

**Lies-Kreisler Mausoleum
Woodlawn Cemetery**

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The Lies-Kreisler Mausoleum is located in the Butternut area of Woodlawn Cemetery in Bronx, New York on a small pedestrian pathway off Filbert Avenue. The mausoleum contains the remains of the Lies and Kreisler families including Fritz and Harriet Kreisler and Harriett's parents, George P. and Catharine Lies. The plot was purchased in May 1918 after the death of Catharine Lies. The Kreislers and George Lies employed Joseph Havender of nearby Havender's Monumental Works to design and construct the mausoleum.

The family purchased a small 22 by 23 feet rectangular lot, off a pathway from Filbert Avenue for the construction of their mausoleum. The mausoleum is recessed from the front lot line facing the pedestrian pathway. The lot maintains two mature Arborvitae trees that frame the front façade. As of 1949, the site plan included spruce trees at the west and rear façade in addition to the front arborvitae trees but all spruce trees have subsequently been removed. Visitor's initial views are made of the relatively simple east side of the mausoleum. The approach is informal, as the front façade and its design are not fully realized until directly standing in front of the structure. Two plots of graves flank the Lies-Kreisler mausoleum and the Dodin mausoleum sits just a few feet behind at the rear. The approach to the plot is not exciting but the layout of the space with the recessed mausoleum framed by two grand trees shows thought in its design. The plot is in a quiet, well-shaded area of the cemetery but its location away from the main road reflects a cost-mindful selection.

The mausoleum is reminiscent of classical temple designs but is not classical in proportions or layout. Four Greek Doric columns frame the central entrance with a large span separating the center two columns. The uneven spacing of columns draws the eye to the smoothly carved center door surround. The symmetrical façade's plain entablature and pediment shelter the constricted portico and steps leading up to the mausoleum. The mausoleum is constructed entirely of Deer Isle granite with a distinct contrast between the uneven "rock face" finish of the walls and the smooth finish of the entryway, pediment, columns, steps, and oversized cross that tops the pediment. The large slabs of "rock face"

granite barely touch the smoothly cut columns at the front façade on the condensed portico. This distinction between the rough and smooth granite is an important feature of the design. Entrance details and the door enframement are all smoothly cut for a sophisticated entrance while the body that makes up the mausoleum is rough and sturdy in appearance (Figure 3). The granite slabs that make up the walls have been cut and placed carefully, four slabs on each side with aligned mortar joints.

The simple, symmetrical exterior hints at the small symmetrical interior. A set of two cascading steps lead visitors from the pedestrian pathway to the central decorative bronze door. On the inside, a small central aisle with mosaic tile floors leads from the door to the stained-glass window at the rear of the mausoleum. On either side of the central corridor, floor-to-ceiling catacombs are stacked vertically, three on each wall. The interior catacombs and ceiling are clad in white “Italian” marble with additional marble panels that frame the outlines of each catacomb. The bottom four catacombs are currently the resting places of the Kreisler and Lies family while the two upper catacombs remain empty. Two bronze decorative medallions are found at each catacomb. This floral medallion is repeated on the marble clad ceiling, serving as a vent for the interior space. The smooth granite rear interior wall surrounds a colorful stained-glass window illustrating crosses with lilies (Figure 5).

Joseph Havender’s design for this mausoleum is not an unique one; the same overall design is seen with varying detail throughout the cemetery. Havender’s Monumental Works is responsible for at least thirty-nine mausoleums and a number of headstones in Woodlawn Cemetery. The company, established in 1895, manufactured three basic designs for mausoleums with small variances in detail. All designs implemented rock-face stone bodies, smooth-cut stone entrances, unevenly spaced columns, pediments and stairs. The company’s convenient location at the entrance of Woodlawn Cemetery is most likely the reason that the Lies-Kreisler family chose Joseph Havender for the design of their mausoleum after the death of Catharine Lies. It is clear that the design is more reflective of the designer, Joseph Havender, than the Lies Kreisler family, as Havender constructed his own family’s mausoleum

in 1928 utilizing the same form (Figure 4). The unadorned Lies-Kreisler mausoleum suggests frugality on the family's part or the desire to have the monument constructed in a timely manner. The cross at the top of the pediment, however, symbolizes the family's Roman-Catholic faith. The cross is not a part of Havender's original design for the Lies-Kreisler mausoleum or any other of Havender's designs and was probably added after construction.

The most interesting aspect of the Lies-Kreisler Mausoleum has to do with the people who rest there. George P. Lies immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1853 and married Catharine, a New York native, in 1869. George P. Lies was a very successful cigar manufacturer, with the second largest cigar company in New York City by 1888; his cigars, "Grand Republic Cigarros" were sold throughout the country. The couple had one child, Harriett or "Hattie" who was born in 1869. Harriett Lies, known as "the pretty daughter of George P. Lies," was first married in 1888 to Frederick W. Worez, the son of a wealthy brewer but was divorced by 1902 after a private investigator implicated her in an affair with a foreign nobleman and musician. Later that year, Harriett married the world-renowned violinist Fritz Kreisler and spent the rest of her life dedicated to philanthropy and managing the social and professional career of her husband. Harriett lived until 1963, when she died at the age of 93. Fritz Kreisler was a world famous violinist and composer born in Vienna, Austria in 1875. Kreisler was a child prodigy who by the age of 9 was awarded a gold medal from the Vienna Conservatory and at 13 made his debut in the United States. After marrying, Fritz and Harriett resided in Austria where Fritz served as an officer in the Austrian Army and Harriett assisted the Red Cross during World War I. During World War II, the Nazis invaded Kreisler's home country of Austria and Kreisler became a naturalized citizen of France and later a citizen of the United States in 1943. He refused to return to what was now Germany as long as the persecution of Jews continued. Kreisler was the highest paid violinist during his time and published more than 200 works of original compositions. In 1950, Kreisler retired

from performing and dedicated his time to philanthropy along with his wife until he died of a heart attack in 1962.

While the design of the Lies-Kreisler mausoleum is not an unique one, the contrast between rough rock-face granite and the smooth finish of the entrance details creates an interesting design. Today the mausoleum stands in good repair with minor biological growth on the smooth-cut granite features. The landscaping of the surrounding area, including the two arborvitae trees that frame the front façade create a peaceful atmosphere while paying respects to the family of arguably one of the most famous violinists of all time.

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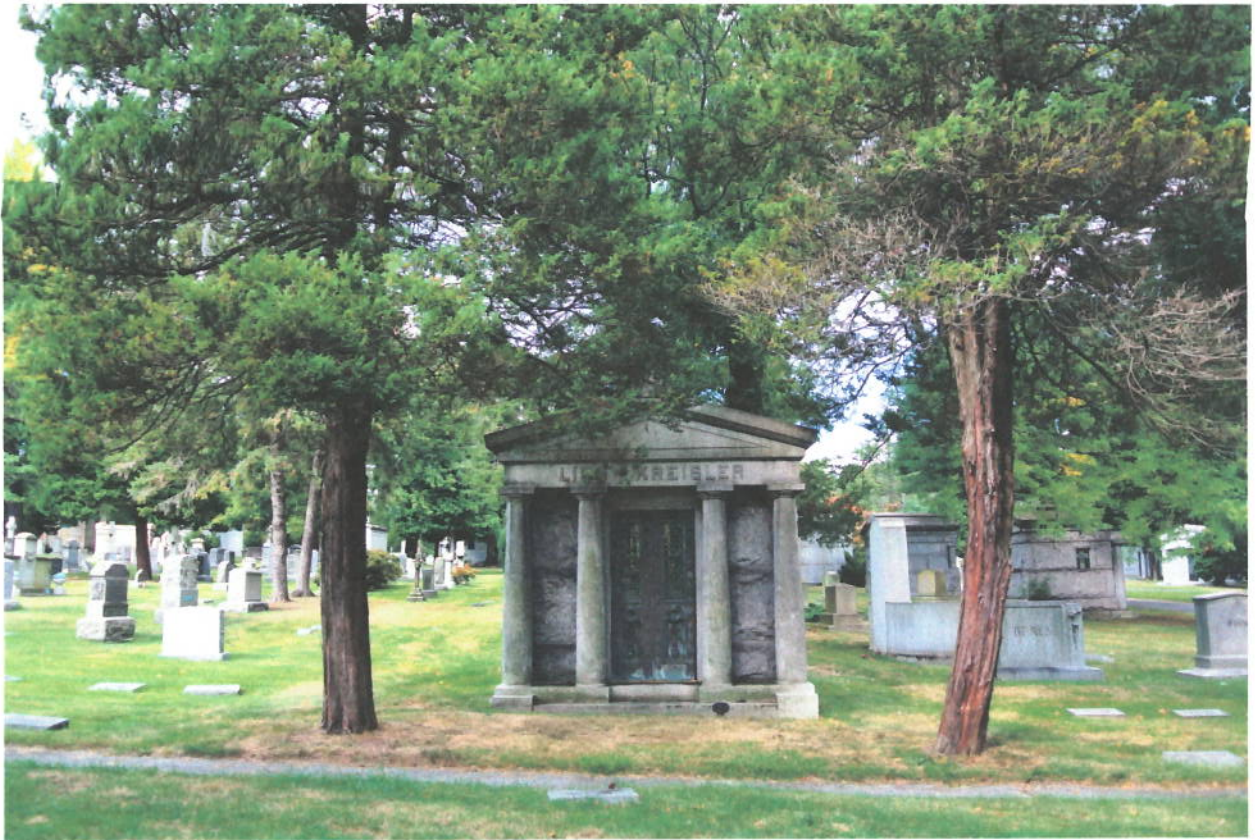


Figure 1: Lies-Kreisler Mausoleum and Arborvitae trees



Figure 2: Lies-Kreisler Mausoleum



Figure 3: "rock-face" finish of granite body and smooth finish of granite entrance, portico, and pediment

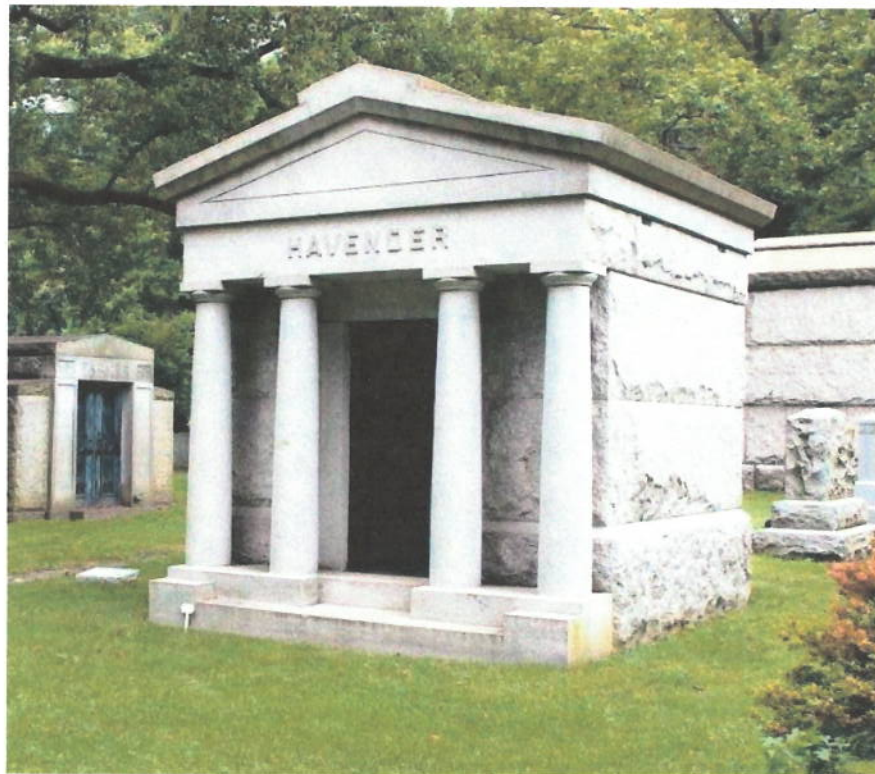


Figure 4: Joseph Havender's Mausoleum, 1928



Figure 5: Stained glass window- interior view



Figure 6: Site plan of Lies-Kreisler Mausoleum