Soul's Beauty: Burne-Jones and Girls on *The Golden Stairs*

ANNE ANDERSON

Since it was first shown in 1880 *The Golden Stairs* has been one of the most popular of Edward Burne-Jones's works (Fig. 1). Its bequest to the Tate Gallery, in honor of Lord Battersea, has ensured that it is also widely and constantly seen on cards, calendars and diaries. The image seems to encapsulate the artist's entire oeuvre, depicting as it does an archetypal maiden lost in a reverie within an imaginary other world. Recent critiques of Pre-Raphaelite painting have stressed that such images reveal the painter's psyche, or his soul, rather than that of his model.[1] As Christina Rossetti so astutely observed, the girl is "Not as she is, but as she fills his dream."[2] Consequently, *The Golden Stairs* should be laden with autobiographical meaning, for in 1879, when the picture was almost completed, the artist decided to add portrait heads. Why he chose to do so and who he selected has been a matter of debate ever since.[3] It is also clear that Burne-Jones did not intend to make a spectacle of himself by including likenesses of society beauties in his work, as Edward Poynter had done the previous year with his painting of *Nausicca and Her Maidens*. According to Henry James, the world and his wife trooped along to the Academy to spot these famous faces only to be disappointed: Lillie Langtry, Lady Wharncliffe and Violet Lindsay, later the Duchess of Granby, were not done justice. Such vulgarity would have been beneath Burne-Jones. However, it does seem likely that the cognoscenti, especially the habitués of the Grosvenor Gallery, were aware of the autobiographical nature of the work because the "girls" Burne-Jones selected were his closest female friends.

A group of girls had supported the artist during the difficult 1870s, the decade referred to by Penelope Fitzgerald as his "desolate years," due to the fact he had stopped exhibiting publicly.[4] After the withdrawal of *Phyllis and Demophoon* from the Royal Water Colour Society in 1870, for indecency, Burne-Jones rarely ventured into the public arena again until the Grosvenor Gallery opened in 1877.[5] It was the Grosvenor shows that secured the artist's reputation, for prior to 1877 his work had only been known to a select group of connoisseurs.[6] The *Days of Creation, Merlin and Vivien* and the *Mirror of Venus* were among the eight works Burne-Jones sent in 1877. The following year saw *Laus Veneris* and *Chant d' Amour*. In 1879 the artist sent the *Pygmalion Series*, now in the Birmingham City Art Gallery, which was widely praised, especially for its color, and *The Annunciation*, which was commissioned by George Howard. Following these successes, his public waited expectantly for the next offering. What they were presented with took them by surprise, for they could not understand the work, let alone comprehend the title:

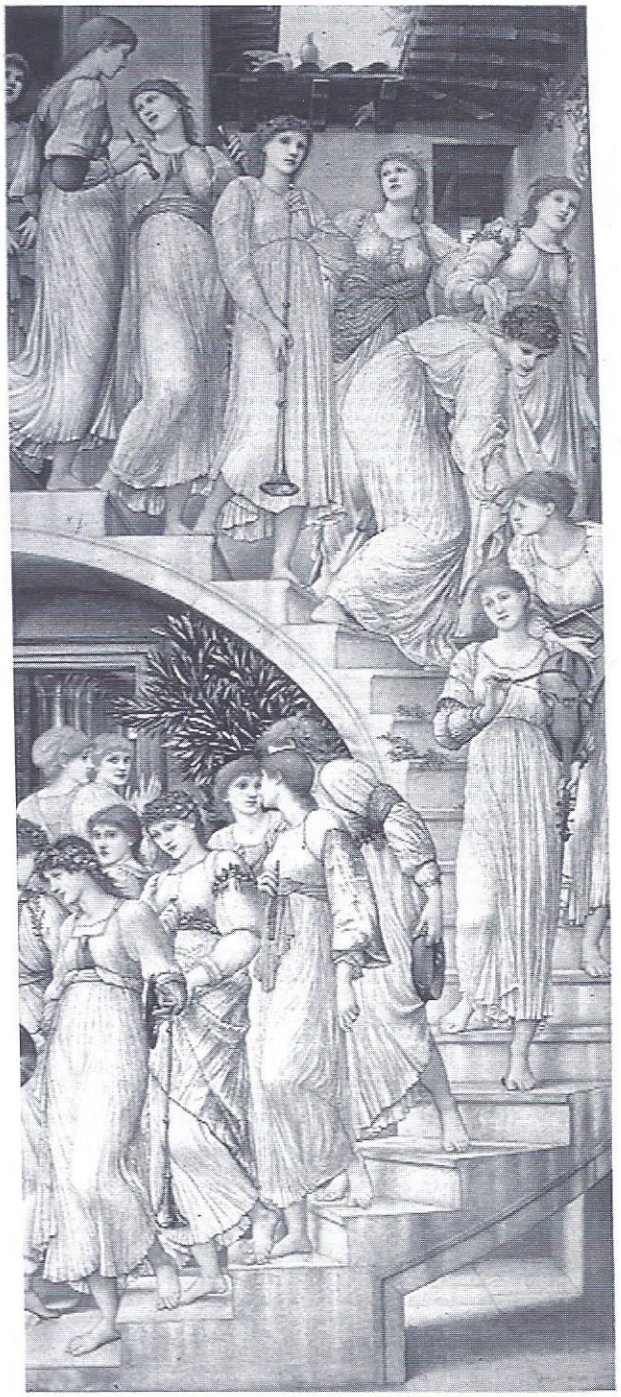

FIG. 1. The Golden Stairs *by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, exhibited 1880, 277x177 cm. Courtesy of the Tate Gallery.*

> There is ... no reason why a beautiful design without any purpose beyond its beauty should be called *The Golden Stairs*. On the other hand it may be said that there is no reason why it should not. "I can call my hat *Cadwallader* if I like," said the hero of Miss Edgeworth's story *The Mimic*; and those who object to Mr Burne-Jones nomenclature may find their answer in a like contention.[7]

What were these girls doing, where had they come from and where were they going? It was all too vague; and what did the artist mean when he declared that he hoped that the viewer would find his own meaning? As Lady Eastlake pointed out, the British public was only on the bottom rung of the Aesthetic ladder and minded more about the subject than anything else. Burne-Jones's unconventional approach had both its supporters and detractors but all appreciated that his approach was essentially non-naturalistic and non-realistic.

In 1880, Harry Quilter, the art critic for *The Spectator*, was still antagonistic towards Aesthetic painting, some twenty years after Whistler's first *White Girl*. Others concluded that the results of *Art for Art's Sake* "would degrade art to mere sensuous pleasure."[8] Supporters of Aestheticism maintained that the true purpose of a work of art was to be decorative, to please the eye with forms and colors. For many who looked for a clear narrative or meaning, this approach was irritatingly ambiguous:

> And the seeker for definite subjects will be inclined to grumble that this picture tells no story and suggests no meaning. The girls, he may say, are coming down the stairs with considerable unanimity, like guests at a Christmas party gently bent upon supper. Only it is to be feared that here there is no substantial reason for their descent.... The treatment is "decorative" and not real.[9]

However, although allegedly "subjectless," *The Golden Stairs* was not without meaning, as it was intended, like a piece of music, to evoke feelings, stir memories and form associations. It was to be suggestive, being designed to stimulate the imagination through sensory perception. The viewer's response was to be personal, triggered by the artist's visualization of the phantoms of his own imagination. For Henry James it was "the chord of association and memory"[10] between the artist and his viewer, of Soul communing with Soul. Paintings were to be about feelings, not about morals, and the experience of the viewer completed the process of creation.[11] Aestheticism shifted the emphasis from the producer to the consumer. Importantly, Burne-Jones regards us as sharing his own sensibilities, for we too are endowed with imaginative powers, if only we are able to discover them. It was the artist's greatest fear that man was not even aware of his need for beauty. His purpose was to awaken in all such a desire. The girls on *The Golden Stairs* are exemplary figures, as they are endowed souls or "aristocratic souls," for inner beauty shines through even a plain physique. These girls would give moral strength to men, for a love of beauty empowers one "to be good and do good."[12] A love of beauty was universal and will bestow on us the same spiritual transformation, regardless of class or lineage, for art was to be "shared by gentle and simple, learned and unlearned, and be as a language that all can understand."[13] Art was to be the great social leveller for "art, like religion, knows no class."[14] For the golden girl art was a worthy cause, one to which her special nature, motherly feeling, was expressly suited. Public work would guarantee her social usefulness, even if she remained unmarried.

FIG. 2. Family Group Portrait, *Georgie Burne-Jones and her children Margaret and Phillip by Edward Burne-Jones, c. 1879 (unfinished). Courtesy of the Witt Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London.*

So who were these girls? Why had they come to mean so much to the artist and does their presence have any bearing on the meaning of the work? It does seem rather odd that an artist who professed to dislike portraiture, because he claimed to have little talent for it, should have chosen to add real likenesses to one of his exhibition works. Burne-Jones only felt comfortable painting those closest to him: relatives, friends and patrons (Fig. 2). After his success at the Grosvenor Gallery he was called on to do more portraits but he was not happy with the "society" portrait, which was primarily designed to reflect one's

FIG. 3. *The Burne-Jones and Morris Families, taken in 1874. Courtesy of the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.*

position. It was not enough to merely capture the appearance. A portrait should be much more: "a reflection of inner life and character, the essence of that person."[15] In the case of the girls he wanted to visualize the purity of their souls, to literalize the metaphysical. This was an approach derived from Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who employed an acute realism to embody the mystical. But, as in the case of Rossetti's work, the final result reveals the hopes and dreams of the artist rather than the character of the sitter. This approach also accounts for the lack of expression or direct engagement, as the figures gaze into some other state of being. Only one figure, crossing the threshold of the door, looks directly at us, as if to say there is no turning back: "the last of the maidens stops, and turning her head once more, sheds a smile of farewell."[16]

Fernand Khnopff, like other contemporary commentators, perceived in the work the theme of the "progress of Life," which suggested that the descending line of girls was a metaphor for their development from adolescence to adulthood. The threshold, which causes the girl to pause, is the doorway to life, leading potentially to maturity, marriage and motherhood.[17] The painter creates a tense psychological moment, a pregnant pause, by stopping the girls and their music. In this moment of silence the girls realize their own sexuality, the natural but despoiling progression from innocent girl to knowing woman.[18] Fitzgerald noted the "growing tension of the faces approaching the door."[19] Puberty was seen as the threshold to maturity by Freud. At the time the picture

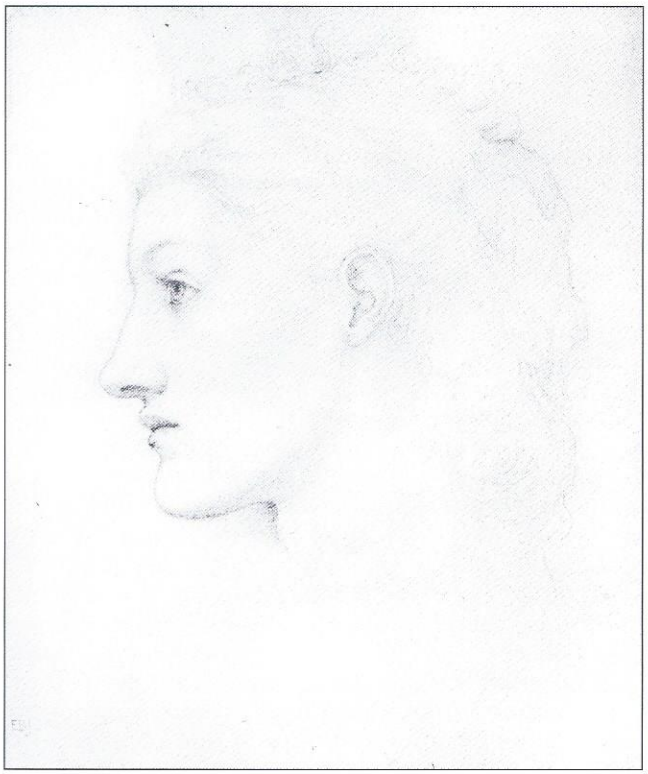

FIG. 4. *Drawing of Frances Graham, Lady Horner, by Edward Burne-Jones, 1879. Courtesy of The Witt Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London.*

was conceived the artist was developing works of a similar nature: the *Sleeping Beauty* or *Briar Rose* set, the *Girls with Lanterns*, setting out in a boat for the other shore, the second *Mirror of Venus*, which are all reflections of the same theme, "the confrontation of the young girl with time, experience, change and sex."[20] Burne-Jones's views on marriage are well known and he feared that marriage could be "a waste place," a loveless match which culminated in spiritual death rather than bringing happiness and fulfillment.[21] His own marriage had experienced several traumas and he had seen Rossetti's wife die prematurely and William Morris's marriage disintegrate (Fig. 3). The girl he feared losing the most, at the top of the stairs, was his only daughter, the beautiful Margaret of the "sapphire eyes." He gave her a moonstone, "that she might never know love, and stay with me."[22] The moonstone failed and Margaret fell in love with Jack Mackail. Burne-Jones was distraught, and he went through a torment of jealousy before becoming gloomily resigned and finally apathetic. At the wedding service, held at Rottingdean, all references to procreation and carnal lust had to be removed. They were too painful for her father.[23] In the same year he painted the *Danae*, showing the young girl peering through a doorway at the tower designed imprison her. But her father failed to stop her impregnation by Zeus and Perseus was the result. The golden girls were growing up but the artist could not hold back their natural development — he would lose them all too soon. The painting is as much about his loss, as his fears for their futures.

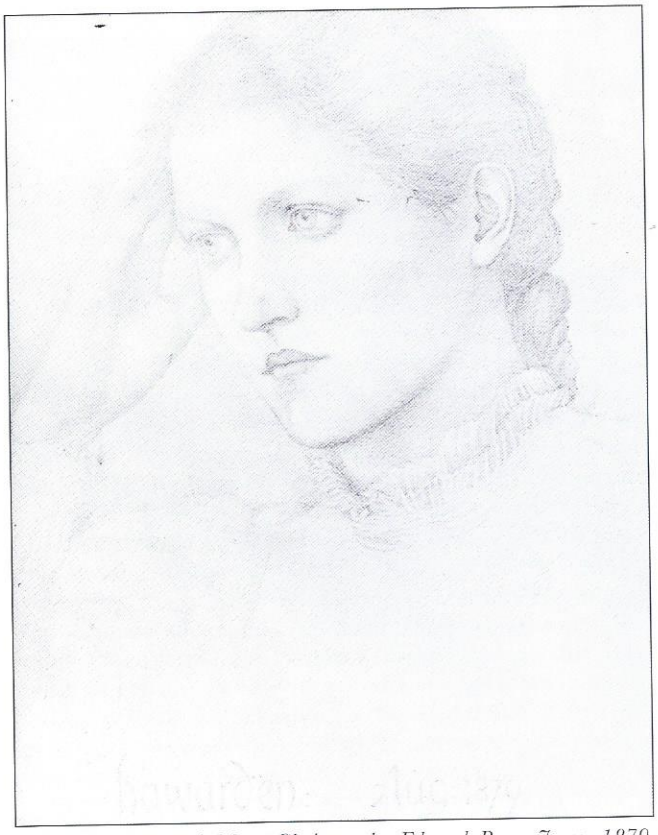

Fig. 5. *Drawing of Mary Gladstone by Edward Burne-Jones. 1879. Courtesy of the Witt Library, Courtlauld Institute of Art. London.*

Fig. 6. Mary Stuart-Worley in her Wedding Dress, *1880. Courtesy of the British Library, London.*

Khnopff's poignant reading may have been inspired by his recognition of at least two of the girls, who would have been known to him: Margaret Burne-Jones, in profile at the very top and May Morris holding the violin, dead center. He might also have recognized Frances Graham, holding cymbals at the bottom of the stairs (Fig. 4). Frances was one of Burne-Jones's great loves and he designed slippers and valentine cards for her. They even dreamed of running away together, to an imaginary "never never land." The painting is a tribute to her and the circle of young women whose friendship meant so much to him. At a time when he felt he was growing old, they gave him life and inspiration. They became his "unforgotten faces."[24] He met Frances in 1870 and her features were used for the bride in *The King's Wedding*. Mary Gladstone, Frances's best friend was a little jealous of their friendship. Burne-Jones drew her portrait in 1879, while staying at the family home, Hawarden. Mary is positioned immediately behind Frances, wearing a laurel wreath (Fig. 5).

Probably standing behind her, with her face twisted away from the spectator, is Mary Stuart-Wortley. Although no preliminary drawing has come to light, there is a striking similarity to a photograph taken c. 1885 by Frederick Hollyer. Her presence on the stairs is documented by Lady Mander of Wightwick Manor.[25] Mary was the sister of Archibald Stuart-Wortley, the pupil of Millais and a cousin of Lord Wharncliffe, the rather unlikely commissioner of *King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid*. Mary was an artist in her own right, who trained at the Slade School and exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Grosvenor. Even after her marriage to Ralph, Baron Wentworth, in 1880, she continued to paint and show her work (Fig. 6). In the 1890s she became a supporter of C.R. Ashbee and the Guild of Handicraft and the Home Arts and Industries Association. She formed two classes, one on the Ockham estates, Surrey and the other at Porlock Weir, part of the Somerset properties. She even undertook training in architectural drawing, in order to design cottages for the estate workers. In this she was joined by Charles Voysey, who also provided designs for the Ockham class and workshops. As Burne-Jones feared, marriage was a trial for her, for her husband was the grandson of Lord Byron and spent his whole life trying to vindicate his grandmother. It would be easy to dismiss these girls as simply PBs, the Passionate of Brompton types "who wanted to paint a little or did paint a little."[26] However, there is little doubt that, although never able to pursue a professional career, Mary was very serious about her work. For her, as for the other girls, art was a vocation. It gave her life meaning and purpose. She was true disciple of her mentors: Ruskin, Morris and Burne-Jones.

Other identifications are more speculative: the Tennant girls have been suggested, for the two figures above May Morris. However, Constance Lawley, Lady Wenlock, was a favorite of the artist during the 1870s and a relative of Mary Stuart-Wortley. Constance is mentioned in one of the artist's letters to Mary. Even Violet Lindsay, Kate Terry or Lillie Langtry can be postulated but not proven. The National Art Collectors Fund catalogue does mention a Miss Gellibrand,[27] whose stage persona was Miss Edith Chester and Bessie Keene, who was a regular model for the artist. (These identifications may have come from Cosmo Monkhouse or from Lady Battersea.)

More important than any specific identifications, was the impression created by the work that such girls really existed. So it was that the rarified image created by Burne-Jones was transformed into the music hall *High Art Maiden*. The culmination came in 1881 when Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* appeared on the stage in London. This was not the first theatrical send-up of the movement, as it was preceded by *The Colonel* and *Where's the Cat*, but it has certainly become the best known.[28] *Patience* was so popular because it struck a contemporary note, with recognizable characters that were based on well-known celebrities and sent up the fad for art. However, for the American audiences Oscar Wilde was dispatched in order to elucidate the finer points. *The Golden Stairs* was probably directly in Gilbert's mind when he envisaged the entry of the twenty love-sick maidens with cymbals, double pipes and other archaic instruments:

Let the merry cymbals sound,
Gaily pipe Pandean pleasure,
With Daphnephonic bound,
Tread a gay but classic measure.

However, Gilbert's acolytes of high-art had turned their attention on Beauty which had assumed manly form, in the shape of Bunthorne, the poet:

When I go out of door,
Of damozels a score,
(All sighing and burning,
And clinging and yearning),
Will follow me as before.[29]

This fiction was close to fact, for the artists and poets were indeed pursued by their female "fans" across London, at the Grosvenor Gallery, at country house parties and even into their own homes.[30] The Grosvenor had encouraged this personality cult, for at the 1877 inaugural exhibition the portrait of Burne-Jones by G.F. Watts had been included, fuelling the demand for information about the "star" of the show. There was a considerable build up to the opening of the first exhibition, with the audience eagerly awaiting the sight of works only known to a rarified few. The Grosvenor ensured Burne-Jones's fame but it also made him public property.

For some, the golden girls did not set a good example, for here was a girl besotted by something beyond her reach. With their floating diaphanous gowns, their pale complexions, forlorn expressions and soulful eyes they epitomized the *High Art Maiden*. Why she was sad was a matter of conjecture, but most considered it to be the result of unrequited love, of hopeless longing and unending waiting. The object of their affections, was like Beauty itself elusive and unobtainable, as Bunthorne was consumed by higher things. The *High Art Maiden* was presented in *Patience* as rather soppy and empty-headed. Her preoccupation with dress and, by extension, interior decorating, was portrayed as frivolous. In the case of men who were interested in such niceties it was downright unmanly. In effect the *High Art Maiden* was stupefied by art and easily led. Rather than expressing her personality through art she had repressed her individual character in order to conform to a prescribed type. This type had been canonized by Burne-Jones. Ideally she was tall and willowy, with a long swan-like neck and an abundance of hair, preferable golden red. A pale complexion was enhanced by voluptuous lips and large, deep, melancholic, eyes ringed by the classic signs of physical decline, a discoloring hematoma. She was limp and assumed an Aesthetic droop, as though weighted down by her own flesh. She was invariably depicted either leaning, sitting or completely prone. Literally "nearer to God," the *High Art Maiden* longed to be released from her earthly pain, to be spiritually transformed: through suffering she will be redeemed.

Although the *High Art Maiden* appeared harmless there were inherent dangers, as this pursuit of Beauty rendered her weak and feeble. Her lassitude was certainly unhealthy and could endanger her effectiveness as a wife and mother. The time wasted on reading poetry and contemplating art could be more profitably spent on running the home and raising children. It was this self-indulgent, self-

centered or selfish streak that was a particular worry, one that was frequently raised in the satirical cartoons of Du Maurier in *Punch*. The Aesthetic Woman was all too often depicted lost in the contemplation of a lily, a sunflower or a vase: "and with a lily she'll sit for an hour" as we are informed by *My Aesthetic Love*, sung by the Great Vance in 1881. Her self-sufficiency was of particular concern, suggesting that woman could be physically complete without sex, without a husband or children and could be sustained by art alone.

The Aesthetic movement created an unprecedented interest in art for the home, that led to an explosion in both professional and amateur production. By the 1880s many girls aspired to be musicians, painters, sculptors and even actresses. They took up china-painting, embroidery and enameling on silver. Even if restricted to amateur status they sought wider recognition for their work, through public exhibitions. Indeed many did marry late or not at all in order to pursue their artistic ambitions. This is highlighted by the girls on *The Golden Stairs* for they were not the passive demure young women depicted by Burne-Jones. Neither were they simply admirers and consumers of art, as implied by the antics of the *High Art Maiden*. They were artists, patrons and collectors. They were social reformers and educators and certainly did not wallow in "weariness and lamentation."[31] They were at the heart of the London social scene, engaged in art and community philanthropy, seeking the common good through agencies such as the Home Arts and Industries Association. Gilbert's maidens were not just a product of his imagination, or for that matter Burne-Jones's, as such ladies could be seen on a daily basis frequenting art galleries, attending soirees, arranging bazaars and studying at art classes. They pursued a dynamic aestheticism, spurred on by Samuel Smiles's philosophy of self-help and the need to find an occupation at a time when so much stress was focused on work. Art was a fitting vocation, for those women who were "cursed" with nothing to do. For those economically disadvantaged it might even lead to a career or improve one's chances of securing a good marriage. Indeed rather than denigrating the Aesthetic *High Art Maiden*, *Patience* actually encouraged others to follow her ways and presented a type that was to be emulated and seen on the streets of London, Paris and New York until well into the next century.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank John Christian, Christopher Newall and Stephen Wildman for their help during the course of my research.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Griselda Pollock, "Woman as Sign: Psychoanalytic Readings," *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the History of Art*, London, 1988, p. 124.
2. Christina Rossetti, "In an Artist's Studio," quoted from Kerrison Preston, *Blake and Rossetti*, London, 1944, p. 57.
3. The identities of the girls were first mentioned in 1924 in the *National Art Collections Fund Annual Journal* (p. 457) and given as the artist's daughter, Margaret (Mrs J. W. Mackail), May Morris, Edith Gellibrand, who acted under the name of Edith Chester, and Mrs Keene. In 1975 John Christian, in the Arts Council Exhibition, *Burne-Jones: the paintings, graphic and decorative work of Edward Burne-Jones 1833–98*, identified Margaret, May Morris, Edith Gellibrand and Mrs Keene, but placed them in different positions. Penelope Fitzgerald, in *Edward Burne-Jones: A Biography*, London, 1975, p. 183, placed Margaret at the top, in profile, May Morris in the centre and Frances Graham extreme left holding cymbals. Margaret's position is confirmed by a study in pencil, also used in his *Family Portrait* of 1878/79. The features of Frances Graham are identifiable from a series of studies made by the artist during the 1870s and used for several projects, notably for the *Perseus Series* commissioned in 1875. According to Fitzgerald, May Morris was identified by George Bernard Shaw. Mary Stuart-Wortley is identified as the "second to approach the door" but no study has been found to confirm this. Fitzgerald also suggests Laura Lyttelton and her sister Margot Tennant. More recently Russell Ash, *Sir Edward Burne-Jones*, London, 1993, has offered the same identities but in different positions, while Jane Brown, *Lutyens and the Edwardians*, London, 1996, suggests Frances Graham is leading her "bevy of contemporaries," May Morris, centre facing, Laura Lyttelton, in profile behind her and Margot Tennant, bending over her. Interestingly several contemporary critics complained about the sameness of the heads: "the heads of the women have been too evidently studied from the same model (real or ideal)," from the *Magazine of Art*, May, 1880, p. 399; and "The sameness of character in the faces is another defect of invention. All may well have been studied from the same model," from the *Illustrated London News*, May 8th, 1880.
4. Penelope Fitzgerald, *Burne-Jones: A Biography*, London, 1975.
5. The single exception was at the Dudley Gallery in 1873, when the artist exhibited the second version of *The Hesperides* and *Love among the Ruins*.
6. Through the Grosvenor Gallery Burne-Jones acquired a cult status. Conversely, the Grosvenor was to become identified with Burne-Jones and the school of painting which he came to represent.
7. *The Saturday Review*, 8th May, 1880.
8. *The Illustrated London News*, 8th May, 1880.
9. *The Standard*, from *The Artist*, June 1880, p. 182.
10. J.L. Sweeney, *The Painter's Eye: Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts by Henry James*, London, 1956, p. 206.
11. In the case of *The Golden Stairs* its enormous size encouraged the spectator to enter the world of the painting. For some this experience was rather troubling!
12. Linda Dowling, *The Vulgarisation of Art: The Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy*, University Press of Virginia, 1996, p. 51, quoting Morris (*Works*, 23:168).
13. ibid., p. 50, quoting Morris (*Works*, 22:165).
14. Said of Sir George Beaumont. See F. Owen and D.B. Brown, *Collector of Genius: a Life of Sir George Beaumont*, New Haven and London, 1988.
15. Martin Harrison and Bill Walters, *Burne-Jones*, London, 2nd. Ed. 1989, p. 129.
16. Fernand Khnopff, "A Tribute from Belgium," *Magazine of Art*, Vol 21, 1898, pp. 520–526. The maiden hesitates, as she turns to look back, her nervous agitation perhaps indicated by the way she raises her hand to her face but her direct gaze and serene smile is suggestive of Leonardo's all knowing Madonnas.
17. The work had various titles, including *The King's Wedding* and *Music on the Stairs*. The uncertainty over the title is perhaps a reflection of the artist's state of mind at the time: "The picture of the many maidens-foolish virgins-or by whatever name it is to be called-goes on nearly everyday" (Burne-Jones to Cyril Flower, his patron and prospective owner of *The Golden Stairs*,

quoted from Fitzgerald, 1875, p. 183). *The King's Wedding* was certainly about marriage and interestingly the bride was modeled on Frances Graham and included the features of Maria Zambaco as one of the dancing girls. The final choice was evidently taken from Dante: "Non vi si mont per iscala de oro" or "no one may ascend the golden stair." According to Mary Lago for Burne-Jones "descending" symbolized the process of aging: "aging was an ignominious descent into oblivion." Mary Lago, *Burne-Jones Talking: His Conversation 1895–98 Preserved by his Studio Assistant Thomas Rooke*, London, 1982, p. 12.

18. A similar device was used in the *Mirror of Venus*, where the girls realize their own beauty and sexuality through gazing at their own reflections. In *Laus Veneris* the maiden minstrels either await instructions to begin or have played the last chord. Contemporary critiques recognized their innocence compared to the love-sick languor of Venus. Yet their obvious discomfort surely indicates that their appointed time has come or is rapidly approaching. They too will know the joy and pain of love. The theme of descent and halted music was also used in the *Bath of Venus*.
19. Penelope Fitzgerald, *Edward Burne-Jones: A Biography*, London, 1975, p. 183.
20. ibid., p. 145.
21. Marriage brought with it dilemmas and compromises. Burne-Jones commented to Rooke, his studio assistant, in 1883, that a painter ought not to be married and that children and pictures were too important to be both produced by one man. Women presented a threat to the creative urge, a topic also raised in conversation with Rooke. See Mary Lago, *Burne-Jones Talking: His Conversation 1895–98 Preserved by his Studio Assistant Thomas Rooke*, London, 1982, p. 6–8.
22. Fitzgerald, 1975, p. 214.
23. Ibid., p. 217.
24. Fitzgerald, 1975, p.177.
25. Tate Gallery Archive.
26. Fitzgerald, 1975, p. 175. Georgie, in the *Memorials*, was rather dismissive of the girls' talents: "One class ... gave him considerable trouble — namely women, from their quick imitative power which led them to a certain point and no further. Imagination, he complained was rare in their work... ." Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, London, reprinted 1993, p. 91. Burne-Jones, on the other hand, had told Rooke that the young Kensington ladies should be kept somewhere where they could not get at painters, but painters could get at them. Despite this he spent some of his last hours showing Freda Stanhope around his studio. See Fitzgerald, 1975, p. 283.
27. The Witt Library Archive contains the Frederick Hollyer Collection, images of Burne-Jones work taken by the photographer. One of the studies is inscribed with her name.
28. The rather enigmatic title of *Where's the Cat* may also refer to *The Golden Stairs*. Mathew Webb refers to a conversation in the studio between the artist and his daughter. Evidently Margaret wanted to know where was the cat: "With this very Golden Stairs, she told him there was one thing missing among so many damsels, the inevitable pussy, and dared him to put it in." According to Webb, Burne-Jones rose to the challenge and concealed by the paint is the tail of the cat walking out of the picture. Matthew Webb, "Sir Edward Burne-Jones and *The Golden Stairs*," Part 2, Vol VIII, No. 5, January 1909, p. 421. Information supplied by Stephen Wildman. If this anecdote was common knowledge in 1880, it also indicates the public's craving for private gossip about their famous artists.
29. W.S. Gilbert, *Patience*, London, 1881, Act 1, 626.
30. On show Sunday Burne-Jones would often escape the invasion of his privacy, by going out or hiding. At the Grange he had two studios, one of which contained the works he did not want prying eyes to see. But he did not like to be completely shut off and often worked with the door of his studio open.
31. Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siecle*, London, 1991, p. 31, from *The Odd Woman* by George Gissing.

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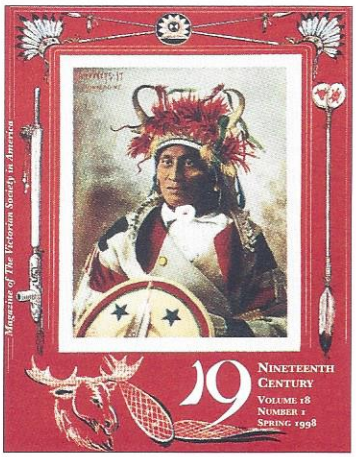

COVER PHOTO
Chief Wets-It, Assinniboine Tribe.
Photo by F. A. Rinehart, 1898. Courtesy of Historical Society of Douglas County, Nebraska.

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