



In Hindsight: Half a Century of Research Discoveries in Canadian History

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Episode 14: Annie Glen Broder

Annie Glen was early twentieth century Calgary's foremost accompanist, teacher, and music critic. She was, as well, a noted composer. For over three decades she played an important leadership role in local musical affairs. Very proud of her stirring 1906 march, "The Ride of the Royal North-West Mounted Police" (a 2015 performance is at <https://youtu.be/N7TYRRYE0LE>), she sent a copy to Lord Minto, the former Governor General of Canada, who she had met in Calgary two years earlier, shortly before his next Imperial posting as Governor General of India. In his last year in Canada, Minto had placed the foundation stone for the Anglican Church of the Redeemer in Calgary, where Annie was the organist. The collection of Glen's papers at the University of Calgary's Glenbow Western Research Centre contains the Viceroy of India's handwritten reply dated 17 January 1907, Government House, Calcutta (Broder fonds, M6258, file #5). Finding the original letter was one of my most pleasurable historical discoveries in recent years.

Dear Madam,

I must apologize for not having thanked you before for sending me your song, the Ride of the R.N.W.M.P. Stress of work being my only excuse.

I hope you will accept my best thanks, for the song, which I am delighted to have, and which will remind me of the splendid force with which I have spent so many happy days.

Believe me Yr. very truly. Minto

I am looking forward to hearing it sung—The words are excellent.

Who was this strong and talented woman, Annie Glen, who rose to such heights in her new community, founded a mere 28 years before her arrival in 1903?

The North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) established Calgary at the junction of the Elbow and Bow Rivers as a police post in 1875. After the Canadian Pacific Railway reached the tiny hamlet in August 1883, it began to grow into a genuine pioneer town, a supply centre for ranchers, then farmers. In 1904, the Force itself was granted the prefix Royal, and became the Royal North-West Mounted Police. (Later, in 1920, the RNWMP was merged with the Dominion Police to create the RCMP.) In the early twentieth century Calgary's steady rate of growth gained extraordinary speed. Between 1901 and 1911 the city's population grew ten-fold from roughly 4,000 to 44,000. Into this "frontier" setting stepped a woman in her mid-40s of great accomplishment in British musical circles.

Annie Glen, of "stately bearing" in the words of a former Calgary student, was an attractive woman who favoured Victorian-era clothes. She was a true child of the British Empire, born in India in

the fortress of Agra, near the Taj Mahal. Her father was the Reverend William Glen, a missionary said to have been a cavalry officer at the time of her birth, and her mother was Eliza Harriet Davis. Her paternal grandfather, another William, had been a Scottish missionary who had translated the Bible into Persian. When Annie was a small child in the early 1860s, her widowed mother relocated from India to Southgate, then a little village just north of London. Southgate could boast of a very distinguished resident at the time. In retirement, Sir John Lawrence, a former Governor General of India in the mid-1860s, lived there.

As early as age 12, the musically talented Annie played for village church services and accompanied singers at local concerts in neighbouring Wood Green. Very early in her musical training, the clever young woman won a scholarship to the National Training School of Music (later the Royal College of Music). At the time, Arthur Sullivan, of “Gilbert and Sullivan” fame, served as principal (1876-80). Educated both as a singer and as a pianist, Annie’s talents were impressive. Sullivan invited her to early productions of the shows, the operettas he created with William Gilbert. In May 1877, Annie was present at London’s Royal Albert Hall for performances of Richard Wagner’s music, with the composer himself conducting. Sir Arthur Sullivan later described the young Annie Glen as “a woman of exceptional gifts.” She held him in the highest regard, writing half a century later in a 3 March 1927 article in the *Calgary Herald*, “As a personality he was most fascinating, with winning manners that put everyone at ease, yet in an entirely effortless way.” In contrast, she recalled, W.S. Gilbert “was austere in his stage management.”

In the 1880s and 1890s, Glen travelled extensively in England. Apparently inexhaustible, she gave many recitals, performing songs by Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, principal of the Royal College of Music from 1888 to 1924, and Gabriel Fauré, among others. Through her association with the Hereford Philharmonic

Concerts (she later recorded in a short memoir), she met the orchestra's second violinist, a young man about her age, Edward Elgar. In the late 1890s, Elgar achieved incredible recognition as a composer of international stature of majestic and martial music. She was also acquainted with such individuals as the pianist and composer Otto Goldschmidt and his wife, the celebrated singer Jenny Lind. One of her teachers was John Stainer, renowned for his contributions as a composer, organist, and musicologist in the field of church music. A popular lecturer, Annie used musical illustrations while giving talks on piano accompaniment in several British cities. Her connections with the British musical establishment best explain her success, after her move to Calgary, in convincing the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music to conduct examinations in the city. Her certainty that local students would do well was justified: between 1909 and 1939, Calgary students won 16 of the 50 board scholarships awarded to Canadians.

Glen had a talent for writing as well as public speaking. In 1889 Oscar Wilde, then editor of *The Woman's World* magazine, accepted two articles, one on combs in history and literature, the second on music as a profession for women. In the following year, two more submissions examined national character and etiquette in European countries, and dramatic singing as a career for women. Unfortunately, any personal impressions she might have recorded of the flamboyant Irish playwright, poet, critic, and celebrity in late 1880s London have not been located.

An excellent introduction to Annie Glen's thought and to the quality of her writing is a passage from her "Dramatic Singing as a Career for Women," published in the 1890 issue of *The Woman's World* (page 491). She advised females seeking a singing career "to learn some modern language; add to the store of musical knowledge in every possible way; and devote a portion of time to exploring the treasures of history, poetry, and romantic literature,

from which are drawn in endless combinations the characters and incidents of modern drama. With a great artist is usually born a strong instinct of inquiry, which seeks food everywhere for the imaginative faculty.”

During the early 1890s Glen wrote stories headed by brief musical scores for *Little Folks* magazine. Perceiving the lack of an authoritative textbook on piano accompaniment, she became determined to create one despite discouragement from those, including Sullivan and Stainer, who claimed that such a manual was impossible to produce. In 1893 the determined woman, undeterred, published *How to Accompany*, which was brought out in an expanded edition in 1894 that was reprinted in 1905. *The Illustrated London News* praised it. Annie Glen cut out the reference and placed it with others in a scrapbook: “The work supplies a long-felt want; and pianists who are called upon to accompany either voice or solo instrument will do well to give it careful study.” The proud author forwarded Queen Victoria a copy. Reception was acknowledged from Windsor Castle by Her Majesty The Queen on 4 March 1895. The message which Annie included in her scrapbook on the volume reads: “The Queen has been pleased (through Lieutenant-Colonel Bigge) to convey to Miss Annie Glen her thanks for a copy of her book. “How to Accompany,” and to express her interest in the work.”

Intended as a practical handbook that “progressively considers musical works of great difficulty,” *How to Accompany* uses short excerpts from various pieces as examples. The first four chapters focus primarily on old ballads and lyrics, and articulate topics such as remembering the structure of scales and using the pedals effectively. Subsequent chapters describe the challenges in songs by contemporary composers such as Gounod, Grieg, and Berlioz, and how to render the complex orchestral parts of operas and oratorios on piano. The author refers to accompanying as a

“science” rather than an art, and she addresses practical skills that are still very much part of being an effective accompanist.

Glen’s marriage to Richard Broder, an Irish widower, brought her to Western Canada, first to Regina, then three years later to Calgary. The couple had met many years before in Britain. He is described as “an educated gentleman” who had been a teacher in England. Glen arrived in Canada during the autumn of 1900. It seems that Richard had written to ask her to join him, and for unknown reasons, she accepted.

In Saskatchewan Annie gave lessons and worked with Colonel J.S. Dennis, then deputy commissioner of the federal Department of Public Works, on a production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s celebrated *HMS Pinafore*. In 1903 the Broders moved further west when Dennis, now employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway, invited her to Calgary “to take hold of the musical situation,” as she later said. Her husband took up ranching, while she instantly became the central figure of the city’s small musical universe as the organist at the Pro-Cathedral Church of the Redeemer (Anglican), and as a highly regarded teacher, recitalist, composer, and music critic for several Calgary newspapers.

Among Annie Glen’s pupils was Muriel Aileen Preston, who later married future Alberta premier Ernest Manning. She recalled Mrs. Broder as a wonderful teacher, strict, but willing to let students give personal interpretations of a composition: “She would allow you to have your own voice.” In 1904 Glen Broder worked again with Dennis, this time on the Canadian premiere of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor’s *The Atonement*; other productions followed. She would become involved in projects such as Calgary’s National Music Week and the Alberta Music Festival.

A prolific author, she consistently included her maiden name before her married name. (When her husband died in 1924, the obituary in the *Calgary Herald* noted that he had been the

“husband of Annie Glen Broder.”) The titles of her compositions and poems indicate her commitment to Canada, her adopted land.

Shortly after her arrival in Calgary she wrote, as previously mentioned, one of her most popular pieces, “The Ride of the R.N.W.M.P.,” which became part of the repertoire of the force’s bands for many years. A friend of mine with a strong music background commented on hearing the 2015 recording of it, “Glen Broder’s March is totally delightful! And you can certainly hear the Arthur Sullivan influence.” The rousing song and chorus was apparently inspired by a recently published memoir by NWMP veteran Cecil Denny, *The Riders of the Plains: A Reminiscence of the Early and Exciting Days in the North West* (Calgary: The Herald Company, 1905). His first-hand account makes clear his sympathy for the First Nations as they struggled to adjust to the incoming settlers. Yet this proponent of gradual change still believed that assimilation was necessary, and he supported residential schools to achieve it.

Annie Glen was totally captured by the heroic narrative of the Mounties’ first years on the northern Plains. Just to quote the opening of “The Ride:”

Who ride fast and who ride far
From the Rockies to the border;
All the cattle thieves know the boys we are
For we deal with them in short order.

As Western Canadian historian Henry Klassen wrote in his 1974 essay “The Mounties and the Historians” (in Hugh A. Dempsey’s edited book, *Men in Scarlet*), “To Denny the Police were ‘grand men’, the embodiment of courage, firmness, and justice” (page 177).

There were, and are today, other narratives. One of Glen’s great interests was the Boy Scout movement, and on request in the mid-

1920s she wrote the foreword for a new scout book for Alberta. She endorsed the movement because “while giving personal pleasure, it inspires patriotic ideals, manly acts and willing service for others.” From Paul Coze (1903-1972), a member of the scouting movement in France who visited Calgary in 1930, Annie might possibly have learned of a Plains First Nations perspective on the Mounted Police in the early twentieth century. It is unrecorded if she did meet him.

Paul Coze, an artist, anthropologist, and prominent member of the French scouting movement, travelled to Western Canada in the summer of 1928. This was the first of four visits. Anxious to speak with elders on Plains reserves, Coze soon found that they did not wish to meet him. At Lebret, Saskatchewan, it all became clear when Father Joseph Poulet, the French-Canadian principal of the neighbouring Indian Residential School at Lestock, learned of the problem. Everywhere Coze went he wore his Scout hat and uniform. Consequently, judging from his appearance, the First Nations naturally believed him to be a Mountie or member of the Canadian military, seeking to enlist them, then or later. Until Father Poulet explained who Coze really was, they wanted nothing to do with him.

In terms of her energy, Annie was indefatigable. She wrote other songs in addition to “The Ride of the R.N.W.M.P.”: “Song of the Chinook,” “Northern Harvest,” and “Calgary, City of the Foothills.” Shortly after her arrival in Calgary, she invited all 23 Indigenous students at the Calgary Indian Industrial School (established by the Anglican church in 1896 for senior Indigenous students and closed in 1907) to meet with her, presumably at the Anglican church where she was organist and choir trainer. The Rev. George Hogbin sent her a thank you letter on 6 June 1904 (University of Calgary’s Glenbow Western Research Centre, Broder fonds, file #5). In the local press, she reviewed performances by local singers and musicians such as Odette de

Foras, one of her pupils, as well as concerts and recitals given by international celebrities and groups, including Calgary-born violinist Mary Kathleen Parlow, Percy Grainger, Jascha Heifetz, Sergey Rachmaninoff, Amelita Galli-Curci, Fritz Kreisler, and the London String Quartet. She gave talks on music and culture, had private students, and made several extended trips to England. At the coronation of Edward VII in 1902, she was a special correspondent for the *Globe* and the (Winnipeg) *Manitoba Free Press*, and in 1911 she wrote about George V's coronation for the latter paper. For the *Herald* she reported on the opening of Canada House in London in 1925, and on the celebration of the 60th anniversary of confederation at a service in Westminster Abbey two years later. In her 70s Annie Glen Broder represented Canada at the Anglo-American Music Conference in Lausanne, Switzerland. In May 1937 she had been, as a press representative, one of the guests in Westminster Abbey for King George VI's coronation. She arrived back safely in Canada, but the journey overtaxed her strength and she never recovered her health again. She had contracted pneumonia and died on 8 August. The *Calgary Herald* described her as "a figure of Victorian elegance, retaining a Dresden-like distinction until the end. When she swept down the aisle at concerts to her critic's chair, her befeathered hat swathed in pale pink tulle was known to half the audience." Frank Harvey, president of the Calgary Symphony's board, paid her this tribute: "her influence was far-reaching and her musical knowledge apparently inexhaustible."

As a musician, critic, author, and gifted teacher, Annie Glen Broder had a rich and rewarding creative life in both England and Canada at a time when women had few opportunities for career advancement. In southern Alberta this accomplished, very self-assured Englishwoman made a major contribution to her adopted city's cultural life. In the early twentieth century, the influential and imposing Annie Glen Broder reigned supreme as the *grande dame* of music in Calgary.

The Back Story

Lord Minto's 1907 note to Annie Glen Broder had a special resonance to me as I visited Calcutta in 1981 during a three week visit of India. On Monday 4 May I wrote a letter summarizing my trip to a Calgary friend. She had studied for nearly two years in India and had encouraged me to go: "My arrival in Calcutta was at night. By rickshaw (man-propelled!) I found a hotel near the National Museum. I felt like I was back in the eighteenth century, travelling like that in such darkness, seeing shadows in darkened dooryards, figures huddle over fires, with my nose taking in the odours of India, smoke, incense, spices, and other smells not so agreeable." I met my Calgary friend shortly after my return to the city, and events took their most happy course, as I married Nancy Townshend one and half years later, in October 1982.

My first "run" at a full review of Annie Glen's life came nearly 30 years later. Ron Bond, University of Calgary English professor, senior University of Calgary administrator, and holder of Associateships in both Piano and Organ (on campus the acclaimed Ronald B. Bond Bach Organ is named in his honour), joined me to write a sketch of Annie for the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (DCB). The *Calgary Herald* of 18 November 2010 announced in a short notice the forthcoming 23 November event: "On the eve of her inclusion in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, early 20th century Herald music critic Annie Glen Broder will be the subject of a free event at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday at Fort Calgary." The news item ended, "The small retrospective celebration of Broder's life will conclude with her most popular composition, The Ride of the Royal North West Mounted Police, performed by singer and pianist Leith Bell." Ron and I gave our presentations, and with her music Leith brought the historical evening to new level of enjoyment. Kat Hammer assisted with the program, sponsored by Calgary's Chinook Country Historical Society. Willadean Leo, our

DCB editor who did so much to improve our sketch, attended from Toronto. Our entry proved very useful in my writing of the text for this episode:

http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/glen_annie_16E.html

Former member of the House of Commons (1993 to 2002) Preston Manning, the son of Annie's student Muriel Preston, and his son Nathan Manning were also able to join us. What a cherished memory that evening is. The details return when I read Lord Minto's last line in his 1907 note to Annie Glen from Government House, Calcutta: "I am looking forward to hearing it sung—The words are excellent." On the evening of 23 November 2010 at Fort Calgary, we were able to hear "The Ride of the Royal North-West Mounted Police," a pleasure denied the Viceroy of India in 1907.

Annie Glen Broder's papers, apparently collected by her former student and close friend Dorothy J. Currie, are held in the University of Calgary's Glenbow Western Research Centre, Broder fonds, M6258. From a biographical perspective, Annie Glen's own five-page 1931(?) memoir "Memoirs of a Musical Pioneer" is invaluable (see file #1).

For background information about Paul Coze, and digital copies of his books, I am indebted to Corinne Desmetre, archivist of the Scouts et Guides de France, whose archives I visited in October 2018 in Paris while on vacation with my wife. Coze relates the misunderstanding with Saskatchewan elders in his *Wakanda* (Paris: Alexis Redier, 1929, pp. 94-95, 125-126). Reference is made to a stop in Calgary in mid-July 1930 in his *Cinq Scouts chez les Peaux-Rouges* (Paris: Librairie des Champs-Élysées, 1932, pp. 52-53). A picture of Paul Coze taken in 1930 in the home of Jack Peach (3833 Elbow Drive, Calgary) is held in the University of Calgary's Glenbow Western Research Centre, catalogue number NA-2139. Later Jack Peach, long-time Calgarian (1913-1993), became a well-known radio broadcaster. He made many local

history broadcasts, and wrote many columns and several books about Calgary's past. In describing this series as "old-fashioned radio" I have Jack Peach in mind. CBC has put several of his broadcasts on the web:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-at-a-cross-roads-audio-jack-peach-1.3368734>