

PERFORMING UPON HER PAINTED PIANO: THE BURNE-JONES PIANOS  
AND THE VICTORIAN FEMALE GENDER PERFORMANCE

By

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: Performing Upon Her Painted Piano: The Burne-Jones Pianos and The Victorian Female Gender Performance

This thesis centers around three pianos designed and/or decorated by the Victorian artist Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones: The *Priestley Piano*, The *Graham Piano*, and the *Ionides Piano*. I read and interpret the Burne-Jones pianos not only as examples of the artist's exploration of the boundaries of visual art and music, but also as reflections of the Victorian era female gender performance. Their physical forms and decorations, both designed and executed by Burne-Jones, enhance the piano as an instrument and accentuate their respective female performers. The music emanating from these pianos and the domestic space in which they inhabit prompt and contribute to the Victorian female performance of gender.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. THE <i>PRIESTLY PIANO</i> .....	11
III. THE <i>GRAHAM PIANO</i> .....	26
IV. THE <i>IONIDES PIANO</i> .....	43
V. CONCLUSION.....	56
APPENDIX: IMAGES .....	59
REFERENCES CITED.....	100



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In a letter to Morris & Company wallpaper designer Kate Faulkner the Victorian artist Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones wrote,

I have been wanting for years to reform pianos, since they are as it were the very altar of homes, and a second hearth to people, and so hideous to behold mostly that with a fiery rosewood piece of ugliness it is hardly worth while to mend things, since one such blot would and does destroy a whole house full of beautiful things. People won't pay much to have it beautified, but I have a little mended the mere shape of the grand piano, and feel as if one might start a new industry in painting them—or rather revived industry.<sup>1</sup>

The “fiery rosewood piece of ugliness” Burne-Jones refers to in this letter is the common Victorian upright piano. While he states that this kind of piano is “hardly worth while to mend,” it was also the subject of his first endeavor into piano reform.<sup>2</sup> On a small upright piano, known as the *Priestley Piano*, from 1860, Burne-Jones painted two scenes, which border the player (Fig. 1). After painting upon his ready-made piano, Burne-Jones became more invested in redesigning and decorating grand pianos. In the late 1870s, he collaborated with London piano manufacturer John Broadwood & Sons, to restructure the grand piano's shape. This thesis will discuss the *Priestley Piano*, as well as two of these redesigned grand pianos. The *Graham Piano* from 1879 was commissioned by his patron and friend, William Graham, for Graham's daughter, Frances (Fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> The *Ionides Piano* from 1883, on which the aforementioned Kate Faulkner painted Burne-Jones's floral

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<sup>1</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, (New York: Macmillan, 1904), 111.

<sup>2</sup> Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 111.

<sup>3</sup> This piano is sometimes called the *Orpheus Piano* for the illustrated narrative around the sides of the piano case. However, for the purposes of this paper, I will be using the name *Graham Piano*.

patterning, was created for the art collector and Aesthetic Movement patron, Alexander Ionides (Fig. 3).<sup>4</sup>

In this thesis I read and interpret the Burne-Jones pianos not only as examples of the artist's exploration of the boundaries of visual art and music, but also as reflections of the Victorian era female gender performance. Their physical forms and decorations, both designed and executed by Burne-Jones, enhance the piano as an instrument and accentuate their respective female performers. The music emanating from these pianos and the domestic space in which they inhabit prompt and contribute to the Victorian female performance of gender. I intend to show how Burne-Jones translates the Victorian feminine piano performance through the pianos he designs and decorates. In the *Priestley Piano* allegorical decorative works frames and mirrors the performer in such a way that she becomes an extension of the allegorical ornamentation. Burne-Jones uses the *Graham Piano* as a platform not only to show his devotion to Frances Graham, but also to unite several art forms into one performative art object. The *Ionides Piano* at first glance seems like just a decorative object, however its female decorator, Kate Faulkner, and female performer follow Morris's socialist ideologies, making it a beautiful and useful machine.

While the literature on Edward Burne-Jones is extensive, the scholarship on his pianos is minimal. The article, "Burne-Jones and Piano Reform," written by Michael I. Wilson in 1975, discusses Burne-Jones's design for a piano that is both

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<sup>4</sup> This piano has no formal name or title like the other Burne-Jones pianos. In the Victoria and Albert Museum online catalog, it is simply called "Grand Piano." However, I will be referring to it as the *Ionides Piano* for the sake of clarity.

visually and audibly pleasing. Wilson focuses on the physical shape of the piano and Burne-Jones's attempts to redesign the modern grand piano into that of a Victorian medievalist's interpretation of a harpsichord.<sup>5</sup> However, Wilson and most art historians who mention the Burne-Jones pianos do not consider the interaction between the decoration and design, or who played these pianos.<sup>6</sup> While there is much to discuss in regards to the Burne-Jones pianos, in this thesis I examine these objects not as just pianos painted and designed by Edward Burne-Jones, but as inherently feminine objects played upon by bourgeois Victorian women. Therefore, I situate my research on the Burne-Jones pianos within the tradition of feminist art historians, such as Griselda Pollock. Pollock's writings in *Vision and Difference* on what the female body symbolizes within Pre-Raphaelite paintings has greatly shaped my methodological approach to these pianos. By exploring what these pianos symbolized and the behaviors they enforced within the female domestic space, I intend to continue the work done by Pre-Raphaelite scholars such as Jan Marsh, Elizabeth Prettejohn, Caroline Arscott. Marsh, Prettejohn, and Arscott have examined the female inspiration behind Pre-Raphaelite paintings, providing a feminist voice to a very masculine movement. The work done by these female art historians on the types of women portrayed within Pre-Raphaelite paintings, what

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<sup>5</sup> Michael I. Wilson, "Burne-Jones and Piano Reform," *Apollo* 102 (1975), 344.

<sup>6</sup> In the recent collection of essays, *Rival Sisters: Art and Music at the Birth of Modernism*, Tim Barringer focuses on the painting *Chant d'Amour* as Burne-Jones's meditation on the relationship between art and music, yet mentions the *Priestley Piano* and its decorative aspects only in passing. The catalog of the most recent retrospective of Burne-Jones's work, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, brings attention to these pianos, but does not analyze how they function within Burne-Jones's oeuvre and more broadly as reflections of the Victorian era. Instead the catalog provides biographical information on Burne-Jones, as well as a formal analysis of the pianos.

women signified to the Pre-Raphaelites, and how this is reflective of Victorian gender norms have been influential in my research.<sup>7</sup>

Extensive research has been done by musicologists on the history of the piano and how it functions within society. Arthur Loesser's comprehensive book, *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History* from 1954 examines the evolution of the piano within England, France, and Germany, centering on changes in economics and gender politics surrounding the instrument. More recently, Richard Leppert's *The Sight of Sound* from 1993 has examined how keyboard instruments and their players have been visually portrayed throughout history. Both have been instrumental in my examination and discussion of the Burne-Jones pianos.

For my investigation into the Burne-Jones pianos I utilize Judith Butler's theories of gender performance and the body. I employ ideas from Butler's essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" in order to understand how the female performer is forced into these gendered boundaries. Through reconsidering the phenomenological theory of constitution, Butler states that we act out what is perceived as normal for our gender for a social audience.<sup>8</sup> She likens this performance of gender to acting within a theatrical setting.<sup>9</sup> In the case of the Burne-Jones pianos, these acts of gender and a literal musical performance are enacted simultaneously, facilitated by the piano. I argue that Victorian women playing a piano within the domestic sphere merge their gender and musical

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<sup>7</sup> In particular Marsh's *Pre-Raphaelite Women: Images of Femininity in Pre-Raphaelite Art* from 1987, Arcscott's 1988 article, "Employer, husband, spectator: Thomas Fairbairn's commission of *The Awakening Conscience*" and Prettejohn's *Modern Painters, Old Masters: The Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War* from 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4, (Dec. 1988), 519.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 520.

performance. Edward Burne-Jones, by decorating an already gendered object, emphasizes the performance of femininity.

### **Visual Representations of Male and Female Piano Performers**

During the nineteenth century, women were viewed as the spiritual guardians and cultural purveyors of the home.<sup>10</sup> The Victorian domestic sphere and the objects within them symbolized a woman's passivity in contrast to the productive male commercial world.<sup>11</sup> Women had control over their domestic space, which includes housekeeping and child rearing. Although women's roles in the home and the workforce were shifting at this time, the ideology that Victorian men were supposed to rule over Victorian women and women meant to rule over the home-through the delegation of the Victorian man-was still prevalent.<sup>12</sup> The home was a retreat for the man of the house. This retreat was often aided by heavenly music played by his angelic spouse. During the Victorian era, the piano became a status symbol, which in turn caused an increase in piano production.<sup>13</sup> The abundance of the instrument made women key accessories to their musical furniture.

The Burne-Jones household was no exception. His wife, Georgiana, an accomplished musician herself, kept her household and her musical repertoire as a

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<sup>10</sup> Anthea Callen, "Sexual Division of Labor in the Arts & Crafts Movement," *A View from the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design* edited by Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham, (London: The Women's Press Limited, 1989), 151.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Judith Flanders, "Introduction: House and Home," in *Inside the Victorian Home*, (New York City, New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 2003), 13. In the second half of the nineteenth century, more than twenty-five percent of the British female population worked outside the home.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Rothstein, "Foreward," in *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History* by Arthur Loesser, (New York: Dover Publications, 1982), viii. By 1847 there were 300 piano firms that were producing more than 20,000 instruments per year.

place for her husband to withdraw into his active imagination. As the metaphorical altar of the Burne-Jones household, the *Priestley Piano* was quickly painted upon. These adornments by Burne-Jones inspired him to continue decorating and redesigning the shape of the piano until it complemented its interior and performer.

Since first becoming available for domestic use in 1771, pianos were a common feature in the nineteenth-century domestic sphere.<sup>14</sup> As a result of its heavy, sturdy nature and relegation to the drawing room, the Victorian upright piano rarely moved from or about the household.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, as Arthur Loesser has argued, the piano was considered furniture instead of purely an instrument.<sup>16</sup> As music lessons, particularly for playing the piano, became an important addition to a nineteenth-century woman's education, Victorian drawing rooms became small domestic theaters where women were expected to entertain their guests and family.<sup>17</sup> Synonymous with a Victorian woman's domestic education and courtship, the upright piano became a customary nineteenth-century wedding gift, meant to herald domestic bliss and harmony. Looked upon as an outlet for a woman's emotions, pianos were also a way for lovers to become close to one another.<sup>18</sup> While the woman being courted played the piano, her suitor or lover could chastely sit next to her, turning the pages of sheet music, gazing upon her. Music-making provided an outlet for romantic expression, as it offered the performer avenues to

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<sup>14</sup> Laura Voracheck, "'The Instrument of the Century': The Piano as an Icon of Female Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *George Eliot—George Henry Lewes Studies*, No. 38/39, In Memoriam: Professor Jerome Beaty (1924—2000), September 2000, 26.

<sup>15</sup> Judith Flanders, "The Drawing Room," in *Inside the Victorian Home*, (New York City, New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 2003), 175.

<sup>16</sup> Arthur Loesser, "The Piano as Furniture," in *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1954), 245.

<sup>17</sup> Voracheck, "The Instrument of the Century," 27.

<sup>18</sup> Rev. H.R. Haweis, *Music and Morals*, (New York City, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1876), 346-347.

explore sensual reactions to music appropriately. In the Burne-Jones pianos we see him emphasizing the piano's association with women and the domestic sphere through his decorative work. The shape of the Burne-Jones grand pianos, take their inspiration from the very first pianos and harpsichords.

Bartolomeo Cristofori, Ferdinando de' Medici's harpsichord maker, invented the piano around the year 1700 (Fig. 4).<sup>19</sup> While other stringed keyboard instruments, such as the clavichord, had the control of volume and the ability to sustain notes, they were too quiet for public performances in large music halls.<sup>20</sup> Instead, these early stringed keyboard instruments restricted the performer from expressive control over each note.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the piano, or "Arpicembalo...di nuova invention, che fa' il piano e il forte" (A harpsichord, of new invention, that plays soft and loud), with its ability to differentiate and alternate sound, was an instrument made for the performer.<sup>22</sup> Unlike playing a harpsichord, the performer could apply different degrees of force to the keyboard in order to control the tempering and variety of the sound.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, this made way for late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century performers, such as Liszt, Beethoven, and Chopin to become the expressive leading piano virtuosos of their time.<sup>24</sup> Concert halls filled with attentive audiences expecting to see the unbridled expression of

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<sup>19</sup> James Parakilas, "1700 to 1770s: The Need for the Piano," in *Piano Roles*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 9.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Stewart Pollens, *The Early Pianoforte*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 43.

<sup>23</sup> Parakilas, "1700 to 1770s: The Need for the Piano," 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

music, which sometimes endangered the state of the piano.<sup>25</sup> Piano manufacturers had to create sturdier, smaller instruments to accommodate their wild patrons, as well as the shifting size of the urban home.<sup>26</sup> Thus, by the time Burne-Jones received his small domestic upright piano, the state of the piano was a hefty, sturdy piece of furniture. Gone was the delicate design of Cristofori, reminiscent of a harpsichord.

The piano became such a ubiquitous piece of furniture in a Victorian household, sometimes buried under decorative scarves and floral arrangements, that the sonic quality of the piano was often regarded as secondary to its aesthetic or symbolic value.<sup>27</sup> However, Burne-Jones, while not a musician himself, valued pianos for their original purpose: music. When Burne-Jones took an interest in designing and decorating pianos, he did so from the point of view of an artist interested in the performance of these instruments. Yet, in my research on the Burne-Jones pianos and the image of the piano in Victorian paintings, there is a distinct difference in the way male and female piano performers are visually portrayed.

The most notable difference is between the artistic freedom the male performer enjoys and the disciplined female performance. For example, in the painting *Liszt at the Piano* by Josef Danhauser from 1840, Liszt's audience, all famous Romantic artists and writers, are enraptured by his performance (Fig. 5). It would seem that the piano, with its mess of music scores, flowers, and large

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<sup>25</sup> Arthur Loesser, "The Great Rave," in *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1954), 369.

<sup>26</sup> Arthur Loesser, "The Piano as Furniture," in *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1954), 247.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Leppert, "The Piano, Misogyny, and "The Kreutzer Sonata,'" in *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 153.



Classical bust of Beethoven, has turned into a shrine to music. Liszt gazes up at the bust of Beethoven, as though revering him as a god, and a portrait of Lord Byron overlooks the musical performance in the background. Liszt has complete control over his performance and how his audience perceives him. Known as a stage phenomenon who produced wild concerts, Liszt's whole body moved and flowed with his performance.<sup>28</sup> In caricatures Liszt is depicted as a spidery, angular performer, stretching his whole body across the keyboard, his hair flowing wildly (Figs. 6 & 7). Through these portrayals of a male piano player's expressive nature, we see how musical genius and the male body are tied together visually.

Alternatively, the female piano performance in painting depicts a constricted, regimented performance, constructed for the male gaze. The female performer has an automaton like quality to her. In George Hamilton Barrable's painting *A Song Without Words* from 1880, his female subject's upright posture, aided by the visible boning in her bodice, prompts the understanding that the upright piano creates a regimented sense of order (Fig. 8). Despite the mess of music scores on the floor, once she sits at the piano, the female performer is prompted to perform the music laid out before her and plays what is expected of her. Restricted by her dress and the notes in front of her, vulnerable with her back to her viewer-audience, she can only look forward. In Middleton Jameson's *At the Piano* from 1877, the female piano player, dressed in all black seems to be in daze (Fig. 9). Although she reaches across

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<sup>28</sup> Liszt was known for treating his pianos roughly during his performances. Austrian journalist and satirical writer noted that, "Liszt, is an amiable fiend who treats his mistress—the piano—now tenderly, now tyrannically, devours her with kisses, lacerates her with lustful bites...Daunted pianos lie around him; torn strings wave like flags of truce, frightened instruments flee into distant corners." Quoted by Arthur Loesser in *Men, Women, and Pianos*, 369.

the keyboard, her arms are only slightly bent. The medieval looking tapestry behind the piano shows more life and movement than her trance-like performance. William John Hennessy acknowledges the decorative purpose of both the player and instrument in his 1874 painting, *An Old Song* (Fig. 10). The female player, again sitting up straight and gazing blankly ahead of her, plays a decorated piano. The floral design on her shawl complement the floral decoration above the keyboard. The deep blue of her dress harmonizes with the blues, turquoises, and greens of the tapestry behind her, making the lighter hues of the piano stand out. These paintings visually demonstrate what the Burne-Jones pianos convey as objects. They facilitate the rigid and confined female piano performance through their shape and decorations, as well as put the female performer into the position of an art object. As Burne-Jones adorns the pianos, the female piano performer also adorns the piano.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRIESTLEY PIANO

In William Holman Hunt's 1853 painting, *The Awakening Conscience*, a standard upright piano symbolizes the confinement of a Victorian woman (Fig. 11). As Victorian art critic and Pre-Raphaelite patron, John Ruskin, observed in his letter to the editor of *The London Times* in 1854, the painting is replete with objects and iconography signaling the sexuality of the female subject. The object that stood out the most to Ruskin was the "common, modern, vulgar" piano, which signifies both the tragedy and the potential deliverance of a kept woman.<sup>29</sup> As she sings the popular song, *Oft in the Stilly Night*, played by her mustached seducer, the musical performance sparks her spiritual awakening.<sup>30</sup> The music and lyrics, which speak of loss, grief, and a simpler time, spiritually transform the young woman. From the large mirror behind her, the viewer can see sunlight pouring into the cluttered drawing room. The woman is entranced as she springs from her lover's lap, suddenly aware of her sinful lifestyle and the possibility of redemption.<sup>31</sup>

Hunt's attention to detail in the rendering of this common instrument prompted critics to lament how the modern piano has shifted from symbolizing wholesome domesticity to lustful immorality. Hunt converts his piano into something associated with erotic pleasure rather than the idealized domestic

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<sup>29</sup> John Ruskin, "Letter to the Editor," *The London Times* 21,733 (May 25, 1854), 7.

<sup>30</sup> *Oft in the Stilly Night*, Words by Thomas Moore, musical arrangement by Sir John Stevenson.

<sup>31</sup> My analysis of *The Awakening Conscience* and how it is an assemblage of signs reflecting the reality of Victorian women, as well as it maintained the gender roles of the male and female viewers of the painting, is owed to Caroline Arscott's article, "Employer, husband, spectator: Thomas Fairbairn's commission of *The Awakening Conscience*" in *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class* edited by Janet Wolff and John Seed.

sphere. The upright piano symbolizes a lack of wholesomeness in the modern household. Ruskin's comments focused on the "terrible lustre" of the piano, writing, "furniture, so carefully painted, even to the last vein of the rosewood—is there nothing to be learned from...its fatal newness; nothing there that has the old thoughts of home upon it, or that is ever to become a part of a home?"<sup>32</sup> Hunt's upright, with its lacquered sheen and placement in a *maison de convenance*, reflects a modern attitude towards music-making. The piano may "become a part of a home," but the domestic activities of that home may not keep with traditional Victorian values.<sup>33</sup> Within *The Awakening Conscience*, the piano allegorizes the two paths a Victorian woman could take: redemption or sin, wife or mistress, purity or impropriety. Hunt was not the only Pre-Raphaelite to explore imagery that suggests a gendered view of musical performance. Second-generation Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones would take Hunt's piano allegory one-step further while delving into similar themes in his own upright piano.

Upon receiving an upright piano as a wedding gift, similar in shape to the one depicted in *The Awakening Conscience*, Edward Burne-Jones decorated his new piece of furniture. Using shellac varnish, Burne-Jones painted images rooted in fourteenth-century friezes and medieval musical imagery, as well as English and Breton balladry. Embracing the Pre-Raphaelite taste for allegorical art, Burne-Jones took Hunt's musical allegory further by decorating a household piano and making it a part of the domestic performance. These adornments, one an allegory for love and the other for death, frame and mirror the performer of the piano in such a way that

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<sup>32</sup> Ruskin, "Letter to the Editor," 7.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

the performer becomes an extension of the allegorical ornamentation. Instrument, decoration, and music envelop the player, while also defining and reflecting the acceptable roles of Victorian female sexuality.<sup>34</sup> The songs played upon the piano, the musical subject matter of the decorations, and the inclusion of the performer in the decorative scheme all contribute to the construction of how a Victorian woman should play the piano and perform her gender.

As the performer, Burne-Jones's wife Georgiana, a gifted pianist and singer, moves between high and low registers of the keyboard. In doing so she is placed in the precarious position of fluctuating between images denoting love and death, salvation and sin, wife and muse. Richard Leppert interprets these binaries as showing how, through the piano and her performance, Georgiana Burne-Jones can transform from a woman waiting for death to a "disembodied and sexless...virginal female."<sup>35</sup> In this section I propose that the female performer of the *Priestley Piano* is not so much transformed as she is trapped in her enactment of a gendered musical performance. Judith Butler writes that gender identity is "a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction."<sup>36</sup> While her piano performance is temporary, it reflects the feminine roles Georgiana must cope with in her everyday existence. Georgiana straddles the visual and sonic boundary between the

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<sup>34</sup> Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock, "Woman as sign in Pre-Raphaelite literature: the representation of Elizabeth Siddall," *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art*, London: Routledge, 1988), 113. Griselda Pollock and Deborah Cherry discuss this idea of how the Pre-Raphaelites regulate and define female sexuality in their paintings and literary works.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Leppert, "Sexual Identity, Death, and the Family Piano in the Nineteenth Century," *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body*, (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1993), 147.

<sup>36</sup> Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," 520.

obligations of both wife and muse, between the pleasures and torments of love, and between her own youthful vitality and inescapable mortality.

### **The *Priestley Piano* in the Burne-Jones Household**

The *Priestley Piano*, now residing in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection, was named after its maker, Frederick Priestley of Berners Street.<sup>37</sup> The two decorations, one painted on the inside of the keyboard lid, the other along the bottom panel above the pedals, were done between 1860 and 1863. Georgiana Burne-Jones describes the *Priestley Piano* in her biography of her husband thus:

Mrs. Catherwood gave us a piano, made by Priestly [sic] of Berners Street, who had patented a small one of inoffensive shape that we had seen and admired at Madox Brown's house; we had ours made of unpolished American walnut, a perfectly plain wood of pleasing colour, so that Edward could paint upon it. The little instrument when opened shows inside the lid a very early design for the *Chant d'amour*, and on the panel beneath the keyboard there is a gilded and lacquered picture of Death, veiled and crowned, standing outside the gate of a garden where a number of girls, unconscious of his approach, are resting and listening to music. The lacquering of this panel was an exciting process, for its colour had to be deepened by heat while still liquid, and Edward used a red-hot poker for the work.<sup>38</sup>

Although Georgiana cites the piano's shape as "inoffensive," through her husband's later work on pianos and his particular attention to their physical form, we can assume that the upright *Priestley Piano* was not Burne-Jones's ideal piano. The heavysset, boxy shape did not appeal to his Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic sensibilities. His granddaughter, Angela Thirkell, remembers the *Priestley Piano* being decorated by

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<sup>37</sup> The Victoria and Albert Museum summary of the *Priestley Piano* cites Frederick Priestley as "an otherwise unknown piano maker." Piano| Priestley, Frederick| V&A Search the Collections, *Victoria and Albert Museum*, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O58869/piano-priestley-frederick/>.

<sup>38</sup> Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 207. Georgiana Burne-Jones is incorrect about the material of the *Priestley Piano*. It was made with American oak, not walnut. Mrs. Catherwood was Burne-Jones's aunt, who acted as his adoptive mother after his biological mother passed away when Burne-Jones was very young. Georgiana often refers to the piano as made by "Priestly" instead of "Priestley." However, the correct spelling is "Priestley" as denoted by a plaque on the instrument.

her grandfather to “show how a cottage piano needn't necessarily be a lump of hideousness.”<sup>39</sup> Regardless of whether Burne-Jones found the shape of the *Priestley Piano* in poor or good taste, it would seem that he utilized this box-shaped instrument to his advantage. While providing an unusual canvas for his allegorical imagery, the squared form of the instrument also limits the interaction between the performer and audience. Within its domestic space, the *Priestley Piano* was pushed against the wall, so that the audience viewed the performer’s back (Fig. 12). The performer is restricted to interacting with the piano and its allegorical decorations. Through the physical design of the *Priestley Piano*, the performer is isolated from her audience, becoming one with the instrument and its decorative scheme. While this could also be said of a male performer in this position, the kind of performance the instrument and its design suggests is feminine. Through learning the piano a young Victorian woman was taught discipline, a character trait that would attract a husband.<sup>40</sup> Butler demonstrates that through “the repetition of acts,” is how the body learns its gender.<sup>41</sup> In the repetition of learning this act of playing the piano, a woman learns both her instrument and her gender. In the case of the *Priestley Piano*, Georgiana’s controlled gestures and movements are socially viewed as feminine. Georgiana performs the confined piano performance of a Victorian woman, rather than the free and natural performance of a Victorian male.

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<sup>39</sup> Angela Thirkell, *Three Houses*, (London: Allison & Busby, 1931), 153.

<sup>40</sup> Vorcheck, “The Instrument of the Century,” 26

<sup>41</sup> Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” 520.

### *Le Chant d'amour*

The decoration that Georgiana Burne-Jones describes as “a very early design for *Chant d'amour*,” borders the performer’s right hand side, along the inside of the keyboard lid (Fig. 13).<sup>42</sup> This is the first documented design for Burne-Jones’s later painting *Le Chant d'amour* from 1868–77 (Fig. 14). Hovering above the high notes of the keyboard, this decoration depicts a woman wearing a long white dress, playing an organ-like instrument, with an angel working the bellows.<sup>43</sup> Behind them, Burne-Jones paints delicate foliage. Although lacking the detail of a finished painting, this woman is the quintessential Pre-Raphaelite muse. Her blank stare suggests that her song has put her into a trance-like state, breaking down the barriers between the material world and the afterlife, summoning her angelic partner.<sup>44</sup>

The design of *Le Chant d'amour* reads, at first glance, as a reflection of purity and innocence due to its religious subject matter, use of the color white, and placement near the angelic high notes of the piano. Yet, through the inclusion of a positive organ instead of a portative organ, Burne-Jones engages the sexual undertones signaled by pianos and other keyboard instruments. In previous scholarship on the *Priestley Piano* and the *Le Chant d'amour* painting, art historians have cited the instrument depicted as being a portative organ, which is an organ small enough to be carried (using a sling) in religious processions (Fig. 15).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 207.

<sup>43</sup> Suzanne Fagence Cooper, “Playing the Organ in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings,” *Music in Art: Iconography as a Source for Music*, (Spring—Fall 2004), 151.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.



However, its size and bellows identify it as a positive organ, a larger Renaissance keyboard instrument.<sup>46</sup>

In the *Le Chant d'amour* design on the *Priestley Piano*, the only indication of eroticism is the model's loose hair.<sup>47</sup> Yet, it is within the attention to the instrument and the decision to paint a positive organ instead of a portative organ, that Burne-Jones presents the image's tension between the roles of wife and muse. Burne-Jones's mentor and friend, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, painted a portative organ in his first critically acclaimed painting, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (Fig. 16). Representing Mary's spiritual and domestic education as similar to that of a Victorian woman, the portative organ denoted the piety and purity of music and its female performer.<sup>48</sup> In contrast the positive organ in the *Le Chant d'amour* design has a secular and sensual connotation as a result of the manner in which it is used. Rossetti's stained glass window, *Music* from 1863 for Morris, Marshall, Faulkner, and Co., turns the positive organ into an altar upon which to make love (Fig. 17). Here a king, working the bellows, and a queen, playing the keyboard, lean across the pipes of the instrument to kiss. Even when angelic or saintly beings are involved within Pre-Raphaelite depictions of a positive organ, there are sexual undertones. Rossetti's illustration of *Saint Cecilia* for Tennyson's *The Palace of Art* from 1857 shows an angel suggestively

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<sup>46</sup> Suzanne Fagence Cooper, "Playing the Organ in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings," 151.

<sup>47</sup>My discussion of the sexual undertones of the *Le Chant d'amour* design is greatly influenced by Griselda Pollock's analysis of the Pre-Raphaelite female body and the tension between autonomous female sexuality and social system in which Georgiana Burne-Jones resides. Griselda Pollock, "Woman as Sign: Psychoanalytic Readings," *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art*, London: Routledge, 1988), 141.

<sup>48</sup>Cooper, "Playing the Organ in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings," 153. This inclusion of a portative organ was also a way to symbolically link Italian fourteenth and fifteenth century artists with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as this is the first painting with the initials "PRB" inscribed in the lower left hand corner.

embracing Saint Cecilia from behind while she plays the positive organ, their lips almost touching (Fig. 18). The piano and the positive organ signal their respective performers' musical ecstasy, an emotional and physical reaction to the music. The duet offers a direct connection to the player's emotions as well as arousing erotic responses in the body.<sup>49</sup> Depictions of large keyboarded instruments, like the positive organ and upright piano, imply both a musical and sexual partnership, appealing to music's emotional and sensual characteristics.

The imagery within the design and final painting of *Le Chant d'amour* considers the relationship between art, music, and the domain of the erotic.<sup>50</sup> In the final painting of *Le Chant d'amour*, Burne-Jones adds a young man clad in full armor, admiring the woman playing the positive organ. The addition of a love-interest, for whom the Pre-Raphaelite maiden performs, ostensibly places an emphasis on sexual desire and love sanctioned by the presence of an angel.<sup>51</sup> *The Priestley Piano*, omitting the suitor, is a rumination on the relationship between art, music, and the domestic sphere. This illustration not only comments upon what is expected of the female performer as both wife and player of the *Priestley Piano*. The role of the love interest, absent from the design, is filled by Burne-Jones, who crafts an idealized image of his wife and her performance.

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<sup>49</sup> Tim Barringer, "Burne-Jones's *Le Chant d'amour* and the Condition of Music," in *Rival Sisters, Art and Music at the Birth of Modernism, 1815-1915*, ed. James H. Rubin with Olivia Mattis (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014), 252.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>51</sup> Stephen Wildman and John Christian, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, (New York City, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998) 99.

## ***Ladies and Death***

The second decoration on the *Priestley Piano* is along the baseboard, situated in the dark recesses of the instrument (Fig. 19). A more elaborate version of this design can be seen in a pen and ink drawing by Burne-Jones, *Ladies and Death*, from 1860 (Fig. 20). In this particular scene, Burne-Jones explores death, mortality, and the impermanence of life not only through his medieval-inspired decorative work, but also through the visual and sonic tradition of English ballads.

On the player's left looms a crowned figure, presumably male, who represents Death. A draped shroud obscures Death's body, including his head. The sinister figure leans against a doorway, quietly observing eight women who are unaware of his presence. He holds a scythe in one cloaked hand, while the other hand holds onto the doorframe, perhaps ringing the bell that appears to be mid-swing on the other side of the door. Through the doorway sit eight female figures with red or auburn hair, clothed in golden yellow dresses, which complement the piano's original varnish. The first woman holds sheet music for her companion playing the lute. The next two female figures are so intertwined that the viewer is unsure of where their bodies begin and end. One holds the other's head in her lap, as though comforting her. Next are two women reclining, one with an unfinished face and a detailed halo. The following figure is doubled over, gripping her knees, hiding her face, as if sleeping or in pain. The last woman is an unfinished half figure, looking over the row of seven women above some sunflowers, her hands clasped around a rosary. This incomplete sketch has elements that are quite detailed and

some that are unfinished, with the women exhibiting dazed appearances similar to that of the woman in the *Le Chant d'amour* design.

This decoration was inspired by the fourteenth-century Italian artist Andrea Orcagna's *The Triumph of Death*, which Burne-Jones viewed while visiting Pisa in 1859 (Fig. 21).<sup>52</sup> The right-hand portion of the fresco depicts a similar grouping, where a winged figure of Death descends upon a group of women, more lively than Burne-Jones's grouping, who are preoccupied with music-making and conversation. As this fresco and Burne-Jones's reimagined version on the *Priestley Piano* feature women playing music, perhaps one can understand Burne-Jones's allegory of death as speaking to the kinds of music played upon the *Priestley Piano* by its female performer.

### **Music Played on the *Priestley Piano***

Georgiana Burne-Jones's musical repertoire included Beethoven and Schubert, as well as Edward's favorite English, Scottish, and Breton ballads. The majority of her repertoire came from the music collection, *Popular Music*, issued by Chappell & Co., one of the leading music publishers and piano makers in England and from the French songbook, *Echos de Temps Passé*.<sup>53</sup> The particular songs found within both of these songbooks inspired the decorations on the *Priestley Piano*.

The *Le Chant d'amour* design mirrors the performance of the female player of the *Priestley Piano*, as Georgiana's musical talent was the inspiration for the *Le Chant*

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<sup>52</sup>Fiona MacCarthy, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 99. This fresco has since been attributed to Francesco Triani. However, Burne-Jones would have understood it as being an Orcagna fresco.

<sup>53</sup>Barringer, "Burne-Jones's *Le Chant d'amour* and the Condition of Music," 261.

*d'amour* design.<sup>54</sup> The title, *Le Chant d'amour*, is taken from the Breton song, "La chanson de Marie" from *Echos de Temps Passé*.<sup>55</sup> "La chanson de Marie," sung from a female perspective, speaks of the difficulties and joys of love:

Hélas! Je sais un chant d'amour  
Triste et gai tour à tour.  
Cette chanson douce à l'oreille,  
Pour le cœur n'a pas sa pareille.  
Hélas! Je sais un chant d'amour,  
Triste et gai tour à tour.

Alas! I know a love song  
Sad or cheerful in turn.  
This song, sweet to the ear,  
For the heart has no equal.  
Alas! I know a song of love,  
Sad or cheerful in turn.

The singer longs for her lover or homeland, aware of the dual nature of love to satisfy and destroy one's life.<sup>56</sup> The lyrics and music are less erotic perhaps than the design's positive organ implies. Burne-Jones, in these early years of his marriage, was attempting to reconcile the ideas of his wife as a sexual being and virtuous model. Engaged at fifteen and married at nineteen, Georgiana Burne-Jones was painted with an innocent appearance throughout her whole life. This innocent demeanor was most notably constructed and perpetuated by her husband. In 1863, Burne-Jones painted her portrait, again taking inspiration from fourteenth-and fifteenth-century Italian artists (Fig. 22). The propriety and chastity of Georgiana's image would follow her for the rest of her life.<sup>57</sup>

Like the woman in the design, her physical performance of playing the piano is a gendered musical performance, a signification of her accomplishment as a

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<sup>54</sup>Wildman and Christian, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, 213.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>56</sup> Barringer, "Burne-Jones's *Le Chant d'amour* and the Condition of Music," 262.

<sup>57</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones's image reflects Pollock's assertion that her sexual needs are not regarded by her husband. Instead the Victorian expectation of submission to legal and moral control by her husband is reflected within how she is portrayed by her husband. Griselda Pollock, "Woman as Sign: Psychoanalytic Readings," *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art*, London: Routledge, 1988), 143.

woman.<sup>58</sup> Through her bodily gestures and movements at the piano, Georgiana is enacting what has been taught to her as an acceptable musical performance.<sup>59</sup> Yet, through this performance Georgiana could sublimate her sexuality and desire into music. In the *Le Chant d'amour* design, the addition of the angel working the bellows makes the music come forth. Similarly, the inclusion of a male partner as her audience or, in the more intimate setting, as a page-turner, adds sexual connotations to the musical subject. Mirroring the design, she is transformed into a musical-sexual object. Much like the piano in *The Awakening Conscience*, the decorative painting signifies both a woman's modesty through the help of an angelic being and the erotic nature of making music in tandem. Georgiana Burne-Jones and the *Le Chant d'amour* design mirror one another in blurring the boundary between her role as chaste wife and sexual being.

In contrast to the *Le Chant d'amour* design, the *Ladies and Death* composition criticizes the vanity that comes with adhering to acceptable enactments of femininity.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps taking inspiration from a fourteenth-century English ballad, *Death and the Lady* found in Chappell's *Popular Music*, the *Ladies and Death* design acts as musical *vanitas* painting. The song describes an interaction between Death and a well-to-do woman. Death wishes the woman to lay her "costly robes aside" and "take leave of every carnal vain delight."<sup>61</sup> The woman protests, asking who he is to take her away so soon. This song is a satire against the perceived vanity of

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<sup>58</sup> Voracheck, "The Instrument of the Century," 27.

<sup>59</sup> Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," 519.

<sup>60</sup> Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," 521.

<sup>61</sup> Anne G. Gilchrist, "Death and the Lady in English Balladry," *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (December, 1941), 39.

women and remained as relevant in the fourteenth century as it was in the nineteenth century.

It is not known for sure if *Death and the Lady* was played in the Burne-Jones household. However, what is certain is that this type of ballad fascinated Edward Burne-Jones and the lesson about vanity taught in *Death and the Lady* can be seen in the *Ladies and Death* design. Particularly in the Victorian Era, when the growing mass production of ready-to-wear fashions and accessories seemed to heighten women's vanity, the *Ladies and Death* design is an ever-present reminder to the female performer that Death awaits us all.<sup>62</sup>

When Georgiana sits down at the *Priestley Piano* to play, she is immediately situated amongst the group of eight women in the *Ladies and Death* design. Just as Death is the audience for the group of eight women, Death also watches Georgiana play. She, like her fellow Victorian women, is under the threat of his scythe. Her audience similarly watches her as she plays, objectifying and critiquing her. The performance is on show for her predominantly male audience to view. Her vulnerability is heightened by the fact that her back is also turned to her audience. Georgiana's performance of both music and gender are under scrutiny. Both Death and her audience can decide when to cut her performance, due to either a gender or musical mistake on her part. A misstep in her musical performance would reflect poorly upon Georgiana's reputation as an accomplished Victorian woman.<sup>63</sup> A lapse in her gender performance, in a society with strict gender rules, would be costly to

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<sup>62</sup> Michael I. Wilson, "Burne-Jones and Piano Reform," *Apollo* 102 (1975), 344.

<sup>63</sup> This scrutiny by society, as Butler writes, initiates a set of punishments or rewards for the performer. Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," 528.

both her and her husband's reputation. Burne-Jones not only situates Georgiana between an allegory for sensual love and an allegory for death, but he also sonically positions her between musical passion and a reminder of her mortality. When Georgiana is seated at the *Priestley Piano* she has no choice but to perform her husband's constructed musical allegory.

The *Priestley Piano's* decorations are arranged in such a manner that the performer must situate herself between artistic representations of love and death, salvation and sin, wife and muse. There is no conclusive ascending or descending to heaven and hell, only fluctuation between the two realms. In these decorations, the female performer is the subject of sexual adoration and scrutiny. One illustration highlights the performative aspects of the instrument; the other decoration emphasizes the allegorical possibilities of Georgiana's musical repertoire. Through her musical performance, her husband and the *Priestley Piano* trap Georgiana. Burne-Jones has stylized her gestures, actions, and representation via the domestic piano.<sup>64</sup> Done in the early years of their marriage, Burne-Jones was still attempting to reconcile Georgiana's dual role as his wife and inspiration. When Burne-Jones finally began the painting *Le Chant d'amour*, he had found his muse in Maria Zambaco.<sup>65</sup> As the new muse for the maiden playing the positive organ in *Le Chant d'amour*, Maria takes on the role of muse, leaving Georgiana to be only his wife. Although Burne-Jones attempted to leave her, Georgiana remained the faithful obedient wife her piano lessons taught her to be. In *Memorials of Edward Burne-*

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<sup>64</sup> Butler writes that it is through a repetition and stylization of gestures that a gender performance is enacted. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," 519.

<sup>65</sup> Wildman and Christian, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, 213.



*Jones*, her only allusion to the affair was the epitaph, “Heart, thou and I here, sad and alone.”<sup>66</sup>

Her gender performance, the domestic sphere, and the instrument, similar to the scenario presented in *The Awakening Conscience*, imprison Georgiana. She is a part of the instrument and the allegories it tells, both visually and sonically. This confinement of the important women in his life through allegorical piano ornamentation would become a pattern within Edward Burne-Jones’s piano work. The next piano, he designed and decorated, was for his patron William Graham’s daughter, Frances, noted as the “most important woman in Burne-Jones’s life after his wife, his daughter, and Maria Zambaco.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 382.

<sup>67</sup> Wildman and Christian, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, 244.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GRAHAM PIANO

Nearly twenty years after receiving the *Priestley Piano* in 1860 Burne-Jones returned to piano reform with a piano that would reflect a muse he could only possess within the confines of a piano case. The genesis of this piano was prompted by a scandalous episode in Burne-Jones's life. As noted in the previous chapter, Burne-Jones was introduced to Maria Zambaco, daughter of a wealthy Greek merchant and a member of the prominent Ionides family, in 1866.<sup>68</sup> The nature of their relationship is illustrated in a portrait of Zambaco completed in 1870 (Fig. 23). Painting her as Venus with Cupid over her shoulder, she poses in a loose Aesthetic style dress.<sup>69</sup> Opened in front of her is an illuminated manuscript with a miniature version of Burne-Jones's *Le Chant d'amour*.<sup>70</sup> Maria, separated from her husband and a mother of two, was already in a scandalous and precarious position in Victorian London. However, Burne-Jones became fascinated with her and, as the inclusion of *Le Chant d'amour* implies, Maria soon replaced Georgiana as his lover and muse.

The affair, which continued from 1866 to 1869, did not last. Georgiana's strict Protestant values prevented Burne-Jones from divorcing her. The scandalous end of the affair with Zambaco, which concluded in her attempted suicide and Burne-Jones fleeing to Italy, sent Burne-Jones's career and social life into a tailspin.<sup>71</sup> During the 1870s only two of his paintings were exhibited, but this did not stop

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<sup>68</sup> MacCarthy, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination*, 201.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

Burne-Jones from generating a multitude of work in his studios.<sup>72</sup> His ability to keep producing through this rough time in his career was, in part, thanks to his friend and patron William Graham. Burne-Jones also confided his feelings about the end of the affair with his latest muse, Graham's daughter Frances.<sup>73</sup>

William Graham, an avid art collector, wealthy merchant, and Liberal Member of Parliament for Glasgow met Burne-Jones in 1864.<sup>74</sup> Graham's patronage inspired a new phase in artistic production for Burne-Jones. In the 1870s, Burne-Jones's work expanded from Pre-Raphaelite paintings into decorative objects, theater designs, and interior design work. Through Graham's encouragement and financial support, Burne-Jones could return to his interest in piano reform. Aiming to create an art object that encompassed several artistic mediums; painting, poetry, & music, Burne-Jones designed and decorated a piano for Frances Graham's twenty-first birthday. Frances, like her father, had a special relationship with Burne-Jones and this bond with Frances replaced his obsession with Maria Zambaco. Frances became his new muse and model, her rounded, innocent facial features contrasting with Maria's dark allure.

This piano, called the *Graham Piano*, displays Burne-Jones's interest in the visual arts melding with music, as well as poetry.<sup>75</sup> Through combining the sister arts into one decorative and musical piece of furniture, Burne-Jones attempts to create a web that his muse, Frances Graham, cannot escape. In this section I propose

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<sup>72</sup> Oliver Garnett, "The Letters and Collection of William Graham—Pre-Raphaelite Patron and Pre-Raphael Collector," *The Volume of the Walpole Society*, Vol. 62 (2000), 148.

<sup>73</sup> MacCarthy, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination*, 213.

<sup>74</sup> Garnett, "The Letters and Collection of William Graham—Pre-Raphaelite Patron and Pre-Raphael Collector," 165.

<sup>75</sup> Sometimes called the *Orpheus Piano* for its set of roundels that adorn the outside and tell the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.

that the female performer of the *Graham Piano*, Frances Graham, is forcibly transformed into Burne-Jones's ideal muse as she enacts her gendered musical performance. If Burne-Jones could not run away with Maria Zambaco, he could at least trap and mold Frances into his ideal muse. The female performer no longer straddles a boundary between two extremes, as in the *Priestley Piano*. Frances is not given the choice between wife and muse. Instead, Burne-Jones portrays Frances in the decorations of the *Graham Piano*, in several different muse-like roles. At first glance it may seem as though Frances is trapped in a musical gender performance by these decorations in a similar manner to Georgiana. However, through the piano's physical shape, Frances is given some agency. The *Graham Piano*, as a grand piano, gives Frances the ability to gaze back upon her audience, making her less vulnerable and more in charge of her performance.

I also suggest that Frances Graham is given some agency through the *Graham Piano* being a "total work of art" or *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Referring to Richard Wagner's writings on art and music, particularly *Artwork of the Future* or *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, I postulate that because the *Graham Piano* encompasses multiple art forms in one instrument it acts as a Wagnerian music-drama.<sup>76</sup> I will be applying Wagnerian ideas to the *Graham Piano* in the way that Burne-Jones and his artistic circle would understand them. In *fin-de-siècle* England, Wagner's theories were often reinterpreted to fit British aesthetic and political contexts.<sup>77</sup> The few who

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<sup>76</sup> Juliet Koss, "Introduction," *Modernism After Wagner*, (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2010), xiii. Wagner called them "music-dramas" rather than "operas" because he treated the musical and dance performances as completing the dramatic performance. Therefore I will reference Wagner's works as music-dramas because I believe the *Graham Piano* incites a similar performance.

<sup>77</sup> Anne Dzamba Sessa, "Wagner Among the Literati," in *Richard Wagner and the English*, (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1979), 81.

considered themselves Wagnerites either focused on the socialist implications or the sonic and visual aspects Wagner's music-dramas.<sup>78</sup> It is in the emotional and passionate musical performance that comes with a music-drama reaching its full potential as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* that gives the female performer a sense of agency over her performance.<sup>79</sup>

In this web of artistic expression, it would seem as though the female performer becomes trapped in Burne-Jones's obsessive decorative work. While Frances Graham's appearance is manipulated into several muse-like roles, these visuals are at odds with the physical design and performance required of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Frances Graham's presence at the *Graham Piano* brings these decorations to life and becomes a key component in creating a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

### **Edward Burne-Jones, William and Frances Graham**

In order to understand the *Graham Piano*, one must first understand the relationship between the Graham family and Edward Burne-Jones. If the first phase of Burne-Jones's career is influenced by his relationship with Rossetti, the second phase can be characterized by his friendship with William and Frances Graham.

William Graham first saw Burne-Jones's work exhibited in 1864.<sup>80</sup> Graham and Burne-Jones's love of the Italian *quattrocento* and early Netherlandish painters

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<sup>78</sup> John Deathridge, "Wagner Lives: Issues in Autobiography," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner*, edited by Thomas S. Grey, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 12. Wagner's music-dramas, especially *The Ring of the Nibelung*, have themes of utopian societies and capitalist greed. Siegfried, the hero of *The Ring Cycle*, has been interpreted as a model for a free socialist "New Man," destined to destroy the oppressive capitalist system.

<sup>79</sup> This emotion and agency is within stark contrast of how Pre-Raphaelite women are portrayed in paintings: languid and dreamy. I owe my foundational reading of Frances Graham on the *Graham Piano* to Griselda Pollock. Pollock uses the "Morris" face to describe the use of Jane Morris's face by multiple Pre-Raphaelite painters. I use this same idea for the use of Frances Graham's face by Burne-Jones in several muse-like roles. Griselda Pollock, "Woman as Sign: Psychoanalytic Readings," 151.

<sup>80</sup> Garnett, "The Letters and Collection of William Graham—Pre-Raphaelite Patron and Pre-Raphael Collector," 166.

brought them together as patron and artist.<sup>81</sup> The time spent with Graham as his patron prompted some of the most artistically productive years of Burne-Jones's career, 1870—77. Their business relationship evolved into a friendship with both Graham and his daughter, Frances. Frances Graham later recalled that her relationship with Edward Burne-Jones gave her “all the treasures of one of the most wonderful minds that was ever created.”<sup>82</sup> Burne-Jones wrote that both Frances and her father “were wonderfully interwoven in my imagination.”<sup>83</sup> Burne-Jones displays his affection for both father and daughter in the *Graham Piano* by creating an art object shows his affinity for Graham's aesthetic taste and his unrequited love for Frances.

Born in 1858, Frances Graham was the fourth of the eight Graham children. She frequently accompanied her father to the studios of Rossetti and Burne-Jones.<sup>84</sup> However, Burne-Jones took a special liking to her. Affectionately called “the Botticelli,” referring to her deep-set and rounded facial features, as well as to her father's art collection, Frances's appearance haunts Burne-Jones's works of the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>85</sup> There is only one known portrait of Frances dating from 1879, although she is specifically featured in *The Golden Stairs* and *The Call For Perseus* (Figs. 24 & 25).<sup>86</sup> Her relationship with Burne-Jones has been characterized as a platonic crush, but it would appear to encompass much more than that, as Burne-

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<sup>81</sup> Garnett, “The Letters and Collection of William Graham—Pre-Raphaelite Patron and Pre-Raphael Collector,” 166.

<sup>82</sup> Frances Horner, *Time Remembered*, W. Heinemann, Limited, (London, 1933), 26.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from Edward Burne-Jones to Frances Horner, August 1885.

<sup>84</sup> MacCarthy, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination*, 276.

<sup>85</sup> Wildman and Christian, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, 245.

<sup>86</sup> Frances Graham is the figure at the bottom left corner of *The Golden Stairs*, holding cymbals.

Jones felt a deep betrayal when Frances married.<sup>87</sup> In the *Graham Piano*, Burne-Jones intertwines Frances in an artistic and musical performance, reflecting their complicated relationship as artist and muse.

### **The *Graham Piano's* Design and Decoration**

After decorating the *Priestley Piano*, Burne-Jones wanted to extend his piano reform ideas to the shape of the Victorian grand piano. Burne-Jones first tested his piano design ideas in 1878. He collaborated with London piano manufacturers, John Broadwood & Sons.<sup>88</sup> With the *Priestley Piano* and its heavy Victorian shape in mind, Burne-Jones took inspiration from the linear form of seventeenth-century harpsichords, which he would have been able to examine at the South Kensington Museum, now the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 26).<sup>89</sup> Georgiana writes in *Memorials* that “Mr. W.A.S. Benson helped him in the practical details of designing a case which strictly followed the line of the strings inside—as used to be done with harpsichords.”<sup>90</sup> Omitting the rounded end of the contemporary Victorian grand, Burne-Jones thought the grand piano’s shape should follow the straight line of the piano’s strings (Fig. 27).<sup>91</sup> However, Broadwood & Sons had recently turned to

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<sup>87</sup> Wildman and Christian, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, 245.

<sup>88</sup> David Wainwright, “The Partnership Breaks Up” in *Broadwood by Appointment: A History*, (London: Quiller Press, 1982), 209.

This piano is not the *Graham Piano*, but more of an initial experiment in going back to the harpsichord form.

<sup>89</sup> “The History of the Musical Instrument Collection,” last modified January 2017, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/musical-instruments-collection-history/> Victoria and Albert Museum has held two Ruckers harpsichords in its collection of musical instruments since it first acquired them in the 1860s.

<sup>90</sup> Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, 111. William Arthur Smith Benson (1854-1924) was a metalwork designer who became a founding member of the Art Worker’s Guild and eventually the Arts & Crafts Exhibition society in 1886.

<sup>91</sup> Wainwright, “The Partnership Breaks Up,” 209.

cross-stringing their pianos. Straight-stringing was seen as old-fashioned.<sup>92</sup> Yet, Burne-Jones was convinced that his combination of an old-fashioned stringing style with an updated harpsichord form was the future of piano design, saying that he found “no special difficulty in combining proper musical mechanism with a pleasing form.”<sup>93</sup> Burne-Jones wanted a sharper form for the Victorian grand, which included a rectangular keyboard and a harpsichord style trestle, where the legs of the piano are connected instead of separate.<sup>94</sup>

Commissioned in honor of Frances’s twenty-first birthday, Burne-Jones designed and decorated the *Graham Piano* while reprising his collaboration with John Broadwood & Sons. In the *Graham Piano’s* decoration, Burne-Jones uses a mix of both Greek mythological and Italian Renaissance references in the designs. Upon first glance the inner and outer lid, soundboard, and case display seemingly unrelated decorations, each having their own distinct artistic reference. The *Graham Piano* facilitates a musical performance, where the performer, Frances Graham, is also visually portrayed in the decorations around and inside the piano. She is the visual and sonic theme that ties the *Graham Piano’s* decorations and design together.

Inside the piano there are decorative references to seventeenth-century harpsichords. On the soundboard Burne-Jones paints *trompe l’oeil* flowers on top a gold and burgundy pattern. He also writes the Graham family motto, “ne oublie” or “do not forget,” on a banner across the soundboard, as though the strings have the

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<sup>92</sup> Wainwright, “The Partnership Breaks Up,” 209.

<sup>93</sup> Wilson, “Burne-Jones and Piano Reform,” 344.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.



power to project that message to Frances’s audience (Fig. 28). On the outside lid Burne-Jones paints a seated figure of a poet looking up through laurel branches to his female muse, who bears a striking resemblance to Frances Graham. The muse also holds a scroll inscribed with “ne oublie,” situating her as a member of the Graham family (Figs. 29 & 30). A cartouche with the thirteenth-century Italian poem by Guido Cavalcanti rests in the laurels.<sup>95</sup> The poem begins:

Fresca rosa novella	Fresh new rose
Piacente primavera	Delighting spring
Per prata e per riviera	By meadow and bank
Gaiamente cantando	Gaily singing
Vostro fin pregio mando a la verdura	I declare your rare gifts to the greenery <sup>96</sup>

Frances, as a young Victorian woman, could be interpreted as the “fresh new rose” who lightheartedly sings and performs through this piano. The poet in this decoration looks up to the muse through the laurels, as though Burne-Jones has captured him in the moment of inspiration for this poem. The muse, with her deep-set eyes and round nose, looks nearly identical to the Frances Graham portrait from 1879 (Fig. 31). Frances is being situated as the angelic muse to the poet.

On the inside lid is a nude Mother Earth surrounded by small putti, some angelic and some devilish, entangled by vines (Fig. 32). This scene does not fit with the muted hues of the rest of the piano’s decorations. Compared to the gray and gold tones of the outer case, opening the lid is a visual shock. In the same manner that opening the lid of the grand piano makes the instrument louder, the inside lid

<sup>95</sup> Wildman and Christian, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, 277.

<sup>96</sup> Translation provided by Stephen Wildman and John Christian in the catalog for Edward Burne-Jones: *Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, 276-77.

decorations make the piano's physical appearance bolder. The difference between the inside lid and the exterior decorations is startling.<sup>97</sup> Historian Oliver Garnett suggests it is an inside joke between Graham and Burne-Jones, both lovers of Botticelli, and it is described as a "Botticelli run riot" in correspondence between Graham and Burne-Jones.<sup>98</sup> The figure of the Botticellian Mother Earth echoes Frances Graham's nickname of "the Botticelli."<sup>99</sup> In this idealized and stylized academic nude, Frances Graham's head seems to be pasted on a Renaissance artist's ideal muse (Fig. 33). By placing her likeness in a scene that reflects a canonical female nude, Burne-Jones is again emphasizing her role as his muse.

Roundels along the side of the case display the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. In these roundels we see another representation of Frances. Based on early illustrations for William Morris's poem, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, as well as for Morris & Company tiling, the roundels along the sides of the *Graham Piano* feature Frances Graham as Eurydice.<sup>100</sup> In this narrative, the roundels begin at the end of the back panel with *The Garden* depicting Orpheus and Eurydice happily married (Fig. 34). Orpheus's head is turned away from the viewer, while Eurydice is facing the viewer, making it clear that this is Frances Graham within the role of Eurydice. The next roundel, *The Garden Poisoned*, depicts Eurydice's death by snakebite (Fig. 35). In *The Gate of Hell* and *The Doorkeeper* Orpheus descends into the underworld, attempting to rescue Eurydice (Figs. 36 & 37). Over the keyboard are two separate

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<sup>97</sup> Garnett, "The Letters and Collection of William Graham—Pre-Raphaelite Patron and Pre-Raphael Collector," 168.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Wildman and Christian, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, 275.

but matching roundels of Orpheus and Eurydice, *Across the Flames* (Fig. 38). Orpheus holds his lyre while pushing through the flames, while a distressed Eurydice falls through the flames as they envelop her. On the player's right-hand side, facing the audience is the larger scene of Orpheus playing his lyre for the rulers of underworld, Pluto and Proserpina, *The House of Pluto* (Fig. 39). In this scene, Burne-Jones joins Frances Graham in the sequence, placing himself in the role of Pluto. After Orpheus's musical performance convinces Pluto to release Eurydice and let her return with Orpheus, there are two decorations depicting Orpheus leading Eurydice away, *The Regained Lost* (Fig. 40). However, Orpheus disobeys Pluto and looks behind him at Eurydice, and she slips back into death. At the rear end of the case is *The Death of Orpheus*, depicting Orpheus slain by the women of Thrace after refusing their sexual advances (Fig. 41). Ultimately at the end of this narrative, Pluto or Burne-Jones, keeps Eurydice, or Frances Graham, in the underworld with him. This reflects an imaginary and idyllic version of what could not happen in real life. In 1882, a year after the *Graham Piano's* completion, Frances announced her engagement to John Horner.<sup>101</sup> Burne-Jones felt betrayed by his muse and there was no correspondence between them for the next two years.<sup>102</sup>

Frances Graham's appearance becomes a part of a schematic repetition of performances: poet's muse, Botticellian Mother Earth, and Eurydice. As her

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<sup>101</sup> MacCarthy, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination*, 337. John Horner, also known as Jack Horner, was the inspiration for the nursery rhyme "Little Jack Horner." He was also a country landowner with a large estate who later became a government Commissioner of Woods and Forests.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 336.

appearance is repeated, so is her gender performance and musical performance.<sup>103</sup> While this gender performance is taking place, her musical performance allows her a sense of agency. The shape of the *Graham Piano* enhances Frances's role in the visual narrative. Unlike the *Priestley Piano*, the performer of the *Graham Piano* can gaze back at her audience in multiple ways. Firstly, Frances Graham herself can confront her audience directly by looking back upon them as she plays music. Secondly, Frances Graham as Eurydice, the Botticellian Mother Earth, and angelic muse, invites her audience to inspect the *Graham Piano*. In gazing upon the decorations, they are confronted by Frances through her multiple appearances. While Eurydice and the poet's muse gaze downwards, playing coy and sometimes elusive, the Botticellian Mother Earth on the inside lid holds an empty, haunting gaze for the audience-viewer. The decorations act in a similar manner to performers in a Wagner music-drama. Frances's musical performance allows them to act on the metaphorical stage of the *Graham Piano*. Unlike the *Priestley Piano*, where the performer's agency is denied by the piano's upright shape, the *Graham Piano* provides Frances Graham a sense of agency via its physical design and her ability to gaze back upon her audience. Frances Graham's musical performance brings these decorations to life and becomes a key component in transforming the *Graham Piano* into a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

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<sup>103</sup> The visual repetition of her likeness in several muse like roles harkens back to Butler's idea of the repetition of acts constituting a gender performance. Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," 519.

## **The Graham Piano as Gesamtkunstwerk**

German composer Richard Wagner's idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or "total work of art," works with the shape of the *Graham Piano*, to create a metaphorical stage for multiple art forms to be showcased. During the spring of 1877, after the failure of his Bayereuth Festival, Wagner toured England, playing several concerts at the Royal Albert Hall.<sup>104</sup> Though Burne-Jones and Wagner exchanged friendly letters for the duration of Wagner's English tour, the two artists never met.<sup>105</sup> Both Wagner and Burne-Jones had an interest in the expression of mood and feeling, as well as in a mythic and idyllic past, but there is no direct artistic connection or inspiration between the two artists. Georgiana writes in *Memorials* that Burne-Jones "did not, as a rule, love Wagner's music."<sup>106</sup> Yet, the quality of sound and the emotional effect of Wagner's music within the music-drama *Parsifal* truly moved Burne-Jones. Burne-Jones writes,

I heard Wagner's *Parsifal* the other day—I nearly forgave him—he knew how to win me. He made sounds that are really and truly (I assure and I ought to know) the very sounds that were to be heard in the Sangraal Chapel, I recognized them in a moment and knew he had done it accurately.<sup>107</sup>

The sonic quality of an opera, a "music-drama," or a melody played in a drawing room was important to Burne-Jones. Music, in order for it to reach its full potential as an art form, needed to evoke emotion from its audience, as Wagner had done for Burne-Jones in *Parsifal*. In the physical design of the *Graham Piano*, Burne-Jones

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<sup>104</sup> Barry Millington, "Edward Burne-Jones, George Eliot, and Richard Wagner: A Collision of Like-minded Souls," *The Wagner Journal*, Vol. 10, 26.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>106</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, 43.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, Sangraal Chapel, which housed the Holy Grail, is the subject of Wagner's music-drama, *Parsifal*, and Burne-Jones's series of tapestries called, *The Holy Grail* tapestries.

hoped it would be able to produce a sound capable of bringing forth such emotion. While Wagner was not popular in England, during the late 1870s and early 1880s, Wagner's theories about music, performance, and achieving the *Gesamtkunstwerk* were still being discussed by a very small group of British artists, which included Burne-Jones.

Within Burne-Jones's social circle playwright Wagner influenced George Bernard Shaw and poet Algernon Charles Swinburne the most.<sup>108</sup> However, English Wagnerites held to loose and varying interpretations of Wagner's music and writings. Burne-Jones was not an explicit advocate for Wagner, however discussions of Wagner's musical theories are documented in correspondence with Swinburne.<sup>109</sup> I do not intend to argue that Burne-Jones was directly inspired by Wagner's writings and music in the *Graham Piano*; however, I do contend that at this time there is an artistic affinity between Burne-Jones's *Graham Piano* and Wagner's idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Although not demonstrated within the context of the theater, like Wagner intended, Burne-Jones intertwines the sister arts in the *Graham Piano*. This interlacing of artistic mediums is outlined in Wagner's *Artwork of the Future*:

Not one rich faculty of the separate arts will remain unused in the United Artwork of the Future; in it will each attain its first complete appraisal. Thus, especially, will the manifold developments of Tone, so peculiar to our instrumental music, unfold their utmost wealth with this Artwork: nay, Tone will incite the mimetic art of Dance to entirely new discoveries, and no less swell the breath of Poetry to unimagined fill. For Music, in her solitude, has

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<sup>108</sup> Shaw wrote an essay on how to be "The Perfect Wagnerite" and Swinburne took inspiration from Wagner's music-drama *Tannhäuser* for his poem *Laus Veneris* Francis Jacques Sypher Jr. and Francis Jacques Sypher, "Swinburne and Wagner," *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 9, No. ½, An Issue Commemorating the Centennial of the Publication of "Songs before Sunrise," 1971, 169. Burne-Jones took inspiration from the poem and made a painting of the same title between 1873-1878.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

fashioned for herself an organ which is capable of the highest reaches of expression.<sup>110</sup>

Wagner believed in a unification of the arts and through this amalgamation each separate art form would reach its full potential of expression. Wagner stipulates that a *Gesamtkunstwerk* is comprised of a combination of poetry, music (tone), and dance. Each one cannot go unused. Similarly, the *Graham Piano* utilizes all facets of the arts. There is poetry written on the outside lid of the piano and music coming forth from the piano. The music or “Tone” incites Frances Graham’s expressive bodily reaction and could be considered a form of dance.<sup>111</sup> The decorations around the *Graham Piano* also create the illusion that Frances has been moving through the sequential illustrations, as well as in the outer and inner lid. Therefore, the *Graham Piano* manifests as a version of Wagner’s “United Artwork of the Future.”<sup>112</sup>

In the *Graham Piano* we see not only a British interpretation of the Wagnerian idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, but also a rather feminine one. In *fin-de-siècle* Britain, the term “Wagnerite” had separate connotations depending on the Wagnerite’s gender. George Bernard Shaw, who writes the first symbolic and allegorical interpretation of *The Ring of the Nibelung* (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) in 1898, perhaps best characterizes the male Wagnerite. Shaw writes this essay from a British perspective, removing Wagner’s music-drama from its German historical and political context.<sup>113</sup> Shaw interprets *The Ring* as a Socialist allegory that exposes the oppression and injustice of capitalism. To the British male Wagnerite, Wagner’s

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<sup>110</sup> Richard Wagner, *The Art-Work of the Future*, translated by William Ashton Ellis, 1895 190.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Barry Millington, “Der Ring des Nibelungen: Conception and Interpretation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner*, edited by Thomas S. Grey, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 80.

theories reflected an ideological commitment to Socialism via the idyllic medievalist past.<sup>114</sup>

Conversely, the female Wagnerian audience was susceptible to what musicologist Elliot Zuckerman calls, “Tristanism.”<sup>115</sup> Tristanism, named for the female audience’s infatuation with the character of Tristan in the music-drama, *Tristan and Isolde* (*Tristan und Isolde*), was seen as an inferior version of Wagnerism.<sup>116</sup> A female Wagnerite, or Tristanite, was more concerned with being infatuated with the players on the stage and her emotional reaction to the music being performed, rather than being ideologically committed to Wagner.<sup>117</sup> This was viewed as a feminine, less rational response to Wagner’s music-dramas. Frances Graham could have been grouped into this category, as she invited John Ruskin to the first English performance of Wagner’s *The Master Singers of Nuremberg* (*Die Meistersinger*).<sup>118</sup> While Ruskin complained of the performance, Frances, who was an accomplished musician and theatergoer, enjoyed Wagner’s music-drama.<sup>119</sup>

While her enjoyment of a Wagner production does not mean that Frances Graham was the stereotypical Tristanite or Wagnerite, seeing such a passion-filled performance on stage could likely inspire Frances Graham to perform her own on the *Graham Piano*. Similarly, the *Graham Piano*, itself a dramatic and theatrical art object could likely incite the same kind of expressive and impassioned performance.

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<sup>114</sup> Barry Millington, “Der Ring des Nibelungen: Conception and Interpretation,” 81.

<sup>115</sup> Elliott Zuckerman, *The First Hundred Years of Wagner’s Tristan*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 30.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> MacCarthy, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination*, 276.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.



As evidenced through Burne-Jones's lack of political motivation and focus on aesthetic beauty, the *Graham Piano* reflects this feminine side of Wagnerism. Burne-Jones, unlike his good friend and colleague William Morris, felt no need to become politically involved with British Socialists.<sup>120</sup> In terms of theater, music, and art, he wanted to be moved by what he saw and heard, as demonstrated by his reaction to Wagner's *Parsifal*. He was more drawn to the aesthetics, both visual and musical, of a Wagner music-drama than reading into the political implications of the symbolism used. Burne-Jones's obsession with Frances Graham can be likened to that of a Tristanite. Like a Tristanite, his response to the look of Frances Graham was emotional rather than rational. While he may not have lost all self control at the sight of Frances Graham, this artistic investment in a woman over twenty years his junior shows an overwhelming emotional connection between artist and muse.

Frances Graham's body is an important addition in completing this web of artistic forms. In her confrontational positioning at the piano, she faces her audience, creating additional agency. She can further her connection with the audience. In the audience's ability to gaze upon her, they lose her to the performance, the way Orpheus gazes back upon Eurydice and loses her to the Underworld. In Burne-Jones's rather artistically obsessive relationship with Frances Graham, creating this elaborate, all-art encompassing piano was perhaps a way to deal with losing his muse to another man.

The *Graham Piano's* decorations are arranged in such a manner that the performer has no choice but to situate her body within the narrative that Burne-

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<sup>120</sup> Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, 139. Georgiana writes in *Memorials* that in the 1880s there was a "divergence of opinion between himself and Morris on the subject of Socialism."

Jones arranges around her. If Georgiana is situated between the representations of wife and muse, then Frances is positioned as only the muse. While she acts out several roles within the piano's decorations, reflecting her role as Burne-Jones's muse, the piano itself is all about Frances. The *Graham Piano* complements her performance through poetry, music, and visual art. This melding of the arts, along with the shape of the piano, gives Frances Graham some agency. While the piano and a Wagnerian music-drama as interpreted by Burne-Jones still hold feminine connotations, through the *Graham Piano's* shape and being a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, it provides Frances Graham a sense of agency.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE *IONIDES PIANO*

In George Bernard Shaw's 1898 book of essays, "The Perfect Wagnerite: A Commentary on the Niblung's Ring," he makes a disparaging remark about both Victorian popular music and interior decoration,

When a musician composes according to a set metrical pattern, the selection of the pattern and the composition of the first stave (a stave in music corresponds to a line in verse) generally completes the creative effort. All the rest follows more or less mechanically to fill up the pattern, an air being very like a wall-paper design in this respect.<sup>121</sup>

Although Shaw is criticizing both simple popular music such as *Pop Goes the Weasel* and *Yankee Doodle* and the kind of wallpaper Morris & Company produced, the connection he makes to music and Victorian domestic spaces highlights how the piano contributed to the domestic interior.<sup>122</sup> Likening a simple musical composition to wallpaper design, as a melody that repeats and essentially surrounds the listener, Shaw's ideas are embodied in the design and decoration of Burne-Jones's third piano, the *Ionides Piano*. The *Ionides Piano* was made for Alexander Constantine Ionides (A.C.) in 1883 to occupy his drawing room, which was inspired by the Aesthetic Movement.

In the *Ionides Piano* we see the influence of music within the Victorian interior, both as an important part of interior design and home life. The playing of the piano and governing the domestic space is an expected part of a Victorian woman's gender performance. The previous pianos that were discussed highlight

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<sup>121</sup> George Bernard Shaw, "The Old and the New Music" in *The Perfect Wagnerite: A Commentary on the Niblung's Ring*, (New York City, New York: Time-Life Incorporated, 1972), 97.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

their female performer in different ways. The *Priestley Piano*'s decorations border each side of Georgiana Burne-Jones, trapping her in a musical gendered performance. The *Graham Piano*'s combination of visual art, poetry, and music emphasize Frances Graham throughout the piano, theatricalizing her musical performance. The *Ionides Piano* blends into a Morris & Company designed drawing room, joining the other pieces of decorated furniture, art objects and the performer's Aesthetic clothing. Music and gilded floral patterning of the piano's case fill the interior space, both physically and sonically, making it an object to adorn the Aesthetic drawing room.

In this section I propose that the *Ionides Piano* is both an aesthetic object that complements its female performer and surroundings through its silver-gilt and gold gesso decorations, as well as a beautiful machine for a bourgeois woman to activate and work. As aesthetic objects, woman, piano, and interior blend together. As an object made by Morris & Company, the *Ionides Piano* cannot be divorced from Morris's socialist aesthetic concerns, despite Burne-Jones wanting to distance himself from politics. The piano is perhaps an unexpected machine, but it acts like that of a loom. They are both machines that to some extent produce a handcrafted product: textiles and music. As opposed to the manufactured and mass-produced *Priestley Piano* or large textile factories, both have mechanical qualities that are then activated and manipulated by its performer to achieve the product she desires. The female performer of the *Ionides Piano* is in turn performing her own automaton-like gendered musical performance, while also adhering to Morris's ideas of producing

useful products that are enjoyed by both the worker and consumer.<sup>123</sup> The *Ionides Piano* being “useful work” for women is intensified by the fact that, although Burne-Jones designed the piano, Kate Faulkner, a wallpaper designer for Morris & Company, hand painted the decorative floral patterning.<sup>124</sup>

The *Ionides Piano* does not hold the direct connection to a specific female player like the *Priestley Piano* or the *Graham Piano*. It was not made for or played upon by a specific woman in Burne-Jones’s life. The decorations, metallic floral patterning, have no allegorical or narrative theme that directly comments upon the female player’s role. John Broadwood & Sons, using the same design from the *Graham Piano*, built the *Ionides Piano*. Burne-Jones designed the floral decoration, which was then painted on the piano by Kate Faulkner. As the final piano in Burne-Jones’s career, its lack of narrative ornamentation situates the piano within the Aesthetic movement. The decorations are not moralizing or didactic, making it a *l’art pour l’art* object.<sup>125</sup> The *Ionides Piano*’s design was produced multiple times through Morris & Company, allowing for multiple upper middle class women to decorate their home with a Burne-Jones piano.<sup>126</sup> However, opposed to the amount of pianos being mass-produced at this time, the *Ionides Piano* was produced in limited quantities as a fine art object.

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<sup>123</sup> William Morris, “*Useful Work versus Useless Toil*,” *William Morris on Art and Socialism*, edited by Norman Kelvin, Mineola, (New York: Dover Publications, 1999), 208.

<sup>124</sup> Morris, “*Useful Work versus Useless Toil*,” *William Morris on Art and Socialism*, 208.

<sup>125</sup> French for “art for art’s sake.” The phrase expresses a philosophy that the intrinsic value of art, and the only “true” art, is removed from a didactic, moral, or utilitarian function.

<sup>126</sup> Wainwright, “The Partnership Breaks Up,” 212.

## **The *Ionides Piano* as Aesthetic Art Object**

The Aesthetic Movement was a late nineteenth-century European arts movement, which maintained that art exists for only the sake of beauty and that art need serve no political or moral purpose. Burne-Jones became one of the founding artists of the Aesthetic Movement, which had its origins in Pre-Raphaelitism. The movement stylistically consumed those who subscribed to the Aesthetic lifestyle, such as the Ionides family. Their London home, No. 1 Holland Park, was meticulously decorated with patterned wallpaper, rugs, and furniture. Following the guidelines of published interior design books, such as Christopher Dresser's *Art of Decorative Design*, ornamentation to the Aestheticists warranted a higher status than pictorial art.<sup>127</sup> Aesthetic interiors were heavily patterned and decorated from floor to ceiling, engulfing their inhabitants with embellishment.

Not only did the Ionides family collect Aesthetic art, read Aesthetic literature, and listened to Aesthetic music, but they also decorated their homes with Aesthetic furniture and wore Aesthetic style clothing. Aesthetic dress rejected the tight lacing of the Victorian corset and embraced simple lines and beautiful, luxurious fabrics. Still pulled in at the waist, Aesthetic women's fashions often had billowing sleeves and skirts, as seen in William Blake Richmond's painting *Mrs. Luke Ionides* from 1882 (Fig. 43). While men were the primary decorators of the Aesthetic interior and buyers of Aesthetic furniture, women were expected to match this interior with dress that reflected the art movement. Their appearances were expected to be just

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<sup>127</sup> Caroline Dakers, "The Aesthetic Interior," in *The Holland Park Circle: Artists and Victorian Society*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 123. Christopher Dresser (1834-1904) was a designer and design theorist who was a pivotal figure in the Aesthetic Movement.

as gilt, ornate, and luxurious as that of the furniture and art objects within their home.

A.C. Ionides was a merchant, stockbroker, and avid art collector whose London home became a gathering place for political leaders, artists, writers, and musicians.<sup>128</sup> In 1864 he moved to No. 1 Holland Park and commissioned architects Thomas Jeckyll and Philip Webb, illustrator Walter Crane, and Morris & Company founder, William Morris, to decorate his new home.<sup>129</sup> Between 1864 and the late 1880s, A.C. and his son, Alexander (Alecco), transformed their home into a showcase of late Victorian decorative arts (Figs 43 & 44).<sup>130</sup> The drawing room at No. 1 Holland Park is where the *Ionides Piano* resided. The walls of the drawing room were covered in jacquard handloom woven silk and wool damask in the Morris & Co. pattern, “Flower Garden.”<sup>131</sup> The metallic colors were chosen to “suggest the beauties of inlaid metal.”<sup>132</sup> The *portière* that hung between the drawing room and the antiquities room was of the same metallic-looking fabric, as were the curtains and valances.<sup>133</sup> The ceiling was covered in a floral design of greens, blues, and oranges.<sup>134</sup> The floor had one of Morris’s Hammersmith carpets; the “Holland Park”

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<sup>128</sup> Charles Edward Harvey and Jon Press, “The Ionides Family and 1 Holland Park,” *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society* 18, (1994), 2.

<sup>129</sup> Harvey and Press, “The Ionides Family and 1 Holland Park,” 2. Although many of these designers would later be notable founders of the Arts and Crafts movement in the 1870s and 1880s they were still trying to find their voice as designers and architects. While major players of the movement did not want politics to intercede on art, such as Oscar Wilde, the designers of Holland Park had socialist and anarchist leanings and did not subscribe wholly to those Aesthetic ideals. They believed in good design, which is where these two movements intersect.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Caroline Dakers, “The Ionides—Patrons in Holland Park,” *The Holland Park Circle: Artists and Victorian Society*, 119.

<sup>132</sup> Linda Parry, *William Morris*, (London: Harry N. Abrams, 1996) 152.

<sup>133</sup> Dakers, “The Ionides—Patrons in Holland Park,” 119.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

carpet was a dark blue indigo field with a madder-red border (Fig. 45).<sup>135</sup> On top of this carpet stood the *Ionides Piano*. On the walls were paintings by Burne-Jones, *March Marigold* from 1870, *Pan and Psyche* from 1869—74, and *Spring* from 1884 (Figs 46-48).<sup>136</sup> These paintings, particularly *Spring* and *March Marigold*, reiterate the Aesthetic dress expected of the female performer of the *Ionides Piano*.

It was not just the abstract idea of music encompassing the drawing at No. 1 Holland Park; sheet music at this time also adhered to the heavily patterned look of the Aesthetic drawing room. In 1883 Walter Crane, who was one of the artists hired to design No. 1 Holland Park, illustrated a book of songs (Fig. 49). *Pan Pipes: A Book of Old Songs*, contained 51 musical scores and lyrics of old English ballads, newly arranged by composer Theo Marzials. Surrounding these musical scores were highly decorative, intricate illustrations done by Walter Crane (Figs. 50-52). In these illustrations, not only do we see similar floral patterning and Victorian medievalist imagery of the *Ionides Piano* and *Priestley Piano*, but also in each illustration that includes a woman, Crane dresses her in Aesthetic dress. In one illustration, “When the Bright God of Day,” Crane depicts a woman at a keyboard instrument. Her dress pattern matches the leaves that seem to be encroaching on her space, as well as the border around her. She displays the rigidity expected of a female bourgeois piano player. The newspaper *The Spectator* wrote that *Pan Pipes* was “suitable in shape to be placed on a pianoforte desk” and “produces as a whole a charmingly decorative effect.”<sup>137</sup> If placed at the *Ionides Piano*, it would not only provide the old English

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<sup>135</sup> Dakers, “The Ionides—Patrons in Holland Park,” 119.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> *The Spectator: A Weekly Review of Politics, Literature, Theology, and Art* November 4, 1882, 1416.



ballads Burne-Jones personally loved to the atmosphere of the drawing room, but also add to the already heavily patterned and ornamented domestic space.

The *Ionides Piano* complemented the Holland Park drawing room, melding into the metallic color scheme on the walls and matching the floral patterning all around the room. The piano, as a piece of furniture that creates music through the performer, adds to this enveloping of the drawing room's occupants. William Morris's interior design philosophy set out to delight the senses. He writes that the modern man or woman is "busy or sluggish, eager or unhappy, and our eyes are apt to get dulled to this eventfulness of form in those things which we are always looking at."<sup>138</sup> Morris believed that the decoration of the home ought "to sharpen our dulled senses."<sup>139</sup> The female performer and the *Ionides Piano*, as Aesthetic art objects, add to the Aesthetic drawing room. Every object that is placed within the room complements the other. This unification and harmonizing of color and pattern within the drawing room at Holland Park displays the permeation of music into everyday life. Music coming from the *Ionides Piano* should surround its audience and performer like the patterned wallpaper, rugs, and sheet music.

### **The Aesthetic Interior & The Aesthetic Performer**

Those who subscribed to the Aesthetic style were often parodied in publications, such as *Punch* magazine; illustrated sheet music covers; and theater productions. The caricature of the Aesthetic women ultimately evolved from Rossetti and Burne-Jones's depictions of women from the 1860s. She was the

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<sup>138</sup> William Morris, "The Lesser Arts" in *William Morris on Art and Socialism*, ed. Norman Kelvin, (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications), 1999, 2.

<sup>139</sup> Morris, "The Lesser Arts," 2.

creation of the “painter-architect-designer,” an object of beauty and desire that complemented her surroundings.<sup>140</sup> Tall, slender, and draped in flowing garments, the Aesthetic woman can be seen in paintings such as *The Day Dream* from 1880 by Rossetti (Fig. 53). In this painting, Morris’s wife, Jane, with her full lips and languid eyes, looks off into the distance. Her hair, although pulled back, still has an element of unruliness, and her blue-green dress is loosely fitted and matches the greenery surrounding her. While Rossetti’s depiction of the Aesthetic woman is glamorous, she is also depicted in cartoons as a gaunt, frail slave to her fashionable lifestyle. The illustrated sheet music cover for *The High Art Maiden* depicts a woman wearing a loose aesthetic dress, holding a lily and looking in a pained, lovelorn fashion at a blue and white vase of sunflowers (Fig. 54). The room she is in has Chinese pottery, Japanese fans, and peacock feathers, which were commonly used as illustrative short-hand for the Aesthetic movement. The manner in which she is posed mirrors the sunflowers, making her appear to be just another object placed within the Aesthetic interior. The female figure depicted wears the Aesthetic fashions that would have been popular within the Ionides and Burne-Jones circle. For women, such as A.C. Ionides’s daughter Aglaia Cornoio who made costumes for Burne-Jones’s studio, their dress code would have contributed to the aesthetic unity of No. 1 Holland Park’s drawing room.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Anne Anderson, “Aesthetic Woman: The ‘Fearful Consequence’ of ‘Living Up’ to One’s Antiques,” in *Bodies and Things in Nineteenth Century Literature and Culture*, ed. Katharina Boehm, (London: Palgrave Macmillan Publisher’s Limited, 2012), 177.

<sup>141</sup> Wildman and Christian, “Pictured Abstractions,” in *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, 313.

Fashion was an important part of the Aesthetic woman's lifestyle. What a woman wore was just as important as the furnishings in her home. Within a woman's domestic domain, fashion and interior design were artistically interconnected. Again, this was seen most notably in Wilde's "A Philosophy of Dress." He writes, "In decorating a room, unless one wants the room to be either chaos or a museum, one must be quite certain of one's color scheme. So also in dress. The harmony of color must be clearly settled."<sup>142</sup> In aligning pleasing interior design with a pleasing dress, Wilde is resigning the Aesthetic woman to her domestic interior. Her color-scheme must correspond with her surroundings. She must not clash with her fellow objects.

Wilde also states that, "the beauty of a dress depends entirely and absolutely on the loveliness it shields, and on the freedom and motion that it does not impede."<sup>143</sup> The performer of *Ionides Piano* is enhanced by this less restrictive style of dress. As her drawing room is constantly in motion she must be able to keep up in her musical performance. Her ability to move as she plays the piano thus enhances the visual quality of her performance. The loose fitting, intensely patterned dress, as it moves with the performer, would create an optical illusion of moving floral patterning around the room, making it come alive into its own living entity. Music is not only incorporated into the Victorian drawing room, but also as an accessory to the performer of the *Ionides Piano*'s style of dress. The *Ionides Piano* reflects the latest trend in dress and interior design. Music and its instruments are a part of the modern costume. In her freedom of dress comes a freedom of musical expression.

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<sup>142</sup> Oscar Wilde, "A Philosophy of Dress," 1885.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

The Aesthetic man is similarly caricatured as effeminate, as seen in the sheet music illustration for “Quite Too Utterly Utter” (Fig. 55). The Aesthetic man is compared to the willowy sunflower, his hands clasped as the beauty of the floral arrangement in its blue and white pattern china vase overcomes him. Yet, while there is a similar effeminate treatment of the male Aestheticist, his role in Victorian society still has not changed. This shift in dress for the Victorian woman has the ability to change how she presents herself aesthetically and musically, through the freedom of movement.

### **Kate Faulkner and the *Ionides Piano* as Machine**

In discussing the *Ionides Piano* and how it facilitates the feminine gender performance, we must also consider Kate Faulkner as the female worker and designer who painted the pattern upon the *Ionides Piano*. Kate Faulkner was the sister of one of the founding members of Morris & Company, Charles Faulkner. She started working for Morris & Company in 1861 as a wallpaper designer.<sup>144</sup> Her talents were extensive and included embroidery, gesso decoration, and painting china. These talents were also reflections of gender boundaries. Victorian women were a decisive factor in the growth of specific areas of the decorative arts.<sup>145</sup> Domestic architecture, interior design, and decoration were encouraged of the women workers of Morris & Company.<sup>146</sup> William Morris called these skills “The

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<sup>144</sup> Anthea Callen, *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870-1914*, (London: Astragal Books, 1979), 223.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>146</sup> Callen, *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870-1914*, 223.

Lesser Arts.”<sup>147</sup> Kate Faulkner’s decoration is what makes the *Ionides Piano* an accessory or a facilitator to the agency of the female performer. In decorating the domestic space, she is enhancing the piano’s feminine connotations through her womanly talents. This further prompts the feminine gender performance, while also reflecting the shift in women’s roles in the workforce. Her decoration is also what sets the *Ionides Piano* apart from other Aesthetic style furnishings of the same era.

During the Victorian Era, the need for suitable occupations for gentlewomen became increasingly apparent.<sup>148</sup> Paying occupations for gentlewomen were usually that of governess or teacher, but striving towards marriage was the more socially acceptable option.<sup>149</sup> Yet, as the numbers of single women increased after the 1860s, competition in the field of education grew and the arts came to be recognized as a place where a woman could earn her living.<sup>150</sup> In her role as a designer for Morris & Company, Kate Faulkner was working in a field that was an extension of the conventional female responsibilities of the Victorian Era.<sup>151</sup>

The *Ionides Piano* as an Aesthetic art object would seemingly contrast with William Morris’s socialist ideologies and goals for Morris & Company products. Aestheticism, as seen in the Aesthetic objects, caricatures, and portraits presented

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<sup>147</sup> William Morris wrote an essay entitled “The Lesser Arts,” highlighting the importance of interior design, while still maintaining its feminine and therefore lesser than the high art of painting, which was seen as masculine.

<sup>148</sup> Anthea Callen, *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870-1914*, 25.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Art-work for Women II, *Art Journal*, March 1872, 102, as cited in Anthea Callen’s *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870-1914*, 24. “The female population in the 1860s and 1870s was increasingly outnumbering men. Nearly half of the six million women in Great Britain in 1872 had to financially support themselves and or relatives.”

<sup>151</sup> Callen, 24.

did not value representing an active female body.<sup>152</sup> The Aesthetic movement preferred female subjects lethargic and indolent, therefore associated with the languid femininity of Rossetti and Burne-Jones's paintings.<sup>153</sup> The passive feminine body was meant to be like an object or a decoration. The industrial masculine world was not a favorable subject for the Aestheticists either, because it did not possess attractive or decorative elements. However, I suggest that pianos were perhaps the only machine that could be activated in an aesthetically pleasing manner to the Aesthetic movement. This would reconcile the differences between the *Ionides Piano* being a product of William Morris's socialist ideologies and purely decorative Aesthetic object.

Pianos, which I have been examining as musical mechanisms that prompt the female gender performance, have mechanical aspects to them. Piano technology historian Edwin M. Good writes,

The piano is a machine. This may not be the first word that comes to mind to define the instrument, but it is perhaps the most inclusive...A machine accomplishes work, that is, it applies energy to some end. The piano's energy produces musical sound vibrations.<sup>154</sup>

The female performer applies force to the keys and sound emanates from the piano. If we think of a piano as a machine, a mechanism that produces music as activated by its player, we can see the radical nature of Kate Faulkner's work.

The female labor involved in the *Ionides Piano* comes from both Kate Faulkner and the female player. It is a collaborative performance of women working

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<sup>152</sup> Tim Barringer, "Aestheticism and Labor," in *Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 314.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Edwin M. Good, "Technology and the Piano," in *Giraffes, Black Dragons, and Other Pianos: A Technological History from Cristofori to the Modern Concert Grand*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 2.

to activate and decorate the *Ionides Piano*. The Aesthetic movement could not turn away an active body on a piano, working a machine as a means to beautify the domestic sphere. While the domestic piano still holds the power to train and discipline a Victorian woman, she has more control over this mechanism and her space than ever before. Also entering into this collaborative effort are the other inherently feminine objects that adorn the drawing room complementing the *Ionides Piano*. In the same manner that Frances Graham can claim the *Graham Piano* as her own, the Victorian female can reclaim her space because it blends into her lifestyle, which is designed in part by women. The female performer of the *Ionides Piano* could be interpreted as just another object of pleasure, both visually and sonically, within her drawing room. Yet, the drawing room, already denoted as a feminine space in Victorian England, is enhanced not only by the female performer's presence, but also by the feminine nature of the decorative objects presented in the room. The female performer of the *Ionides Piano* could be interpreted as just another object of pleasure, both visually and sonically, within her Aesthetic drawing room. Yet she is fulfilling William Morris's urge for the worker to produce something enjoyable: music from a beautiful piano and to enjoy creating such a product. Faulkner gains pleasure by contributing a beautiful object to a beautiful drawing room. The female performer, as she works the piano, produces pleasurable sounds to fill the Aesthetic drawing room.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

From the beginning of Burne-Jones's venture into piano reform, he has always situated them within the domestic sphere, calling them "the very altar of homes."<sup>155</sup> As I have shown in this thesis, they decorate the domestic theater with their gilded designs, enthrall their audience with musical and mythological narratives, as well as remind their female performer of her place and station within the home. Within the context of Burne-Jones's oeuvre, pianos are decorative art objects that capture his interest in music and perhaps best reflect the capabilities of his theatrical imagination. These pianos also reflect how Burne-Jones constructed how the female performer should play her piano, being complicit in maintaining the rigidity in Victorian female piano performance. Although we see some semblance of agency within the *Graham Piano* and *Ionides Piano*, these pianos still comply with Victorian gender norms.

The *Priestley Piano* reflects the visual culture of Victorian female piano players. The *Priestley Piano's* decorations demonstrate the strict Victorian rules of femininity and what is expected of the female performer. Georgiana Burne-Jones fluctuates between the varying acceptable forms of femininity, as illustrated by her husband on the piano. Vulnerable, with her back to her audience, she enacts a strict and confined gender and musical performance. Yet, we see this change with the theatricality of the *Graham Piano*. Frances Graham is no longer in the vulnerable position of her back to her audience; she can gaze upon and confront her spectators

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<sup>155</sup> Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 111.



through the melding of visual art, music, and poetry. The *Graham Piano's* performance, like a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, is avant-garde theater. Finally, the *Ionides Piano* facilitates a similar confrontation of the audience, as well as being a canvas showcasing the abilities of a female designer. However, The *Ionides Piano* situates itself within both the turns the idea of the domestic space as symbolizing a woman's passivity in contrast to the productive male commercial world on its head.<sup>156</sup> The Burne-Jones pianos develop from a "fiery rosewood piece of ugliness" reflecting confining gender roles and prompting a restricted performance to a female powered and decorated machine.<sup>157</sup>

In the evolution from the upright *Priestley Piano* to the grand *Ionides Piano*, the female performer gains some semblance of agency. The *Priestley Piano's* decorations demonstrate the strict Victorian rules of femininity and what is expected of the female performer. Vulnerable, with her back to her audience, she enacts a strict and confined gender and musical performance. Yet, we see this change with the theatricality of the *Graham Piano*. Frances Graham is not in the vulnerable position of her back to her audience; she can gaze upon and confront her spectators through the melding of visual art, music, and poetry. Finally, the *Ionides Piano* facilitates a similar confrontation of the audience, as well as being a canvas showcasing female artistic work and talent. The Burne-Jones pianos develop from a standard Victorian upright reflecting confining gender roles and prompting a restricted performance to a female powered and decorated machine. By looking at the Burne-Jones Pianos through a feminist lens, examining the circumstances in

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<sup>156</sup> Callen, "Sexual Division of Labor in the Arts & Crafts Movement," 151.

<sup>157</sup> Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 111.

which these works were designed and decorated, as well as their respective female performers, we can better understand how they reflect and complicate the Victorian female gender performance. Each piano, its specific environment, and player reflect a particular phase in Burne-Jones life. Through examining these pianos we can see Burne-Jones's artistic interests and influences shift. We can also see that his construction of the idealized feminine body is not restricted to a two-dimensional painting. Burne-Jones can design an art object that further prompts his idealized woman into the gendered musical performance he desires.

## APPENDIX

### IMAGES



Figure 1: Frederick Priestley and Edward Burne-Jones, *Priestley Piano*, 1860, American Walnut; Shellac; Paint, Length: 127 cm, Height: 93.5 cm, Depth: 47 cm, Source: Given by Mrs J. W. Mackail, daughter of the artist to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1926.



Figure 2: Edward Burne-Jones and John Broadwood & Sons, *Graham Piano*, 1879-1880, case of painted wood, Height: 98 cm, Width: 142 cm, Length: 260 cm  
Source: Private Collection



Figure 3: Edward Burne-Jones, Kate Faulkner, and John Broadwood & Sons, 1883, oak, stained and decorated with gold and silver-gilt gesso, Length: 266 cm, Width: 140.5 cm, Height: 45.7 cm

Source: Given by Mrs A. C. Ionides to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1927



Figure 4: Bartolomeo Cristofori, *Grand Piano*, 1720, cypress, boxwood, paint, leather, fir, Height: 86.5 cm, Width: 95.6 cm, Length: 228.6 cm  
Source: Given by The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1889



Figure 5: Josef Danhauser, *Liszt at the Piano*, 1840, oil on canvas  
Source: Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany



Figure 6: Maurice Sand, *Caricature of Franz Liszt and George Sand*, 19<sup>th</sup> century,  
Source: Musée de la Musique



Figure 7: George Sand, *Caricature of Franz Liszt*, 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Source: Musée de la Musique





Figure 8: George Hamilton Barrable, *A Song Without Words*, 1880, oil on canvas,  
Source: Private Collection



Figure 9: Middleton Jameson, *At a Piano*, 1877, oil on canvas  
Source: Private Collection



Figure 10: William John Hennessy, *An Old Song*, 1874, Oil on canvas  
Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Figure 11: William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853, Oil on canvas  
Source: Tate Britain



Figure 12: Music room at The Grange, the Burne-Jones's first home. The Priestley Piano on left side of the room. Photograph by Frederick Hollyer, Source: National Monuments Record.



Figure 13: Edward Burne-Jones, Detail of *Le Chant d'Amour* Design on the *Priestley Piano*, 1860-1862, Source: Given by Mrs J. W. Mackail, daughter of the artist to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1926.



Figure 14: Edward Burne-Jones, *Le Chant d'Amour*, 1868-77, Oil on canvas, Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Figure 15: Edward Burne-Jones and Charles Fairfax Murray, *Saint Cecilia*, after 1874,  
Source: Private Collection



Figure 16: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848-49, Oil paint on canvas, Source: Tate Britain



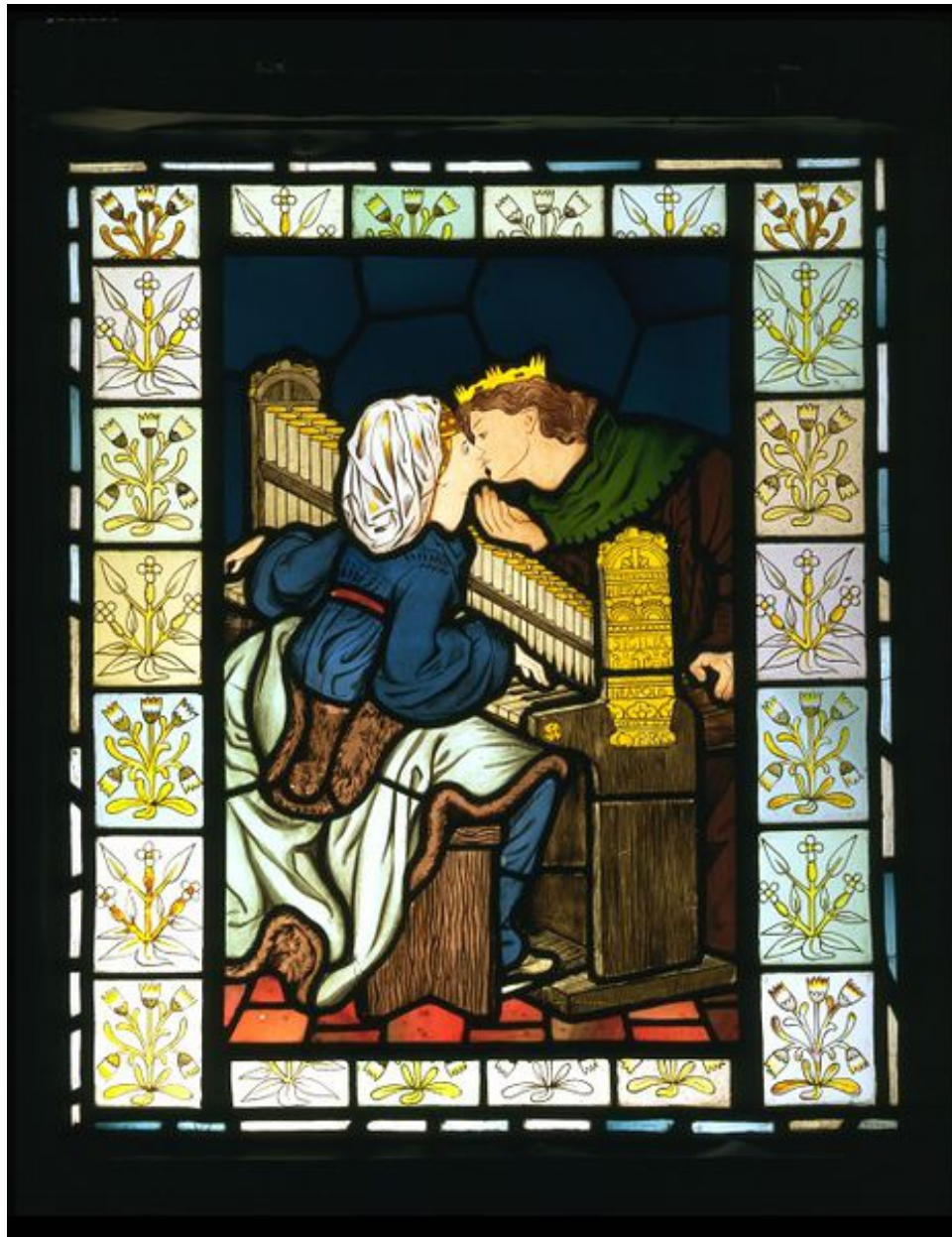


Figure 17: Dante Gabriel Rossetti Design for Morris & Co., *Music*, 1863, Stained and painted glass, Source: The Victoria and Albert Museum



Figure 18: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Saint Cecilia in The Palace of Art*, 1857, wood engraving, Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Figure 19: Edward Burne-Jones, Detail of *Ladies and Death* Design on the *Priestley Piano*, 1860-1862, Source: The Victoria and Albert Museum



Figure 20: Edward Burne-Jones, *Ladies and Death*, 1860, pen and ink over pencil laid down on thin card, Source: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne



Figure 21: Andrea Orcagna and Buonamico Buffalmacco, *The Triumph of Death*, Campo Santo, Pisa, 1338-39, Source: <http://travelingintuscany.com/art/buonamicobuffalmacco/camposantopisa.htm>



Figure 22: Edward Burne-Jones, *Portrait of Georgiana Burne-Jones*, 1863, gouache on paper, Source: Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery



Figure 23: Edward Burne-Jones, *Portrait of Maria Zambaco*, 1869  
Source: Private Collection



Figure 24: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Call For Perseus*, 1877, Source: Southampton City Art Gallery



Figure 25: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Golden Stairs*, oil on canvas, 1876-1880  
Source: Tate Britain



Figure 26: Ionnes Ruckers, Harpsichord, 1639 Planed, joined and painted wooden (poplar?) case with planed and partly painted spruce soundboard, with gilt lead rose, Length: 173.1 cm, Width: 78.5 cm, Height: 21.2 cm



Figure 27: James Gamble, Robert Wornum & Sons, *Grand Piano*, 1870, Length: 206 cm, Width: 135.5 cm, Height: 35.1 cm, Source: Victoria and Albert Museum





Figure 28: Edward Burne-Jones, *Graham Piano* Soundboard Detail, 1879—1880, Photograph by Amelia Anderson.



Figure 29: Edward Burne-Jones, Detail of *Graham Piano* Lid, 1879—1880, Photograph by Amelia Anderson.



Figure 30: Edward Burne-Jones, Detail of *Graham Piano Lid*, 1879—1880, Photograph by Amelia Anderson.

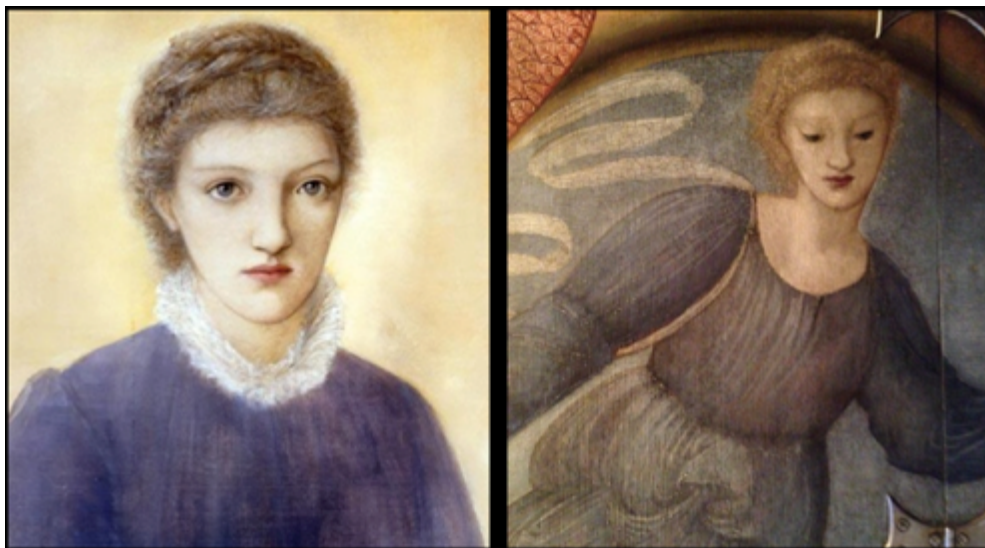


Figure 31: Edward Burne-Jones, (Left) Portrait of *Frances Graham*, 1870s, Source: Private Collection, (Right) Edward Burne-Jones, Detail of *Graham Piano Lid*, 1879—



Figure 32: Edward Burne-Jones, Inside Lid Detail, 1879—1880, Photograph by Amelia Anderson.

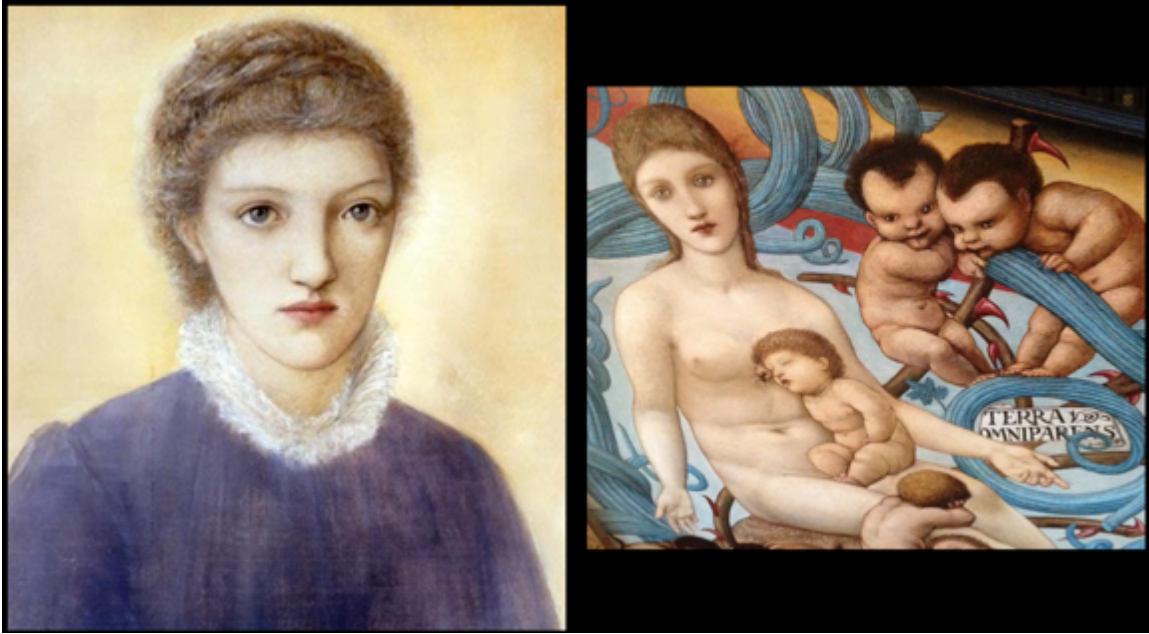


Figure 33: Edward Burne-Jones, (Left) Portrait of *Frances Graham*, 1870s, (Right) Inside Lid Detail, 1879—1880, Photograph by Amelia Anderson



Figure 34: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Garden*, Roundel Detail from the Graham Piano 1879—80, Photograph by Amelia Anderson



Figure 35: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Garden Poisoned*, Roundel Detail from the Graham Piano 1879—80, Photograph by Amelia Anderson



Figure 36: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Gate of Hell*, Roundel Detail from the Graham Piano 1879—80, Photograph by Amelia Anderson



Figure 37: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Doorkeeper*, Roundel Detail from the Graham Piano 1879—80, Photograph by Amelia Anderson



Figure 38: Edward Burne-Jones, *Across the Flames*, Roundel Detail from the Graham Piano 1879—80, Photograph by Amelia Anderson



Figure 39: Edward Burne-Jones, *The House of Pluto*, Roundel Detail from the Graham Piano 1879—80, Photograph by Amelia Anderson



Figure 40: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Regained Lost*, Roundel Detail from the Graham Piano 1879—80, Photograph by Amelia Anderson



Figure 41: Edward Burne-Jones, *Death of Orpheus*, Detail from the Graham Piano 1879—80, Photograph by Amelia Anderson



Figure 42: William Blake Richmond, *Mrs. Luke Ionides*, 1882 oil on canvas, Source: Victoria and Albert Museum





Figure 43: View from the antiques room into the drawing room at No. 1 Holland Park, *Ionides Piano* can be seen behind the curtain.



Figure 44: Drawing room of No. 1 Holland Park, featuring the *Ionides Piano*, a Morris Hammersmith carpet, as well as two Burne-Jones paintings.



Figure 45: Designed by William Morris, *Holland Park Carpet*, Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, 515.6 x 396.9 cm, Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Figure 46: Edward Burne-Jones, *March Marigold*, 1870, Source: Piccadilly Gallery



Figure 47: Edward Burne-Jones, *Pan and Psyche*, 1869-74, Source: Harvard Art Museum



Figure 48: Edward Burne-Jones, *Spring*, 1884, Source: Private Collection



Figure 49: Walter Crane, *Pan Pipes: A Book of Old Songs*, 1883



Figure 50: Walter Crane, "The Seeds of Love" from *Pan Pipes: A Book of Old Songs*, 1883

**THE THREE RAVENS**

1. These were three ravens sat on a tree, Down, hey down, hey down, hey down; They were as black as they might be; With a down. And one of them said to his mate, "Now where shall we our break - fast take?" With a down, der-ry, der-ry, der-ry down, down.

2. There lies a knight in yonder field, Down, hey down, &c. All feely slain beneath his shield; With a down. His hands about his feet you see; They guard their lord right faithfully; With a down, &c.

3. His faithful hawks above him fly; Down, hey down, &c. No bird of prey dare venture nigh; With a down.

4. She lifted up his lifeless head; Down, hey down, &c. His yonder comes a fellow doe; And to her taught she straight doth go; With a down, &c.

She kissed his wounds, that were so red; With a down. She buried him before the pine;— She died herself ere evensong; With a down, &c.

37

Figure 51: Walter Crane, "Three Ravens" from *Pan Pipes: A Book of Old Songs*, 1883



**When the Bright God of Day**

When the bright god of day Drove to westward his ray, And the evening was chancing and

clear: When the swallow a-main Nimbly skim o'er the plain, And our she-doves like

gl - ants up - - pear.

<p>2. In a jasmine bower (When the breeze was in flower, And zephyrs breathed odours around) Laid Celia she sat, With her song and spirit, And she charm'd all the grove with her sound.</p>	<p>3. Rosy hovers she sang, While the harvest song, And the bees they all darting active; The industrious bees, From the flowers and the trees Gently hum with their sweets to their hive.</p>	<p>4. The gay god of love As he flew o'er the grove, By zephyrs conducted along, As she touched on the strings, He bent down with his wings, While echo repeated the song.</p>	<p>5. O ye mortals beware How ye venture too near! Love doubly is armed to wound; Your fate you can deem, For you're surely undone If you rashly approach near the sound.</p>
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47

Figure 52: Walter Crane, "When the Bright God of Day" from *Pan Pipes: A Book of Old Songs*, 1883



Figure 53: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Day Dream*, 1880, oil on canvas, Source: The Victoria and Albert Museum



Figure 54: Lithograph by M. & N. Hanhart, Published by Metzler & Co., *The High Art Maiden*, 1885, Source: Victoria and Albert Museum



Figure 55: Lithograph by Alfred Corcanen, "Quite Too Utterly Utter," Published by Hopwood & Crew, 1881, Source: Victoria and Albert Museum

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