Australian Music Series – MDA040

‘How Can I Live’ from Stella
Melbourne, 1909-10

George W L Marshall-Hall
London, 1862 – Melbourne, 1915

Edited by
Richard Divall

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Introduction

G W L Marshall-Hall was born in Hyde Park, London in 1862 and died in Melbourne on 18 July 1915. Born into a medical family, Marshall-Hall studied from the age of sixteen at Kings College, London, and then in Montreux in Switzerland. Destined for the civil service, he decided on music as a career. From 1880 studied in Berlin, before returning to London in 1882 to further study at the Royal College of Music, where his teachers included Sir Hubert Parry and Frederick Bridge. The then Director of the College, Sir George Grove recognised his talent, and his wide interest in literature and in the history of music. Sir George wrote that Marshall-Hall was a man with an ‘inquiring turn of mind’, and ‘there is some evidence of a temper of no mean order’. He was beginning to make a mark for himself as a composer in England, but in 1887 an advertisement appeared for the position of the inaugural Ormond Professor of Music at The University of Melbourne. His application for the position was successful, and he arrived in Melbourne in January 1891 to take up the post. He quickly established a reputation for bohemianism, as a musician who could inspire both students and staff, and as a conductor. Marshall-Hall’s programming in concerts was adventurous and demanding, and his output as a composer ranged from two operas to two symphonies, several orchestral tone poems, chamber works and many songs.

His success was tempered by the publication of a series of provocative poems under the title of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, which inflamed the Anglican establishment. Although not devoid of defenders, Marshall-Hall’s tenure as professor was not renewed in 1900. But after a long period of controversy, he was eventually re-appointed as Ormond Professor in July 1914, only one year before his untimely death in 1915. His career and music are thoroughly examined in Dr Thérèse Radic’s excellent study *G.W.L. Marshall-Hall A Biography and Catalogue*.2

Marshall-Hall had shown support for the young Percy Grainger, and in 1938 Grainger repaid the debt by purchasing Marshall-Hall’s scores from his widow and only son. They are now housed in The Grainger Museum at The University of Melbourne. His grandson, Marshall-Hall Inman bequeathed a sum that provided the resources for the setting up of The Marshall-Hall Trust, which publishes and supports research and performance of Australia’s earlier music. The Trust has published numerous volumes of early Australian Music, and studies, including Thérèse Radic’s *Biography and Catalogue* mentioned in footnote two, and assisted in the publication of *Marshall-Hall’s Melbourne Music, Art and Controversy 1891–1915*.3

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The Performing Arts Collection, Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne.
Marshall-Hall started work composing his opera Stella over a ten week period from September 1909 until 4 February 1910, and he completed the orchestration of the work by 12 May of the same year. It is an opera set in Melbourne, and could be best described as Australian verismo but with a post Wagnerian influence. Some of the orchestration and vocal writing is very beautiful, especially so in the aria *Tired Nature* which is in the volume MDA039. The work was published in full score in 1992 in a fine edition by Dr Suzanne Robinson. In the full score the *History of Stella* and the synopsis of the opera are thoroughly described. The work is a very dramatic one, and it contains very direct references to the cabals and narrow personalities that beset Marshall-Hall during his time as Ormond Professor and in the following years, by the inclusion of the singing of the *Committee of the Social Purity Society*. The aria is sung in deep despair in the final scene, before the heroine Stella commits suicide.

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*Portrait of Marshall-Hall – Tom Roberts 1900 – Oil on Canvas
Grainger Museum, The University of Melbourne*

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4 G W Marshall-Hall, *Stella, an Opera in One Act* (Melbourne: Centre for Studies in Australian Music, The University of Melbourne, 1992). A vocal score was issued in the same series but there are some errors in the publication, which has necessitated this score being republished.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Richard Divall
July 2014

CRITICAL NOTES

There are no editorial notes.

The Editor
Frà Professor Richard Divall AO OBE is a Vice-Chancellor’s Professorial Fellow at Monash University, an Honorary Principal Fellow in Music at The University of Melbourne, and Visiting Professor at The University of Malta. He is Chairman of the Marshall-Hall Trust and is a Knight of Malta in Solemn Religious Profession. He was awarded a D.Llett. (Hon Causa) in 1992 by Monash University, and a Doc. Univ. (Hon Causa) by the Australian Catholic University in 2004. He holds a PhD in Theology from the University of Divinity on eighteenth-century sacred music on Malta that includes an edition of the complete sacred works of Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818), and is an Honorary Research Fellow at the same university. In 2014 he was appointed a Visiting Professor of Music at King’s College London. Richard Divall has edited early Australian music since 1967.
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**How Can I Live**

'Stella' - Melbourne - 1980

Edited by Suzanne Robertson

Vocal Score and Orchestral Parts by Richard Divall

G.W. L. Marshall-Hall

Edited by Richard Divoll
There's none so rare but, none so pity me. And could I weep, I have no

furose slentando più lento
How Can I Live

'Stella' - Melbourne - 1910

G W L Marshall-Hall
Edited by Suzanne Robertson
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my life? Could I but die, his arms about me,

voice at my ear, whis-p'ring "I love thee".

Thus, thus to bid farewell to shame, and
fear, and heart - ache.

What com-fort is there

else in all the world?

There’s none to care for,

none to pi-ty me.

And could I weep, I have no friend, no breast, where

on to lay my head and sob, my life away.

All is
He loves me! And his love will give me strength to tell him all. And though he then des

pise me. yet, when I'm gone he'll grieve: And I, to know he grieves, will glad - ly

die.

Grave

dark, dark as the grave.