



DAVID W. GUION

*Composer-Pianist
and Teacher of Piano*

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DALLAS, TEXAS

DAVID W. GUION is a native of Texas, having been born in Ballinger, the son of the late Hon. and Mrs. John I. Guion. Judge Guion was one of the best known of Texas citizens, having served his state in many capacities, Guion Hall at A. and M. College testifying to his efforts in behalf of education. From Mrs. Guion the son inherited his musical predilection, which became so manifest in the early years of childhood that his musical education was begun at the age of six. Within the next six years he had given concerts throughout Texas and had won a scholarship in the Conservatory of Music at Jacksonville, Ill.

After a year's stay in Jacksonville, Mr. Guion returned to Texas and entered Polytechnic College, Fort Worth, where he remained five years under the tutelage of the late Wilbur MacDonald, the last two years serving as Mr. MacDonald's assistant. At Mr. MacDonald's death, Mr. Guion went to Vienna, Austria, and spent three years in the Royal Conservatory of Music under Leopold Godowsky. Again returning to Texas, he became director of the School of Music of Daniel Baker College at Brownwood. Here Mr. Guion brought into use his creative powers and instantly he was acclaimed a composer of originality and broad musicianship. From Brownwood Mr. Guion went to New York and gave his entire time to composition. On returning to Texas Mr. Guion signed a two-year contract as teacher of Piano in Southern Methodist University of this city. For the past two years Mr. Guion, aside from his private teaching in Bush Temple, has been Director of Fairmount Conservatory. Beginning with this year Mr. Guion will devote all of his time to private teaching in his down town studio.

There is scarcely a concert given by the leading artists of America

that does not carry one or more of Guion's compositions. Among the artists using his works last season were:

John Phillip Sousa, Percy Grainger, John Powell, Edwin Hughes, Mabel Garrison, Sophie Braslau, Galli-Curci, Paul Althouse, Arthur Middleton, Reinald Werrenrath, Alma Gluck, Margaret Matzenauer, Lucy Gates, Alice Gentle, Florence Hinkle, May Peterson, Oscar Seagle, Cecil Arden, James Goddard, Cecil Fanning, Dicie Howell, Elizabeth Lennox, Margery Maxwell, Orville Harrold, Rosalie Miller, Alice Moncrief, Gretchen Morris, Margerite Ringo, Mildred Smith, Minnie C. Stine, Earle Tuckerman, Eleonora de Cisneros, Frances Ingram, Merle Alcock, Charles W. Clark, Norman Arnold, Elizabeth Rothwell, Carolina Lazzari, Lucille Stevenson, Alma Hays Reed, Gordon Kay, James Price, Lotta Madden, Frederick Gunster, Walter Greene, Richard Hale, John Lund, Edward Johnston, Alma Peterson, Alma Simpson, Florence Easton, Alice Nielson, Emma Roberts, Joyce Borden, and others.

Guion's compositions are: Turkey in the Straw, Sheep and Goat, Dance Pickaninny, Minuet, De Ol' Ark's a Moverin', Greatest Miracle of All, The Bold Vaquero, Shout Yo' Glory, Little Pickaninny Kid, My Own Laddie, Life and Love, Mary Alone, Return, Resurrection, Compensation, Love is Lord of All, Prayer, A Kiss, Run Mary Run, Embers, The Ghostly Galley, Ol' Marse Adam, Some O' These Days, Swing Low Sweet Chariot, Nobody Knows de Trouble I Sees, Little David, John de Baptist, I Sees Lawd Jesus A Comin', Hark From de Tombs, Poor Sinner, Jubilee, My Little Soul's Gwina Shine, Holy Bible, Sinner Doan Let dis Harves' Pass, You Jest Well Git Ready, Satan's A Liar an' a Conjur Too, Hopi Indian Cradle Song, Loss, Within Your Eyes, and a recent set of waltzes called "Southern Nights."

LETTERS COMMENDING MR. GUION

From Mrs. John F. Lyons: (President of the National Federation of Music Clubs) Your song, "Mary Alone," I honestly consider the most

beautiful thing I have heard in a long, long time. It is truly wonderful in its dramatic intensity. May I add that I am taking very great

pride in you as a Texan who does us great honor.

From G. Schirmer, Inc.: If you submit such extraordinary compositions, you need not worry about our accepting them.

From Lois Fox: I've had a splendid ovation through the Guion spirituals. Have used them at many camps for more than 100,000 of our boys.

From Oscar Seagle to Mrs. Seagle, Feb. 11, 1919: You ought to hear that Negro Spiritual of Guion's "The Ol' Ark's A Moverin'." It is simply wonderful. I am going to make a record of it when I return home.

From Mrs. Walter Rothwell: I like Mr. Guion's songs immensely and am using them a great deal in teaching. I consider them songs of great merit and they deserve to meet success.

From Charles W. Clark: I got a great deal of pleasure from studying this song ("Some of These Days"). It is beautifully written.

From George Siemomn: We have done "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" on at least a dozen programs and enjoy it thoroughly each time. Mr. Guion has struck exactly the right note for this setting and the impression on audiences is invariably preference. They convey to us deathlike quiet, and this is always the proof of highest appreciation. Mrs. Siemomn (Mabel Garrison) liked the number so well that she made a record of it.

From John Lund: I can not begin to tell you how much I enjoyed studying Mr. Guion's adaptations. They are wonderfully clever and certainly stamp him a musician of highest rank.

From Percy Grainger: I can not tell you how much I admire your arrangement of "Turkey in the Straw." What you have done could not possibly be better done, it seems to me.

The piece appeals to me tremendously and I shall play it in my concerts.

From Lucy Gates: I must tell you how delighted I was with your "Ol' Ark's A Moverin'."

From G. Schirmer, Inc.: Contrary to my usual practice, I wish to add that your song "Lil' Pickaninny Kid" is touchingly beautiful.—It will please you to hear that Mr. Rudolph Schirmer took a decided personal interest in your work.—I happen to know that among the songs he enjoyed and wanted to hear most just before his death was your sacred song "Prayer." Had he lived longer, your career would have been watched by him with special interest.

From M. Witmark & Sons: Your "Darkey Spirituals" cannot possibly be improved upon. Your work in thus perpetuating these quaint and plaintive melodies, with their characteristic text, constitutes a valuable contribution to the future as well as to the present.

From Louis Untermeyer: Your "Darkey Spirituals" are, I think, a real contribution to American music—a real folk-song literature that is authentic and convincing and movingly beautiful.

From Frances Ingram: Your "Songs of the South" greatly impressed me. I am using them with much success.

From Edwin Hughes: I am using your "Turkey in the Straw." In the first place I am very fond of it myself, and in the second it is so irresistible that it never fails to bring down the house.

From John Powell: "I have used your "Turkey in the Straw" on all my programs this year and have always been compelled to repeat it. Let me add that your "Darkey Spirituals" are the very best that have been written."

PRESS COMMENT

David W. Guion, pianist, rendered his numbers with a technical certainty in mastering all details. His first number, "Chaconne" Bach-Busoni, displayed his musicianship, while his rendition of Chopin was most commendable. Clear-cut runs, proficient

attack of heavy chords and well defined melody notes characterized his playing. (*Dallas News*).

In personality quiet and unassuming, Mr. Guion won his large audience upon his advent on the stage. His playing of the Bach-Busoni

"Chaconne in D Minor" prepared his listeners for an evening of real music. The selection was well executed, the pianist's technic, infused with genuine feeling, early manifesting itself. The selection of the evening which carried the broadest appeal to all was Schumann's "Scenes from Childhood," including a number of brief pieces designed to portray in musical expression, the moods of a child. (*Dallas Times Herald*.)

Brahms' "Rhapsodie in E Flat" was a good example of Guion's technical ability. He played this difficult number with perfect ease, showing himself master of his instrument. (*Fort Worth Record*.)

Quarter-Notes: These things, "Turkey in the Straw," etc., are as striking as skyscrapers, as nationally typical as base ball. It would be hard to find anywhere in piano literature numbers more irresistible to each and every kind of audience, simple or sophisticated.

Jacksonville (Ill.) *Star*: David Guion displays wonderful musical ability; he played with such a musical understanding that he easily won the hearty applause of his large audience.

Dallas (Texas) *News*: He possesses a marvelous musical sense, strong interpreting powers and his excellent technic was a wonder to all present.

The second number, the Andante from Beethoven's Farewell Sonata, was perhaps the most pleasing to the majority of the audience. This Mr. Guion played in a sympathetic way with a perfection of finish rarely equalled. (*Fort Worth Star Telegram*.)

"Molly on the Shore" and "Irish Tune from County Deery" were tumultuously applauded, but with the "Turkey in the Straw," he received an ovation to which he was forced to respond with a repetition of his inimitable transcription. (*San Angelo Standard*.)

David Guion made a deep impression through the rendition of a well selected program. (*Abilene Reporter*.)

The program closed with a Chopin group, all of which he played with remarkable smoothness. (*Corpus Christi Caller*.)

David Guion is one of the most gifted of the younger American pianists. His playing last evening proved that. (*Brownwood Bulletin*.)

The Muscicle (Dallas): Mr. Guion's songs are effective and he always finds the true dramatic undertone for the atmosphere of the poems he sets to music.

Charles J. Finger in *Reedy's Mirror* (St. Louis): I know very well that what passes current as negro music is more often than not of such sort as to blunt the artistic taste of those foolish enough to play it. They (Guion's) represent the real folk music of the negro carefully preserved and set in proper harmonic form by a young man who knows the unspoiled Southern darky. . . . The things he has done are good enough as they are, and still better work will come from him. He composes because he must and will never be recreant to his calling.

Milwaukee Correspondence, *Musical Courier*: Then he (Mr. Grainger) turned to whimsies and gayeties and here he and large portions of the audience had the best time of all. One opined, indeed, that if he had played that ancient breakdown, "Turkey in the Straw," sixty seconds longer he would have broken the reserve and sophistication of that same audience and set the people to treading the merry measures to their own astonishment.

Musical America: What Percy Grainger has done for some British and Irish folk tunes in his superb arrangements Mr. Guion has done for this American "Cowboys' and old fiddlers' Breakdown" (Turkey in the Straw). David W. Guion is one of the cleverest composers in America today. His arrangements of old negro spirituals prove that.

Music News (Chicago): "Darky Spirituals" is the title of a little booklet that has come into Music News' office, and which in content is an announcement of the songs of David W. Guion, a young Southern composer whose work is being brought to the attention of the American public. Several of these unique spirituals, founded on melodies taught Mr. Guion by his own colored "mammy" were sung at the Lockport Festival with great success.

All's Well (Fayetteville, Ark.): David W. Guion is a brilliant musician and what he gives us is real music. You can't go wrong with a Guion song.

Musical Courier (in writing of "Turkey in the Straw") Everybody in America knows it, and everybody loves it. It is positively irresistible. The collection and preservation in artistic arrangement of such folk tunes as this is of great importance to native American creative music.

Sigmond Spaeth (New York *Evening Mail*): Guion's compositions, I believe, would interest any publisher.

As an American composer David W. Guion stands at the head of the line with Victor Herbert, Henry Hadley, Reginald DeKoven, Oley Speaks and Charles Wakefield Cadman. (*Houston Chronicle*.)

The Musicales (Dallas): As a composer, Mr. Guion has an established reputation throughout the entire musical world; as an educator his renown is but little less.

San Angelo Standard: The second of the notable musical functions came in the beautiful banquet given by the David Guion Choral Club at one o'clock Thursday at the St. Angelus, honoring Mr. Guion of Dallas, foremost Texas composer for whom the club is named. The organization is composed of the devotees of music, the students and the artistically inclined, hence it was to be expected that the event would be a brilliant affair and the guests were not disappointed. There is a mystery about the personality of the man that is forever making something new. This is true with regard to the personality of the honor guest, Mr. Guion. Even more, there is the strength in simplicity of his genius, which is ever a flame of fascination for the music lover, the art connoisseur, the student and even the public at large. Mr. Guion sat at the end of the long table with the club president, Mrs. Bernice Ogle Jones, and like all great characters of artistic temperament, there was a modesty in his demeanor that was strikingly noticeable.

TEXAS COMPOSER HONORED BY HARMONY CLUB

Furthering the ideal of the Na-

tional Federation of Music Clubs to introduce American music to America, the Harmony Club presented David Guion, Texas composer and pianist, in a program of his own compositions. Guion, whose home is now in Dallas, is known internationally for his Darkey Spirituals, Negro lullabies, cowboy songs and piano arrangements of many of our old fiddle tunes such as "Turkey in the Straw," "Sheep and Goat," etc. To these were added on the Wednesday night program, which was appreciated by a large and enthusiastic audience, several of his newer art songs and piano compositions. One of the outstanding songs was "Mary Alone," sung by Daisy Polk, soprano. It is not so well known among Guion compositions but is surely one of the most beautiful. Miss Polk was called upon to repeat "Greatest Miracle of All," also "Embers" and "Hopi Indian Cradle Song." Mrs. Dan Brown scored best in "Lil' Pickaninny Kid" and "Prayer." George Ashley Brewster was forced to repeat Guion's famous cowboy song, "The Bold Vaquero." This number requires much long capacity, and Brewster filled the bill. Guion's wide range of musical composition enabled him to present a delightful program. So versatile is this young composer-pianist that one unfamiliar with every number and listening without a program might not have detected the same David Guion genius in every number. His piano group, which he himself interpreted, included the "Minuet," "Pickaninny Dance" and "Turkey in the Straw." Guion played these numbers brilliantly and was forced to repeat his "Turkey in the Straw." (*Fort Worth Record*.)

DAVID GUION HONORED AT HARMONY CLUB DINNER

David Guion, the Texas composer, was honored Wednesday night with a delightful informal dinner at the Texas Hotel. Mrs. John F. Lyons presided as toastmistress and graciously introduced Mr. Guion, who responded in a most pleasing manner. Messers W. J. Marsh and Sam S. Losh also responded with appropriate toasts to the noted composer. The table was elaborately decorated

in figures representing some of Guion's most famous compositions. After dinner Mr. Guion, assisted by Miss Daisy Polk, Mrs. Dan Brown and George Ashley Brewster, was presented in a program of his own compositions. The audience was unusually responsive and a great ovation was given after each number. (*Star Telegram.*)

DAVID GUION ONE OF TEN PIANISTS IN MASSED PIANO CONCERT

Ovation for Guion—However, it was the spirited rendering of David Guion's rollicking transcription of "Turkey in the Straw" that "brought down the house." From this, perhaps the best known tune in this country, one that from time immemorial every old fiddler has fiddled and everyone hummed, this now internationally famed composer, a native Texan has evolved a classic that great artists everywhere are adding to their repertoire. The frantically applauding audience, resorted to its heels by way of emphasis and so great was the ovation accorded that it had to be repeated, and its composer who was a member of the ensemble was

kept bowing many minutes. (*Times Herald.*)

But it was David Guion's "Turkey in the Straw," Dallas music, which won the outstanding ovation of the evening. The homely old tune, known from Atlantic to Pacific, has risen to the distinction of a classic beneath the skillful arrangement of Mr. Guion, and the audience not only made the pianists come back on the stage, but would not be content until the number was repeated. Mr. Guion, being one of the pianists, came in for a double share of applause. (*Dallas News.*)

(*MUSIC WEEK*) The Palace Symphony orchestra, conducted by Don Albert, featured David Guion's "Turkey in the Straw" and "Southern Nights." Both numbers were enthusiastically applauded and had to be repeated.

David Guion's "Turkey in the Straw" played by Houston Ray on Majestic bill—Houston Ray, pianist, scored such a triumph with Guion's "Turkey in the Straw" he was compelled to repeat it and was afterwards called back to bow several times. (*Dallas News.*)

David Guion, Texas Composer, Interviewed by Idalea Andrews-Hunt for Dallas News

The world seems to accord to genius, particularly the musician, the special privilege of reacting to ordinary conditions in a uniquely different way and we rather expect those who have soared higher or dropped their plummet farthest into the unfathomable depths to manifest barometric temperaments. And it is not to be wondered at that we hold that idea regarding the old masters, when biographers seemed to have concurred in the belief that they did have "an extraordinary appetite for doing different things and things in a different way."

But the greatest composers of today, particularly our native Americans, who have soared to the heights are possessors of no more idiosyncracies than other human beings, whom we encounter daily on the streets.

It is only because of their great-

ness that their whimsicalities and pettiness stand out and are taken seriously by a worshipful public—a public that is always delighted to know of any littleness in the bigness of its famous favorites.

Since one of Texas' own splendid sons, David W. Guion of Dallas, is now established on one of the loftiest pinnacles of fame, as one of the greatest of living modern composers, the thousands of students, concert-artists, and clubs in this and foreign lands, who are yearly manifesting an increasing interest in his works will be delighted in knowing just "how" and "why" he composed his inimitable transcription of "Turkey in the Straw," his tremendously popular negro spirituals, his art songs and his rousing cow-boy ballads.

Recently, when interviewed on this subject in his Bush Temple studio, this internationally famous Texan,

who withal is one of the most modest of men, was induced to divulge the origin or inspiration of several of his best known compositions, which such great artists as Galli-Curci, Frances Alda, Reinald Werrenrath, Percy Grainger, John Powell, John Philip Sousa, Rosa Ponselle, Mabel Garrison and scores of others, give prominent places on their programs each season.

"'Hoppi Indian Cradle Song' was the first of my songs to be published," said Mr. Guion. It was written in 1918 at my old home, Ballinger, Texas. I wrote it just as it is today, but without any words. The melody came to me one evening while I was improvising at my piano. It simply came to me—I don't know how, but I didn't lose any time writing it down. I didn't give it a name as I wrote it without a lyric and could find none to suit it. Later on in the year I spent several months in New York City and while there met the much talked of Louis Untermyer. I was invited to his home—played for him and among other things played this melody or song. He asked me what it was. I told him it had no name and no lyric. He was so impressed with the melody that he asked me to play it over and over. Before I knew what had happened, I had a lyric for my melody! He called it "Hoppi Indian Cradle Song," and so it is."

"A few weeks later I happened to meet Jessie B. Rittenhouse. She was good enough to read me several of her best lyrics and gave me permission to use them. This is how I came to write "Embers," "The Ghostly Galley," "Loss," "Within Your Eyes" and "Return." These songs were written one right after another. "Embers" and "The Ghostly Galley" came to me one afternoon while I was sitting out in one of the parks on Riverside Drive. I scratched them down on a piece of paper, then rushed to my room to write them. Both songs were finished within two hours. After a week or so I wrote "Within Your Eyes" at the home of my friend, Helen S. Woodruff. Mrs. Woodruff, writer of many splendid books, took a decided interest in my work and I often went to her home, just a door off of Fifth Avenue, to

write. "Loss" came to me one night about two o'clock. I dreamed I heard my mother singing this melody to me—it awakened me and I wrote it down. Strange to say, the lyric of "Loss" fit it exactly, "Return" was written a few weeks later."

"My "Darkey Spirituals" were also published in 1918. These melodies I love best of all. There's something about the old negro folk tunes that simply "gets me." Perhaps it is because I was "raised" by an old black mammy who was forever singing these old tunes. She used to take me to "chuch" with her and "set" me on the "moaners" bench with all the other "saints." The "reverend preacher," as he was called, usually preached with the Bible upside down, but that made no difference to him and it certainly didn't bother me. After he got through "expounding religion," he'd "lead off" into a song, and the rest of "us" would follow. In this way these old tunes got to be a part of me and I couldn't help writing them even if I had wanted to. These old songs will live forever, and I intend arranging them as long as I live. All of my "Darkey Spirituals" were written in Ballinger."

"While spending the summer months of 1919 with my mother in Ballinger, I wrote my now most famous numbers—"De Ol' Ark's a Moverin'," "Greatest Miracle of All" and "Turkey in the Straw." Every one asks me how I happened to arrange "Turkey in the Straw" for piano. Well, I don't know. Probably I didn't have anything else to do. I do know that while it was "going on," my mother and sisters, to say nothing of our next door neighbors, almost went crazy—so they say. "They" thought I was crazy and told me so, but I was used to that so went right along with my "Turkey in the Straw." Everyone knows the old melody, so don't ask me where it came from—I don't know, but I heard our old fiddlers and cowboys fiddle and whistle it before I could talk. I've danced to it until I was almost ready to drop. As to my arrangement—it was just in my soul and had to come out. Part of it was gotten by hard "diggin'" while at the piano. A certain little part popped into my head one morning between

two and three o'clock. I jumped out of bed and ran down stairs to my piano to write it down before I forgot it. Then, our neighbors *knew* I was crazy. I managed to get back in bed without being murdered, and by the end of the day my "Turkey" was finished, and I was almost as glad as the neighbors."

"'De Ol' Ark's a Moverin' was written a month or so before "Turkey." It is taken from an old Negro Spiritual. However, I made the accompaniment more or less humorous. Guess I just felt that way. Anyway, it was the first of my songs to make a real "hit" in New York. I know when, several months later, Mabel Garrison sang it in Carnegie Hall and was forced to repeat it again and again, I was very calmly sitting there, with hundreds of others, until my song started. Then—well, I wanted to jump up and crack my heels together, yell and shout, but an old sister sitting next to me gave me such an awful look that I was afraid to give way to my feelings—and I didn't. I shall never forget that evening—and I'll never forget Mabel Garrison."

"'Greatest Miracle of All' was inspired by the lyric—written by my good friend Marie Wardall of New York City. No one can beat Marie writing darkey lyrics, and do you know she has never seen a real pickaninny that I know of? After this song came "Lil' Pickaninny Kid," another darkey song. Like "Greatest Miracle of All," it was inspired by the lyric—another of Marie's."

"While in New York the second winter, I wrote several art songs. "Prayer," a lyric of Herman Hagedorn's was the first. Then came "My Own Laddie," "Love is Lord of All," "A Kiss," "Compensation," "Resurrection," "Life and Love," and then two darkey songs—"Run Mary Run" and "Ol' Marse Adam."

"'The Bold Vaquero' also "Shout Yo' Glory" were written at home the following summer. Years ago, out on a big ranch just a few miles west of Ballinger, my mother learned the melody and words of "The Bold Vaquero" from a Texas cowboy—now dead. Mother often sang this song

and I later arranged it for voice and piano. It is the most typical of all cowboy songs and has the old cowboy yells in it. When sung as it should be, it makes you think you are on a regular "round up," for it has the real atmosphere of the West."

"'Shout Yo' Glory,' a darkey song, is one of the oldest negro tunes in existence. It was handed down to my mother's old black mammy and I learned it from my mother. Aside from my mother, I don't know of anyone else who ever heard the melody sung. It is one of the most interesting to me."

"'Sheep and Goat,' an old fiddler's tune, I also learned from my mother, while "trotting" on her knee. Mother used to sing to me when she had nothing else to do, and often when she should have spanked me instead of singing to me. This old tune was shaped into a piano arrangement only a winter or two ago—my first year in Dallas. Then came "Pickaninny Dance" and "Minuet," my latest piano compositions, except for one or two groups of waltzes now at the publishers."

"Of my more serious songs, I consider "Mary Alone" my best. The poem is by Lucile Isabel Stall, a Texas writer, and was published in the *Dallas News* a little over a year ago. I was so deeply impressed with this beautiful poem that I immediately set it to music—even before I got permission to use it. In writing this song, I studied the poem very carefully and memorized it. Then, at night, when I was entirely alone, I turned off all the lights and began playing. I love to be alone, at times, and I especially love to play in the dark for I can think more clearly then. Of course I was thinking, all the while, of this poem, and, from somewhere, this melody came to me, and I played it over and over. It was then rather late and I had the uneasy feeling that someone was listening to me, and perhaps wishing I were somewhere else. In this I was correct, so I closed my piano and went to bed. I did not sleep, however, for I could only think of my new born song. Daylight found me writing, and writing "Mary Alone."