

*Six Technical Stunts in Canonic Form* (ca. 1920)

Edward Joseph Collins, composer

Notes by Jon Becker, editor for the Collins project

In diary entries dating from the 1920s, Collins mentions near daily work on counterpoint, part of his continuing efforts to better educate himself as a composer, after Berlin schooling that emphasized performance. His music notebooks are sprinkled with contrapuntal exercises or sketches.

The composer's intentions for the music titled *Six Technical Stunts in Canonic Form* are less than certain. Found in a notebook on the cover of which Collins wrote the words "Technical Stunts; Oct. 19, 1920" these six canons are numbered, but untitled, and abruptly end with an incomplete composition titled "Fugue" and dated "Nov. 20, 1920."

The sixth *Stunt* [Track 11] is a contrapuntal treatment of *Dixie* that presages by nearly two decades that tune's reappearance in Collins's opera *Daughter of South*, in counterpoint to *The Girl I Left Behind (Me)*, another authentic Civil War tune.

Despite having been the Confederacy's unofficial anthem, *Dixie* was a favorite of Abraham Lincoln and remained popular in the United States long after that country's Civil War. A tune with centuries-old Celtic roots, *Dixie* also attracted Collins, even though his own Irish-American uncle, while serving in the Union Army, narrowly escaped a Confederate bullet during the Battle of Antietam.