

*The 5:48* [1940; publ. 1949] (1941)

**Edward Joseph Collins, composer**

**Notes by Jon Becker, editor for the Collins project**

The earliest known performance of *The 5:48* dates back to a 10 June 1940 recital that Collins shared with his American Conservatory faculty colleague Maryum Horn, in Chicago's Kimball Hall. An unsigned review of the performance appeared in the 8 August 1940 edition of that city's *Music News*:

In his closing group, all but one of which were from his own pen, Mr. Collins struck fire and captivated his listeners by his style, clarity, [and] keen originality. *Li'l David* and the 5:45 [sic] are full of the modern idiom of restless energy and spirit. Many encores were in order.

On the back cover of the colorful 1949 Clayton F. Summy publication, an unattributed program is provided:

O[n] a clear autumn afternoon in the "Gay '90s," "The 5:48" is making her daily run from Sun Prairie to Eden Valley. Rounding the east bend of Lebanon Junction, she whistles for Blake's crossing (Measures 3 and 4).

The two coaches and baggage car are drawn by one of the engines of the new 900 series, resplendent in bib smoke-stack and cow-catcher. "The 5:48" hums along and, in open country, does better than 45 m.p.h. Did you just hear the engine bell? (Measures 17 and 18).

Now roaring over bridges, now cutting through woods or corn fields, "The 5:48" finally comes within sight of Eden Valley. The engineer jams on the brakes and she slows down to six m.p.h. (prescribed by law!)

There is a big crowd at the depot to see her pull in and as the engineer release the air brakes (next to last measure), he waves to the people. Just at the far end of the platform she crashes to a stop. The station agent looks at his watch—right on time—old "5:48" has done it again.

Besides the train, Collins took great joy in other modern mechanical things of his time, often remarking how radio had made the experience of music so accessible, even in the car that he loved to drive fast from Chicago to his summer abode near Fish Creek, in Door County, Wisconsin.