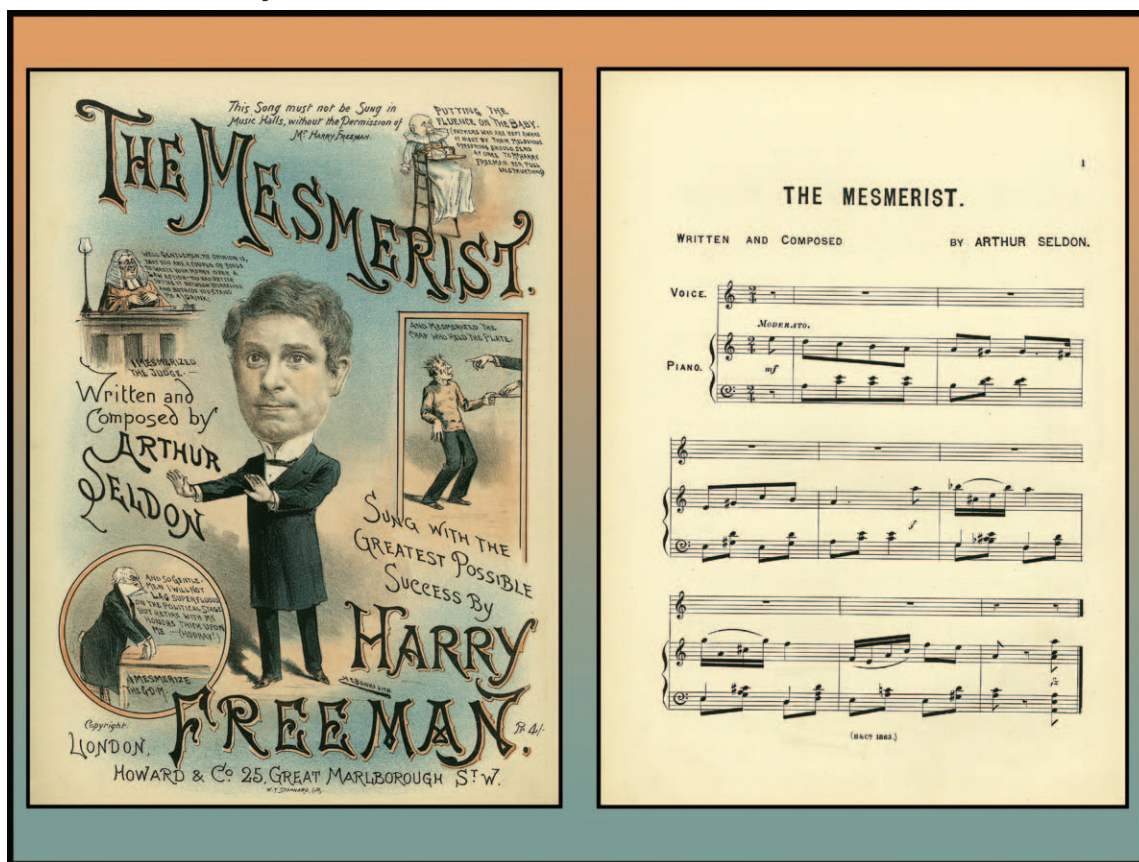


ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

The Mesmerist by Arthur Seldon



Whether called “animal magnetists,” hypnotists, or mesmerists, many entertainers introduced the public to the concept of preventing surgical pain well before Morton’s 1846 public demonstration of surgical etherization. And after that demonstration, some mesmerists offered hypnotic anesthesia as an alternative to the perceived perils of chemical anesthetics. “Sung with the greatest possible success” in the 1890s by London music hall performer Harry Freeman, “The Mesmerist” was a song “written and composed” by Arthur Seldon (right). This colorfully covered song sheet (left) was collected by the late Maurice Rickards, the founder of the Ephemera Society of Great Britain. Considered a throw-away item by some, such a piece of ephemera was regarded by Rickards as a “fragment of social history, a reflection of the spirit of its time.” In 2015, Drs. Ben Z. Swanson and George Bause donated this item to the Wood Library-Museum in memory of Swanson’s mentor, Maurice Rickards, whose not-so-ephemeral legacy included his masterwork “bible” for collectors of ephemera: *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents of Everyday Life for the Collector, Curator, and Historian*. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

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