

ROUTLEDGE FOCUS

REFLECTIONS ON  
ELIZABETH A. H. GREEN'S  
LIFE AND CAREER IN  
MUSIC EDUCATION

Jared R. Rawlings

ROUTLEDGE  
  
Focus

# Reflections on Elizabeth A. H. Green's Life and Career in Music Education

An engaging integration of scholarship and storytelling, *Reflections on Elizabeth A. H. Green's Life and Career in Music Education* details the life and career of a pioneering figure in the field of instrumental music teacher education, who was one of the first to document a curriculum for teaching conducting and stringed instruments. Featuring interviews with Green's former students, faculty colleagues, and close friends, this account combines reflections and memories with Green's conducting techniques and teachings. *Reflections on Elizabeth A. H. Green's Life and Career in Music Education* uncovers pedagogical insights not available in the late educator's published texts, focusing on ways to assist instructors in new and different ways to manage and direct large ensembles and build confidence in undergraduate music majors. Through the exploration of an extraordinary educator's life, it offers new insights into both the history of music education and present-day pedagogy for string instruments and conducting.

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# **Reflections on Elizabeth A. H. Green's Life and Career in Music Education**

**Jared R. Rawlings**

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# Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	vi
<i>Foreword by H. Robert Reynolds</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvi
1 Elizabeth A. H. Green (1906–1942)	1
2 Elizabeth A. H. Green (1942–1995)	32
3 The Pedagogical Philosophy of Elizabeth A. H. Green: “How to Make Your Flowers Grow”	73
4 Relational Trust and a Capacity to Influence Others	84
5 Always Teaching	103
<i>Appendix A: Selected Publications</i>	117
<i>Appendix B: Selected Compositions</i>	123
<i>Appendix C: Awards</i>	124
<i>Appendix D: Methodology</i>	125
<i>Appendix E: Obituary</i>	139
<i>Index</i>	140

# Figures

1.1	Albert Wingate Green <i>Violin School</i> Brochure, 52 South Jackson Street, Mobile, Alabama, circa 1906	2
1.2	Recital Program from April 12, 1912, Elizabeth Green performs <i>Dream Waltz</i> at age 5	4
1.3	Recital Program from June 30, 1917, Elizabeth Green performs <i>Rigauden</i> at Chicago Technical Violin School, age 10	5
1.4	Recital Program from June 30, 1917, Elizabeth Green performs <i>Hungarian Dance</i> at Cosmopolitan School of Music and Dramatic Art, age 10	6
1.5	Recital Program from June 30, 1917, Elizabeth Green performs <i>Menuet</i> at the Conservatory of Chicago, age 10	7
1.6	Elizabeth Green portrait, circa 1919	9
1.7	Elizabeth Green, faculty member of the Conservatory of Music, Wheaton College, 1927–1928	10
1.8	Recital Program, circa 1924, Elizabeth Green performs at the Benefit of the Wheaton College Building Fund	11
1.9	East Waterloo High School, Waterloo, Iowa, circa 1930	13
1.10	Top row left to right: Charlotte Atland (cello); Mary McNabb (viola); Elizabeth Green (first violin); Margaret Miller (second violin), circa 1932	14
1.11	Elizabeth Green faculty portrait, East Waterloo High School Yearbook, 1929, page 11	16
1.12	East Waterloo High School Symphony Orchestra, East Waterloo High School Yearbook, 1929, page 68	17
1.13	Elizabeth Green faculty portrait, East Waterloo High School Yearbook, 1934, page 15	18
1.14	East Waterloo High School Symphony Orchestra, East Waterloo High School Yearbook, 1939, page 39	20
1.15	Waterloo Symphony, <i>Waterloo Daily Courier</i> , Sunday December 5, 1937, Section 12, page 13	21

1.16	Elizabeth Green, pictured center, head turned left, with Northwestern University students, circa 1933	23
1.17	Recital Program from July 26, 1937, Elizabeth Green performs Graduate Violin Recital at Northwestern University School of Music and Dramatic Art, age 30	24
1.18	Elizabeth Green leading a string ensemble at the National Music Camp, circa 1941	26
2.1	Elizabeth Green (violin) with Mr. Charles Yates (clarinet) and Miss Rose Marie Grentzer (piano)	34
2.2	Elizabeth Green conducting the 1944 AAPS All-City Orchestra	36
2.3	Elizabeth Green conducting the 1949 AAPS All-City Orchestra	36
2.4	Slauson Junior High Orchestra, circa 1948	37
2.5	Elizabeth Green, circa 1953	39
2.6	Elizabeth Green, circa 1958	41
2.7	Elizabeth Green playing violin, circa 1965	42
2.8	Elizabeth Green, holding her 235-year-old Montagnana violin, studies music for a performance with the Ann Arbor Civic Orchestra, of which she is returning from 13 years not performing with the ensemble, as the concertmaster <i>Ann Arbor News</i> , November 1, 1965	44
2.9	Recital Program from January 6, 1946, Elizabeth Green performs a Faculty Recital at University of Michigan School of Music, age 39	45
2.10	Recital Program from July 26, 1950, Elizabeth Green performs a Guest Recital at University of Kentucky Music Department, age 43	47
2.11	Elizabeth Green leading musicians at National Music Camp, circa 1945	50
2.12	Front cover of 1946 National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan brochure	51
2.13	Elizabeth Green leading musicians at North Dakota "Class A" High School Orchestra Festival in Devil's Lake, North Dakota, April 11, 1958	53
2.14	North Dakota "Class A" High School Orchestra Festival concert in Devil's Lake, North Dakota, April 11, 1958	54
2.15	Elizabeth Green, circa 1958	57
2.16	Elizabeth Green, circa 1950	59
2.17	Elizabeth Green, circa 1974	62

viii *List of Figures*

2.18	Elizabeth Green's landscape pencil drawing	63
2.19	Elizabeth Green holding her violin during retirement 1993	65
3.1	Elizabeth Green leading a conducting class at Interlochen Music Camp, circa 1945	75
3.2	Elizabeth Green playing violin, circa 1965	77
4.1	Michael Avsharian (left), Elizabeth Green (center), Charles Avsharian (right), circa 1993	99
5.1	Elizabeth Green during her retirement, circa 1993	115

# Foreword

Elizabeth Green was the greatest teacher I ever had of anything. It was my good fortune to have Professor Green as my conducting teacher when I first arrived as a student at the University of Michigan in the early 1950s. Immediately, I knew I was in the presence of greatness, with someone who cared deeply for all her students (including me). I learned not only about conducting, and later string instrument technique, from a master teacher, but also how to teach just by observing how she taught. What meaningful lessons I learned about conducting, string instruments, teaching, and life!

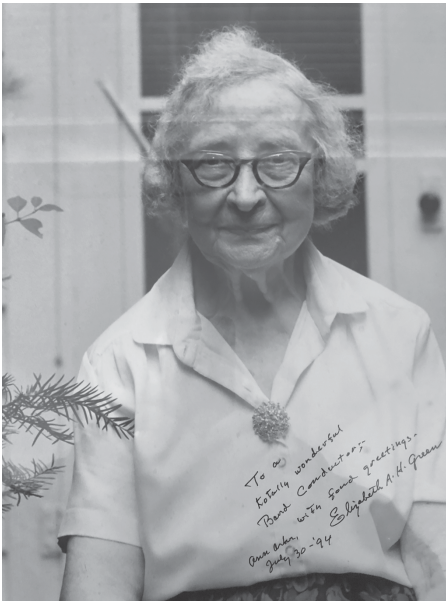
When I returned to the University of Michigan as a faculty member in 1975, I would spend time on many occasions just talking with her in her home. During one of these visits, I noticed her old TV with a “rabbit ears” antenna. In addition, it had rubber bands attached to the dials. Upon asking her the purpose of the rubber bands, she said that if she put pressure on the dials, the stations would come in more clearly. I made note of that, and when I returned to my home, I called six or eight of my friends who had been her students and asked for \$100 each to buy her a new TV (with cable). I could have asked many, many more of her former students – such was the respect, admiration, and love we all felt for her.

Her classes were essential, for we all learned so very much; we didn’t want to miss anything. We were learning the grammar of conducting. This was during a time when she was also conducting her own junior high school orchestra in Ann Arbor. We were then lucky enough to be able to attend her own rehearsals and witness how it was really done.

Dr. Jared Rawlings’ book will be treasured by the many students and friends of Elizabeth Green for it has been researched so very well and filled with the details of her life. It also includes personal reflections by a number of her former students. In this book, Dr. Rawlings details the life and achievements of Professor Green so completely that I, who

knew her quite well, learned many aspects of her life and teaching that were unknown to me. He did not leave out the personal side or her dedication to her students. In reading the book, you learn not only the trajectory of her achievements but also the love and care she gave to and received from her many, many students.

*H. Robert Reynolds  
Director Emeritus of University Bands  
Arthur Thurnau Emeritus Professor of Music (Conducting)  
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# Preface

The acquiring of knowledge is not the end; the end is the use to which the knowledge is put.

—Elizabeth A. H. Green.

This book tells the story of Elizabeth A. H. Green's life and career in music education. Throughout this book, the term "music education" is used, intended to encompass her work within formal music learning settings (schools, churches). The majority of music education research related to instrumental music and conducting pedagogy demonstrates that teaching a large instrumental ensemble is complex work.<sup>1</sup> Traditions of ensemble performance permeate the discourse of music education, broadly, while contemporary tensions related to the demands and constraints of teaching and the process of musical learning contribute to the complexities of musical teaching. Within this context, the music education field can benefit from research that examines the past teachings of music pedagogues in order to assist in understanding why these complexities exist today and how influential instructors have grappled with them in the past.

This historical account is written for K–12 music teachers and college professors who are responsible for preparing future teachers for K–12 instrumental music classrooms. Extant research documenting the influence of early music teacher educators is scarce, and current trends in music education historical research reveal that studies of women music educators can uncover an alternative view of the history of music education.<sup>2</sup> Since women have been somewhat silenced in historical records, this book will complement histories already documented in music education and serve as an example for future research on women in music education.<sup>3</sup>

Elizabeth A. H. Green was an innovative music teacher educator who influenced thousands of music educators and teacher educators in the 20th century. There is much to learn from examining the life and careers of early music teacher educators. By drawing upon the memories and recollections of Elizabeth's former students, colleagues, friends, and her own writings, I uncovered some of the idiosyncrasies of Elizabeth Green's pedagogy as a means of possibly enhancing the understanding of our present pedagogy for string instruments and conducting courses within institutions of higher education. How do Elizabeth's friends and close acquaintances describe her life within the context of her career in music education? How do Elizabeth's former students and colleagues describe and reconstruct her teaching? To what extent, if any, did her approach to teaching shift when considering the content and methods of her courses? How do these participants describe the impact of her teaching and praxis on her students? Within a male-dominated music profession, how did Elizabeth navigate some of the vocation-specific micropolitics? Many of us – teachers, preservice teachers, teacher educators, educational researchers – may have never asked ourselves these questions about Elizabeth or other early music teacher educators. On the other hand, some may have asked these questions with few presuming certain answers to these questions.

Researching and writing this book did not resolve those questions for me. Readers may come to accept the likelihood that the answers can never be known with definite certainty. This is due to the colossally complex, widespread, profoundly personal, indisputably social, intrinsically political, and inevitably subjective nature of the outcomes of music teaching and learning. The process of searching for these answers led to more questions. Who was teaching music during Elizabeth's life? What backgrounds do these music educators come from? Where were they teaching, and what was the relationship between music teaching in schools and at home? How were music educators involved in professional music organizations? What was the cultural and political climate during Elizabeth's life?

The nature of this book was influenced by the research and developments in the fields of historical research and human inquiry. The book investigates the meaning of teacher–student relationships within the life narratives of those who lived and experienced Elizabeth's teaching and career in music education and also offers an analysis of the significance of those relationships from my own worldview as a music teacher educator and researcher. Many details of how this investigation was conducted are included within Appendix D.

## An Overview of the Book

This book is divided into five parts. The first two parts comprise Elizabeth's biographical information. The final three parts are devoted to an exploration of what made Elizabeth A. H. Green a master pedagogue, and looks into her pedagogy and relational capacity. Here, in somewhat greater detail, is what awaits the reader of this book.

Chapter 1 presents biographical material related to Elizabeth Green's life and career in music education – her relocation from Waterloo, Iowa, to Ann Arbor, Michigan, as the concluding event. In the first section of the chapter, I present her family background as well as her early music and formal music education experiences. In the next section of the chapter, I discuss Green's public school teaching career and professional experiences in Waterloo, Iowa. Although my research includes referencing previously documented material, I was granted access to much personal information documented within holdings at historical libraries. Many of the pictures within this chapter exist in the Wheaton College Special Collections and East Waterloo High School Yearbooks.

Chapter 2 is a continuation of Elizabeth's biography. In the first section of the chapter, I present her teaching career in both secondary and tertiary education in Ann Arbor, Michigan. There are many details within this chapter that account for how Elizabeth navigated teaching for both Ann Arbor Public School District and the University of Michigan during her first decade living in Michigan. In the next section of the chapter, I detail the transition from part-time work to full-time work at the University of Michigan. Throughout this section of the chapter, I include artifacts detailing the courses she taught, her promotion through the ranks of higher education, and her retirement. Elizabeth was an extremely active professional – both teaching and performing. In the next section of the chapter, I document details of her professional activity while she was living in Ann Arbor. This includes her violin studies and performance career, professional conducting activities, professional studies with Nicoli Malko, guest teaching/speaking engagements, publications, and service to the music education profession. There are several photographs within this chapter, and they can be found in her paper collection at Bentley Historical Library (University of Michigan) and *Ann Arbor News* archives.

Based on these biographical details, Elizabeth's strong reputation as a leader in the fields of conducting and string performance makes her a unique figure in music education history. Within Chapter 3, I share selected quotes of interview data, assembled from her past students,

friends, and colleagues, that relate to her pedagogy and teaching philosophy. In the first section of the chapter, I present Elizabeth's teaching philosophy as it relates to conducting and string pedagogy. Specifically, I discuss her strong-held, core beliefs about music and detail her commitment to content mastery and musicianship through experiential learning. In the second section of this chapter, I present how Elizabeth used her diagnostic skill as formative assessment toward a systematic way of learning and knowing. Elizabeth had a prominent reputation as a detailed diagnostician. From establishing her diagnosis, she was able to construct a prescriptive plan to address what needed to be corrected. In the final section of this chapter, I present evidence about how Elizabeth made clear her commitment to affective fulfillment and the use of imagination.

Chapter 4 presents information-rich descriptions of Elizabeth Green's tremendous capacity for building relationships with her students and colleagues throughout her life and career in music education. Notably, her *presence* in teaching music, which was profound, opens the chapter. Her persistence was a unique component to her teaching, and she could be persistent with her students through how she cultivated rapport and trust. Next, I present how Elizabeth created a *safe* learning space (physically and psychologically) that promotes learning. Within this chapter, I provide scholarly, interpretive frameworks for connecting and grounding the heartfelt narratives of her former students and friends.

The final chapter of this book, Chapter 5, is an exploration of a strong theme from the interviews. The title of the chapter, "Always Teaching," was a prominent point made by the interviewees. Elizabeth had a profound way of modeling the learning process as well as sharing what she had learned with her students and through her publications. I add a layer of ambiguity to the text, offering readers a pair of analytical lenses for viewing the phenomena presented in the earlier parts of the book. One tenet of her teaching philosophy was that teachers should encourage their students to be curious. Throughout this chapter, there is evidence of her teaching philosophy captured in the selected quotes. As such, a picture emerges of an array of musical outcomes that have been identified as significant by the interviewees, attributed to Elizabeth's influence, and situated within the complex network of ongoing life stories.

This book aims to promote a conversation between the story's readers, as each brings a distinctive perspective to the conversation. It is my hope that this book will lead to rich discussions about the purposes and meaning of music education and what can and should be accomplished in schools that might make a positive difference in

the lives of youth. This book is an attempt to raise my own voice, not in an assertive fashion, but in one that entices readers to start such discussions. I believe that researching how a single music educator has taught, listening carefully to how her former students describe what they learned and appreciated over the decades, and thinking deeply about the significance of these memories (and what they fail to include) can give us much to discuss. This discussion may center around a need to document noteworthy educators and learn from their experiences, and in order to accomplish this work and understand the work of music teachers, researchers must continue to document experiences of those educators who may appear ordinary but led extraordinary lives and careers. As a result of this inquiry, profound ideas and questions may be raised about music teachers' *musical lives well lived*.

## Notes

- 1 Sommer H. Forrester, "Music Teacher Knowledge: An Examination of the Intersections Between Instrumental Music Teaching and Conducting," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2015, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global (UMI No. 3731290).
- 2 Marie McCarthy, "Developments and Trends in Historical Research as Reflected in the *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, Volumes 21–30 (1999–2009)," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 33, no. 2 (April 2012): 152–71.
- 3 Sondra Weiland Howe, *Women Music Educators in the United States: A History*. Scarecrow Press Inc., 2014.

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