



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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The musical life of poet Emily Dickinson to be featured in American Antiquarian Society program on Tuesday, July 25

July 5, 2023 (Worcester, MA) — Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) is one of America’s greatest poets of all time. She was also an avid parlor pianist and music lover, who assembled over a hundred of her favorite sheet music in a keepsake book. This book and the music that she enjoyed will be explored in “Emily Dickinson’s Music Book: A Live Performance of an American Poet’s Musical Life,” at the American Antiquarian Society (AAS) on Tuesday, July 25, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. The program will feature a presentation by musicologist George Boziwick, along with performances by soprano Maria Ferrante and pianist Kit Young.

Free and open to the public, the program will take place in Antiquarian Hall, 185 Salisbury Street, Worcester. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The full program will also be livestreamed for those unable to attend in person. Advance registration is required for both the in-person and livestreamed options and can be done online at americanantiquarian.org.

After years of studying piano as a young woman in her family home in Amherst, Massachusetts, Emily Dickinson had her large collection of published sheet music bound into a keepsake book, a common practice at the time. Now part of the Dickinson Collection in the Houghton Library of Harvard University, this volume of 107 pieces includes the poet’s favorite instrumental piano



music and vocal music, ranging from theme and variation sets to vernacular music.

Musicologist George Boziwick, author of *Emily Dickinson's Music Book and the Musical Life of An American Poet* (2022), will bring Dickinson's memento to life, giving a glimpse into her early years of musical study through the time her music was bound in the early 1850s—and revealing new insights into what music meant to the poet. The program will also include live performances of selections from Dickinson's music book by soprano Maria Ferrante and pianist Kit Young. Nineteenth-century parlor songs to be performed include "Oh the Merry Days When We Were Young," "The Old Armchair," and "Believe Me if All Those Endearing Young Charms."

About George Boziwick

George Boziwick is a musicologist, music librarian, composer, and performer. His thirty-one years with The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts included eleven as Chief of the Music Division. As a composer, his *Magnificat* is published by C.F. Peters, and his music has been recorded on Opus One and other labels. Boziwick and artistic director Trudy Williams cofounded The Red Skies Music Ensemble. Since 2012, they coauthored and coproduced seven performance programs on various aspects of Emily Dickinson and music. His book, *Emily Dickinson's Music Book and the Musical Life of An American Poet*, is published by the University of Massachusetts Press (2022). Boziwick, who lives in New York City, currently serves on the Board of the Emily Dickinson International Society.

About Maria Ferrante

Soprano Maria Ferrante, of Worcester, has become familiar to audiences worldwide in recital, oratorio and in over fifteen leading operatic roles. A winner of the Mario Lanza Voice Competition, she has been acclaimed by *The Washington Post* and *The Boston Globe*. The soprano's performances have delighted audiences from New York to the Virgin Islands, Prague, Japan, and London. She appeared live on WGBH-TV in Verdi's *Aida*, and was invited to



commemorate Boston's Goethe Institute 250th Gala Celebration with Xavier de Maistre, (Vienna Philharmonic). Ferrante has recorded for Naxos, Albany and AFKA labels. In addition, she has four solo CDs to her credit.

About Kit Young

As a pianist, improviser, and composer, Kit Young continues to find a synergy of ecologies throughout Emily Dickinson's poems embracing sound and music. Her chamber opera, *What Miss Dickinson Heard—and Didn't*, explores improvisational musical interpretations on a fixed libretto of Dickinson's poetry and letters. In 2022, she recorded repertoire on nineteenth-century, square pianos for George Boziwick's recently published *Emily Dickinson's Music Book and the Musical Life of an American Poet*. Since 1988, Young's collaborations with musicians from Thailand, Myanmar, and China (where she lived consecutively until 2012) integrate her study and performance of both traditional and new music idioms. Young lives in Washington, DC.

About the American Antiquarian Society

The American Antiquarian Society (AAS) is a national research library and community of learners dedicated to discovering and sharing a deeper understanding of the American past. Through wide-ranging programs, community engagement, and research support for scholars and students, the Society works to cultivate a broad community of inquiry—locally and nationally.

Since its founding in 1812 by Revolutionary War patriot and printer Isaiah Thomas, AAS has assembled what is today the world's largest and most accessible collection of books, pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, periodicals, children's literature, music, and graphic arts material printed before the twentieth century in what is now the United States. The library of over four million items also includes a substantial collection of secondary texts,



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A national research library of American history and culture

bibliographies, digital resources, and reference works. As a learned society, AAS has over 1,100 members, who are elected based on distinctive achievement in academic or public life. The Society was presented with the 2013 National Humanities Medal by President Obama in a White House ceremony.

The American Antiquarian Society is located at 185 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA. The library is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. To learn more, visit americanantiquarian.org.

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