

Music By Amy Beach  
*Variations on Balkan Themes*  
Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra  
Hector Valdivia, conductor





Composer and pianist **Amy Beach** (1867-1944) was one of the first American musicians to achieve international recognition for her compositions. Often associated with the New England School, a group of composers including Edward MacDowell (1860-1908), Arthur Foote (1853-1937), and John Knowles Paine (1839-1906), Beach wrote music characterized by Romantic lyricism set against a distinctive, chromatic harmony.

Beach's lifelong preoccupation with her *Variations on Balkan Themes*, Op. 60 left two versions for solo piano (1906/rev. 1936), another for two pianos (1937), and an incomplete version for orchestra (1906). The central unifying theme for *Variations* is the Serbian song, *O Maiko Moyá*, which laments the persecution of Serbians at the hands of occupiers. *O Maiko Moyá* appears throughout Beach's *Variations*, and is a primary source for much of the work's structural, harmonic and motivic material. The three other themes, the Balkan folk songs *Stara Planina*, *Nasadil ye Dadó*, and *Macedonian!*, appear less frequently and are subject to little compositional variation. The assimilation of this material lends an "exotic" Eastern European color to the music with its modal melodies and augmented intervals.

Such color was well received during the first public performance of the original solo piano version of *Variations*, which took place on February 8, 1905, with Beach herself at the keyboard. In 1906, Arthur P. Schmidt published the first edition of *Variations*, which advertised the availability of an arrangement in manuscript for orchestra, though only a fragment has been unearthed to date. Beach later prepared a revised version for solo piano, published by A.P. Schmidt in 1936, and another for two pianos (1937) that remains in manuscript. In both revisions, Beach replaced the cadenza of the 1906 original with an extended final

variation consisting of a funeral march ending in E flat major instead of the original C sharp major. Additionally, several repeats were eliminated and enharmonic changes were made in order to accommodate the ending in a different key. Furthermore, the two-piano version is divided into two portions, leaving duos with the possibility of performing either portion independently of the other, or both together as a set.

No such division of the work is evident in the orchestral version, as only fifteen unsigned, undated manuscript pages survive: the theme and three variations. The fragment lacks tempo markings, dynamics, phrase markings, and articulations. Since neither instrumental parts nor other records of an orchestral version remain, we may never know whether Beach abandoned the orchestration or whether she completed an orchestration that was subsequently lost or destroyed. Given the existence of this fragment as well as the 1906 Arthur P. Schmidt advertisement, one may conclude that Beach intended to complete an orchestral arrangement of *Variations*.

The orchestration that appears on this recording, completed by Hector Valdivia, is based on a comparison of the three complete versions of the work as well as an examination of Beach's other works for orchestra, including her *Gaelic Symphony* and *Piano Concerto*. These sources provide excellent material for the completion of Beach's orchestration of *Variations*: notes, rhythms, dynamics, formal organization, instrumentation, articulations, metronome and tempo markings. It is Beach's final, two-piano version in particular that provides her final thoughts on harmony, form, texture, and voicing.

Beach, whose mastery of text and music helped establish her compositional career, wrote over one hundred and thirty art songs. The early song *Ecstasy* was so

popular that the proceeds made her enough money to purchase land on Cape Cod. Both *Ecstasy* and *Chanson d'amour* are written in a Romantic idiom influenced by Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. Beach later added optional parts for violin and cello respectively.

More than three decades separate *Ecstasy* and *Chanson d'amour* from her late songs *A Mirage*, *Stella Viatoris*, and *Rendezvous*. All three were composed with obbli-

gato string parts as part of their original conception. Representative of Beach's late style, these songs reveal a more fully developed compositional voice with a rich chromaticism redolent of Debussy and Fauré.

The *fin de siècle* nostalgia of *Bal Masqué* is an unpublished orchestration of an earlier waltz for solo piano from 1894.

— Hector Valdivia

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**Chanson d'amour** (Song of Love)  
Victor Hugo / English version by Amy Beach

L'aube naît et ta porte est close!  
Ma belle, pour quoi sommeiller?  
A l'heure où s'éveille la rose  
Ne vas tu pas te réveiller?

O, ma charmante  
écoute ici:  
L'amant qui chante  
Et pleure aussi!  
Tout frappe à ta porte benie

L'aurore dit: je suis le jour!  
L'oiseau dit: je suis l'harmonie!  
Et mon coeur dit: je suis l'amour

O, ma charmante...

Je t'adore, ange, et t'aime, femme,  
Dieu qui par toi m'a complété  
A fait mon amour pour ton âme  
Et mon regard pour ta beauté

O, ma charmante...

Still asleep, when the dawn is breaking!  
My dearest, thy portal unfolds;  
When roses around thee are waking  
Arouse thee now to joys untold!

O, my beloved  
I sing to thee,  
Sighing, imploring,  
Eternally!  
All Nature a welcome is bringing,

Aurora says: "I am the day!"  
And sweetly the bird is singing!  
And my heart says: "I love always!"

O, my beloved...

I adore thee, I love thee truly; God,  
who has filled my life with thine,  
Created mine eyes for thy beauty,  
And for thy soul, this love divine.

O, my beloved...



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**Ecstasy**  
*Amy Beach*

Only to dream among the fading flowers,  
Only to glide along the tranquil sea.  
Ah dearest, have we not together  
One long, bright day of love, so glad and free?

Only to rest through life, in storm and sunshine,  
Safe in thy breast, where sorrow dare not fly.  
Ah dearest, thus in sweetest rapture  
With thee to live, with thee at last to die!

**A Mirage**  
*Bertha Ochner*

Now the mountaintop all purple  
Rises thro' a mist of silver,  
While the moon, a disc of cobwebs,  
Shining in the pallid heavens,  
Ghost-like thro' the evening shadows.

Now the lofty eucalyptus  
Stretches forth its chalky branches  
Toward the lovely, lusted heavens,  
While the drowsy west wind sighing  
Sings the theme of lamentation.

**Stella Viatoris**  
*Jessie Hague Nettleton*

Dun grows the sky;  
The cloud rack dark  
In the west hangs low;  
The wind moans by;  
The bare trees ply their futile weaving  
Sad and slow.

But o'er the east

The grim clouds part;  
A fleece of white,  
A space of blue  
Aloft, afar,  
There's a single star,  
Like the kindness of God Shining through!

**Rendezvous**  
*Lenora Speyer*

But one more month and  
I shall be wrapped in a shadowed harmony  
Of leaves and buds and crinkly moss.  
Above me tangled boughs will toss  
And all about unfurled for me,  
Uncurled for me,  
The fern's unhurried rout.  
But one more month so soon  
Wait for me June, my June

The birds live cups of singing wine  
On their tall stems of larch and pine will bring for me  
the glad day long the solace of their bubbling song  
The nightingale will trill for me,  
Will spill for me,  
Her shy, exultant grail.  
But one more month so soon  
Wait for me June, my June!

Bring me your revelling fields and woods  
Your hills and lakes of solemn moods  
Gather the stars, fresh plucked and sweet  
Scatter them there where we two meet,  
I bring to you  
Still near to me  
Still dear to me  
My ancient grief still new.  
But one more month so soon  
Wait for me June, my June!



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**Hector Valdivia** (violinist, conductor) is the S. Eugene Bailey Director of the Carleton Orchestra and Professor of Music at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. He received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Yale School of Music where he studied with Sidney Harth, Otto-Werner Mueller, and the Tokyo String Quartet. His research interests include the music of Eugene Ysaye, Luise Adolpha Le Beau, and Amy Beach. An active recitalist and chamber musician, Dr. Valdivia has recorded several works by the composer Phillip Rhodes (Centaur CRC 2597 and CRC 2807).

***Moraská filharmonie Olomouc*** (the Moravian Philharmonic) is a prominent symphonic orchestra, one of the oldest in the Czech Republic. It is based in Olomouc, the historical capital of Moravia and a major center of education, culture, and arts. Distinguished conductors such as Gustav Mahler, Otto Klemperer, and Vaclav Neuman have led the Moravian Philharmonic.

**Kathryn Ananda Owens** (pianist) began her performing career as a laureate of the Neale-Silva Young Artist and American Pianists Association Biennial Fellowship Competitions. Following doctoral studies with Julian Martin at the Peabody Conservatory, she has performed extensively throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Dr. Ananda Owens is Associate Professor of Music at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

**Christopher Atzinger** (pianist) has performed in Austria, Italy, France, Spain, and Canada in addition to the United States. A medalist of the New Orleans International Piano Competition, the World Piano Competition in Cincinnati, and the Nina Plant Wideman International Piano Competition, Dr.

Atzinger has been praised by critics for his "personal interpretive vision" and "virtuoso aplomb". Dr. Atzinger holds degrees from the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Michigan, and the Peabody Conservatory. His teachers include Julian Martin, Robert McDonald, Anton Nel, David Renner and Carolyn Lipp. Dr. Atzinger is currently Assistant Professor of Music at St. Olaf College.

**David Carter** (cellist) is Professor of Music at St. Olaf College. He holds degrees from the University of Minnesota, Indiana University and the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana where he studied with Gary Hoffman, Janos Starker and Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi. He has served as Principal Cellist of the Wichita Symphony, performing as soloist with that ensemble in addition to the Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Dr. Carter is currently the cellist in the Melius Trio and the Artistic Director of the Bridge Chamber Music Festival.

**Alison Feldt** (soprano) is Associate Professor and chair of the music department at St. Olaf College. Dr. Feldt holds degrees from Luther College, the University of Iowa, and the University of Minnesota. Her additional studies have been with Kerstin Meyer, Rita Streich, and Rudolf Knoll of the Mozarteum, Salzburg, Austria. Dr. Feldt has won awards in several prestigious vocal competitions including the Minnesota NATS Competition, the Metropolitan Opera auditions, and the Opera/Lied Competition in Salzburg.



# Music By Amy Beach (1867-1944)

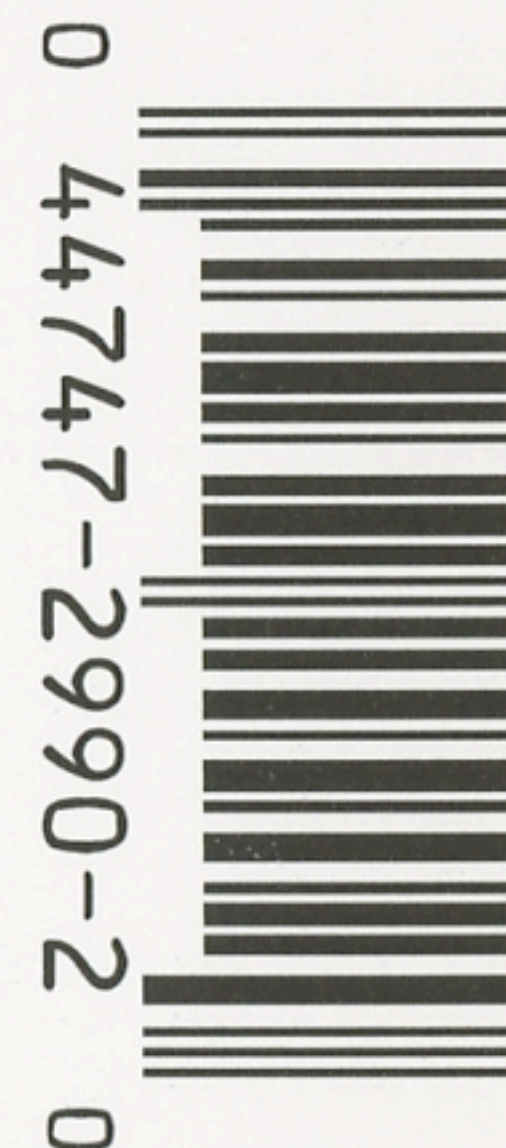
## *Variations on Balkan Themes*



CRC 2990

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|------------------------|---|--------------|
| 1                      | <i>Variations on Balkan Themes, Op. 60c</i> for Two Pianos (1937)<br>Kathryn Ananda Owens, piano I; Christopher Atzinger, piano II      | 20:13        |
| 2                      | <i>Chanson d'amour, Op. 21, No. 1</i> (1893)  | 4:28         |
| 3                      | <i>Ecstasy, Op. 19, No. 2</i> (1893)  | 2:03         |
| 4                      | <i>A Mirage, Op. 100, No. 1</i> (1924)  | 2:49         |
| 5                      | <i>Stella Viatoris, Op. 100, No. 2</i> (1924)   | 3:14         |
| 6                      | <i>Rendezvous, Op. 120</i> (1928)<br>Alison Feldt, soprano; Kathryn Ananda Owens, piano<br>Hector Valdivia, violin; David Carter, cello | 4:00         |
| 7                      | <i>Variations on Balkan Themes, Op. 60d</i> for Orchestra (1906/2000)   | 19:37        |
| 8                      | <i>Bal Masqué, Op. 22</i> for Orchestra (1894)  | 5:04         |
| <b>Total Duration:</b> |   | <b>62:00</b> |



*Variations on Balkan Themes* recorded August 25, 2006; *Chanson d'amour, Ecstasy, A Mirage, Stella Viatoris* and *Rendezvous* recorded June 11, 2007, at Urness Recital Hall, Saint Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. Produced by Hector Valdivia. Engineered by Reid Kruger. *Variations on Balkan Themes* and *Bal Masqué* recorded November 28, 2000, Olomouc, Czech Republic. Session produced and engineered by Radek Rejsek and Ales Dvorak. Post-production by Hector Valdivia and Reid Kruger. All rights to Amy Beach's music belong to the MacDowell Colony. Used by permission. Cover photo Stara Planina mountains, Bulgaria ©Vladimir Hristov 2007. Used by permission.

With many thanks to: Carleton College, President Stephen Lewis, President Robert Oden Jr., the MacDowell Colony, the Free Library of Philadelphia, Phillip Rhodes, Julian Martin, Robert Elhai, and all the great musicians whose performances are represented on this CD.