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 Unsung Songs: Self-Borrowing in Amy Beach’s Instrumental Music

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Unsung Songs
Self-Borrowing in Amy Beach’s Instrumental Music

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by
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ABSTRACT

Amy Beach employed many sources for her musical themes, including folk music, bird songs, and music by herself and even other composers. She based several of her instrumental compositions on her own art songs. These compositions fall into three categories. The first contains keyboard transcriptions or paraphrases of an entire song. The second consists of short works for small ensembles that include piano in their instrumentation and include substantial quotation and reworking of the opening thematic material from the song. The third comprises large multi-movement works for orchestra in which at least one theme is derived from the song and extensively developed.

In all these works, Beach takes melody and accompaniment from the songs and develops them in the instrumental work. While some scholars have extrapolated programs or other extramusical meaning in the instrumental work through the application of the underlying song’s text, it does not appear that Beach intended such a close relation. Instead, this study demonstrates that Beach had an underlying vocal conception of all musical composition, which places her in a tradition wherein vocal and instrumental composition are indelibly wedded.
Musical examples by Amy Beach reproduced with permission The MacDowell Colony (c. 2008 The MacDowell Colony, Inc.)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Musical Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1. Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2. Transcriptions of an Entire Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballad for Piano, Op. 6 and “O My Luve is Like a Red, Red, Rose” Op. 12, No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Far Awa’!,” Song and Transcription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3. Small Works Thematically Derived from a Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4. Extended Compositions with Multiple Themes Derived from a Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Gaelic” Symphony in E minor, Op. 32: I. Allegro con fuoco and “Dark is the Night,” Op. 11, No. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano Concerto in C-sharp minor, Op. 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5. Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1. Song Texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2. Table of Beach’s Borrowing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

1.1a  Amy Beach, “Dreaming,” Op. 15, No. 3, mm. 1–5
1.1b  Franz Schubert, Impromptu, Op. 90, No. 3, mm. 1–4
1.2a  Beach, “Fireflies,” Op. 15, No. 4, mm. 1–3
1.2b  Frédéric Chopin, Étude, Op. 25, No. 6, mm. 1–4
2.1a  Franz Schubert, “Auf dem Wasser zu singen,” mm. 9–12
2.1b  Franz Liszt, transcription of “Auf dem Wasser zu singen,” mm. 9–12
2.1c  Liszt, transcription of “Auf dem Wasser zu singen,” mm. 35–38
2.1d  Liszt, transcription of “Auf dem Wasser zu singen,” mm. 61–64
2.2a  Richard Strauss, “Ständchen,” Op. 17, No. 2 mm. 1–8
2.2b  Beach, transcription of “Ständchen,” mm. 1–10
2.2c  Beach, transcription of “Ständchen,” mm. 23–30
2.3a  Strauss, “Ständchen,” mm. 45–60
2.3b  Beach, transcription of “Ständchen,” mm. 50–59
2.4a  Liszt, Concert Paraphrase of Rigoletto, m. 51
2.4b  Beach, transcription of “Ständchen,” mm. 42–45
2.5a  Beach, “My Luve Is Like a Red, Red Rose,” Op. 12, No. 3, mm. 1–12
2.5b  Beach, Ballad for Piano, Op. 6, mm. 5–12
2.6a  Beach, “My Luve Is Like,” mm. 21–29
2.6b  Beach, Ballad for Piano, mm. 21–28
2.7   Beach, Ballad for Piano, mm. 45–51
2.8a  Beach “My Luve Is Like,” mm. 39–51
2.8b  Beach, Ballad for Piano, mm. 90–103
2.9a Beach, “My Luve Is Like,” mm. 74–81  
2.9b Beach, *Ballad for Piano*, mm. 147–54  
2.10a Beach, “Far Awa’!” Op. 43, No. 4, mm. 5–12  
2.10b Beach, “Far Awa’!,” mm. 23–30  
2.11a Beach, piano transcription of “Far Awa’!,” mm. 5–12  
2.11b Beach, piano transcription of “Far Awa’!,” mm. 23–30  
2.12a Beach, “Far Awa’!,” mm. 35–39  
2.12b Beach, piano transcription of “Far Awa’!,” mm. 35–43  
2.13 Beach, organ transcription of “Far Awa’!,” mm. 1–12  
3.1a Johannes Brahms, “Regenlied,” Op. 59, No. 3, mm. 1–9  
3.1b Brahms, “Nachklang,” Op. 59, No. 4, mm. 1–7  
3.1c Brahms, Sonata for Piano and Violin No. 1 in G Major, Op. 78:  
III. *Allegro molto moderato*, mm. 1–5  
3.2a Brahms, “Regenlied,” mm. 44–51  
3.2b Brahms, Violin Sonata, Op. 78, Mvt. III. mm. 70–75  
3.3a Beach, “Sweetheart, Sigh No More,” Op. 14, No. 3, mm. 1–6  
3.3b Beach, “Sweetheart, Sigh No More,” mm. 15–18  
3.3c Beach, “Sweetheart, Sigh No More,” mm. 29–32  
3.4a Beach, “Sweetheart, Sigh No More,” mm. 3–4, voice  
3.4b Beach, *Romance*, Op. 23, mm. 1–12  
3.5 Beach, *Romance*, mm. 29–35  
3.6 Beach, *Romance*, mm. 62–67  
3.7 Beach, *Romance*, mm. 97–102  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Work/Part</th>
<th>mm.</th>
<th>Instrument(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.8b</td>
<td>Beach, “Valse Amoureuse,” Op. 65, No. 3</td>
<td>1–16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9a</td>
<td>Beach, “Valse Amoureuse,”</td>
<td>73–80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9b</td>
<td>Beach, “Valse Amoureuse,”</td>
<td>151–56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Beach, “Valse Amoureuse,”</td>
<td>41–48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11a</td>
<td>Beach, “Le Secret,”</td>
<td>55–62, piano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11b</td>
<td>Beach, “Valse Amoureuse,”</td>
<td>115–36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Beach, “Allein!,” Op. 35, No. 2</td>
<td>1–10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Beach, Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violoncello, Op. 150, II. <em>Lento Espressivo</em></td>
<td>11–18, violin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>Beach, Trio, Op. 150: <em>Lento espressivo</em></td>
<td>1–5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1a</td>
<td>Beach, “Dark Is the Night,” Op. 11, No. 1</td>
<td>1–7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1b</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. <em>Allegro con fuoco</em></td>
<td>1–9, strings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I.</td>
<td>107–120, strings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I.</td>
<td>167–74, strings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I.</td>
<td>215–19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I.</td>
<td>319–33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I.</td>
<td>507–515, strings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7a</td>
<td>Beach, “Dark Is the Night,”</td>
<td>43–46, voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7b</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I.</td>
<td>17–21, trumpet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7c</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I.</td>
<td>21–25, horn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I.</td>
<td>38–44, horn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9a</td>
<td>Beach, “Dark Is the Night,”</td>
<td>13–25, voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9b</td>
<td>Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I.</td>
<td>59–71, violins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.10  Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 540–43, strings
4.11a  Beach, “Dark Is the Night,” mm. 8–11, voice
4.11b  Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 26–30 winds
4.12  Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 183–90, trumpet
4.13  Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 191–93, violin 1
4.14a  Beach, “Dark Is the Night,” mm. 28–33, voice
4.14b  Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 114–19, clarinet
4.15a  Beach, “Dark Is the Night,” mm. 34–39, voice
4.15b  Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 122–29, clarinet
4.16a  Beach, “Jeune fille et jeune fleur,” Op. 1, No. 3, mm. 1–4
4.16b  Beach, Piano Concerto, Op. 45, I. Allegro moderato, mm. 1–5
4.17a  Beach, “Jeune fille et jeune fleur,” mm. 38–43
4.17b  Beach, Piano Concerto, I. mm. 131–37
4.18  Beach, Piano Concerto, I. mm. 341–51
4.19  Beach, Piano Concerto, I. mm. 268–74, piano
4.20a  Beach, “Empress of Night,” Op. 2, No. 3, mm. 1–11
4.20b  Beach, Piano Concerto, II. Scherzo (Perpetuum mobile), mm. 9–29
4.21a  Beach, “Empress of Night,” mm. 23–24
4.21b  Beach, Piano Concerto, II. mm. 101–104
4.22  Beach, Piano Concerto II. mm. 117–22, clarinet
4.23  Beach, Piano Concerto II. mm. 188–201
4.25a  Beach, “Twilight,” mm. 1–11
4.25b  Beach, Piano Concerto III. *Largo*, mm. 1–30

4.26  Beach, Piano Concerto IV. *Allegro con scioltezza*, mm. 1–3

4.27  Beach, Piano Concerto IV. mm. 46–49

4.28a  Beach, “Twilight,” mm. 12–19, voice

4.28b  Beach, Piano Concerto IV. mm. 133–44
LIST OF TABLES

1  “Empress of Night” in Piano Concerto, II. Scherzo
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There is enjoyment in every contact with beautiful song—in writing, singing, playing, or even thinking of it—and it brings to the listener a sense of discovery of a world in which serenity and contentment still reign.

Amy Beach, “Enjoyment of Song”

Amy Beach’s enjoyment of song manifested itself not only in her composition of over a hundred songs but in nearly every work she composed. As the cultured art song gained status through the works of composers like Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Fauré, and Hahn, along with the rise of grand opera, characteristics of vocal writing permeated instrumental compositions. Composer-performers wrote and improvised transcriptions and variations of popular arias and songs. Vocal stylizations of lyrical melody with accompaniment resulted in works like Chopin’s Nocturnes and Mendelssohn’s Lieder ohne Wörte. Pictorial representation in accompaniments led to character pieces, such as Schumann’s Nachtstücke and Waldstücke, and in turn to program music like that of Berlioz and Liszt. Finally, composers would incorporate material from their own and other composers’ songs into their instrumental works, sometimes quoting small portions to allude to the previous work in some way and sometimes deriving entirely new compositions from substantial sections. This study examines those compositions by Amy Beach that show one facet of her underlying vocal conception of instrumental composition: the instrumental works based largely upon musical material drawn from her own art songs. It examines which elements she borrowed from the songs and how she incorporated and developed them. It places the works in question within the context of Beach’s life. Finally, it considers extramusical and personal connotations placed upon the instrumental work by the presence of an implicit text and whether Beach intended such connections to be made.
Amy Beach (1867–1944) received a very limited musical education. Although she displayed an astonishing precociousness at an early age, her parents refused to give her the music lessons she so strongly desired. Among the stories of Beach’s early musical talent is one that her mother, Clara Cheney, recounted: before age two Beach could improvise “a perfectly correct alto to any soprano” her mother sang to coax her to sleep.¹ By age one, Beach knew forty melodies and always hummed them (she could not yet speak) in the original key.² Beach’s mother was a steadfast Congregationalist in a conservative Victorian society and believed staunchly in the need to discipline children. According to an essayist of the time, Gerald Stanley Lee, the best solution to a child’s disciplinary problems is to place their most desired object in the “top bureau-drawer,” as it were. For Beach, this was the piano.³ This was also congruent with the beliefs of Horace Bushnell whose book Christian Nurture probably influenced Clara Cheney and who believed that an infant’s “blind will” must be curbed and the infant taught “to learn the self-submission of allegiance, obedience, duty to God.”⁴ While music was pervasive in Beach’s childhood home, her parents did not allow her to touch the keyboard.⁵

Beach’s first venture at the piano came at age four when her aunt visited and put her at the piano, at which time she played by ear a Strauss waltz that she had heard her mother play. Still, her parents allowed Beach only limited time at the piano and even denied it completely as


² Unless otherwise noted, all biographical information is taken from Block, Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian.


⁴ Block, Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian, 6.

⁵ Clara Cheney was a singer and pianist, while Beach’s grandmother who lived with the family was also a singer. Ibid., 4.
punishment. Beach’s mother began giving her piano lessons at age six, while still restricting her time at the piano, as well as home-schooling her. At age eight Beach auditioned for the best German-trained musicians in Boston, who asserted that the top German conservatories would immediately accept her. Instead, in the words of her mother, her parents “wisely decided to keep her at home for her general education, with such musical instruction as could be combined with it.”

She had only two years of formal schooling at the Whittemore prep school from 1879–1881—her mother imparted the remainder of her “general education.” Beach studied piano with Ernst Perabo, a pianist and teacher at the New England Conservatory, from 1877 to 1882, and then with Carl Baermann, a former pupil of Franz Liszt, from 1882 to 1885. Beach also had one year of theory from Junius Hill from 1881 to 1882. That one year of theory, however, was the extent of Beach’s formal training in musical composition.

Beach’s parents followed the advice of Wilhelm Gericke, the new Viennese conductor of the Boston Symphony, that Beach “teach herself composition by studying the great masters.” Beach embarked on an impressive journey of self-instruction, committing entire symphonies to memory, and reading and memorizing treatises on theory and composition. In 1915, at the height of her career, Beach published “Music’s Ten Commandments as Given for Young Composers,” in which she charges students to use “as illustration for the form upon which you are now engaged, a master’s work in the same form.” From her earliest compositions, Beach followed her own advice.

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6 Ibid., 22. Block explains in a footnote that the sources for this information do not identify the musicians in question.

7 Ibid., 40.

Two character pieces from Beach’s *Sketches*, Op. 15, clearly reveal her models. The third of the set, “Dreaming,” is remarkably similar to Franz Schubert’s *Impromptu*, Op. 90, No. 3. Both works are in G-flat Major and contain an underlying, undulating accompaniment of triplets with a sustained melody floating over it.\(^9\) [See Example 1.1a–b.] The last piece in the set, “Fireflies,” is modeled after Frédéric Chopin’s Etude, Op. 25, No. 6. Like Chopin’s work, “Fireflies” is a study in parallel thirds. While in different keys and meters,\(^10\) the two works share the dominating figuration of trills and scales in thirds. [See Example 1.2a–b.]


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\(^9\) These resemblances are pointed out by Adrienne Fried Block; however, they have also been noted by myself and many personal acquaintances after hearing Beach’s pieces. Adrienne Fried Block, preface to *Amy Beach: Piano Music* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2001), iv.

\(^10\) “Fireflies” is in A minor and 6/8, while Chopin’s work is in B minor and common time.


Example 1.2b. Frédéric Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 6, mm. 1–4.
Beach continued to use models throughout her compositional career. Her Quintet for Piano and Strings, Op. 67, composed at the height of her career, betrays a debt to Brahms’s Piano Quintet, Op. 34, which she had performed in 1900 with the Kneisel Quartet. Block notes that the second theme from Brahms’s fourth movement serves as the basis for three of Beach’s themes.¹¹ In her D.M.A. thesis, “The Quintet for Piano and Strings, Op. 67 by Amy Beach: An Historical and Analytical Investigation,” Tammie Leigh Walker expands the observations made by Block, citing ten other connections including formal processes and motivic similarities.¹² Walker writes, “Since she began working on her Quintet eight years after Brahms’s death, Beach’s quotations can be seen as an homage, not as compositional modeling.”¹³ However, because such connections include form and because Beach frequently modeled compositions after other works and because she explicitly recommends the use of a specific model for a composition in a new form (this is Beach’s first and only piano quintet), I believe it is an instance of compositional modeling, as well as an homage to an influential composer.

J. Peter Burkholder in his study of Charles Ives’s music defines “modeling” as “modeling a work or section on an existing piece, assuming its structure, incorporating part of its melodic material, imitating its form or procedures, or using it as a model in some other way.”¹⁴ In her quintet, Beach uses Brahms’s work both for its structure and procedures, as well as quoting melodic material. The quintet is an instance of Beach using a pre-existing work both as a model

¹¹ Block, Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian, 127.

¹² The first movement of Beach’s quintet and the fourth of Brahms’s use slow introductions that are restated near the end of the movement. Both of these movements also end with a presto section. Tammy Lee Walker, “The Quintet for Piano and Strings, Op. 67 by Amy Beach: An Historical and Analytical Investigation” (D.M.A. thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001), 56.

¹³ Ibid., 64.

and as a source of material to be quoted or “borrowed” from in her own work. Throughout her career, Beach frequently borrowed material that became an integral part of a new piece.

The borrowed material in Beach’s oeuvre can be sorted into four categories, folk songs, other composers’ music, bird songs, and original material. The first category includes several varieties of folk music. In 1893 Antonín Dvorák challenged American composers to create an “American” sound by deriving a “truly national music” from “Negro melodies or Indian chants.”¹⁵ Beach responded to Dvorák’s charge:

Negro melodies…are not fully typical of our country. The African population of the United States is far too small for its songs to be considered “American.” It represents only one factor in the composition of our nation. Moreover, it is not native American. Were we to consult the native folk-songs of the continent, it would have to be those of the Indians or the Esquimaux, several of whose curious songs (?) are given in the publications of the Smithsonian Institute. The Africans are no more native than the Italians, Swedes or Russians…. We of the North should be far more likely to be influenced by old English, Scotch or Irish songs, inherited with our literature from our ancestors, than by the songs of a portion of our people who were kept for so long in bondage, and whose musical utterances were deeply rooted in the heart-breaking griefs attendant upon their condition.¹⁶

Following her own advice, Beach based some of her music on Irish melodies, such as in the “Gaelic” Symphony in E Minor, Op. 32, and the Suite for Two Pianos Founded upon Old Irish Melodies, Op. 104. Scottish characteristics appear in the piano piece “Scottish Legend,” Op. 54, No. 1 and songs on texts by Robert Burns, Op. 12 and Op. 4 as well as “Shena Van,” Op. 56, No. 4. Beach also acknowledged the power of Native American melodies, which she claimed were truly native to America. Her set of character pieces for children Eskimos, Op. 64


and *Quartet for Strings in One Movement*, Op. 89 are based on Innuit themes.\(^\text{17}\) Beach’s frequent employment of such melodies primarily in instrumental compositions is one facet of her fundamental vocal conception of musical composition.

The second category of borrowed material includes music of art composers from which Beach appropriated melodic, harmonic, or motivic material. Beach composed most of the works that include this type of borrowing early in her life. One of her earliest songs is “The Rainy Day” on a poem by Longfellow, which Beach composed after meeting the poet in 1880. The melody of the song is borrowed from the fourth movement of Beethoven’s “Pathétique” Sonata, Op. 13.\(^\text{18}\) As discussed above, Beach modeled her Piano Quintet on Brahms’s Piano Quintet and adapted several of his themes.

The third category of pre-existent borrowed music consists of bird songs. Beach first began collecting such songs in 1878 while visiting her aunt in San Francisco. An English professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Edward Rowland Sill, solicited Beach’s help in “steal[ing] from the birds” upon learning of her absolute pitch. Beach continued to collect bird songs, quoting them in compositions, always the correct pitches although sometimes displaced by an octave. The most famous examples of bird songs in her works are the two pieces for piano “The Hermit Thrush at Morn” and “The Hermit Thrush at Eve.”\(^\text{19}\)

\(^\text{17}\) For more on Beach’s use of folk material, see Adrienne Fried Block, “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” *American Music* 8 (1990): 141–66 and Beverly Crawford, “Folk Elements in the Music of Amy Beach” (Master’s thesis, Florida State University, 1993).


\(^\text{19}\) Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 26. In a whimsical emulation of Domenico Scarlatti, Beach turned to feline inspiration for the thematic material of the *Fantasia Fugata*, Op. 87 for piano. At the bottom of the published score there is this note: “For this [notation of opening motive] the composer is indebted to ‘Hamlet,’ a large black Angora who had been placed on the keyboard.”
The fourth category consists of Beach’s own music that she then reused for another piece. In a few cases, she borrowed from instrumental works, such as in the second movement of the Piano Trio, Op. 150 in which she reorchestrated the piano piece “The Returning Hunter,” Op. 64, No. 2. In her Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, Op. 80, composed in 1916 for the San Francisco Chamber Music Society, Beach used her women’s part song “An Indian Lullaby,” Op. 57, No. 3 for her theme. Most of her borrowed music in this category, however, originated in her art songs.

The art song genre was an important outlet for Beach who composed approximately 120 such works, many of which are still programmed in recitals. “I really consider that I have given myself a special treat when I have written a song,” she once remarked. She composed songs on English, French, and German texts by such famous poets as Shakespeare, Shelley, Chateaubriand, Goethe, Schiller, and Heine, and by friends and colleagues in Boston, as well as by her husband and even herself. When choosing a poem to set, Beach would continually recite the poem (from memory) until “the music takes a definite shape in my mind.” In her 1934 essay “Enjoyment of Song,” Beach wrote: “The music should be the poem translated into tone, with due care for every emotional detail.” The small dimensions of a song may also have fulfilled two of her “Ten Commandments,” to “begin with small things—ideas that can be

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20 “The Returning Hunter” is itself derived from an Inuit melody; hence, the Trio represents two types of Beach’s borrowing.

21 Ibid., 208.

22 Hazel Gertrude Kinsecca, “‘Play No Piece in Public When First Learned,’ Says Mrs. Beach,” Musical America 28 (7 September 1918): 9, quoted in ibid., 146.


expressed in small form” and to “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.”²⁵

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century society accepted that women compose in the “small gem” of art song. Although some progress had been made in the rights of women, in the nineteenth century a prevailing ideology separated men and women into different spheres, men working in the public arena, while women managed the private, domestic realm. In music this translated to men dominating opera and concert halls, women relegated to composing for the parlor. Judith Tick writes: “By 1900 the aesthetics of the eternal feminine in music included both form and style, as well as emotive content. Vocal music was the essence of ewige weibliche [the eternal feminine] because it ‘appeals more directly to the heart.’”²⁶ Songs held a multifaceted existence, “represent[ing] both a middlebrow genre and a legitimate art form as defined by the cultural elite: they reflected social values, popular tastes, and cultural ideals.”²⁷ Since harmony and counterpoint were “logical,” they were alien to femininity.²⁸ Within their domestic sphere, women “provided spiritual elevation and moral teaching within the home sanctuary.”²⁹ Beach adhered to the idea of the spiritual power of music throughout her life; she wrote in 1905: “Music is the first, the simplest, and the most effective of all instruments of moral instruction. The noblest attributes of so great an educational force may be…frittered away by its degradation


²⁷ Blunsom, “Gender, Genre and Professionalism,” 185.

²⁸ Tick, American Women Composers Before 1870, 227.

²⁹ L. K. Blunsom, “Gender, Genre and Professionalism: The Songs of Clara Rogers, Helen Hopekirk, Amy Beach, Margaret Lang and Mabel Daniels, 1880–1925” (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1999), 13.
to the purpose of mere entertainment.” She even qualified her discussion of sacred music in an interview published in *Etude* in 1943 that she was “using the term in its limited sense, I am merely accepting the convention of language…. To me, all music is sacred.”

Unlike most of her female contemporaries who composed mainly songs and keyboard music, Beach also composed in large genres. Her husband, Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, was a Boston surgeon and member of the upper class. When she married him, she agreed to curtail her public performances, accepting no fees for them. In addition, her husband preferred her to be a composer rather than a pianist, allowing her to publish and encouraging her to compose in large genres. Henry Beach died in 1910 leaving Beach with debt, requiring her to support herself. Her songs were very popular, both in homes and recitals, and quite lucrative. Her publisher, Arthur P. Schmidt, would take chances on publishing her larger works because her songs were so profitable.

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32 Several American women prior to Beach, including Clara Kathleen Rogers, Carrie Jacobs-Bond, and August Browne, were prominent composers of parlor songs and piano music. Helen Hopekirk (1856–1945) also composed works for piano and orchestra. The first work by a woman to be performed by a major American Orchestra was Margaret Lang’s *Dramatic Overture*, Op. 10, performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1893. For more on these American female composers, see Adrienne Fried Block, assisted by Nancy Stewart, “Women in American Music, 1800–1918,” in *Women and Music: A History*, 2nd ed., ed. Karin Pendle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 193–226.

33 While H. H. A. Beach wished Beach to devote her time to composition and allowed her to receive royalties from publications, she published her works under the name “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” which Block describes as a “shield of propriety and a public affirmation of her husband’s role in her creative life.” Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 48. Immediately after her husband died, Beach embarked upon a European concert tour, and took the name “Amy Beach.” However, upon return to the United States she discovered her reputation was attributed to “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach” and resumed that professional name. Still, her bookplates and stationery read “Amy Beach,” and in her will she endowed the “Amy Beach Fund” for the MacDowell Colony. Based on this evidence, it is disrespectful to insist on an appellation she later tried to disown. Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, x.
Nine of Beach’s art songs reappear in her instrumental works. These instrumental works fall into three categories. The first is comprised of pieces in which the entire composition is founded upon the song. The full song can be traced through the work for piano, either as a transcription or as an elaborate concert paraphrase. Beach skillfully reworked the melody and enriched the harmony, usually through added chromaticism. More substantially, however, Beach lengthened introductions and postludes, and inserted extensive cadenzas. In the concert paraphrase, Beach effectively states the song twice, first as a fairly straight-forward transcription, then as a pianistic commentary on it.

The compositions included in the second category of Beach’s self-borrowing from song share several defining characteristics. First, they are all small-scale works for only one to a few instruments, and all include the piano in their instrumentation. Second, she always borrowed the motive or theme from the beginning of the song, included introductory material, and introduced it immediately. Third, she always included the original accompaniment. And fourth, she incorporated the borrowed material throughout the work.

The third category includes compositions in extended forms for large ensembles in which one or more theme is derived from a song. Beach used portions of the melody from “Dark is the Night,” Op. 11, as the primary and secondary themes in the first movement of her “Gaelic” Symphony in E Minor. In the Piano Concerto in C-sharp Minor, Op. 45, Beach borrowed from “Jeune fille et jeune fleur,” “Empress of Night,” and “Twilight.” Her usage of “Empress of Night” in the second movement is remarkable. Beach retained the accompanimental figuration of the song in the solo piano, which plays without break through the entire perpetuum mobile

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34 Each of these instances is identified by Block in Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian; her analysis, however is not as detailed as in this study. Also, this study compares Beach’s works with her nineteenth-century predecessors who strongly influenced her musical style and places her within a historical development where vocal and instrumental music becomes increasingly wedded.
movement. She reworked the melody of the song and divided it among the orchestra, yet she placed it in a lower register, submerged beneath the piano’s scintillating passagework.

With so much emphasis placed on Beach’s penchant for modeling, the question of where she got the idea to base instrumental music on art songs is raised. Four prominent nineteenth-century composers who borrowed from their own songs are, Johannes Brahms, Gustav Mahler, Franz Schubert, and Robert Schumann. It seems likely that Beach would have been familiar with the music of all of these composers and have studied and performed some of it. Beach’s ninth “commandment” reads:

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.35

Invited by Gericke, Beach attended the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s rehearsals.36 She studied scores at its performances, memorizing them, and rewriting them from memory. She kept careful notebooks at performances, analyzing and dissecting works she heard.37 Aided by her prodigious memory, her infallible ear, and Boston’s vibrant musical life, Beach gained a substantial repertoire to draw from in her composition.

Beach’s practices are substantially different from those of Mahler’s, another inveterate musical borrower. Mahler reworked earlier settings of songs from Des Knaben Wunderhorn for his second and fourth symphonies, yet these quotations differ from Beach’s in two fundamental ways: Mahler’s symphonies are frequently not purely instrumental but include voices. Also,


unlike Beach, Mahler intended and provided a program for his works. Even when the song is reworked purely instrumentally, Mahler supplied a context for the borrowing. Mahler referred to the scenario of the song in his program for the section based on “Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt” in the third movement of Symphony No. 2:

He loses, together with the clear eyes of childhood, the sure foothold which love alone gives. He despairs of himself and of God. The world and life become a chaotic nightmare [wirren Spuk]; loathing for all being and becoming seizes him with iron fist and drives him to an outburst of despair.  

Much has been written, both by musicologists and the composers and their friends, about secret messages and allusions in the music of Schumann and Brahms. Both composers made extensive use of musical motives that symbolized specific people, places, or concepts, such as Schumann’s “ASCH” and Brahms’s “Frei aber einsam” motives. Both composers also frequently alluded to songs, occasionally their own, but more frequently to other composers, especially Beethoven. The most notable example is the quotation from Beethoven’s An die ferne Geliebte in Brahms’s fourth symphony and first piano concerto, and in Schumann’s C-Major piano fantasy and F-major string quartet. In all these instances the reference is short, audible, and assimilates the meaning of Beethoven’s song. Dillon Parmer writes:

In Brahms’s instrumental music, a reliance on vocal antecedents might be attributed to his alleged belief that only song, especially folk song, can serve as a suitable source for melodic inspiration…. But because most other instances of song reference in his output tend to be parenthetically isolated rather than thematically structural, they demand different explanations.  

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39 Such ciphers were also common in the works of Bach who also had a profound influence on Beach. Beach wrote that she learned counterpoint from Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier, from which she frequently performed (Brooks, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” 208.) In her Prelude and Fugue, Op. 81, Beach imitated Bach’s musical spelling of his name, using as her subject her own name in music, only one letter different from the famous contrapuntist. Block, Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian, 189–90.

That is, the explanation that such references are symbolic and allusive. In Beach’s compositions, however, the references to songs are structural, forming the basis of part or all of the composition, and therefore not necessarily an allusion intended to assimilate the meaning of the referenced work.

Parmer does acknowledge that the first “explanation could apply to the Andante from the First Piano Sonata and the Variations op. 2,” works in which Brahms treats the borrowed material quite similarly to Beach’s handling. Beach was profoundly influenced by the compositions of Brahms, even saying that “Brahms, next to Bach and Beethoven, gives me the greatest happiness.”

Her standard programming included works by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, herself and others of the American school. As early as Beach’s teens, her fondness for Brahms despite his apparent old-fashionedness is evident in an anecdote recounted in the *Musical Quarterly*:

The mature musicians of the 1880’s, most of them, could see no good in the works of Brahms. One day late in the decade, Amy Cheney, as she still was, met the Boston music critic, John Sullivan Dwight, and his friend Otto Dresel, both of whom were intolerant of Brahms. She played for them a Capriccio of his for piano that had lately reached these shores and was as yet unknown. She did not announce the composer’s name. The Boston musicians were enchanted and eager to learn who had written the piece. When she announced that it was by Brahms, there were coughs and mutterings that it was the best piece yet to come from his pen.

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Beach’s stylistic derivation from Brahms was noted both by contemporary and more recent critics and listeners. In 1899 in regards to the publication of her *Sonata for Piano and Violin*, Op. 34, Percy Goetschius wrote that Beach adopted “the methods of development peculiar to Brahms.” Jacques Meyer, reviewing the same work at a 1913 concert in Munich, wrote, “Her violin sonata, Op. 34, is an earnest, respect-demanding work revealing genuine ability, and in a sympathetic way an intimate knowledge of Brahms.” Still regarding the *Sonata*, an unnamed Berlin critic denounced Beach: “In style, she is not individual; her dependence upon Schumann and Brahms is unmistakable, which is a weakness, for which the feminine character furnishes ground and excuse.” And in a 1970 review of a recording of Beach’s *Piano Quintet*, the author wrote:

The quintet is very Brahmsian; there is, indeed, scarcely a turn of phrase, a rhythmic figuration, or a harmonic progression throughout its three movements that does not recall something similar in Brahms. Yet the whole thing hangs together—it has integrity and style, and one can listen to it with pleasure for its own values. It is a little smaller in scale and concept than the chamber works of the Master, but it stands up alongside them without apology.

Even in Beach’s interpretations of Brahms’s works, listeners noted a certain sympathy:

“It would almost seem that Brahms was a favorite writer with the artist so sympathetically were

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46 *Berlin Volkszeitung*, 30 October 1899, quoted in ibid., 45.

47 A. F., *High Fidelity Magazine*, n.d., review of the 1970 recording of the piano quintet by Mary Louise Boehm, piano; Kees Cooper and Alvin Rogers, violins; Richard Maximoff, viola; and Fred Sherry, 'cello (Turnabout TV-S 34556), quoted in Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 129.
the numbers [by Brahms] played by her,” wrote the *Brooklyn Eagle* critic.\(^{48}\) And Marion Dwight upon visiting Boston in 1907 wrote to the *Boston Beacon*:

After hearing all the great pianists who have visited here this season, I wish to say, if it is not too personal, that you have right here a rare and lovely artist in Mrs. H. H. A. Beach. Her interpretation of Bach, Chopin and Brahms is nothing short of wonderful. In her composition she shows a broad sense and beauty of imagination, which, though appreciated now by the truly musical, will be much more so in the coming years. Her modesty and quiet womanly dignity, combined with the rarest generosity of nature, make of her a figure which cannot be too highly thought of, and my privilege of having met her and heard her play will ever remain one of my dearest memories of delightful Boston.\(^{49}\)

But perhaps the best evidence of Brahms’s influence on Beach is in the music itself. The parallels in their piano quintets have already been discussed. In addition, Block writes that Beach’s *Improvisation*, Op. 148, No. 1 might well have been an homage to Brahms: “Beach’s treatment recalls the texture and rhythm of his ‘Intermezzo,’ op. 119, no. 1.”\(^{50}\) Both composers were influenced by folk music, Brahms completed over two hundred arrangements of folk songs, and like Beach, incorporated Eastern European melodies and flavors into his works (e.g., Hungarian Dances).\(^{51}\) Both composers each wrote well over a hundred art songs, and even shared a similar approach to writing songs: Brahms’s student Gustav Jenner wrote: “Brahms demanded from a composer, first of all, that he should know his text precisely…. [Brahms] recommended…that before composing [a composer] should carry the poem around [in his head] for a long time and should frequently recite it out loud…paying close attention to everything,

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\(^{49}\) Marion Dwight, letter to *Boston Beacon* 9 March 1907, quoted in ibid., 63.

\(^{50}\) Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 270. Block’s compelling argument includes musical examples.

\(^{51}\) Parmer, “Brahms, Song Quotation, and Secret Programs,” 161. On 11 February 1885 Beach performed with Leopold Lichtenberg an arrangement by Joachim of an unspecified Hungarian Dance by Brahms, Amy Cheney Beach Collection, Milne Special Collections, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, box 16, folder 3.
especially the declamation.” And most importantly, both composers based a number of instrumental compositions on their own art songs.

Dillon Parmer writes that Brahms based the Andante of the C-Major Piano Sonata, Op. 1, and the Variations on a Hungarian Theme, Op. 21, on songs. In addition, the “Edward” Ballade, Op. 10, No. 1, may first have been a song, and the Andante from the Piano Sonata in F-sharp minor, Op. 2, and the Intermezzi, Op. 117 may have been conceived vocally. As all of these works are for the piano, it is most probable that Beach knew them, given her proclivity to Brahms. Also, Brahms alluded to two of his own songs in his second symphony and second piano concerto, to Wagner excerpts in his third symphony, a song of Schumann’s in his fourth symphony, and one of Beethoven’s in his fourth symphony and first piano concerto. Most substantially, and most similar to Beach’s own treatment, Brahms derived the third movement of his Violin Sonata in G Major, Op. 78 from two closely related songs, “Regenlied” and “Nachklang,” incorporating both melodic material and accompaniment.

Schubert also used structures from songs to form the basis of an instrumental, absolute work, as in the string quartet “Death and the Maiden,” the “Trout” quintet, the “Wanderer” Fantasy for piano, and the “Trockne Blümen” variations for flute and piano, works with which

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53 Parmer, 162.

54 These works are not included on any programs housed in the Amy Beach collection in the Milne Special Collections at the University of New Hampshire. Still, Beach programmed Brahms frequently, especially his piano works and songs, and it is likely that she would have at least read through the works during her long and diligent studies.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., 167–70.
Beach would probably have been familiar. Both of these works are a series of variations on a theme taken from a song. While Beach did compose several sets of variations, she did not base them on her own songs and therefore they will not be examined here. Schubert biographer Brian Newbould has this to say about Schubert’s self-borrowing:

These “borrowings,” it should be remembered, were not in the nature of transcriptions or arrangements: Schubert was not merely bringing the songs to a wider or different audience. He left half of the song behind, in every case: the text was set aside, and the musical material was projected into a new context in which it could germinate according to its own lights to produce new growths. What this tells us is not so much that the songs live on in the new medium, but that Schubert’s compositional urges sprang from a central source and the boundaries between the genres into which they were (necessarily) channeled were of no abiding consequence.

This statement could easily apply to the second and third categories of Beach’s self-borrowing; the first category, however, is in “the nature of transcriptions or arrangements”; hence, the original song can be mapped directly onto the instrumental work and the text applied. Therefore, the text and program of the song will be discussed in the analysis of those works in Chapter 2. Block suggests various autobiographical connections within Beach’s piano concerto, based partly upon song texts. This interpretation, sparked by comments of Beach herself, will be discussed in Chapter 4, and conjectures of Block’s will be extrapolated to other works. While it is uncertain whether Beach intended the subject of the song to influence the interpretation of

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57 Although Beach apparently did not perform this work herself, she did program several of Schubert’s songs and expressed great familiarity with them in her essay “The Enjoyment of Song,” cited above.

58 Beach used four folk songs, “O Maiko moyá,” “Stara planina,” “Nasadil e dado,” and “Macedonian!” as the basis for the Variations on Balkan Themes, Op. 60, for piano, published in 1906. She arranged the work for orchestra in 1906 (revised 1936) and for two pianos in 1937 (revised in 1942). She used her part song for women’s voices “An Indian Lullaby,” Op. 57, No. 3 as the theme for the Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, Op. 80 in 1916. Block, Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian, 124, 208.


the instrumental work or whether the contemporary audience would have recognized the song
upon hearing the later work, such knowledge can be valuable in informing an interpretation of
the work as long as such an interpretation is not taken as binding.

Beach followed in a long tradition of musical borrowing, from masses based on chants
and secular tunes, quotations alluding to people and politics, to variations and sets based entirely
on the harmonic structure of another work. The analysis presented here explores the
relationships between Beach’s songs and the instrumental works based on them. It demonstrates
Beach’s different approaches to such self-borrowing in several different genres. It places Beach
in the tradition of virtuoso performer-composers of late-Romantic monumentalism. It can
inform our exploration of not only Beach’s other forms of musical borrowing, but other
composers who found inspiration from similar sources as well, and provides insights into the
procedures of the first successful female composer recognized by her contemporaries as an
equal.
CHAPTER 2: TRANSCRIPTIONS OF AN ENTIRE SONG

The first category of Beach’s self-borrowing from song for her instrumental works consists of keyboard works: transcriptions or paraphrases of entire songs. The two works in question come from opposite ends of Beach’s long life and represent the extremes between transcription and virtuosic piano commentary on a song. Before embarking on her career as a composer, Beach desired a life as a concert pianist. Most nineteenth-century virtuosos, such as Henri Herz, Sigismond Thalberg, Franz Liszt, and Robert and Clara Wieck Schumann, performed their own compositions. Many composer-pianists would capitalize on popular melodies, composing or improvising sets of variations, paraphrases or transcriptions, for their own performance. Franz Liszt perfected these typically flashy works into a complex art form that influenced compositions for the piano in general. Regarding Liszt’s virtuosic transcriptions of Franz Schubert’s Lieder, a critic named “Carlo” wrote:

It is a successful attempt to reproduce the melodic and harmonic beauty of the new classical song as a lyrical whole for the piano alone, and to perfect it with the power of singing and declamation without the sacrifice of any of his keyboard richness. The composer’s skillful, characteristic, and tasteful treatment [of the material] has made these pieces favorite nearly everywhere. Schubert’s immortal songs will be the property not only of cultured singers, but also of cultivated pianists.¹

Edward Hanslick also recognized the historical importance of these pieces:

Liszt’s transcriptions of Schubert Lieder were epoch-making. There was scarcely a concert in which Liszt did not play one or two of them; even when they were not listed on the program they would have to be played. Far be it from me to praise the artistic value of these transcriptions or even to see a glorification of Schubert in them. When one takes away the words and voice from Schubert Lieder, one has not glorified them, but rather impoverished them. Still the fact

remains incontestable that Liszt, through these paraphrases, did a great deal for the dissemination of Schubert Lieder. Printed concert programs prove that since the appearance of Liszt’s transcriptions of Schubert songs, the originals have been publicly sung more frequently than before: the power of virtuosity proves itself once again and this time served a good cause.²

This chapter examines Beach’s own transcriptions and paraphrases and shows her assimilation of techniques used by Liszt, which in turn carry into her piano works in other genres.

Beach performed several of Liszt’s transcriptions during her life. On 21 March 1889 in a benefit for the Marine Biological Laboratory she performed three of his transcriptions, of Robert Franz’s song “Er ist gekommen,” Schubert’s Waltz in A major, and the quartet from Verdi’s Rigoletto. On 23 March 1891 she performed his transcription of the “Spinning Song” from Wagner’s opera Der fliegende Holländer at a benefit for the family of Calixa Lavallée at Steinert Hall in Boston. She also performed there on 22 May 1902 Liszt’s transcriptions of Schubert’s piano pieces Soirée de Vienne as a benefit concert for the Marinique and St. Vincent Sufferers.

A comparison of Beach’s transcription of Richard Straus’s “Ständchen,” Op. 17, No. 2 to Liszt’s transcription of Schubert’s “Auf dem Wasser zu singen” manifests several shared techniques.³ Beach first performed her transcription from manuscript in a recital featuring contralto Gertrude Edmands and violinist Olive Mead at Chickering Hall in Boston on 6 March 1901. In a letter to her publisher, Arthur P. Schmidt, the following year she revealed her familiarity with Liszt’s transcriptions, writing: “I suppose there would be no reason why I should not give the work an opus number for convenience in ordering, just as I would do were the music

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² Edward Hanslick, Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien (Vienna, 1869), I: 336, quoted in ibid., 357, n5.

³ I am not suggesting that Beach modeled her transcription of “Ständchen” on Liszt’s of “Auf dem Wasser,” only that both works exhibit certain techniques shared by both composers that Beach may have learned from performing several of Liszt’s transcriptions.
all original. Liszt has done this in his early transcriptions, before he gave up the use of opus numbers entirely."

Both composers alter the voicing of the song in their transcriptions to create variety that previously was provided by the song’s lyrics. For each of the three stanzas in “Auf dem Wasser,” Liszt successively places the melody one octave higher, beginning in the tenor range. In addition to furnishing variety it also creates different technical challenges requiring a different part of the hand to play it. For the first stanza, the left hand plays both the melody in its top fingers as well as some of the accompaniment, the right hand plays its original part from the song and the remainder of the accompaniment. [See Examples 2.1a–b.] In the second stanza, the thumb of the right hand plays the melody while the rest of the hand plays the original figuration, Liszt’s famous “three-handed technique.” [See Example 2.1c.] For the final stanza, Liszt places the melody in the top voice and displaces the piano figuration down two octaves in the left hand. [See Example 2.1d.] Similarly, Beach transcribes the first stanza quite strictly, drops the melody an octave and changes the figuration for the second, and in the third passes the melody around various ranges. [See Examples 2.2a–c, 2.3a–b.]

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Example 2.1b. Franz Liszt, transcription of “Auf dem Wasser zu singen,” mm. 9–12.

Example 2.1c. Liszt, transcription of “Auf dem Wasser zu singen,” mm. 35–38.
Example 2.1d. Liszt, transcription of “Auf dem Wasser zu singen,” mm. 61–64.

Example 2.2b. Beach, transcription of “Ständchen,” mm. 1–10.

Example 2.2c. Beach, transcription of “Ständchen,” mm. 23–30.
Example 2.3a. Strauss, “Ständchen,” mm. 45–60.
Example 2.3b. Beach, transcription of “Ständchen,” mm. 50–59.

In addition to both transcriptions progressively diverging more from the original, they both become increasingly more virtuosic. Both “Auf dem Wasser” and “Ständchen” have extremely difficult piano parts in their original form. Some idiomatic techniques used by both Liszt and Beach in their transcriptions include runs of thirds [See Examples 2.4a–b] and voicing the melody in octaves and chords. In both transcriptions, the composers arrange the entire song before inserting a piano cadenza, extending the postlude to the song and capitalizing on the themes of the song. Similarly, in her Ballad for Piano, Op. 6, Beach transcribes the entire first half of the song, maintaining its texture and figures, then recomposes it in a pianistic fantasy based on the original setting.
Example 2.4a. Liszt, Concert Paraphrase of *Rigoletto*, m. 51.

Example 2.4b. Beach, transcription of “Ständchen,” mm. 42–45.

The parallels in voicing, piano technique, and form suggest that Beach may have chosen Liszt as the “master” on whom to model her piano pieces. Her performance of his works did not stop at transcriptions: she also performed his études, *Rapsodie espagnole* for two pianos, and numerous songs. In the two works in category one, the *Ballad for Piano*, Op. 6 and the piano and organ transcriptions of “Far Awa’!,” Beach continued to use the variations in voicing, the formal structure, and the virtuosic piano idioms seen in both her transcription of “Ständchen” and Liszt’s transcription of “Auf dem Wasser zu singen.”
Beach published her *Ballad* (sometimes programmed as *Ballade*), Op. 6 in 1894 with a dedication to pianist Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler (1863–1927). Zeisler performed twice at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago at which Beach appeared several times.  

Zeisler programmed the *Ballad* in her 1915–16 season. Beach first performed the work at a benefit for the Marine Biological Laboratory at the Tremont Temple in Boston on 27 February 1891. She composed the *Ballad* as a concert fantasy on her song “My Luve Is Like a Red, Red Rose,” Op. 12, No. 3, composed in 1889 on a text by Robert Burns. Beach composed two sets of songs on texts by Robert Burns, Op. 12 and Op. 43 in 1888–89 and 1899, respectively. With eight settings, Burns figures first among poets set by Beach, followed by her husband with seven settings. The dominance of Burns’s poetry reflects Beach’s statement in her refutation to Dvorák that northern American composers would be more influenced by Scottish and Irish music than by African-American music. Several of Beach’s settings incorporate the “Scottish snap” (long-short); however, it is uncertain whether any works include actual Scottish folk-songs, although her setting of Burns’s “Dearie” certainly imitates a folk style.

Burns cast his poem in four quatrains of iambic tetrameter. The poem describes the beauty, endurance, and devotion of the protagonist’s love. Beach’s song is through-composed in two contrasting sections, separating the first two stanzas from the final two. Beach designated

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5 Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 83.

6 Ibid., 357, n46.

7 Despite the apparent discrepancy in opus numbers, the piano work postdates the song.

8 In fact, in the concert aria *Eilende Wolken, Segler der Lüfte*, Op. 18, Beach quotes Burns’s song “Auld Rob Morris.” Based on a text by Schiller, the work describes the life of Mary Stuart. According to Block, the melodic reference is emblematic of Scotland in Beach’s work and functions as a “leitmotiv” in *Eilende Wolken*. Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 74.
the first half *allegretto espressivo* and the second *più mosso ed agitato* to depict the floods and melting rocks of the third stanza. Heightening the contrast, she began the second section in F-sharp minor, the enharmonic spelling of the minor subdominant of the tonic, D-flat Major.

In the *Ballad*, Beach maintained the two sections and large-scale tonal plan of the song but extended the form and traveled through more keys. Like in the transcriptions of “Ständchen” and “Auf dem Wasser zu singen,” she transcribed the first half of “My Luve Is Like” fairly strictly before embarking on a pianistic recomposition of it, extending the first half by fifty measures. In the second half of the work, Beach included a cadenza between the third and fourth stanzas. She also prolonged the fourth stanza, creating a tumultuous climax to the piece and lengthening the equivalent of the piano postlude. Rather than mirroring the first half of the *Ballad* by first composing a strict transcription, Beach continued the pianistic fantasy. In the song, Beach retained the same texture in the accompaniment throughout while changing the melody; however, in the *Ballad* she buried the melody in a dense, almost orchestral texture depicting the cataclysms described in the song’s text at this point (see Appendix 1).

In both “My Luve Is Like” and the *Ballad*, the piano becomes less accompanimental and increasingly more virtuosic and adversarial. In “My Luve Is Like,” the accompaniment rarely sounds above the voice, although it sometimes doubles it. Beach’s transcription of the first stanza preserved this relationship, the melody always being the top-sounding note, but even by the second stanza the voice’s supremacy is challenged: while the melody is still usually on top, it is distributed between the pianist’s hands creating difficulties of voicing and continuity. [See Examples 2.5a–b and 2.6a–b.] Beach placed the melody in the alto register played by the thumb of the left hand in the recomposition of the first stanza, overbalancing it with thick chords and a
countermelody in the right hand. [See Example 2.7.] Beach began the second half with heavy
chords and sweeping arpeggios, showcasing the pianist’s technique. [See Examples 2.8a–b.]

Example 2.5b. Beach, *Ballad for Piano*, Op. 6, mm. 5–12

Example 2.6a. Beach, “My Luve Is Like,” mm. 21–29.
Example 2.6b. Beach, *Ballad for Piano*, mm. 21–28.

Example 2.7. Beach, *Ballad for Piano*, mm. 45–51.
Example 2.8a. Beach, “My Luve Is Like,” mm. 39–51.
Beach’s recomposition of the fourth stanza of “My Luve Is Like” shares both the strict transcription and pianistic fantasy evinced in the first part of the Ballad. The melodies corresponding to the first two lines of text appear as a faithful transcription of the song, the melody in the right hand in the original register accompanied by material similar to that in the
song. Then, however, the vocal line disappears temporarily, replaced by the piano part from the song. [See Example 2.9a–b.] Why would Beach choose now to incorporate the original piano part and not the vocal melody? At this point in the song the piano for the first time rivals the voice in importance: it has its own melody, higher than that of the voice, often a third higher as though the voice were accompanying the piano. When the Ballad was composed in 1894, Beach had been married for nine years. When she married, she was required to become a composer first and a pianist second, despite declarations that she felt herself the opposite. Block has argued in her analysis of Beach’s piano concerto that the piano in Beach’s compositions represents Beach herself. In both of the works in question, the piano becomes increasingly dominant. In “My Luve Is Like,” the piano takes on its own melody rivaling that of the voice and then plays a lengthy postlude beginning fortissimo, almost as though cutting off the voice at the height of its power. In the Ballad, a straight-forward song transcription becomes increasingly more virtuosic, the vocal part is buried in pianistic figuration, obscured by countermelodies, interrupted by emphatic chords, and finally dismissed altogether in favor of the piano part. Could the “love” of the poem be for Beach the piano, her setting of the poem and its reincarnation as the Ballad her expression of her intent to return to it?

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10 Block’s analysis of the Concerto will be discussed in Chapter 4.
Example 2.9a. Beach, “My Luve Is Like,” mm. 74–81.

Example 2.9b. Beach, *Ballad for Piano*, mm. 147–54.
The *Ballad* was Beach’s largest work for piano to date, until she composed the 25-minute-long *Variations on Balkan Themes* in 1904. The *Ballad* is one of her most successful early keyboard works, containing the sweeping melodies, rich harmonies, and impassioned climaxes for which her music is loved. It places her among the pianist-composers of the nineteenth century, following in the steps of Frédéric Chopin and Franz Liszt. The techniques assimilated from Franz Liszt in composing concert paraphrases become hallmarks of Beach’s piano writing, even in works not based on song. Only once more would Beach compose a true transcription of an art song, although her songs would continue to be a favorite source of compositional material.

Far Awa’!, Song and Transcription

The other work in the first category of self-borrowing from art song comes from the opposite end of Beach’s life. In June 1937 she finished arranging her 1899 song “Far Awa’!,” Op. 43, No. 4 for piano and organ. As with “My Luve Is Like a Red, Red Rose,” Beach based “Far Awa’!” on a poem by Robert Burns. Unlike the fantasy paraphrase stylings of the *Ballad*, the “Far Awa’!” arrangements are fairly strict transcriptions. Still Beach employed the techniques she derived from Liszt, seen in the transcriptions of “Auf dem Wasser zu singen” and “Ständchen”: varying the voicing of the melody, extending the climax, and, while never truly virtuosic, both transcriptions become increasingly more difficult.

Beach set the two stanzas of Burns’s poem to the same melody but varied the piano parts from a supportive chordal accompaniment to an independent arpeggiation. She altered the final line of the second stanza to draw out the climax. [See Examples 2.10a–b.]

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11 Beach also arranged “Far Awa’!” for vocal duet and trio.
In her piano transcription, Beach retained the melody but modified the accompanimental figuration greatly. As in the other examples, she changed the voicing of the melody, placing it first in the alto register played by alternating left and right hands, then in the soprano register, and finally adding an octave to double it. [See Examples 2.11a–b.] In addition, Beach extended the climax of the song on the final line of the second stanza. [See Examples 2.12a–b.] Her organ transcription is not substantially different from that for piano with the exception of some figurative alterations and the addition of a pedal part. [See Example 2.13.]
Example 2.11a. Beach, piano transcription of “Far Awa’!,” mm. 5–12.

Example 2.11b. Beach, piano transcription of “Far Awa’!,” mm. 23–30.

Example 2.12a. Beach, “Far Awa’!,” mm. 35–39.
Example 2.12b. Beach, piano transcription of “Far Awa’!,” mm. 35–43.

Example 2.13. Beach, organ transcription of “Far Awa’!,” mm. 1–12.

Both “Far Awa’!” transcriptions evince the same techniques Beach adapted from Liszt: Beach retained the integrity of the original song, flourishing into a cadenza only at the climax.
She changed the voicing of the melody for the second stanza to create variety. Beach arranged these transcriptions late in her career, at which point she had honed her technique, removing the long-windedness of her youth and expressing in modest dimensions all the lush, sweeping Romanticism distinctive of her music.

Conclusion

The first category of works Beach composed on her own art songs consist of transcriptions or concert paraphrases for keyboard in which the entire song is present and can be traced through the work. The works in this category, the Ballad, Op. 6 on “O My Luve Is Like a Red, Red Rose,” Op. 12, No. 3, and the piano and organ transcriptions of “Far Awa’!,” Op. 43, No. 4, follow the conventions of nineteenth-century piano virtuosos, capitalizing on the popularity or musical potential of a vocal precedent. In her transcriptions of “Far Awa’!” and Strauss’s “Ständchen,” Beach followed the form set by Liszt in his transcriptions of maintaining the structure of the song, breaking away at the climax or end in a pianistic cadenza. Beach further showed her assimilation of techniques used by Liszt through varying the position of the melody to create interest and technical challenges. Many of these features are characteristic not only of her compositions based on art songs or her piano works in general, but her works in all genres, manifesting the importance her early and continuing piano study held to her development as a composer.
CHAPTER 3: SMALL WORKS THEMATICALLY DERIVED FROM A SONG

The second category of Beach’s self-borrowing from songs includes three small-scale works for one to three instruments, always involving the piano. These works share several characteristics: Beach borrowed the theme from the beginning of the song, introduces it immediately, and includes the introductory material. In each case, Beach retained the original accompaniment from the song and it becomes an integral part of the new piece. She incorporated the borrowed material through the entire work, continuously developing it and spinning it into a new fabric. All of these features are also characteristic of the music of Johannes Brahms, whose profound impact on Beach was shown in Chapter One. Through an examination of Beach’s formal, harmonic, and thematic construction in these three works, this chapter will show that Brahms also influenced Beach in a fundamental song-based conception of musical composition.

Like Beach, Brahms composed a substantial number of songs. Both composers wrote more works for solo voice than in any other genre. Brahms’s advice on composing songs is remarkably similar to Beach’s (quoted above), as summarized by Gustav Jenner: “Brahms demanded from a composer, first of all, that he should know his text precisely…. [Brahms] recommended…that before composing [a composer] should carry the poem around [in his head] for a long time and should frequently recite it out loud…paying close attention to everything, especially the declamation.”¹

Both composers were greatly influenced by folk music. Beach’s statements regarding the value of folk melodies and works utilizing such material were discussed above in Chapter 1.

Brahms composed over two hundred arrangements of folk songs and, like Beach, used such melodies as the basis for instrumental works, as in the Andante from his Piano Sonata in C Major, Op. 1, and the Variations on a Hungarian Theme, Op. 21. According to Albert Dietrich, when Brahms composed “he like[d] to recall folk-songs, and that melodies then spontaneously presented themselves.”\(^2\) He also composed numerous works in folk idioms, such as the Hungarian Dances and Zigeunerlieder. Brahms, like Beach, was fond of using Scottish styles, melodies and poetry: he used “Mein Herz ist im Hochland” by Robert Burns as inspiration for a melody in the final movement of his Piano Sonata in C Major, Op. 1. He inscribed the Ballade for piano, Op. 10, No. 1, “Nach der schottischen Ballade: ‘Edward’ in Herders Stimmen der Völker” and prefaced the Intermezzo, Op. 117, No. 3 with three lines from “Schlaf sanft, mein Kind” from the same source.\(^3\)

Also like Beach, Brahms substantially borrowed from and modeled on other composers, including himself. While he was aware of such instances, he sometimes disparaged those who pointed them out, implying that the quotations had no extramusical connotations:

When a musical wiseacre of his acquaintance expressed his enthusiasm over the C minor Symphony and added that it was only regrettable that the theme of the finale was so like the one in the ninth symphony [by Beethoven], Brahms looked the gentleman up and down and replied rudely: “Yes, and still more regrettable that any ass can see it at once.” Sigmund Bachrich, the late admirable violinist of the Rosé Quartet, which the master liked to entrust with the first performance of new works, told me that he was made to swallow the same retort when he attempted to draw Brahms’s attention to a similarity of this sort.\(^4\)

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\(^3\) Ibid.

The composer and conductor Otto Dessoff dedicated a string quartet to Brahms in which a phrase resembled one by Brahms. Dessoff offered to change the passage, but Brahms wrote:

I beg you, do nothing stupid. One of the stupidest topics of stupid people is that of reminiscences. The small place in question is with me really nothing at all, as excellent as all the rest may be. But with you it is particularly this passage which is especially warm, beautiful and naturally expressive. Don’t spoil it, leave it alone. You cannot very often speak that beautifully—yet you are only beginning to chat. Actually I would have said nothing, and then would have taken for myself this good thing which is not owned by anyone. You must not change a single note. After all, you know that I too have stolen on occasion, and much more seriously.⁵

Still, at other times Brahms drew attention to instances of borrowing or programmatic connections, such as in the score of “Unüberwindlich,” Op. 72, No. 5 where he indicated that the opening phrase was by Alessandro Scarlatti. Brahms linked his Piano Quartet, Op. 60 to Goethe’s Werther and suggested that its title page have a picture of himself with a gun to his head.⁶ Brahms recommended to Theodore Billroth to play through the finale of his G-Major Sonata for Piano and Violin only once and on “a nice, soft, rainy evening to give the proper mood.”⁷ And to Otto Dessoff he wrote: “You must not complain over rain. It can be set to music quite well, something I have also tried to do last spring in a violin sonata.”⁸ Both of these statements hint at the movement’s provenance in Brahms’s song “Regenlied,” Op. 59, No. 3. Eric Sams wrote, Brahms’s songs “inhabit that hinterland of the Lied where song borders on absolute music…. [one seems] always ready to turn into instrumental music.”⁹

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⁷ Gottlieb-Billroth, Billroth und Brahms, 283, quoted in Parmer, 167.

⁸ Briefwechsel XVI, 218, quoted in Parmer, 167, n30.
Brahms and Beach tread easily across the boundary from vocal to instrumental music. Like Beach, Brahms composed numerous instrumental works on material from vocal compositions and many other works that imply vocal conception. Brahms’s third movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin, Op. 78, based on “Regenlied” and its “echo,” “Nachklang,” Op. 59, No. 4, exhibits all of the features distinctive of the works in the second category of Beach’s self-borrowing from art-song. Brahms composed the two Op. 59 songs, “Regenlied” and “Nachklang” in 1873 on poems by Klaus Groth. The songs share thematic and accompanimental material—in fact, Brahms set the first verse of each identically with only slight rhythmic alterations. He used the same material in the Op. 78 Sonata, in G minor, rather than the songs’ F-sharp minor. Brahms took the theme from the first five measures of the songs’ melody and introduces it immediately, the first two defining characteristics of the second category of Beach’s self-borrowing from song. He did not include introductory material (the third defining characteristic) from “Regenlied”; however, there is no introduction in “Nachklang”: it begins immediately with the theme in the voice. Brahms retained the accompaniment from the songs in the piano part of the sonata, the fourth defining characteristic. [See Examples 3.1a–c.] He expanded the function of the song’s accompaniment, threading it through both piano and violin as transitional material. In “Regenlied,” as well, Brahms worked the accompaniment into the vocal melody, as he did in the third stanza [see Example 3.2a–b.]

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Example 3.1c. Brahms, Sonata for Piano and Violin No. 1 in G Major, Op. 78:
III. *Allegro molto moderato*, mm. 1–5.

Example 3.2a. Brahms, “Regenlied,” mm. 44–51.
The final defining characteristic pertains to the treatment of the borrowed material itself. Brahms in the violin sonata and Beach in the works discussed below incorporate the borrowed material throughout the entire work and develop it continuously. Brahms structured the sonata finale in the form of a five-part rondo with coda. While the first two statements of the primary material are identical, Brahms treated the final statement as a development section, expanding the thematic material, and, in the coda combining it with material from the episodes. The opening dotted-note figure pervades the movement, prefiguring the return of the primary material. Likewise, Beach used the head-motive of “Sweetheart, Sigh No More” to permeate the entirety of the Romance for Piano and Violin, Op. 23.

Three works by Beach share the characteristics defining the second category of her self-borrowing from song, that is, taking the borrowed material from the beginning of the song, including the introduction, and quoting it immediately, retaining the original accompaniment,
and incorporating and developing the borrowed material throughout the composition. Two works, the *Romance* and “Valse amoureuse” for piano, incorporate fairly short motives and accompanimental figurations and develop that material throughout each of the respective works. The last work, the second movement of the piano trio, represents an intermediate case: the form of the movement is slow-fast-slow-coda (fast). The slow sections are founded on the song “Allein” in much the same way that *Romance* and “Valse amoureuse” are based on their respective songs. This chapter examines how Beach incorporated her art songs into these three pieces and draws a comparison to Brahms’s song-based conception of musical composition through a close analysis of formal, harmonic, and thematic construction.


At the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, music by Beach was performed every day; she was the only composer to be thus honored. She herself performed the premiere of the *Romance for Piano and Violin*, Op. 23, with the dedicatee, Maud Powell. The work was so successful an encore was demanded. According to a review, “The selection was listened to in sympathetic silence, and at the close tears glistened in many eyes.”10 Beach also performed with Jeannette Dutton the song “Sweetheart, Sigh No More,” the opening motive of which permeates the *Romance*.

Beach composed “Sweetheart, Sigh No More,” Op. 14, No. 3, in 1890 on a text by Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836–1907), a contemporary Boston poet who, like Beach, was born in New Hampshire. Typical of Beach’s art songs, it is through-composed with the following

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10 *Chicago Record*, 7 July 1893, quoted in Jenkins, 31.
features that unify the three stanzas: the opening melody recurs in the piano accompaniment at the beginning of the second stanza, over which the voice sings a quite different melody. The first line of text in the second and third stanzas are identical; Beach set this line, along with the second line of each stanza with identical rhythms, but different melodic contours. To each stanza she added an additional identical line. [See text in appendix and Examples 3.3a–c.] In addition, she based the interlude between the second and third strophes on the opening motive of the melody. This motive saturates the entire texture of the Romance, as the head-motive from “Regenlied” and “Nachklang” permeated the finale of Brahms’s G-major violin sonata.

Ex. 3.3b. Beach, “Sweetheart, Sigh No More,” mm. 15–18.

Ex. 3.3c. Beach, “Sweetheart, Sigh No More,” mm. 29–32.

Block comments on the irony that “Sweetheart, Sigh No More” and the Romance were both performed at the Musical Congress, writing that “in offering these two compositions, Beach demonstrated to her colleagues how she developed and expanded a musical idea. The relationship between the two works, however, was nowhere recognized.”

That the connection was not noted, despite the probability that some people undoubtedly heard both pieces within a few days of each other, supports the notion that Beach was not interested in programmatic allusions to the song’s text, but in the compositional potential of the music. Critics did comment on the dominance and development of a single motive in Romance. A German critic wrote:

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11 Block, Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian, 83.
If there is here and there a breath of sentimentality, the composition as a whole is pervaded by a predominating idea. The leading motive is not new, but it is interesting in its development. In her harmonic structure the lady has pronounced versatility, in which may be distinguished a sincere aspiration toward vigor and purity of style.\textsuperscript{12}

And a critic for the \textit{Boston Globe} wrote: “The composition is an excellent one and is certain to be more and more popular as it becomes better known; it is tuneful and pleasing, but at no time cheap or trashy. The theme on which the romanza [sic] is based is well worked out and skillfully interwoven in the piano part.”\textsuperscript{13}

Like “Sweetheart, Sigh No More!,” Beach composed the \textit{Romance} in three parts.\textsuperscript{14} She precedes the second and third sections by a \textit{ritard}, and marks both by a return to the original tempo and the theme in the tonic. This sequence occurs a third time at m. 105; here the theme begins in the bass of the piano, but she modified it slightly and does not modulate. She presented the motive for the first six measures of this section and only in the piano. More importantly, this final section remains entirely in the tonic: hence, this last section can best be analysed as a coda, perhaps corresponding to the piano postlude of “Sweetheart, Sigh No More!” The full form of the work then is a very loose ABA’.

Beach derived the theme of \textit{Romance} from mm. 3–4 of “Sweetheart, Sigh No More!” and made two changes: she based it on the tonic triad, rather than the dominant, and employed a skip of a third between the fourth and fifth notes, rather than a second. The motive sweeps upward to a pause on the fifth of the chord, followed by a descent and an appoggiatura. She extended the theme for \textit{Romance} by maintaining this contour and fashioning a classical 2+2+4 phrase from it.

\textsuperscript{12} “Literatur und Unterhaltungs Blatt,” \textit{Hamburger Freunden Blatt}, 23 September 1899, trans. by “Prof. E. Kr;” UNH: 1883 Diary, quoted in Brown, 166.

\textsuperscript{13} “Kneisel Quartet Concert,” \textit{Boston Globe}, 29 January 1894, UNH: 1883 Diary, quoted in Brown, 167.

\textsuperscript{14} Brown describes it as ABA, but this description is debatable. The violin part at the return of “A” is identical to the beginning for six measures, however, at this point the texture departs, continuing the development of the primary motive.
The second subphrase of the theme follows the same pattern, beginning a step higher and with a leap of a fourth to the climax. The second half of the theme begins with an ascending major-seventh arpeggio to the leading tone and an extended descent. This theme provides the basis of most of the melodic material in the piece. It ends on a half-cadence: however, the ensuing phrase begins identically to the first, only an octave higher, still the second and third subphrases are elided and extended with material following the same sweeping contour and characteristic appoggiaturas. [See Examples 3.4a–b.] In the formulation of this theme, Beach shows the influence of Brahms: she pulled from this short motive an extended though segmented melody, which nonetheless bears an air of classical symmetry.

Example 3.4a. “Sweetheart, Sigh No More,” mm. 3–4, voice.

The middle section serves as a quasi-development, and the motive traverses through multiple keys and permutations as is common with Brahms. Beach utilized the appoggiatura’s leaning inclination to drive toward the climax where the violin plays the theme alone, *fortissimo*. She made this momentum more dramatic by interpolating a new motive that interrupts the main theme. [See Ex. 3.5.] The two themes reconcile only at the climax. [See Ex. 3.6.] The
interrupting motive is beaten into submission, appearing only in the piano at ever-quieter dynamics while the violin plays the main theme above it. The main theme dominates the remainder of the piece in its original guise, in a bravura Lisztian texture and emphatic duple divisions against pulsing triplets. [See Ex. 3.7.]

Ex. 3.5. Beach, Romance, mm. 29–35.

Ex. 3.7. Beach, *Romance*, mm. 97–102.
The progression of textures in Romance mirrors that in “Sweetheart, Sigh No More”: both begin with a simple syncopated accompaniment, then the piano takes a more active and equal role in the second section, and finally the piano reaches an almost orchestral power of full repeated chords in triplet rhythms. Both pieces also progress through similar rhythmic stages, the first characterized by syncopated duple subdivisions, the second a more steady eighth-note pulse, and then finally triple subdivision. As shown in the discussion of the Ballad, Op. 6, Beach typically used this triplet figuration in her piano-writing in passages and pieces of great passion, often at climatic moments. While both Romance and “Sweetheart, Sigh No More” maintain the triplet subdivision until the end, the song ends at a vigorous forte, while Romance subsides to pianississimo.

Romance was one of Beach’s most popular works during her life, performed widely in concert and on radio broadcasts. In a review of a 1942 performance of Beach’s chamber music, Ray Brown wrote: “[Beach] has always been a romantic in the best sense of the word—a devotee of beauty and a follower of the gleam. She has not been tempted into impressionism or atonality, nor has she strayed into the jungle of dischords. Her music has a timelessness that should make it enduring.” Romance continues to be one of her most popular and widely performed works today, proving her appeal beyond her time.


On 12 February 1908, Beach performed Les Rêves de Colombine: Suite française, Op. 65 at a memorial for composer and friend Edward MacDowell. She had premiered the work from

manuscript at a morning recital at the Hotel Tuilleries in Boston on 17 April 1907, about six months after she began the composition. Beach often programmed it for “less musically sophisticated audiences” or to contrast with the ponderous *Variations on Balkan Themes* in her frequent all-Beach recitals.\(^{16}\) The suite comprises five movements, each given a descriptive French title and based on a dance. Block avers that Beach might have been contemplating classical dance while composing the work; she could also have been emulating the keyboard suites of François Couperin, who also gave the movements of his suites whimsical French titles that often included *commedia del arte* characters, and who frequently based the movements on dances.\(^{17}\)

The third movement of *Les Rêves de Colombine*, titled “Valse Amoureuse,” includes the caption “Columbine dreams of a sweetheart with whom she is dancing.” Beach based the movement on her song “Le Secret,” Op. 14, No. 1 on a French text by Count Jules de Resseguyer. It is surely no coincidence that a portion of her “suite française” incorporates motives from a French song that Block describes as “a lilting waltz, [that] suggests by short phrases in the vocal line a flirtatious conversation while dancing.”\(^{18}\) Beach was exposed to both French and German during her brief formal education at the Whittemore School. According to friend and biographer Walter Jenkins, “She would take a book to the piano and do all sorts of technical exercises by the hour and all the while be reading the book. She learned foreign languages in the same way, while practicing, and she knew exactly what she was reading. She realized that technical studies at the piano were like calisthenics involving only physical

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\(^{16}\) Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 127.

\(^{17}\) Ibid. The movements are titled “La Fée de la fontaine” (The Fairy in the Fountain), “Le Prince gracieux” (The Gracious Prince), “Valse Amoureuse” (Waltz of Love), “Sous les étoiles” (Under the Stars), and “Danse d’Arlequin” (Dance of Harlequin.)

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 151.
coordination, so that her mind was free to ponder other things.”

Beach used her knowledge of languages not only to set French and German texts, but to translate the orchestration and composition treatises of Berlioz and others.

In “Le Secret,” the narrator beseeches her beloved to reveal the secret that his harp tells him, whether his heart sighs of love for her, if his tears moisten the strings under his fingers, whether he sings while crying. She wonders if his heart is grieving at a chord or a tender note, whether he responds if the voice of one absent faintly murmurs. But no, she says, say nothing, sing, sigh, weep, and keep your heart’s secret: If you tell me that loving you I must die of despair, or of rapture. Beach capitalized on the harp within the text, imitating its strumming in the piano, while still weaving a complicated accompaniment, which interacts with the melody, even prefiguring it in places.

Beach divided “Le Secret” into two large sections separated by an eight-measure piano interlude, the last two measures of which recall the song’s introduction. The vocal part’s first three measures in the second half match exactly those of the first half, the next four measures are only subtly changed. The piano retains the original harmonies, but changes its figuration. Both halves end with identical vocal melismas, which are anticipated two measures earlier in the piano. Beach preserved overall unity by a waltz accompaniment and the recurrence of an ascending three-note motive with rhythmic values of short-short-long. In “Valse Amoureuse,” Beach developed this motive as well as the piano’s introductory motive and quotes verbatim the interlude between the two parts of “Le Secret.”

“Valse Amoureuse” is in a loose five-part rondo form, dominated by two main themes, each of which Beach developed extensively. Beach based the A theme on the opening material of “Le Secret.” [See Examples 3.8a–b.] To enhance the waltz affect, she placed “Valse

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19 Interview with Professor Walter Jenkins, 5 October 1975, quoted in Eden, 38.
Amoureuse” in 3/4 time, rather than the 3/8 of “Le Secret.” Besides this small change, the four-measure introduction is identical to both pieces. Beach launched the first theme with the three-note motive that unifies “Le Secret”; she heightened the forward propulsion by placing it on the second beat of the measure and repeating it twice at increasingly higher pitch levels with an extension on the third iteration. The fashioning of this melody is similar to that in the Romance and in the Violin Sonata by Brahms. Like in the movement by Brahms as well, Beach stated the theme twice in the initial A section of “Valse amoureuse,” already developing it in the second statement. The middle A section functions almost as a development section in which Beach emphasized the work’s connection to “Le Secret” (beginning at m. 73) by quoting the first seven measures of the vocal part. [See Examples 3.8a and 3.9a.] While the final A section begins with the original theme for the first statement, the second statement becomes a fleeting development of the main motive. [See Example 3.9b.]


Beach, like Brahms, absorbed the accompaniment into the melodic material in the recomposed work. In the sonata examined above, Brahms used the piano figuration from “Regenlied” and “Nachklang” as transitional material played by both piano and violin. In “Valse amoureuse,” what begins as an introduction becomes part of the melody in a rising sequence culminating at m. 13. Beach developed this introduction-made-melody even in the second statement of the theme in the first A section.

In Theme B, Beach incorporated the three-note motive in the second phrase. [See Example 3.10.] While she preserved the melodic span of a minor third in only the first two iterations (mm. 41 and 43), she maintained the rhythmic profile in mm. 45, 46, and 47. As a transition from the second B section into the final reprise of A, Beach returned to “Le Secret” for material, quoting practically verbatim and then extending the interlude between the first and second half. [See Examples 3.11a–b.]


The final movement of Les Rêves de Colombine, “Danse d’Arlequin,” opens with a reprise of the B material from “Valse amoureuse,” which is interrupted by Harlequin’s rollicking dance. Harlequin relaxes at the end of the movement, pensively reflecting again upon the earlier waltz—as though in the suite’s implicit program, Harlequin is the sweetheart Colombine dreams about earlier in “Valse Amoureuse,” or the beloved of “Le Secret.” While Beach did not hint at the relationship between “Le Secret” and “Valse amoureuse” to friends as Brahms did with “Regenlied” and the Op. 78 Piano and Violin Sonata, their correlation is indisputable. And,
while it is debatable whether the text of a song can and should be applied to the interpretation of a work borrowing material from it that is otherwise “absolute,” Beach’s *Suite française* is not free of programmatic intimations. The suite itself and the individual movements have descriptive titles, and as this French suite uses material from a French song in a movement that also quotes another movement from the suite, perhaps in this case it is safe to ascribe some meaning to the assimilation beyond simply a source of material.


On 2 June 1938, Beach wrote in her diary, “Trying a trio from old material. Great fun.”

The trio in question was her last published work, the Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violincello [*sic*], Op. 150, and the “old material” was her song “Allein,” Op. 35, No. 2, her piano character piece “The Returning Hunter,” Op. 64, No. 2 (which is itself a reworking of an Innuit melody), and two folk tunes. According to Block, Beach’s “pleasure in making do with old material grew out of both her Yankee thrift and her awareness that materials written earlier had further developmental possibilities.” This awareness may have come from her study of composer’s like Brahms and Schubert who expanded their previous compositions into extensive works and even from Beethoven who crafted large works out of small motives.

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20 Quoted in Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 261.

21 Sources vary with regard to “violoncello” and “violincello.” In the appendix listing Beach’s complete works in Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 305 the *Trio* is listed as *Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violincello*, assumedly because that was the designation in the 1939 Composers Press edition. On the cover page of Hildegard’s Publishing Company’s 1997 reprint it is titled *Trio Op. 150 for Piano, Violin, Violoncello*.

22 Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 261.

23 Ibid.
Beginning in 1921, Beach spent one month each summer at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, an artist colony for composers, writers and artists personally selected by Marian MacDowell who built the retreat after her husband Edward MacDowell’s death in 1908. The colony provided Beach a quiet space to think and compose, as well as valuable interaction with other artists. Among friends Beach made at the colony were Pulitzer-winning poet Edwin Arlington Robinson, composer Walter Jenkins, and Thornton Wilder who commemorated Peterborough in his play *Our Town*.\(^{24}\) From the beginning of her tenure at the Colony, Beach’s productivity soared: she composed or sketched most of her remaining compositions there. In 1938 she composed the *Piano Trio* in only fifteen days.

Beach herself introduced the work at the piano on 15 January 1939 with Eugenie Limberg, violin, and Phyllis Kraeuter, ’cello. The National Association of American Composers and Conductors financed the premiere at the MacDowell Club in New York.\(^{25}\) Although Charles Haubiel of the Composers Press immediately accepted the Trio for publication upon hearing it on 21 June 1938, Beach withheld it pending revisions following performance. The Composers Press subsequently published the Trio as her Op. 150 in 1939.\(^{26}\) Virginia Duffey, Eugenie Limberg, and an unnamed ’cellist later performed it on a broadcast by WNYC that also featured Beach playing her *Five Improvisations*, Op. 148 and “Young Birches,” Op. 128, No. 2.

Beach structured the *Trio* in three movements, the first a juxtaposition of impressionist figuration and late-romantic harmonies. The third movement is reminiscent of Chopin in the piano’s tour-de-force left-hand octaves interpolated with a lyrical middle section. She composed

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 222.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., 287.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 286.
the second movement in a ternary form with coda, in the A sections of which she reorchestrated her art song “Allein,” and based the scherzo-like B section and coda on “The Returning Hunter.”

Beach composed “Allein” in 1897 on the poem “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” by Heinrich Heine. The text had previously been set by Franz Schubert in 1828, Clara Schumann between 1840 and 1843, Edvard Grieg in 1861, Zdenek Fibich in 1867, and Hugo Wolf in 1878. Block asserts that Beach probably knew Schubert’s setting, and considering Beach’s diligence in studying the works of the masters, it seems likely that she would have known such an important collection as Schwanengesang. Still, as Block points out, Beach’s and Schubert’s settings are quite different, making it unlikely that Beach modeled her work on Schubert’s or was even influenced by it.27

Heine cast his poem in three quatrains and, like so many of his poems, establishes an emotion that then is twisted in the final couplet, the “sting at the tail.” According to Charles Brauner, “Almost always, such lines require us to reassess our reaction to what went before, but the reassessment only occasionally involves reconstruction of irony.”28 In this case, Heine leaves the reader unaware until the end that the narrator’s beloved whose picture he is viewing has left him. Beach set the intense agony of these lines by hurtling toward a climax on “und ach!” followed by a recitative-like declamation of the final couplet. She repeated the final line pianississimo and ends with a piano postlude of such acute melancholy as those of Robert Schumann’s Dichterliebe.

27 Ibid., 152

Beach retained the structure of Heine’s poem in her setting, separating strophes with piano interludes and observing punctuation and syllabic accents.\textsuperscript{29} She set the first couplet of the first and second quatrain with identical melodies, varying the accompaniment while retaining its harmonies. She intensified the final quatrain by beginning it similarly, only a third higher. Beach conveyed Heine’s pathos through melodic dissonances on accented beats and syllables, augmented-sixth chords, and diminished and augmented melodic intervals. Block writes: “Throughout, dissonance prevails, further underscoring grief, with few moments of consonant harmony. Yet the tonality is quite stable and rarely in doubt—perhaps a reflection of the stasis the poem projects.”\textsuperscript{30}

As Block contends, Beach changed relatively little of the song when she revised it into the Piano Trio, “There is, however, an increased level of dissonance and chromaticism, as well as a floating tonality in several places before the tonic, F-sharp minor, is reestablished.”\textsuperscript{31} Beach greatly increased the poignancy (Heine’s term \textit{Wehmuth} is most apt for the anguish portrayed in “Allein”) in the Trio, heightening the contrast to the scherzo-like B section. The key change from the G-minor of “Allein” to the F-sharp minor of the \textit{Trio} is hardly insignificant. Beach was synesthetic and from an early age associated colors with pitches and key areas. F-sharp minor, along with C-sharp minor, are Beach’s two blacks keys and the keys of some of her most heartbreaking pieces, including the Piano Quintet, Piano Concerto, and \textit{Variations on Balkan Themes}.

\textsuperscript{29} As mentioned above, Beach studied languages during her brief formal education at the Whittemore school, apparently assimilating them quite easily and also studying them while practicing technique at the piano. Beach later spent time in Germany and other European countries where her ease at learning languages must have been quite useful.

\textsuperscript{30} Block, \textit{Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian}, 152.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 262.
Beach developed the thematic material from “Allein” in the Trio in a process similar to that in the *Romance* and to those of Brahms. While Beach quoted the melody of nearly the entire first stanza in the ‘cello, she used that of the first phrase as the basis for development. As early as the violin’s entrance in m. 11, she derived a counter-melody from that theme. [See Example 3.13.] Through the first A section, she developed the theme sequentially to peak first at m. 17, and then finally at m. 24, an example of the wave-like arches that are a hallmark of Beach’s style. The second A section begins identically to the first but proceeds differently: again she developed the melody of the first line of text, extending it and reaching higher for the movement’s climax at m. 163. [See Example 3.14.]

Ex. 3.13. Beach, Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violincello, Op. 150: Lento espressivo, mm. 11–18, violin.
As in her other works in this category, Beach included the introduction from “Allein,” here extended by an opening statement of the theme by the violin and 'cello in octaves and intensified by added chromaticism.  [See Example 3.15.]  She also included the accompaniment with similar harmonies and figuration but over a thicker texture and motivically derived melodic material.  These sections of the Trio become almost a musical impression of the anguish presented in Heine’s poem, as Brahms painted the rain in the finale of the G-Major Violin Sonata.  Like most of Beach’s works that start quietly, climb and fall gradually to several
increasingly higher points, to finally subside through a suspended and measured denouement, the second movement ends softly. Unlike most of her compositions, however, which rarely include such wildly contrasting material, it encompasses some of Beach’s most ebullient and most wrenchingly sorrowful music.

Conclusion

In discussing the music of Schubert and Mahler, Christopher Gibbs wrote:

The Romantic Lied had an impact far beyond the newly prominent genre of modest-scale works sung in German with piano accompaniment. The infiltration of song into instrumental compositions, the ability of song to convey meanings both private and public, its alliance with new genres (for example, the lyric keyboard piece and the song/symphony), testify to a far greater significance. For some composers from Schubert to Mahler (but for those two especially), song was central to their conception of instrumental music.32

To Schubert and Mahler could be added Brahms and Beach. Both composers set over a hundred texts by dozens of poets. Both as well were influenced by folk songs and incorporated a wide variety of them in their compositions. All four composers crafted instrumental works that reveal a fundamental song-like conception of composition through a concentration on lyricism and the absorption of actual songs into their compositions. Beach’s works examined thus far all share the modest proportions of the art song. They all use similar instrumentation, the piano and one or two melodic instruments. The works discussed in the next chapter expand the dimensions of the song to Mahlerian proportions: the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C-sharp Minor, Op. 45 and the “Gaelic” Symphony in E Minor, Op. 32.

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CHAPTER 4: EXTENDED COMPOSITIONS WITH MULTIPLE THEMES DERIVED FROM A SONG

It was he [Henry Beach] more than any one else who encouraged my interest upon the field of musical composition in the larger forms. It was pioneer work, at least for this country, for a woman to do, and I was fearful that I had not the skill to carry it on, but his constant assurance that I could do the work, and keen criticism whenever it seemed to be weak in spots, gave me the courage to go on.¹

Amy Beach

So Beach wrote in 1935, twenty-five years after her husband died, almost forty years after Emil Paur led the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the premiere of her “Gaelic” Symphony. Until her courtship by Henry Beach, Amy Beach concentrated primarily upon her career as a pianist, composing mostly piano pieces for her own performance and songs. With her husband’s encouragement, she composed a Mass in E-flat, Op. 5 (1890), the “Gaelic” Symphony in E Minor, Op. 32 (1894–6), a Piano Concerto in C-sharp Minor, Op. 45 (1899), as well as numerous choral works with orchestral accompaniment and the concert aria Eilende Wolken, Segler die Lüfte, Op. 17 (1892). The common feature among these works, besides the use of orchestra, is the formal guidance of a text. Even in her two purely instrumental works (the Symphony and Piano Concerto), Beach derived several themes from a song.

The type of borrowing found in the symphony and piano concerto represents the third category of her self-borrowing from art-song. Category three works are scored for large orchestra and contain several multi-thematic movements, with at least one theme derived from a song. Category three differs from categories one and two in that the works are substantially longer, both as a whole and in the lengths of the individual movements. Beach scored the category three works for a large orchestra rather than the solo keyboard of category one or the small chamber ensembles of category two. Like the category-two works, Beach derived a theme

¹ Beach to Mrs. Edwin H. Wiggers, 24 August 1935 (Philanthropic Educational Organization Archives, Chapter R, New York, NY), quoted in Block, Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian, 48.
from a portion of one of her art songs; however, instead of using this theme as the basis of the entire composition, she crafted multi-thematic, sonata-form movements. Like both categories one and two, the underlying song is easily recognizable, and Beach included both the vocal and piano parts. Beach took motives from the whole song, often incorporating the entire melody in some guise, combining and varying them extensively. In the category three works Beach borrowed substantial amounts of material from her art songs, proving in these works her skill at elaborate development from a modest foundation. This chapter investigates Beach’s integration of her art songs in her two largest instrumental works and through an examination of motivic and thematic development places her in the tradition of late-Romantic monumentalism begun by Beethoven in which vocal techniques become increasingly and inextricably entwined with instrumental composition.

“Gaelic” Symphony in E minor, Op. 32: I. Allegro con fuoco and “Dark is the Night,” Op. 11, No. 1

I want you to know how much Mr. Parker and I enjoyed your symphony on Saturday evening. It is full of fine things, melodically, harmonically, and orchestrally, and mighty well built besides. I always felt a thrill of pride myself whenever I hear a fine work by any one of us, and as such you will have to be counted in, whether you will or not—one of the boys.  

George Whitefield Chadwick

Beach began composing her first and only symphony in January of 1894, then in her late twenties. Emil Paur led the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the premiere of her Symphony in E minor, “Gaelic,” Op. 32 in a pair of concerts on 30–31 October 1896. According to friend,

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2 Autograph Album, no. 68 (University of New Hampshire, Dimon Library, Beach Collection 51), quoted in Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 103.

3 Kalmus bizarrely published the “Gaelic” Symphony as Beach’s *Symphony No. 2*, but gives no indication as to what “Symphony No. 1” could be.
MacDowell Colony comrade, and biographer Walter Jenkins, the work “enjoyed the greatest success of any American symphony by any composer of Mrs. Beach’s generation.” While hardly the staple of orchestral repertoire that the symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms are today, the “Gaelic” Symphony continues to enjoy periodic performance by modern orchestras. In 1931 *The Musical Leader* wrote: “Although almost forty years old yet the work has a freshness, spontaneity, charming melodic contour and orchestration that reflect the pure romanticism of its period. Mrs. Beach may well be proud of this lovely work which aroused a large audience to great enthusiasm.” After Emil Paur and the Boston Symphony’s performance of the “Gaelic” Symphony in New York on 27 March 1897, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* touted Beach’s work as “remarkable, for she is not yet thirty years of age, and is of American education as well as Yankee in birth. It would not be in the least surprising after a publication of this example of her writings, should she develop as marked a gift for orchestral composition as that of Raff or St. Saens [sic].” Beach’s education was not only American, but self-administered, and the tribute to her skills of orchestration are all the more impressive when considering the absence of recordings.

Beach’s designation of the symphony as “Gaelic” drew considerable discussion following its introduction. The *Boston Courier’s* review of the premiere reads:

Mrs. Beach entitled her symphony *Gaelic*. Just why does not openly appear. Perhaps because some melody comes to its close with the peculiar drop which is accepted as significant of Celtic music, although it is found elsewhere. But, probably, as we would guess, rather because its moods are significant of those which history and poetry have roused in the composer’s mind and heart, and are intended to hint to the hearer the windy

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5 “Women Composers Honor Mrs. Beach,” *The Musical Leader* 60, no. 6 (5 February 1931), 8, quoted in Brown, *Amy Beach and Her Chamber Music*, 94.

waste, the gloomy world, the strange sadness, the scarcely less strange gayety and the restless combative spirit of the land and life of the ideal Gael.\footnote{Boston Courier (no other citation), quoted in Jenkins, The Remarkable Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, 38.}

And in the \textit{Brooklyn Daily Eagle}: “Her symphony is called \textit{Gaelic} because of its Gaelic rhythms, and the use of a melodic figure that is like the opening of \textit{The Campbells Are Coming}. This figure is played upon in the symphonic fashion, its best use being in the Siciliana.”\footnote{Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 28 March 1897, quoted in Jenkins, The Remarkable Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, 40.} And Henry Krehbiel of the \textit{New York Tribune} wrote: “She has called it ‘Gaelic’ and justified the epithet by the use of some melodies with Irish rhythms and turns, but the task of stamping the whole work with a spirit which would be recognized as characteristically Gaelic seem to have been beyond her powers.”\footnote{Henry Krehbiel, New York Tribune, [n.d], quoted in Jenkins, The Remarkable Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, 41.}

Despite the critics guesses as to the meaning of the caption “Gaelic,” Beach had done her homework. In preparation for the symphony’s composition, Beach studied Irish history and read the Dublin-based magazine \textit{The Citizen}, published in 1841, which included Irish folk melodies.\footnote{Block, Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian, 88.} Beach adopted four of these melodies to use in her symphony, writing that they “sprang from the common joys, sorrows, adventures and struggles of a primitive people. Their simple, rugged and unpretentious beauty led me to ‘take my pen in hand’ and try to develop their ideas in symphonic form.”\footnote{Caryl B. Storr, “Program Notes” [1917] (Beach Clipping File, New York Public Library, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, Music Research Division), quoted in ibid., 88.} Beach used “Conchobhar ua Raghallaigh Cluann” (Connor O’Reilly of Clounish) as the closing theme of the first movement, “Goirtin Ornadh” (The Little Field of Barley) as the theme
of the second movement, and in the third movement “Paisdin Fuinne” (The Lively Child) or “Cushlamachree” and “Cia an Bealach a Deachaidh Si” (Which way did she go?).

For the remaining themes Beach turned to her song “Dark Is the Night!,” Op. 11, No. 1. Beach had composed the song in 1890 on a text by William Ernest Henley. The following year she had performed it with Mrs. W. F. Whitney on a March 23 program to benefit the family of deceased teacher and composer Calira Lavallee. Beach composed several songs depicting the sea, including “Empress of Night,” Op. 2, No. 3, “In the Twilight,” Op. 85, the three *Songs of the Sea*, Op. 6, and “Dark Is the Night.” Rupert Hughes compared the song to Schubert’s “Erlking” [sic], “but highly original and tremendously fierce and eerie.” The songs are similar in their ferocity, however, unlike the story enacted through multiple characters in Schubert’s lied, Beach’s narrator merely describes a scene, the song’s affect remains consistent throughout.

Henley cast his poem in two quatrains, the lines alternate iambic tetrameter and trimeter with a simple abab cdcd rhyme scheme. The narrator paints a stormy night at sea, the tempest reflecting his (or her) own thoughts. He gives a fleeting nod toward happier times, before catapulting back into the present, violent storm. Beach changed the structure of the poem by setting it in a modified ternary form. She drew on the relative calm of the first two lines of the second strophe for the middle section, placing it in the parallel major, then returning to the initial


14 For more information, see Heather L. Nehre, “An Examination of the Musical Treatment of the Ocean in Selected Works by Amy Beach,” Ph.D. diss., Washington University, in progress.

turbulence for “A wild wind shakes the wilder sea.” The melody for this line became the primary theme for the first movement of the “Gaelic” Symphony.

Beach made no mention of “Dark Is the Night” in her analysis of the Gaelic Symphony. This omission implies that Beach did not want or expect listeners to associate the song and its text with the symphony. Yet the musical evidence of the connection between “Dark Is the Night” and the “Gaelic” Symphony is incontrovertible. Beach used “Dark Is the Night” for both primary and secondary themes in the symphony’s first movement. In addition, she derived her primary theme for the fourth movement from a motive of the song and anticipated this theme at the end of the first movement. Beach developed extensively each element borrowed from “Dark Is the Night.” In her analysis of the symphony, she wrote: “The subject is fully developed, leading through several keys and with many rhythmical changes in the melody. There is no subsidiary theme or phrase that is not the direct outcome of the principal subject in some of its modified forms.”

Such extensive development lends credence to the argument that Beach adopted material from her art songs because of its compositional potential, not in order to allude to the subject of the songs’ texts. As in the works of Schubert, “the musical material was projected into a new context in which it could germinate according to its own lights to produce new growths.”

While there is no evidence that Beach intended the listener to identify the foundational song or to associate the song’s text to the instrumental work, Block in her analysis of the piano concerto and myself elsewhere in this study argue for the possibility of the piano being Beach’s subconscious personification of herself in her compositions. As well as borrowing the vocal part

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16 Amy Beach, “Self-Analysis of the ‘Gaelic’ Symphony,” typed transcription, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire, Durham, Box 4, folder 6.

17 Newbould, Schubert, 160. Passage quoted in full in Chapter 1.
of the song, Beach modified the piano accompaniment into a “murmuring chromatic figure” for strings.\textsuperscript{18} In every other instance of borrowing from her art songs, Beach retained the piano part in the new work’s instrumentation. Although the piano is not physically present in the “Gaelic” Symphony, its “voice” is not silenced.

The reorchestrated accompaniment of “Dark Is the Night” dominates the first movement of the “Gaelic” Symphony. As in the song, the passage begins the work, “its chromatic whizzing evok[ing] the turbulent sea surrounding the Emerald Isle.”\textsuperscript{19} The accompaniment propels the music to the entrance of the primary theme in the horns. [See Examples 4.1a–b.] In addition to accompanying the primary theme, it precedes and accompanies the secondary theme and heralds important structural points in the movement.


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\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Block, \textit{Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian}, 96.
Example 4.1b. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. Allegro con fuoco, mm. 1–19, strings.
Beach took her second theme from the relatively placid middle section of “Dark Is the Night.” Although the mode is major, Beach did not change the accompanimental figuration. Hence the “murmuring strings” accompanying the E-minor primary theme, and the secondary theme in G major are virtually indistinguishable, especially when the latter key is reconciled in the recapitulation. Moreover, the key during the introduction to the secondary theme is unclear until the solo clarinet plays the theme at m. 115. [See Example 4.2.] In addition, the accompaniment announces the beginning of the development section, or as Beach called it, the “free fantasia.” [See Example 4.3.] This motive, stated pianissimo in the violas, quietly sets up the development of the second theme. [See Example 4.4.]

Example 4.2. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 107–20, strings.

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20 Beach, Self-analysis, 1.
Example 4.3. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 167–74, strings.

Example 4.4. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony I. mm. 215–19, strings.

Block wrote that the murmuring figure is “both a driving and a unifying element”; it unifies the primary and secondary themes, and appears as a ritornello throughout the movement.\(^{21}\) It also propels toward the climax within the development, played by the violins and violas two octaves above its original range and for the first time above \textit{piano}, in fact, \textit{fortissimo}.

\(^{21}\) Block, \textit{Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian}, 96.
Two further instances of the accompanimental figure warrant discussion: following Beethoven’s example in his fifth and ninth symphonies, Beach composed a recitative-like clarinet solo immediately preceding the recapitulation. The viola punctuates the clarinet melody with just a faint murmur of the accompanimental pattern and anticipates two measures earlier the true recapitulation at m. 329. [See Example 4.5.] The second instance occurs in the coda: the strings play the figure in stretto, initiating the final drive to the finish. [See Example 4.6.]

Example 4.5. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 319–33.
Beach included the entire melody of “Dark Is the Night” in some form in the first
movement of the “Gaelic” Symphony. She took the primary theme, placed in the trumpets at m.
17, from the return of the initial E-minor turbulence at m. 43, accompanying the text “A wild wind shakes the wilder sea.” The horns answer the theme at the level of the dominant; this phrase, however is identical to ones in the voice in mm. 12–15 and 16–19. [See Examples 4.7a–c.]


Example 4.7a. Beach, “Dark Is the Night,” mm. 43–46, voice.

Example 4.7b. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony,” mm. 17–21, trumpet.

Example 4.7c. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, mm. 21–25, horn.
Even before the entrance of the second theme group Beach introduced variations of the primary theme, the first of these is an extension of the horn call motive [see Example 4.8], the second is taken directly from the vocal part of “Dark Is the Night” and is the germ of the primary theme of movement four. Beach quoted mm. 13–25 of “Dark Is the Night” in the violins in mm. 59–71. [See Example 4.9a–b.] She expanded the single common-time measure (m. 24 in “Dark is the Night”; m. 70 in the symphony) into a four-measure phrase at the end of the movement that then becomes the primary theme of Movement IV. [See Example 4.10.] Beach wrote in her analysis of the symphony: “The subject is fully developed, leading through several keys and with many rhythmical changes in the melody. There is no subsidiary theme or phrase that is not the direct outcome of the principal subject in some of its modified forms.”22


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22 Beach, Self-analysis, 5.
Example 4.9b. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 59–71, violins.


In conjunction with the primary theme in Movement I (P1), Beach used a second theme taken from the first part of “Dark Is the Night,” setting the words “The sky of driving cloud,” in mm. 8–11 (P2). Beach first introduced P2 in the winds in mm. 26–30 and again in the flutes in mm. 41–46. [See Examples 4.11a–b.] Beach developed this theme extensively in the development, making a composite of a variant of P1 and P2. [See Example 4.12.] She used the pattern of a tied note, followed by a downward step, a downward leap and a return up a third as a transitory motive throughout the development. [See Example 4.13.]

Example 4.11a. “Dark Is the Night,” mm. 8–11, voice.

Example 4.11b. “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 26–30, winds.
Example 4.12. “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 183–90, trumpet.


For her second theme, Beach returned to “Dark Is the Night,” this time to the calm middle section, accompanying the words “Where are the hours that came to me/So beautiful, so beautiful and bright?” Like the primary theme, the second is in two parts, the first (S1) comprising mm. 28–33 of the song and presented by the clarinet in mm. 114–19 in the symphony. [See Example 4.14a–b.] Beach took the second part of the theme from mm. 35–39 of “Dark Is the Night” and placed it again in the clarinet in mm. 123–29. [See Example 4.15a–b.]


Example 4.14b. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 114–19, clarinet.

Example 4.15b. Beach, “Gaelic” Symphony, I. mm. 122–29, clarinet.

To summarize, in her first work for orchestra Beach crafted a large work out of a relatively small amount of musical material, some of which she derived from her own song “Dark Is the Night.” While the resemblance of the symphony to the song is evident to those who know both, Beach did not publicize the genesis of her ideas, nor did she comment on any extra-musical implications implied by that genesis. Instead, she recognized the potential of the earlier composition and used it as the musical foundation for the symphony. The techniques Beach used to manipulate the musical material in the symphony are further honed and displayed in her other large work for orchestra, the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C-sharp minor, Op. 45.

Piano Concerto in C-sharp Minor, Op. 45

A magnificent romantic concerto, opening with a bold bravura cadenza and leading into some of the most melting melodies and technical fireworks a pianist could desire—plus a rich orchestra score. How could this work have remained unheard for the last six decades?

Mary Louise Boehm, liner notes to Beach: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

On 7 April 1900, Amy Beach premiered her new Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C-sharp Minor, Op. 45 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Wilhelm Gericke, the same conductor who twenty years earlier had recommended that she “teach herself composition by studying the great masters.”23 After her husband’s death, the concerto became

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23 Block, Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian, 40.
Beach’s virtuosic vehicle, taking her across the United States and Germany. While the concerto was Beach’s first and only attempt at composing for piano and orchestra, she had previously performed at least six concertos with orchestra, beginning with her debut on 24 October 1883 of Moscheles’s Concerto No. 2 in G minor with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Adolph Neuendorff. She also performed Chopin’s Concerto in F Minor, Op. 21, Mendelssohn’s Concerto in D minor, Op. 40, Mozart’s Concerto in D minor, K. 466, Beethoven’s Concerto in C Minor, Op. 37, and Saint-Saëns Concerto in G minor, Op. 22. In addition, Block believes that Beach was familiar with Tchaikovsky’s first concerto through the Boston Symphony’s three performances of it and “may have used it, as well as the Saint-Saëns, as a model for contentiousness.” Katina Rushing argues that the concertos of Chopin, Liszt, Tchaikovsky and Grieg influenced the pianistic figuration and passagework of Beach’s concerto. Furthermore, she shows similarities between Beach’s concerto and Brahms’s second concerto in the movement structure (both concertos have four movements, the second of which is a fast scherzo) and harmonic language. Also, she writes: “A similarity to Brahms can be seen in Beach’s use of the piano as part of the orchestra. In the concertos of both Beach and Brahms, the piano part is often accompanimental, functioning as a member of the ensemble rather than as featured soloist.” Although Beach did not perform Brahms’s concerto, her affinity towards his music was shown earlier, and it is likely that she was familiar with the work. Rushing also suggests that Beach may have been influenced by Edward MacDowell’s second piano concerto.

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24 Ibid., 131
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
in D: the second movement of each is a scherzo dominated by sixteenth-notes, and both concertos are cyclic. While MacDowell’s concerto contains only three movements, the third movement has a largo introduction.

The first performance of Beach’s concerto drew considerable notice and criticism. The critics most frequently disparaged Beach’s orchestration, such as in this review in the *Boston Herald*: “The orchestration is steadily thick and noisy, and too frequently so massive that the solo instrument does not and cannot loom through it. The score would benefit greatly by a severe thinning out.”28 The *Globe* condemned Beach, and indeed all women composers, writing that she “like nearly all her sex, lacked the power of coping with an orchestra like the Boston Symphony, especially where so many fortissimo passages occur, and the consequence was an obscuration of some of the piano score.”29 Louis Elson in the Boston Daily Advertiser wrote, “The orchestration swallows up the piano in many passages and the solo instrument is not employed in sounding forth bold themes in its own definite style, but in giving constant fioriture, scales and ornate passages against rather vague themes in the orchestra.”30 Philip Hale lamented that Beach “never had a thorough, severe drill in theory and orchestration,” unaware of the rigorous regimen Beach put herself through.31

Between her first performance of the concerto in 1900 and her European performances of it in 1913, Beach must have modified the orchestration as subsequent critics praised the balance and treatment of the instruments:

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30 Louis C. Elson, *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 9 April 1900, quoted in Macdonald, 44.

We have before us undeniably a possessor of musical gifts of the highest kind; a musical nature touched with genius. Strong creative power, glowing fancy, instinct for form and color are united in her work with facile and effortless mastery of the entire technical apparatus. To this is added charm of poetic mood, delicacy and grace of melody, and a gift for rich, soulful harmonization. The piano concerto was played by Amy Beach herself...in a style which revealed her as an excellent pianist, with brilliant technique and contagious rhythm. This work finds its highest point in the opening allegro—a surpassing movement, rich in ideas in the romantic element, and marked by its refined treatment not only of the solo instrument, but of the orchestra.\textsuperscript{32}

The \textit{Berlin deutsche Reichsanzeiger} claimed after Beach’s third German performance on 18 December 1913: “The artistic manner in which the concerto is worked out undeniably reveals an independence of character and personality, and a remarkable knowledge of the art of instrumentation.”\textsuperscript{33}

Upon her return to the U.S., Beach performed the concerto six more times between 1915 and 1917, in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis, and Boston. As before, reviews were mixed. Edward C. Moore with the \textit{Chicago Journal} wrote:

The composer evidently gave much care and thought to the construction of the work. Its working out is painstaking; its balance between solo instrument and orchestra is excellent…. [However,] the musical ideas of the work are not of the notable kind that command attention and stick to the memory. There are very few themes in all four movements that flow, that possess the powerful vitality which every large work ought to set forth.\textsuperscript{34}

And Karleton Hackett of the \textit{Evening Post} complained:

It was not apparently conceived as an organic whole in which the piano formed but one of the essential elements, but it took form rather as a series of soli for the piano about which the orchestra was written. This gave it a somewhat disjointed effect, with the orchestra appearing and disappearing in a rather confusing manner.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32}“Amy Beach in Hamburg,” \textit{The Musical Courier} 67 (31 December 1913): 50, quoted in Rushing, 24.

\textsuperscript{33}“Berlin’s Praise of Mrs. Beach,” \textit{The Musical Courier} 68 (25 February 1914): 13, quoted in Rushing, 24.


\textsuperscript{35}Karleton Hackett, [Review], \textit{Evening Post}, 5 February 1916, quoted in Macdonald, 50.
Still, Richard L. Stokes of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* praised:

One’s first impression was that here was one of the most amazing bravura displays ever conceived…. But soon it was borne in upon the mind that every one of these dazzling notes had its inevitable place and meaning; that not one of them was introduced for mere ornament or parade.\(^{36}\)

The *Boston Transcript* also lauded the work as being “at the golden mean that treats a concerto neither as a virtuoso piece for the solo instrument with accompanying band or as a symphonic piece that happens to add a piano to the other instrumental voices.”\(^{37}\) The *Boston Journal*, on the other hand, placed the concerto on the other end of the balance spectrum, writing, “The regard for the piano as a solo instrument subdues the orchestra so that the beautiful cantilene \([sic]\) melody which it sings against the piano accompaniment is hardly to be heard at all.”\(^{38}\)

Adrienne Fried Block in her analysis of Beach’s concerto argues that because of the presence of three art songs associated with Beach’s husband and mother and the “contentious” relationship between piano and orchestra the concerto can be considered a “veritable autobiography” in which the piano personifies Beach herself and the orchestra Beach’s home life.\(^{39}\) Block launches her argument from Beach’s statement: “[A] composer might remain apparently unaffected by even the most terrible onslaught upon all that was deepest in his life, and years afterward give expression in music, perhaps unconsciously, to all that the experience had cost him.” Therefore, Beach concludes, a composition can become a “veritable


\(^{37}\) *Boston Transcript*, 3 March 1917, quoted in Macdonald, 52.


\(^{39}\) Block, “A Veritable Autobiography”? The Piano Concerto,” in *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*. 

95
autobiography.‖ Block suggests that the hiatus in Beach’s performance career provided such an onslaught and that the “concerto offered Beach a medium to ‘give expression in music’ to the central conflict with husband and mother over control of her musical life…. Beach would make the struggle between forces the central issue of her concerto. As soloist and composer, the pianist’s lead could hardly be challenged.” Block traces the piano from unequal to equal contestant to victor, writing “this evolution suggests a plot that encapsulates the most important issue of Beach’s life, her struggle for the freedom to play whenever and wherever she chose.”

Block bases her argument on the three art songs that Beach incorporated into the concerto. “Jeune fille et jeune fleur,” Op. 1, No. 3, which Beach quoted in the first movement, relates the grief of a father as his young daughter is buried. Block writes, “The poem may well have been heavy with symbolism for Beach: her suitor, then husband, a bit older than her father, had ‘buried’ her ambitions as a pianist even as he obliterated her name and replaced it with his.” Henry Beach sang “Jeune fille” one year prior to his marriage to Beach. Beach based her second movement on “Empress of Night,” Op. 2, No. 3, a setting of her husband’s text dedicated to her mother. Block suggests that Beach personified her mother who had taken to sitting in the room with her as she composed the melody of the song. In addition, she writes, “In the second movement of the concerto, Beach may have recognized and suppressed her mother’s voice as she had learned to do while composing.” Beach based both the third and fourth movements on her song “Twilight,” Op. 2, No. 1, also on a text by her husband. While Block’s argument is persuasive, especially in light of Beach’s own statement that a composition can function as a


41 Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 131.

42 Ibid., 141.

43 Ibid., 132.
“veritable autobiography” and can provide a personal interpretation of the work, the analysis is based primarily on interpretive reading. As with the “Gaelic” Symphony, Beach did not publicize her source material or discuss any intimate connection to the work. She seemed to desire the concerto, like her symphony, to be evaluated on purely musical and compositional terms.

Beach composed her concerto in four movements rather than the traditional three. Only the third movement is in a slow tempo, the other three lengthy movements demand such virtuosity and endurance from the performer as those concertos of Liszt and Rachmaninoff, also composed as vehicles for the composer’s own performance. None of the three songs, all composed around the time of her marriage in 1885, “Jeune fille et jeune fleur,” “Empress of Night,” and “Twilight,” were commercially or popularly successful: they were performed by Beach, her husband, and others in salon settings but never reached the popularity of some of her later songs, such as “The Year’s at the Spring.” It is unlikely therefore, that Beach by incorporating her songs into her concerto was attempting to capitalize on their success as Schubert did in his “Trout” Quintet. As in her analysis of the “Gaelic” Symphony, Beach made no reference to the songs in her descriptions of the concerto for the Los Angeles Examiner in 1915 and in the program notes for the performances in St. Louis and Chicago, suggesting that she did not necessarily expect or desire listeners to recognize their presence.44

Chateaubriand wrote his poem “Jeune fille et jeune fleur” in four stanzas, each ending with the titular line. Beach’s song is through-composed, its form similar to an operatic scena. Beach set the first stanza in a recitative-style with a chordal accompaniment. The second stanza combines an arioso-like melody with piano tremolos evocative of orchestral string writing. The

44 Amy Beach, “Californians Fête Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” The Musical Courier 70 (14 July 1915): 7; Amy Beach, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Program Notes, 12–13 January 1917, reprinted in Rushing, 73.
final two stanzas feature a more tuneful melody and pianistic accompaniment. The song as a whole lacks the coherence of material and form, the sweeping melodies, and sweet sonorities typical of Beach’s compositions. In the first movement of the piano concerto Beach took the song’s most effective moments and developed them.

Block suggests that Beach derived her primary theme from the introduction to “Jeune fille et jeune fleur.” The two motives bear a slight resemblance to each other, sharing only, as Block says, the key of C-sharp minor, a “serious affect,” and “falling modal scales.” In addition, they both have the opening rhythm of long-short-short. That, however, is the extent of the similarity. The concerto theme lacks the distinctive augmented second of the song. It begins on the tonic rather than the dominant of the song and has a very different melodic profile. [See Example 4.16a–b.]


Beach clearly derived her secondary theme from the music setting the first line of the poem’s third stanza. The text “You sleep, poor Elisa, as lightly as the year you were born” occurs at the beginning of the aria-like section. The first part of the phrase returns as the piano

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postlude. As customary, Beach presented the secondary theme in the piano alone. Her treatment of the borrowed material is similar to her techniques she used in her transcriptions of songs (category two): the relative positions of melody and accompaniment is preserved, the accompaniment is accurately maintained with only minor changes. Beach composed the original music in “Jeune fille” in the key of D-flat Major, her violet key, and the enharmonic parallel major of the beginning key, C-sharp minor, a black key. The secondary theme in the concerto is in the relative major, A, Beach’s green key. Beach retained the profile of the first phrase of the melody, filling in some of the intervals to create a more moving, compelling melody. [See Example 4.16a–b.]

Example 4.17a. Beach, “Jeune fille et jeune fleur,” mm. 38–43.
As in the later movements, Beach derived nearly all of the music in the secondary sections from the original theme. A solo violin makes the second statement of the theme, while the piano plays material derived from the accompaniment. Immediately preceding the cadenza, Beach stripped the melody bare, placing the fundamental descending chromatic scale first in the piano, then in the clarinet. [See Example 4.18.] Beach reworked the theme most substantially in the development. A poignant minor-mode statement in the piano capitalizes on its yearning chromaticism in an increasingly fervent crescendo. [See Example 4.19.]
Example 4.18. Beach, Concerto, I. mm. 341–51.

Example 4.19, Concerto, I. mm. 268–74, piano.
Beach described every motive in the second movement from “Empress of Night,” demonstrating definitively her skill at development, suggested in the secondary areas of the first movement. Henry Beach cast his poem in six quatrains with the rhyme scheme abab. In setting the poem, Amy Beach coupled every two lines, creating impetus and symmetry not found in the original. Like most of her songs, “Empress of Night” is through-composed; however, Beach organized it in two sections, setting the first line of each similarly. The accompaniment is almost intrusive with its unabating sixteenth-notes and wide range. The accompaniment that invades the song, dominates the concerto.

Beach described the second movement as “consist[ing] of a piquant etude rhythm unbroken throughout the piano part, set against an orchestral background that sings in the stringed instruments.” Her comparison to an etude is apt, the movement is an unbroken stream of pianistic aerobics; chromatics, scales in thirds and sixths by both hands or within one, octaves, arpeggios, stride accompaniments, and little melodic or musical substance. Beach subtitles the movement “perpetuum mobile” and directs the pianist to play *sempre staccato*, both of which contribute to the sense of relentless calisthenics. Beach derived all of this material from the original accompaniment of “Empress of Night,” quoting the first six measures nearly verbatim.

In both song and concerto, the piano repeats the melody only once, in both cases after it had been presented by another party: in mm. 193–94 of the concerto, the pianist plays the melody from mm. 12–13 of the song, just heard by the violin; in mm. 25–26 of the song, the pianist repeats the melody just sung. This last fragment becomes the secondary theme of the concerto movement.

46 Beach, “Beach’s Notes on the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 45,” *Los Angeles Examiner*, 7 June 1915, quoted in Rushing, 73.

47 “Empress of Night” is in common time, while the second movement of the concerto is in 2/4. Hence, six measures of the song is equal to twelve of the concerto.
Beach organized the melodic material of her through-composed song into a large ternary-form movement for piano and orchestra, incorporating nearly the entire melody in the concerto. [See Table 1.] She derived the material in the A section from the first two phrases of “Empress of Night.” [See Example 4.20a–b.] She stated the entire phrase once, then subjected it to extensive development. As mentioned above, the piano plays only one short melodic phrase in both the song and in the concerto. In “Empress of Night,” it reiterates the melody that had accompanied the line “Kissing the sea foam that flies in the air”; Beach used this phrase as the secondary theme of the concerto. [See Example 4.21a–b.] In the concerto the piano plays neither the primary or secondary theme, but quotes the melody accompanying the line “Falleth her jewels on ev’ry side.” The clarinet anticipates the fragment in combination with the secondary theme. [See Example 4.22.] Beach used it as an introduction into the return of the primary material after the cadenza, placing it in the violin and piano. [See Example 4.23.]
Table 1. “Empress of Night” in Piano Concerto, II. Scherzo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Measures in Song</th>
<th>Measures in Concerto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Radiant with Light</td>
<td>2–3</td>
<td>13–14; 31–32; 35–36; 75–76; 201–202; 219–20; 247–48; 269–70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shineth her Brightness, Empress of Night</td>
<td>3–5</td>
<td>15–18, 203–205, 221–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As granules of gold, From her lofty height</td>
<td>6–7</td>
<td>20–22; 208–10; 226–28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or cataract bold</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>211–12; 229–30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazing sight [1]</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>213–14; 231–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falleth her jewels on ev’ry side</td>
<td>12–13</td>
<td>117–18; 189–91, 193–94; 244–46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting her joybells</td>
<td>13–14</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting her joybells of Christmastide.</td>
<td>15–17</td>
<td>62–63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piercing the tree-boughs</td>
<td>18–19 (=1–2)</td>
<td>11–12, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That wave in the breeze</td>
<td>19–20 (=2–3)</td>
<td>13–14, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting their shadows among dead leaves</td>
<td>20–22</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When tossed from its home</td>
<td>25–26</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In waves so fair;</td>
<td>26–27</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silv’ring all clouds that darken her way,</td>
<td>29–30</td>
<td>117–19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As she lifts the shrouds</td>
<td>30–31</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The shrouds of break(ing day)</td>
<td>32–34</td>
<td>63–63; 252–54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These fragments together comprise the principal theme.
** Secondary theme.
Example 4.20b. Beach, Piano Concerto, II. Scherzo (*Perpetuum mobile*), mm. 9–29.
Example 4.20b, cont.

Example 4.21a. Beach, “Empress of Night,” mm. 23–24.
Example 4.21b. Beach, Piano Concerto, II. mm. 101–104.

Example 4.22. Beach, Piano Concerto, II. mm. 117–22, clarinet.
Example 4.23. Beach, Piano Concerto, II. mm. 188–201.
Beach described the piano concerto as containing four movements, the last two of which are played *attaca*. She characterized the movements thus: “The slow movement is a dark, tragic lament, which, after working up to an impassioned climax, passes through a very soft transition phase directly into the last movement, a bright vivacious rondo. Before the close there comes a repetition of the lament theme, with varied development, quickly followed by a renewal of the rondo and then a coda.”

The “lament theme” to which she refers comes from her song “Twilight,” Op. 2, No. 3, also on a text by her husband, published in 1887. The poem relates in its four stanzas the shadowy silence attendant upon nightfall and the rejuvenating powers of morning. Implicit in the text is a parallel to death and rebirth. Beach reflected the progression in her choice of keys, beginning in a dark E-flat minor, traveling through G-flat major to close with the only definitive cadence in E-flat Major, the key she associated with the color pink. Her setting also suggests a spiritual interpretation especially in the fourth stanza which has a hymn-like chordal accompaniment with low bass notes redolent of organ pedal tones. Most explicitly, Beach marks the last line “*religioso,*” an ascent in the melody to the major third of the chord over a step-wise descending bass line. [See Example 4.24.]

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48 Ibid., 73.
Beach’s “dark, tragic lament” germinates from the broodingly ominous first stanza of “Twilight.” Henry Beach’s words “no sun,” darkning cloud,” “mist,” “veil,” “grey,” and “damp” are illustrated in Amy Beach’s orchestral recomposition with intense chromaticism in her black key of F-sharp minor. In the concerto, the piano and orchestra are equals in this movement, sharing thematic material, each having the opportunity to voice their own sorrow. The piano follows the clarinet’s first keening presentation of the theme, seemingly unable to contain a cry of grief. [See Examples 4.25a–b.] Two motives, both resonant of sighs or sobs, infuse the movement. The first motive, from the phrase “but ev’rywhere,” provides a grim harbinger in the introduction. Beach used the second motive, from the opening line “No sun to warm,” in sequences of two in the latter half of the movement, as if, after pouring out her grief, the protagonist can only brokenly repeat a single phrase. This latter motive also provides the basis for the primary theme of the fourth movement.
Example 4.25a. Beach, “Twilight,” mm. 1–11.

Adagio quasi andante

Voice

No sun to warm The dark-ning

Piano

cloud of mist. But ev - ry - where

The steam-y earth sends up A veil of grey and damp.
Although Beach considered the third and fourth movements to be separate movements, she linked them not only cadentially and temporally, but also thematically. Both of the main
themes outline the opening motive from “Twilight,” “No sun to warm.” The sun, however, has come out: the motive now defines in the primary theme the bottom of an A-major triad, rather than the F-sharp minor of the largo. [See Example 4.26.] The sun dazzles in the secondary theme, beginning with the tones sol-mi-re, i.e., “sun to warm.” [See Example 4.27.]

Example 4.26. Piano Concerto IV. Allegro con scioltezza, mm. 1–3.

![Example 4.26. Piano Concerto IV. Allegro con scioltezza, mm. 1–3.](image)

Example 4.27, Beach, Piano Concerto IV. mm. 46–49.

![Example 4.27, Beach, Piano Concerto IV. mm. 46–49.](image)

The clouds of the largo interrupt the ebullience of the fourth movement with a full reprise of the lament theme, shared equally between piano and orchestra. Beach quoted not only the first verse of “Twilight,” the theme of the third movement, but the second stanza as well, played by the piano and ’cello together. [See Examples 4.28a–b.]

Example 4.28a. Beach, “Twilight,” mm. 12–19, voice.

![Example 4.28a. Beach, “Twilight,” mm. 12–19, voice.](image)
Example 4.28b. Beach, Piano Concerto IV. mm. 133–44.
In an interview with Harriette Brower, Beach said: “When I am not playing I am composing and vice versa. I do them both interchangeably and constantly, but not both at the same time. This keeps me fresh for each one. I am a dual personality and lead a double musical life.” This duality is epitomized in the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 45. While it also became her medium to showcase her skills as a pianist, the concerto demonstrates Beach’s skills as a composer. Upon close examination, it manifests her ability to develop material, almost all of which is derived from or inspired by her early songs. It proves, according to a Hamburg critic, Beach “a possessor of musical gifts of the highest kind; a musical nature touched with genius.” The same critic describes the concerto as having “charm of poetic mood, delicacy and grace of melody, and a gift for rich, soulful harmonization,” qualities grounded in their origin as a texted song.

Conclusion

In the wake of Beethoven’s great symphonies the mark of a composer was his ability to compose in large genres. For Amy Beach, it also ranked her as the equal of a man, proving her capable of intricate thematic manipulation for immense forces, “one of the boys.” Yet Romanticists were fascinated with fragments, manifested in music through small forms like character pieces and art songs, and perhaps epitomized in Hugo Wolf’s lied “Auch kleine Dinge.” Beach combined these two fascinations literally, deriving the musical material for her

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50 Hugo Wolf (1860–1903) composed almost exclusively songs for voice and piano, many of which are only a couple pages long. “Auch kleine Dinge” can be considered his anthem, pronouncing that even little things like a pearl or olive (or a small song) can be precious and, while simple, infinitely complex.
two largest orchestral works, the “Gaelic” Symphony and the Piano Concerto, from several of her own art songs. Other composers did this as well, Brahms in his second piano concerto, Mahler in his first three symphonies. Some, as Beethoven and Mahler did in their ninth symphonies, included vocal forces in their symphonies. The genre of the orchestral lied, a song accompanied by orchestra, emerged, many examples, such as those by Mahler, Richard Strauss, and Alban Berg, also exist in versions for piano accompaniment. Still, in Beach’s works, she merged not only the separate worlds of vocal and instrumental but the spheres of influence discussed in Chapter One. In her “Gaelic” Symphony and Piano Concerto, Beach proved not only that a woman is capable of composing in the “masculine” genres, but that the “feminine” genre of song is fertile ground to produce such monumental works.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

For every work of art, there is a seed that gives rise to the entire creation. For a composer, this may be a short motive, a tone-row, a story, or a poem. Over two-thirds of Amy Beach’s compositions are texted works: songs, anthems, choral works, a mass, and an opera. For the remaining works, she found a different point of departure. For some, the Piano Quintet, “Dreaming,” and “Fireflies,” she followed her own advice and used another composition as a model. For others, “A Hermit Thrush at Morn,” From Grandmother’s Garden, she drew inspiration from nature. Others she based on folk melodies, Irish for the Suite for Two Pianos, Eastern European for Variations on Balkan Themes, and Native American for Eskimos and her String Quartet. For others she used her own compositions, sometimes instrumental, but most often art songs.

The works derived from art songs, taken from all periods of Beach’s long and prolific career, can be divided into three categories. The first category encompasses keyboard works that are transcriptions or concert paraphrases of the entire song. Only two works belong to this category: the Ballad for piano, Op. 6, a concert paraphrase on her song “O My Luve Is Like a Red, Red, Rose”; and her piano and organ transcriptions of “Far Awa’!,” Op. 43, No. 4. In both works, Beach incorporated both the melody and accompaniment of the song. The entire song can be traced through the keyboard work; hence, it is appropriate to associate the text of the underlying song with the instrumental work.

The second category consists of works for one to three instruments, always including the piano. In each, Beach borrowed the opening material from the respective song, including the introductory material and original accompaniment, and incorporated the material throughout the

The third category comprises extended, multi-movement works for orchestra. In them, Beach derived at least one theme from a song. While she used long phrases of the song’s melody for the themes themselves, she also took motives from elsewhere in the song for subsidiary themes or in combination with the principal themes. In several cases, she incorporated the entire melody from the song into the orchestral work. Beach derived material in the first and fourth movements of her “Gaelic” Symphony in E minor, Op. 32, from “Dark Is the Night,” Op. 11, No. 1. She based each movement of the Piano Concerto in C-sharp minor, Op. 45, on a song: the first on “Jeune fille et jeune fleur,” Op. 1, No. 3; the second on “Empress of Night,” Op. 2, No.; and the third and fourth on “Twilight,” Op. 2, No. 1.

With the exception of the “Far Awa’!” transcriptions (which have still not been published), Beach did not acknowledge the works derivation from art songs in their publication or in her published writings. While this does not mean that Beach was not consciously or subconsciously associating the song’s text to the instrumental work, it does imply that she did not expect or wish the listener to recognize the composition’s relation to the song and associate the text to it. The songs she chose as sources of material were primarily from early in her career and relatively unknown. Had she wished to capitalize on the popularity of an art song, she might have chosen “The Year’s at the Spring” as the basis of a piano paraphrase. In view of the lack of evidence to the contrary, it seems most likely that Beach chose to recycle from songs because of their compositional potential, rather than for extramusical associations. In her treatment of the
material itself, Beach’s works most closely resemble those works by Liszt and Brahms of similar provenance, such as Liszt’s concert paraphrases and Brahms’s Violin Sonata in G Major, Op. 78.

This study examined one facet of the significance of art song and vocal writing to Beach’s conception of musical composition. Many of the characteristics apparent in the works based on her own art songs, such as the formulation and development of themes, are also present in her other works, those based on folk melodies, or entirely new material. The compositions discussed here come from a variety of musical genres, keyboard transcriptions and character pieces, chamber music, a concerto, and a symphony. And while it would seem that this vocal bedrock for instrumental compositions is far more prevalent in Beach’s output than most composers, the tradition began well before her and continues still. From the songs of Schubert and Schumann came new genres: Lieder ohne Wörte, Nocturnes, transcriptions, and concert paraphrases; and from Ravel, piano tone-poems inspired by poetry in Gaspard de la nuit. Songs gained a second life in chamber music and in the symphony hall, and insinuated themselves into the conception of the most “absolute” music.

This study followed in a recent renaissance of Beach scholarship and performance. In the footsteps of Adrienne Fried Block’s ground-breaking work, much has been written about Beach’s life and music—surveys of her piano music, songs, chamber and choral works, theoretical, critical and historical analyses of her concerto and symphony, studies of her use of folk music, the pedagogical applications of her piano pieces, but as yet this is the first investigation exclusively into the relationship between Beach’s art songs and instrumental music. The analysis presented here illustrated Beach’s compositional procedures, adherence to her own guidelines for young composers, use of models, and employment of small forms as testing-
grounds. The works of Beach studied here chronicle the education of and stand testament to the most successful autodidact in the history of Western music.


“Amy Beach (Mrs. H. H. A. Beach) in Hamburg.” *The Musical Courier* (31 August 1914), 50; translated from “American Art in Germany.” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, (3 December 1913).


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APPENDIX 1: SONG TEXTS

“O My Luve Is Like a Red, Red, Rose”
Robert Burns

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That’s newly sprung in June:
O my Luve is like the melodie
That’s sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou; my bonnie lass;
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a’ the seas gang dry,

Till a’ the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi’ the sun,
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o’ life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve!
And fare thee weel, awhile!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho’ it were ten thousand mile.

“Far Awa’!”
Text: Robert Burns

Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
Ye whom never shed a tear,
Care untroubled, joy-surrounded,
Gaudy day to you is dear.

Gentle night do thou befriend me;
Downy sleep, the curtain draw;
Spirits kind, again attend me,
Talk of him that’s far awa’!

“Sweetheart, Sigh No More”
T. B. Aldrich

It was with doubt and trembling
I whispered in her ear.
Go, take her answer, bird-on-bough,
That all the world may hear
Sweetheart, sigh no more!

Sing it, sing it, tawny throat,
Upon the wayside tree,
How fair she is, how true she is,
How dear she is to me
Sweetheart, sigh no more!
Sing it, sing it, tawny throat,
And through the summer long
The winds among the clovertops,
And breaks, for all their silv’ry stops,
Shall envy you the song
Sweetheart, sigh no more!

“The Secret”
Text: Le Comte Jules de Resseguier (1789–1862)

Dis-moi de quel secret ta harpe solitaire
Tell me, what is the secret that your only companion,
T’enretient au déclin du jour?
Tell you in the twilight?

Dis-moi si de ton coeur révélant le mystère,
Tell me if your depth-revealing heart
Elle exhale un soupir d’amour?
Sends a sigh of love for me?

Si ta pensée intime en ton âme éveillé
If the innermost thought of your awakened soul
Te dit de craindre ou d’espérer;
Fears or hopes, keeping courage?
Si tu sens, sous tes doigts, une corde mouillée,
And whether tears moisten the strings under your hands,
Et si tu chantes pour pleurer?
And whether you sing while crying?

Dis-moi si d’un accord, d’une note plus tendre,
Tell me whether your heart is grieving
Ton coeur se trouble quelquefois;
At a chord or a most tender note;
Si la voix d’un absent soudain se fait entendre;
If the voice of one absent murmurs faintly,
Et si tu réponds à cette voix?
Do you respond, believing?

Mais non; non, ne dis rien; chante, soupier,
But no, say nothing, sing, sigh,
pleure cache le secret de ton coeur;
Weep, keep your heart’s secret;
Si tu dis jamais…il faudra que je meure
If you tell me that I must die
De désespoir, de désespoir ou de bonheur.
Of despair, of despair or rapture.

“Alllein”
Text: Heinrich Heine

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen,
I stood in dark dreams,
Und starrt’ ihr Bildniss an,
Staring at her picture,
Und das geliebte Antlitz
And that beloved face
Heimlich zu leben begann.
Began mysteriously to live.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich
About her lips played
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,
A wonderful smile,
Und wie von Wehmutstränen,
And as though from tears of sadness
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.
Gleamed her eyes.

Auch meine Tränen flossen
And my tears also flowed
Mir von den Wangen herab,
Down upon my cheeks.
Und ach! Ich kann es nicht glauben,
And oh! I cannot believe it,
Daß ich dich berloren hab’!
That I have lost you!
“Dark Is the Night”
Text: Wm. Ernest Henley

The sea is full of wand’ring foam,
The sky of driving cloud;
My restless thoughts among them roam,
The night is dark and loud.

Where are the hours that came to me
So beautiful and bright?
A wild wind shakes the wilder sea,
O dark and loud’s the night!

“Jeune fille et jeune”
Text: Chateaubriand

Il descend, le cercueil, et les roses sans tâches,
Qu’un père y déposa, tribut de sa douleur,
Terre, tu les portas, et maintenant tu caches
   Jeune fille et jeune fleur.

Ah! ne les rends jamais à ce monde profane,
A ce monde de deuil, d’angoisse et de Malheur,
Le vent brise et flétrit, le soleil brûle et fane
   Jeune fille et jeune fleur.

Tu dors, pauvre Élisa, si légère d’années!
Tu ne sens plus du jour le poids et la chaleur.
Vous avez achevé vos fraîches matinées,
   Jeune fille et jeune fleur!

Mais ton père, Élisa, sur la tombe s’incline;
De ton front jusqu’au sien a monté la pâleur;
Vieux chêne!...Le Temps a fauché sur ta racine
   Jeune fille et jeune fleur.

It descends, the coffin, and the roses without stains,
That a father laid there, a tribute of his grief,
Earth, you carried them, and now you hide them
   Young girl and young flower.

Ah! never to this profane world,
To this world of bereavement, anguish, and misfortune:
The wind blows and withers, the sun burns and fades
   Young girl and young flower.

You sleep, poor Elisa, as lightly as the year you were born,
You no longer know today weight and warmth.
You finished your cool mornings
   Young girl and young flower.

But your father, Elisa, under the inclined grave;
Of your cheek until her palor mounts;
Old oak!...Time cuts to the root
   Young girl and young flower.
“Empress of Night”
Text: Henry Harris Aubrey Beach

Out of the darkness,  
Radiant with Light,  
Shineth her Brightness,  
Empress of Night.

As granules of gold,  
From her lofty height,  
Or cataract bold  
(Amazing sight!)

Falleth her Jewels  
On ev’ry side,  
Lighting the joybells  
Of Christmastide.

Piercing the treeboughs  
That were in the breeze,  
Painting their shadows  
Among dead leaves;

Kissing the sea foam  
That flies in the air,  
When tossed from its home  
In waves so fair;

Silv’ring all clouds  
That darken her way,  
As she lifts the shrouds,  
Of breaking day.

“Twilight”
Text: Henry Harris Aubrey Beach

No sun to warm  
The darkning cloud of mist,  
But ev’rywhere  
The steamy earth sends up  
A veil of grey and damp,  
To kiss the green and tender leaves,  
And leave its cool imprint  
In limpid pearls of dew.

The blackened trunks and boughs  
In ghostly silhouette,  
Mark grimly in the coming eve  
The shadows of the past.  
All sounds are stilled;  
The birds have hushed themselves to rest,  
And night comes fast, to drop her pall,  
Till morn brings life to all.
APPENDIX 2: TABLE OF BEACH’S BORROWING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Folk</th>
<th>A. Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “Gaelic” Symphony, Op. 32, I. <em>Allegro con fuoco</em> (“Conchobhar ua Raghallaigh Cluann” (Connor O’Reilly of Clounish))</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Gaelic” Symphony, Op. 32, II. <em>Alta siciliana</em> (“Goirtin Ornadh” (The Little Field of Barley))</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Gaelic” Symphony, Op. 32, III. <em>Lento con molta espressione</em> (“Paisdin Fuinne” (The Lively Child))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Gaelic” Symphony, Op. 32, III. <em>Lento con molta espressione</em> (“Cia an Bealach a Deachaidh Si” (Which way did she go?))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Iverniana</em>, Op. 70 (Lost, probably revised as <em>Suite for Two Pianos Founded upon Old Irish Melodies</em>, Op. 104)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>The Fair Hills of Éiré</em>, Op. 91 (rev. as Prelude on an Old Folk Tune) (“Beautiful and Wide are the Green Fields of Erin: The Fair Hills of Holy Ireland”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>Suite for Two Pianos Founded upon Old Irish Melodies</em>: I. Prelude, Op. 104 (“Fonncoadail”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>Suite for Two Pianos Founded upon Old Irish Melodies</em>: II. Old-time Peasant Dance (“Irish Dance”)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Suite for Two Pianos Founded upon Old Irish Melodies</em>: II. Old-time Peasant Dance (“Fuaim na Dtonn” (The Sound of the Waves))</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Suite for Two Pianos Founded upon Old Irish Melodies</em>: III. The Ancient Cabin (“Maire St. Seorse” (Mary St. George))</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>Suite for Two Pianos Founded upon Old Irish Melodies</em>: IV. Finale (“For the Violin”)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Baltic</th>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>Variations on Balkan Themes</em>, Op. 60 (“O Maiko Moya”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>Variations on Balkan Themes</em>, Op. 60 (“Stara planina”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Variations on Balkan Themes</em>, Op. 60 (“Nasalil e Dado”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Variations on Balkan Themes</em>, Op. 60 (“Macedonia!”)</td>
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<tr>
<th>C. Native American</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “Arctic Night,” Op. 64, No. 1 (Boas, No. XVIII, untitled)</td>
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<td>• “Arctic Night,” Op. 64, No. 1 (Boas, untitled, p. 240)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “The Returning Hunter,” Op. 64, No. 2 (Boas, No. VIII “Song”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Exiles,” Op. 64, No. 3 (Boas, No. III, “The Song of the Tornit”)</td>
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<td>• “Exiles,” Op. 64, No. 3 (Boas, No. XI, “The Raven Sings”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Exiles,” Op. 64, No. 3 (Boas, No. X, “The Fox and the Woman”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “With Dog Teams,” Op. 64, No. 4 (Boas, untitled, identified as being from Lyon)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• “With Dog Teams,” Op. 64, No. 4 (Boas, No. VII, “Song”)¹
• Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violincello, Op. 150, II. Lento espressivo (“The Returning Hunter”)
• From Blackbird Hills: An Omaha Tribal Dance, Op. 83 (“Children’s Song for ‘Follow my Leader,’” from Alice C. Fletcher, A Study of Omaha Indian Music, 1893)
• Quartet for Strings in One Movement, Op. 89 (“Summer Song”)
• Quartet for Strings in One Movement, Op. 89 (“Playing at Ball”)
• Quartet for Strings in One Movement, Op. 89 (“Ititaujang’s Song”)²

D. Other
• Arrangement for violin and piano: “On a Hill: Negro Melody”

II. Other Composers
A. Borrowed material
• “The Rainy Day” (Beethoven: Pathétique Sonata, Op. 13, III. Rondo–Allegro)
• Cadenza to Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 37, I. Allegro moderato (published as Beach’s Op. 3)
• Eilende Wolken, Segler die Lüfte, Op. 18 (Robert Burns: “Auld Rob Morris”)
• Piano Quintet in F-sharp minor (Brahms, Piano Quintet in F minor)

B. Arrangements
• “Whither” (Chopin: Trois nouvelles etudes, no. 3)
• Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 1, II. for piano four hands
• Arr. Berlioz: Les Troyens, Act I, scene 3 for violin and piano
• Piano transcription of Richard Strauss’s “Ständchen,” Op. 17, No. 2

III. Beach’s Art Songs
• Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C# Minor, I. Allegro moderato (“Jeune fille et jeune fleur,” Op. 1, No. 3)
• Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C# Minor, II. Scherzo: Vivace (“Empress of Night, Op. 2, No. 3)
• Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C# Minor, III. Largo (“Twilight,” Op. 2, No. 1)

¹ Beach found the melodies used in Eskimos: Four Characteristic Pieces, Op. 64 in Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo, Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1888). Kane and Lyon were both Arctic explorers who journaled their findings.

² Block identified these songs from Boas’s monograph in “Amy Beach’s Music on Native American Themes,” American Music 8 (1990): 157.
• Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C# Minor, IV. Allegro con scioltezza
  (“Twilight,” Op. 2, No. 1)
• Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violincello, Op. 150, II. Lento espressivo
  (“Allein,” Op. 35, No. 2)
• “Far Away,” piano/organ transcription (“Far Awa’!,” Op. 43, No. 4)

IV. Beach’s Other Compositions
• Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, Op. 80 (“An Indian
  Lullaby,” Op. 57, No. 3)
• Trio for Piano, Violin and Violincello, Op. 150, II. Lento espressivo
  (“The Returning Hunter,” Op. 64, No. 2)

V. Bird Songs
• “Hermit Thrush at Eve,” Op. 92, No. 1
• “Hermit Thrush at Morn,” Op. 92, No. 2