart only to God’. The phrase translated as ‘in her heart’, or ‘silently’, is, in the Latin text, *organis*, which refers to the organ of human of speech or singing, the voice. During Cecilia’s sacred conversation, she turns away from the musicians playing around her: she is speaking or singing with God alone. But Chaucer, following Caxton, seizes on the confusing term ‘organ’ in order to insert organ music into the scene and, moreover, to imply for that music a more direct role in Cecilia’s trance:

\[
\text{And whil the organs maden melodie,}
\]
\[
\text{To God allone in herte thus sang she.}
\]

The sound of organ music in Chaucer’s tale thus moves Cecilia to turn to celestial music: to the unheard music of the spheres, as Dryden, Brady, Purcell, and Handel would have it, or perhaps just to the silent conversation of her heart with God.

Morris and Burne-Jones shared an early enthusiasm both for the *Golden Legend* and for *The Canterbury Tales*; their several designs for Cecilia most probably reference these medieval versions rather than those of Raphael, Dryden, Purcell, or Handel. But the patron saint of music and her unlikely associate in Chicago, that other virgin martyr Margaret, held additional personal resonance for both men. If art was one ground of their long, close friendship and working partnership, music, particularly the older music of the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, both sacred and secular, was another. Soon after the two met as undergraduates at Oxford, both joined the newly-formed Oxford Plain Song Society, whose initial meeting took place, for obvious symbolic reasons, on St Cecilia’s Day, 22 November 1853. For several years, Morris and Burne-Jones (then plain Jones) regularly attended the Society’s meetings, which brought together music-lovers with very
diverse church affiliations (or none at all), all dedicated to revival of early music. They also sang plain song at nearby St Thomas Church.

Burne-Jones was unusually sensitive to music. His tastes in later life were broad – from the street music of wandering Italians with their hand organs, to Meyerbeer and Wagner – but his boyhood exposure to cathedral music in his native Birmingham shaped a particular love for early music, both sacred and secular. Perhaps most important of all, before he had ever met Morris, he had encountered Georgiana Macdonald, a gifted musician of eclectic tastes who was to become his wife, and Morris’s closest woman friend. Georgie’s playing and singing soon became central to the circle around Morris, Burne-Jones, and Rossetti.

St Margaret and her dragon are not normally companions of Cecilia. But Margaret was the name of the Burne-Jones’s only daughter (born 1866), whom he adored. Although he painted few portraits, his painting of his daughter is one of Burne-Jones’s most lovely works. It seems to embody his vision of beauty as a young, virginal girl, just on the cusp of adulthood, and a little saddened by that knowledge (like Gerard Manley Hopkins’s Margaret in ‘Spring and Fall’, perhaps). Margaret Burne-Jones was also the model for the face of a different Saint Margaret window, designed by her father for St Margaret’s Church, Rottingdean, Sussex, where the Burne-Joneses owned a much-loved second home.

Saint Margaret, while not as frequent a subject in the stained-glass work of ‘the Firm’ as Saint Cecilia, was nonetheless a popular figure. The design used in the Chicago window appears in a number of other places in England, including St Peter’s Church, Bramley, Yorkshire (installed 1882), and Holy Trinity, Sloane Square, London (1894–5). In none of these examples, however, except that in Chicago, does Margaret stand beside Cecilia. Yet we know that Burne-Jones did envision his daughter Margaret in ways which link her to music. While his portrait of Georgiana shows their two adolescent children in the background gathered around Philip’s easel (Philip too became a painter), he also made a careful family portrait drawing, probably during the later 1870s, which shows Georgiana seated at the piano with Margaret and Philip standing beside her, the three of them intent on the music open before them. Margaret is also recognisably one of the white-robed young girls singing and playing musical instruments who slowly descend The Golden Stairs (1876–80), the monumental painting now in Tate Britain which for many is one of Burne-Jones’s signature works. Margaret held an important place in her father’s visual conception of musical melody.

Morris too had discovered the pleasures of early music before he arrived at Oxford. He already knew something via his mother’s family about the music still sung in Anglican Cathedrals: his maternal grandfather taught church music, and two uncles were ‘singing canons’ at Worcester Cathedral, and at Westminster Abbey. But Morris fell in love with revived early music while still a pupil at Marl-
borough, the ‘new and very rough’ school he attended during the late 1840s and early 1850s. Marlborough, which practised ‘high’ or catholic-inflected Anglicanism influenced by the Tractarian or Oxford Movement, had soon adopted in its chapel (where daily attendance was mandatory) musical and architectural tastes derived from the medieval church. As Morris’s first biographer (Burne-Jones’s son-in-law and Margaret’s husband, J.W. Mackail) put it, ‘the older church music appealed to him with a force only less than that of medieval architecture’. Even before Morris left Oxford, he had visited and knew intimately the remains of gothic buildings all over southern England and northern France, where he not only viewed the celebrated medieval cathedrals, but also collected old tunes from at least one cathedral organist.

The two friends’ early embrace of plain song – another term for Gregorian Chant – put Morris and Burne-Jones in the vanguard of changing musical as well as visual tastes. Plain song – a form of musical chanting to a few reciting-notes, usually by male voices singing unaccompanied and in unison, not to a tune written in ordinary musical measures of equal time, but flexibly adapted to the rhythmic emphases and inflections required to sound, musically, the words of an individual text – had been the music of the medieval church throughout Europe. Its revival during the 1840s and 1850s in England was part of the larger Oxford movement, designed to restore some of the older faith and ritual practices of the medieval church to the contemporary Anglican Church.

The movement set out not only to reintroduce earlier beliefs and practices, but also the musical and visual beauty associated with older ritual. During the sweeping and often violently iconoclastic and anti-Catholic reforms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most churches in England had been roughly stripped of architectural embellishments – and of their music. Unlike the great medieval churches which survived everywhere in Catholic countries such as France, Italy, or Spain, English churches during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were often austere expanses of grey stone, their former stained glass, sculptures, paintings, and textiles destroyed or defaced as ‘popish’. The monks and priests who once conducted musical services where liturgy and psalms were not spoken but sung, who had also sung and even commissioned new music, were also gone. Except for the great, now-Anglican cathedrals which maintained trained boys’ choirs, employed singing canons, and possessed organs, music in Anglican parish churches during the later seventeenth century was left largely to unaccompanied and often unled congregational singing, or sing-song recitation of metrical psalms. Other music – vocal or instrumental – was banished from reformed Calvinist churches as idolatrous, both in England and America.

During the eighteenth century this began gradually to change, first in wealthy, urban churches (where professional choirs and musicians were available), and then in smaller, rural churches (where volunteer choirs were eager to include
pieces they could sing, and local bands constituted from parishioners provided at-times musically-questionable accompaniment). But it was not until the later eighteenth and the early nineteenth century that music again became, slowly, a valued part of religious practice in England. Two movements were particularly influential: the Evangelical and, during Morris and Burne-Jones’s youth, the Tractarian. Evangelicals both within and outside the Anglican church had, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, embraced the value of a more participatory music in worship. John Wesley discovered the uniting, arousing effects of congregational hymn-singing at open-air Methodist prayer meetings, and later, at indoor services, in the towns and villages of the south-west, and in the industrial midlands and north of England. Within the Anglican Church, too, Evangelicals accepted a new emphasis on spiritual expression through congregational singing, especially of hymns, many newly-composed in simple harmonies to accessible texts intended to encourage emotional commitment. There was resistance: until the second part of the nineteenth century, many more traditional Anglicans distrusted congregational participation, finding the new hymns too emotional, and associating them with the originally poorer and less-educated populations attracted by the evangelising Methodists. Some Tractarian-influenced Anglicans saw plain song as a less-emotional alternative especially well-suited to congregational singing (although in practice plain song, like more elaborate early choral music, often became the preserve of a trained choir). Nonetheless, under the combined influence of Evangelical and Tractarian interest, by the later nineteenth century church music occupied an important and well-accepted place, not only for its religious but for its aesthetic potential.

Although Morris and Burne-Jones soon gave up their initial intentions of entering the Church in order to dedicate themselves to Art, music continued to be important to both men. Morris first apprenticed himself to a leading gothic revival architect, but he also wrote carols and songs – poems, not music, but words to be sung to old tunes in fact or imagination. Burne-Jones, followed shortly by Morris, moved to London in order to study painting with Rossetti, where at frequent gatherings in their apartment at Red Lion Square, Georgie played and sang, with an expanding group of friends, ballads and other tunes from English and French collections of older music. According to a later account by an American visitor, Charles Eliot Norton (friend of Ruskin, patron of the Pre-Raphaelites, translator of Dante, and the first professor of fine arts at Harvard), ‘Mrs Jones’s music is of a rare sort, and not of the modern but of the former better English school. She will sing for an hour delightfully from Haydn, from Cherubini, from Bach, or will turn from these composers to the lighter style of the old Shakespearian and Ben Jonson songs, or the still older English airs and French chansons’.13

By 1860, the Morrises, Burne-Joneses, and Rossettis were all newly married; Morris and Jane’s Red House, in Bexleyheath, Kent, Philip Webb’s inspired
adaptation of medieval domestic architecture to far-suburban nineteenth-century London, drew them all together on long summer weekends. While Morris dreamed of establishing a working community of artist friends and their families, he, Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and their wives and friends set about designing and making furnishings. According to their later recollections, it was an idyllic time, with music and games all over the house and gardens interrupting the designing and painting and embroidering. From the couples’ exuberant art making arose the firm which became Morris & Co. Perhaps recalling Georgie’s music-making around the piano, Cecilia, with her organ and innumerable musician angels of all kinds, quickly became one of ‘the Firm’s’ favorite subjects, stimulating a number of different designs.

Burne-Jones had already, before the founding of ‘the Firm’, designed in 1859 a rather charming small panel as part of a series for St Frideswide’s Chapel at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.14 The panel shows Cecilia (her halo is clearly labelled) serving as music tutor to the young St Frideswide, the Anglo-Saxon patron saint of Oxford and of the University. With its compressed spatial relations, simplified drawing, and kaleidoscope of strong colours, the window’s consciously archaic feeling is at the same time strangely modern. The Firm’s first Cecilia windows may have been a pair, Saint Cecilia and Saint Catherine, designed by Morris in 1865.15 Two years later, Burne-Jones designed a single figure of Cecilia with her organ in a less archaic style. The window, realised in colour under Morris’s direction, incorporated painting on glass (in the tinted panels which form the background) with the mosaic method of composing in coloured glass for the figure. This design was repeated at least once, in 1873, for Jesus College, Cambridge; another version, now at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow, may have been made later but from that design.16

But Burne-Jones’s best-known and most often repeated design for a sainted Cecilia – that of the Chicago window – dates from 1874–1875 when it was installed in a different part of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.17 Both the saint and the two musician angels in panels to her left and right are clothed all in white, the pallor of their robes, faces, and hands emphasised by narrow red halos and, for the angels, pale blue wings. They stand on a narrow strip of grass against a background of scrolling dark green leaves, the latter rather like those of the Chicago Cecilia. The expression on Cecilia’s face is simple but particularly lovely, as are the delicately painted details of her hair, her gown, and her instrument. These features are equally visible in a version dressed in pale blue created for Whitelands College (then located in Chelsea, but now part of the University of Roehampton), around 1883 – although in the Whitelands example, the background consists of a figured pattern in deep blue, with crimson drapes below. In all three versions, Cecilia is the same slightly sad, abstracted, slim figure touching her slender fingers to the keys of her portative organ. In the Chicago version,
however, the colours are far richer than either at Oxford or Whitelands College. Cecilia’s face and hands, like her organ pipes, seem to flush with life caught from the glowing blues and greens of her robe and her leafy surrounds. Although she still bears the label and the attribute of a saint, one is tempted to say that she has taken on a new identity with her changed surroundings: no longer the Catholic martyr, she is evoked now as the human patron of earthly music – religious, but not silent – of music like that which the visitor can expect to hear on entering the main sanctuary, itself a dazzling evocation in coloured glass of glowing figures in green and gold landscapes.

But there was another, more immediate pictorial influence on Morris and Burne-Jones’s imaginations of Cecilia. In 1856, for an illustrated edition of Tennyson’s early poetry, Rossetti produced a very strange drawing of the saint. Here are Tennyson’s lines:

Or in a clear-wall’d city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
An angel looked at her.

Rossetti’s Cecilia is, like Raphael’s and like Tennyson’s, caught up in a musically-induced trance (her hands rest on the keys of her organ), but the angel-knight standing behind her, into whose arms she swoons, seems to be doing something more than just looking at her, as Tennyson’s poem would have it. He leans forward to kiss (or in the engraver’s awkward translation, to ‘munch’) her forehead. In the Golden Legend, Cecilia invokes her guardian angel – in that trance when she speaks to God in her heart – to guard her chastity, since she is about to be married. With the angel’s help, she succeeds in converting to Christianity not only her husband, who then lives chastely but affectionately with her, but also his brother. Eventually the men are arrested and put to death, as is Cecilia, but not before a series of botched attempts – boiling, hacking, and so on – qualify her for true martyr status. A guard biting an apple nonchalantly in the foreground of Rossetti’s design, however, seems to allude both to the fall of Eve, and that of Cecilia.

Rossetti returned to a very similar subject during the early 1860s: the design dates from the time of the music-making, house-decorating weekends at Red House. Rossetti designed Music for an early Morris & Co. commission; a series illustrating the story of King René and his wife on their honeymoon. The artist takes advantage of one feature of the instrument the young Queen is playing: a so-called ‘positive organ’ whose operation requires two people, one to play the keyboard, and the other to stand behind it and pump the bellows. A music which takes two lends itself particularly well to depiction not of an ethereal heavenly
music but of an arousing and very earthly one. It reminds us that Red House at that time hosted three recently-married artists and their wives, who loved to design and make art, and to sing old French and English love songs.

At about the same time, Burne-Jones made his own design of a woman playing a positive organ while a winged, kneeling male figure works the bellows. It is a small image he painted for Georgie, *ca* 1863, inside the lid of a new piano given to her as a wedding present. As he often did, Burne-Jones elaborated a number of fuller versions of this design during the coming years. Both a watercolour (1865) and an oil painting (1868–1877) are now titled *Le Chant d’Amour* (The Song of Love) and contain a third figure: a seated knight gazes with longing at the woman who plays the organ and sings with a dreamy, abstracted expression. In the distance rises a dim, sunset-lit landscape of a moated but apparently deserted castle-city which floats on mist across the water, as if conjured up by the music but unreachable in reality, an apt image for the listening knight’s unfilled (and perhaps unfulfillable) longings. Maybe these are the desires which Cecilia’s young husband, sworn to honour her chastity in hopes of future heavenly bliss, may have felt.

In the watercolour, the winged figure working the organ bellows is masked and more resembles Cupid than Cecilia’s guardian angel of chastity, but he also wears the crown of woven roses which, according to the *Golden Legend*, Cecilia’s angel brought from Paradise to give to her newly-converted husband and brother. In the oil, the angel-Cupid—although he keeps his wings and his garland—has lost his blindfold, but his crimson robes and abstracted gaze do suggest that the music they make is more productive of erotic swoons of hopeless longing than the religious trance attributed by Dryden, Handel, and Raphael to the celestial music which Cecilia imitates. One might say that Burne-Jones’s image is Cecilia’s story from the imagined perspective of her husband, rather than that of Cecilia herself. The title, in fact, comes from the refrain of one of the old French love songs Georgie used to play:

Hélas, je sais un chant d’amour,
Triste et gai, tour à tour.
[Alas, I know a song of love,
Sad and gay, turn by turn.]²³

By the time he completed the oil, the image had probably acquired a new and different meaning for Burne-Jones, for during the late 1860s he began what proved to be a tortured affair with Maria Zambaco (who tried to kill herself when Burne-Jones decided not to leave his wife and children for her; he was found physically wrestling her to the ground when she tried to throw herself off a bridge). In a portrait of her which he painted after the stormiest days of their affair, she holds a small book of miniatures; the image on the open page is that
of *Le Chant d'Amour*. Georgie stuck by her husband with remarkable patience, and the marriage survived. But *Le Chant d’Amour* remains as testament to Burne-Jones’s acknowledgement of the power – and aptness – of Rossetti’s alternative reading of St Cecilia’s story as one of music’s power to express the prolonged state of postponed physical desire, understood not as a love for God but as passionately human.

But how did Cecilia and Margaret, apart elsewhere if associated in the life of their creator, come to Second Presbyterian? Morris & Co. normally worked on site-specific commissions for their stained glass; both colours and background patterns often varied from location to location, even when figure designs remained the same. Morris, together with Philip Webb, oversaw the making of windows from the artist’s black and white drawings, and then Morris or Webb arranged them as compositions in coloured glass, designing the backgrounds. Individual installations differed not only in colour and background but in the windows which surrounded them, the size and placement of the windows, and, of course, the architecture and uses of the buildings in which they were placed. Thus the appearance and impact of each window inevitably depends not only on complex cultural and personal backstories, both for the image and its creators, but also the particularities of its setting.

However, the Chicago windows were *not* made for the church where they are now installed. In 1902, the Tobey Furniture Company of Chicago exhibited both windows in their William Morris Memorial Room, on the fourth floor of their large showroom building at Wabash and Washington Streets in downtown Chicago. The objects in this room had been chosen and arranged by designer Joseph Twyman, a long-time advocate for Morris & Co.’s designs, then working for Tobey’s. Originally an Englishman, Twyman had arrived in Chicago around the time of the great fire of 1871, and had met Morris when he visited the workshops at Merton Abbey on a trip back to England in 1883, of which more below.

By the early 1900s, others in Chicago besides Twyman were enthusiasts for Morris and for the man who inspired him, the art and social critic John Ruskin. The Arts and Crafts movement begun by Morris & Co. was at the height of its popularity in the city – not least among those furnishing large new homes on Prairie Avenue, south of the downtown district, and attending Second Presbyterian Church a few blocks away. H.H. Richardson, the Boston-based architect of Glessner House (now the restored jewel of Prairie Avenue and the only remaining Richardson building in Chicago), had himself visited Morris’s workshops in 1882, the year before Twyman, and subsequently recommended Morris & Co. products to clients, including John and Frances Glessner. In 1887 Harry Gordon Selfridge, the aggressive young manager of the retail division of Marshall Field’s department store, and later the founder of the famous London store which carries
his name, acquired exclusive distribution rights to Morris & Co. art goods and wallpapers (along with Tiffany glass and Grueby pottery) as part of a move ‘to attract the more select trade’.

Walter Crane, a gifted designer in his own right and a Morris disciple, lectured in Chicago on his visit to the city during 1891 (he also created two panels for the Women’s Temperance Building at the soon-to-open Columbian Exhibition).

Oscar Lovell Triggs, who taught the ‘new’ poetry of both Robert Browning and Walt Whitman at the also then-new University of Chicago, was a committed evangelist for Morris’s and Ruskin’s ideas regarding the value of combining good design with dedicated craftsmanship. His book on the origins of the Arts and Crafts in England appeared in 1902, followed by a biography of Morris which included a detailed account of Triggs’s own visits, probably during the later 1890s, to many Morris sites in England, including the Company’s workshops at Merton Abbey.

Motivated not only by Morris’s products, but by his ideas on craft, work, and beauty, in 1899 Triggs organised The Industrial Arts League in order to coordinate what he hoped would become an extensive network of craftsman’s guilds and workshops.

One of these, the South Park Workshop Association, was active enough in 1904 to be mentioned, along with the Industrial Arts League, in a long article for the Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Labor on the revival of handicrafts in America which singled out Chicago as an early centre of the revival. It also noted the activities of another of Triggs’s projects: the William Morris Society of Chicago, which Triggs co-founded with Twyman in 1903. Triggs and his Industrial League were also in close contact with the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society founded in 1897 at Jane Addams’s Hull House (a pioneering settlement house in a crowded immigrant district near the stockyards, south of Prairie Avenue). The Society held six annual exhibitions at the Art Institute, including work produced by those trained in its settlement workshops.

By 1903 – when Marshall Field’s exclusive arrangement with Morris & Co. must have lapsed – the Tobey Furniture Company described its Morris Memorial Room across the street from Field’s as ‘one of the most beautiful rooms in the world’. Tobey’s also carried other Arts and Crafts furniture, including Gustav Stickley’s ‘New Furniture’ collection which was stylistically similar Mission furniture from California. Such furniture, Tobey’s advertisements noted, ‘as would delight the soul of Ruskin and William Morris’. The perfect complement to the ‘simplicity combined with elegance’ of this furniture, the advertisement suggested, were patterned goods from Morris & Co. ‘We are the only house in the central west’, they proclaimed, ‘that shows the Morris fabrics – the wall papers, chintzes, velvets, etc., made at the Morris manufactory at Merton Abbey’.

Morris’s influence in America – and in Chicago – was not only aesthetic. Triggs’s Industrial Arts League and Addams’s Hull House were institutions deep-
ly committed to social reform, both looking to Toynbee Hall, the settlement house in London’s East End inspired by the teaching of Ruskin and the example of Morris. Addams visited Toynbee Hall in 1888, the year before she founded Hull House, and with her partner, Ellen Gates Starr, established workshops there on the model of the Guild and School of Handicraft begun at Toynbee Hall by C.R. Ashbee, himself deeply influenced by Morris. Starr travelled to England in order to study with Ashbee, and he in turn visited Hull House in 1900.

By the mid-1880s, Morris was not only England’s most gifted pattern designer, and the guiding force behind Morris & Co., he was also a committed socialist, convinced that to change consumer attitudes toward household objects, and the way in which they were made, would require a much more complete transformation in the social and economic order, by revolution if necessary. Morris had long insisted that the daily objects we live with should, and could, be both useful and beautiful – and moreover, that those who made them should be able to find pleasure in doing so. In many cases, he advocated recovering lost processes of hand manufacture by local associations of craftsmen in order best to achieve quality in the objects made, while improving the conditions of their making (although he was not, as is often believed, totally opposed to the use of machinery).

Addams, although inspired by Morris’s vision of cooperative craft organisations wedding art to labour, in promoting their craft workshops to potential Chicago benefactors, stopped short of advocating his socialism, which would hardly have been popular with Prairie Avenue industrialists such as Glessner. (While Morris publicly protested in Commonweal regarding the death sentences given to those arrested as anarchists at the 1886 Chicago Haymarket Riots, Glessner – an executive at what would become the tractor giant International Harvester – urged no clemency.)

Triggs, however, promoted what he called the new spirit of ‘cooperative individualism’ based on locally-organised workshops, small businesses, and craft communities (he particularly admired the Rookery Pottery in Cincinnati and the Tobey Furniture Company). He looked for inspiration not only to Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris, but to Shelley, Browning, Whitman, and Tolstoy (disturbing enough, perhaps, but less openly hostile to capitalism). Triggs’s book on the Arts and Crafts movement (1902) bore the imprint of the ‘Bohemia Guild’ of the Industrial Art League, but his The Changing Order: A Study of Democracy, a collection of essays he considered the clearest articulation of his hopes for art and life in modern industrial America, was reprinted numerous times by Charles H. Kerr, a radical publisher in Chicago who advocated socialism. As Florence Boos argues above, Triggs’s eventual dismissal (in 1904) from his teaching position at the University of Chicago was probably connected to his real or suspected political views – or at the least, to his tendency to irritate the University’s trustees and patrons by his outspoken remarks on modern industrial culture and society.
And Triggs was outspoken, in the classroom (delightedly reported in the *Chicago Tribune*), and in public lectures and articles. During an era of damaging strikes and suspected anarchist agitation, Chicago (and non-Chicago) businessmen were particularly sensitive to such remarks.32

Among Charles Kerr’s other Chicago publications was a collection of socialist and union songs which he edited himself in 1901, reissued many times. This volume included five of Morris’s ‘Chants for Socialists’, marching songs written to be sung to well-known popular tunes and used in order to gather, organise, and educate the working people to whom Morris was lecturing during the 1880s. Kerr’s collection, in which no other writer of political lyrics is as well represented as Morris, was widely used as a song-book at both union and socialist events in the US well into the twentieth century; a lesser-known side of Morris’s presence in America. Although Burne-Jones disapproved of Morris’s socialist activities (mainly because they distracted him from Art), Georgie, their own Cecilia, was more sympathetic to his political views, and continued to support him. Neither Triggs’s *Chapters in the History of the Arts and Crafts Movement* (1902) nor Morris himself directly preached violence, but Morris’s socialist songs and writings would not have been the aspect of Morris – or of Triggs – which appealed to the University’s patrons, or to Twyman, Richardson, Tobey’s Furniture Company, or the ‘more select trade’ on Prairie Avenue, including members of Second Presbyterian.

At least some of the objects in Tobey’s William Morris Room may have been acquired by Twyman during his 1883 visit to Merton Abbey. He later reported seeing there a window with Saint Cecilia ‘gowned in sapphire blue and purpled shadows, all bedded in a bower of lemon leaves and fruits’, which indeed describes the Cecilia later displayed at Tobey’s (from where it was purchased for Second Presbyterian).33 Twyman was apparently attracted to that window by a conversation he witnessed between Morris and his workers, regarding changes which Morris had requested: a different blue, and darkened foliage (Morris approved the new version Twyman saw). Was this the window Twyman purchased, and if so, for whom was it being made in 1883?

That is the year in which Burne-Jones agreed, partly as a favour to Ruskin, a close friend and patron, to provide (at considerable discount from ‘the Firm’s’ usual prices) a series of windows with female figures for Whitelands Ladies Training College, Chelsea, an institution in which Ruskin was interested.34 (Ruskin – who often addressed Burne-Jones with affectionate playfulness – asked him for ‘some cheerful rectorial or governessial saints’ with which to decorate the newly-built chapel, and specifically suggested Cecilia).35 Whitelands was a progressive college, training young women to become teachers and governesses: martyrdom was presumably not on Ruskin’s mind when he specified ‘cheerful’ models for these future teachers. Indeed, windows employing the same Burne-Jones designs
as those used in Chicago, for both Cecilia and for Margaret, were among the first installed at Whitelands (although there they did not stand side-by-side), beginning in 1885—a row of tall female figures on alternating deep red and blue patterned backgrounds, all serene in countenance, although accompanied by symbols of their martyrdom. It is possible that the ‘Whitelands’ Saint Cecilia was already in the making in 1883; if so, and if Twyman bought the window he saw, then Morris & Co. made another for the College: its blues are lighter than those of the Chicago windows, and its background (deep blue scrolls on an almost black ground) is quite different.

By 1903 the Chicago windows had been purchased from Tobey’s by Franklin Darius Gray, a businessman and parishioner at Second Presbyterian, and donated to the church, probably at the request of Howard Van Doren Shaw, the Arts and Crafts architect of the redecoration undertaken after a devastating fire in 1900 destroyed much of the original interior. (The Gothic-revival church, on South Michigan Avenue in the newly-fashionable Prairie Avenue district, had been designed by James Renwick, another prominent East Coast architect, and completed in 1874.) Neither Shaw nor Gray were in search of just those two windows— they were simply what was on offer in Chicago. But Gray may have been attracted to the saints for reasons of personal association, perhaps not unlike those of Burne-Jones. He had recently lost his wife, Ann Olive Phelps Gray; the Cecilia window was dedicated to her memory by Gray and their only daughter. When Gray himself died a few years later, his daughter added a dedication to the second window, as if acknowledging, via the saint of childbirth, her lasting ties to her parents.

There were other reasons why Cecilia might appear the appropriate saint, if saint there must be, for this church. In America, as in Britain and Ireland during the Reformation and the Civil Wars, many Presbyterians originally hewed to stricter Calvinist attitudes discouraging all sacred music other than metrical psalms (organs were not permitted). But by the nineteenth century these formerly-austere denominations had, on both sides of the Atlantic, greatly extended the role of music in their services, even among many so-called ‘Old School’ Presbyterians, often of Scottish descent, who long resisted the revivalism of a New School. Gray’s father Silas had been an outspoken advocate for Old School Presbyterianism, but Franklin Gray left his Connecticut home for rapidly-urbanising Chicago, where he settled in 1840, and became, during the latter part of the century, a successful banker. By the time Second Presbyterian was being rebuilt in 1900, Gray belonged to its established and prosperous urban congregation, which, like many others, had fully embraced the arguments of Ruskin, in his widely-read 1849 volume, The Seven Lamps of Architecture. According to Ruskin—who here was attempting to justify his own love of an art and a music originally associated with Catholicism to the strict evangelical Scottish church
in which he was raised – the ‘Lamp of Sacrifice’ required the celebration of God through music and art offered up in His service and to His greater glory. The invitation to Howard Van Doren Shaw, and the extraordinary care and expense lavished on the church’s glass, wood, and metal furnishings by some of the most talented American craftsmen, might also be taken as yet more evidence of the influence, not only of Ruskin, but of Morris, whose vestibule windows appropriately announce intentions to be fulfilled in the main sanctuary of the church itself. As a temple of advanced arts and crafts design, the church was intended as the setting for a congregational worship beautiful in both form and practice – appealing not only to the eye but also to the ear.

The Chicago windows, as I hope I have suggested, possess a rich and complex history which is musical as well as visual, personal as well as cultural. In their present form and setting, they bring with them the ghosts of many earlier realisations. Does the Chicago Cecilia invoke the virgin martyr of ancient Rome, or the ‘Bright Cecilia’ of Raphael’s altarpiece and of Dryden’s ode: she who heard the celestial music of the spheres when she conversed with her guardian angel? Is she the Cecilia of Alexander Pope’s Ode, another eighteenth-century poem which compares the saint favourably to the mythical Greek musician, Orpheus, who conjured the lost Eurydice out of the underworld back to earthly life via his music, only to lose her once again (as, of course, he would, sooner or later, have lost her) in death? Cecilia’s powers – and those of sacred music – are, according to Pope, both greater and more lasting than those of Orpheus. ‘His numbers raised a shade from hell,/ Hers lift the soul to heaven’.39

Or is she rather the medieval musician of the Golden Legend and of Chaucer’s Second Nun’s Tale: ‘hearing the organs making melody, she sang in her heart only to God’. Perhaps the Chicago Cecilia is closer to Rossetti’s subversive re-imagining of her passionately human love story, and to Burne-Jones’s subsequent paintings of Cecilia with her organ, her assistant angel-Cupid, and the longing, listening knight-lover caught in the hopeless desires of unfulfilled love.

Or perhaps not. But she and her companion, Margaret, do carry with them the memory of a forty-year friendship of two artists built on a shared passion not only for medieval art but for early music, and of the beloved women who played and sang that music.

NOTES

1. St Cecilia (1874) and St Margaret, stained glass with figures designed by Edward Burne-Jones for Morris & Co., these versions installed 1903 in the Second Presbyterian Church, Chicago; http://www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org/gallery3/category/1-windows.html [last accessed 31 January 2014].
For more on the history of these windows and the church, see ‘Burne-Jones Windows are International Treasure’, The Herald (Friends of Historic Second Church) Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 2011), pp. 1–2, and ‘Franklin Darius Gray – Donor of the Burne-Jones Windows’, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Fall/Winter 2011), both articles available via the website above. Besides the Morris windows in the vestibule, the sanctuary boasts nine by Tiffany and a number of others by important American Arts and Crafts glass designers. Angels are a conspicuous motif not only in the glass but in many other features of the arts and crafts interior. The church continues its tradition of hosting musical events; see the section ‘Sounds of the South Loop’ on the church’s website, above. I am grateful to the Friends of Historic Second Church for inviting me to speak about the windows; that lecture was the germ of this article.


5. Modernised from William Caxton’s Golden Legende, ed, 1483, printed in Originals and Analogues, Part II, Chaucer Society, 1875 as William Caxton,


7. Edward Burne-Jones, Margaret Burne-Jones, 1885–6, oil on canvas, Private collection:


10. See http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/burne-jones-the-golden-stairs-n04005 [last accessed 13 May 2014]. The face of the figure in profile at the top of the stairs is that of his daughter Margaret (cf the family group-portrait drawing, Note 8).


18. For images of both the drawing (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery) and the engraving, see the Rossetti Archive, (ed Jerome McGann), Exhibits and Objects, St Cecilia: http://www.rosettiarchive.org/docs/s83.rap.html [last accessed 1 February 2014]. My readings of Rossetti’s *St Cecilia and King René’s Honeymoon*, and of Burne-Jones’s *Le Chant d’Amour*, are indebted to Suzanne Fagence Cooper’s article, ‘Playing the Organ in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings’, *Music in Art*, Vol. 29, Nos 1–2 (March 2004), pp. 151–70.


20. Rossetti contributed this design, representing *Music*, to Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co.’s *King René’s Honeymoon* cabinet; other designs representing *Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*, and *Gardening*, together with smaller scenes, were by Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown, and Val Prinsep, all painted on the inlaid cabinet’s wooden panels (1860–1862; Victoria and Albert Museum, London). In 1862, the four largest designs, including *Music*, were rendered into stained glass by Morris & Co. (also now in the Victoria and Albert Museum). A pen and ink wash drawing dated 1862 (Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Birkenhead), and an oil version (1864, private collection) both use the same design.
27. From a full-page advertisement for The William Morris Room of The Tobey Furniture Company included in Triggs, *Morris*, back cover.
28. Advertisement for Tobey Furniture Company, 1900 [seen on E-bay, 1 September 2013].
29. Advertisement for Tobey Furniture Company, as Note 27. The phrase in the preceding sentence, ‘simplicity combined with elegance’, is from a June 1902 advertisement for Tobey [seen on E-bay on 1 September 2013].
30. Triggs, *Chapters*, Appendix I: ‘Proposal for a Guild and School of Handicraft, an address delivered at the annual meeting of the Industrial Art League in the Auditorium Hotel, Chicago, November 23, 1901’, p. 189: ‘co-operative individualism is the necessary working theory of a free workshop’. Triggs continues: ‘I conceive of such a working guild as being the unit of social organization that pertains to an industrial commonwealth. I can foretell that such a workshop would grow into a kind of “industrial settlement”, social in its motive, co-operative in its method, complete and self-supporting in its results’. (p. 194) In 1902, two years before his contract with the University of Chicago was terminated, Triggs’s ‘co-operative individualism’ was evidently not a problem; the University’s President, William Rainey Harper, was listed as a member of The Industrial Art League’s Executive
Board (Triggs was League Secretary). The League’s President was Frank O. Lowden, son-in-law of George Pullman (the Pullman company in Chicago had been the target, during May 1894, of some of the most bitter strikes); see the account of the League with its officers in Appendix II, reprinted from Clarence Cook, *The House Beautiful*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1902, 336 pp.


32. Florence S. Boos, ‘The First Morris Society: Chicago 1903–1905’, (this volume, pp.35–48). The University’s president, William Rainey Harper, apparently defended Triggs to the trustees. See Presidents’ Papers, 1889–1925, Special Collections, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago; John Matthews Manly [then chair of the Department of English where Triggs was instructor] to Dean H.P. Judson, 1 March 1904. Triggs was notified in February 1904 that his contract would not be renewed. The *Chicago Tribune* (20 February 1904) attributed his dismissal to Triggs’s ‘liberal views’ and ‘unusual statements’ in class and in public lectures, while the *Boston Transcript* (24 February 1904) reported that ‘nothing in the history of the university has yet raised such a storm of protest as this action against an instructor who has been accounted the most popular on the faculty, alumni and students alike voicing surprise, horror and disgust’, although the storm was apparently less in Chicago. For these references and the fullest discussion of Triggs’s life and works I have found, see Bruce Kahler, ‘Arts and Life: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Chicago, 1897–1910’, PhD dissertation. Department of History, Purdue University, 1986, pp. 170–260, especially pp. 251–2.


34. Whitelands College has moved location several times, but is now part of the University of Roehampton. The windows from the chapel in Chelsea were re-installed in 2006 on its new Whitelands campus. For a description
of the present installation, see English Heritage entry for Parkstead House (on the same campus), http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1357675 [last accessed 1 February 2014]. A brief history of the college, with an image of another of the windows showing Saint Ursula, may be found at http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/Colleges/Whitelands-College/History/ [last accessed 1 February 2014].


36. According to at least one genealogical website, Isabel (or Isabelle, or Isobel) Gray may have been adopted; see http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/marcius-denison-raymond/gray-genealogy--being-a-genealogical-record-and-history-of-the-descendants-of-j-mya/page-9-gray-genealogy-being-a-genealogical-record-and-history-of-the-descendants-of-j-mya.shtml [last accessed 13 May 2014].


38. See ebooksread.com (Note 36). Of Silas Gray, the site notes, ‘His polemic passages with the late President Taylor of Yale, when the controversy between the Old and New School Presbyterians was in progress [c. 1837], he espousing the cause of the former, attracted no little attention in the religious press’. [last accessed 13 May 2014].