

## **FINAL REPORT: 2010-2011 Faculty Development Grant**

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I received a course release during the fall semester to pursue work on magic, childhood, and the grotesque in the music of Maurice Ravel. Over the summer I visited the Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin to examine the Magicians Collection, which contains posters, programs, books, and other ephemera relating to the history of magic from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. The trip provided a wealth of material not just for my project on Ravel, but also for future research on the uses of music in nineteenth-century theatrical magic. My familiarity with the Magicians Collection helped me prepare a successful application for a Mellon travel fellowship at the Ransom Center, where I will return in the summer of 2012 for additional research. Part of my project requires documents from the Bibliothèque nationale de France, but I was unable to secure photocopies or digital images despite multiple attempts. A trip to the BnF sometime in the next year will be necessary to continue my work.

The grant helped me to discover an unexplored area of research: music and theatrical magic. No books have yet been published on the subject, and historical accounts of music in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries make only passing references to magic shows. Yet the history of magic has much to offer the cultural study of music: theatrical magic was often performed in opera houses and music halls, and many programs for magic shows included the names of musical performers along with their institutional affiliations and awards—a practice that capitalized on the proliferation and growing prestige of European conservatories. The immense popularity of salon magic, theatrical illusions, and hybrid forms of magical entertainment suggests a new

context for understanding musical examining music and theatrical magic. I will also be giving a paper based on my research entitled "Ravel and Robert-Houdin, Magicians" at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society (November 2011).

I would like to thank the staff at the Ransom Center for providing expert research assistance and for creating digitized materials that were clear, well sized, and true to color. I am also very grateful to Carla Bailey, who helped me receive important sources through Interlibrary Loan. My research could not have been carried out without Carla's persistence in securing rare materials for me to examine without having to undertake additional travel.