

Who was Mozart Allan?

Some years ago I was given a small booklet by Dorothy Leurs: *Allan's Reference Guide to the Ball-Room with a few hints on drawing-room etiquette*. It is smaller than our old Pocket Books (remember them?), measuring two and three-quarter inches by four. 84 pages long, it begins with advice to the dancer, then gives the instructions for the dance repertoire in the early 1900s: 9 quadrilles, 13 circle dances, 53 country dances and 5 Scotch reels – not the dying repertoire which we have always been given to believe.

The Duke of Perth is as we dance it today, but *The Deil amang the Tailors* is totally different: First lady and 2nd gentleman down the centre and up again. First gentleman and 2nd lady down the centre and up again. First couple down the centre and up again. Poussette

So, who was this Mozart Allan? I managed to discover that E. J. Mozart Allan died on 9 August 1929, aged 72 years. He was a well-known Glaswegian music publisher of 60 South Portland Street, just over the bridge on the south side of the Clyde. He came from Glasgow stock on both sides – no relation of Wolfgang Amadeus! His father, W. E. Allan, was the teacher of dancing to more than one generation of Glasgow citizens, and his grandfather, James Allan, and his great-grandfather, Ebenezer Allan, were well-known music teachers in the city in their time. His grandmother was a daughter of Gilbert Hamilton, who was a town Councillor in 1787 and Lord Provost of the city in 1793.

Mr. Allan himself began life as an assistant to his father, but he is best known as the publisher of popular Scottish music. It is said that a large part of the credit is due to him of introducing Scottish music into English homes. He was an active member of the Church of Scotland and very active in benevolent societies, helping the poor of the Gorbals.

If any of you have J. M. Duthie's book of *Eight Scottish Country Dances*, the publisher was Mozart Allan. *His Guide to the Ballroom* is full of good advice:

1. Change partners as often as possible.
2. Never rush to a dance, and once you have fixed upon a place, do not move from it.
3. Ladies should avoid holding their pocket handkerchiefs in their hands while dancing.
4. Persons should be careful not to look at their own feet, and every other appearance of self-admiration should be avoided, as this generally excites contempt.
5. Avoid vulgar practices of all kinds: making a noise with your feet, or spitting in the fire or on the floor.

All true today!

Jimmie Hill

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