

# Basic Detail Report



**Title: Music**

Date: c. 1910

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@3f0e3

Medium: Oil on canvas

Description: "Music" depicts three classical women dancing in an unidentified space. The facelessness of the women and the unfinished nature of the composition indicate that the work is a sketch. The existence of another sketch and a drawing of the same subject suggest that Vedder may have considered the subject for a larger composition, which never came to fruition. He did, however, include the drawing in his book of poetry, "Doubt and Other Things", which was published the year of his death. Painted quite late in Vedder's career, "Music" reflects concerns similar to the American Renaissance interest in capturing allegory and moods. Vedder was a major proponent of this movement, and his many mural paintings of the 1890s, in particular his commission for the Collis P. Huntington house, include designs for such allegorical ideals as Victory and Poetry. Vedder successfully captured the ideal of music and its impact through the use of rhythmic vitality throughout the composition. The movement of the three figures is accomplished through the use of relatively simple shapes and the play of light on the drapery and skin. "Music" is also comparable to "The Fates Gathering in the Stars" (1887; Art Institute of Chicago), a subject directly inspired by Vedder's illustrations for the "Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám". The similarity of the works is seen both in the subject matter and in the

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recurrent use of the double swirl of two interlocking S shapes, a feature that Vedder created for the "Rubáiyát" illustrations. The artist described the meaning of the double swirl as "the gradual concentration of elements that combine to form life." (1) The energetic vitality of the interlocking S shapes in Music may perhaps reflect a vibrancy toward life that Vedder felt despite the many tragedies he experienced throughout his lifetime. IB Bibliography: Elihu Vedder, "The Digressions of V" (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1910); Regina Soria, "Elihu Vedder: American Visionary Artist in Rome" (1836-1923), exhib. cat. (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970); Joshua C. Taylor et al., "Perceptions and Evocations: The Art of Elihu Vedder", exhib. cat. (Washington, D.C. : National Collection of the Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, 1979). Notes: 1 . "Notes for Preface to Omar Khayyam Drawings," undated, unpaginated ms. in Vedder's hand, Elihu Vedder Papers, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York.  
Dimensions: 8 1/2 x 13 in.