

*Nocturne* (ca. 1936-1940)

Edward Joseph Collins, composer

Notes by Jon Becker, editor for the Collins project

The earliest mention of a *Nocturne* by Collins is in a May 1936 *Chicago Tribune* review:

Edward Collins, a Chicago pianist and teacher who has enjoyed for many years a steadily growing reputation as a composer, played several things from his own pen Sunday afternoon. The occasion was the annual Collins recital in the Studebaker Hall. . . . The composer's cult of the exquisite was revealed in his four contrasting waltzes and the highly attractive *Nocturne*.

On the evening of 28 June 1939, Collins noted in his journal that "My summer recital took place this afternoon . . ." and that the program included ". . . my own 'Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel' and *Nocturne*. . . . The theatre was filled with a very musical and appreciative audience and I was in fine form, having prepared the program perfectly."

Yet in journal entries of 22–23 March 1940, Collins wrote of "trying (in vain) to close the gap" in a *Nocturne in B Minor*, calling it an "unfortunate" work "which will simply not get finished."

The source manuscript for the *Nocturne* recorded on this disc does seem to reflect this troubled history. Found in a bound music notebook, amidst other compositions and sketches, the penciled score is in the composer's hand. At the closing measure Collins wrote "19 February 1936," so apparently, at least on that one day, he considered *Nocturne* completed.

But fourteen measures in the middle are crossed-out, an arrow reconnecting the preceding and subsequent passages. Three more measures are crossed out in the closing section; lower on the page, after the composition's ending, two options for substitution are penciled.

This edition honors the composer's deletion of *Nocturne's* middle section, and the better of the two substitute passages is performed.