"To the Girl Who Wants to Compose": Amy Beach as a Music Educator

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“TO THE GIRL WHO WANTS TO COMPOSE”:
AMY BEACH AS A MUSIC EDUCATOR

By

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ABSTRACT

Amy Marcy Beach (1867-1944) is best known as having been a child prodigy who became a successful pianist and America’s most prominent female composer of her time. Her compositional education was based on a program of self-study, which emphasized memorization, listening, and a thorough study of masterworks as models. With this auto-didactic education Beach became one of the first American women to be regarded for composing musical works in large forms, when her *Mass in E-flat*, op. 5, was published in 1890. Beach was also an educator, although not in a traditional manner. At the request of her husband, she never took on students in composition or piano, and she only infrequently coached the students of other teachers. Yet through journal articles, music conference presentations, and contact with regional musical clubs, Amy Beach was able to give advice on piano performance and composition to students throughout the United States, independent of any educational institution or even a private studio.

Within Amy Beach’s writings, certain recurring ideas surface that represent some of her most strongly held musical values. These concepts may be traced both in the advice Beach gave to readers of her articles and audiences for her speeches, as well as in the subject matter and style of her compositions. Beach repeatedly emphasized that command of technical facility, balanced by musicality and sensitivity to the subject matter, was essential for both performers and composers. She also believed that an American-based musical education could be just as complete as one received in Europe, with the added benefit of nurturing the American identity of the student musician. Additionally, she encouraged American composers to find musical inspiration in American folk tales, historical events, and literature. Beach demonstrated her musical values in the products of her own compositional career, and she set an example for young musicians and composers in her piano pieces for students.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

Important concepts that comprise the musical values of Amy Marcy Beach (1867-1944) are present among her writings and compositions. These ideas are found in the advice Beach gave to the students who read her articles and attended her presentations, and in the subjects of her compositions. Beach is recognized as having been a child prodigy who became a successful pianist and America’s most prominent female composer in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After she had been privately trained in piano by the leading musicians of Boston, her compositional education was based on a program of self-study, which emphasized memorization, listening, and a thorough study of masterworks as models.

Although she promised her husband that she would not teach music lessons, Beach was nevertheless an educator who reached out to students and teachers in the United States through journal articles, music conference presentations, and contact with regional musical clubs. Her advice passed on the auto-didactic tools that she found to be successful in her performance and compositional studies, as well as her personal experiences and opinions concerning American identity and style in musical composition.

This thesis investigates the mutually reinforcing connections between Amy Beach’s piano teaching pieces and her published writings on technique, performance, the compositional process, and music education in order to identify the central principles of Beach’s musical values. These values include the necessity of technical facility, a balance of “emotion and
intellect” in performance and composition, and the importance and value of American compositions, composers, and teachers.

1.2 Articles

This thesis primarily draws on statements made by Beach in articles she wrote for The Etude, as well as presentations delivered at the Music Teachers National Association and subsequently printed in the MTNA publication Studies in Musical Education, History, and Aesthetics. The articles in The Etude were published between 1909 and 1944, and Beach’s presentations at MTNA were published in 1931, 1932, and 1935.

Articles published in The Etude:

MTNA Presentations:

Other Publications:

1.3 Literature, Repertoire, and Method

1.3.1 Review of Literature

1.3.1.1 Biographies. The most authoritative and complete biography of Amy Beach available today is Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian: The Life and Work of an American Composer, 1867-1944, published in 1998 by Adrienne Fried Block (1921-2009). Block was the preeminent Beach scholar and a pioneer of feminist studies and of women in American music. Block published frequently on the subject of Amy Beach and her music, including numerous articles, encyclopedia entries, and a critical edition of Beach’s Quartet for Strings, op. 89, for the Recent Researches in American Music series.

Another perspective on Amy Beach’s life is provided by the biography authored by Walter S. Jenkins The Remarkable Mrs. Beach, American Composer: A Biographical Account Based on Her Diaries, Letters, Newspaper Clippings, and Personal Reminiscences, edited by John H. Baron and published posthumously in 1994. Jenkins, an acquaintance of Beach’s by way of the MacDowell Colony, used primary source documents to describe the life of Amy Beach through her personal correspondence, the contemporaneous words of others, and the memories of her friends and colleagues.

1.3.1.2 Collections focusing on women in music. Encouraged by the growing trend of gender and feminist studies in the field of musicology, several collections of essays concerning the role of women in music and in the history of music were published in close succession. One of the most prominent volumes is Christine Ammer’s Unsung: A History of Women in American Music (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1980; 2nd ed., 2001). Unsung is an historical survey of the role
of women in American music history. A large section of a chapter is devoted to Beach, including the influence of the Beach clubs, and Beach is also mentioned throughout the volume. Another important historical survey is Diane Jezic’s *Women Composers: The Lost Tradition Found* (New York: The Feminist Press, 2nd ed., 1994). Jezic covers female composers and musicians of all style periods in Western music history from the Middle Ages to the end of the twentieth century, including Amy Beach.

Two important research guides are also useful for the study of women in music, and specifically for the study of Amy Beach. Adrienne Fried Block and Carol Neuls-Bates collaborated on the text *Women in American Music: A Bibliography of Music and Literature* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1979), another milestone volume in the surge of studies on women and American music that began around 1980. Block was a Beach scholar, and this volume is particularly useful for its inclusion of citations concerning Beach, including an extensive list of works. A relatively new research guide in the Routledge series concerning women in music is by Karin Pendle and Melinda Boyd, titled *Women in Music: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2010). This book has multiple entries on Beach.

An essay by Block on Amy Beach, “The Child is Mother of the Woman: Amy Beach’s New England Upbringing,” was included in *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, edited by Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994). Block’s contribution to Cook’s edited volume on feminist musicology and gender studies of music is included alongside essays submitted by the leading feminist scholars in musicology. However, this collection is not specific to either American musicians or nineteenth and early twentieth-century music.
1.3.1.3 Theses and dissertations. Amy Beach has also been the subject of several dissertations and theses. These studies tend to focus on a particular musical composition or genre, critical reception, or gender and social issues of Beach’s time. Almost all the theses and dissertations on Amy Beach have been completed since about 1990.

The earliest dissertation completed on Amy Beach, titled *Mrs. H. H. A. Beach: Her Life and Music*, was by E. Lindsey Merrill in 1963 at the Eastman School of Music.¹ Merrill surveys Beach’s biography and works in order to demonstrate her artistic development over her career. In addition to an analysis of Beach’s music and biography, a unique feature of this study is Merrill’s solicitation of the opinion of two psychologists regarding Amy Beach based on the biographical explanation in Merrill’s first chapter. He invited the psychologists to speculate on the genius-level behaviors Beach exhibited in her youth and the degree to which they may have been a product of her age, gender, or upbringing.

Some dissertations focus on specific major works.² With regard to specific genres, studies of Beach’s vocal and instrumental works have been popular, focusing on topics such as Beach’s anthems and service music, chamber music, songs, and solo piano music.³ Some of the solo piano music studies have focused on the pedagogical aspects of certain pieces, including Clark’s

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¹ E. Lindsey Merrill, “Mrs H.H.A. Beach: Her Life and Music” (PhD diss., The University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, 1963).
² These include: Katrina Carlson Rushing, “Amy Beach’s Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C-sharp Minor op. 45: A Historical, Stylistic, and Analytical Study” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2000) and Ching-Lan Yang, “An Analytical Study of the Piano Concerto in C-sharp Minor op. 45 by Amy Beach” (PhD diss., University of Northern Colorado, 1999); Yu-Hsien Judy Hung, “The Violin Sonata of Amy Beach” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2005); Carolyn Marie Treybig, “Amy Beach: An Investigation and Analysis of the Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet op. 80” (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1999); Tammie Leigh Walker, “The Quintet for Piano and Strings op. 67 by Amy Beach” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001); and Paula Ring Zerkle, “A Study of Amy Beach’s Grand Mass in E-flat Major op. 5” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1998).
“Pedagogical Analysis and Sequencing of Selected Intermediate-Level Solo Piano Compositions of Amy Beach” and Miles’s “The Solo Piano Works of Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” both of which are discussed later in this section.

Two recent studies focusing on the reception of Beach’s music are Sarah Gerk’s 2006 “A Critical Reception History of Amy Beach’s Gaelic Symphony,” and Karrin Elizabeth Ford’s 2011 dissertation “Women Composers, Musical Institutions, and the Criticism of the ‘Old Guard’ in Fin de Siècle Boston.” Gender studies focusing on Beach and her contemporaries include Laurie K. Blunsom’s 1999 dissertation “Gender, Genre, and Professionalism: The Songs of Clara Rogers, Helen Hopekirk, Amy Beach, Margaret Lang, and Mabel Daniels 1880-1925.” Geralyn Shultz completed a thesis in 1994, “Influences of Cultural Ideals of Womanhood on the Musical Career of Mrs. H. H. A. Beach.”

Beach has also been included in several comparative and interdisciplinary dissertations comparing Beach’s music to that of other composers, or to sister arts. Myrna Garvey Eden’s 1977 dissertation linking Beach and Anna Hyatt Huntington, a sculptor, through their contributions to the “American Cultivated Tradition” was expanded upon in Eden’s 1987 book. Rebecca Straney Russell’s 1999 dissertation compared Beach’s settings of the poetry of Sara Teasdale to the works of several of her contemporaries. Completed under the Brigham Young University Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature, Lorraine Wanlass Wood’s thesis “Musical Keys to Success: A Historical-Philosophical Study of the Life and Work of Amy Beach, American Composer” focuses on a study of Beach’s personal values and the

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changing cultural environment in which she was raised as factors that contributed to Beach’s eventual success.5

1.3.1.4 Writings on Amy Beach’s pedagogical works for piano. “Amy Beach and Her Music for Children” was an article by Marcelle Vernazza published in *The American Music Teacher* in 1981. After a brief biography of Beach, Vernazza suggested several works for solo piano that would be appropriate to use for teaching: *Fireflies* from op. 15 (1892); *Children’s Carnival*, op. 25 (1894); *Children’s Album*, op. 36 (1897); *Eskimo Suite*, op. 64 (1907); and *Scottish Legend*, op. 54 (1908).

In his 1985 dissertation, “The Solo Piano Works of Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” Marmaduke Sidney Miles devoted a chapter to Amy Beach’s pedagogical works. He asserted that although many of Beach’s works could be used for students, only seven were specifically written for pedagogical use: *Children’s Carnival*, op. 25; *Children’s Album*, op. 36; *A Cradle Song of the Lonely Mother*, op. 108 (1914); *From Grandmother’s Garden*, op. 96 (1922); *Farewell, Summer/Dancing Leaves*, op. 102 (1924); *A Bit of Cairo* (no opus number, 1928); and *From Six to Twelve*, op. 119 (1932).

Donna Elizabeth Congleton Clark’s dissertation on intermediate-level piano compositions by Amy Beach also discussed appropriate teaching pieces. Although she limited her scope to “intermediate piano compositions,” Clark acknowledged that some of the works that appear to be marked as pieces for children are still challenging enough to be appropriate for students transitioning between the beginning and intermediate stages, and thus includes them in her list.

Clark selected *Children’s Carnival*, op. 25; *Children’s Album*, op. 26; *Four Eskimo Pieces*, op. 64; *Scottish Legend*, op. 54; *By the Still Waters*, op. 114; and *From Six to Twelve*, op. 119. Clark also included some of Amy Beach’s juvenilia: *Mamma’s Waltz, Menuetto, Romanza* (all 1877), and *Petite valse* (1878).

Jeanell Wise Brown created a nearly comprehensive catalog of Beach’s music in her 1994 book *Amy Beach and Her Chamber Music: Biography, Documents and Style*. She cataloged solo works by opus number and assigned a designation of S or P to a work based upon whether or not she believed it to be suitable for students or professionals, respectively. Based upon her criteria, twenty-one of Beach’s pieces are appropriate for students, including the pieces listed by the authors mentioned above. Missing from Brown’s catalog, however, is the suite *From Six to Twelve*, which both Miles and Clark classified as a teaching piece.

1.3.2 Repertoire Selection

In order to determine which of Amy Beach’s works are regarded as teaching pieces, four studies of Beach’s solo piano pieces were consulted (see Table 1). Based on a survey of the catalogs and dissertations discussed above that evaluate the pedagogical value of Amy Beach’s piano pieces, eight works from Beach’s catalog have been selected for investigation in this thesis regarding their pedagogical and ideological content that appeals to young musicians:

1. *Children’s Carnival*, op. 25 (1894)
2. *Children’s Album*, op. 36 (1897)
3. *Scottish Legend*, op. 54, no. 1 (1903)
4. *Four Characteristic Pieces*, op. 64 (1907)\(^7\)
5. *From Grandmother’s Garden*, op. 97 (1922)

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\(^7\) Also known as *Eskimos*
6. *Farewell, Summer* and *Dancing Leaves*, op. 102 (1924)\(^8\)
7. *By the Still Waters*, op. 114 (1924)
8. *From Six to Twelve*, op. 119 (1927)

1.3.3 Research Method

In order to discover connections or contradictions in Amy Beach’s musical values between 1916 and 1944, this thesis examines three types of sources: articles published by Amy Beach in *The Etude*, the *Proceedings of the Music Teachers National Association*, and other publications; articles and interviews of Beach published by others in *The Etude* and other musical journals; and pedagogical piano pieces published by Beach.

The articles by Beach are studied with the particular goal of locating recurring themes in Beach’s writings, especially pertaining to music education, musical values, technical advice, national musical identity, and the composition of music. Beach’s articles are brought together with her statements in interviews and supported by analysis of Beach’s pedagogical piano music in order to establish her musical philosophy.

Based upon a review of the above-mentioned studies, eight piano pieces from Amy Beach’s catalog have been selected for investigation regarding their pedagogical and topical content. These are surveyed to determine to what extent she used her piano works to transmit her values, and what aspects of her auto-didactic music education informed her own teaching method. 1) *Children’s Carnival*, op. 25, was published in 1894 by the Arthur P. Schmidt Company. It is made up of six individual works: *Promenade, Columbine, Pantalon, Pierrot and Pierrette, Secrets,* and *Harlequin*. 2) *Children’s Album*, op. 36, was published in 1897, also by the Arthur P. Schmidt Company. This collection includes five pieces: *Minuet, Gavotte, Waltz, March,* and *Polka*. 3) The set of *Four Characteristic Pieces*, op. 64, also known as the *Eskimo*

\(^8\) Also known as *Two Pieces*
Suite or Four Eskimo Pieces, was published in 1907 by Schmidt and reissued in 1935 and 1943. 4) Scottish Legend is the first of Two Compositions, op. 54, published by Schmidt in 1908. 5) From Grandmother’s Garden, op. 96, is a five-part collection with its pieces named after flowers: Morning Glories, Heartsease, Mignonette, Rosemary and Rue, and Honeysuckle. The collection was published in 1922 by the Theodore Presser Company. 6) Farewell, Summer and Dancing Leaves constitute op. 102, published in 1924 by Oliver Ditson and Company, a subsidiary of Theodore Presser. 7) By the Still Waters, op. 114, was also published by the Ditson Company in 1924. 8) From Six to Twelve, op. 119, was published in 1927 by the Ditson Company.

In addition to scholarly consensus concerning the educational nature of these works, their inclusion in this study has been established by additional criteria. The titles and subjects of the pieces are often geared towards engaging children, such as Children’s Carnival or From Grandmother’s Garden. The titles of some pieces also reveal their educational intentions, such as introducing the common dance styles that make up the movements of Children’s Album. Each work in the list above is here subjected to thematic, formal, and pedagogical analysis to determine its musical and technical benefits for students of piano and composition.

To Beach, there was a connection between composition and performance, especially when she composed for the piano. Her earliest conception of her professional career included both performing and composing. As she entered the professional musical world after her debut, she said, “I had not then divided my enthusiasms [performance and composition]; the work was complementary. It had not come to me that there was a choice to be made.”

9 Requests for no. 5 and no. 6 of From Six to Twelve, op. 119 were not available through Inter-library Loan due to lacking resources (No Lending Libraries). This thesis will analyze nos. 1 – 4.
however, that she sometimes felt the need to separate the two activities: “When I do one kind of work I shut the other up in a closed room and lock the door, unless I happen to be composing for the piano, in which case there is a connecting link.”

Even as she tried to separate composition and musical performance, then, the piano was still the place where she united her two enthusiasms. For this reason, the musical works and articles are analyzed for the advice and educational opportunities they offer to the student of either piano or composition, or both, as Beach's musical lessons often serve to educate simultaneously both the student performer and the student composer.

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<td>Les Rêves de Columbine, op. 65, 1907</td>
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<td>The Chapel by Moonlight, op. 106, 1924</td>
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<td>Cradle Song of the Lonely Mother, op. 108, 1914</td>
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<td>Young Birches, Scherzino-A Peterborough Chipmunk, A Humming Bird, op. 128 nos. 1, 2, and 3, 1932</td>
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<td>From Six to Twelve, op. 119, 1927</td>
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CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY

2.1 Early Life and Musical Education

Amy Marcy Cheney was born in West Henniker, New Hampshire, on 5 September 1867. Her parents were both interested in the arts and literature; her mother Clara Cheney was a locally active pianist and singer. Signs of Amy’s prodigious musical abilities manifested themselves early. She could hum forty distinct melodies before she could speak and as a two-year-old she could harmonize “a perfectly correct alto to any soprano” sung by her mother. She startled both her family and neighbors with her accurate singing and performing. In 1869 musicians all over New England, most likely including Amy’s mother, were preparing for Patrick Gilmore’s National Peace Jubilee in Boston, where a chorus of ten thousand accompanied by bands and orchestras would perform the Handel chorus “See, the Conquering Hero Comes” to welcome President Grant and celebrate the end of the Civil War. When two-year-old Amy was sitting for a photographer (also a member of the Jubilee chorus), she suddenly burst into song, surprising the photographer with her precise rendition of the Handel tune. It became apparent that in addition to her encyclopedic musical memory she also had perfect pitch, as she would insist on songs’ being performed in particular keys, and she associated keys with specific colors.

Amy was evidently very sensitive to loud noises and to musical affect. Loud noises such as thunder or uncontrolled laughter bothered her immensely, even into adulthood, when she

12 Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach: Passionate Victorian; The Life and Work of An American Composer, 1867-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 19. All biographical information about Amy Beach in this chapter is drawn from Block, unless otherwise cited.
15 E. Lindsey Merrill, “Mrs H.H.A. Beach: Her Life and Music” (PhD diss., The University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, 1963), 1.
would play Bach fugues to cover the tumult of a thunderstorm. When Amy was a child, playing pieces in a minor key would upset her so much that her mother would use it as a punishment, often needing only the chromatic opening bars of Gottschalk’s *The Last Hope*, op. 16, to bring a halt to Amy’s mischief.

Amy’s mother was able to keep her away from the piano until she was four years old, and even after that her time at the instrument was restricted, so she mentally composed many pieces away from the piano that she later performed at the piano from memory. These pieces were copied out by her mother, and they demonstrated what Block describes as “a remarkable sense of form and key structure,” as well as the use of “some sophisticated harmonies.” These anecdotes about Beach’s childhood have been frequently cited as evidence of her natural talent for music performance and composition. However, her in-born musical abilities needed refinement.

Amy Beach’s education was standard for an upper-middle-class girl in the late nineteenth century. She was educated in basic subjects by her mother, who also most likely supervised her daughter’s piano practice. Amy spent much of her childhood alone; she was an only child and rarely socialized with other children, except for a few years of preparatory school in her teens. Her sheltered childhood was typical for her time and social class, considering the circumstances of raising an intensely emotional and evidently gifted female child in late-nineteenth-century New England. Amy’s mother and father agreed that she should not be treated exceptionally for her musical talent and that she should be raised to have a normal life, to be “a musician, not a prodigy.” The demanding and often exploitative nature of the life of a child prodigy caused her parents to worry about the possible negative impact of a public career, especially considering their daughter’s young age and apparent over-sensitivity to stimuli. A limited amount of musical

16 Merrill, “Mrs H.H.A. Beach: Her Life and Music,” 3.
training would be a useful ornament for a young woman seeking an advantageous marriage in the future, but a public career was out of the question, since it contradicted the Victorian-era values of humility and deference for women (and even for men the life of a professional musician was a difficult and less-than-desirable occupation).

Amy’s education included music, although her mother refused to give her piano lessons until she was six. Clara Cheney believed that by restricting children’s access to the things they desired most (the piano, in Amy’s case), they would learn discipline and deference to their parents. Amy’s mother came from a Calvinist background, believing that young children needed to be taught the values of piety and modesty early in their lives. The idea that desires of a child’s “blind will” should be gently curbed to the authority of their parents came from an influential book, *Christian Nurture* by Horace Bushnell, published between 1847 and 1863. Bushnell’s Calvinist ideas may have influenced both Clara Cheney’s upbringing and her own philosophy in raising her daughter. Additionally, Mrs. Cheney believed that enforcing a ban on music would prevent her daughter from over-indulgence and subsequently becoming tired from too early exposure to the piano. When Amy finally began lessons, she made swift progress, despite limited practice time each day. Within a year of starting lessons with her mother she had completed the *Boston Conservatory Method*, as well as playing works by Handel, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Beethoven.

The Cheney family moved to Boston in 1875, and the following year the eight-year-old Amy’s ability on the piano exceeded her mother’s ability to teach her. The Cheneys began to look for another piano teacher among the leading musicians of Boston. Many recommended that Amy be sent to Europe for conservatory training straight away, despite her youth.19 Amy’s

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19 Had Amy left America in 1875, she would have been six years younger than Maud Powell was when Powell and her mother went to Europe.
parents chose to keep her at home, however, and she began studying privately with composer and pianist Ernst Perabo of Boston in 1876. Perabo taught at the New England Conservatory as well as giving private piano lessons. In addition to her general education under her mother and private piano lessons from Perabo, Amy was also allowed to take advantage of the musical offerings of the Boston area and attend concerts in the evening.

In 1879 came the biggest change in Amy’s education since she began to study with Perabo, as she left her mother’s tutelage to attend Professor William L. Whittemore’s preparatory school full-time for two years. She studied a variety of subjects, including natural sciences, foreign languages, and mathematics, alongside other students. Amy also joined the Attic Club, a girls’ literary club modeled after the types of organizations to which their mothers belonged. Amy entertained this group of friends with her stories and musical performances. The club members also endeavored to collect autographs from notable figures, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, whose autograph Amy particularly prized.

Amy studied basic music theory on her own until 1881, when she was allowed to begin lessons in harmony with Junius Welch Hill, the organist at a local church as well as a Professor of Music at Wellesley College (1884-97), where he encouraged women to take coursework in theory, harmony, and analysis. The only studies that remain from her work with Hill are four chorales for four voices, which reflect “careful study of Bachian models.” After a year of lessons with Hill, she continued to study theory on her own.

After she concluded her course in basic theory with Hill, Amy also discontinued lessons with Perabo, possibly due to her parents’ disapproval of his plan to raise funds to send Amy to study in Europe. In 1883 Amy began taking lessons – on piano only – from Carl Baermann, a

20 Block, Passionate Victorian, 36.
German pianist, former professor of music at the Munich Conservatory, and a friend and pupil of Liszt, who had recently distinguished himself as a soloist and teacher in Boston.\textsuperscript{21} Amy’s final year at Whittemore’s School were spent studying only French and German, clearly in preparation for a trip to study in Europe that would never come. It was also at this time that Amy’s mother relented and allowed Amy to make her debut as a pianist. She began to practice four hours a day to prepare for the momentous occasion.

Amy’s first performances were at church recitals and home musicales, where she typically performed Chopin waltzes and Beethoven sonatas, as well as some of her own compositions, at least as early as 1875, when she was only seven or eight years old. Her official debut as a concert pianist took place on 24 October 1883. She had just turned sixteen. Amy shared the program with a number of other Boston performers, including the singer Clara Louise Kellogg (1842-1916). She performed Moscheles’ Concerto No. 2 in G minor and Chopin’s *Rondo* in E-flat, op. 16, receiving high praise in reviews from the audience and critics alike.

Earlier that same year Amy had published her first song, “The Rainy Day,” published in 1883 by the Boston firm Oliver Ditson. “The Rainy Day” is a setting of Longfellow’s poem, in which Amy borrowed and extended the music of the opening bars of Beethoven’s “Pathétique” Sonata, op. 13. The song began as a gift to her mother’s sister, Aunt Franc, the first person to grant her access to the piano. Franc had disregarded her sister Clara’s wishes and lifted the four-year-old Amy onto her lap to put her at the keyboard. Franc did not just play the piano for Amy, but let her harmonize a melody and then play on her own, giving Amy creative control and direct access to the forbidden instrument for the first time.

\textsuperscript{21} Block, *Passionate Victorian*, 28.
Amy’s auditions for piano teachers and recital appearances excited the attention of the Boston musical elite, who followed her musical development closely. This prestigious circle brought her into contact with some of the leading music performers, educators, and patrons of the day, including her future husband, Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, a prominent Boston surgeon.

2.2 Auto-Didactic Method

Amy’s early compositions reflect a synthesis of her remarkable musical abilities, including her absolute pitch and affective associations between pitch and color or mood, encyclopedic musical memory, and instinct for melodic composition. She tended to compose in her head, away from the piano, and to play or write out her “inner hearing of the recalled work” as a finished piece. Her earliest works are pieces for piano, voice, or choir, reflecting the types of music she encountered most often in her home. After she completed her year of theory training with Hill, the Cheneys looked to the new conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Wilhelm Gericke (1845-1925), to recommend a teacher for Amy. Gericke’s recommendation was that Amy should teach herself composition by studying masterworks. To that end, he provided her access to the rehearsals of the BSO, and she attended often. The BSO eventually opened its rehearsals once a week to allow all local music students to take advantage of the opportunity to study the sounds of the orchestra and the construction and performance of symphonic works.22

At eighteen Amy Cheney married Dr. Beach, who was twenty-four years her senior. As a new wife and member of the Boston social elite, Amy Beach no longer had the option of becoming a professional soloist or music teacher. She gave only one solo recital a year, usually as a benefit for a specific charity, and although she appeared from time to time with the Boston

Symphony or a chamber group, all profits that she earned from public appearances were donated to charitable organizations. With the blessing and support of her husband, Amy devoted herself to composition.

Despite the sudden curtailment of Amy’s concert career, the marriage appears to have been a positive relationship for both husband and wife. Amy gained the assistance of Henry and his well-connected friends in developing the career she would make for herself as a composer, and the doctor also managed his wife’s business affairs, especially using his knowledge as editor of a medical journal to advocate on her behalf concerning publishers. In return, Henry had the pleasure of a talented and vivacious young wife who beautified his home with music and gave him the opportunity to oversee the artistic development of a brilliant protégée.

Henry encouraged Amy to compose, and he allowed her to publish and collect royalties under her own (married) name: Mrs. H. H. A. Beach. As Amy’s catalog of publications grew, more of her own works began to appear on her recital programs. Henry also shared in Amy’s work. He was an amateur singer and a member of many Boston musical organizations, including the Handel and Haydn Society and the Harvard Musical Association. At the end of each day he would come up to her music room in their home and listen to what she had composed; if it was a song he would sing through it. He would then give Amy his opinion on what he thought about the music. Sometimes Henry was the source of the texts for songs, evidenced by the some of the manuscript song settings Amy gave Henry each year on his birthday, with the simple dedication “To H.” Amy also gave credit to Dr. Beach for the encouragement to start her first major work, the *Mass in E-flat* (1890).23

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By 1886 Dr. Beach decided that Amy would discontinue her piano lessons with Baermann, and that she would not be allowed to study composition privately or at a conservatory. She was musically isolated, with only the critiques of her mother and husband to help her develop her compositional skills. Henry believed this lack of outside influence “preserved” Amy’s style, but like the isolated nature of her childhood, it also hampered her ability to develop relationships with other musicians early in their careers and around her age.24

Amy Beach may have entertained ways to maintain both a performing and composing career; the anecdotes of her early experiences indicate that she saw performing and composing music as interrelated activities. Beach would later comment on the direction of her career, “‘though I had not deliberately chosen, the work had chosen me. I continued to play at concerts, but my home life kept me in the neighborhood of Boston. My compositions gave me a larger field. From Boston, I could reach out to the world.’”25 It seems that her acquiescence to focusing solely on composition stemmed from her domestic obligations at home and pressure from her husband and her mother to give up on a career as a professional concert pianist.

As evidenced by a manuscript workbook that she kept from 1887 to 1894, Beach developed a rigorous and comprehensive program to teach herself advanced theory and orchestration. Block later emphasized that this course of study is extraordinarily hard, and she would not recommend it to the average student.26 For example, to study counterpoint she memorized Bach fugues until she could copy them down from memory. She also copied out and sometimes translated information from orchestration, theory, and history books into her own

music encyclopedia. Orchestration treatises by Berlioz and Gevaert were considered the standard texts for composers, describing in detail the colors and effects of the orchestra, but there were no English translations at the time. She either translated and wrote out selections of these texts in her manuscript journal, or committed entire chapters to memory.

Meticulously kept, her workbook alphabetically organized various pieces of information about music and music composition, mostly orchestral composition. She focused on information concerning how to write for instruments of the orchestra, alone or in combination. Her reference library was housed along with her musical scores in low shelves along the walls of her music room. Beach developed an enormous collection of books on all musical subjects, and she claimed that her collection was unexcelled in America.

In addition to studying books and treatises on music, Beach used musical scores as her “authoritative tutors” in counterpoint, fugue, and symphonic orchestration. As she studied the Bach fugues, Beach would also memorize orchestral scores until she could mentally isolate or combine the sounds of particular instrumental lines. She took advantage of her accurate hearing and excellent musical memory to recreate the sounds of the orchestra in her head. After learning these scores by heart, she would attend performances of the works and write out from memory what she heard, later comparing it to the score at home to measure her accuracy. This process of dissection, memorization, and visual and aural study allowed Beach to internalize the sounds and methods of the masters, so she felt that “the knowledge I have acquired has been my own effort; and what I compose is a part of myself.”

27 Possibly Grand traité d’instrumentation et d’orchestration modernes (Paris, 1843), and Cours méthodique d’orchestration (Paris and Brussels, 1890), respectively.
In 1895 both Amy Beach’s father and grandmother died, leaving her mother living alone. Amy and her husband invited Mrs. Cheney to move in with them at their home in Boston. This arrangement relieved the twenty-eight-year-old Amy of the duties required to manage day-to-day household tasks and left her free to focus entirely on musical activities. Amy Beach continued her routine of occasional concertizing and composition.

Beach’s routine was disrupted in 1910 by the loss of her husband and mother within a year. On 28 June 1910 Dr. Beach died from injuries sustained from a fall at one of his patient’s homes. This left Amy Beach on her own to take care of her own finances and the home, as well as her ailing mother. A forty-three-year-old widow, Beach was not left independently wealthy; her husband did leave her an inheritance, but there was a large debt on their Boston home. Although she refused advance royalties from her publisher, she did encourage him to embark upon a campaign to sell more of what she had already published to raise her income. Beach knew that she was going to have to begin work again soon, but she was not yet ready to face the public. After the loss of her husband, Beach, who had never been particularly religious, began to seek comfort in the philosophy and theology of the church, especially the sermons of a local Episcopalian minister, Dr. Worcester. She eventually became officially affiliated with this church, as she had not been affiliated with any one church during her childhood or marriage. Beach’s mother died 18 February 1911, and she was alone. With no children or family to care for, she began to make plans to resume work, beginning with a trip to Europe.

2.3 Travel to Europe

On her forty-fourth birthday, 5 September 1911, Amy Beach set sail for Europe to fulfill her lifelong dream of studying and performing abroad. She did not arrive in Europe as a student-

29 Jenkins, *The Remarkable Mrs. Beach*, 66.
prodigy, however, but as a famous composer from her own country. Beach was also mindful of the pressure to live up to her reputation: as an American and as a woman, her compositional and performance credentials were under harsh scrutiny by conservative European audiences.\textsuperscript{31}

Having lost her husband and mother, for whom she still grieved, Beach did not travel alone. She was accompanied in Europe by her friend and fellow musician Marcella Craft (1874?-1959), the famous American soprano from the Munich Royal Opera and veteran of the music scene in Germany. The pair traveled to England, Munich, Berlin, the Austrian Alps, and Rome, although Munich would be their home base for the next three years. Beach was able to devote time to studying, composition, and practicing, as well as to visiting with musicians and friends. She played for the Italian composer and pianist Giovanni Sgambati (1841-1914) in Rome, and visited with the family of the late author F. Marion Crawford (1854-1909), who were family friends of the Beaches.\textsuperscript{32}

What Beach heard and experienced abroad surprised and reinvigorated her musically. She related that it was wonderful to find music “put on a so much higher plane than in America, and universally recognized and respected by all classes and conditions as the great art which it is.”\textsuperscript{33} She enjoyed the daily outdoor public performances of music she found all over Munich, and reveled in the respect given to music in Europe. She marveled at the program of a “popular music” concert put on by a military band in the Munich Hofgarten, which opened with the Overture to Mozart’s \textit{Magic Flute} and a selection from Wagner’s \textit{Parsifal}.\textsuperscript{34}

Beach put on a number of recital tours during her three years in Europe, and although she would play a mixed program of European and American composers, she tended to favor

\textsuperscript{31} Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” \textit{The Etude} 33/1 (January 1915), 13. 
\textsuperscript{32} Jenkins, \textit{The Remarkable Mrs. Beach}, 72. 
\textsuperscript{33} Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 13. 
\textsuperscript{34} Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 13.
performing her own compositions.\textsuperscript{35} On joint tours and appearances, Craft would also perform Beach’s music with Beach at the piano – a friendly and mutually beneficial arrangement. Although the general reaction from Munich critics was hostile, there was still an immediate demand for copies of her music that Schmidt, her German publisher, had a difficult time fulfilling, and the relationship between Beach and Schmidt became strained.

As World War I began in Germany, Beach stayed abroad until the last possible moment, when she reluctantly took one of the final trains offered to Americans out of Germany. She arrived home on 18 September 1914 aboard the \textit{SS Cretic}.

Beach was excited and inspired by European culture and its respect for fine music. When she returned home to the United States, she was able to recreate and encourage these conditions in her home country through the sponsorship of clubs and the encouragement of good music.

\textbf{2.4 Music Clubs and Educational Activities}

Over the course of her career Amy Beach published many piano pieces with didactic intentions, wrote six articles for \textit{The Etude}, and presented three times at Music Teachers National Association conferences. She was also active in several musical clubs and organizations and advocated on behalf of women and girls in music. She was a fellow in the MacDowell colony, and she was a member and contributor to the Music Teachers National Association, the Society of American Pen Women, and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. She was also the organizer and inspiration for Beach Clubs, groups of young women who were interested in the composition and performance of music and admired Amy Beach, much like the Chaminade clubs that were popular at the time.

Beach and the MacDowells had met in Boston during the late 1880s, and Beach was very supportive of Marian MacDowell as her husband was dying. She also encouraged Mrs.

\textsuperscript{35} Jenkins, \textit{The Remarkable Mrs. Beach}, 71.
MacDowell to raise the necessary funds for a working retreat in memory of her husband. Beach offered her own money, manuscripts, and performances to raise money for Mrs. MacDowell’s efforts. The first fellows arrived at the MacDowell Colony in 1907, and after Edward MacDowell died in 1908, Mrs. MacDowell selected the fellows herself. Beach was appointed as a fellow in 1921 and began to spend time at the Colony regularly, usually in June or September (or both).\textsuperscript{36} In addition to her early support of the colony and her status as a fellow, Beach continued her advocacy and fund-raising through her appointment to the Allied Members of the MacDowell Colony. Beach also spoke frequently about the Colony to music clubs, including a presentation commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Colony at the national meeting of the Music Teachers National Association in 1932.

The Music Teachers National Association had been organized in 1876 by Theodore Presser and William H. Dana when Presser was the head of the Music Department at Ohio Female Seminary – now Ohio Wesleyan University – to coordinate teachers and create a forum for music education in the United States. The first meeting of MTNA was held on the campus of Ohio Wesleyan and attended by musical luminaries such as George Whitefield Chadwick, George F. Root, and W. S. B. Matthews.\textsuperscript{37}

Beach appeared before the Music Teachers National Association and other local and national educational organizations to play and discuss music and music education. She discussed her teaching pieces with the Piano Teachers Society of Boston in April 1922 and reviewed some of her own didactic music in a July 1930 interview in \textit{Musician}. She also spoke to music students

\textsuperscript{36} Block, \textit{Passionate Victorian}, 222.

at the University of New Hampshire in October 1933; she had received an honorary master’s degree from the University in 1928.38

With the profusion of modernist and popular music in the early twentieth century, Beach repeatedly expressed her concern that students should have access to music that is artistically sound and spiritually uplifting. These appeals were printed in articles and interviews in *Etude* and reflected in her presentations at the annual MTNA meetings in 1931, 1932, and 1935 in which she spoke about musicality; her visits to the MacDowell Colony, and her piano playing, respectively. Her remarks were printed in *Studies in Musical Education, History, and Aesthetics*, the proceedings of the Music Teachers National Association. Beach was in high demand as a speaker and performer at educational institutions and women’s and music clubs, and her popularity and musical authority allowed her to reach out to musicians and music teachers throughout the country.

Beach supported the growing movement of women’s clubs, especially music clubs specifically for women. In the late nineteenth century the growth of these clubs created a demand for new, amateur-friendly compositions for women’s voices, which were hard to come by before this time. The new compositions for women were frequently, but not exclusively, written by women. Beach also advocated on behalf of individual women, such as Marcella Craft, using her musical network to connect young performers with the MacDowell Colony and with patrons and publishers.

Beach periodically coached students of other teachers on her own compositions, and although she mentioned that the musicians presented to her were not always of the highest quality, she still relished the opportunity to encourage young musicians and composers,

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38 Jenkins, *The Remarkable Mrs. Beach*, 126.
especially young women.\textsuperscript{39} Beach’s aims in composing for women’s and children’s clubs are similar to the same goals that motivated her to write for the \textit{Etude} and present at MTNA. She sought to act as an example of the moral and spiritual power of music, and to provide young musicians with a good example of music and musicianship in her works and performances.

Beach was able to influence directly the musical education of some young musicians in Hillsborough, New Hampshire, not far from her own hometown. In 1922 she coordinated with local music teachers to establish a Beach Club for children, subdivided into the Junior and Juvenile Beach Clubs. The children played music for each other, and when Beach attended meetings, she would play for them and tell them stories about her life and career. She also dedicated \textit{From Six to Twelve}, op. 119, “to the Junior and Juvenile Beach Clubs of Hillsboro [sic], N. H.”\textsuperscript{40} The appreciation the children felt for Beach’s involvement in their musical lives is evident in a letter from a young member of the Hillsborough Beach Club, published in \textit{Etude} in April 1924: “We wish all children could have a Beach Club, and of course they can, but there is only one Mrs. Beach and she belongs to us.”\textsuperscript{41} Beach was involved with the club until it disbanded in 1934.

Beach was also involved in clubs that supported the professional pursuit of music by herself and her peers, especially the National League of American Pen Women. At the 1924 meeting of the League, Beach and several others formed the Composers’ Unit, and Beach was unanimously elected chair of the group. The early concerts put on by the Composers’ Unit in April 1924 in Washington, D.C., seemed to establish the organization’s aims to promote high art

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\item \textsuperscript{39} Jenkins, \textit{The Remarkable Mrs. Beach}, 127.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, \textit{From Six to Twelve} (Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson Company, 1927).
\item \textsuperscript{41} “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach Sets an Example,” \textit{Etude} (April 1924): 274.
\end{itemize}
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music, but membership was not restricted to professionals: a prospective member needed only to be "able to write her own manuscript."  

Beach found herself disappointed by the lax membership requirements of the Composers’ Unit, and collaborated with several women to form the Society of American Women Composers in October 1925. She was elected to be their first president and stepped down to become Society’s Honorary President in 1928. The Society had much stricter entrance requirements than the Composers’ Unit, as each prospective member was subject to a review of her qualifications and a majority vote. The by-laws also dictated the nature of the musical activities undertaken by members that would represent the Society. The group dissolved in 1932 due to the financial pressures of the Great Depression.

In 1924 Beach was elected to the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP). The royalties she earned through her membership in ASCAP eventually amounted to a substantial portion of her income. In her will Beach stipulated that these royalties were to be donated to a fund in her name at the MacDowell Colony. These proceeds for the Colony dwindled through the late twentieth century, but a resurgence of interest in the music of American composers, including Beach, has increased the impact of her bequest to the MacDowell Colony.

42 Block, Passionate Victorian, 246.
43 Block, Passionate Victorian, 246. Other founding officers were Gena Branscombe (first vice-president) and Helen Sears (second vice-president). A full list of founding members can be found in Block, Passionate Victorian, 366n23.
CHAPTER 3

IMPORTANCE OF TECHNICAL FACILITY IN PERFORMANCE AND COMPOSITION

3.1 Biographical Source of this Musical Value

To Amy Beach, the first requirement for musical performance or composition was a thorough and versatile technical foundation. “In order to express our own thoughts, or adequately those of others,” she says, “we must acquire a sufficient command of language. This in relation to the art of pianoforte playing means command of technic [sic].”44 She stressed “the need of a thorough technical equipment as a preparation for any work that is worthwhile.”45 The source of Beach’s advice to students of piano and composition is found in her descriptions of her daily routine and her own educational experience.

3.1.1 Performance Technique

Beach completed daily technical exercises as part of her piano practice regimen beginning in her youth. Although she understood the importance of these exercises, she only used them to “‘limber up’ – as an athlete would use a dumb-bell exercise.”46 To Beach, these technical studies were just exercise, not music. To that end, she attempted to use her time well when doing her daily routine: in her youth she propped French and German textbooks up on the piano,47 and in a 1918 interview she mentioned that, at the time, she was studying Spanish while she worked. She also claimed to “save” her ears and nerves by playing these exercises on a silent clavichord or a fold-up keyboard that she took with her when she traveled.48

As part of her daily technical routine, she would also play “a big daily draught of Bach, at
the piano.” For Beach the music of Bach had been a staple of her musical education, and it
constituted one of the fundamental resources of harmony. In addition to regular studies and
exercises, she also advocated the use of excerpted passages from standard compositions as
practical material for technical practice. After her initial routine she moved on to literature for
her upcoming performances.  

Beach’s first exposure to a technical method was the Boston Conservatory Method, which
she had completed a year after beginning lessons with her mother in the early 1870s. After her
mother, Beach’s musical training was under the supervision of the German-trained Boston-area
musicians Ernst Perabo, Carl Baermann, and Junius Hill. During her lessons with Hill she wrote
four-voice chorales to learn four-part harmony using the master composer of the genre, J. S.
Bach, as the exemplar. Her rational and systematic approach to technical development, as well as
her own auto-didactic program of study for composition, may have been based on the approaches
she encountered as a student.

3.1.2 Compositional Technique

Wilhelm Gericke’s advice to Beach to carry out a self-created course in composition
using masterworks as models was the impetus for the auto-didactic program she began at age
seventeen. His recommendation that she should study on her own, as opposed to the
conservatory and international education of her contemporaries, may have been motivated by his
skepticism about the suitability of women for musical professions such as composition;
nevertheless, he opened the Boston Symphony Orchestra rehearsals to her in order to aid her
study.

As discussed in Chapter 2, an integral part of Beach’s individualized program of composition study was her personal library. She endeavored to collect as many books on musical topics as she could, including theory, composition, and orchestration. She also had a large library of orchestral scores. Using these resources, as well as her piano and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Beach taught herself theory, harmony, counterpoint, fugue, and orchestration. In addition to her reference materials, she also maintained a manuscript workbook that became her personal composition and orchestration encyclopedia as she filled with translated and copied material from her orchestration and theory books, focusing on technical details of notation and orchestration. Whole chapters of the treatises that Beach believed to be important or useful were translated by her and then committed to memory.\footnote{Block, \textit{Passionate Victorian}, 54-55.}

One of the essential steps of Beach’s program of compositional study was the memorization of scores and score study away from the piano. Memorization had always come naturally to Beach, since even as a young child she was able to recite from memory, poems and songs of considerable length.\footnote{Block, \textit{Passionate Victorian}, 8.} An essential tool of the concert pianist is memorization, and she found a way to put it to use for compositional study.

She began this process with the fugues of the \textit{Well-Tempered Clavier}.\footnote{Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” \textit{Etude} 61/3 (March 1943): 208.} By writing out each voice from memory on an individual line in a full score, she was able to find “exactly what became of each voice in its devious wanderings” and uncover the mechanics of the fugal structure.\footnote{Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “Work Out Your Own Salvation,” \textit{Etude} 36/1 (January 1918): 11.} She applied this same method to teach herself orchestration. Beach repeatedly copied out and studied movements of symphonies, comparing the work to “a medical student’s dissection. I began to know the instrumentation on paper.”\footnote{Kinscella, “Play No Piece in Public When First Learned,” 9. [emphasis in original]} Once she had succeeded in
memorizing the movement so thoroughly that she could mentally recreate the sound of each instrument alone or in combination with any of the others, she would bring her work to the symphony and compare what she mentally recalled with what she heard from the orchestra.\textsuperscript{56}

Beach’s personal course of study was well-suited to rely on her own specialized set of skills, including her musical and disciplined upbringing and education, intensely focused passion for music, and remarkable memory. She did not recommend her solitary, self-guided method to the average student, since “it requires determination and intensive concentration to work alone, and,” she warned, “those who are not equipped for it would go seriously afield . . . the average student needs guidance.”\textsuperscript{57} She advised that “the acquirement of musical technique demands years of hard and faithful service to routine work, as well as the expenditure of a vast amount of physical and mental strength.”\textsuperscript{58} Nevertheless, Beach believed that many students of piano or composition could benefit from the self-analysis and sense of satisfaction in their work brought about by auto-didactic methods.

3.2 Technical Proficiency Addressed in Beach’s Articles

3.2.1 Performance Technique

In her January 1918 article for \textit{The Etude}, “Work Out Your Own Salvation,” Beach pointed out that certain well-disciplined students of the piano who had lost the guidance of a teacher due to the circumstances of World War I might derive great satisfaction from “a fight with [themselves] and [their] own foes within” by addressing technical issues on their own.\textsuperscript{59}

Beach described to students the tools that she thought made up the basics of piano performance. In an October 1916 article, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” she

\textsuperscript{56} Block, \textit{Passionate Victorian}, 55.
\textsuperscript{57} Beach, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” 208.
\textsuperscript{58} Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “Don’t Give Up Music at the Altar,” \textit{Etude} 37/7 (July 1919): 407.
\textsuperscript{59} Beach, “Work Out Your Own Salvation,” 11.
cited the adage “a good workman is master of his tools”; the tools she listed were “octaves, scales, trills, and exercises of whatever nature seems most necessary for the individual . . .” She emphasized the necessity of a teacher’s guidance to provide a solid foundation and guide proper technical development tailored to each student’s needs. In her September 1918 interview with Hazel Gertrude Kinscella for *The Etude*, Beach advised that every student strive for “utter simplicity, clear melody playing and use of the pressure touch, and for wrist and finger dexterity.”

In addition to technical exercises, Beach recommended other sources of music for technical development, particularly the kind that she had found in the works of older composers. She prescribed thorough study of the first two composers of von Bülow’s “Three Bs” (Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms) for their instructive technical and expressive moments. In her interview with Kinscella, Beach listed etudes and pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Chopin, as well as fellow Americans such as MacDowell, Foote, Chadwick, Paine, and Helen Hopekirk, as being worthy of study. These works demonstrated “so much of good form and musical ideals, significant variation of rhythm in thematic development, and more difficult work in scales, octaves, chords, and arpeggios, and general dexterity and lightness.” Beach viewed the analysis and practice of music by respected composers to be beneficial as models and as opportunities for students to uncover the formal and technical properties of works on their own.

To Beach, the sure mark of a technically polished student was flexibility in technique.

Her article “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic” was dedicated to emphasizing this

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60 Beach, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” 701.
most important trait in performers. She began the article by relating a common question from students regarding the application of technique:

Many times I have been asked by apparently intelligent students whether I play octaves with a loose or stiff wrists. It always seems to me as if one should ask “do you use a knife or a spoon in eating?” Our old friend, Common Sense, rises to explain that in a half-dozen octave passages, each one expressing a different musical or emotional idea, precisely six kinds of octave playing would be necessary.⁶⁴

In the course of the article, she interprets the technical and expressive challenges posed by passages from Rachmaninoff’s *Serenade*, op. 3, Sgambati’s *Nocturne* in B minor, op. 20, and the so-called *Scotch Lullaby* from Brahms’s op. 117.⁶⁵ Each of these examples serves to demonstrate that each piece demands such varied techniques from performers that it should be “as if [they] played them on three kinds of instruments.”⁶⁶ Without a stable and responsive technical foundation, piano students could not hope to manifest the expressive qualities of a work.

Beach recommended that students regularly analyze compositions away from the keyboard, eventually committing them to memory.⁶⁷ When complete, a thorough analysis of a work would also likely result in memorization and in an internalization of the musical language of the piece. Beach also advised students to go beyond the literature of the piano to complete their technical training, “especially when unable to hear other versions of chamber and orchestral music.”⁶⁸ She encouraged students to play through four-hand arrangements of orchestral and chamber pieces for the technical education that could be gleaned from the unfamiliar forms laid out at the piano, as well as for the additional challenge of ensemble playing.

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⁶⁴ Beach, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” 701.
⁶⁵ Beach was referring to no. 1 of Brahms’s three *Intermezzos*, op. 117. It is prefaced with two lines of a Scottish ballad (translated into German), beginning “Schlaf sanft mein Kind,” and features parallel octaves framing a separate melodic line, all within the right hand part.
⁶⁶ Beach, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” 702.
⁶⁷ Beach, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” 701.
Listening to high quality music was an important part of developing musical skill for someone as aurally gifted as Beach, and she recommended the same careful program of listening and repertoire selection to her students and their teachers. She frequently lamented the negative effect that she perceived from “music that is of the lowest possible value,” ragtime and jazz, and called for a push towards refinement. She did not devalue the piano music of her day that was of the “better class,” but she clearly saw more value in works and composers that withstood the test of time.

3.2.2 Compositional Technique

Beach applied her same philosophy regarding technical skill to aspiring students of composition. In her November 1918 article “To the Girl Who Wants to Compose” Beach described the basic components of musical composition: the intellectual, the emotional, and the spiritual. The intellectual aspect of music was “best understood by those who have entered in all seriousness into the composition of music in its most abstract forms.” This study was usually undertaken by students at schools and universities, although in rare cases, such as Beach’s, it could be self-taught.

As with her advice to piano students, Beach stressed a firm foundation in the rudimentary skills of composition. She encouraged young composers to learn piano, harmony, counterpoint, and orchestration. Beach advised that a serious student of composition should be so well-versed in theoretical fundamentals that “he should hesitate no more in setting down his musical thoughts than he does in forming the written letters of his name.”

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71 Beach, “To the Girl Who Wants to Compose,” 695.
72 Beach, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” 208.
experience in composition, she encouraged students to begin with small forms and to hone these compositions and their techniques before moving on to larger works.73

Beach encouraged the study of orchestral works as models for composition, encouraging students to analyze the works, paying careful attention to the structural features, and attempt to memorize the movements just as she had done. Beach advised students to listen to good music, not just for entertainment, but analytically: “try to go ‘backstage’ in every work you hear.”74

She instructed devoted young composers to bring their scores and follow in her footsteps to the orchestra hall. In addition to the value of hearing “high quality” live music, she encouraged the students to listen actively, and attempt to “bring back that orchestral coloring to your mental ear”75 after the performance, in order to internalize the voices of the orchestra. If students were unable to hear the music performed, however, she still encouraged them to study the scores in silence, and gather what formal and technical information they could.76 This technical study was also to be enhanced by the study of other musical texts, such as treatises, textbooks on form and theory, and histories and biographies of great musicians.77

Beach’s opinions regarding popular music’s negative effect on the internal compositional resources of a student composer were similar to her views on popular music at the piano. She did not discourage students from attempting to compose “so-called popular music,” possibly because this genre included the small forms with which she recommended that students begin their study. When the time would come to publish, however, she insisted that students think seriously about what they would produce: “‘to compose is a pleasure – to publish is a responsibility.’”78

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73 Beach, “To the Girl Who Wants to Compose,” 695.
74 Beach, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” 208.
75 Beach, “Work Out Your Own Salvation,” 12.
76 Beach, “Work Out Your Own Salvation,” 11.
77 Beach, “Work Out Your Own Salvation,” 12.
78 Beach, “To the Girl Who Wants to Compose,” 695. Beach believes she is quoting Rubenstein, but I have been unable to verify that.
1940s, she stated that she found no problem with jazz as an accompaniment to dancing, but she expressed concern that students who listened to it exclusively endangered their own good taste.79

Beach’s technical prescription to aspiring composers were summarized in her June 1915 article in the *Los Angeles Examiner*, “Music’s Ten Commandments as Given for Young Composers”:

1. Spare neither time nor strength in the perfecting of the technic of composition, beginning with the simplest rudiments. Your musical material must be perfectly under control as is language in the case of a writer of literature. One must never be compelled to pause in the development of an idea through lack of knowledge of spelling or grammar.

2. Begin with small things—ideas that can be expressed in small form.

3. Study how best to develop all the possibilities of a small form. A small gem may be just as brilliantly cut as one weighing many carats.

4. Learn to employ as much variety in form as possible. Above all things, avoid becoming stereotyped in the expression of melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic ideas.

5. Subject yourself to endless labor in the analysis of works by the old masters, especially using, as illustration for the form upon which you are now engaged, a master’s work in the same form. There is no better way to learn how to write a fugue than by dissecting one by Bach, preferably one from “The Well-Tempered Clavichord.”

6. Begin early to study the scores of stringed quartet music by Haydn and Mozart and the early Beethoven. It is well to select one work and subject it to the most careful analysis, studying it until it is learned by heart.

7. Use every possible opportunity to hear a good stringed quartet, if possible at rehearsals as well as at concerts. Take a score of the composition and study it while it is being played.

8. Hear as much choral music as possible. The study of voice writing, as illustrated in the master works, is of the greatest importance.

9. The crowning glory of music study is familiarity with the master works in symphony, played by a fine, modern symphony orchestra. Carry into the study of symphonic compositions the same thoroughness with which you have analyzed works for the piano, stringed quartet, and chorus, beginning with the simpler and earlier composers.

79 Beach, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” 208.
10. Remember that technic is valuable only as a means to an end. You must first have something to say – something which demands expression from the depths of your soul. If you feel deeply and know how to express what you feel, you make others feel.\textsuperscript{80}

Beach reiterated variations on this method throughout her different publications over the years, including music examples to demonstrate and justify her statements.

The advice was clearly inspired by her own auto-didactic compositional training, and although she emphasized that her particular method is ill-suited to the average student, she encouraged students to take their own musical motivation in hand to explore and expand their own technical limits in performance and composition.

With all Beach’s admonitions and warnings about the substantial expenditure of effort required to acquire the necessary technical skills to perform and compose music competently using auto-didactic methods, a student might have been discouraged from attempting this work at all. Nevertheless, for both the ambitious performer and composer Beach had words of encouragement: “If you mean to be serious, and love the work, not only for the sake of what it may mean to you, as a means of expressing your own ideas, but for the insight it will give you into the workings of master minds, by all means enter into it.”\textsuperscript{81}

3.3 Ways in Which Beach’s Works Demonstrate the Value of Technique

Although Beach did not teach students directly, she offered them performance opportunities by sponsoring clubs, by hosting “Drawing Rooms” at her Boston home, and by writing appealing, quality music for young people. Beach’s pedagogical piano music is an excellent demonstration of her musical ideals in practice. The style and musical techniques in \textit{Children’s Carnival}, \textit{Children’s Album}, \textit{Scottish Legend}, \textit{Eskimos}, \textit{From Grandmother’s Garden},

\textsuperscript{81} Beach, “To the Girl Who Wants to Compose,” 695.
Two Pieces, By the Still Waters, and From Six to Twelve encourage the development of both technique and creativity in students.

While they address a variety of musical issues, each of these pieces focuses in particular on honing the techniques that Beach considered to be essential for the development of the beginning or intermediate student. The pieces in the suites Children’s Carnival and Children’s Album are educational samplers; each movement uses a variety of characters to present different technical exercises for students.

Children’s Carnival, op. 25, has six movements, which are named after characters or episodes that may be found in pantomime or commedia del’arte. The first movement, “Promenade,” is the march-style introductory piece to the suite. “Promenade” opens with a trumpet-like, four-measure fanfare in octaves with both hands playing together. The fanfare (mm. 1-4) features repeated notes and arpeggios, and Beach was very specific regarding fingering in this section.

Example 1. Amy Beach, Children's Carnival Op. 25, no. 1 “Promenade,” mm. 1-4.

Beach’s fastidious and thorough fingering indications demonstrate her desire to help students develop good technique, and provide her interpretation, as a pianist-composer, of the best execution of the piece. “Promenade” has a right-hand melody with a broken-chord accompaniment. The primary rhythmic skill addressed in “Promenade” is the execution of the
dotted-eighth-sixteenth rhythm in the melody (mm. 5-8). The B section contrasts this skipping dotted-eighth-sixteenth rhythm with a flowing scalar even eighth-note rhythm to reinforce the stylistic difference between the two rhythms. “Promenade” closes with a sudden return to the dramatic octave fanfare opening of the work (mm. 56-59).

“Columbine,” in 6/8 time, is the second piece of Children’s Carnival. The feminine character of Columbine is depicted in the cantabile left-hand melody of the piece, with a piano or pianissimo dynamic throughout. The right hand accompanies the melody with arpeggios or broken chords, except for a short section with the melody in the right hand (mm. 19-26). This piece poses two major technical challenges for the young student. The first is smoothly shaping the legato melodic phrase in the left hand with refined dynamics and control. The second challenge is in balancing the expressive left-hand melody with the right-hand accompaniment, since the normal roles of the hands are reversed. Again, Beach is very specific with regards to fingering for both the chords and melody.

“Pantalon” is the third piece of Children’s Carnival. After a decorated introductory section shared between both hands, an energetic melody consisting of rapid turning and scalar figurations takes over in the right hand. At measure 37, the melody passes to the left hand, then back to the right for the close of the piece. In her edition of “Pantalon” (prepared from the original manuscript), Sylvia Glickman encourages students to practice this work “slowly, and always with the correct fingering” when first starting to learn the piece, since Beach had specified fingerings for scalar passages to help develop execution of this technique.82

“Pierrot and Pierrette” is a waltz with a right-hand melody and broken-chord accompaniment. The melody and chords of the waltz are more easily coordinated if the student

follows Beach᾽s fingering recommendations. Beach only gave the tempo marking *Tempo di Valse* for this movement, so it could be performed by treating the triple meter as being either “in three” or “in one,” to match the needs of the student.

“Secrets,” the fifth piece in *Children᾽s Carnival*, has both hands performing in treble clef in close proximity to each other. The primary performance challenge of this piece is recognizing and projecting the *tenuto* melody clearly from the close, split-hand texture.

The final piece of *Children᾽s Carnival*, “Harlequin,” brings the suite to a spirited close. The mischievous, clown-like pantomime character of Harlequin is illustrated in the leaping melody ornamented with grace notes. The left-hand melody at the *seconda volta* is accompanied by a varying pattern of syncopated eighth notes. The technical challenges of this piece are to execute the grace notes accurately and to keep a responsive *staccato* touch for both the melody and accompaniment at a brisk tempo.

*Children᾽s Album*, op. 36, is a five-movement suite with dance-inspired themes for each piece. In each dance, both hands are notated entirely in treble clef, and the music is written within a very small note range. Most of the pieces have no tempo or style indication – Beach must have felt that their titles would be sufficient to convey this information. The first piece is a minuet, and is an excellent model of the rounded binary minuet and trio form. This piece could be used to introduce first and second endings, and the *D.C. al Fine* to students. Beach provided fingerings throughout the piece, and expressive instructions, such as *ritardando* and both written and hairpin-style dynamics to encourage the student to shape the rhythm thoughtfully.

The second movement, a gavotte in D minor, has a melody with contrasting articulation that is distributed between the two hands. The middle section of the gavotte, in the relative major, is musette-like, with a more lyrical melody over an open-fifth drone. In addition to style
contrasts between the gavotte and the musette, and the shared-hand melody, exaggerated
dynamic shifts in the gavotte sections pose a challenge to students to balance the melodic line
appropriately between the hands.

The meter of the waltz, like the “Pierrot and Pierrette” waltz from *Children’s
Carnival*, could be performed in three or in one. The waltz of *Children’s Album*, however, has no
notated time signature, so the option to interpret the meter in three or in one becomes even more viable.


Without the meter written, teachers could use this piece as an opportunity to show students how
the waltz can be counted with either the dotted half note of the melody or the three quarter notes
of the accompaniment acting as the pulse. It has a broken-chord accompaniment and a *cantabile*
melody with some syncopation. Sustaining the extended phrases of the melody is the primary
pedagogical goal of this piece. Although the figuration and regular rhythm of the accompaniment
rarely vary, there is some variety in the articulation of the accompaniment figures, which
presents an additional technical challenge for students.

The penultimate movement of *Children’s Album* is a march. Although the march was not
part of traditional dance suites, in the late nineteenth century it was a popular American genre
that was sometimes used for dancing, and Beach took the opportunity to give students a chance
to practice the dotted-eighth-sixteenth rhythm in the march style. As in the *Children᾽s Carnival*, Beach also sometimes juxtaposed the dotted-eighth-sixteenth rhythm with even eighth notes in the melody to emphasize the difference between the execution and sound of those two rhythms.

A polka is the final movement of *Children᾽s Album*. The *staccato* right-hand melody is accompanied by broken chord figures. In this work as in the others, Beach gave specific fingerings for incidences of repeated notes, scalar passages, and turning figures.

*Scottish Legend*, op. 54, provides some more challenging techniques for students to attempt. The stately introduction features lush chords for both hands and a melody heavily decorated with ornamental notes. Dotted-eighth-sixteenth rhythms are contrasted with the “Scotch snap” throughout the work, and students must emphasize the difference between the two rhythms due to the slow tempo. There is pedaling throughout, and rolls are marked on chords larger than a tenth. The effect is fitting for the haunting and expressive theme, which Beach remarked is reminiscent of “a lonely lake or castle, or a haunting legend,” but the rolled chords are also practical: rolls facilitate the performance of large intervals by players with small hands such as younger students, or Beach herself. Beach also varies the rhythm and harmony of the accompaniment slightly for each return of the melody, to provide variety to challenge students, and to augment the improvisatory folk-like style (mm. 9-12 and mm. 13-16).

In *Eskimos*, op. 64, Beach wrote original treatments of a selection of Native American themes recorded in Franz Boas᾽s monograph *The Central Eskimo* (1888). The theme is clearly stated at the beginning of each piece in unison or in octaves, but the following harmonies and variations are all her own. Among the themes of *Eskimos* the use of the pentatonic scale is the most prevalent tonal feature. Arthur Wilson, Beach᾽s interviewer for a 1912 feature in *The

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Musician, claimed this scale was “the basis of primitive music the world over,” and this particular attribute likely accounts for the folk or ethnic sound of the suite, as well as being an exercise for developing scale technique.

“Arctic Night” employs a gapped, quasi-pentatonic C-minor scale (C, D, E-flat, G, B-flat), with open-voiced chords and intervals in the accompaniment.

Example 3. Amy Beach, Eskimos Op. 64, no. 1 “Arctic Night,” mm. 1-4.

A particular challenge for students in this piece is to express the themes beginning with an anacrusis, and frequent syncopation. “The Returning Hunter” is based on a song that could accompany children’s dancing.85 The brief, two-measure phrase units in G major are fragmented further and developed throughout Beach’s setting. The simplified harmonic vocabulary suits a children’s folk song, but Beach includes some challenging chromatic alterations and changing fingerings on repeated notes. “Exiles,” in F major, challenges students with syncopation and repeated pitches with changing fingerings, as in “Arctic Night.” The final movement of Eskimos, “With Dog Teams,” has two highly contrasted melodies. The stately declaration of the opening four bars gives way to a presto melody (m. 5) with light repeated notes with both hands in the treble clef. The second theme (m. 25) features a melody tied across bar lines and paired with a

homorhythmic accompaniment to give the piece a sense of constant motion. Students are challenged by syncopation and sudden thematic, tempo, and articulation shifts between the two drastically different themes. An extended version of the *maestoso* theme returns in m. 87, immediately followed by an abbreviated *prestissimo* version of the second theme at m. 93. The second theme also creates a problem for students in shaping the irregular, nine-bar phrase. Throughout the collection, Beach used specific fingerings to reinforce patterns for repeated notes and scalar passages.

Among Beach’s pedagogical works, the movements of *From Grandmother’s Garden*, op. 97, pose some of the greatest technical demands on the skills of an intermediate student pianist. “Morning Glories” challenges students with thirty-second-note arpeggiated figures, where the bottom notes form a melody moving at the pace of the quarter note. Students must also control the *pianissimo* dynamic level in the upper register of the piano. The second movement, “Heartsease,” features a tuneful, folk-like melody in the left-hand with syncopated accompaniment. By the time they begin the study of “Heartsease,” intermediate students may no longer have trouble smoothly executing the left-hand melody. The intense chromatic transition (mm. 9-16), however, furnishes a source of technical and musical interest and an opportunity for students to analyze the enharmonic chords and deceptive transitions.

Example 4: Amy Beach From Grandmother's Garden Op. 95, no. 2 Hearsease mm. 9-16.
“Mignonette,” the third movement, is a minuet. Students must strive to shape a phrase from the bouncing, homorhythmic accompaniment and impressionistic harmonies. The overlapping melodic gestures of “Rosemary and Rue” invite students to approach technical issues with attention to syncopation and chromaticism. Students must also be mindful of balance between harmony and accompaniment when a distinct melody for the inside “tenor” voice emerges at m. 52. The rapid triplet octaves at the transition back into A (m. 102) are reminiscent of virtuosic passages characteristic of Beach’s professional-level concert compositions. The final movement of From Grandmother’s Garden, “Honeysuckle,” tests the technical facility of students with fast passagework and a leaping left hand accompaniment throughout. The B section (mm. 45-68) features a lyrical melody in the upper register and a waltz-like accompaniment, with running passages through the middle voices. Beach provided some of the most advanced material that she intended for students of the piano in the impressionistic techniques and extended lengths of the pieces of From Grandmother’s Garden.

“Farewell, Summer” and “Dancing Leaves,” composed in 1924 at the MacDowell Colony, were published as a pair under op. 102 and dedicated to the pianist and music educator Olga Samaroff (1882-1948). The two pieces form a duo that creates an image of nature transforming the late summer into the arrival of autumn. “Farewell, Summer” features a broken-chord accompaniment, and the B section has an inner-voice melody surrounded by flowing eighth notes. The soft dynamic level is shaped with swelling sections, sometimes growing or receding over several measures, requiring dynamic control from the performer. Students may also be introduced to the una corda pedalling indication in this piece. “Dancing Leaves” evokes its title with perpetually running eighth notes contrasting with syncopation throughout. The right-
hand melody is propelled forward by chromatic moving notes, providing students with opportunities for fingering practice with shifting intervals (i.e. mm. 5-12). “Dancing Leaves” also has wide dynamic shifts, from ppp, to crescendo past mezzo forte at the end of the first section (mm. 34-44).

*By the Still Waters*, op. 114, suggests gently flowing water with a sustained *cantabile* melody in the left hand accompanied by arpeggiated and scalar accompaniment in the right hand. This piece requires strict dynamic control, since the dynamic level is limited to *pianissimo*, with slight dynamic swells. Students may be challenged by pedaling throughout, as well as balancing the melody and accompanying voices.

*From Six to Twelve*, op. 119, is dedicated to the Junior and Juvenile Beach Clubs of Hillsborough, New Hampshire, the Beach club that the composer began sponsoring in 1922. The title of the collection is likely a reference to the typical range of ages of the students in the club, and the individual pieces represent images of the outdoors, as well as youthful activities. The first piece, “Sliding on the Ice,” makes use of ascending and descending tetrachords across both hands as a “sliding” theme. This tetrachord practice is important for piano students to develop proficiency in performing their scales. “First Mayflowers” poses challenges to students of balancing a lyrical melody line against a chordal accompaniment appearing in both hands. Beach provided her usual guidance with fingerings that help students with smooth execution of the melody and chords. This piece also requires students to practice dynamic control and shape the expression of the melodic line without exaggerating, as the dynamic level is rarely above *piano*. “Canoeing,” like “First Mayflowers,” also requires students to focus on balancing a sustained melody against an accompaniment. “Canoeing” has a constantly flowing eighth-note accompaniment that must pass equally between the hands and not overwhelm the melody.
“Secrets of the Attic” helps students develop their skills in playing scalar sixteenth-note patterns in both hands, and the syncopated chords of the accompaniment emphasize playing chords in inversions.

The small forms represented by these suites and pieces may be inspiration for students to attempt to write music that emulates Beach’s music. Her works reinforce her advice to young composers and act as compositional models for students to study when they begin to compose small forms. *Children’s Album* in particular is full of short classical dances. All the above-mentioned works for children are also models for the composition of character pieces. *Scottish Legend* provides an example of variation in accompaniment at each return of a melody, and a sampler of some of the sounds, colors, and techniques of impressionism is found in *From Grandmother’s Garden*. These pieces have the potential to present harmonic, textural, and formal models for young students.

To Beach, it was important that interesting music of high quality be available to students of the piano in order to develop their skill. She took responsibility in writing music that children would enjoy, and she mentioned in a 1930 interview that her Hillsborough Beach Club particularly enjoyed her children’s suites. As much as her students delighted in performing them, she said, “. . . these little ‘easy’ pieces were not easy for me to write. Ordinarily I think in terms of more difficult works, and it was really hard for me to write things suitable for children.” In spite of her professed struggle, Beach’s pedagogical piano pieces exhibit tightly focused stylistic and pedagogical intent, with subjects likely to intrigue and inspire students.

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CHAPTER 4

BALANCE OF “EMOTION AND INTELLECT”

4.1 Biographical Source of this Musical Value

Amy Beach consistently emphasized the need for completely polished musical technique in performance and composition. However, she also cautioned against relying on technique while neglecting expression: “Technic [sic] is like most of the important things in life; a power for good or evil. It must be the servant, not the master, of our musical equipment.”

In addition to technical knowledge, which Beach called intellect, she defined two additional broad criteria that she considered to be essential to music making: the emotional, and the spiritual. The emotional side of music is “the side of music most easily understood by the average human being.” It encompasses the familiar music that anyone might encounter as a child, religious music, and patriotic music. Beach also mentions that even among “primitive peoples,” (she specifically mentions Eskimos and Zunis) music is a part of daily life from birth to death.

Beach’s awareness of the emotional aspect of music began with her musical education and upbringing in the atmosphere and values of late-nineteenth-century Boston. Even as a young child Amy Beach had a gift for melody and a sensitivity to musical affect. Before she was allowed to play the piano, she would improvise melodies for Mother Goose rhymes and invent an accompaniment to her mother’s singing. She was also sensitive to affective associations in music and nature, associating rain with “nature’s tears” and crying at the sound of chromaticism in Gottschalk’s “Last Hope.”

Her earliest works demonstrate her encyclopedic musical

91 Block, *Passionate Victorian*, 4, 8.
memory: composed in her head away from the piano, her juvenilia reflect the incorporation of the music she encountered most frequently in her home, including short piano pieces and choral works.92

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Beach was a synaesthete, associating distinct colors with certain keys. Most of her connections were for major keys: C, white; E, yellow; G, red; A, green; A flat, blue; D flat, lilac or violet; E flat, pink. Her only minor-key associations were F sharp minor and G sharp minor, and they were both black. These color affiliations suggest an early association with sound, color, and mood that carries over to her mature compositions.93 One of Beach’s first published songs, “With Violets,” op. 1 (1885), uses the keys of G major (red) and D-flat major (lilac/violet), and Beach’s anguished and “stormy” pieces were often in F sharp or G sharp minor. Beach’s educational pieces, especially the intermediate works, make use of some of Beach’s palette of tonal colors within a limited range of keys for young students.

Beach developed her intellectual and emotional knowledge with educational and travel experiences throughout her life. During Beach’s three years of school in her teenage years, she received a well-rounded education at Whittemore’s preparatory school. She studied a broad variety of subjects, including foreign languages, mathematics, and natural sciences. She also shared stories and music with girls her own age in the Attic Club. After she had achieved her fame as a concert pianist and composer in the United States, she traveled abroad in 1911 and experienced the culture and musical environment of Europe. Beach traveled back to Europe several times: back to Germany in 1926, the winter and spring of 1928 into 1929 in Rome, and in 1936 to London. She also traveled regularly throughout the United States.

92 Block, _Passionate Victorian_, 34.
93 Block, _Passionate Victorian_, 10.
Several times throughout her life Beach commented on the situation of women in music professions. When it came to her own experience, she claimed in 1915: “I have personally never felt myself handicapped in any way, nor have I encountered prejudice of any sort on account of my being a woman.” She supported many female performers, composers, and teachers throughout the years. However, when it came to the conspicuous absence of women from the field of composition, especially in producing large works like the ones which Beach wrote, she did comment on the general lack of opportunities for women in terms of education, employment, and travel: elements of life experience that she considered essential for the creation of music.\textsuperscript{94}

Beach also believed in the emotional and spiritual nature of music. She believed that high-quality music, as an educational force, would have a positive effect on the cultural health of the public. Part of the lasting nature of masterworks comes from the strong emotional reaction they produce in the audience. Beach took a responsibility throughout her life to sponsor music and music education programs that would help spread high-quality music to the public. She sponsored and organized women’s music clubs, mentored female composers and performers, and supported the performance of new works of American art music. Part of Beach’s sense of responsibility to circulate spiritually and morally sound music included music education programs and clubs for children, She also composed her educational works to offer them an alternative to low-quality popular music.

Returning to the final of the three parts of music composition, the spiritual, Beach describes this aspect as having two points of view, “that of the listener, and that of the creator.”\textsuperscript{95} In writing music, composers are moved to express a musical impulse or ideal, and the listener is affected and uplifted by the inherently spiritual nature of music. Although Beach does not

\textsuperscript{94} Block, \textit{Passionate Victorian}, 73.
\textsuperscript{95} Beach, “To the Girl Who Wants to Compose,” 695.
explicitly define the role of a performer, she implies that performers, especially those who are composers such as herself, play both to interpret the composer’s message for the audience and for their own insight into the mind of the author of the work.

Although no performer or composer could expect to express herself or himself adequately without command of technique, emotional interpretation of a work is essential to convey entirely the sentiment contained within the work. “If technical command is analogous to command of language, we are here reminded,” Beach advised, “that ‘language is given to conceal thought.’”

4.2 “Emotion and Intellect” Addressed in Beach’s Articles

Beach believed that the main and most universal effect of music is expression, and technical flexibility is key to making music communicate an idea. In her 1916 article on piano playing, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” she comments that since the piano itself has “so many aspects of the mere machine that we ought continually to strive against adding further to its unyielding qualities by the imposition of a rigid technical employment of them.”

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the adaptation of technique to fit each situation is part of a musician’s necessary technical skill. Performers should be able use their “musical and emotional” intuition to choose which technique to apply to a work to keep it from sounding mechanical. According to Beach in her 1918 interview with Hazel Gertrude Kinscella, these musical instincts are necessary for composers as well, and, like her own gifts, this rudimentary talent must be honed with practice if students expect success.

Once composers have mastered the necessary theoretical skills, their work can begin.

Composers must have something to express to listeners, not merely execute proper formal

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96 Beach, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” 702.
97 Beach, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” 701.
98 Beach, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” 701.
technique. Beach points out that the appeal of master composers such as Bach and Beethoven is their combination of “stupendous intellectual equipment with an emotional force almost beyond description,” and that the enduring qualities come from the expression of an emotional idea.\(^{100}\) A composer’s technical training serves to streamline the process of transforming an idea from an abstract thought to formal expression. She reminded composers in her 1942 interview “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition” that “craftsmanship, vital though it is, serves chiefly as the means toward the end of personal expression.”\(^{101}\)

The source of this emotional expression comes from within the composer, and is influenced by one’s life experiences, or lack thereof. “For the young aspirant to honors in musical composition,” Beach advises, “I should advise that great stress be laid on the acquirement of a broad general education.”\(^{102}\) Beach’s own diverse educational interests prove that the knowledge of a broad base of subjects, from mythical folk tales to birdsong, provides a composer with a rich palette of emotional topics from which to draw inspiration. She recommends that students read for “poetic insight” into music, such as studying old Scottish legends to give depth to the interpretation of music like her *Scottish Legend*.\(^{103}\)

Beach differentiates between education and experience, however, and emphasizes the necessity of both, when she addressed domestic women and their life experiences as they apply to making music in her 1909 article in *The Etude*, “Music after Marriage and Motherhood”: “She must learn to accept the fact that study alone will not produce competency, though it may give

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\(^{103}\) Kinscilla, “Play No Piece in Public When First Learned,” 10.
her erudition and appreciation of musical literature. The great experiences of life are important factors in the educational forces which produce a fine musician.”

Beach also encouraged students to study composers’ biographies and their musical intentions. She directed them to think about what the music means, saying, “if the piece appeals to us, its meaning comes out gradually under the developing fluid of our repeated analysis, until the picture takes shape, and we can then begin to think about coloring it according to our personal inclinators [sic].” Although a performer’s interpretation brings vitality to a performance, “a player must.” Beach cautions, “follow the composer’s expression marks.” She notes that students should also prepare pieces for recitals ahead of time and set them aside, “for one often sees many new beauties in it later, particularly after it is laid aside for a time and then taken up again.”

Beach described opportunities for students to test their interpretive skills on newly composed art pieces or lesser-known works by masters. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Beach recommended Bach and Beethoven, the first two of “von Bülow’s Three Bs” for technical development in her 1918 article “Work Out Your Own Salvation.” She recommended von Bülow’s third B – Brahms – specifically for the expressive and interpretive challenges his works pose. Even in the technical study of Bach’s fugues she warns students to “not lose sight for a moment of their absolute beauty.” In “New Gems in the Old Classics,” a 1904 interview with William Armstrong, she recommends that students take advantage of the in-depth study of less popular works by masters like Beethoven and Bach. Only then, “free from an imitation or

105Beach, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic” 701.
composite of imitations in interpretation,” are students forced to rely completely on their own musical and theoretical instincts.109

Beach’s main concern with the modern music of her day was what she considered its lack of balance in emotion and intellect. She spoke about this topic at the national meeting of the Music Teachers National Association in 1930. In her essay, “Emotion versus Intellect in Music,” she contrasted what she described as the two primary types of modern music: “. . . first, a large part of what we receive ‘over the air,’ consisting mostly of emotion carried to the last gasping point of sentimentality. Second, works of a purely intellectual nature, often of deep interest as problems . . . worked out brilliantly and exhaustively, but never for a moment touching our emotions.”110 Too much, of either overwrought sentiment or passionless technique, fails to satisfy the listener or musician. She questioned the enduring quality of compositions that seemed only to display the greatest extremes of mathematical or formal construction. Beach does not deny that these theoretical feats are ingenious, but she asked, “is Thomas Tallis remembered and loved today for his motet in forty actual parts, or for the responses such as ‘Take not Thy Holy Spirit From Us,’ – to which we church-goers ‘respond’ with a lump in our throats?”111 Beach asserted that by reaching out “in both directions – the intellectual and the emotional,” even though the modernist trend rejected the emotional and narrative sentiments typical of Romantic works, composers would be able to express “the inexpressible” and still remain current.112

Addressing the national conference of the Music Teachers National Association again in 1934, Beach made “A Plea for Mercy” to modern composers on behalf of piano players. She observed that “entire programs, with the exception of some short interludes, were devoted to

music illustrating the complete possibilities of the piano as an instrument of percussion . . . with a maximum of force and rapidity that suggested a Gatling gun more nearly than anything else.”

As for technical requirements, she declared that “a tackhammer in each hand . . . would produce exactly the same effect in regard to tone quality.”[113] Beach aimed to devise “a real scheme for the protection of the fingers of long-suffering pianists. Whether the ears of pianist or listener would be equally benefited,” Beach wryly mused, “is, of course, a matter for further consideration.”[114] Despite the contemporary trends toward extremism, Beach had faith that what she believed to be the best of music would persevere, as excessive and self-conscious modernism fell out of fashion.[115]

Beach also encouraged students and performers to be aware of the spiritual nature of music, stating, “I shall always feel that the true mission of music is to uplift.”[116] During an interview for The Etude in 1944, in the midst of World War II, Beach shared her opinion of the necessity of music in times of crisis, saying, “the main thing is to let our hearts sing, even through sorrow and anxiety. ‘The world cries out for harmony.’”[117] In addition to musicians and listeners being uplifted and united by music, Beach saw composers playing an important part in the lifting and inspiration of others. Addressing the members of Mu Phi Epsilon in a 1942 article for their magazine, The Triangle, she describes three paths for composers: “First, that of furnishing sadly needed diversion from the severity of life,” as a composer of light parlor or popular music; “Second, that of reflecting, (perhaps unconsciously) the actual restlessness and chaos” that seem to describe the trends of modernism; “Third, that of appealing to the things of

the spirit as they may be illustrated by music,” a mission that matches Beach’s Romantic concept of high-quality, uplifting art music.\textsuperscript{118}

4.3 Ways in Which Beach’s Works Encourage a Balance of Emotion and Intellect

Beach’s music for young people offers myriad technical challenges to students, but her gift for melody and vivid characterizations invite students to set their goals beyond the merely correct reproduction of the music. She hoped to attract students to her art music with appealing imagery that encouraged them to think critically and deeply about the emotional and spiritual message of a work.

The style and musical techniques present in Children’s Carnival, Children’s Album, Scottish Legend, Eskimos, From Grandmother’s Garden, Two Pieces, By the Still Waters, and From Six to Twelve challenge students of piano and composition to balance their technical “intellect” against their creative “emotion.” Each piece presents a character or mood in both its title and individual musical style, and compels students to transcend mechanical technique to produce an expressive performance or musical work.

The titles of four of the six the movements of Children’s Carnival, op. 25, come from the stock characters of pantomime and commedia dell’arte, and the music of each piece depicts these characters. Familiarity with these characters and their behaviors could have served students well in their musical studies, since commedia dell’arte characters appear frequently in other musical, theatrical, and artistic works. The Columbine of the commedia dell’arte tradition is a sweet and pretty girl who loves the mischievous Harlequin and rebuffs the lecherous Pantalon.\textsuperscript{119} The second movement of Children’s Carnival captures the spirit of Columbine with the singing left-hand melody and delicate arpeggio accompaniment. The very soft dynamic level of “Columbine”

\textsuperscript{118}Beach, “The Mission of the Present-Day Composer,” 71.
creates an image of the delicate feminine and challenges students to shape a singing melodic line within a limited dynamic range. The character Pantalon is a rich old man, whose servant is typically Harlequin. Pantalon chases after Columbine, but she always avoids his advances.¹²⁰ Beach’s sprightly “Pantalon” is the third movement of Children’s Carnival, and the energetic scalar melody depicts Pantalon’s pursuit. Pierrot was a character usually assigned to a young child in the theater company, dressed in baggy white clothes with a white-painted face.¹²¹ “Pierrot and Pierrette,” the male and female variants of this character, are the inspiration for the fourth piece in Children’s Carnival. The youthful characters are represented by the waltz, with its simple melody and straightforward accompaniment. Harlequin was dressed in brightly colored, heavily patched clothing. Although he is considered a slow-witted clownish character and a flirt, he still loves Columbine.¹²² Beach captures the spirit of “Harlequin” in the final movement of Children’s Carnival in a vivacious piece full of leaping grace notes and staccato scales and arpeggios. “Harlequin” also has dramatic dynamic shifts and requires students to keep a light staccato touch no matter the volume.

The other two pieces in Children’s Carnival, “Promenade” and “Secrets,” also help students to develop their musical and technical skills. “Promenade” has march-like rhythms and regular four-measure phrases. The juxtaposition of even and uneven eighth notes expresses the light-heated and playful quality of the pantomime characters and the Carnival suite as a whole. “Secrets” has a very quiet dynamic level and requires balancing a melody line from within an accompaniment, both of which are shared between the two hands. The soft dynamics and alternating tenuto notes of the melody call to mind the familiar and friendly title of the piece.

¹²⁰Rudlin, Commedia dell’arte, 92-95.
¹²¹Rudlin, Commedia dell’arte, 134.
¹²²Rudlin, Commedia dell’arte, 76-79.
The dances that comprise the *Children's Album*, op. 36, encourage piano students and composers to think musically. Although the dances provide important formal education to composers and performers, they also have, or had in the past, a practical application as accompaniment to social entertainment. Sylvia Glickman’s 1990 edition of *Children's Album*, prepared from the original manuscript in the Library of Congress, describes the steps of some of the dances to help students understand where to emphasize the beat and how the style of the dance and the execution of the musical technique should correlate. The “Minuet,” a dance in 3/4 time, requires precise rhythmic execution and melodic balance from the performer. Glickman suggests that students “think of people dressed in formal, fancy, satin clothing, wearing powdered wigs, taking small, shuffling steps and bowing graciously to each other.”123 The “Gavotte” is in 4/4 time and has a melody that challenges students to draw out and balance the melody line between the hands, or against the drone accompaniment in the musette section. Glickman recommends that students think of seventeenth-century dancers pausing every four to eight measures to demonstrate how the steps of the gavotte would align with the musical form by pausing at the regular cadences in the dance.124 The “Waltz” could be interpreted as emphasizing a meter of one or three beats a measure, but either way requires balance between the broken-chord accompaniment and the sustained *cantabile* melody. Very few dynamics are marked in this work, and much of the shaping of the eight-measure phrases is left to the student’s interpretation. For the “March,” Glickman encourages students to actually “Stand up and practice marching in your room while you whistle the tune!”125 Although this sort of pedagogical activity might not appeal to older students, a strong internal sense of rhythm helps students differentiate between

the dotted-eighth-sixteenth and eighth-note rhythms, and to bring that contrast to the foreground
of the piece with an unfaltering technical performance in the “March.” The lively “Polka” has
characteristic running-scale motifs and contrasting articulations. To make the piece match the
light, quick steps of the polka, students must have great control of their dynamics and
articulation, especially in performing the constantly running notes of the accompaniment.

Scottish Legend, op. 54, is precisely the type of piece that is best served by Beach’s
advice to study old myths and legends as part of a musical and general education. Beach does not
divulge which “legend” the title may refer to, if any at all. Transforming the work into a
convincing emotional drama relies on the imagination and ingenuity of the performer. While
ornamentation, lyrical melody, lush harmonies, and stately tempo create what might well be
understood as a type of Scottish character in the work, Beach saw Scottish Legend as an
educational opportunity to stimulate a student’s “‘story-telling’ ability,” and give the work a
greater affective and narrative trajectory, beyond the evocation of a mood that seems vaguely
Scottish or ancient.126

In contrast to the ambiguity of Scottish Legend, Beach discloses that each of the melodies
of the Eskimos suite, op. 64, comes from the “genuine Labrador Eskimo folk-songs” she found in
Boas’ monograph, The Central Eskimo.127 Beach created the original harmonies and variations
on the themes, as well as the titles of the works; with the exception of “The Returning Hunter,”
the titles of the works are original to Beach.128 These invented titles represent Beach’s own
interpretation of the emotional content of the melodies, and she tailored her settings to those
ideas. Beach’s scoring of the themes also provides the performer with inspiring imagery: the

128 Adrienne Friend Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” American Music 8/2 (Summer
1990): 149.
open-voiced chords and intervals of the accompaniment in “Arctic Night” evoke the expansive tundra; short, breathless phrases and a hopping *staccato* rhythm depict the children’s dance of “The Returning Hunter”; the harmony of “Exiles” is chromatic and plaintive, and the use of the upper register calls forth images of isolation; light repeated eighth notes and the momentum of melody notes tied over barlines imitate a sled speeding over frozen snow in “With Dog-teams.” This suite also serves as a possible example for aspiring composers seeking to adapt and explore folk-songs, as well as borrowed melodies in general.

Each movement of *From Grandmother’s Garden*, op. 97, characterizes a type of flower for each of its movements. This suite was composed during Beach’s first stay at the MacDowell colony in 1921, where she was surrounded and inspired by nature. The impressionistic rising arpeggios of “Morning Glories” characterize the dawn and the opening of the eponymous flower, while challenging performers to draw out the melody from within the texture. “Heartsease” has a cantabile left-hand melody and moments of suddenly shifting chromaticism. The *Viola tricolor*, or as it is commonly known, wild pansy or heartsease, has been associated with love and love potions, and the sweet and sometimes plaintive moments of “Heartsease” characterize this plant’s literary and folkloric attributes. “Mignonette” is a minuet, which Block suggests may be a musical pun. The playful contrast of *staccato* and legato sections, and the frequent parallel fourth harmonies seem to be a double representation of the sweet and fragrant flower and the meaning of *mignon*. The sentimental “Rosemary and Rue,” suggests loss of love and regret in its overlapping chromatic lines and dissonances. The light melody of “Honeysuckle” symbolizes its title flower as it winds lithely and quickly around *staccato* chords in inversion. Knowledge about these flowers and their corresponding characteristics is important to bring depth to the emotional

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performance of this suite. Students likely would have encountered this floral symbolism in literature and poetry, and if they were residing in the northeast United States, they may have encountered the flowers in the gardens and woods near their homes.

Natural imagery abounds in Beach’s piano works between 1921 and 1925, including the pair of pieces that comprise op. 102, “Farewell, Summer” and “Dancing Leaves.” The pieces depict the natural imagery of the titles, from the last bittersweet days of summer amusement in the shifting harmonies and reminiscent moments of “Farewell, Summer,” to the swirling and changing leaves of fall in the relentless rhythm and mercurial harmonic colors of “Dancing Leaves.” Both pieces were composed during one of Beach’s trips to the MacDowell Colony and they were published together in 1924.

*By the Still Waters*, op. 114, furnishes at least two possible sources for musical inspiration. According to Beach the title is biblically inspired and adapted from Psalm 23, verse 2: “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.” Beach explained that she made the slight change in the preposition (from “beside” to “by”) because she felt that an exact quotation from the Bible as a title of the piece, “divorced from its biblical context, seemed rather vague and hardly of the character of a title for a piece of secular music.” She intended that the constant rhythm and sustained cantabile melody, blended with a pedalled texture, would represent placidly flowing waters.

The titles of the pieces in *From Six to Twelve*, op. 119, are inspired by the favorite recreational activities of children like the ones in the Beach Clubs of Hillsborough. The works take advantage of musical imagery to evoke their subject. The shared-hand sliding and tripping aspects of the melody of “Sliding on the Ice” mimics children trying to keep their balance while

130Ps. 23:2 AV, [emphasis added].
131Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, *By the Still Waters*, (St. Louis, MO: Art Pubilcation Society, 1925), [ii].
they play on icy surfaces. The challenge of balancing the accompaniment and melody shared between the two hands in “Canoeing” represents the even and regular motion of the paddles necessary to move a canoe smoothly through the water. “Secrets of the Attic” evokes its title through its register and scoring. Both hands are in the treble clef for most of the piece, and the melody passes back and forth between the hands, possibly symbolizing two friends trading secrets.

During her address to the Music Teachers National Association on “Emotion versus Intellect in Music,” Beach claimed, “‘Art is the successful communication of a valuable experience.’” She reasoned, then, that an effective and complete musical communication of an experience “must surely include emotion as an integral part of music.”[32] Although all Beach’s didactic pieces emphasize technical concerns, such as shaping long phrases, rapid style shifts, pedalling, or the particulars of fingering, a student could not expect to apply the same technical approach to each of these pieces and realize an interesting and satisfying musical experience. Beach not only uncovered technical issues for students to address but also supplied them with a musical framework of provocative titles and idiomatic musical styles to encourage their imagination and interpretation. Neither pianist nor composer could expect to reach the audience and create a musical performance without emotional knowledge at least as impressive as their technical skills.

CHAPTER 5
IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF AMERICAN COMPOSITIONS, COMPOSERS, AND TEACHERS

5.1 Biographical Sources of Beach’s Commitment to American Music

Amy Beach’s education is proof of her assertion that the highest quality music education is available to Americans in their home country. Although she was self-taught in composition and displayed uncanny musical instincts, Beach still had many experienced teachers who aided in her development in the musical basics of piano performance and composition. In order to develop technical facility and a balance of emotion and intellect, Beach recommended that students seek the assistance of a teacher. Beach also took action to support American educators and compositions by contributing to pedagogical literature, and aiding the development of music clubs and education programs.

Beach’s advice for others to take advantage of American teachers was a product of her own experience. As noted in Chapter 2, Beach’s earliest piano teacher was her mother, but she began taking private piano lessons with Boston-area teachers in 1876. Both of her piano teachers, Ernst Perabo (1845-1920) and Carl Baermann (1839-1913), were German-born and -trained musicians who immigrated to the United States and established reputations and performers and teachers in Boston, and were accepted by the Boston community as their own. Beach’s only composition teacher, Junius W. Hill (1840-1916), was an American trained at the Leipzig Conservatory. Well-trained musicians such as Beach’s teachers brought quality musical education, equivalent to that found in Europe, to students living in America. In a series of sketches for *Etude* titled “Girlhood of Famous Women in Music,” editor C. A. Browne observed that the results of Amy Beach’s American musical training “would seem to justify Madame
Chaminade’s words, ‘Tell American girls not to go abroad to study. They have good teachers at home.’”

Amy Beach defied assertions of her time that musical abilities of the highest distinction could not be acquired by Americans who lacked European training or lineage. Beach’s compositional skills were mostly self-taught, and since she identified as an American, her musical style would be considered quintessentially American. In a letter to one of her cousins, Clara Cheney rejected questions of her daughter’s lineage and her “inherited” musicality by establishing Amy’s thoroughly American lineage: “‘I reply if being one of the tenth generation of the Dearborns, the eighth generation of the Marcys and no-end-of generations of Cheneys in New England doesn’t make her an American, I do not know what will.’”

Beach’s isolation in her youth and her auto-didactic education kept her from most outside musical influences aside from her teachers and family. She studied privately with her teachers and did not often play music with any other students her age aside from occasional performances for the Attic Club or collaborations on shared recitals. After her marriage to Dr. Beach, Amy discontinued her private piano lessons entirely. Once Beach focused on composing, perhaps she might have considered taking up more intensive composition study in connection with one of the major universities in Boston: with George Whitefield Chadwick at the New England Conservatory, John Knowles Paine at Harvard, or perhaps even with Hill at Wellesley College. Instead, relying on advice from Gericke as mentioned in Chapter 2, Beach studied theory and composition on her own. Dr. Beach preferred that Amy “preserve” her personal style.

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Beach did not travel to Europe at all until she was in her forties, when she went there as an established composer, not as a student. She took in sights, attended and performed at some concerts and salons, and met with other musicians and friends while abroad. She enjoyed European musical culture and returned multiple times for vacations and to visit friends throughout her later years. Beach felt invigorated by the ubiquity of high quality music in European daily life and thought that this exposure was beneficial for both performers and composers.¹³⁶

Beach believed that there was great value in the idea of nationalism in music. However, to her, this idea was not as simple as writing music with nationalistic imagery or copying folk melodies. An American style in music was something that could only be achieved by musicians who were in touch with their personal American identities. Beach was not alone in rejecting Dvořák’s assertion that American music would find its identity in African American themes. A week after Dvořák’s famous statement in the New York Herald, 21 May 1893, the Boston Herald reprinted much of the 21 May article with additional comments and rebuttals from the leading musicians of Boston. Among the dissenters were John Knowles Paine, George Whitefield Chadwick, and Beach, who responded at length. Beach believed that there were many more sources of inspiration for American composers with which she felt more Americans might identify. MacDowell, responding to Dvořák’s article at a later date, wrote that he rejected music from African-American and popular sources, but embraced Native American melodies.¹³⁷

Beach’s own first published composition was a setting of “The Rainy Day,” a poem by the popular and respected American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. As mentioned in

¹³⁶Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” Etude 33/1 (January 1914): 13.
Chapter 2, Beach had enthusiastically collected Longfellow’s autograph, and she was partial to his poetry. Yet Beach’s most frequently utilized American poet was her husband Henry Beach; she set seven of his poems between 1887 and 1910. Throughout her song-writing career the majority of the poets whose works Beach selected to set to music were Americans, many of whom were Bostonians she knew personally.

Beach also supported the growth of American music through her involvement with music clubs and women’s music organizations. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Beach sponsored children’s music clubs and was a founding member of the Composers’ Unit of the American Pen Women and of the Society of American Women Composers. She was also an active member in the National Federation of Music Clubs and the Music Teachers National Association, and an advocate for the MacDowell Colony. In a 1924 article, “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach Sets an Example,” an editor from the *Etude* reprinted an admiring letter from the members of her Hillsborough Beach Club, and encourages other musicians to follow Beach’s example, for “the instance of an extremely busy woman, standing at the top of her profession, finding time to promote the interests of a children’s club is so noteworthy that we desire to call Mrs. Beach’s example to the attention of others.”138 Music clubs and the women who managed them also played an important role in the increasing support and performance of American music. According to a survey of music club programs by Linda Whitesitt, one of the most frequently chosen topics for study among music clubs was American composers, and clubs frequently commissioned and performed music by American composers, including a number of women.139

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5.2 American Music Addressed in Beach’s Articles

Because of Beach’s wholly American music education and her renown as a performer and composer, she spoke from a place of authority on the subject of American music. In interviews and articles throughout her career she dispensed advice to students and teachers concerning American music and musicians, and on music education in the United States. In Block’s article on Beach’s use of Native American musical sources, she listed the conditions that were regarded in Beach’s time as necessary for an impulse of musical nationalism to develop within the United States: 1) “a sense of national identity,” 2) “the availability of a usable musical past,” and 3) “composers themselves had to be convinced that the creation of a national – as distinct from a European – style was a desirable end.”¹⁴⁰ In her 1915 article “The Outlook of the Young American Composer,” Beach discussed the emerging nationalism and the nature of American composition. Possibly sensing a separation from European musical models, she observed that the trend developing in American music was not a distinct “American school” but a commitment to individual development, saying, “I might compare it with the spirit of American independence; each man is a law unto himself to a large extent.”¹⁴¹ Echoing a Transcendentalist perspective, Beach asserted that an American style did not have a particular sound and did not come from borrowing folk-melodies, but was instead a method or philosophy of self-reliance and independent, personal development. Free from boundaries, the American composer would be able to draw inspiration and knowledge from a variety of musical resources, and Beach encouraged young American composers to develop their skills “on as broad lines as possible.”¹⁴²

¹⁴¹Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 13.
¹⁴²Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 13.
In “The Outlook for the Young American Composer” Beach also described the roots of American musical style as found in a number of Boston composers. For readers who still doubted the quality of musical education in America, Beach pointed out that some of America’s most respected composers “have been products of the Harvard University School of Music, such as Chadwick, Converse, and Foote.” Although these musicians and their students traveled to Europe to finish their music studies, their personal American style eventually began to appear. She also offered Edward MacDowell as an example of native American character that emerged only in his maturity. Born in the United States, MacDowell (1860-1908) traveled to Europe at fifteen years old to study in Paris, and then in Germany. His earliest compositions “show no distinctively American traits,” but once he returned to America in 1888 and was free of the influences of Europe, Beach attested that “he began to write music that showed forth characteristics of his native soil,” and so recovered his authentic personality.

Beach rarely missed an opportunity to mention the importance of educating American musicians and composers within the country. In “The Outlook for the Young American Composer” she warned aspiring composers to avoid “too close contact with any of the commanding musical personalities of Europe” to protect their American individuality until they had a firm grounding in their own musical style and personality. Even in “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” in which Beach’s concern was the importance of a technical education that addressed the needs of a student on an individual level, she pointed out that any student looking for the “the guidance of some teacher gifted with ‘common sense,’” was certain to find one in the United States. Beach felt that the importance of “home and home influences”

143Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 13.
144Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 13.
145Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 13.
was so great that she again advised students to avoid traveling to Europe to study until they had “reached the stage of near-virtuosity.” In an interview in *Musician*, Beach expressed concern that students who traveled to Europe too early risked being “ruined in the making” and losing their valuable, inherent American style.

However, Beach did not want to give the impression that students should never travel abroad. She personally found the experience to be extremely valuable, and she recommended that students follow her example and travel to Europe after they had established their musical proficiency. In a 1912 interview with Arthur Wilson, Beach declared that only when students were secure in their technical faculties would they fully appreciate the guidance of a European teacher or the “wealth of tradition surrounding the musical shrines of Europe.” After returning from her first European trip, she encouraged “all American composers to go abroad and work for a time at least, in order to come into immediate contact with the wonderful musical life and atmosphere of Europe . . . at the same time,” she cautioned, “I would advise him not to remain too long.”

Beach believed that there was a positive shift in the public opinion of the quality of American teachers and schools. Beach’s personal belief in the quality of American compositions, composers, and teachers was the motivation behind her mission to call the attention of the public to the excellent music being produced by Americans. She rallied nationally-minded musicians and concert-goers to demand American music on concert programs:

> We must educate public opinion to the fact that we really have composers in America whose work is worth hearing, and we must make our audiences patriotic enough to insist

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147Beach, “Common Sense in Pianoforte Touch and Technic,” 701.
150Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 13.
151Wilson, “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” 9-10.
on having a fair share of American music on the programs to which they listen . . . This is then the fundamental requirement, the education of our concert-going public to the fact that the work of American composers is really worthy of consideration.\textsuperscript{152}

Practicing her own advice, in her 1918 interview conducted by Nebraska music educator Hazel Gertrude Kinscella (1893-1960), Beach said that she would “always aim to include some American composition on each public recital program.”\textsuperscript{153} That “American composition” was often one of her own, once she had built a substantial repertoire for the piano. Beach was also responsible for many of the premieres and performances of her own works through her recital and charity concert appearances.\textsuperscript{154}

Beach also shared her opinion on possible American sources of inspiration for musicians and composers. She recommended that composers look to American poets for inspiration, although she lamented that much of American history was not yet suitable as a source of musical inspiration because “the necessary haze of romance” had not formed around the events for audiences in 1914.\textsuperscript{155} Beach also rejected the suggestion that Americans find their musical sources in African American or Native American music. In the case of opera, she argued that Native American music was not suitable because presenting it to “any except an American audience . . . would be impossible.” Instead, she suggested that composers look to the “old New York legends of Rip Van Winkle and Ichabod Crane” and their Anglo-American themes for more

\textsuperscript{152}Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 14.
\textsuperscript{153}Hazel Gerturde Kinscella, “Play No Piece in Public When First Learned,” \textit{Musical America} 28/9 (September 1918): 9.
\textsuperscript{155}Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 13.
familiar and profitable plots. This did not, however, stop Beach from borrowing music and styles from other nations, including Zuni and Eskimo melodies.

Beach also found inspiration in the natural beauty of the United States. Natural imagery abounds throughout Beach’s music, and she was especially fond of the MacDowell Colony because it brought her close to nature. She began spending time there in 1921, and it became a part of her regular travel routine. She spoke on behalf of the MacDowell colony at the 1931 national meeting of the Music Teachers National Association, describing Edward MacDowell’s motivation for founding the colony in the Peterborough woods where he built his own private studio: “. . . he wished to express and communicate the beauty that he knew, and he wished to establish in America those conditions and foster that spirit which would conduce to the development of an always noble and more beautiful art.”

Beach found that the silence, solitude, and natural surroundings were inspirational to the musical and spiritual forces that allowed her to create and communicate music “at its highest and noblest.”

In order to support and develop American music culture, Beach encouraged music education programs for the community and in the schools for children. As in her own experience, she advised mothers to acquire a high-quality musical education for themselves and their children, since “a child’s musical future depends in large degree upon home influences.”

Beach believed that children raised in a home full of excellent music would grow up to be morally sound, as well as technically and emotionally prepared to enjoy and produce music for

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156Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 14. Seeming to contradict her very advice, however, Beach wrote an unpublished chamber opera in 1932, *Cabildo*, op. 149, which used Creole folk tunes for local color. The libretto, written by an American playwright and colleague from the MacDowell Colony, was a fictionalized historical romance set in New Orleans.
159Beach, “Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of a Vision,” 46.
the rest of their lives. She supported amateur music-making throughout the country, pointing out the opportunity for “great work for the musical amateur to do in the organization and maintenance of women’s clubs.”

These music clubs, organized by and made up of conscientious and cultivated amateurs would be the most powerful force for developing an educated American musical public. Indeed, Beach credits women’s music clubs with spearheading the effort to study promote American music. Beach also urged musically gifted young people to take charge of music education in their communities instead of seeking fame and fortune:

I wish more of our young people might be content to act as musical evangelists-pioneers. There are towns throughout the west, rapidly growing into small cities, where there is need for someone to encourage larger and more serious interest in music. The well-equipped young man or young woman soundly versed in the theory and practice of music can be of great service to that community, and can probably earn a better living, and at the same time be building a better foundation for future years, than in some more vagrant and less concentrated effort.

Beach hoped that the combined forces of enthusiastic amateurs and dedicated educators would promote the spread of American music through clubs, not only in the cultural centers and major cities, but in every community in the country.

Beach and others supported the idea that excellent American music should be made available to students. In an 1896 article for *Music*, “Musical Creative Work Among Women,” Mrs. Crosby Adams noted the positive impact of music education on children, and observed that many educators of young children, mostly women, were also realizing the importance of “presenting truthful interpretations, beautiful tone, and carefully selected material to the plastic minds committed to their care.” Adams also praised the efforts of composers who attempted to

161 Wilson, “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” 10.
162 Beach, “The Outlook for the Young American Composer,” 14.
163 Wilson, “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” 10.
create fine music that appealed to children. Schmidt and many other publishers of Beach’s time issued collections of children’s music and other educational materials, and Beach contributed pedagogical music to publishers’ catalogs throughout her life. Beach consistently reiterated her views that outstanding music and musicians were being produced in America, and Beach’s music represents both a contribution to that literature an inspiration to future generations of American composers.

5.3 Americanism in Beach’s Works for Young Musicians

Amy Beach’s musical compositions for children demonstrate her commitment to the importance and value of American music and music teachers through both their musical characteristics and educational purpose. Beach introduces the march and other popular piano pieces to a European-style dance suite or cast of commedia dell’arte characters, positioning these genres at the level of other established art music styles. In each of the two “Children’s” suites, *Children’s Carnival*, op. 25, and *Children’s Album*, op. 36, Beach includes a march movement, a prevalent style that would have been well-known to American children. The march-like “Promenade” is the introduction to *Children’s Carnival*, while a march is the penultimate piece in *Children’s Album*, followed by a “Polka.”

As previously mentioned, *Eskimos*, op. 64, uses melodies selected by Beach from Boas’s monograph *The Central Eskimo*. In her 1915 interview “The Outlook for the Young AmericanComposer,” several years after the composition of *Eskimos*, Beach expressed skepticism about the notion that Native American melodies could appeal to a wide audience, whether inside the United States or internationally. In 1918, however, Beach stated in her interview with Kinscella for *Musical America* that her next recital included “‘real American’ music – some Zuni...”

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melodies,” implying that she had begun to widen her criteria for what could be considered “American” music. Although Beach did borrow these “‘real American’” melodies from Native American musics, she intentionally treated the material in her own way. The titles, settings, and interpretations of the pieces are entirely her own, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Nature and natural inspiration were a vital source of inspiration for Beach, and she attributed her creative productivity to the solitude she found in the wooded landscape of the MacDowell Colony on more than one occasion. Natural imagery is abundant in Beach’s oeuvre, and appears frequently in her piano music for children. In particular, the suite From Grandmother’s Garden, op. 97, evokes nature by characterizing the folkloric and literary attributes of each of the flowers named in the movements, as mentioned in Chapter 4. Each of the flowers has strong symbolic meanings, and they were also widely cultivated as garden flowers or found growing in the wild, and would have grown in a climate similar to Beach’s primary environ: the northeast United States. In By the Still Waters, op. 114, Beach combined Biblical and natural imagery in an impressionistic secular piano piece that captured the peace and spirituality that Transcendentalists found in nature.

Beach’s educational music was widely circulated due to the appeal of the American musical characterizations and the soundness of their pedagogical content. Speaking to Una L. Allen of The Musician in July 1930, Beach mentioned that her educational piano works, especially Children’s Album and Children’s Carnival seemed to be popular among students and teachers alike. The suite From Six to Twelve, op. 119, is dedicated especially to the youth music club she founded in Hillsborough, New Hampshire, which bears her name. Like many other composers Beach wrote educational music to fulfill demands from her publishers or music

clubs for more American music of a pedagogical nature, but she also endeavored to create music that would both entertain and train young musicians.

Beach believed that the method of the American composer was one of independent development, and her own personal style represents American music and composers in this sense. In her interview with Allen discussing her pedagogical piano pieces, Beach explains, “‘I’ve put a good deal of myself into them, for of course the piano is my instrument.’” By adapting European musical and formal models to American sounds and themes that would appeal to young people in her own country, Beach’s pedagogical pieces for piano constituted an inspiring example for young American pianist-composers.

Beach’s educational pieces for children also serve to further her goal of the wide dissemination of art music for both education and entertainment. Beach believed that it was part of her duty as a composer to provide American art music to American students. During Beach’s time people throughout the United States, and particularly the members of the educated, upper-class Bostonian circles in which Beach and her husband moved, were concerned with the moral health of the public at large. Efforts to edify the public could be seen in the proliferation of music clubs and the sponsorship of art music that produced organizations like the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Through her composition of children’s music, speaking engagements at educational and musical organizations, and sponsorship of music clubs, Beach directly supported and espoused the uplifting power of music as a force for good among the young people of the United States.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

Amy Beach is best remembered for her many compositions in both large and small forms, and for her skills in piano performance as a child prodigy and later as a respected concert pianist, but she was also an educator, and a passionate one. Her musical compositions, articles, and active participation in professional and amateur music clubs all served to foster the growth and legitimacy of an American education for American musicians in her time.

As an auto-didact, most of what Beach knew about how to learn and teach music came from her self-designed curriculum. By connecting her biography and education to both her didactic music and her writings addressed to students and teachers of music, this thesis has identified a set of related central principles that represent Amy Beach’s musical values: technical facility, a balance of emotion and intellect in performance and composition, and the importance of American compositions, composers, and teachers. These principles come from assertions Beach made herself in the articles she wrote and interviews she gave between 1893 and 1944. These statements appeared primarily in music magazines aimed at an amateur public, such as *Etude*, and so Beach’s words were not exclusive advice to the professional pianist. In fact, she often oriented her comments and instructions directly to young musicians generally, and especially aspiring composers.

Additionally, a second aim of this thesis has been to investigate the mutually reinforcing connections between Amy Beach’s piano teaching pieces and the musical values established by her published articles on technique, performance, the compositional process, and music
education. Beach practiced her own advice to make high-quality American music available across the country, and she contributed many works to the pedagogical catalogs of her publishers. In addition to the carefully developed technical and expressive qualities that students and teachers could uncover in Beach’s educational piano works, her example of doing small things well provided an active model of her own advice to young composers.

6.2 Overview of Beach’s Contributions to Music Education in America

Amy Beach’s personal musical experiences and auto-didactic education are the source of her educational techniques and advice. With her marriage, the trajectory of Beach’s career changed due to her promise to stop performing professionally and focus on a self-taught course in composition. Beach did not recommend that students study music or composition entirely on their own, for even she had received training from others in piano and compositional fundamentals to supplement her natural musical talent. Beach combined everything she had learned from her teachers and with her auto-didactic experience and proffered a scaled-down, less intense version of her curriculum, so that average music students could incorporate into their daily routine some of the auto-didactic techniques that Beach found to be most beneficial.

Solid technical foundations, for both the pianist and the composer, are an absolute and most basic requirement for making and interpreting music in Beach’s mind. While students would be able to achieve some of this technique through self-study, every student would benefit from the guidance of a qualified teacher to oversee the development of their musical skills. Beach believed that, “without adequate technic [sic], it is absolutely impossible to express in all its fullness the meaning of any composer or composition.”169 She intended this advice for both

169Beach, “Common Sense,” 701.
performers and composers. Student pianists required diligent practice of octaves, scales, and other exercises, while student composers needed such fine control over the rudiments of theory that they became like a second language. Technique should be so effortless as to be second nature, rendered completely transparent during the actual performance or composition of the work to allow pure expression to come to the foreground. With the mastery and transparency of technical equipment, musicians would be able to approach Beach’s next principle in the balance of emotion and intellect in music.

Beach’s first musical concern was the perfection of musical basics, yet these were only the tools of expression. Musicians must seek a balance between emotion, or expression, and intellect, or technique. Beach explained that “technical perfection may indeed be there, but so completely subordinated to the emotional character of the song that we lose all consciousness of its existence,” for, once technique had been mastered, both the composer and the performer must have an emotional message to transmit in order for the full effect of any composition to be realized. Just as technique could be practiced and refined, so Beach believed that emotional resources of musicians could be developed. Travel abroad, a comprehensive general education, awareness of the intentions of composers, and life experiences all contributed to the expressive and imaginative material available to composers and performers.

Beach asserted that American music and musicians were of high quality, and she supported the performance and creation of music that reflected an American identity. As an American musician trained entirely in the United States, Beach had an education that was unconventional for a professional composer in her time. At the turn of the twentieth century most serious students of composition still were strongly expected to travel to European universities to

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170 Beach, “Common Sense,” 702.
“complete” their studies. Beach felt strongly that the material and personnel that American music students needed to develop their technical facility and their balance of emotion and intellect could be provided by the qualified composers and teachers of the United States. Furthermore, in the interest of the preservation and development of the national musical identity, it was especially important that this education should come from American music and music teachers. Beach believed that an American identity in music was tied to the pursuit of individual style, and that abundant musical material could be found both in the history of the country and within the individual identity of the composer as an American. Beach put her beliefs into practice by drawing inspiration from a broad selection of themes found in nature, the folk and native identities that she categorized as American, and the adaptation of the European models she had studied closely.

6.3 Perspectives and Conclusions

Beach’s educational philosophy, for both performance and composition, is based on mastery of the necessary technical skills, a depth of emotion and affective knowledge, and the ability of American teachers and compositions to provide both of these essential parts of music to American students. She supported her statements with advice drawn from her own auto-didactic experience, and put it into action through her educational musical compositions.

Establishing Amy Beach’s musical philosophy provided a new framework for this study to investigate a small part of her body of work for the piano. These pedagogical pieces combined aspects of each of Beach’s values within each work. The challenging technical features help students develop proficiency in core fundamentals and a variety of styles. The evocative titles and musical idioms create opportunities to develop a musical narrative and to require that students match the execution of the music to that expressive idea, beyond the merely correct
performance of style. Beach’s piano works also showcase the quality and viability of American music, and the composer herself typifies the unlimited possibilities of self-reliant, American-trained musicians.

Previous studies of Beach’s works and writings have focused primarily on her well-deserved fame as an internationally renowned composer or virtuoso piano player, but she was also an active educator despite never having a studio or teaching at a university. She directly supported musical activities in the community, and advocated that other amateurs and professionals reach out in the same way. Beach was proud of the emerging American identity in music, and she wrote about it frequently. Her own sense of what is American seems to have broadened as time went on: in her compositions she began to experiment with more folk and native tunes, but she took ownership of them and set them in a way that she thought would transform them into high-quality art music.

6.4 Extension and Future Projects

The conclusions of this thesis might help to reveal the musical principles present in Amy Beach’s works other than pedagogical pieces for the piano. Concerning pedagogical works, Beach may have been influenced in her pedagogical compositions and writings by what she knew of Schumann’s works. Beach’s Children’s Carnival has similar characters to Schumann’s Carnival, and her Children’s Album could have been inspired by his Album for the Young. Beach also possessed among her personal papers a list of Schumann’s “Rules for Young Musicians,” the format and content of which may have been her model for the “Ten Commandments for Young Composers.”

Another promising investigation may be the exploration of the development of Beach’s criteria for music to be part of (an) American identity, both in her writings and compositions. In
particular, in a 1914 interview, Beach gave specific examples of plots and subjects that she thought would be appropriate and profitable for American opera, defining a relatively narrow selection of Anglo-American folk tales and subjects. In 1932, however, she composed her only opera, *Cabildo*, op. 149, a fictionalized romance based on the history and legend of a Creole pirate, and set in the titular building in New Orleans. The music for this chamber opera combined selections from Beach's art song repertoire, original material composed for the opera, and Creole folk tunes to lend a local color to the work. Whether the impetus for this opera and its non-Anglo-American subject was a response to changing public tastes, or an expanding view of her own criteria for American music, raises interesting implications about how Beach and her music responded to the complex and fluid issue of American identity in music.
Writings of Amy Beach (chronological)


______. “America’s Musical Assertion of Herself has Come to Stay.” Musical America 28 (October 19, 1918): 5.


Sheet Music

Beach, Mrs. H. H. A. *Eskimos*, op. 64. Boston: Arthur P. Schmidt, 1907.

_____ *Farewell, Summer* and *Dancing Leaves*, op. 102. Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1924.

_____ *By the Still Waters*, op. 114. St. Louis, MO: Art Publication Society, 1925.

_____ *From Six to Twelve*, op. 119. Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1927.


Recordings


_____ *Amy Beach: Piano Music Vol. 2; Turn of the Century*. Guild GMCD7329.

_____ *Amy Beach: Piano Music Vol. 3; The Mature Years*. Guild GMCD7351.

_____ *Amy Beach: Piano Music Vol. 4; The Late Works*. Guild GMCD 7387.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nicole Marie Robinson (b. 1989) was born in Atlanta, Georgia, and raised in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Robinson graduated *magna cum laude* from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Science in Education degree, certified to teach music in primary and secondary schools in Pennsylvania. She is currently pursuing a Master of Music degree in Historical Musicology at the Florida State University.