

MORE NOTES OF A PIANIST: A GOTTSCHALK COLLECTION SURVEYED AND A SCANDAL REVISITED

BY RICHARD JACKSON

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This article surveys a collection of materials relating to Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869) acquired by The New York Public Library's Music Division in 1984. One document in the collection contains Gottschalk's own account of the "scandal" of September 1865 that caused his clandestine flight from San Francisco and his self-imposed exile from the United States for the rest of his life.

Gottschalk was the eldest of seven children. His sisters Clara and Blanche—both professional pianists for some years—strived to preserve his name and memory when, after his death, his music began to fall into unjust neglect. Clara, who lived on into the twentieth century, was especially active in this regard. With her husband Robert E. Peterson as translator, she edited and published in 1881 a version of Gottschalk's diary, which she called *Notes of a Pianist*,¹ a title Gottschalk had used earlier for published autobiographical writings.

All of his brothers and sisters had considerable reason to revere Gottschalk, not only because he was an internationally acclaimed piano virtuoso and composer, but also because he contributed significantly to the family's material well-being. To what extent he supported them is not precisely known, but he gave or sent them sums of money for about twenty years, from 1849 until his death.² Clara writes in her biographical introduction to *Notes of a Pianist* that from the time she, her mother, and her brothers and sisters arrived in Paris, "Moreau became [our] sole protector."³

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1. *Notes of a Pianist* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1881).

2. It is often overlooked that Gottschalk's parents were separated. In 1847, his mother Aimée Bruslé Gottschalk, then about thirty-nine, left her husband Edward, then about fifty-two, in New Orleans and settled permanently in Paris with Louis Moreau and her six other children. She is reputed to have believed that *all* the Gottschalk children would be musically gifted, like the Garcias before them and the Patti family later on. Nature would prove otherwise, though all did perform publicly and/or compose at one time or another. Of Moreau's siblings, the most active as a performer was his youngest brother, Louis Gaston (1846–1912), who sang operatic baritone roles in Europe and in this country, and taught voice in Chicago over a period of thirty years.

3. *Notes of a Pianist*, 35. Louis Moreau was always called Moreau by his friends and family, just as his younger brother, Louis Gaston, was called by his middle name. Louis Moreau was named after Louis Moreau Lislet, a close family friend—some say a relative. Louis Gaston was named after his mother's brother, Louis Gaston Bruslé.

Before his New York debut in 1853, Gottschalk had toured as a young pianist in France, Switzerland, and most notably in Spain, where he gave concerts for over a year during 1851–52 and received a decoration from the Queen.

On 18 January 1853, less than a month before Gottschalk's New York debut, a reporter for the New York *Evening Mirror* wrote after hearing him play in a private session for reporters in his rooms at the Irving House: "M. Gottschalk is decidedly American in manners, sympathy and enthusiasm—though he has been abroad eleven years—and he gave us a magnificent apostrophe to our national airs, which he informed us was the outline of a grand composition he has long contemplated, to be called 'Bunker Hill,' and calculated for ten pianos."⁴

He made his New York debut on 11 February 1853, in a program that included his *Jerusalem* and *Waltz di Bravura*, both for two pianos (played with Richard Hoffman), his *Le Moissoneuse*, *Danse Ossianique*, *Le Bananier*, *La Chasse du jeune Henri* (after the overture to Etienne Méhul's opera *La jeune Henri*), and his splashy *Carnival of Venice* to end the concert. He also played Liszt's fantasy on the *Lucia* sextet.

Reviewing the debut, the New York *Home Journal* for 19 February 1853 records the exact date of the debut; the reviewer then notes: "We mention the date, because we are convinced that the musical history of the country will require that it should be preserved."⁵

The composer William Henry Fry wrote in *The Tribune*: "Mr. Gottschalk is emphatically a great artist. . . . Who [in America] compares with him? No one. . . . We had anticipated a different style of performance in young Gottschalk: we looked for pearly trills, dazzling rapidity; but we did not expect such a massive left hand, such a facility for hurling chords. . . . He has rendered his rank indisputably great in the opinion of every one who heard him; and in the lyrical history of the country he is one of the medals placed in the corner stone."⁶

Immediately after his New York debut, he gave concerts in New Orleans and various other American cities before journeying to Cuba in 1854. His father, Edward, had died in New Orleans of yellow fever on 23 October 1853, and, according to Clara, "[Louis Moreau] at once resolved to pay his father's debts".⁷

In 1857–58, after giving several "try-out" concerts in New York, he

4. *Evening Mirror*, 18 Jan. 1853.

5. Quoted in *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 19 Feb. 1853, 158.

6. *The Tribune*, Feb. 12, 1853.

7. *Notes of a Pianist*, 68. Jeanne Behrend writes in her 1964 edition of *Notes of a Pianist* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1964; reprinted Da Capo Press, 1979) that profits from Gottschalk's commercial blockbuster, *The Last Hope*, "helped to pay off" those debts (p. xvi). (Behrend's edition lacks Clara Peterson's historically interesting—if factually faulty—biographical introduction.)

toured the Caribbean with the fourteen-year-old Adelina Patti, who was accompanied on the trip by her father. The Pattis returned to New York, but Gottschalk remained until February 1862, leisurely traveling among the islands and, as he tells us in his diary, living "according to the customs of these primitive countries, which if they are not strictly virtuous, are nonetheless terribly attractive."⁸

In September 1865, precipitated by a "scandal" involving two local school girls, Gottschalk fled San Francisco (and the United States) to tour countries in South America for the last four years of his life. He died, probably of peritonitis, in Rio de Janeiro on 18 December 1869 at the early age of forty, leaving two marvelous (if eccentric) symphonies, at least two works for piano and orchestra, over a dozen songs, other orchestra and vocal works, one or two operas (reputedly), and many brilliant piano works, some of them showing charm and striking originality.

Letters he wrote during his travels in Spain, the Caribbean Islands, and North, Central, and South America were preserved by the family, as were many of his reviews and playbills, which he apparently mailed to them or saved. Some of his effects were recovered in 1870 after his death in Rio. Through the years, these and other materials associated with him were passed from one generation of the family to another, eventually being stored in a trunk in a basement in Philadelphia by Byron Otto Rhome, a grandson of Gottschalk's sister Blanche. His estate was willed to his sister, Lily Glover of Asbury Park, New Jersey. As is often the case, materials precious to one generation were considerably less so to a distant one, and were eventually regarded as more-or-less worthless. After the fateful trunk was discovered, family members were on the verge of discarding the contents, believing them to be of no particular value and being unaware of just who Louis Moreau Gottschalk was.

Then they discovered an unanswered letter that had been written to Rhome by Robert Offergeld, a Gottschalk enthusiast: Did he have any material relating to Gottschalk? Offergeld was contacted, and thus began a curious period for the Glover family. From an unknown figure among the family's shadowy nineteenth-century ancestors, Gottschalk became someone prominent in their daily lives for a period of five or six years. Lawrence B. Glover, Lily Glover's son, became so interested in the material that he took some refresher French lessons so that he might translate the letters.

At first, Glover installed the trunk in his home in Bloomfield, New

8. *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 42.

Jersey. When I first saw the material, its contents were spread over a dining room table and chairs. At least one other large object relating to Gottschalk—an amateurish oil portrait in very poor condition—was also discovered among Rhome's effects. In due time, the collection was appraised and a number of times were transferred to a bank vault. During this period, an all-Gottschalk concert was given at Carnegie Hall by Eugene List with members of the Glover family in attendance, Lily wearing the few Gottschalk medals and jewels discovered among the materials. Finally the collection was turned over to The New York Public Library, where conservation and preservation have now been completed.

In his estimable Gottschalk bibliography, John G. Doyle calls the find of the Glover-Gottschalk material "perhaps the most important and notable event in the search for Gottschalk's history" and characterizes the material itself as "historically invaluable."⁹ The following survey describes the collection in greater detail than Doyle (who had limited access to it) was able to provide, but should not be regarded as anything approaching a complete inventory.

NOTEBOOKS AND DIARY

Perhaps the most valuable items for historical research in the collection are three small notebooks (pocket diaries, in Gottschalk's terminology) covering portions of 1862 and 1864 and written in Gottschalk's hand. They mention people and places encountered in his travels; they contain drawings, and—not surprisingly for a traveling composer—musical themes, perhaps for use in future compositions.

Most startling, however, is the existence of two drafts in French of *Notes of a Pianist* in Clara Gottschalk Peterson's hand, because most Gottschalk scholars had assumed years ago that all pertinent materials preliminary to publication of the book had long since vanished. There are hundreds of pages here—one draft without Clara's long biographical introduction, one with it, complete with several autograph Gottschalk letters casually attached with straight pins at various points. Fortunately no damage to letters or draft was suffered, and pins and letters have been safely removed. One of the drafts bears the attractive title *Souvenirs de voyage*, but Clara obviously settled on the title by which the diary has been known since 1881.

What cries out to be accomplished now by some interested scholar is to compare the originals—both Gottschalk's and Clara Peterson's—with

9. John G. Doyle, *Louis Moreau Gottschalk, 1829–1869: A Bibliographical Study and Catalog of Works* (Detroit: Published for The College Music Society by Information Coordinators, 1982), 7, 205.

the published book. It has long been thought that Clara might have been overly protective of her brother's posthumous reputation.¹⁰

LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS

If the diaries and drafts are the most important part of the collection, the letters and documents are hardly less so. The languages encountered here—French, Spanish, and English—reflect the major strains of Gottschalk's life and career, though French easily dominates, having been Gottschalk's and his family's first language. A few of the letters have English translations (translators unknown), most do not.

As might be expected, most of the letters are between family members: Gottschalk writing to his sisters from the Caribbean, from cities and towns in the United States, and from many South American countries ("Did you receive 'The Battle Cry of Freedom' and 'La Gallina'? Did you give them to Schott? Did he pay for them?");¹¹ Gottschalk's mother Aimée writing to him from Paris ("Chopin is dead");¹² Gottschalk writing from Puerto Rico to his brother Edward ("*La Tulipe de Brabant* is my best work and the most serious");¹³ Gottschalk writing to his mother about his first concerts in New York ("I make about \$60 profit on each one").¹⁴

There are other letters: Charles Francis Chickering (son of Jonas) writing to Gottschalk in 1863 and in 1866; various officials in Rio de Janeiro writing to Clara in 1869 and 1870; Henry Hawes, an early New Orleans Gottschalk aficionado, writing to Clara in 1907.

If there is one recurrent theme in the letters, it is money; the subject seems to surface continually in letters from Gottschalk to his mother, brothers, and sisters. We now have documentation about the frequency with which he must have given or sent them cash. Here are some random examples: Gottschalk writing from New York to his mother in Paris: "I shall write and send you 100 francs within two days";¹⁵ Gott-

10. While Clara may have edited her brother's diary here and there for publication—she compiled it over a period of years from hundreds of faded scraps, fugitive letters, and perhaps previously published pieces—this writer believes that no major personal passages were omitted. As far as is known, Gottschalk—a worldly and sophisticated man, to be sure—never committed personal exploits to paper, following the Victorian tradition of his day: he never "kissed and wrote." It would be farfetched to believe that Gottschalk would have confessed to any great improprieties, even in supposedly private travel writings which he probably knew, or hoped, would be published, in order to bring in a little needed money. (Some indeed were published!) He may have lived as he wished, but he would doubtless not have risked embarrassing himself, his beloved family, or his wealthy and proper friends and business associates such as the Chickering, William Hall, William Mason, George F. Bristow, and George William Warren by compromising himself in writing.

11. 20 Nov. 1865.

12. 30 Oct. [1849].

13. [1 Jan. 1858?]; the title mentioned is not among Gottschalk's known works.

14. 15 Feb. 1853?].

15. *Ibid.*

schalk to his brother Edward: "I am less worried now that I know you have money. I sent you 800 francs by Audage";¹⁶ Gottschalk writing from Baltimore to his sisters: "In a few days I shall send you some of my pieces whose sale to Schott will help you, I hope, with your expenses";¹⁷ Gottschalk writing from the town of Calloa in Peru to his sisters: "I am enclosing \$200. A week ago I sent you \$100 drawn on Paris. Did you get it?"¹⁸ Gottschalk writing from Tacna in Chile to his sisters: "I am enclosing forty pounds. Last month you should have received a like sum by way of my friend Dupeyron from Lima";¹⁹ Gottschalk writing from Santiago to his sisters: "By the first boat you will receive \$200. This is the first occasion in a long time that I have failed to send you your monthly remittance of \$200."²⁰ And perhaps most revealing of all, a remark in a letter written from New York in September 1864, again to his sisters: "The question of money keeps my nose to the grindstone. My expenses, including my remittances to Europe, mount up to 5000 francs a month."²¹

Here is revealed someone who worked hard in order to provide income for his family. He chose the strenuous, almost inhuman, life of the traveling piano virtuoso because it paid well. And though much of his music was shrewdly tailored for the commercial marketplace, we should not be blind to the originality and high quality of the balance.

He seems to have accepted his lot fairly well, but once in a while he breaks down and complains to his family. Here he is writing from St. Louis in 1863 to his sisters: "It is a monotony of movement and activity which dulls me and makes me nervous."²²

Gottschalk's generosity to his family was memorialized in 1870 by his sisters and remaining brother, Louis Gaston (Edward had died of tuberculosis in 1863), who placed the following lines on his tombstone in Green Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York, where he was reinterred: ". . . his noble heart and generosity made him beloved by all and [to] his sisters and brother by whom this monument is erected in all love and gratitude he ever was the best and most loving of brothers."

Some of the letters—in fragment or complete—were quoted in *Notes of a Pianist* and elsewhere, but many are unpublished. On the verso of at least two letters which, according to Larry Glover, were attached to bundles of items, is the notation, "To be burned."

16. 1 Jan. 1858?].

17. 19 July 1864.

18. 20 Nov. 1865.

19. 5 May 1866.

20. 7 June 1868.

21. 6 Sep. 1864.

22. 17 Dec. 1863.

Among the letters are preserved several interesting documents: a copy of Gottschalk's death certificate; his will; contract agreements with Firth, Pond & Co, and with Hall & Son; many royalty statements from the publisher Oliver Ditson to Gottschalk and to his estate (the latter testify to the dwindling sales of his music after his death); a list of real estate in New Orleans that his mother owned and sold; and Gottschalk's honorary membership in the New York Philharmonic Society, awarded in 1855.

CONCERT PLAYBILLS

The collection includes a small lot of original playbills advertising Gottschalk's concerts. As in the usual practice of the time, these bills enumerate the works to be performed; they were also intended to serve as programs to be given out at the events themselves. The playbills contain a surprising amount of information, and three from 1863 are especially illuminating. The first dates from 13 February 1863;²³ it records a performance in which Gottschalk seems to have been assisted only by Siegfried Behrens (1839–1911), billed as "Musical Conductor and Director," and the singer Carlotta Patti, a member of the legendary Patti clan (the tenor soloist, Sig. Scola, was indisposed and "not able to perform"). We learn that Gottschalk played five solo pieces (all his own compositions, as usual) and was joined by Behrens for the four-hand *Ojos Crillos*. Carlotta Patti sang arias by Donizetti and Auber (a translation was provided for the latter), "Sontag's Celebrated Echo Song" (*Swiss Song*, by Carl Eckert), and Gottschalk's own virtuoso song "Le Papillon," billed as

THE GREAT POLKA. Words and music composed by L. M. Gottschalk expressly for Miss Patti. . . . This piece, which is CONCERTANTE for the voice and piano, will be sung by Miss Patti, accompanied by Mr. Gottschalk.

We learn only incidentally that the concert took place in Rochester, New York—the bill describes the concert as Patti's "farewell appearance in Rochester previous to her departure for Europe, where she is engaged at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, London." Gottschalk calls Rochester a "charming town; one of the greatest, most animated, and most civilized" in the East.²⁴ He describes Behrens as "a young German from Hamburg who wears spectacles, is a good musician, and has a

23. Of the three playbills mentioned here, only that of 13 April 1863 records the year. Almost all the playbills in the collection lack complete dates; these have been graciously supplied by William Seward of New York.

24. *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 211.

good heart.”²⁵ Gottschalk also writes that Behrens was addicted to pun-making and overeating.

The second playbill, from 13 April 1863, announces a Gottschalk concert at the Brooklyn Atheneum that is notable mainly for the appearance of Theodore Thomas as solo violinist performing two Vieuxtemps opera fantasies. (Thomas was later known solely as an orchestral conductor.) The bill also advertises that Gottschalk’s next concert in the series, to take place three days later at Irving Hall in New York City, would be “for the benefit of Adelphi Lodge, F. and A. M.” (i.e., Free and Accepted Masons).

The third 1863 playbill also originates from a Brooklyn concert, this one at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The date was 7 November, Behrens was again the “Musical Director and Conductor,” and this time the large assisting troupe consisted of three singers, a violinist, and two additional pianists: George William Warren, who with his friend Gottschalk at the second piano performed his own composition, *The Andes*, an homage to Edwin Church’s painting “Heart of the Andes”; and Harry Sanderson, a composer-pianist and pupil of Gottschalk, who participated in the premiere of a two-piano fantasy by Gottschalk on themes from Verdi’s *Un Ballo in Maschera*, a work not known to have survived in any form.

The violinist was Carlo Patti, the younger brother of Carlotta and Adelina Patti. Gottschalk, who referred to Carlo as “Sunshine Patti . . . because of the happy thoughtlessness of his character,”²⁶ has much to say about him in *Notes of a Pianist*. In one passage he calls him

a fine fellow, rather bohemian, as his adventurous temper has led him to California and Mexico (where he played the violin in a very remarkable manner), to New York, where he sang, married, and divorced (he was then seventeen years of age), to Memphis, where . . . he married, it is said, enlisted as a private in the Southern army, [and] became a musical leader.²⁷

The star, however, among the assisting artists at this concert was the opera singer Angiolina Cordier. According to the playbill, this would be her only appearance “in Mr. Gottschalk’s concerts, as she will be compelled to resume shortly her operatic engagements.” Gottschalk amusingly describes her as “not pretty, but . . . French, that is to say [she] has all the piquant graces that appear to belong to her countrywomen.” He also writes that “she has a flexible voice, which she uses

25. *Ibid.*, 146. Much later Behrens arranged Gottschalk’s *The Last Hope* as a church anthem titled *Thy Will Be Done*.

26. *Ibid.*, 201–2.

27. *Ibid.*, 129.

with much art" and is "an excellent musician (*rara avis*) [who] can read what she sings."²⁸

For the grand finale, a performance of the *Tannhäuser* March arranged by Gottschalk for four pianos, the composer was joined by Warren, Sanderson, and Behrens. This piece is mentioned over a period of some years from 1863 on. It must have been a serviceable vehicle for Gottschalk, who performed it using whatever number of pianists happened to be available. The work has never been published; the manuscript for one piano part is in the collection (see below).

MUSIC MANUSCRIPTS

While the general nature of the collection is literary, there are about sixty music manuscripts, among them complete autographs, sketches (some for unknown works), and published pieces. Included are nine previously unlisted or unknown piano pieces: the danzas *Ay! Lunarcitos!*,²⁹ as published in Havana (no copy previously located), and *El silvido; Ignacia*³⁰ (probably also a danza); *Adios à la Habana* (piano, 4 hands); an arrangement of the march from *Tannhäuser* (this copy marked "Piano C"); *Fleur de lys* ("Galop brillante," for piano, 4 hands, by "Paul Ernest," one of Gottschalk's pseudonyms); and *Italian Glories* (three easy opera fantasies with a fragment of a fourth) and *Le reveil l'aigle*, the last two pieces bearing the name Oscar Litti, the pseudonym Gottschalk used when publishing his less elaborate pieces for piano.³¹ The ninth work is an unpublished arrangement for piano and string quintet with optional clarinet and flute of Gottschalk's *Grande Tarantelle* for piano and orchestra, by his Cuban friend and disciple, the composer-pianist Nicolás Ruiz Espadero (1832–1890).³²

SCRAPBOOKS

There are twelve scrapbooks in all, presenting a wide variety of material. They include six delightful caricatures (see fig. 1). One of the largest (ca. 16" × 10") and most striking is a colored lithograph by Joseph Mill that adorned the first page of the 19 June 1869 issue of *Ba-Ta-Clan, Journal Satirique Illustré* published in Rio de Janeiro. Of paramount interest are snippets of Gottschalk's own published writings, as

28. *Ibid.*, 145.

29. Listed in the program of Eugene List's Carnegie Hall concert of 2 May 1979 but not performed owing to the length of the program.

30. John Doyle believes that this composition is not by Gottschalk but by a student, with corrections possibly by Gottschalk.

31. There are plans to publish these "unknown" pieces in the near future.

32. This arrangement was given what was probably its New York premiere by Eugene List at the Carnegie Hall concert on 2 May 1979 mentioned above.



Fig. 1. Caricature of Louis Moreau Gottschalk published in Buenos Aires, 1869

preserved here in random newspaper cuttings. At the end of scrapbook 2, in an undated, unsourced³³ letter to an editor, we find an amusing if depressing reminder of what hinterland American audiences could be like in the 1850s and 1860s. Recalling that during a concert in a small Ohio town “a charming young girl and her mother” laughed continuously and stared at his feet, Gottschalk writes: “I at last perceived that it was the movements of my feet on the pedals which aroused their mirth. They did not know of these appendages to the piano, and only saw in my movements a sort of rudimentary choreography. In the same village, a man, observing the unboxing of my grand piano, asked me what I called the big accordion!”

Earlier in the same scrapbook there is another letter to the editor, published in the New York *Home Journal* for 7 February 1863. Gottschalk writes on the previous rainy 1 January from the Tremont Hotel in Chicago,³⁴ where he has been ill and alone, in a letter that (like many of his compositions) is sentimental yet touching:

The past is always sorrowful to evoke. I think Victor Hugo somewhere says ‘We love what we have no more; what we [do] have makes us weep.’ Remembering that this is New Year’s Day, I saw one by one, my childhood memories rise before me—my father’s hearth, our family happiness. . . . The dear old words of childhood once more floated past my ear like the tremulous, diminished echoes of far-off music.

Later in the same letter, supplementing remarks of his in *Notes of a Pianist*, Gottschalk gives us his rather jaundiced view of the constant rail travel necessitated by living the life of a piano virtuoso:

Certain naturalists pretend that insects reflect in their conformation the characteristics of the surrounding vegetable life. If this phenomenon extends to pianists, I ought by this time to have the manners of a locomotive and the soul of a trunk. I have certainly passed five-sixths of my life’s last three hundred days on the railroad.

One treasure is the large quantity of Gottschalk concert reviews, many from long-vanished newspapers. There are reviews in French by Berlioz and Adolphe Adam. There are early reviews from such cities as Bordeaux, Geneva, Lausanne, Bilbao, and Madrid, and reviews dating from later years from Cleveland, Toronto, San Francisco, Saratoga, Lima, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, and the island of Jamaica.

One notable review, in scrapbook 6, of a “monster concert” staged in

33. Many items pasted in the scrapbooks are accompanied by the title and date of the source, entered in some cases by Gottschalk himself and in others by someone else.

34. The Tremont House is described by Gottschalk in *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 112, as “the best hotel I know of.” Pages 112–14 cover the period of the letter; that coverage and the letter, while matching somewhat in feeling, contain sharp differences.

Montevideo on 10 November 1868 in which three hundred performers took part appears in English, as reprinted in an unknown American or English paper. It concludes with the following:

Gottschalk may well be proud of the triumph he obtained last night. What immense difficulties of all kinds he has had to overcome, what incessant work he had to do for the last two weeks, nobody can imagine. [It was] the greatest and most successful concert ever heard in this part of South America. . . . May he . . . remember now and then his grateful and sincere admirers in Montevideo. When shall we hear again an artist like him?

Scrapbook 11 is devoted entirely to political clippings from 1865–66, presumably from Peru, with Gottschalk's autograph notes. Scrapbook 2 primarily contains reviews of the 1881 *Notes of a Pianist*. Edward Gottschalk's ledger of an 1854 Cuban concert tour on which he accompanied his older brother includes a charming ink drawing by Edward of their ship, the *Isabel*, leaving Havana harbor.

The scrapbooks are valuable for the light they shed on Gottschalk's brothers and sisters. Scrapbook 12, for example, contains the following items:

Programs and review from London and elsewhere in late-1860s England of Blanche and Clara Gottschalk's duo concerts—Blanche as singer (“this young lady possesses a brilliant soprano voice of a light, but pleasing quality”) and pianist, mostly in duets with Clara (“perhaps the principal feature . . . was the magnificent pianoforte playing by the Misses Gottschalk”); or Clara as pianist and composer (“she contributed a charmingly-written and deliciously harmonized part song”).

Programs and reviews of New York concerts in October and November 1870 by *three* “sisters of the lamented Louis M. Gottschalk” (Celestine Gottschalk—by then of Philadelphia—as pianist and occasionally vocalist, joining Clara and Blanche; compositions of Louis Moreau Gottschalk “largely made up the programme”).

Programs and reviews of London recitals in December 1870 and early 1871 by Blanche and Clara.

A New York program of 11 November 1871 featuring Blanche and Louis Gaston.

An 1871 program featuring Louis Gaston (baritone), Celestine, and Augusta Gottschalk (as a duo pianist).

Reviews of a published piece by Augusta.

A 27 December 1871 program from White Plains, N.Y., for a benefit for the victims of the Chicago Fire, featuring Blanche and Louis Gaston.

A notice of the Philadelphia wedding of Blanche and Dr. Robert E. Peterson on 2 December 1871.

Programs from December 1871 and early 1872 of solo recitals by Clara in London, followed by other programs featuring “Pupils of Clara Gottschalk,” some with Clara as assisting artist.

Newspaper reports from 1871 that Clara is editing her brother's biography and letters "to be published shortly in two volumes."

Programs of December 1873 and January 1874 for all-Louis Moreau Gottschalk concerts performed by Clara in Paris.

A notice of Clara visiting her sister Blanche and brother-in-law in Philadelphia.

A clipping in which Henry C. Watson, a New York music critic, calls Louis Moreau Gottschalk "the most original and inspired writer for the pianoforte since Chopin."

A notice of Blanche's death in Philadelphia on 23 July 1879, shortly after giving birth to a son. [Among the letters is a notice of Clara's wedding to Dr. Robert E. Peterson on 27 May 1880 in Philadelphia, less than a year after Blanche's death.]

A program from 13 February 1882 for a benefit concert, one of the performers being "Mrs. Clara G. Peterson."

Reviews dating from 1903 of Clara's collection *Creole Songs* (New Orleans: The L. Grunewald Co., 1902). Clara is described as a resident of Philadelphia who spends "six or seven months of the year" in Asbury Park, N.J.

THE "SCANDAL" LETTER

The *New York Weekly Review* of 14 October 1865 reports the following item:

It seems that Mr. Gottschalk's vagaries sometimes take a rather peculiar direction, if we may trust *The Sun*, which says: "Gottschalk, the celebrated pianist, has been creating a great sensation in California, not by his musical talent, but as alleged by aiding two young ladies escape from their boarding school at night. The school was broken up in consequence."³⁵

The collection contains what is apparently the draft of a letter in English in Gottschalk's hand recounting the incident that caused his hasty, enforced final departure from this country in the fall of 1865 (though he was returned to be buried in the fall of 1870).³⁶ The document is unsigned, undated, and incomplete. Though the identity of the intended recipient of the finished letter is unknown, I believe it to be Charles Francis Chickering (1827–1891), called Frank, one of three sons of Jonas Chickering (1797–1853), the piano manufacturer. Beginning in 1859, Charles Francis Chickering directed the New York operations of his father's Boston-based piano business. Gottschalk, a close friend of the Chickering family, was well known as a "Chickering artist." (The

35. *New York Weekly Review*, 14 Oct. 1865, 4.

36. Harold C. Schonberg discusses the draft in "Gottschalk's Monster Concert," *The New York Times*, 22 Apr. 1979, sec. 2, p. 23.

two Chickering grand pianos that customarily accompanied Gottschalk on his travels had to be left behind in San Francisco, so rapid was his flight.)

The draft is important not only because its description of the incident varies in certain details from other versions, but because it is the only known account of the affair written by Gottschalk himself.³⁷ Considering the importance of the event in his life and considering his staunchly maintained innocence, it is most curious that Gottschalk does not mention it in his diary.³⁸

Besides Gottschalk himself, the other characters who played major or minor roles in the incident were Tom Maguire (1820–1896), former sports promoter, subsequently owner of two gambling casinos, who by 1860 is said to have become a millionaire and by 1865 proprietor of several theaters in San Francisco and environs (Vernon Loggins refers to him as “the Barnum of the West Coast”);³⁹ a Mr. Badger (so identified by Gottschalk in his diary), the Chickering agent in San Francisco; Charles Legay, a San Francisco hatter, probably in his twenties; Emanuele Muzio, a noted conductor, pupil of Verdi, and Gottschalk’s manager at the time; Lucy Simons, Muzio’s wife, who was a soprano in Gottschalk’s “troupe”; Henri de Cazotte, the French consul in San Francisco; and two young ladies—one with blond hair, the other a brunette—whose identities have been lost to history.

Gottschalk, accompanied by his servant, Firmin Moras, and the Muzios, arrived in San Francisco on 27 April 1865, on board the ship *Constitution*. Loggins writes that Muzio and Gottschalk lost no time in meeting the powerful Maguire.⁴⁰ Gottschalk had arrived in San Francisco at a time when two rival opera companies (one of them Maguire’s) were performing, and when the public was still unsettled by the wildly successful appearance of another New Orleanian, the electrifying actress Ada Isaacs Menken, who had thrilled audiences for months with her

37. There are two other relatively brief drafts in the collection—one scarcely a page in length—that relate to the incident, but they are sketchy and confusing, and neither contains an actual retelling of the story. These drafts have been painstakingly translated by Emily Good.

38. Perhaps its omission is an instance of Clara’s supposed “editing,” or perhaps Gottschalk was not as innocent as he claimed to be.

39. A major, beautifully-written account of the life and career of the colorful Maguire may be found in a book-length article by Lois Foster Rodecape, “Tom Maguire, Napoleon of the Stage,” *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 20 (1941): 289–314; 21 (1942): 39–74, 141–82, 239–75. The information about Maguire’s becoming a millionaire and theater proprietor is from Vernon Loggins, *Where the Word Ends* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 218 and 215. This book, written by a non-musician, is the only full-scale twentieth-century biography of Gottschalk to date. It is novelized and unscholarly, containing no citations or notes. Certain of its details are incorrect, yet others, after laborious checking, have proven to be valid. The major problem in using the book, then, is not knowing which statements are accurate and which are not.

40. Loggins, *Where the World Ends*, 219.

“nudity in *Mazeppa*,” her “lewd masculine poses in *Black-Eyed Susan*,” her display of legs in *The French Spy*, and her “imitations of Lola Montez.”⁴¹ Until his precipitate departure from San Francisco on the ship *Colorado* on Monday, 18 September 1865 less than five months after his arrival, Gottschalk gave over twenty concerts in the city proper and performed in nearby California cities and towns such as Oakland, San Jose, Sacramento, and Stockton, mostly in Maguire-owned theaters. He even ventured by stagecoach to the remote Nevada towns of Carson City, Nevada City, Dutch Flat, and Virginia City, enduring bad hotels, bad food, illness, and indifferent audiences.

Some of his appearances in San Francisco were billed pointedly as “recitals,” in which he would appear without assisting artists. Though it was probably Liszt who used the term first, for a solo appearance in 1840, the term and the practice were apparently still novelties in San Francisco.⁴² Recitals were performed only in the afternoon, and were regarded as suitable mainly for students, though general audiences also attended.

Gottschalk thrived in San Francisco. After a slow start, and despite heavy competition from the opera companies and various amusements, his concerts became highly successful. He received such notices as the following from the *Daily Alta California*: “Each and every time we hear our American genius, the more apparent his great merits appear. There is a delicacy even in his force, and a poetry in improvisation at his command, which no other artiste, to our knowledge, has ever evinced.”⁴³ He loved the city and went into lengthy panegyrics about it in his diary.⁴⁴ In return, he was much admired and feted. Loggins writes: “He was a guest at dinners, balls, and picnics. He joined parties on long horseback rides into the country and went on moonlight sails in luxurious yachts. To have the charming Mr. Gottschalk accept an invitation became the desire of every fashionable San Francisco hostess.”⁴⁵

41. *Ibid.* In a long letter to Leon Escudier, published in *Watson's Weekly Art Journal*, 17 Feb. 1866, 283–84, Gottschalk derides Mencken, classing her with what he considered low attractions in San Francisco, such as “Negro comedians and circuses.” In the same letter he writes amusingly of Maguire and the two opera companies.

42. Henry Russell (1812–1900), the popular English singer and composer of ballads, also gave what amounted to solo recitals in New York in the late 1830s and early 1840s (see Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong On Music*, vol. 1: *Resonances, 1836–1850* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988], 25). Russell was criticized by some for this practice. Gottschalk probably knew about solo recitals from his European years; certainly he performed them in various locales before 1865.

43. Quoted in *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 315.

44. See *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 285–320. To be sure, Gottschalk did not like everything about the city; he thought it musically provincial, for instance (see especially p. 299).

45. Loggins, *Where the World Ends*, 221.

As something of a climax to his stay, a little more than two weeks before his clandestine departure, a group of forty prominent members of the community—including the mayor; Badger, the Chickering representative; and de Cazotte, the French consul, with whom Gottschalk had become quite friendly—presented Gottschalk with a large gold medal encrusted with diamonds and rubies. Shortly after the presentation, the *Daily Alta California* carried a lengthy notice about it (quoted in full by Gottschalk in his diary) that describes the medal as “nine inches in circumference,” containing “six plates of auriferous quartz of different colours,” and bearing the initials “L.M.G.” in diamonds surrounded by a laurel wreath in diamonds and rubies. The verso of the medal contained the words “To Gottschalk: a token from his California friends. 25 Aug. 1865.” “The attachment of the medal is made of a large ring set with diamonds, in the midst of which is a lyre also with diamonds.”⁴⁶ The article relates that “Gottschalk replied [to the seven presentation speeches] with the modesty and tact which characterize him,”⁴⁷ and that the “beautiful medal” had been displayed in a jewelry-shop window for the two days immediately following the presentation.

According to Loggins, Gottschalk’s great success the previous evening with a performance of the *Tannhäuser* March, this time for ten pianos, and the Soldiers’ Chorus from *Faust* convinced him and Muzio that a multi-piano work must figure in his farewell San Francisco concert which was scheduled for 20 September but of course was never realized. Thirty pianos would be used!⁴⁸ Loggins continues that when Maguire heard of this intention, he presented himself at Gottschalk’s hotel and asserted that because of his dislike for the local Chickering representative (Badger, apparently), the concert would never take place in one of his theaters if Chickering pianos were used. It was an ultimatum, and Maguire and Gottschalk became enemies. As Gottschalk was committed to the Chickering house by contract, he immediately rented another theater, Platt’s Hall, and is said to have subsequently presented eight concerts there.⁴⁹ Maguire’s answering tactic was to lure both Muzio and his wife away from Gottschalk with extravagant promises.

46. *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 318–19.

47. *Ibid.*, 319.

48. *Ibid.* What the multi-piano work would have been remains a tantalizing mystery. Loggins in *Where the World Ends*, writes that it was to be Gottschalk’s *Battle of Bunker Hill* (p. 223). The title is encountered with some frequency in the Gottschalk literature (as in the quote from the *Evening Mirror* above), but it is not found among his published compositions or known manuscripts. According to the *Daily Alta California*, Gottschalk was composing a special piece for thirty pianos and orchestra (quoted in *Notes of a Pianist* [1964 ed.], 316). Gottschalk himself writes merely that it was to be “a march for ten [*sic*] pianos and orchestra” (*Watson’s Weekly Art Journal*, 17 Feb. 1866, 284).

49. Loggins, *Where the World Ends*, 224.

The final blow occurred, apparently, on Sunday, 10 September.⁵⁰ The accounts given by Behrend, Loggins, and the *New York Weekly Review* differ widely in details of the incident.⁵¹ But basically it had to do with Gottschalk and Legay (the young hatter friend) driving at night with two women, who were questioned on returning to their seminary late and were then, apparently, dismissed. The story reached the San Francisco newspapers; Loggins flatly asserts that Maguire or accomplices of his set up the whole affair and notified the papers. Loggins concludes his section on the “scandal” with the statement: “Maguire’s victory was complete.”⁵² Behrend’s account states: “It is generally believed that a version of the story reached the local press by way of an enemy of both Gottschalk and the Chickering representative.”⁵³

While Maguire is not mentioned by name, it is clear from articles by Henry C. Watson defending Gottschalk that Watson believed “an individual” was behind the event. He wrote that the head of the girls’ seminary in question

had probably been notified by some enemy of Gottschalk—for we believe the whole affair a trap—and was waiting for the return of the indiscreet and romantic young ladies. . . . That their companions should share the blame, was a necessary and, we believe, a designed conclusion. . . . Gottschalk, the pianist, was made to suffer the brunt of the whole unfortunate *contre temps*, by a manufactured public opinion—manufactured, we think it will be proved, for special business purposes.⁵⁴

The activity of Gottschalk’s enemies—he has no rivals—can hardly be appreciated. Not only have scurrilous articles been forwarded to leading pa-

50. Though Behrend and Loggins both claim that to have been the date, Gottschalk himself maintains that the incident occurred on Friday, 15 September (see the draft text quoted below in full). In Gottschalk’s version, a weekday would certainly have been more logical: a hatter’s shop would probably not have been open on a Sunday in 1865, nor would Gottschalk have been likely to contemplate buying a hat on that day. Further confusing the chronology of events is an editorial appearing in *Watson’s Weekly Art Journal* for 2 September 1865, 297, which reads in part: “The Sultan of American pianists has finished his career in California, having parted from Signor Muzio. . . . On his return from [the gold-mining towns] . . . he announced three farewell concerts on his own account in San Francisco. Immediately after the third concert, Gottschalk left San Francisco for Peru . . . and may probably turn up in Brazil before we hear of him again.” Like much else surrounding Gottschalk’s last days in San Francisco this account is undoubtedly garbled. It was probably written by Watson himself—a friend of Gottschalk’s. To what extent the truth of the matter was innocently or deliberately perverted (to save Gottschalk any embarrassment) we shall probably never know.

51. Loggins writes that each man rode in a separate carriage; Behrend never writes that there was only one carriage. Loggins writes that the seminary was on South Park Street in San Francisco; Behrend writes that it was the Oakland Female Seminary in Oakland. (See Loggins, *Where the World Ends*, 225, and *Notes of a Pianist* [1964 ed.], 319.) The *New York Weekly Review* (14 Oct. 1865, 4) alleges that the two women were escaping from their boarding school; Loggins and Behrend do not mention such a possibility. Loggins alone asserts that the blond young woman was Legay’s fiancée (p. 225).

52. Loggins, *Where the World Ends*, 228. To be sure, Maguire was no stranger to intrigue and scandal. One of his most notorious episodes involved the 1852 sale of a bankrupt theater, the Jenny Lind, to the city of San Francisco, which eventually used it as its City Hall. See the article cited in n. 39.

53. *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 319–20.

54. *Watson’s Weekly Art Journal*, 11 Nov. 1865, 56, 58.

pers, but they have been enclosed to his dearest friends—to families in whose home circle he has for years been a welcome and honored guest.⁵⁵

Gottschalk writes in one of his undated fragmentary drafts that “the merciless court of truth . . . sooner or later will force [the accessories to the act] to be ashamed of the sordid means they used to harass an artist.”

In Loggins’s version we read that on Friday, 15 September 1865 (this also disagrees with Gottschalk’s dating of the incident),⁵⁶ Gottschalk invited to a luncheon the forty individuals who had presented him with the medal. Of that number only three appeared, led by de Cazotte. They strongly suggested that Gottschalk remain in his hotel until they could smuggle him aboard the *Colorado*, sailing in two days (Monday, 18 September) for Panama between 2 and 3 A.M. In his published letter of 11 November 1865 to Escudier, Gottschalk writes: “I was obliged to leave the city precipitately, from fear of being *assassinated*.”⁵⁷

Five years later, Octavia Hensel (pseudonym of Mary Alice Ives Seymour) wrote in her gushy, sentimental *Life and Letters of Louis Moreau Gottschalk* that Gottschalk,

unconscious of the lying reports creeping towards the North, went southward to gladden music-loving souls of a sunnier land. Ah! Could he have known the cruel stories which wounded and angered the true-hearted friends he had left in the United States, he would have returned at once and faced his calumniators.⁵⁸

Gottschalk, however, knew well that rumors were flying, but his only known response was made in a letter: “It is beneath my dignity as a man of honor to notice such slanders. Surely my friends can never credit them, and if believed by those who are not my friends, I can only pray kind Heaven give them better minds.”⁵⁹

Following is a transcription of Gottschalk’s draft describing the fateful incident. It may have been written in Peru, early in 1866.

55. *Ibid.*, 25 Nov. 1865, 89–90.

56. Doyle states in *Gottschalk*, 65, that Gottschalk was “notoriously vague about dates.” Perhaps so, but one would think that Gottschalk would be accurate about the date on which one of the most important events of his life took place. Further weakening his statement of the date, however, is the fact that the *Daily Alta California* for 14 Sep. 1865, page 4, advertised that he was to appear on the evening of 15 September at Platt’s Hall in the “Grand Complimentary and Farewell Benefit to Signor G. Sbriglia” (the tenor mentioned in the draft). Did the concert go on without Gottschalk? Was it possibly canceled altogether?

57. *Watson’s Weekly Art Journal*, 17 Feb. 1866, 284.

58. Octavia Hensel, *Life and Letters of Louis Moreau Gottschalk* (Boston: Ditson, 1870), 161–62.

59. Quoted in Hensel, *Life*, 162. Also quoted in *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 320. We do not know the identity of the letter’s addressee.

My dear sir

Yours dated Boston 6th Oct.r is at hand. It is the second/or third at the utmost/ which I have received from you since I left New York. My concerts here succeed admirably and my health is satisfactory.

I have for the last two months avoided writing to any of my friends about the affair which compelled me to leave California suddenly hoping that the circumstances connected with [it] and the very interest of those persons who took a part in it would suggest the propriety of smothering the whole thing in its cradle; but the last letters I have received from the Atlantic States leave me no other course to pursue but to make as public as possible the plot I have been made the victim of. The office of slanderer is, verily, an easy one but I would doubt of even the existence of a Being above at all were it not in the power of truth to vindicate itself at last.

The whole affair, at least the part they say I have taken in it, is a lie, a villainous, rascally, infamous falsehood from beginning to end. In any of the Atlantic States or in any part of Europe where laws are respected I would have appealed to the courts but in California where unfortunately there are yet remnants of Lynch-law notions I had no other alternative but to flee at once.⁶⁰ Here goes the whole thing:

On the 15th of September at 12 m. I called on my hatter, a young dandy of S^F [San Francisco] to order a hat. As soon as he saw me he exclaimed "Why, my dear G[ottschalk], this is providential! I wanted precisely to see you; here is something which concerns you" (showing a letter he was reading) and then he went on telling me that for the last six weeks he had been receiving anonymous letters from a girl who said she was in love with him. The one he had then in his hand was more passionate than the former ones and he read me a passage which said: "My dear Charley I must see you and if you come tonight I will give you every proof of my love. Take a carriage and meet me at half past eleven to night on the road at [?] Oakland. You will wait until I meet you but you must be accompanied by a friend as I, myself, will not be alone and the girl who will be there with me wishes to have someone too. Let your friend be Sbriglia or Gottschalk."⁶¹ I told at once Mr. Charles Legay (this is the name of the hatter) that my unvariable custom had been to take no notice of anonymous [*sic*] letters. Most of them [?] I considered as sells [?]. This woman was either worthy of the trouble of going to a rendezvous, and in such a case she would not in all probability write an anonymous letter; or she was not worth taking notice of which course was the easiest and safest to pursue.

"However,["] retorted Charlie Legay, ["]you do not know California, there may be some fun if we go; suppose it is a practical joke, you and I will have a good supper, we will the next morning visit the environs and as we shall

60. There may have been such remnants, but Maguire *was* sued twice near this time: in October 1865 by an actress, Felicite de Vestvali, and in December 1865 by a musician, W. J. Macdougall. See the article mentioned in n. 39.

61. Giovanni Sbriglia (1832?-1916) was an Italian tenor then appearing in San Francisco (see n. 56). He performed opera in Italy and New York, sang in Havana, toured the U.S.A. and Mexico twice, and returned to Europe about 1875. He was later famous as a vocal teacher, numbering Lillian Nordica and the de Reszke brothers among his pupils. In 1865, Gottschalk thought him "a charming tenor. He has a very handsome face, sings very well, and has borne alone the weight of the hundred representations given in four months by Maguire" (*Watson's Weekly Art Journal*, 17 Feb. 1866, 284).

remain two days in our excursions no one will consider that we have been *sold*."

I was, however, not inclined to accompany him and suggested that he should propose to Sbriglia to take part in the adventure instead of me but he objected on the ground of not knowing intimately Sbriglia. I left his store without, in spite of all his entreaties, having promised positively to meet him in the afternoon.

He called at my house two hours afterward leaving word to my servant that I *must* not leave him alone in the scrape [?] that this was nothing but fun etc. etc. and that the steamer would leave for Oakland at 6 o'clock. When I came home I found out that that day the hour of departure of the Oakland steamer had been changed and was half past five instead of six. I ran to the wharf but the steamer had left.

The weather was beautiful: the bay perfectly calm and Oakland is but 6 or 7 miles from [San Francisco]; besides, a poor workman who had missed the boat seemed much distressed at the prospect of having to remain in [San Francisco] all night there being no more boats till next morning, attracted my attention and wishing at all events to have a nice sail and to serve the poor man I engaged a small boat and both of us with the two oarsmen started for Oakland.

On my landing there I went to several hotels and finding nowhere the name of Chas. Legay gave him up[,] the more so as a gentleman who had come up in the [5:30] boat assured me Chas. Legay was not on board. Knowing no body in the place I started on a solitary walk and was coming back to the hotel when I met on the road a carriage and to my great astonishment saw Legay was in it. I took a seat and we had a hearty laugh at my having found nowhere his name, a circumstance which he accounted for by saying he had taken a room at a Frenchman's restaurant outside of town.

After riding half an hour the coachman who I supposed was known to Mr. Legay and had honestly received his instructions stopped. We stepped out. It was on the road. I could not see two steps before so dark was the night. We waited half an hour. I then urged him, entreated him to go back to town as my conviction was that we had been made fools of and some party was most probably in the very moment laughing at our expense.

Suddenly, we heard a cough and a smothered laugh and two shadows emerged from one side of the road. "Is it you, Charlie?" said a girl's voice. Yes, answered Charlie. ["Who is your friend?"] said the first voice. ["It is Gottschalk."] As soon as my name was pronounced the second shadow (the first was already engaged arm in arm talking eagerly to Mr. Legay) approached me and said laughingly: "Don't you know me?[" I took off my hat and the darkness being yet so thick that it was impossible for me to make out who was talking to me[.] I puffed my cigar and through its dim light recognized at last my mysterious companion who was no one else but a young lady whom I knew by sight and whom every one in any way connected with theatrical circles knew to have been *flirting* notoriously with Sbriglia the tenor.

I had never spoken to her having met her only once in a lady's home where she was in the habit of meeting the handsome and talented Italian singer. Lately it had been muttered that while her family (which is, I think, an honorable one) thought her at her boarding school in Oakland she had remained secretly in [San Francisco] at her lady friend's in order to carry out her "*flirtation*."

As soon as I knew who my interlocuter was I felt rather amazed, as my position evidently was anything but flattering. I was nothing but a substitute, the "small change" of Sbriglia and several others and in my spite I told the girl frankly so. She retorted that I was not gallant, that I was a queer man, that she had no more love with Sbriglia, that two days before they had broken up, that he was a fool, etc. Our conversation was anything but tender and were I the only man she ever gave a rendezvous to she might swear she was as innocent as a dove.

Both girls laughed a good deal at the stratagems they made use of to get out of their rooms & "how they walked alone over the hills;" they laughed so loud that we had several times to beg them to be more prudent, but then the 2^d shadow (mine) made fun of us saying I was a queer man, that we feared every thing, that it would be most funny should they meet on their way back the director of the school etc. etc. I have forgotten to tell you that the young lady is at least twenty years old[.] In spite of their entreaties to remain longer we left them on the road & then Legay & myself went back to our hotel.

Next morning we heard that the director had discovered them as they were entering the house and had sent for the family of the "second shadow" as it appeared that she was the guilty party and was the originator of the whole plot. To make a long story short a paper next morning published the news of a most villainous crime perpetrated by a celebrated *strolling* pianist and appealing to the most violent passions of the people in a language well calculated to arouse the ire of the community[.] [H]e, though without exactly giving my name, denounced me as deserving to be treated like a fiend, a rascal, a dog. The excitement was immense.

I have friends who care for me but their number is but insignificant if compared to that of my enemies. Is there any man who attracted public attention without creating enmity? Is not the fact of doing something better than most others a sufficient reason to be disliked by that immense portion of humankind who cannot tolerate superiority. Think also of the relish for scandal-mongers!!

You might for ten years say that Gottschalk paid all his father's debts, supported his family since he was 20 years old, brought up and gave a splendid education to four sisters and two brothers, has given money to every poor artist he has found on his way, has never done harm to any one willingly, has never written about a brother artist but to praise his talent, you might that and ten thousand times more and be convinced that it will be kept in religious secrecy; but publish to morrow that G[ottschalk] has committed the most unheard of "brigandage" and it will spread like a wild fire all over the land, no one (perhaps a few friends excepted) doubting the truth of the fact and many adding [. . .]

The following disconnected fragment may belong to the forgoing draft:

exclaimed "Good God! After so much trouble and exertion the school is ruined for ever. I had however thought all was safe as I had two matrons *sleeping on each side of her bed.*" Of course, the conclusion to come to is that when two matrons are required to sleep on each side of a school girl's bed who enjoys capital health it is not for the purpose of giving her medicinal assistance except in the way of preventing her catching cold outside of the house during the night[.]

So here, in Gottschalk's own words, is his version of the "scandal" that caused his exit from San Francisco and his ensuing exile from the United States. For all his protestations of innocence, however, there is something unsettling about the piece: it is terribly self-serving—even whiney. It is maddeningly detailed overall, though insufficiently detailed in certain respects. With his known fondness for young women⁶² and his reputation as a "ladies' man," Gottschalk's motives for going with Legay are suspect, especially so when we consider his thoughts on the artist and morality. We read in his diary a passage written not many months before he left New York for San Francisco:

I lament that the man of genius is, sometimes, from his private character unworthy of the sentiments that his writings inspire, but do not forget that he dies, while his works live. His neighbors only are interested in knowing that he gets drunk, or that he is not a believer. But his works! They pass through the ages . . . and are the only source of human perfectibility. . . . To make the works of the artist responsible for the whole of his private life is . . . unjust. . . . Poor Poe! He drank! Who knows it now?⁶³

Certainly today, almost a hundred and twenty-five years after the San Francisco incident occurred, many would agree with this position. Simon Schama writes the following about Rembrandt: "[He] is now seen [as] an acquisitive property owner, hungry for status, greedy for cash, churlish to his patrons and often brutal in his relations with women . . . but if his unpleasant personality produced 'The Jewish Bride,' then why should we care?"⁶⁴ Nevertheless many would prefer to believe that Gottschalk was completely innocent in the affair despite his very human weaknesses.

The greatest doubt about Gottschalk's actual role in the incident is raised by the clear-cut statement in his diary about Maguire: Gottschalk maintains that he found Maguire "very kind and very just in his transactions,"⁶⁵ suggesting that he did not suspect Maguire of wrongdoing in the matter. This would leave Gottschalk himself with major responsibility for the incident.

Open to question, too, are the motives behind Gottschalk's decision to remain outside the United States permanently. Did he really believe what he wrote in one of the fragmentary drafts found in the collection: "As an artist my career is finished in the U.S."? Perhaps he was being melodramatic, if indeed the statement was genuinely meant and Gottschalk was completely innocent, as he claimed to be in the above draft. Behrend explains away Gottschalk's refusal to return by maintaining

62. See especially a famous passage in *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 293.

63. *Ibid.*, 260.

64. *The New York Times Book Review*, 15 May 1988, 34.

65. *Notes of a Pianist* (1964 ed.), 293.

that “the San Francisco episode was bound to leave its mark on a sensitive artist. The hurt never left him.”⁶⁶ Octavia Hensel merely states that “his [South American] engagements forced him to remain.”⁶⁷

The publicity surrounding the “scandal” was neither great nor meaningful. While three San Francisco newspapers carried mention of the affair in one or more issues,⁶⁸ one or even two of these papers were the equal of today’s unsavory tabloids and would not have been taken very seriously. Most of the accounts did not mention Gottschalk by name (those members of the relatively small world of San Francisco concertgoers who read the papers could only *assume* that he was the pianist in question). So little was the incident written of in the press, in fact, that after Gottschalk’s departure one of the more reputable San Francisco papers published a letter to the editor, from which the following passage is extracted:

Facts have just been brought to light proving, beyond a doubt[,] that the celebrated pianist, who has charmed us with his delightful music and astonished us with his wonderful skill, is a *rake*. But as soon as the facts are known, he quietly slips off . . . filling the minds of those who did not know the reason with wonder. . . . The Press is hushed! Not a word.⁶⁹

We know that Gottschalk was by no means universally admired as a person. An anonymous (and maybe alert) critic, writing in 1865, perhaps spoke for many:

His reputation was made in Europe before he even thought of seeking it here. Surrounded by the baneful influence of journals like [the *New York World*] he rapidly degenerated into a carping, unreasonable, and wearisome egoist. Sinking beneath the ignominy of senseless adulation, he poured forth piece after piece of trash.⁷⁰

And a review, reputedly written by Eugene Field, of Hensel’s book about Gottschalk mentions the California matter and then refers to his “well remembered . . . exploits elsewhere. . . . [Hensel] endeavored to deify a man—a weak, erring man; one whose mind was peculiarly developed in certain respects, and peculiarly stunted in others.”⁷¹

Gottschalk’s decision to remain for over four years in more-or-less uncivilized, frequently corrupt, or politically ravaged cities and villages in South America rather than return to New York is made to look almost foolish by a strong letter—preserved in the collection—from Charles

66. *Ibid.*, 320.

67. Hensel, *Life*, 162.

68. Doyle, *Gottschalk*, 171.

69. *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 21 Sept. 1865, 3.

70. *New York Weekly Review*, 24 June 1865, 4.

71. This unsourced undated review (possibly from the *Philadelphia Free Press*) is preserved in the Gottschalk clipping file at The New York Public Library, Music Division.

Francis Chickering to Gottschalk that seems to be something of an answer to the letter represented by the above draft. Chickering's letter was written from New York and bears the date 6 March 1866. He writes in part:

The matter is not one half or one tenth part so bad as you think it is. So little is it thought of here that again I say to you, as I did in a letter of 2 or 3 weeks ago, "I am ready to negotiate with you for a professional season for the winter of '66 & '67." And my candid advice to you is *come to New York* . . . Your long letter [giving me the particulars of the San Francisco matter] has been circulated freely[;] all your friends have seen it, and it is now in the hands of the Editor of the "Tribune" who has promised to make a proper newspaper statement of it.⁷² . . . I hope before this that . . . what I have already said will induce you to recall all your determinations about not coming this way again.

As we now know, Gottschalk did not change his mind, in spite of Chickering's offer to negotiate a contract and the information that the San Francisco affair was scarcely talked about in New York.

The foregoing revelations provide, I believe, insights into the complex character of one of America's most interesting musical figures. When carefully studied, the balance of the great Gottschalk collection at The New York Public Library will undoubtedly reveal many more.

72. I have located no such article.

