

# The Kapralova Society Journal

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## Emerging from the Shadows: Maude Valérie White, a Significant Figure in the History of English Song

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### *Special points of interest:*

Maude Valérie White

Kaprálová: Dance for Piano

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Writing in 1903, Arthur Elson reported, “Maude Valérie White takes rank among the very best of English song writers.”<sup>1</sup> Although she is unaccountably neglected today, White played a significant role in the history of English vocal music. When she came to the fore as a composer around 1880, the English vocal scene was dominated by the Victorian drawing room ballad, aptly described in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians* as “a composition of the slightest degree of musical value nearly always set to three verses (neither more nor less) of conventional doggerel.”<sup>2</sup> Through her extraordinary musical talent, and her impeccable taste in literature, as reflected in the poems she chose to set, White helped to raise the artistic standard of late nineteenth-century English song. In his widely read historical survey of music in England, Eric Blom paid tribute to her contribution to English vocal literature, noting that she “bridged the gulf between the ballad and the art-song,”<sup>3</sup> and Derek Hyde recently pointed out that, in her works, she rescued English art-song “from the pernicious clutches of the Victorian ballad.”<sup>4</sup>

White’s creative output was substantial. Primarily a vocal composer, she wrote more than 200 songs, several piano pieces, some early choral works, incidental music for plays, a ballet, a few other orchestral and chamber works, and an unfinished opera.<sup>5</sup> In later life, she also penned two volumes of memoirs—*Friends and Memories* (1914) and *My Indian Summer* (1932)—and translated several books. This article examines her life and creative achievements.

Maude Valérie White was born near Dieppe, Normandy in 1855 to upper middle class English parents. Her family moved to

England before she had reached her first birthday. She spent her childhood in England, Heidelberg and Paris, and it was probably this cosmopolitan upbringing that awakened her lifelong interest in foreign travel and nurtured her exceptional gift for languages. She was fluent in French, German, Italian, Spanish and English, and chose poems in those languages as texts for her songs.

White’s musical education began at an early age with piano lessons from her German governess. She loved the lessons,<sup>6</sup> and continued to study piano throughout her school years with a succession of teachers. Although she had yet to begin the study of music theory, she composed her first song in 1873, at the age of seventeen—a setting of Byron’s “Farewell, if ever fondest prayer.” Because it sheds light on her method of composing, her account of this important event is especially valuable. She wrote:

I knew the poem well, and improvised the music to the words without the slightest difficulty. It is the way I have composed the melody of almost every song I have ever written, naturally working up the accompaniment and adding many little details afterwards.<sup>7</sup>

Two years later, when she was nineteen, White spent the winter in Torquay with her mother and aunt. While there, she studied harmony and counterpoint with W. S. Rockstro, a former pupil and personal friend of Mendelssohn.<sup>8</sup> Acting on Rockstro’s advice, she continued her theoretical studies with Oliver May in London.<sup>9</sup> May proved to be an inspiring and supportive teacher. In addition to instructing her in counterpoint and composition, he helped her prepare a few of her

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early songs for publication.<sup>10</sup> Recalling this period of study with May, she wrote: “Never in my life have I ever come across anyone professing to teach composition or the pianoforte who more efficiently or more faithfully fulfilled the task.”<sup>11</sup>

As much as she loved her lessons with Oliver May and was devoted to him as a teacher and friend, White eventually decided that she wanted to pursue full-time studies at the Royal Academy of Music, with a view to becoming a professional composer. But first she knew that she would have to overcome her mother’s extreme prejudice against women taking part in public life, and that this would be no easy task.<sup>12</sup> In this respect, Mrs. White was a child of her time; her prejudice against women’s involvement in public life is a clear indication of the importance she attached to traditional Victorian beliefs about the appropriate role of women in society.

According to one of her mother’s more snobbish acquaintances, the chance that Maude might attend the Royal Academy raised serious questions surrounding the issue of social class. In one of the most amusing passages in her memoirs, Maude relates that this “sincere friend” took it upon herself to warn Mrs. White of the “appalling dangers” to which her daughter would be exposed if she were allowed to mix with the students of the Royal Academy of Music. Chief among such alleged dangers was the distinct possibility that she “might be obliged to associate with the daughters of tradespeople!”<sup>13</sup> Mrs. White may have held old-fashioned views about the proper role of women, but she was certainly not a snob, and she refused to be impressed by such nonsense. In due course, she reluctantly gave her seal of approval to her daughter’s plan.<sup>14</sup>

In the fall of 1876, at the age of twenty-one, Maude became a student at the Royal Academy of Music. The blind composer Sir George Macfarren, who was then principal of the Academy, accepted her into his class for harmony and composition, and she had lessons in piano and sight-singing as well. For a very short time, she also attempted to learn the violin, but had to give it up because holding the instrument for more than five minutes at a time caused severe muscular pains in her arms.<sup>15</sup>

While at the Academy, she composed and published numerous songs—settings of German, French and English texts. But despite her success in this area, Macfarren thought that she should not devote herself exclusively to vocal music, and suggested that she try to compose a concerto. She told him she was absolutely certain that she was incapable of such a thing, but he insisted. In the end, both teacher and pupil agreed that her attempt to carry out this task had proved disastrous.<sup>16</sup>

In an effort to redeem herself, White decided to try her hand at writing a piano piece, which she called *Rondo Scherzando*. It was a great success. Macfarren liked it so much that he encouraged her to publish it. The piece was also performed at one of the Academy student concerts.<sup>17</sup> Among her many

other compositions featured on such programmes during her student years were several songs with piano accompaniment, a setting of Victor Hugo’s “Espoir en Dieu” for voice and orchestra,<sup>18</sup> a Benedictus for vocal quartet and chorus, and a Credo for soloists, chorus and orchestra.

In 1879, White gained the distinction of becoming the first woman to win the coveted Mendelssohn Scholarship.<sup>19</sup> The four compositions she submitted to the competition were an Agnus Dei for soloists, chorus and full orchestra, and three songs—“Espoir en Dieu,” “Chantez, chantez, jeune inspirée!” (both settings of poems by Victor Hugo), and a setting of “My ain kind dearie O!” by Robert Burns.<sup>20</sup> After the competition was over, she learned that it was the latter song that Sir Arthur Sullivan, one of the judges, had admired most.<sup>21</sup>

White was especially fond of her setting of “My ain kind dearie O!,” but the original accompaniments to her songs, including this one, were often more challenging to play than those that eventually appeared in print. In her memoirs, she described the original version of this accompaniment (which is the one she always played) as “a terror,” adding that “it was ten times more difficult than the printed one.”<sup>22</sup> To satisfy the requirements of her publisher, she produced a more accessible version.<sup>23</sup>

Although previous Mendelssohn Scholars had elected to further their musical training in Germany, White remained in London, where she continued to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Sir George Macfarren. On Macfarren’s advice, she also took extra composition lessons from his son-in-law, Frank Davenport.<sup>24</sup>

Winning the Mendelssohn Scholarship was not White’s only achievement in 1879. She composed many songs that year, including “Absent yet Present,” a setting of a poem by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. It was immediately published and sold better than any other song she ever wrote.<sup>25</sup> The great baritone Charles Santley was so taken with “Absent yet Present” that he decided to perform it along with another of White’s songs—“Montrose’s Love Song” (text by the Marquis of Montrose)—at one of the celebrated Monday Popular Concerts, and insisted that the young composer accompany him. Santley was a renowned artist, and the Monday Pops, as they were usually called, were considered the most important concerts of chamber music in London, so the inclusion of her music in that series was a major breakthrough for White.<sup>26</sup> Santley held her in high esteem as a composer, and continued to champion her works throughout the remainder of his career. In addition to “Absent yet Present,” his name became associated with several other of her songs, including “To Electra” and “To Blossoms”—both setting of poems by Robert Herrick, “When Passion’s Trance” (Shelley), “To

Althea from Prison” (Richard Lovelace), and “Heureux qui peut aimer” (Victor Hugo).<sup>27</sup>

White’s father had died when she was a child, and her mother, who had been suffering from failing health, died in 1881. The loss of her mother left White so devastated that she found it impossible to concentrate on her work. She gave up the Mendelssohn Scholarship, abandoned her studies at the Royal Academy, and went to Chile, where she spent the next ten months with her married elder sister.<sup>28</sup> Because she was in deep mourning, she lived very quietly, but she did teach herself to play the guitar. She also collected a number of traditional Chilean airs and dances, which were published after her return to England in 1882 as *Eight South American Airs* for piano duet. She composed only one song during her stay in Chile, a setting of Shelley’s poem “To Mary.”<sup>29</sup> It became one of Queen Victoria’s favourite songs, and the tenor Ben Davies always included it on his programme when invited to sing before the Queen.<sup>30</sup>

Soon after returning to London, White received in the mail a poem called “The Devout Lover” by W. H. Pollock, which she set to music that same day.<sup>31</sup> It was one of her most frequently performed works, and was sung by Charles Santley throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.<sup>32</sup>

White composed many other songs that year, and often tried them over with her friend Edith Santley, the eldest daughter of Charles Santley. Edith had a fine soprano voice and enjoyed a brilliant career as a concert singer until she married. One of her greatest successes was the first public performance of White’s “My soul is an enchanted boat,” which she sang at a Monday Pops Concert.<sup>33</sup> A setting of an excerpt from Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*, the song was described in early editions of *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians* as “one of the best in our language.”<sup>34</sup> White fell in love with the poem, and felt compelled to set it to music. She later explained in her memoirs: “The ethereal beauty of the words affected me so strongly, they evoked a vision of such ideal beauty, such ineffable happiness, that a burning longing arose in me to capture if only one drop of that essence, to make that one drop my own—my very own. I longed to make a casket to enshrine those words—a casket of music.”<sup>35</sup>

In 1883, White spent six months in Vienna studying with Robert Fuchs.<sup>36</sup> After he had seen most of the music she had already written, Fuchs was very encouraging. But, like Sir George Macfarren, he strongly advised her to broaden her scope by writing a large-scale instrumental piece. She spent the next several weeks attempting to compose a concerto, but eventually abandoned the project in despair. When he realized how miserable this assignment had made his student, Fuchs relented and allowed her to con-

centrate on composing songs. White later wrote that her decision to give up trying to compose the concerto was such a relief that it made her “feel like a gay and cheerful *soufflé*.”<sup>37</sup> It seems likely that she had internalized the views expressed in much of the philosophical and scientific literature of the time about women’s supposedly innate inability to create large-scale musical works of any value.<sup>38</sup>

While in Vienna, White composed a good number of German songs, eight of which were published a short time later in her first *German Album of Sixteen Songs*.<sup>39</sup> She also spent countless hours working at counterpoint.<sup>40</sup> A high point of her stay was a concert in which she was invited to participate. When Rosa Papier, one of the principal Wagnerian singers of the Vienna Opera House, heard some of White’s compositions, she asked the composer to accompany her in “Absent yet Present” and “When Passion’s Trance” at a concert. Papier was a much-admired artist, and White was delighted that she wanted to perform her songs.<sup>41</sup>

White was an inveterate traveller who loved to explore foreign countries and experience their cultures. She also suffered from very poor health for most of her life, and often found it helpful to spend time in places where the climate was more congenial. Although she had inherited a small legacy, it didn’t provide her with the necessary funds to support her lifestyle, but she was able to use her musical talent to earn the money she needed. Later, she also increased her income by translating books and plays into English.<sup>42</sup>

Not long after returning to London from Vienna in 1884, White began to supplement her income by giving piano lessons, teaching people her songs, and playing professionally at musical parties. While this work took up a significant amount of her time, it didn’t interfere to any great extent with her composing. She wrote numerous songs during that period, many of which were published in her *New Album of Songs with German and English Words*. She set several poems by the Hungarian poet Petöfi, a few others by Heine, and some Swedish and Norwegian poems as well—the latter, a result of her recent trip to Sweden. She also set several French poems, including Sully Prudhomme’s “Ici-bas.”<sup>43</sup>

Among the loveliest of White’s songs dating from the later 1880s is her setting of Byron’s “So we’ll go no more a-roving”—a treasured remembrance of her trip to Italy in 1888. In her memoirs, she penned the following description of the moonlight carriage drive to Sorrento that inspired her to compose it:

I shall never forget . . . that exquisite drive along the mountain road, that exquisite view across the dark blue bay that lay spread beneath its canopy of stars! . . . [T]he soft wind blew the delicious smell of orange blossoms towards us—the delicious smell that conjures up visions of the South so magically, and fills the lover of the South

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with such unspeakable nostalgia! It was after that drive that, some weeks later, shut up in a room in London, I wrote, “So we’ll go no more a-roving!”<sup>44</sup>

Some critics regard “So we’ll go no more a-roving” as her finest work. It was closely associated with the distinguished tenor Ger vase Elwes, who sang it frequently in recital, often accompanied by the composer.<sup>45</sup>

White reached the peak of her success during the 1890s. Her songs were sung widely throughout Britain and Europe by leading singers of the day, including Clara Butt, Robert Kennerley Rumford, Harry Plunket Greene and Raimund von zur-Mühlen. She also began to organize public concerts of her own music, and her works were featured in prestigious concert series.<sup>46</sup> Between 1895 and 1940, for example, her songs were performed at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts (better known as the Proms) more than 100 times. Although her music has not been heard at the Proms since 1940, she remains the most frequently performed woman composer in the history of that celebrated concert series.<sup>47</sup>

White composed a significant amount of music during the 1890s, including many German, French and English songs, piano pieces, a work for cello and piano entitled *Naissance d’amour*, and incidental music for *The Medicine Man*—a play by Henry Duff Traill and Robert Hichens which was produced at the Lyceum theatre in London. She also began an opera called *Smaranda* that she worked on at various times between 1894 and 1911, but didn’t complete because she encountered difficulties with the orchestration.<sup>48</sup> Among the songs from the 1890s, her setting of Tennyson’s poem “The Throstle” is especially worthy of mention. It was written in the south of France toward the end of a seven-month tour of Europe that she took in 1890 with her sister Emmie, and it became one of her most popular songs.<sup>49</sup> Her charming setting of Robert’s Burns’ poem “John Anderson, my Jo’,” composed the following year in London, is also of considerable interest. It was often sung by the legendary soprano Dame Nellie Melba, who was then the reigning diva of Covent Garden and a major star of the Metropolitan Opera in New York.<sup>50</sup>

In the hope of finding relief from her chronic health problems, White decided to spend part of the winter of 1901 in Rome and Naples. While en route to her destination, however, she became seriously ill with pneumonia and bronchitis, and was confined to a hospital near Paris for six weeks. Upon her release, she was urged by her doctor to take up residence in Sicily, where the climate might help to restore her health and strength. Heeding this advice, she made the Sicilian town of Taormina her home base, but returned to England every summer.<sup>51</sup> She also delighted in exploring other parts of Italy—a country she loved—and continued to travel abroad, often presenting concerts of her own music in the places she visited. On a trip to Egypt in 1905, for instance, she gave a concert at the Cairo Opera House. Assisted by the fin-

est local singers, she performed several of her German, French and Spanish songs, and *From the Ionian Sea*—a suite of piano pieces based on traditional Sicilian melodies that she had collected.<sup>52</sup>

During the early years of the twentieth century, musical styles and tastes were changing, and White’s music was beginning to fall out of favour with the critics, but it remained popular with singers and with the concert-going public. Although her songs were published less frequently than before, she continued to compose. Because of the tragic earthquake that occurred in Messina in 1908, she was forced to abandon her little cottage in Sicily, and went to live with her sister Emmie in Florence.<sup>53</sup>

A visit to southern Russia in 1912 provided White with the inspiration for two very interesting new works. The first was *Trois Chansons Tziganes*, a harmonically bold setting of three Russian poems by Tolstoy in French translation.<sup>54</sup> The second came about because of her introduction to Russian ballet in the town of Usovka. She had never been to a ballet before, and was so delighted with what she saw that she decided to try to compose one herself. The ballet she wrote was called *The Enchanted Heart*, and was based on a scenario of her own creation. She had completed the piano score and much of the orchestration by the summer of 1913. A lavish production of *The Enchanted Heart* was set to take place the following spring before a large invited audience at the British Embassy in Rome, but was cancelled at the last moment because of the death of the Duke of Argyll. To the great disappointment of everyone concerned, it was announced that, as the members of the Royal Family were in mourning, no entertainment could be allowed to take place at the British Embassy.<sup>55</sup> The scheduled premiere of an orchestral suite from *The Enchanted Heart* that Sir Henry Wood had asked White to arrange for the Proms in 1915 was similarly ill-fated. It too was cancelled when the board of management of the Proms decided to postpone the performance of all new music in order to attract a wider audience.<sup>56</sup>

Although White abandoned her opera because she encountered problems with the orchestration, she seems not to have experienced any comparable difficulties with her ballet.<sup>57</sup> During the war years (1914-1918), she organized and participated in many benefit concerts for war charities. For one such event in aid of the Serbian Relief Fund, she engaged the services of the Queen’s Hall Orchestra, and its conductor Sir Henry Wood. The programme included excerpts from *The Enchanted Heart*, and five Serbian dances that she had arranged for full orchestra with bass clarinet, double

bassoon, and all the percussion instruments necessary to create the desired barbaric effects. Both pieces were well received, and Sir Henry Wood repeated the excerpts from *The Enchanted Heart* the following Sunday at his own afternoon and evening concerts.<sup>58</sup> Among White's other works from this period are two songs written in response to the war—"Le Depart du Conscrit" (text by the composer) and "On the Fields of France" (N. McEachern).<sup>59</sup> She also composed incidental music for *The Law of the Sands*, a play by her close friend Robert Hichens. It was produced at the Coliseum in London in 1916. The great ballet master Enrico Cecchetti liked the incidental music so much that he choreographed a dance to it.<sup>60</sup>

After the war, White continued to live with her sister in Italy for the next several years, but she returned to England for the final few years of her life. Apart from a small number of English and French songs, she wrote very little music during the 1920s, but she continued to organize concerts of her works.<sup>61</sup> One of her very last songs, a setting of William Watson's poem "Leave-taking," was composed in Rome in 1927.<sup>62</sup> It seems to have been around this time that she decided to bring her composing career to an end, for she wrote: "Of late years I have not composed much. When one has nothing further to say, silence is best."<sup>63</sup> During her last years, she wrote the second volume of her memoirs, *My Indian Summer*, and translated a number of literary works into English. Among them were Lili Fröhlich-Bume's biography of Ingres, the memoirs of Princess Pauline Metternich, a novel called *Uncle Anghel* by the Romanian author Panait Istrati, and a play entitled *The Apostle Play* by the Viennese writer Max Mell.<sup>64</sup> She died in London in 1937 at the age of 82, and was interred in the churchyard of St. Edward's Roman Catholic Church, Sutton Green, Surrey.

The following brief passage from the writings of the eminent critic and scholar J. A. Fuller Maitland reveals the level of respect accorded White as a musical creator by her peers: "The songs of Maude Valérie White are known and loved everywhere the English language is spoken."<sup>65</sup> But, despite the great success she enjoyed during her lifetime, her music fell out of fashion soon after her death—a result of the widespread reaction against Victorian aesthetic ideals. When and if she is mentioned in standard music reference books, she is usually described as a successful composer of drawing room ballads. Some of her early songs such as "Absent yet Present" and "To Mary" belong in that category, but they share none of the negative features typically associated with the genre. As Derek Hyde put it, "One is generally aware of the traditions of the art-song in her settings, and even her most popular ballad, 'Absent yet Present,' has an attractive flowing arpeggio accompaniment which gives the piece momentum."<sup>66</sup>

White developed her own distinctive musical voice, and was able to adapt her style to capture the essence of each poem she chose to set. One of her most famous songs, her setting of Byron's "So we'll go no more a-roving," illustrates the main characteristics of her vocal writing: sensitivity to the poetic text, lyricism, a sense of rhythmic impetus, and the avoidance of predictable cadences. Her German settings reflect the influence of mid-nineteenth-century *Lieder*,<sup>67</sup> and she chose the German *Lied* as the model for many of her other songs as well. Her indebtedness to the example of Robert Schumann is readily apparent in her accompaniments, especially in the German songs.<sup>68</sup> Most of her French settings such as "Ici-bas" and "Au bord de l'eau" (both poems by Sully Prudhomme) are written in a style not unlike that of Gabriel Fauré (although usually less harmonically adventurous), but "La flûte invisible" (Victor Hugo) and "Le foyer" (Paul Verlaine), composed in the latter years of her career in 1924, are more impressionistic. The same ethereal style of writing is evident in a few other of her later works as well, including her setting of Gabriele d'Annunzio's "Isotta Blazesmano."<sup>69</sup> The music that she heard during the course of her extensive foreign travels often helped to shape the rhythm and melody of her own compositions, and she also based several of her works on traditional Swedish, Finnish, Italian and German folk tunes.<sup>70</sup> She was admired by composers of the previous generation, including Sir Arthur Sullivan, as well as by such younger composers as Percy Grainger, Roger Quilter and Ralph Vaughan Williams, and her influence can still be heard in the songs of the latter two.<sup>71</sup>

Thanks to the revival of interest in the period known as the English musical renaissance (c.1880–c.1945), a few music scholars have begun to focus their attention on White and other women composers who were active in England at the time. Of particular interest are the writings of Derek Hyde and Sophie Fuller, whose pioneering research has added greatly to our knowledge of White and her music. Another important contributor to this area of research is the pianist Graham Johnson, who has recorded a number of White's songs with Felicity Lott, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, and Alice Coote.<sup>72</sup> His elegantly written notes on these songs are illuminating.

After several decades of undeserved neglect, Maude Valérie White is finally emerging from the shadows. Reviewing her 1905 Bechstein Hall concert in London, the *Times* critic paid tribute to White's musical achievements in terms that still hold true today. He wrote:

There are few composers of either sex whose fountain of melodic inspiration has flowed so freely for so long. . . . The secret of her success is that she is at once passionate and sincere, and if her ideas, and the manner of their performance, sometimes suggest the clinging air of a hot-house they have much of its fragrance too.<sup>73</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Arthur Elson, *Woman's Work in Music* (Boston: L. C. Page, 1903), 150.
- <sup>2</sup> J. A. Fuller Maitland, "Ballad," *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. J. A. Fuller Maitland (London: Macmillan, 1910), 1:173. Drawing room ballads were also known as shop ballads or parlor songs.
- <sup>3</sup> Eric Blom, *Music in England*, rev. ed. (West Drayton, England: Penguin Books, 1947), 218.
- <sup>4</sup> Derek Hyde, *New-Found Voices: Women in Nineteenth-Century English Music*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 82.
- <sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive list of Maude Valérie White's compositions, see Sophie Fuller, *Women Composers during the British Musical Renaissance, 1880-1914* (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1998), 337–358. A useful but abbreviated and less detailed list is included in Sophie Fuller, "White, Maude Valérie," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Laura Macy, grovemusic.com.
- <sup>6</sup> Maude Valérie White, *Friends and Memories* (London: Edward Arnold, 1914), 24.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 120. White also studied piano with Oliver May in 1879, while preparing to compete for the Mendelssohn Scholarship. *Ibid.*, 172.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 136–137.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 147. White dedicated this work to the contralto Mary Wakefield. The two women were close friends, and Wakefield sang early performances of several of White's songs. On Wakefield as a singer, and her pioneering work in the competitive music festival movement, see Hyde, 140–162.
- <sup>19</sup> White, *Friends and Memories*, 179.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 173–174. The *Agnus Dei* was later performed at one of the Academy concerts.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 174–175.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 183–184.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 184–185.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 195–196.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 205–206; Sophie Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers, Britain and the United States 1629-Present* (London: Pandora, 1994), 331.
- <sup>29</sup> White, *Friends and Memories*, 217–220.
- <sup>30</sup> Hyde, 78. Ben Davies made at least three recordings of "To Mary," the first in 1903 and the last in 1932.
- <sup>31</sup> White, *Friends and Memories*, 224.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 226–228.
- <sup>34</sup> Mrs. Edmond Woodhouse, "White, Maude Valérie," *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. J. A. Fuller Maitland (London: Macmillan, 1910), 5:515.
- <sup>35</sup> White, *Friends and Memories*, 228–229.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 255 and 261.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 264–265.
- <sup>38</sup> The relevant literature is discussed in the following: Eugene Gates, "The Woman Composer Question: Philosophical and Historical Perspectives," *Kapralova Society Journal* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 1–11; Eugene Gates, "Female Composers: A Critical Review of the Psychological Literature," *Canadian Music Educator* 39 (Winter 1998): 37–41, reprinted in *Kapralova Society Journal* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 5–11; Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870–1914: "Encroaching on All Man's Privileges"* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 15–31.
- <sup>39</sup> White, *Friends and Memories*, 265.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.
- <sup>42</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 321–322.
- <sup>43</sup> White, *Friends and Memories*, 293.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.
- <sup>45</sup> Maude Valérie White, *My Indian Summer* (London: Grayson & Grayson, 1932), 206–207. Gervase Elwes recorded "So we'll go no more a-roving" in 1911.
- <sup>46</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 322.
- <sup>47</sup> Cath Sleeman, "The Forgotten Women of the Proms," *The Long and Short: A Magazine of Innovation, New Ideas and How the World is Changing* (27 July 2016), 2–4. The annual summer series of classical music concerts known as the Proms was established in London in 1895 by the impresario Robert Newman.
- <sup>48</sup> White, *My Indian Summer*, 267.
- <sup>49</sup> White, *Friends and Memories*, 354.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 359. Nellie Melba recorded "John Anderson my Jo" in 1913.
- <sup>51</sup> White, *Friends and Memories*, 372–375.
- <sup>52</sup> White, *My Indian Summer*, 134–135.
- <sup>53</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 332–334.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.
- <sup>55</sup> White, *My Indian Summer*, 238–245.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.
- <sup>57</sup> The extent of White's formal training in orchestration remains unclear, but it is known that she took some lessons in the subject from Sydney Waddington and Herbert Bedford at some point later in her career. White, *Friends and Memories*, 173.
- <sup>58</sup> White, *My Indian Summer*, 259–262.
- <sup>59</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 334.
- <sup>60</sup> White, *My Indian Summer*, 26–27.
- <sup>61</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 334.
- <sup>62</sup> White, *My Indian Summer*, 273.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 273–274.
- <sup>65</sup> J. A. Fuller Maitland, *English Music in the XIXth Century* (London: Grant Richards, 1903), 268.
- <sup>66</sup> Hyde, 78.
- <sup>67</sup> Fuller, "White, Maude Valérie," *Grove Music Online*.
- <sup>68</sup> Malcolm Boyd, "White, Maude Valérie," *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, ed. Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuelli (London: Macmillan, 1994), 493.
- <sup>69</sup> Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers*, 334.
- <sup>70</sup> Fuller, "White, Maude Valérie," *Grove Music Online*; Hyde, 80.
- <sup>71</sup> Graham Johnson, "Maude Valérie White (1855–1937)," liner notes for *The Power of Love: An English Songbook* (Alice Coote/Graham Johnson) Hyperion CD A67888, 2010, p. 4; Fuller, "White, Maude Valérie," *Grove Music Online*.
- <sup>72</sup> "So we'll go no more a-roving," "The Spring has come," "The Devout Lover," in *The Power of Love: An English Songbook*, Coote/Johnson, Hyperion CD A67888, 2010; "So we'll go no more a-roving," in *Favourite English Songs*, Lott/Johnson, Chandos CD CHAN 6653, 1990, "Chantez, chantez, jeune inspire." in *Mélodies sur des poèmes de Victor Hugo*, Lott/Johnson, Harmonia Mundi CD HMA 1901138, 1985; "The Thrustle," "My soul is an enchanted boat," "The Devout Lover," "So we'll go no more a-roving." in *The Praise of Women*. Rolf Johnson/Johnson, Helios CD CDH55159, 2004.
- <sup>73</sup> *The Times* (4 December 1905), 11, quoted in Fuller, *Women Composers during the British Musical Renaissance*, 209.

Eugene Gates holds an Ed.D. in aesthetics of music (University of Toronto). His articles on women composers and other musical subjects have appeared in the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, *Canadian Music Educator*, *Journal of the American Liszt Society*, *Tempo*, *Music Educators Journal*, *Czech Music*, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, and *Kapralova Society Journal*.

## Women's Philharmonic Advocacy

Leveling the "playing field" for women composers, and celebrating the legacy of The Women's Philharmonic

### History

The **Women's Philharmonic** began with the vision of its Elizabeth Seja Min, Miriam Abrams, and Nan Washburn who hoped to compensate for the under-representation of women within the mainstream classical music world by creating an orchestra comprised entirely of women performing music composed by women. Unlike most orchestras, which enjoy the direct civic support of the cities where they are based and are funded with large donations by wealthy members of those cities' communities, The Women's Philharmonic began as a grassroots effort with many donors giving small contributions of \$10, \$20, and \$25.

In the years following the first concert in 1981, The Women's Philharmonic grew into a nationally renowned orchestra with a loyal following. It presented works by more than 160 women composers – including 134 premieres and 47 commissioned works.

The Women's Philharmonic received 17 ASCAP awards in 22 seasons. The Women's Philharmonic has been given the John S. Edwards Award by the American Symphony Orchestra League, which goes to the one orchestra in the United States that demonstrates the strongest commitment to new American music during a season. The orchestra's second recording, *The Women's Philharmonic*, received the "Best Classical Recording" award from the National Association of Independent Record Distributors (NAIRD).

The Women's Philharmonic has been featured in the national media, including Time, USA Today, Ms., "CBS Sunday Morning," and National Public Radio's "Fresh Air," "Morning Edition," and "All Things Considered." It is the subject of a documentary film. The Washington Post published a highly favorable review of the orchestra's East Coast debut at Kennedy Center.

Women's Philharmonic Advocacy is a non-profit organization founded in 2008 in order to:

- Recognize the achievement of The Women's Philharmonic (1980-2004) over their 24 years of activity.
- Build on this work by advocating for the performance of women composers by orchestras and ensembles.
- Address the place of women composers (historic and contemporary) in today's repertoire of orchestras and ensembles in the US and internationally.
- Present information that highlights the shortage of programming of works by women; the heritage of TWP emphasizes that this should and can be corrected.

For more information about the WPA projects, visit [wophil.org](http://wophil.org)



**Pianistische Miniaturen von Komponistinnen.** *Une flûte soupire* and *La Cathédrale blessée* by Mel Bonis, *Bucoliques* by Marguerite Roesgen-Champion, *Lullaby* and *Humoresque* by Otilie Suková-Dvořáková, *April Preludes* by Vítězslava Kaprálová, *Sicilienne* by Germaine Tailleferre, *Valses Mignonnes* by Marie Jaëll, *Cinq Miniatures* by Stephanie Zaranek, *Deux Danses* by Vera Vinogradova, *Danza Criolla* by Alicia Terzian. Viviane Goergen, piano. ARS Production ARS38559 (2019).

*Piano miniatures by women composers* is the brainchild of Swiss pianist Viviane Goergen. The project took almost two decades to materialize, and it was only the very recent interest in women's music on the part of some more adventurous music labels that made it finally happen.

There are nine composers (from France, Switzerland, Czechia, Russia and Argentina) featured on this disc, represented by music ranging from short character pieces to preludes. Viviane Goergen is not new to this repertoire; in fact, she was one of the very first interpreters of Kaprálová's piano works and possibly the very first promoter of music by Suková outside of the Czech Republic. While Otilie Suková (a daughter of Antonín Dvořák) is represented on the disc by two 19th-century salon pieces—*Lullaby* and *Humoresque*, Kaprálová's 20th-century *April Preludes* is the most substantial work on the disc.

ARS Production must be commended for releasing this repertoire, which receives a fine performance from Goergen; her rendition of Zaranek's enchanting cycle of miniatures is particularly sensitive. The booklet is expertly written by Walter Labhart, a Swiss musicologist with a life-long interest in the music of Vítězslava Kaprálová. Well done!

Karla Hartl

Vítězslava Kaprálová: Two Dances for Piano, op. 23 (1940). An attempt at reconstruction of the autograph

In 2016, while I was working in Brno (Czech Republic) on a vocal cycle of Bohuslav Martinů, I was provided with a scan of a sketch of Kaprálová's op. 23 dances by the local Moravian Museum Department of Music History. When I attempted to play the score directly from the manuscript, however, it became very clear that this would lead nowhere and that I had to approach the score differently.

The manuscript was written in small, almost illegible notes; moreover, from measure 90 to 101, the notation consisted primarily of an illegible, multilayered sketch. I therefore decided to use a method which served me well in the past – the method of gradual, measure by measure, re-writing of the score with a computer notation program, while playing and replaying the transcribed parts on the piano. This method gave me the best possible results in the reconstruction of the songs by Bohuslav Martinů, for example. In fact, the case of Martinů's songs was in some respects worse, as there were large parts of the left hand accompaniment missing and the text in the voice part was often only partially written out, so that it was necessary to search the internet for the songs' lyrics.

After my first attempts at transcribing the sketch and playing it on the piano, a particular logic of rhythm and harmony, so typical of Kaprálová, began to emerge. Even when I was working with a partially illegible chord, I tried to keep these characteristics in mind as much as possible in order to avoid a natural impulse to "fix" the chord so that it sounded less dissonant.

It should be noted that I did this work with the intention of arriving at a usable version of the composition so that it could be recorded on a compact disc, which was to be released by Grand Piano (Naxos) in 2017. I therefore did not proceed in a purely musicological fashion to recreate the work like a pure "photograph", as this approach would not have been practical; such work I leave to future researchers. What helped me most during this process was the fact that I had already recorded much of Kaprálová's solo piano music prior to reconstructing the piece, so I was very familiar with the composer's style and way of thinking.

The title "Two Dances for Piano, op. 23" on the score was an issue, however. Could it be that a thick bar line written midway in the manuscript actually separated two dances?

After transcribing the score on the computer, it became very clear that this could not be the case. The characteristic elements and the development of the composition continued throughout the length of the autograph score, and, in my opinion, *de facto* ruled out that it was two different scores, for measure 109 and the several measures that followed almost literally took over from measure 16 and the few following measures.

A big problem arose in the most complex part of the composition, between measures 90 and 100; in these places I had to select the most likely version from among the clusters of notes, which as such were simply unplayable. This is also the only place (except for a few small corrections without much importance) where I had to re-compose an utterly illegible notation. Even here I tried not to depart from the characteristic style of the composer. From measure 102 to the end of the score, the situation improved considerably, and the final measure 119 confirmed unambiguously Kaprálová's intention to finish the composition in this way.

After my experience with Martinů's songs "Kráčím, kráčím" and "Jaškova zpěvanka", which Halbreich mentions as two independent songs, but which in fact are two versions of the same song, it can be safely assumed that the definitive version of the first dance of op. 23 would sound somewhat differently. However, this reconstruction is our only possibility to preserve the composer's last composition for piano, which would otherwise be unusable and "lost" to us.

As for the probability that one day the second dance of op. 23 will re-surface, this is indeed something that we cannot completely rule out. If I can use yet another example of the Martinů case: some of his compositions, long considered lost, eventually re-surfaced in various family archives, whose owners often did not know what they actually contained. The history of collaboration and exchange of music between Martinů and Kaprálová gives this hypothesis some hopeful probability.

Giorgio Koukl

English translation Karla Hartl



# Dance for piano

Vitezslava Kapralova arrang. G.Koukl

Piano

Measures 1-6. Dynamics: *f*, *p*, *pp*.

Pf

Measures 7-12. Dynamics: *mp*, *sf*.

Pf

Measures 13-19. Dynamics: *ff*, *p*.

Pf

Measures 20-24.

Pf

Measures 25-28.

Pf

Measures 29-34. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.

Vítězslava Kaprálová

2

35

41

47

53

58

64

Pf

Pf

Pf

Pf

Pf

Pf

The image displays a page of musical notation for piano (Pf) by Vítězslava Kaprálová. The score is organized into six systems, each with a measure number at the beginning: 35, 41, 47, 53, 58, and 64. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A 'p' (piano) dynamic marking is visible in the fifth system. The piece is marked with a '2' at the top left, likely indicating a second ending or a specific performance instruction. The overall style is characteristic of early 20th-century modernist piano music.

3

68

Pf

Musical notation for measures 68-72, featuring piano (Pf) dynamics. The system includes a treble and bass clef with various chords and melodic lines.

73

Pf

Musical notation for measures 73-78, featuring piano (Pf) dynamics. The system includes a treble and bass clef with various chords and melodic lines.

79

Pf

Musical notation for measures 79-82, featuring piano (Pf) dynamics. The system includes a treble and bass clef with various chords and melodic lines.

83

Pf

Musical notation for measures 83-86, featuring piano (Pf) dynamics. The system includes a treble and bass clef with various chords and melodic lines.

87

Pf

Musical notation for measures 87-90, featuring piano (Pf) dynamics. The system includes a treble and bass clef with various chords and melodic lines.

91

Pf

Musical notation for measures 91-94, featuring piano (Pf) dynamics. The system includes a treble and bass clef with various chords and melodic lines. A dynamic marking of *8<sup>ma</sup>* is present above the treble staff in measure 93.

Kapralová: Dance for Piano

4

95 (8)

Pf

6

99

Pf

*ff* *p*

104

Pf

109

Pf

*p*

113

Pf

*ff* *mf* *cresc.....* *ff*



The Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini di Lucca, in collaboration with Palazzetto Bru Zane – Centre de musique romantique française, Venice, is pleased to invite submissions of proposals for the symposium *‘Women Are not Born to Compose’: Female Musical Works from 1750 to 1950*, to be held in Lucca, Complesso Monumentale di San Michele, from November 27–29, 2020.

The conference aims to investigate the music and the role of women composers from 1750 to 1950. From the second half of the 18th century women composers began to participate more actively in musical life. Although the value of their works may already have been recognized during their own time (though with critical reception that might be unhelpfully gender-inflected), women composers and their works were routinely forgotten after their death. The growing corpus of musicological literature, together with scholarly editions of music, produced in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century largely ignored these women and their works. In recent decades the new perspectives in musicology have restored the presence of women composers to the history of music, and their works have begun to receive the analytical attention they deserve.

This conference focuses on the various aspects of women’s work as composers, with particular reference to some fundamental questions: when, where, what, why, how and for whom did they compose? The Program Committee encourages submissions within the following areas, although other topics are also welcome:

- Gender and genre: women composers and musical genres
- Women composers’ impact on the development of musical forms and genres
- Analytical and hermeneutic approaches to women’s music
- Virtuosity
- Women composers and their self-belief in the context of contemporary views on female creativity
- Reflections on women composers’ position in the history of music
- The critical reception of women’s works
- ‘Heroines of the Risorgimento’: music as a means of conveying patriotic and liberal ideals in women’s works
- Social expectations and possibilities of professional training for women composers
- Women composers’ writings about their music (and that of others)
- How has the social status of women composers been changing along with the transformation of the socio-cultural context?

The official languages of the conference are English, French and Italian. Papers selected at the conference will be published in a miscellaneous volume. Papers are limited to twenty minutes in length, allowing time for questions and discussion. Please submit an abstract of no more than 500 words and one page of biography. All proposals should be submitted by email no later than Sunday, April 5, 2020 to [conferences@luigiboccherini.org](mailto:conferences@luigiboccherini.org). With your proposal, please include your name, contact details (postal address, e-mail and telephone number) and (if applicable) your affiliation.

The Program Committee will make its final decision on the abstracts by the end of April 2020, and contributors will be informed immediately thereafter. Further information about the program, registration, travel and accommodation will be announced after that date.

International Summit on Gender, Sexuality & Equity in Grove Music Online



In the fall of 2019, Grove Music Online (GMO) has launched a comprehensive revision and expansion of its content relating to gender and sexuality. While its focus is on gender and sexuality, this endeavor presents an opportunity for all fields of music and sound scholarship—performance, education, composition, ethnomusicology, musicology, library science, music theory, and music therapy—to take an intersectional approach to addressing equity and inclusion of all kinds in print and digital reference documents (encyclopedias, dictionaries, indexes, educational materials, source books, score anthologies, museum exhibits, and so on). To that end, in collaboration with scholarly and community partners, the University of Guelph will hold a summit from May 29-31, 2020.

This summit will interrogate the ways that reference publications—particularly works under the Grove umbrella—have captured, contained, and defined the fields of music and sound studies within and beyond the academy. We seek contributions that discuss challenges and best practices in working toward equity and inclusion within the particular limitations of scholarly and editorial structures for publishing reference materials. This summit will explore how GMO’s revisions can mobilize new practices, policies, and content to support equity in the broadest sense. This summit will also examine how better leveraging existing technologies might allow Grove Music Online to become a more equitable tool.

**Summit participants will discuss the following and related themes:**

- \* What does equitable and inclusive representation mean in the context of an encyclopedia or other reference work such as Grove Music Online?
- \* What new methods, formats, categories, structures, and organizing principles can help this revision of Grove Music Online be more equitable in its representation of marginalized and underrepresented individuals and groups?
- \* What gaps in Grove Music Online’s gender and sexuality content should be filled by emerging research?
- \* How might fields such as queer studies, race studies, disability studies, and feminism transform our understandings of the function and content of Grove Music Online?
- \* How can this revision of GMO provide lessons applicable to other reference tools and encyclopedias used by the fields of music and sound studies?

For additional info email  
[groveequitysummit@gmail.com](mailto:groveequitysummit@gmail.com)

**PERSPECTIVES.** Reena Esmail: *Jhula-Jhule*. Ellen Taaffe Zwilich: *Episodes: I. Arioso. II. Vivace*. Vítězslava Kaprálová: *Legenda*. Jung Sun Kang: *Star-Crossed*. ChihChun Chi-Sun Lee: *Provintia* “Sunset of Chihkan Tower.” Florence Price: *Deserted Garden. Elfentanz*. Lili Boulanger: *Nocturne*. Vivian Fine: *Portal*. Amy Beach: *Romance / Dawn* Wohn, violin. Esther Park, piano / Delos DE 3547 (2019).

Issued on the Delos label, this recording represents an enviable collection of music from women composers ranging from a romantic character piece by Boston legend Amy Beach to a new work commissioned for the collaboration by Jung Sun Kang. The selections are carefully chosen for the chamber alliance of Dawn Wohn, violin, and Esther Park, piano. Several common threads unite various of these selections, ranging from cross-cultural references to familiar childhood experiences. As a result, the recording captures the beauty of folk traditions from India, Korea, and China, the sounds of Impressionism and African-American spirituals, and the familiarity of Romanticism paired with the excitement and unpredictability of the Modern Era. To achieve such a diverse offering, nine composers are featured, each contributing to the history of chamber music in an equally diverse and attractive manner.

The first selection on this recording is by Indian-American composer **Reena Esmail** (b. 1983), whose university education in the United States includes a bachelor’s from Julliard and master’s and doctoral degrees from Yale. She is the recipient of numerous commissions; the present work *Jhula-Jhule* was requested by Multicultural Sonic Evolution with the requirement that it be based on Indian folksong. It represents a merging of Esmail’s two cultures, a conscious decision to avoid what she admitted was an initial attempt to “separate my home life from my outside life” and, for the first time, to “bring songs from my own family into my music and into the Western concert hall.” (reenaesmail.com) The work gives a prominent place to two folk melodies from her native India: “Ankhon vina andharon re,” the second “Jhula-Jhule” is from her father’s mother, who lived with their family for most of Esmail’s childhood and would often sing this lullaby to her when she was a baby. The basis of the first section of the piece is the first folksong, the violin taking the melody as the piano provides a repetitive, shimmering underpinning. The second quotation, generally resting in a lower register for the violin, is supported in a similar manner for the middle section, gently rocking the listener back and forth, before a return to the opening tune. The violin approaches the conclusion with a sparsely accompanied repetition of “Jhula-Jhule” before the piano frames off the work with the pattern heard in the opening measures. A repeated chord played softly assists the audience in gently exiting this lovely visit to Esmail’s childhood and the musical sounds of India.

An illustrious artist who has made significant strides for women composers, **Ellen Taaffe Zwilich** (b.1939) has been the recipient of many distinguished honors, among them the first female to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music (1983), an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and election to the American Classical Music Hall of Fame. In the education of tomorrow’s professional musicians, she is one of the few female composers selected for study in standard university textbooks for undergraduates on the history of music. *Episodes* was completed in 2003 for renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman and commissioned by Ray and Nancy Murray of Clearwater, Florida to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Ruth Eckerd Hall. The work itself is written in a neo-romantic style with hints of modernist language and impressionist gestures. Inspired by Perlman’s rich, lyrical sound, Zwilich

allowed the violin to deliver the melody as the voice would in an aria over chordal accompaniment and running passages from the piano. The second movement provides an effective contrast with the first. Its quick, lively dialogue infused with a playful and energetic mood is further emphasized with crisp and well-articulated rhythms between violin and piano.

The fleeting career of **Vítězslava Kaprálová** (1915–1940) is sprinkled throughout with the names of renowned Czech artists with whom she associated, studied, and worked. Two deserve special mention: Leoš Janáček, with whom her father, composer Václav Kaprál, studied and Bohuslav Martinů, from whom Kaprálová herself learned. Recognized as a prodigy whose brilliant future was cut unmercifully short, she nevertheless amassed an enviable catalogue of works in various genres. *Legenda*, written in 1932 when she was only seventeen and a student at the Brno Conservatory, was her first work for violin and piano. This work captures Kaprálová’s lyricism, which she achieved with the repetition of short motives that are then spun out into swirling melodic elegance. A brief section of lively rhythmic dialogue between the violin and piano thrusts itself into the lyrical canvas, loses its momentum, and is ultimately overtaken by familiar passages of motivic development. It is pure Kaprálová and a preview of the delightful chamber works and sheer beauty yet to come from the pen of this talented artist.

Composer, keyboardist, and educator **Jung Sun Kang** (b. 1983) obtained a doctorate from Eastman and an Artist Diploma from McGill University. She is an avid performer (harpsichord and piano) of both early and new music as well as a composer of works ranging from solo to orchestral. Her work *Star-Crossed* is unique among the compositions on this collection as it was commissioned especially for its release. As with Esmail’s *Jhula-Jhule*, Jung Sun created her piece as a tribute to her cultural identity; it is based on the story she heard during her childhood in Korea of Kyunwoo, the cow herder, and Jiknyeo, the princess, immortalized as the constellations Altair and Vega. The love between the ill-matched couple incited the anger of the gods who, as punishment, sent them to two stars separated by the Celestial River (the Milky Way). In pity, birds gathered to form a bridge, allowing the lovers to meet once per year at its center. When the Celestial River is too dangerous for them to meet, their tears become the rain that marks the beginning of the monsoon season. The ethereal tones from the violin at the opening take the listener to a different landscape, the piano grounding the work in the reality of innocent yet heartfelt emotion common to all, whether experienced by those of legend or those of today. One can easily imagine the folk-tale upon hearing the beautiful soaring lines of the violin, the breathless exchange between the two lovers, the dialogue of their fate made tangible in the interaction between the piano and violin.

Taiwanese-American composer **Chihchun Chi-sun Lee** (b. 1970) studied in both Taiwan and the United States, received a doctorate from the University of Michigan. Her works span numerous genres with a large segment intended for performance on traditional Chinese instruments. (In fact, the work for this collection was originally written in 2010 for erhu.) *Provintia* (Fort Provintia, Chihkan Tower) is also the name of a monument in Tainan City, a location established by the Dutch East India Company and the oldest city in Taiwan. In 2010, the same year as the creation of the work for the traditional erhu, Lee produced a version for solo violin. While on first hearing it

may strike the listener as an abstract piece utilizing extended techniques and added percussive sounds, it does in fact follow a well-defined program which takes us through the history of this monument. The main musical materials are extracted from the Siraya people's music as well as Dutch music.

A pattern of cross-cultural influences for several works on this CD is amplified with the selections from **Florence Price** (1887–1953), whose accolades as a woman composer of African-American heritage working in the less-than-welcoming first half of the twentieth century are, at the very least, enviable. With her Symphony No. 1, premiered in 1933, she became the first female African-American composer to claim a performance of a large-scale work by a major orchestra. Born in the Midwest (Little Rock, Arkansas), she studied music in the European tradition at the New England Conservatory. Her own compositions combine this training with the sounds of spirituals and folk music of both African-American and African origins. Her music is now gaining popularity, in no small part due to recordings such as this one devoted to women composers and diversity. The two works featured on this CD are emblematic of her cross-cultural method of mixing European and African-American sources, a style encouraged during her private study with George Chadwick. *Deserted Garden* adopts structural and modal materials in its adherence to a ternary (ABA) form as well as the Dorian mode and pentatonic scale, a feature common in African-American music. The most instantly recognizable aspect enters immediately in the violin, however, with a melody whose balanced phrases and concluding slow downturn infuse its mournful lyricism with the flavor of the spiritual. The more optimistic and slightly quicker middle section is short-lived as the work soon returns to its melancholy opening to conclude. The performers have selected and observed the perfect tempi to accentuate the appropriate emotional contrast between these two sections. The second work (*Elfentanz*) is what its title indicates—a charming dance. It exudes the sentimentality of music for the late nineteenth-century salon and betrays the composer's European training with its German title but at the same time highlights the assimilation of African-American call and response.

Among the women featured on this recording are sprinkled a number of firsts; although lesser known overall than her older sister Nadia, **Lili Boulanger** (1893–1918) made her own important contributions to history, among them the distinction of being the first female to be awarded the coveted Prix de Rome in music, which she received in 1913. Her achievements were in spite of her health; her immune system weakened after contracting pneumonia in 1895, she suffered from illness for the remainder of her short life. As expected, her music is tinged with impressionist features but is also subject to innovation, particularly in her use of orchestral color. *Nocturne*, completed in the span of two days in 1911, exhibits both of these stylistic traits.

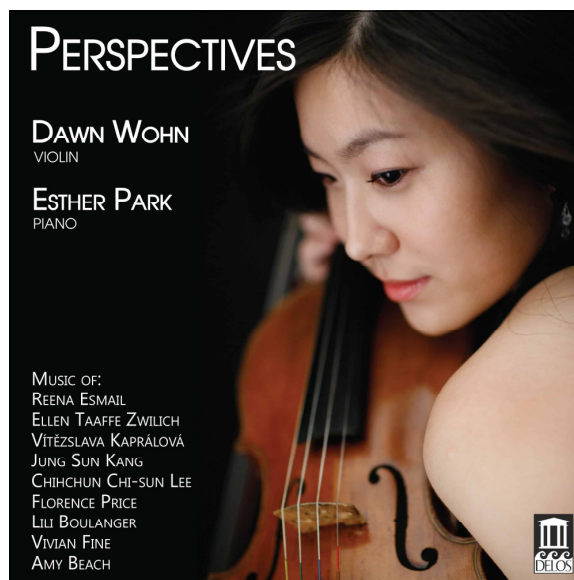
A native of Chicago, **Vivian Fine** (1913–2000) studied with an array of renowned musicians, namely composition with Ruth Crawford and Roger Sessions and orchestration with George Szell. Her works are characterized by a variety of modernist techniques and materials, which take shape in a conventional range of genres (opera, choral, orchestral, chamber, and solo). The chamber work featured on this recording (*Portal*) was commissioned and premiered by violinist Pamela Frank for her New York City recital debut in 1990. The expanse of the opening with its quick wide leaps tests the agility of the violinist. A slower tempo prevails in the second section, assigned to the violin alone, until the piano gently joins the dissonant territory of modernist melody with its chordal accompaniment. The solo / duo pattern is repeated but with greater anxiety, reminiscent of the opening, once the piano enters. The chord that concludes the work does so in a particularly savory yet une-

pected major mode as the piano slips into consonance with the final held note of the violin.

Hampered from a career as a concert pianist by nineteenth-century expectations, **Amy Beach** (1867–1944) focused instead on composition. Also known in musical circles as Mrs. H.H.A. Beach, her alternate name illuminates the reason she turned from performing music to creating it, i.e., to respect the wishes of her husband. Yet she was no less of an advocate for professional women because of her decision. The Society of American Women Composers has her to thank as its founder and first president. Fully recognized today for her well-crafted works and as a member of the Second New England School, she was in her time the first American female to achieve success in the otherwise male genre of large-scale orchestral works. Her style is that of nineteenth-century Romanticism, further tailored by her associations of keys with moods and instrumental colors. Her adeptness at creating long exquisite melodic lines is also to her advantage in *Romance*, dedicated to violinist Maud Powell, who premiered the work. As expected, the six-minute work focuses attention primarily on the violin as the principal carrier of the melody. Shared fragmented episodes between the two instruments combine with souring lines, running passages, and weighty chords to enact climactic moments in the midst of the work's overall romantic lyricism.

The diversity in styles of the works on this recording mirrors the diversity of the composers themselves. While part of the purpose of the recording is to bring together the voices of women artists, to view this collection only in these terms is to do it a disservice. The level of variety in the selections is not only greatly attractive but also emphasizes stylistic and cultural differences in the best way. The works that seek to combine Eastern and Western musical materials and programmatic sources are especially gratifying. Nevertheless, all of the compositions featured are necessary to allow the listener to fully appreciate the high level of artistry of the Wohn-Park Duo.

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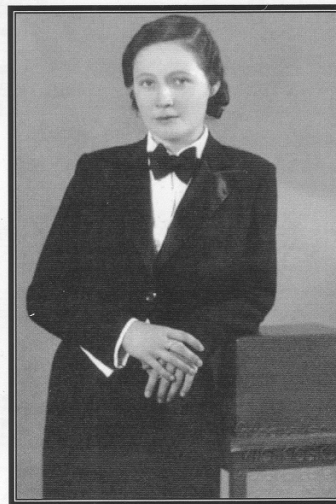
*Partita for Piano  
and String Orchestra*

*by*

*Vítězslava Kaprálová*

*Arranged for Piano & Reduction (piano)*

*Arranged & Engraved by Chris A. Trotman  
Women's Philharmonic Advocacy – [www.wophil.org](http://www.wophil.org)  
[www.kapralova.org](http://www.kapralova.org)*



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