

**THE PIANIST'S SELF: POLITICAL ACTION IN PIANO PERFORMANCE AS A  
RELATIONAL PRACTICE**

by

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The Pianist's Self: Political Action in Piano Performance as a Relational Practice

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submitted by Risa Renée Tonita in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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## Abstract

Inspired by the work of feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero and political philosopher Hannah Arendt, I argue that a pianist can, in concrete terms, take what Arendt called “political action” within the concert space. In light of Cavarero’s claim that the physical voice is the best way to express one’s “uniqueness of self” and therefore to relate to others, I argue that it is necessary for a pianist to develop *who* they are and to express this identity to an audience with their physical voice in order to create a relational concert space.

Through primary research and analysis of Amy Beach’s Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I argue that the sonata is an example of what Arendt called “political action.” Additionally, I argue that a pianist can take “political action” by learning and performing the sonata through “embodied practice” as defined by Elisabeth Le Guin.

While my analysis of Beach’s sonata explores ways that the composer was able to reclaim agency by composing and performing such a large-scale work for piano, my analysis of Maurice Ravel’s *Ondine* examines ways in which mythological figures such as the Siren and the water sprite have been portrayed throughout history specifically linking their sexuality and their *lack* of agency to their physical voices. Through primary research and analysis of Ravel’s *Ondine* I analyse the way that the composer portrays the physical voice of the water sprite and how this portrayal perpetuates false beliefs about a woman’s agency in relation to her physical voice.

Finally, this dissertation addresses the possibility for pianists to take “political action” within the concert space by performing works for vocalizing pianist. In light of Freya Jarman-Ivens’ argument that “queer” is an ongoing practice, I argue that a pianist has the opportunity to

“queer” the norm of solo piano performance, and that there is also an opportunity to challenge gender expectations or stereotypes.

This research highlights the oppression women in music have faced throughout history and offers pianists—female and beyond—tools to reclaim agency with the physical voice within the concert space.



## Lay Summary

Using feminist theory and political philosophy I argue that it is necessary for a pianist to develop *who* they are and to express this identity with the physical voice in order to create a relational concert space and by extension to take what Hannah Arendt called “political action.” Throughout this dissertation I explore facets of self-expression in various works for piano including works by women composers, Canadian composers, works for solo vocalizing pianist, and one work about a water sprite and her voice (Maurice Ravel’s *Ondine*.) This research highlights the oppression women in music have faced throughout history and offers pianists—female and beyond—tools to reclaim agency with the physical voice within the concert space.

## **Preface**

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work done by the author, Risa Tonita under the guidance of Dr. Hedy Law. I conducted a thorough literature review of existing and current scholarship for all independent components of this dissertation. Additionally, I visited and studied the archival collections of Amy Beach at the University of New Hampshire (NH) in Durham, NH, and of Maurice Ravel at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, France.

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## **Dedication**

To all of the women who have ever felt that they did not have a voice.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The DMA lecture-recital can be found at: <https://youtu.be/8hftPiH4gRk>

While attending most solo piano recitals or orchestral concerts featuring a traditional classical pianist in 2024, one might expect the pianist to walk on stage, bow, play, bow, and then walk off stage. Because pianists do not need to use their voices in performance, there is not an expectation that they will address the audience during the performance. However, as scholar Christopher Small (1927–2011) argues in his book *Musicking* (1998), the lack of expectation for performers to discuss the music using their voices results in a “one-way system of communication, running from composer to individual listener through the medium of the performer.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the listener’s task is to focus exclusively on the music, to reflect and to respond to it in their own way, but the listener is not meant to contribute to the meaning of the music.

Small’s idea of “one-way system” is illustrated in a 2014 documentary on one of the top virtuoso pianists Yuja Wang (1987–). Produced by Medici TV called *Through the Eyes of Yuja* (2014), this documentary records Wang’s views about the theoretical unity between orchestra, soloist, and audience. Yet, she does not elaborate how she, as a pianist, connects with the audience during performance; rather, she only describes the pianist’s placement of physically being in-between the orchestra and audience, presumably when she plays a concerto, accompanied by the orchestra. She, however, does not theorize the physical placement of the pianist, forms of mediation, and thus types of relation facilitated by the spatial distribution of the performing bodies: “I’m either doing a recital or a concerto...and even concerto you are the

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (1998; Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), 6.



soloist so you do kind of take control and...not exactly in the middle of the whole orchestra and on the other side, on my right side, there's the public, so for them I am, you know, some entity, so myself, it is already a unity.”<sup>2</sup>

Although later in the documentary she nevertheless briefly expresses some sense of purpose she finds in the world beyond just playing music, her remarks again do not involve relating to other listeners. Wang says, “[y]ou don’t really know what you’re searching for, but you know it’s there. It’s something beautiful, something that you believe in. [...] Human beings have to produce creative work, otherwise I don’t feel life.”<sup>3</sup> Wang expresses in this passage that playing music for an audience is philosophically more meaningful than merely appearing on stage and playing notes on an instrument. It is not enough to simply “enjoy” playing music—there must be some greater purpose, Small might say, to her creative work and she is seeking that out. In an interview published by Slippedisc in 2024, Wang discussed never wanting to disengage with her audiences. She stated that “[e]verything I do on stage is about connecting with people. My audiences and fans sustain and nourish me as an artist.”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Wang has recently begun to perform interdisciplinary concerts that bring together her pianistic artistry and the visual artwork of English painter David Hockney (b. 1937). On her personal website she expresses her enthusiasm for “fusing visuals with live music and creating immersive experiences.”<sup>5</sup> In Wang’s statement about connecting with people from the stage and by performing interdisciplinary concerts she is expressing a belief in uniting humans through

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<sup>2</sup> *Through the Eyes of Yuja Wang*, directed by Anaïs Spiro and Olivier Spiro, produced in 2014, on Medici TV, <https://www.medici.tv/en/documentaries/through-the-eyes-of-yuja-anaïs-olivier-spiro/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Through the Eyes of Yuja Wang*.

<sup>4</sup> Norman Lebrecht, “Yuja Wang: I Was Humiliated,” Slippedisc, February 24, 2020, <https://slippedisc.com/2020/02/yuja-wang-i-was-humiliated/>.

<sup>5</sup> “Yuja x Hockney at London’s Lightroom,” Yuja Wang (personal website), accessed July 21, 2024, <http://yujawang.com/yuja-x-hockney-at-londons-lightroom/>.

musical performance. However, Wang does not discuss specific ways that she connects to her audiences in any of these examples, she only expresses a desire to connect. To Small participating in a musical act is a central way of expressing humanness and therefore musical performance is a relational practice built upon social meanings: “The fundamental nature and meaning of music lies not in objects, not in musical works at all, but in action, in what people do.”<sup>6</sup> In a similar way, political philosopher Hannah Arendt argues that action or *vita activa* corresponds to the Greek term *askholia* or “un-quiet” which Aristotle used to define all activity.<sup>7</sup> For Aristotle, only in action and through speech can humans exist in a political space.<sup>8</sup> Thus, speech and action serve relational purposes, necessitating the voice of one and the ears of another.

In contrast to Wang’s lack of conscious tangible connection with her audiences, mezzo-soprano Joyce Didonato finds that relating to her audiences creates the shared experience of being human within the performance space. In an article published in *The Guardian* on October 25, 2021, Didonato says that “[c]ruising through the centuries with the flick of a page, over wildly different geological and musical terrains, I can spin a thematic thread of emotional commonalities and familiar stories that miraculously—as only great art can—hold up a mirror to my life today.”<sup>9</sup> She elaborates the idea of relating to others (“spin a thematic thread of emotional commonalities and familiar stories”) by explaining the profound shared negative impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on concert-goers and how this impact can be felt in performance:

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<sup>6</sup> Small, *Musicking*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 15.

<sup>8</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 25.

<sup>9</sup> Joyce Didonato, “From Cleopatra’s Sorrow to Duke Ellington’s Solitude, Music Helps Us Heal,” *Guardian* (International), Oct 25, 2021, accessed November 17, 2021.

Because I can now return to sing on a public stage, and because the beautiful and daring audience can now choose to come along for such an experience, “my” seeking becomes “our” seeking. “My” comfort transforms into “our” comfort. “My” solitude and isolation is now “our” shared experience. And if I’ve done my job well, by the end of the night the individual isolation has dissipated, and a *new community* has been born: a community brimming with empathy and compassion for the protagonists’ fate, for the fellow concert-goer’s sorrow and for themselves, as well.<sup>10</sup>

Didonato’s emphasis on creating a new community through live concert is shared by Riccardo Muti, music director and conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (2010 - 2023), who expressed similar sentiments regarding the return to the concert space after nearly twenty months without orchestral performances during the COVID-19 lockdown in Chicago from March 2020 to September 2021. In a live performance on September 23rd, 2021, at the Symphony Center in downtown Chicago, he reminded the audience of the importance of live music and of the connectedness of assembling for such an experience:

You are not here tonight because you didn’t know how to spend your evening. You are here tonight because you need music. You need to hear live, your fantastic musicians. That is the reason why *we* are here. We are here to give you emotions, to give you the sound of beauty, of harmony. That sound that the world is forgetting. Without music the world will be, it will become more and more savage [...] So I’m asking you to, to stay close to the orchestra, to tell your friends, your colleagues, come to hear the orchestra, not just to hear the music, but to receive through music: beauty, harmony, and as Beethoven said, brotherhood.<sup>11</sup>

Muti’s statement illustrates an example of what Butler considers a public “assembly” where humans congregate in a shared space for a similar purpose.<sup>12</sup> To Butler’s mind, uniquenesses can exist in this organized space, and those gathered do not need to act in conformity, but the act of assembling creates unity. In the scenario that Muti described, members of the audience and

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<sup>10</sup> Didonato, “From Cleopatra’s Sorrow.” [my emphasis]

<sup>11</sup> Chicago Symphony Orchestra, “Riccardo Muti addresses the audience at Symphony Center” (video), posted September 30, 2021, accessed November 17, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xe81-eHGc0w>. [my emphasis]

<sup>12</sup> Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Harvard University Press, 2015), 154-157.

musicians alike are gathering to participate in what Small calls “musicking” (i.e., the act of participating in the creation of music in any way, shape, or form).<sup>13</sup>

Although Wang does not offer suggestions of how to relate to others in the concert space, all three active musicians—Wang, Didonato, and Muti—express a concern for unifying performers and audiences, and acknowledge that music performance is not only about offering musical commodities. Rather, the experience of performing music live is one that unites all human beings as a result of the shared experience of living in society. At stake here is the problem of piano performance being typically understood even by some of the top virtuosos in the world as what Small might call a one-way system of communication.

As a solution to the problem of piano performance as a one-way communication, I will use in this dissertation feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero’s concept of “ethics of relation” to theorize what I call “the pianist’s self” for connecting more deeply with oneself and audiences.<sup>14</sup> I propose, using the concept of relationality theorized by Cavarero, to understand facets of piano repertoires of different styles and genres from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century including works for solo piano, works for solo vocalizing pianist, and one work for collaborative pianist. All works that I examine in this dissertation have rarely been studied or have not received any scholarly attention to date including works by Canadian composers Nova Pon and Emily Doolittle. Furthermore, I aim to theorize in this dissertation how a pianist can develop a relational self in a performance space and in piano pedagogy, that can assume what Arendt called the role of “political action.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Small, *Musicking*, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Adriana Cavarero, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (London: Routledge, 1997), 125.

<sup>15</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.

## 1.1 Literature Review

For decades, philosophers and feminist scholars such as Butler, Cavarero, and Karen Feldman have been contemplating Arendt's ideas of "action" which she first discussed in *The Human Condition* (1958). Inspired by Arendt's reflections on identity and plurality, Cavarero's "ethics of relation" has in turn inspired scholars in various fields to theorize notions of difference, "uniqueness," and vulnerability. However, music scholars have only recently begun to explore the implications for performance. Because neither Arendt nor Cavarero discusses music performance, scholars must find the intersections between philosophy, politics, and art in order to relate to the particularities of music performance. Musicologists Annamaria Cecconi, Mary Ann Smart, and Ryan Dohoney have bridged the gap between philosophy and musicology by providing summaries of Cavarero's concept of relationality and reflections on the signification for music scholarship. Their work opened up broader discussions of application to voice studies<sup>16</sup> and sound studies.<sup>17</sup> Their ideas also have implications for music pedagogy, as discussed by Nina Sun Eidsheim and Elisabeth Le Guin.<sup>18</sup> Finally, Zhuqing Hu's dissertation published in 2019 demonstrates the application of relationality on a global level, and Jessica Bissett Perea's book published in 2021 advocates for Indigeneity-centered research which expands the domain of relationality by theorizing connections beyond those between humans. However, there is currently little scholarship on relationality extending to pianists or to repertoire

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<sup>16</sup> See, notably, Martha Feldman and Judith T. Zeitlin, eds., *The Voice as Something More: Essays Toward Materiality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), and Nina Sun Eidsheim and Katherine Meizel, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Eidsheim, "Multisensory Investigation of Sound, Body, and Voice," in *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, ed. Michael Bull (London: Routledge, 2018), 35-43; Eidsheim, *Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019); and James A. Steintrager and Rey Chow, *Sound Objects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

<sup>18</sup> See Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 132-153, and Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 14-37.

for piano, nor is there any current scholarship that theorizes a pianist's physical voice as an expression of self or the implications of this expression on Arendt's idea of "political action." In the following literature review section, I illustrate the intersections between Cavarero's "ethics of relation," and the "uniqueness of self," and Arendt's "political action." This section will lead to the objective of this dissertation, which aims at theorizing the modern concert space of a classical pianist and arguing for the necessity for change within the study and performance of classical piano repertoire.

### **1.1.1 Expression of a "Self"**

In her book *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (2000), philosopher Adriana Cavarero explores the reciprocity of relating to other humans through storytelling. Her main argument is the necessity for developing one's self as a way to relate to others. For her, much of this process takes place through narration of an individual's story by another person.<sup>19</sup> In other words, a person cannot know the extent of their own life story without someone else relaying it back to them as a mirror would reflect their image. Additionally, Cavarero refers to the work of political philosopher Hannah Arendt in order to understand the politics of relationality. While Arendt explains the state of humanity through politics in her book, *The Human Condition* (1958), Cavarero illustrates the power of sharing stories and how relationships influence both the narration and interpretation of these stories.

Expanding upon Arendt's discussion of identity, Cavarero explains the difference between *what* a person is and *who* a person is (i.e., a person's identity based on their function in society or their life experiences). According to her the qualities of a person —their "character,

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<sup>19</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 1-4.

roles, [and] outlooks of the self”—define *what* someone is. For example, familial roles such as mother, daughter, or grandfather, or job titles such as artist, chef, or architect not to mention the more commonly recognized lawyer, doctor, or teacher describe mutable characteristics of a human being.<sup>20</sup> In Butlerian terms a person’s gender is a “social construct” which is performed and performative, and would thus be considered mutable as well.<sup>21</sup> What Butler means is that rather than understanding gender as a biological and physical characteristic of a person, gender is demonstrated through learned and repeated patterns of behaviour. In order to illustrate this point they use the example of a drag queen whose physical attributes demonstrate the biological male gender, but whose gender in drag reflects being female. Out of drag this person may be *performing* their maleness even if they were to identify as female. They may have learned how to *act* as a stereotypical man by practicing behaviours that are culturally and historically attributed to men.<sup>22</sup>

In contrast to the mutable qualities that describe one’s identity, the characteristics of *who* a person is are immutable and Cavarero describes these aspects as “the uniqueness of self in her concrete and *insubstitutable* existence.”<sup>23</sup> To better understand what this means or which qualities might define one’s identity, Cavarero turns to Arendt who argues that a personal identity is uncategorizable because it is non-essentialist and even “eludes verbal definition.”<sup>24</sup> For Cavarero, all of the happenings of one’s life story—their experiences, their thoughts, their relationships—define a person’s identity. In order to fully acknowledge and understand oneself, Cavarero explains that humans require their story to be narrated by someone else, what she calls

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<sup>20</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

<sup>21</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 10-18.

<sup>22</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 186-187.

<sup>23</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73. [my emphasis]

<sup>24</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

an “other.”<sup>25</sup> For her, the relationship between self and other is important because only through the development of a close relationship is it possible to narrate the other’s story. Examples of these intimate relationships include close friendships, romantic relationships, and familial relationships.

One such relationship that Cavarero discusses at length is that between Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas who are romantic life partners. Stein wrote about herself when she wrote Toklas’s “autobiography” which was in fact written by Stein but typed out by Toklas. Thus, strictly speaking, it was Stein’s autobiography with the assistance of Toklas, as opposed to *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, which is the title of the book. The difference between “autobiography” and “biography” allows one to notice the layers of narration [mediation, and relationships] between the partners. Although the book is an autobiography of Toklas, her story is in fact about Stein and her relationships with other extraordinary people, notably Pablo Picasso. Therefore, the book that is an autobiography of Toklas written by her partner is actually an autobiography of Stein *narrated* by Stein and typed out by Toklas. As romantic life partners, Cavarero explains that the relationship between Toklas and Stein is based on traditional domestic roles where “the writer, the genius—plays the role of the ‘husband,’ while the other—the cook, the secretary—plays the role of ‘wife.’”<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Toklas needed to learn to type in order to support Stein’s work. The web of narration in this story is extremely mediated and intricate and serves as an excellent example of the type of relationship that Cavarero deems necessary to develop in order to be what she calls a “mirror” for another.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Cavarero argues, only from another’s perspective can a person know *who* they are. Or, Butler might say, the identity of a

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<sup>25</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 81-92.

<sup>26</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 83.

<sup>27</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 84.



person is constructed performatively and *relationally*. Of course, they note that an individual's story does not depend solely on the narration by another, but is in conjunction with this mirroring of oneself. On this note, translator Paul A. Kottman explains in his introduction to Cavarero's book that "[w]hile the 'narratable self' is not fully distinguishable from his or her life-story, neither is he or she reducible to the *contents* of this story."<sup>28</sup> In other words, a person's identity cannot be determined by individual experiences, but by the sum of their parts. The most important aspect to Cavarero is the necessity to develop oneself and to understand *who* one is—that is, one's identity—in order to relate to others. It is necessary to be relational in order paradoxically to understand what Cavarero calls one's "uniqueness."<sup>29</sup> Hence, she theorizes relationality as an integral part of the process of identity formation: "[t]he necessary aspect of an identity...is intertwined with other lives...and needs the other's tale."<sup>30</sup>

Focusing on self-expression, Cavarero challenges the relationship between speech and voice by recategorizing it from ontology to politics in her book, *For More Than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression* (2005). The difference, to Cavarero, between speech and voice is that speech is rhythmic whereas the voice is purely resonance.<sup>31</sup> She acknowledges that the relationship between speech and voice is "one *among uniquenesses*" and that together they create a plural bond.<sup>32</sup> Voice and speech are unique entities, but they exist in relation to one another. Therefore, they create a partnership. Cavarero's argument addresses the issue of "logocentrism" (or the focus on speech over voice) and she explains the necessity to separate the voice from speech in order to understand its function for self-expression and thus for relating to

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<sup>28</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, xvi.

<sup>29</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 18-23.

<sup>30</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 88.

<sup>31</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 180.

<sup>32</sup> Adriana Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 16.

others. To her mind, the most significant way to express the uniqueness of self is through the voice. In order to theorize the significance of the voice in developing inter-personal relationships, she refers to the work of Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and Heraclitus, explaining specifically how speech became known separately from the voice in the history of metaphysics.<sup>33</sup> For Aristotle, the human voice is significant because it conceptualizes thoughts through speech. However, in Greek philosophy, it is speech—and not the voice—that is important, because it can signify thoughts. Therefore, voice and speech became known as separate entities in the history of metaphysics, resulting in what Cavarero calls the “devocalization of logos.”<sup>34</sup> However, understanding the voice only as a vessel through which thoughts get expressed excludes the extraordinary quality of an individual’s “uniqueness.” Through Homeric epics, stories of sirens, and the grandiose thoughts of the Greeks, she explains this process of devocalization and establishes the necessity to reclaim the ontological significance of the voice.

For Cavarero, because each voice is “unique”—unique because each person is distinguishable just by the quality of their voice—it is in using the voice that makes humans relatable.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, while words are important, they are not indistinguishable from those used by other humans, but the individual *timbre* of a human voice transmits distinctive characteristics of a person’s soul. While the “uniqueness” of an individual can also be perceived from their outward appearance, the perception of it aurally transfers the perception inside the body. In other words, the eyes perceive what exists on the outside of the body. Yet, because hearing is possible only through internal organs it is linked to the voice through internal physiological passageways

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<sup>33</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 53-61; 37.

<sup>34</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 40.

<sup>35</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 42.

in the head. The perception of a voice (or any sound) is therefore a physically internal experience. When a person speaks or sings, it is the internal organs that are facilitating the perception of sound. When a listener perceives this sound, they are in turn making use of their internal organs. To Cavarero, it is this internal physiological relationship between voice and ears that unites human beings in a profoundly relatable way. Additionally, because of its distinctive timbre, the voice communicates the most individual and intimate characteristics of a person. She writes, “the voice is the equivalent of what the unique person has that is most hidden and most genuine.”<sup>36</sup> Importantly, she argues that in order for an experience to be truly relational, there is a necessity for what she calls “‘more than one voice’, each one different from the other.”<sup>37</sup> What she means by this expression is that there is a necessity for interpersonal dialogue by genuinely listening to the other’s physical voice so that one can understand more fully the other’s uniqueness. For Cavarero, to *not* use the physical voice precludes all potential for relationality. As she claims, “[t]he price for the elimination of the physicality of the voice is thus, first of all, the elimination of the other, or, better, of others.”<sup>38</sup>

Of course, Cavarero is interested in understanding the unique characteristics of a person and, for her, the voice best expresses this individuality and language forms the connector that highlights the similarities between people which results in a unity that, based on Arendt's discussion, she describes as “relational.”<sup>39</sup> Most importantly, she acknowledges the necessity for humans to interact with one another in a shared physical space and to use their voices as a means to express their uniqueness of self which becomes as Arendt has called “political action.”<sup>40</sup> For

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<sup>36</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 15-16.

<sup>38</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 46.

<sup>39</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 193.

<sup>40</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190-191.

Cavarero, “[w]ithout such communication, without action in a shared space of reciprocal exhibition, uniqueness remains a mere ontological given—the given of an ontology that is not able to make itself political.”<sup>41</sup> In other words, if humans do not interact with one another and they do not use their voices to communicate in a public space, what defines their uniqueness remains a state of existence rather than contributing to society through “political action.”

Expanding upon the concept of “shared space,” Cavarero’s book, *Surging Democracy* (2021) facilitates a discussion of Arendt’s political thoughts about “assembly” in a public space. Although not a direct translation from the Italian *Democrazia sorgiva* (2019), the title “Surging Democracy” represents a mass of people congregated for a shared purpose and whose collective energy emanates forth.<sup>42</sup> As Cavarero discusses, Arendt rarely uses the word “democracy” because her argument concerns politics. For Arendt, “politics” is about a communal space of reciprocal interaction between equals. In keeping with Arendt’s usage, Cavarero’s concept of “shared space” refers to Arendt’s idea of “political space.”

### 1.1.2 Taking Political Action

Because Cavarero’s work includes discussion of the physical voice and the expression of self, no wonder musicologists such as Dohoney, Cecconi, and Smart have begun to explore its implications for music. However, few scholars who work on voice studies and sound studies investigate Arendt’s work extensively. In this dissertation I acknowledge that Cavarero’s argument for the development of a “self” is a response to Arendt’s work on identity and plurality. Furthermore, my intervention addresses a gap in the scholarship pertaining to taking

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<sup>41</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 196.

<sup>42</sup> Adriana Cavarero, *Surging Democracy: Notes on Hannah Arendt’s Political Thought* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 5-12.

what Arendt calls “political action.” While Cavarero’s discussion focuses on intricate physiological and historical conceptions of the voice, Arendt’s book, published originally in 1958, focuses on politics. She aims at understanding why humans behave the way they do in the twentieth century. To her the modern world is a space of alienation due to a lack of plurality with other humans. As an antidote to this problem, she reflects on the purpose of all human activities and actions, or in her words to “think what we are doing.”<sup>43</sup> From her perspective, humans in the modern world have become preoccupied with themselves and focus their energies on concerns between the world and themselves, rather than fostering a concern for humankind or for one’s community. This concern for the self is not to be misunderstood for understanding one’s identity, however, because for Arendt it is precisely the disconnect between knowing oneself and thinking *only* of oneself that results in isolation.

Crucially, Arendt uses the terms “world alienation” and “self-alienation” to theorize isolation. For her, what unites humans is a shared understanding of concepts or basic principles, or common sense. When a person lacks common sense, they are cutting themselves off from that shared understanding with other humans, therefore separating themselves from the world. In being so concerned about oneself a person is no longer focused on the commonalities among other humans and, in this way, they are becoming alienated from the world. To Arendt, “[o]ne of the most persistent trends in modern philosophy since Descartes and perhaps its most original contribution to philosophy has been an exclusive concern with the self, as distinguished from the soul or person or man in general, an attempt to reduce all experiences, with the world as well as with other human beings, to experiences between man and himself.”<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, the Marxist term “self-alienation,” as Arendt explains, describes the separation of one’s individual

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<sup>43</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 254.

qualities from their role as a producer of products. For example, the vendor who simply plays their role selling products for profit and the fabricator who arrives at the market in search of products are separating themselves from the role they must play in order to succeed in their commercial goals. Neither one goes to the market to look for a relationship, but for personal gain. Simply put, Arendt argues for existing in relation to other human beings through action and speech.

Although *The Human Condition* was first published in 1958, it was reprinted in 2018, complete with an introduction by political scientist Danielle Allen. The reprint demonstrates its current relevance. Arendt's demand for "political action" by living among and relating to other human beings is relevant to our society in 2024 as across the globe all humans are struggling to connect with others during rounds of COVID-19 outbreaks and since the rounds of lockdowns between 2020 and 2022. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, what Arendt means by "think[ing] what we are doing" brings purpose into each of our activities and to our relationships. This kind of thinking enables us to dare to use our voices in order to take what she calls "political action," and to do so in the presence of others because only then can true action come to life. According to her,

[a]ction [...] is never possible in isolation; to be isolated is to be deprived of the capacity to act. Action and speech need the surrounding presence of others no less than fabrication needs the surrounding presence of nature for its material, and of a world in which to place the finished product [...] Action, moreover, no matter what its specific content, always establishes relationships and therefore has an inherent tendency to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, Arendt extends her argument by stating the necessity for humans to interact with one another so that each can understand a variety of life experiences, in particular suffering and

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<sup>45</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.

flourishing. For her, to be “among and in relation to other acting beings”<sup>46</sup> provides the opportunity to be a contributor of a story—one that has begun in consequence of actions and deeds.

### 1.1.3 Bringing Cavarero into Musicology

Studying the work of both Arendt and Cavarero helps to theorize the philosophy of the political and social trends in the western world in 2024, specifically the impact of isolation on inter-personal and intra-personal relationships. However, neither of them discusses the implications on musical performance specifically. Fortunately, Cavarero’s work on the “uniqueness of self”, relationality, and the voice inspired musicologist Ryan Dohoney to bring her ideas into music scholarship. In his article titled “An Antidote to Metaphysics: Adriana Cavarero’s Vocal Philosophy” (2011) Dohoney summarizes Cavarero’s *For More than One Voice* and relates the work of composer-vocalist Meredith Monk to Cavarero’s discussion of the voice, specifically the idea of “devocalization of logos.” The majority of the article is devoted to explaining “the importance of Cavarero’s concepts of sexual difference, natality, and embodied uniqueness to her vocal philosophy.”<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, Dohoney contributes a well-organized synthesis of the main themes of Cavarero’s writing, concise explanations of key concepts and vocabulary such as sexual difference, uniqueness, plurality, narration, and the voice, and an opening for other musicologists and music scholars to apply Cavarero’s theory to more specialized discussions of music (i.e. music performance). While he uses Monk’s composition and performance style to exemplify the uniqueness of a self, he does not address how to

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<sup>46</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.

<sup>47</sup> Ryan Dohoney, “An Antidote to Metaphysics: Adriana Cavarero’s Vocal Philosophy,” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 15 (2011): 72.

approach Western Classical music that has previously been composed or how to take political action within a performance space. That said, Dohoney must be credited for encouraging a discussion to take place within the realm of musicology. In his words, “[m]usical relations constantly present us with difference, and thinking with Cavarero may help us narrate those voices we have yet to hear.”<sup>48</sup>

#### 1.1.4 Sound as Vibrational Practice

Applying Cavarero’s ideas on voice, speech, and difference to her own craft, singer Nina Sun Eidsheim explores relationality through her concept of sound as a vibrational practice in her book *Sensing Sound: Singing & Listening as Vibrational Practice* (2015). Although she only specifically cites Cavarero three times, it is evident that the themes of logocentrism, relationality, and the idea of voice as commodity (which comes from Arendt, but which Cavarero develops) informs her entire book. In the first instance, Eidsheim references Cavarero’s discussion of the various readings and interpretations of Odysseus and his experience being tied to the mast of his ship hoping not to become overwhelmed by the song of the sirens. She explains that “[t]hese readings, as Adriana Cavarero has pointed out, are anachronistic in their consideration of the ‘bourgeois.’”<sup>49</sup> She means that Horkheimer and Adorno modernized the *Odyssey* by using words like “subject,” “Self,” “enlightenment,” “society,” “bourgeoisie,” and “capitalism” — words that skew the perception of the story’s reality.<sup>50</sup> However, Eidsheim argues that the anachronistic interpretations shed light on the current state of music performance as a capitalist endeavour. Although the reference is brief and even her footnote does not include any extra information

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<sup>48</sup> Dohoney, “An Antidote to Metaphysics,” 85.

<sup>49</sup> Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 53.

<sup>50</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 112-113.



about Cavarero or the context of this quote, it is evident that her discussion about sirens in Eidsheim's book stems from Cavarero's second chapter of *For More Than One Voice*.<sup>51</sup>

The second and third references to Cavarero occur in Eidsheim's third chapter in which she discusses the jamming of speech, or the corruption of what she calls "fluid speech". She considers the difference between syllables that form words and those that are only utterances of non-linguistic sounds. To justify her points, she cites Cavarero's analysis of the term "logocentrism" and explains how this term unfairly represents the function of the voice: "nonlinguistic stutters and sounds of hesitation are not voice."<sup>52</sup> In a similar way that Cavarero asserts that the voice on its own is an expression of the uniqueness of self, Eidsheim argues that the sound quality of the voice can be equated to the "thick event" (or the main event) of music thereby demonstrating its individual importance rather than its fusion with language.<sup>53</sup>

Eidsheim's main argument throughout her book is that sound should be understood not only as sound on its own, but as an experience that engages the entire body, or as she calls it as a "vibrational practice."<sup>54</sup> She identifies issues arising from understanding music without considering it an embodied experience and offers insight into reconsidering our approach to learning, teaching, and performing music. Some issues that she identifies include the construction of concert spaces in such a way to project acoustic sound to precise locations in the hall, teaching music with the exclusive goal of optimizing sound while disregarding what the experience of playing or listening might feel like, and a lack of consideration of the overall experience of participating in musical activity which results in the inability to relate to others. She contends that,

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<sup>51</sup> Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 53.

<sup>52</sup> Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 99.

<sup>53</sup> Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 154.

Understanding music as a figure of sound [...] is merely one mode of thinking about the phenomenon. But this is an idea with enormous currency and seemingly unstoppable momentum. Not only does it shape how we discuss, conceive of, and analyze music, but it also determines the ways in which we imagine we can relate to music and the power we imagine it to wield in our lives. This shaping, in turn, influences how we configure our relationships to other humans through and with music. Indeed, the way we conceive of our relationship to music could productively be understood as an expression of how we conceive of our relationship to the world.<sup>55</sup>

Her argument is directly linked to the theses of both Arendt and Cavarero in that the main argument supports “political action” through relating to ourselves, to other humans, and to the world.

### **1.1.5 Connecting to the Composer Through Embodied Practice**

In a similar way that Eidsheim reimagines the performance space and music pedagogy as vibrational practice, cellist and musicologist Elisabeth Le Guin offers the possibility to engage with the composer in a deeply relatable way. Although she does not cite Cavarero in her book *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (2006) Le Guin explains how performers can reclaim agency through an embodied experience with their instrument in a similar way that Cavarero seeks to reclaim the individuality of the voice. For Le Guin, an embodied experience provides a possibility for better understanding the composer's craft and for developing the performer's voice. In her first chapter she meticulously describes the process of reading and playing Luigi Boccherini's Cello Sonata in Eb Major. Specifically, she depicts how a performer can relate to the composer's own experience of playing the sonata and in this way the relationship between performer and composer is reciprocal. For her, “[...] as living performer of Boccherini's sonata, a work which he wrote for himself to play, I am aware of acting the

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<sup>55</sup> Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 6.

connection between parts of someone who cannot be here in the flesh. I have become not just his hands, but his binding agent, the continuity, the consciousness; it is only a step over from the work of maintaining my own person as some kind of unitary thing, the necessary daily fiction of establishing and keeping a hold on identity.”<sup>56</sup> In understanding, learning, and performing music in this reciprocal manner, Le Guin is successfully achieving Small’s point that “musicking” should be more than unidirectional. She extends her argument by claiming that when a performer engages with the music through an embodied approach the audience will also feel the performer’s connection to the composer. Furthermore, she—speaking as a cellist—argues that the use of the physical voice is not necessary to express the connection between performer and composer. However, Arendt, Cavarero, and Eidsheim (who is a singer) would surely argue that no political action can exist in this context due to the lack of relation to members of the audience by use of the voice. Le Guin offers an approach to understanding a composer’s craft and in understanding their experience with the instrument (if they are/were proficient at that particular instrument). She also offers an approach to understanding and interpreting the music itself which gives the act of performing such music more purpose than if such a reflective approach had not been taken. In this way, she provides a process of developing a mindful and embodied performance of any musical work and which can be applied to any musical instrument, including the voice. Her contribution to scholarship and to performance can be seen through Eidsheim who explicitly acknowledges Le Guin’s contribution to her own scholarship.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini’s Body*, 24.

<sup>57</sup> Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 14.

### 1.1.6 Global Relationality

Expanding the concept of relationality beyond the inter or intra-personal dimension, one of the recent musicological works that employs Cavarero's ethics of relation is Zhuqing Hu's dissertation entitled "From Ut Re Mi to Fourteen-Tone Temperament: The Global Acoustemologies of an Early Modern Chinese Tuning Reform" (2019). Unlike Dohoney, Le Guin, or Eidsheim, Hu does not discuss an embodied approach to the learning of music or offer suggestions for engaging with music as a vibrational practice. Rather, he challenges his readers to understand relationality on a global or transnational level. While the only mention of Cavarero's name occurs in a footnote referring to her Appendix in *For More Than One Voice*, Hu's thesis is an application of Cavarero's ideas on difference, "otherness," and relationality.<sup>58</sup> Through his extensive study of the Kangxi Emperor's fourteen-tone temperament and meticulous attention to its historical and cultural influences, Hu demonstrates how cross-cultural relations resulted in the development of not only a system of music temperament, but the building of an empire. In order to convey the complex implications of his argument Hu uses the phrase "hidden cosmopolitan acoustemologies" to illustrate indications of global relativity in the Emperor's fourteen-tone temperament.<sup>59</sup> His aim is to "use the Qing's tuning reform to illuminate those global relationalities of listening-and sounding-as-knowing without being confined by *ad hoc* demarcations of sameness or difference."<sup>60</sup> By pushing the boundaries of Cavarero's discussions of difference and sameness, and of the "necessary other" Hu encourages his readers to consider how their individual lives and expressions of self might have a larger, cross-cultural impact—how individuals or collectives of humans might affect other cultures or cultural practices. More

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<sup>58</sup> Zhuqing Hu, "From Ut Re Mi to Fourteen-Tone Temperament: The Global Acoustemologies of an Early Modern Chinese Tuning Reform" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2019), 454.

<sup>59</sup> Hu, "From Ut Re Mi to Fourteen-Tone Temperament," 22-33.

<sup>60</sup> Hu, "From Ut Re Mi to Fourteen-Tone Temperament," 32-33.

specifically he prompts questions pertaining to the inter-relatedness of all cultures. These are the questions that need to be posed and answered in order to resolve Arendt's concern for "world-alienation".

### 1.1.7 Indigeneity-Centered Research and the "Density" of Relationships

In a way similar to Hu's argument for transnational relationships, musician-scholar Jessica Bissett Perea contends in *Sound Relations: Native Ways of Doing Music History in Alaska* (2021) that to understand music history in a Native way one must take what she calls a relational and deeply rooted approach. Only in this way can Indigenous-led and Indigeneity-centered scholarship account for what she calls the "density" of colonialism and other transcultural relationships.<sup>61</sup> In other words, rather than discussing Indigenous music as a genre on its own or understanding Indigenous music history as culturally isolated from Western music history, Perea argues that scholars understand the complexity of the relationships throughout history that have shaped Indigenous music. Furthermore, she implores scholars to consider the interconnectedness of performance and all other modes of living. To Perea, relationality is not only about relationships with humans, but relationships between *experiences*. For example, there are certain performance practices that must take place for a hunt to be successful. "Songs and subsistence are deeply interconnected ways of respecting reciprocity and the responsibility one has to all human and more-than-human entities."<sup>62</sup> Therefore, Perea asks researchers to account for the complexity or the "density" of Indigenous peoples' "ways of being," "ways of knowing," and "ways of doing."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Jessica Bissett Perea, *Sound Relations: Native Ways of Doing Music History in Alaska* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 6.

<sup>62</sup> Perea, *Sound Relations*, 7.

<sup>63</sup> Perea, *Sound Relations*, 29.

While this dissertation is not informed by the genealogy of indigenous scholarship directly, I acknowledge that the concept of relationality is deeply rooted in Indigenous performance practices. It is also crucial to note that Perea's argument takes relationality beyond the scope of inter- and intra-human relationships to involve experiences, sounds, and nature, to name just a few examples. In this way she pushes the boundaries of scholarship on relationality even though it is not at all a new concept in Indigenous culture.

### **1.1.8 Conclusion of Literature Review**

Despite his intriguing incentive to reflect on global relationality, Hu does not discuss performer-audience relationships, and despite Cavarero's multidisciplinary influence on scholarship and the emergence of her work in music there is currently no published work that theorizes the pianist's physical voice as an expression of their "uniqueness of self," as she has discussed. Nor is there any published work that theorizes the concert space as a space of isolation and alienation. While the current scholarship on piano pedagogy does include discussion of how to interpret music, how to make artistic choices on the instrument, and the importance of developing a reciprocal relationship between teacher and student, none of the literature uses Cavarero's concept of relationality to develop a "self", nor does it address Arendt's concept of "political action."<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, I acknowledge pianists' concern for their audiences and their desire to connect more deeply with their audiences. However, there is currently no literature that theorizes the relationship between pianist and audience in the way that Cavarero argues the

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<sup>64</sup> See, notably, Amy Boyes, "Strong Connections: Building Positive Teacher-Student Relationships Based on Personality Types, Learning Styles, Methods of Communication, and Contrasting Perspectives," *Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) e-Journal* 4, no. 3 (February 2013), 23-34; Jeffrey Swinkin, *Teaching Performance: A Philosophy of Piano Pedagogy* (Norman, Oklahoma: Springer International Publishing, 2015); and Jessica L. Welsh, "Student-First Piano Pedagogy: Best Practices for Creating Dynamic Relational Connections in the Piano Studio" (DMA diss., Texas Christian University, 2021).

necessity to develop reciprocal relationships. Therefore, this research will fill this gap. My xs concern how to theorize the pianist's self including a pianist's physical voice (and by extension, agency, and identity), historically underrepresented voices, the continued need to empower girls and women, and gender equality.

## **1.2 Research Question**

It is now clear that both Arendt and Cavarero argue that the importance of relating to others is to take political action. However, while Arendt's approach to identity is always political, Cavarero's interest resides in the types of relationships that are created throughout a person's life and the reciprocity in sharing one's life story with another. Moreover, in order to fully realize her argument for the necessity of storytelling, she does so by recounting stories from Greek mythology, classic Shakespearean tales, or legends. Through the telling of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, for example, Cavarero uses the blindness of a poet as a metaphor to understand the absence of relation and explains that seeing is a metaphor for all five senses. In musical performance this blindness can be understood from the audience's perspective when there is a lack of relatable information being communicated. For example, when a pianist does not engage verbally with the audience or does not provide context for the music or personal thoughts about the music, the audience is blind to the purpose of the act of creating music and the system of communication is automatically one-way. Likewise, if a performer does not deeply reflect on their identity in practice and outside of practice, if they do not consider what they think about the music or what it means or what it might mean for someone else, the performance will reflect this personal blindness, and this will contribute to the audience's blindness. In Arendtian terms, the performer is thus creating a space of alienation where there is a lack of shared

understanding or “common” sense.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, in failing to consider *who* they are prior to a performance and how this contributes to their delivery of the music to an audience, the performer arrives on stage isolated from themselves. In other words, the performer plays the role of “pianist” rather than being a human being who performs at the piano. Simply put, by not engaging verbally with the audience, by not expressing one's individuality or as Cavarero would say one's “uniqueness” through the use of the voice, the audience would have no way of relating to the performer. Consequently, the musical space remains one where the only purpose of the act of making music is the music itself, as Small has discussed, rather than on making music as a “political action” as Arendt discusses. This dissertation thus takes Arendt's concept of alienation in the concert space as the research problem. I propose that the concept of relationality can be theorized for the practice of live piano performance and, by extension, piano pedagogy.

### **1.2.1 Music Performance as Political Action**

In understanding Arendt's argument for speech and action to coexist and in light of Butler's ideas on “assembly,” I argue for the necessity to create a performance space where the pianist can take political action. Arendt's argument is primarily about politics, but she does occasionally examine the arts. When she does, her point is always purposeful and special because she treats the arts as a specific category of political action. For example, she cites the relationship between social art forms, such as music and poetry, and public arts such as architecture as a demonstration of the connection between the social and the intimate spaces. Additionally, in a similar manner that Butler argues that gender performativity is possible only through repetitions of behaviours, Arendt discusses the requirement for speech and action to be

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<sup>65</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 208.



consistently repeated in order to fully comprehend the identity of the speaker and the intent of the action. Therefore, to her mind, the theatre is an important venue for political action.

Therefore, to her, actors can play the role of humans “acting” as in taking action as a member of society. For Arendt, “the theatre is the political art par excellence; only there is the political sphere of human life transposed into art. By the same token, it is the only art whose sole subject is man in his relationship to others.”<sup>66</sup> Based on Arendt’s understanding of the theatre, both Didonato and Muti, to my mind, have created a performance space that Arendt would call a space for political action. Both artists use their physical voices in performance as a necessary medium through which they connect with their audiences; both are interested in the relationship between themselves and the members of the audience, and each possesses a concern for society and for humanity rather than a concern only for themselves. In these ways both Didonato and Muti are providing solutions to both Marx’s “self-alienation” and Arendt’s “world-alienation.”

### 1.3 Chapters’ Summary

In consideration of Cavarero’s claim that in order to develop a “‘narratable self,’ there is always a *necessary other*,”<sup>67</sup> in Chapters Two and Three I aim to explain musical properties of a piano composition that has no clearly stated “programmatic” content (i.e., repertoire composed with an attached story or descriptive title).<sup>68</sup> Programmatic music is already relatable because the composer has provided expressive information which immediately connects them to the performers and the members of the audience. While a descriptive title such as “La soirée dans Grenade” (The Evening in Granada) does not provide a fully realized story it still incites mutual

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<sup>66</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 188.

<sup>67</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, xii.

<sup>68</sup> Jonathan Kregor, *Program Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2015), 1-6.

focused reflection between performers and members of the audience. Immediately, upon acknowledgement of the title one knows what time of day the event is taking place as well as the location. Even if a listener has no musical education the title brings together composer, performer, and member of the audience in their shared reflection of what the music evokes based on the given evidence. In contrast, non-programmatic music (i.e. repertoire composed *without* an attached story or descriptive title) offers no such relatable content.<sup>69</sup> Performers often research the context in which a piece was composed, information about a composer's background, or the political state of the country they were living in at the time of composition. Additionally, performers consider what a composer was trying to communicate through their music, but there is currently little published scholarship to theorize a composer's "self" within a piece of abstract music for piano. These chapters will provide theoretical possibilities for understanding how a composer's "narratable self" may be represented in the music. Additionally, I will theorize how in understanding the composer's identity the music becomes relatable to members of an audience, thus contributing to a participatory experience rather than a passive experience as Small has discussed. The research question of these two chapters is: How does a non-programmatic piano composition express what Cavarero calls the "uniqueness of self"?

Despite recent studies of her music, the music of Amy Beach (1867-1944) has rarely been examined in relational terms.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, I will use Amy Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, Op. 34 (1896) which is a non-programmatic composition as a case study to

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<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Daniel K. L. Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Berthold Hoeckner, *Programming the Absolute: Nineteenth-Century German Music and the Hermeneutics of the Moment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002); and Sandra Pederson, "Defining the Term 'Absolute Music' Historically," *Music & Letters* 90, No. 2 (May 2009), 240-262.

<sup>70</sup> See, notably, Edward D. Latham, "Amy Beach, 'Phantoms,' Op. 15, No. 2 (1892)" in *Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Secular & Sacred Music to 1900*, ed. Laurel Parsons and Brenda Ravenscroft (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 228-242.

explore Cavarero's idea of "necessary others."<sup>71</sup> Although there are no apparent programmatic ideas in this work, I will identify traces of Beach's "necessary others" (e.g., piano masters of the 19th century) in the music, such as the fugue in the fourth movement, a compositional technique that was used by her predecessors. Additionally, I will demonstrate how Beach's compositions illustrate her "narratable self" even though she was prohibited from studying, performing, or teaching formally after she was married. In order to understand how Beach saw herself in relation to these "others", I will contextualize my analysis by consulting the following archival sources: Box-Folders 28/9 and 28/10 from the A.P. Schmidt Company Archives at the Library of Congress (manuscript and first edition of the sonata with her annotations), the Amy Cheney Beach Papers and the Walter S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Papers housed at the University of New Hampshire Library, and relevant published newspaper articles and writings.<sup>72</sup> Finally, in Chapter Four I will use Le Guin's model of embodied practice to explore ways that a pianist can develop a reciprocal relationship to Amy Beach in the fourth movement of her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34.

The fifth chapter of my dissertation will be a study of the vocal expression of an identity in instances of programmatic music. Based on Cavarero's analyses of the voice of the mythological figure—the Siren—and the various ways that Sirens have been represented by such philosophers and artists as Plato, Homer, and René Magritte, I aim to interpret one musical depiction of a related figure—the water sprite—in select piano repertory.<sup>73</sup> As a programmatic piece, it is an instance of music that creates links between composers, musicians, and listeners.

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<sup>71</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 81-92.

<sup>72</sup> Beach, Mrs. H.H.A., Sonata for Violin and Piano, Music Manuscript and Print Edition with Annotations (A.P. Schmidt Company Archives: 1869-1958, Box-Folder 28/9 and 28/10. Music Division. Washington, D.C., Library of Congress).

<sup>73</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 103-116.

However, there is little published work that discusses how Sirens and water sprites are represented in repertoire for piano. Because Sirens have received considerable attention by a variety of musical composers, and because a Siren's identity is directly linked to the voice, I will theorize this identity based on her musical depiction. This chapter will focus on understanding complex details of this mythological creature—details that are not obviously recognized in the music just by playing it—and in turn offer possibilities for a more relatable performance experience for both performers and members of the audience alike. The research questions that I will address in this chapter are: How do the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and formal features reflect the mesmerizing quality of the Siren's voice?

Using Cavarero's analysis of the Sirens (2005) and Le Guin's recently published work on the Sirens (2021), I will explain how the Siren's voice is depicted in *Ondine* (1908) by French composer Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). To better understand Ravel's interpretation of *Ondine*, I will consult relevant published primary sources housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France such as correspondences, journal and newspaper articles, conferences, and memoirs of lessons with Ravel by former students, and secondary sources.

Finally, the sixth chapter will focus on the development of a pianist's physical voice in the performance space. In light of Cavarero's claims that the best way to express a human's "uniqueness" is through the voice, and that the expression of this voice creates a relational space, I will demonstrate how compositions that feature a "vocalizing pianist" (i.e., a pianist who speaks or sings, or who vocalizes non-linguistic sounds while playing) construct a relationship between the pianist's voice and political action.<sup>74</sup> Because pianists typically do not need to use their voices to play their instrument, they are not expected to connect vocally with any other

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<sup>74</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 8.

human beings while on stage. The pianists who perform repertoire composed for vocalizing pianist would then share a profound expression of their “uniqueness.” Because the vocalizing pianist expresses their “uniqueness” by use of their physical voice in performance the audience can relate to the human in addition to relating to the music. Consequently, they are immediately modifying a performance space from non-relational or self-alienated, to being relational. Just as Cavarero explains the difference between understanding the “uniqueness” of an individual by their physical appearance and understanding their “uniqueness” from their voice, so too listening to a piano performance can be understood in this way. When a performer does not use their voice in performance—on stage or within a piece written for non-vocalizing pianist—the audience can only understand the pianist’s interpretation of the music through an external expression of self (i.e., through the piano itself). Conversely, when a pianist uses their voice within the performance space the perception of their identity passes from the internal organs of their body (organs that produce vocal sound) to the internal organs of the listeners (internal canals of the ears). Furthermore, the performer is taking political action, as Hannah Arendt would have it, as they create a space in which to be “among and in relation” to others just by using their voice. My question is: How does the act of vocalizing while playing communicate the uniqueness of a pianist’s self?

To understand the agency of a vocalizing pianist, I will use Cavarero’s ideas of “vocal exchange” and “reciprocal dependence”.<sup>75</sup> I will study the ways the composer constructed the text and music to optimize their reciprocity, and how the use of the voice contributes to a reciprocal performance experience. I will also examine how the preparation of such music impels the pianist to develop their own physical voice as well as their “unique self” in order to

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<sup>75</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 182.

successfully deliver the piece in performance. Case studies will include *Sunflower Sutra* (1999) by American composer Jerome Kitzke (1955 -), *Myosotis* (2012) by Canadian composer Nova Pon (1983 -), and *Tony Beaver and the Big Music* (2021) by Canadian composer Emily Doolittle (1972 -).

In the Epilogue of the dissertation, I will offer suggestions for applying ideas of relationality to piano pedagogy and live performance. In light of Arendt's proposal that we "think what we are doing" I will discuss possible ways to incorporate this statement into piano lessons for students of any age and any level.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, following Eidsheim's model of vocal pedagogy I will suggest ways of rethinking the piano lesson in relational terms. I will also propose ways of reconceptualizing the performance space so it becomes what Arendt might call a space of "political action" rather than what Small calls a space of one-way communication.

This research will contribute to women's studies, music performance studies, and voice studies, with implications for piano pedagogy. My dissertation will contribute to the field of piano performance in three ways. Firstly, it will advance new interpretations of rarely studied piano repertory including Canadian piano music, grounded in ideas of relationality in recent feminist scholarship. Secondly, it will be a contribution to the studies of piano performance by theorizing the intersections between feminist ideas of relationality and the performance space. Finally, I will offer suggestions for a pedagogical approach grounded in Cavarero's ideas of relationality. My active engagement as a performing pianist and my research will reimagine the performance space by theorizing how piano performance as a relational practice exemplifies Hannah Arendt's idea of "political action."

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<sup>76</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 5.

## Chapter 2: The Composer's Self: Amy Beach's Expression of Self as Documented in Primary Sources

### 2.1 Introduction

Although Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 was performed frequently throughout her lifetime and received significant attention in the press, it has declined in popularity since her death in 1944. However, recent scholarship on Beach's life and on her sonata has contributed to renewed interest in the work and in the composer. Nevertheless, while some scholars such as Felicia Ann Piscitelli (1983), Jeanell Wise Brown (1994), Adrienne Fried Block (1998), Yu-Hsien Judy Hung (2005), Yuri Kang (2011), and R. Larry Todd (2023), have acknowledged Beach's compositional style in relation to other compositional masters, none has theorized the sonata in relational terms. Each scholar's analysis of the sonata provides a structural overview of the work, but no scholar considers the work from a relational perspective informed by feminist theory. Furthermore, even those scholars such as Block, Brown, and Douglas E. Bomberger (2023) who accessed primary sources and used the materials to share facts about the sonata such as interest in and criticisms of the work's premiere, did not discuss the implications of Beach's "uniqueness of self" in her compositional style.<sup>77</sup> This dissertation will, thus, examine Beach's sonata from a relational perspective informed by feminist theory. In order to contextualize Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 within her life I

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<sup>77</sup> See for example Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian: The Life and Work of an American Composer 1867-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 113. Block states that "[i]nterest in the Sonata in A Minor for Piano and Violin, op. 34, was so high that some listeners chose the new Beach over the opening night of a new play starring John Drew, this country's leading actor." See also Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, p. 119 in which Block quotes a critique of the third movement of the sonata written by Louis C. Elson published in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1897. Original quote states that "the elegiac and passionate Largo had very little to say...on first hearing; it seemed made up of modern vagueness and finally of an apotheosis of ecstasy." "The Kneisel Quartette Concert More Than Ever Interesting," *Boston Daily Advertiser* 169, no. 4, 5 January 1897, 4.

will discuss the composer's biography and the programming of her works in this chapter, whereas in Chapter 3, I will provide a detailed analysis of the work.

### 2.1.1 Literature Review

The most detailed analysis of Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 is discussed in a DMA dissertation, completed in 2011 by Kang. This analysis largely addresses sonata form that makes use of an analytical method developed by musicologists James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy. Kang focuses her study of the Beach sonata on the structure and organization of musical material and compares its structure to the Sonata for Violin and Piano in D Minor, op. 25 (1893) by Clara Kathleen Rogers (1844-1931). In the fifth chapter of her dissertation Kang discusses how both sonatas by Rogers and Beach exhibit characteristics of "expressive genre," a term employed by music theorist Robert Hatten in his article entitled "On Narrativity in Music: Expressive Genres and Levels of Discourse in Beethoven."<sup>78</sup> As Hatten explains, musical works that imply changes of emotional state, such as the shifting from tragic to triumphant as in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, qualify as expressive genres. These works, Hatten argues, "demand an *expressive* rather than strictly structural competency."<sup>79</sup> In other words, the structure of the music is not necessarily organized only by typical tonal, sectional and cadential organization, but also by harmonic or motivic development that suggests a dramatic or narrative plot of some kind. Hatten's use of the term "narrative" to understand absolute music is helpful when studying a score's form and structural integrity especially when a work does not adhere to typical structural conventions expected at the time of composition.<sup>80</sup> Studying sonata

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<sup>78</sup> Robert Hatten, "On Narrativity in Music: Expressive Genres and Levels of Discourse in Beethoven," *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (Spring and Fall 1991), 75-98.

<sup>79</sup> Hatten, "On Narrativity in Music," 76.

<sup>80</sup> Hatten, "On Narrativity in Music," 75-76.



forms from this perspective can provide answers to structural questions and begins to link the compositional process to the actual composer and to their personal narrative (i.e., why they would have written a certain work the way they did, their social or political influences, etc.). Additionally, Kang's study of the Beach sonata from this perspective provides a foundation on which to understand the formal structure of the work.<sup>81</sup> However, Kang does not develop an argument around the term "narrative" in her dissertation and her use of the term in her analysis of the Beach sonata is loose leaving a gap in the scholarship. Therefore, this chapter will address Beach's "narratable self" by discussing her life in relation to others. In Chapter Three I will discuss how I analyse Beach's sonata as a vehicle for the expression of her "narratable self."

In addition to providing a structural analysis of Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, Hung's DMA dissertation provides a historical overview of Beach's life and certain works for violin and piano including the sonata. Additionally, she offers some performance considerations, such as paying close attention to Beach's tempos, dynamics, expressive terms, phrasing, articulations, pedal markings, and fingerings.<sup>82</sup> Although Hung addresses a gap in the published scholarship pertaining to performance of the work, her discussion is vague, lacks in development, and does not provide sufficient evidence for her claims. For example, in her section on fingerings and pedal markings, Hung explains that Beach indicated pedal markings and fingerings in her score. She then notes that "fingerings are a personal matter, and performers should find what is beneficial for them."<sup>83</sup> Hung does not elaborate this point or offer other fingering suggestions. In her section entitled, "Interpretation" she only makes one claim which is that because Beach was clear in her "expressional

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<sup>81</sup> Yuri Kang, "Sonata Form in the Romantic American Violin Sonata: Clara Kathleen Rogers and Amy Beach" (DMA diss., University of Houston, 2011), 28.

<sup>82</sup> Yu-Hsien Judy Hung, "The Violin Sonata of Amy Beach" (DMA diss., Louisiana State University, 2005), 80.

<sup>83</sup> Hung, "The Violin Sonata of Amy Beach," 86.

indications” in the music a performer needs to perform the music with “feeling and imagination.”<sup>84</sup> Again, she does not elaborate what she means by “expressional indications” or what it might mean to interpret a musical work with “feeling and imagination.” She does follow this statement with a quote from Beach’s “Music’s Ten Commandments for Young Composers,” but does not offer any suggestions of how to put Beach’s claim into practice.<sup>85</sup> Until the conclusion, there is no musicological or theoretical argument being presented, rather she discusses the form of the music. In her conclusion to the dissertation, Hung makes a bold statement that Beach’s sonata is “exceptional,” but her argument is vague reading that “she [Beach] conveys intense feelings and emotions throughout it.”<sup>86</sup> Her supporting evidence for this claim is Beach’s use of contrasting musical styles, dynamics, and modes, but she does not elaborate this point any further or provide specific examples of such. Her final statement reads, “Beach’s music resonates the innermost emotion and outermost energy of the human soul,” which is quite an interesting statement. However, such an intriguing statement demands to be developed and, unfortunately, Hung does not use this bold claim to organize her dissertation. Since Hung argues that Beach’s music “resonates the innermost emotion” it would be helpful to know more about what Beach may have been feeling at the time of composition to better understand specifically what she may have been expressing in the sonata. In this way, a performer can begin to develop a relationship with the composer and by extension share more specifically what Beach’s musical expressions might mean with audiences thus creating a relational concert space. In response to this gap in the literature, this dissertation will address not

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<sup>84</sup> Hung, “The Violin Sonata of Amy Beach,” 86.

<sup>85</sup> Quote used in Hung’s dissertation: “Remember that technique is valuable only as a means to an end. You must first have something to say—something which demands expression from the depths of your soul. If you feel deeply and know how to express what you feel, you make others feel.” Hung, “The Violin Sonata of Amy Beach,” 86. For original quote and full article see Beach, “How Mrs. Beach Does It,” *Musical Courier* 71, no. 1 (July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1915): 25.

<sup>86</sup> Hung, “The Violin Sonata of Amy Beach,” 91.

only Beach's life and her sonata from a relational perspective, but in Chapter Three I will provide a detailed analysis of the sonata from an "embodied" approach using Le Guin's model.<sup>87</sup> By extension, I argue that a pianist can, in concrete terms, take "political action" as Arendt argues.<sup>88</sup>

Brown's examination of the Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 34 is brief but provides sufficient information to largely understand how all four movements of the work are structured and what it demands of the performers.<sup>89</sup> She refers to two reviews from the press—articles published in *The Boston Daily Advertiser* on January 5, 1897, in *Volkszeitung* on October 20, 1899—as supporting evidence of performance dates and specific performers—Beach and Franz Kneisel in 1897—and justifies her claims about performance practice with appropriate examples from the score for each movement.<sup>90</sup> She mentions Beach's compositional style in relation to that of Franz Liszt, Johannes Brahms, and Robert Schumann, but does not elaborate any further than to acknowledge the similarity of writing. In relation to Brahms and Schumann, Brown states that Beach's "syncopated chordal pattern [in measures 35-40 of the third movement of the sonata] was a technique of several other romantic composers including Brahms and Schumann."<sup>91</sup> She then elaborates that although the technique was used by "other romantic composers" the way in which Brahms and Schumann treated it in their own writing differed because it was typically a simple pattern in an "accompaniment" to songs. When she addresses the thick texture of Beach's writing in the third movement, Brown explains that it was "typical of the *appassionata* writing found in the piano works of Liszt [...]."<sup>92</sup> The connections that Brown makes between Beach's

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<sup>87</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 8.

<sup>88</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.

<sup>89</sup> Jeanell Wise Brown, *Amy Beach and Her Chamber Music: Biography, Documents, Style* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1994), 171-188.

<sup>90</sup> Brown, *Amy Beach and Her Chamber Music*, 171-173.

<sup>91</sup> Brown, *Amy Beach and Her Chamber Music*, 181.

<sup>92</sup> Brown, *Amy Beach and Her Chamber Music*, 187.

compositional style and that of Brahms, Schumann, and Liszt provide insight into how Beach related to other male masters of composition during her lifetime. Brown's contribution to the published scholarship on Beach's sonata is, thus, primarily to provide structural analysis rather than to theorize Beach's relationships with others. This leaves a gap in the scholarship that I will fill in this dissertation. Additionally, Brown states that the sonata "is the masterpiece of the chamber works" because to her, the sonata is structurally well-planned, "the ensemble writing is idiomatic," it is a "well-balanced and difficult work," and requires "technical mastery by both violinist and pianist."<sup>93</sup> My dissertation will further this discussion of the complexity of Beach's sonata by exploring the context within which the work was composed and by providing an analysis of the sonata through embodied practice. In this way, my dissertation will highlight not only the exceptionality of the work, but will provide insight into how the composer may have played the sonata.

Where Brown's summary of the sonata lacks contextual evidence that supports her claims, Block provides a thorough understanding of the work and its reception during Beach's lifetime. Referring to newspaper articles published in the *Boston Courier*, the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, the *Boston Daily Globe*, *Musician*, the *New York Daily Tribune*, the *New York Times*, the *Boston Evening Transcript*, the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, and the *Boston Sunday Herald*, and letters from Percy Goetschius to Beach (December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1905), Teresa Carreño to Beach (December 1899), and Henry Beach to Arthur P. Schmidt (December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1901) Block's analysis of the sonata not only addresses structure of each movement, but also contextual evidence of performances and their reception encompassing the value of the composition.<sup>94</sup> Block also acknowledges the pressure of being a female composer in the late nineteenth and

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<sup>93</sup> Brown, *Amy Beach and Her Chamber Music*, 187.

<sup>94</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 113-122.

early twentieth centuries and includes examples from negative reviews of the sonata by Henry T. Finck and William J. Henderson following the fifth performance in New York in 1899.<sup>95</sup> To Block, the negative reviews were linked to Beach's gender as demonstrated by her inquiry as to whether Finck would have criticized "one of Haydn's monothematic movements" in the way that he criticized the length of Beach's sonata in its entirety.<sup>96</sup> She also points out that William J. Henderson made a point of saying that Beach "has proved that it is possible for a woman to compose music which is worthy of serious attention," but proceeded to attack all other women composers both abroad and from the United States.<sup>97</sup> However, despite Block's exhaustive study of primary materials, her examination of the sonata is limited to the facts about the music such as thematic and motivic structure, about the performances of the work, and to the reception that performances received. The examples of critics' reviews that Block includes mainly focus on compositional technique, such as "developing variation" or "sonata-allegro form."<sup>98</sup> She includes only one review in which the description of the music bears any form of human emotion stating that the third movement expressed "a passion of grief and longing," but does not elaborate on this point, thus presenting an objective view of Beach, rather than presenting Beach's "narratable self" behind the composition.<sup>99</sup> To summarize, Block's discussion of the sonata is supported by appropriate evidence and provides insight into the work's reception during Beach's life. She also offers readers an opportunity to consider the injustice that women composers faced at the turn of the twentieth century as demonstrated by her discussion of Henderson's reviews of the sonata. However, despite Block's extensive study of primary sources and comprehensive overview of

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<sup>95</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 122.

<sup>96</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 121.

<sup>97</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 121. For original quotes by Henderson see "The Kneisel Quartet," *New York Times* 48, no. 15,356, 29 March 1899, 6.

<sup>98</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 117-118.

<sup>99</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 118. For original quote see "News of the Day," *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 22, 1905, last edition, 11.

Beach's life and musical works, she does not discuss how Beach's relationships with others influenced her compositional style in the Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 34, or how Beach related to the male compositional masters of the nineteenth century by meticulously studying composition on her own. Block's biography is an excellent source of contextual information about the composer and begins to address issues of gender and identity in music opening up the possibility for other scholars to add to the published scholarship on Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34.

Whereas Block's discussion of Beach's sonata only briefly mentions any relation between the composer's writing style and that of Brahms and contemporary French composers, R. Larry Todd's analysis of the sonata centers around the similarities of compositional style between Beach and other romantics such as Brahms, Franz Liszt (1811-1886), Richard Wagner (1813-1883), and Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904). In particular, Todd focuses on the "modality" of the sonata in relation to the late style of Brahms.<sup>100</sup> In this way, Todd contributes to scholarship that relates Beach to other composers of the nineteenth century. Additionally, Todd's analysis includes helpful comparisons and relations between Beach's sonata and particular other works and movements of works by Brahms including the Violin Sonata in D minor, op. 103 (1888), the Clarinet Sonata in F minor, op. 120, the Intermezzo, op. 76, no. 4 (1878), the Double Concerto, op. 102 (1887), the Clarinet Trio, op. 114 (1891), the Fourth Symphony, op. 98 (1886), the Piano Quintet in F minor, op. 34 (1865), Mendelssohn's Cello Sonata in D major, op. 58 (1843), Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde* (1857-1859), and Liszt's Piano Sonata in B minor (1853). By including so many examples of potential influences on Beach's compositional style at the time of her sonata's composition is helpful in situating her within the patriarchal music culture of the

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<sup>100</sup> R. Larry Todd, "Worthy of Serious Attention," in *The Cambridge Companion to Amy Beach*, ed. E. Douglas Bomberger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 125.

nineteenth century. Additionally, Todd addresses the male-dominated domain of chamber music composition at the turn of the twentieth century. He appropriately contextualizes Beach's sonata in relation to other women composers such as Fanny Hensel (1804-1847), Clara Schumann (1819-1896), Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944), Marie Jaëll (1846-1925), Louise Farrenc (1804-1875), Teresa Carreño (1853-1917), Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), Alice Mary Smith (1839-1884), and Elfrida Andrée (1841-1929) who also composed works for chamber ensembles. Including these women and their chamber works is a significant contribution both to the contextualization of Beach's sonata and to scholarship on women composers of the nineteenth century at large since the published scholarship on women in music remains limited in 2024. Relating Beach to all of the aforementioned composers opens up possibilities of expanding the theory of relationality in Beach's sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 which I will address in the following three chapters of this dissertation.

### **2.1.2 The Expression of Amy Beach's "Narratable Self" in her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34**

Using the distinction between the "what" and the "who" theorized by Cavarero, I realize that the literature review of published scholarship on Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin, op. 34 provides a foundation of knowledge that describes "what" Amy Beach was through her composition: a prolific composer-pianist. However, despite the fact that Brown and Block have consulted extant primary sources for Amy Beach at the archives at both the Library of Congress and at the University of New Hampshire, neither scholar uses the sources to theorize "who" Amy Beach was and how this "self" is expressed in her music. Additionally, neither scholar considers study or performance of the work in relational terms—that is, neither scholar discusses how a

performer can relate to a composer through embodied practice of the musical work or by way of understanding Beach's "others." Therefore, this dissertation will fill this gap in scholarship by examining how Amy Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 expresses what Cavarero calls her "narratable self," and by extension is a form of what Arendt calls "political action."

### **2.1.3 Overview of Relevant Scholarship and Primary Sources that Demonstrate Beach's "Narratable Self"**

The extensive primary sources that are housed at the archives at the University of New Hampshire and at the Library of Congress show that Amy Beach was not only an excellent pianist, performer, and composer, but she was admired and valued as an artist because of her expression of self in both her playing and in her compositions. The many reviews and newspaper articles about performances of her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 and of the work itself indicate that above all else, the music expresses what Cavarero would call Beach's "uniqueness of self." As shown in her diary of musical visitors, scrapbooks, personal diaries, and the abundant letters to and from the composer, Beach was loved by many including her family, friends, colleagues, and later in her life by protégés. She inspired and encouraged other female composers and performers to pursue their musical crafts and to collaborate with others. Her published and unpublished writings demonstrate that Beach was confident in "who" she was, that she lived her life by always being faithful to this "uniqueness," and she encouraged others to do the same. In this way it is evident that throughout Beach's life she was taking "political action" as Hannah Arendt describes. By analyzing the Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 34 through a relational lens I argue that the composition itself is a form of "political action" and by learning it



through what Le Guin calls “embodied” practice a pianist can also take “political action” in the concert space.

In this chapter, I will discuss important relationships in Beach’s life and demonstrate how they were “necessary others” in understanding her “narratable self.” Based on the existing primary sources, Beach developed meaningful relationships with her mother, Clara Cheney, her husband, Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, contemporary composers George Whitefield Chadwick, John Knowles Paine, Arthur Foote, Horatio Parker, and Cécile Chaminade, conductors Leopold Stokowski, Max Fiedler, and William Gericke, violinists Maud Powell, Teresa Carreño, and Franz Kneisel, pianist Raoul Pugno, friends Marian MacDowell, Mabel Daniels, Lillian Buxbaum, David Williams, and Ruth Shaffner, several young musicians whom she mentored, and music critics. Based on my study of primary and secondary sources, all of these relationships impacted her musical work. Additionally, by studying the works of many living and predeceased masters of composition notably J.S. Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Franz Schubert, Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner, and Antonin Dvorak, Beach positioned herself in relation to them thus resulting in their also being “necessary others” in her life. I propose that these relationships form what I call a “relational context” that provides a new lens through which to study and analyze Beach’s Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34.

Whereas current published scholarship on Beach’s Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 34 provides only structural and thematic analytical overview, chapter two of this dissertation offers a new method for analyzing the work: I show how Beach’s “uniqueness of self” is expressed in the music. By studying not only the structure of the music, but the relationship between the violin and the piano, the virtuosity of the piano writing, the density of the texture in the piano, phrasing, articulation, pedaling, expression and tempo markings, tonal relationships, time

signatures, and melodic distribution I argue that Beach composed her identity into the work. By extension, I contend that this work is a form of “political action” and that mindful performance of this work is also “political action.”

Finally, Chapter Four will use Le Guin’s model of embodied practice to demonstrate how a pianist can develop a reciprocal relationship with Beach and thus create a more relational concert space. In understanding the composer’s stature and build, by studying all of her markings in her score, and in examining primary sources that demonstrate Beach’s philosophy of music, identity, and relationships I offer possibilities of *embodying* her while playing the Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 34.<sup>101</sup> I also maintain that a pianist must develop their own “self” in order to relate to both Beach and to any audience to take any “political action.”

## **2.2 Beach’s “Necessary Others”**

In studying the life and work of Amy Marcy Cheney Beach (1867-1944), it is evident that the relationships that she developed with her colleagues, friends, and family played a critical role in her work as a performing pianist as well as in her compositions. Born to Clara Imogene (Marcy) Cheney and Charles Abbott Cheney in Henniker New Hampshire Amy’s upbringing did not allow much opportunity for friends or social interactions. Her mother chose to tutor her at home rather than sending her to school, thus limiting her potential for friendships. On the other hand, by tutoring Amy at home rather than sending her to school, Clara protected her daughter from various forms of gendering within the school system such as an adapted curriculum for girls that was more focused on the aesthetic and the emotional rather than the more scientific

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<sup>101</sup> Elisabeth Le Guin, in *Boccherini’s Body*, 14-37.

curriculum taught to the boys.<sup>102</sup> At the same time, as scholar Ruth Solie explains, in the nineteenth century, women and girls were commonly associated with private life directly related to the home and to the nuclear family.<sup>103</sup> Although Clara's reason for teaching her daughter's school lessons at home is unknown, there was a common belief in the nineteenth century that organized and regimented school activities were not suitable for "delicate and sensitive" girls.<sup>104</sup> The labelling of girls as "delicate" and "sensitive," according to Butler, implies a set of culturally and socially imposed behaviours that would construct femininity for young girls performatively.<sup>105</sup> By restricting Amy's activities based on her gender, Clara isolated Amy from potential friends, colleagues, and family.

Despite Amy's early interest in music, her sensitivity to sound, and her very prolific musical intelligence, Clara and Charles were determined to bring their daughter up as a musician rather than as a prodigy. In a published article from 1942, Beach explained her parents' decision: "Managers came to my parents offering anything for this tot who could play—in addition to Beethoven, Handel, and Chopin—her own compositions, this infant prodigy. But Father and Mother, guided by a divine instinct, refused them all—these contracts so tempting to a young couple. They knew that early aggrandisement must be harmful to their nervous, delicate child, and they had decided that I was to grow up just like any other little one adopting music as a profession when I was old enough."<sup>106</sup> Amy's recollection of her early upbringing describes parents who might have been tempted by the financial gain of exploiting their daughter's natural affinity for piano performance. However, Clara and Charles resisted the temptation choosing

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<sup>102</sup> Ruth Solie, "'Girling' at the Parlour Piano," in *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 92.

<sup>103</sup> Solie, "'Girling' at the Parlour Piano," 95.

<sup>104</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 12.

<sup>105</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, xv.

<sup>106</sup> Beach, "How Music is Made," *Keyboard* (Winter, 1942): 11.

instead to raise their daughter out of the public realm of performance and in the more socially acceptable structure of domestic life. Moreover, as Amy recalled in a published article in *Mother's Magazine*, Clara restricted Amy's practice time, withheld the instrument as a form of punishment, and controlled her public appearances as a performer.<sup>107</sup>

According to Block, Clara's beliefs about raising a family were deeply rooted in her faith as a Congregationalist (i.e., a Calvinist). One such belief was that "[i]ndulgence of any kind corrupts."<sup>108</sup> Historically, Calvinism was rooted in the belief that some people were part of the elect whose souls would be saved after death, and others were not. Thus, believers lived a disciplined life to prove that they were among the elect.<sup>109</sup> Morality was strictly observed, and repentance required upon sin. Of course, women were under further scrutiny because they were expected to fulfill a maternal role in society dictating myriad appropriate behaviours including resisting temptations. Furthermore, as Beach recollected in a published article, Clara believed in a principle of withholding called the "top bureau-drawer principle" conceived by American writer Gerald Stanley Lee.<sup>110</sup> Clara, would therefore withhold the piano from young Amy by prohibiting her to climb onto the music stool or onto Clara's lap at the piano or even to touch the piano keys until her mother gave her permission.<sup>111</sup> Accordingly, Clara kept Amy from indulging

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<sup>107</sup> Amy Beach, "Why I Chose My Profession: The Autobiography of a Woman Composer," *Mother's Magazine* 11 (February 1914), 7-8. Reprint: Amy Beach, "Amy Beach, Composer, on 'Why I Chose My Profession,'" in *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion*, ed. Judith Tick (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 323-324.

<sup>108</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 6.

<sup>109</sup> Jeffrey R. Watt, *The Consistory and Social Discipline in Calvin's Geneva* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 164. Other sources on Calvinism in nineteenth-century America include: Philip F. Gura, *A Concise Companion to American Studies Foundations and Backgrounds* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Lawrence Buell, "The Concept of Puritan Ancestry," in *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution Through Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Brian Fehler, "Classicism and the Church: Nineteenth-Century Calvinism and the Rhetoric of Oratorical Culture," *Rhetoric Review* 24, no. 2 (2005): 133-149; and R. Bryan Bademan, "'The Republican Reformer': John Calvin and the American Calvinists, 1830-1910," in *Sober, Strict, and Scriptural: Collective Memories of John Calvin, 1800-2000*, ed. Johan de Niet, Herman Paul, and Bart Willems (Leiden: Brill, 2009): 267-291.

<sup>110</sup> Beach, "'Why I Chose My profession,'" in *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion*, ed. Judith Tick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 323.

<sup>111</sup> Beach, "'Why I Chose My profession,'" 324.

too much in her passion for the piano all the while bringing up her daughter to be a wife and a mother rather than to be a performer. Not only did such strict observation of religious and social belief of morality restrict Amy's time at the piano, but it restricted her from attending school where she would have met other students her age with whom she may have developed valuable bonds.<sup>112</sup>

However, no matter how socially isolated Amy was, she was certainly never "self-alienated" in the way that Arendt explains the Marxist term.<sup>113</sup> To be self-alienated, Arendt clarifies, is to experience a lack of relatedness to others. In order to relate to others, as Cavarero argues, a person must be willing to share their "insubstitutable existence" with another.<sup>114</sup> The result is, as Cavarero says, "unity," and by extension, as Arendt argues, when humans exist in relation to one another and they use their voices in speech with one another, they are taking "political action."<sup>115</sup> Therefore, as expressed in her diaries, notebook, scrapbooks, published, and unpublished writings, Amy was active in relating to others and had great willingness to expose her "self" to others.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, she had a highly developed sense of self and she often reflected on herself as expressed in the extant primary sources. Even as a very young child, Amy's desire to engage with music was significant demonstrating a strong affirmation of her identity. According to Beach, when she was still so young that her mother would not allow her to actually touch the piano keys, young Amy could not help but to think about music or to hum or sing tunes.<sup>117</sup> Such a powerful impulse to play the piano and to engage with music illustrates

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<sup>112</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 12.

<sup>113</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 209-210.

<sup>114</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

<sup>115</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 40; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 26.

<sup>116</sup> See for example Beach to Cécile Chaminade, undated, F. 4, Box 4, Walter S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Collection, 1914-2008, MC 232, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, NH, USA; Beach, "How Music is Made," *Keyboard* (Winter, 1942); Beach, "Music after Marriage and Motherhood," *Etude* 27, no. 8 (August 1909): 520.

<sup>117</sup> Beach, "'Why I Chose My Profession'," 324.

strong self-awareness at a very young age as well as a desire—almost a necessity—to express this identity through music-making. Nevertheless, receiving such frequent feedback from Clara regarding proper behaviour inevitably impacted Amy's view of herself, her etiquette, career, and musical output. For example, according to Block, Amy's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, op. 45 (1899) demonstrates a “reciprocal relationship between Beach's life and work.”<sup>118</sup> To Block, the constant battle for dominance between piano and orchestra mirrors Amy's struggle to develop her individuality within her compositions while adhering to appropriate social and domestic behaviours.<sup>119</sup> Butler might call Amy's demonstration of individuality “constructing her femininity performatively.”<sup>120</sup> Therefore, while Amy was sure of her capacities as a musician from an early age her relationship with her mother largely impacted her development of a “self” as a pianist, as Cavarero would say; Clara was one of Amy's “necessary others” in developing Amy's identity.<sup>121</sup> The frequent reminders to behave in a certain way taught Amy to perform her identity in a socially appropriate manner, but her musical compositions show a desire to subvert societal norms in order to express her “uniqueness of self.”<sup>122</sup> By “treating the piano as a personifying element,” as Block discusses, Amy demonstrated her desire to “perform” her own identity, thus negating “self-alienation.”<sup>123</sup>

Despite her mother's control over her development as a proper young girl, Amy was simply born with an affinity for music and a keen sense of self. At four years old, Amy was still not allowed to play the piano, but during a visit from her mother's sister, Aunt Frances (Franc) facilitated Amy's first experience at the instrument. In her autobiography entitled, “Why I Chose

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<sup>118</sup> Block, “A ‘Veritable Autobiography’?: Amy Beach's Piano Concerto in C-Sharp Minor, op. 45,” *The Musical Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (1994): 395.

<sup>119</sup> Block, “A ‘Veritable Autobiography’?: 402.

<sup>120</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, xv.

<sup>121</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 1-4.

<sup>122</sup> See, for example, Beach, “‘Why I Chose My Profession’,” 324-325.

<sup>123</sup> Block, “A ‘Veritable Autobiography’?: 402.

My Profession: The Autobiography of a Woman Composer” (1914), Amy explains the occasion: “At last, I was allowed to touch the piano. My mother was still opposed, but I can remember my aunt coming to the house and putting me at the piano. I played at once the melodies I had been collecting, playing in my head, adding full harmonies to the simple, treble melodies. Then my aunt played a new air for me, and I reached up and picked out a harmonized bass accompaniment, as I had heard my mother do.”<sup>124</sup> Already at four years old, Amy was composing in her head without even the experience of having played an instrument. Her innate ability to compose in her head and then to perfectly play what she had composed on an instrument that she had never touched before demonstrates what Cavarero would consider an “unchangeable,” authentic quality of identity.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, Cavarero would consider Amy’s relationship to music itself her “uniqueness.”<sup>126</sup> Cavarero does not discuss intra-personal relationships because to her the development of one’s “self” requires an “other.”<sup>127</sup> From this perspective I consider music to be Amy’s “other,” in this particular relationship. Because Amy was born with a highly developed musical intelligence, and because music is an expression of self, Amy would only have to reflect on her compositions to remind her of her identity. In other words, because musical expression came naturally to Amy, her “self” was also highly developed from an early age. Amy’s strong “self” can be understood by considering her first experience of touching the piano. These pieces of evidence indicate that in relational terms, Amy related to herself through an important “other”—music—by composing and later through playing the piano.

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<sup>124</sup> Amy Beach, “Why I Chose My Profession: The Autobiography of a Woman Composer,” interviewed by Ednah Aiken, *Mother’s Magazine* 11 (February 1914): 7-8.

<sup>125</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 27.

<sup>126</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

<sup>127</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 89.

Amy was later allowed to take piano lessons and her teacher—Ernst Perabo—would become an important “other” in her self-fashioning. According to Block, by the time the Cheneys moved to Boston in 1875 and Amy was eight years old, Clara felt that Amy had outgrown her tutelage, so she sought out a professional to take over Amy’s studies.<sup>128</sup> The well-known Boston musicians that Clara interviewed for the job were all so impressed by Amy’s playing that they suggested she study in Europe.<sup>129</sup> It was customary in the late nineteenth century for young, aspiring musicians such as Amy’s American contemporary Maud Powell (1867-1920), to move to Europe for musical study and to begin their professional careers as performers. However, the Cheneys were firm in their decision not to allow Amy to live the life of a prodigy and therefore insisted on local instruction. As a result, according to Block, Amy studied with Ernst Perabo (1845-1920), one of the finest pianists and teachers in Boston, between the ages of eleven and fifteen from 1876 until 1882.<sup>130</sup> Perabo believed in being sensitive to the development of a child’s mind and taking care not to interfere with their identity while teaching in a conservative manner.<sup>131</sup> In his own words, “[t]he development of the mind requires slow growth, assisted by the warm sun of affection and guided by conservative teachers with honest and ideal conceptions, who understand how to so load its precious cargo that it may not shift during life’s tempestuous vicissitudes.”<sup>132</sup> Amy was fortunate to have a teacher so keen to the development of one’s “self” at such an early age in her life. Evidently Perabo was a crucial “other” in her life and development as a pianist.

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<sup>128</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 21.

<sup>129</sup> In Block’s research of primary sources, the names of the well-known Boston musicians were never mentioned. For Block’s citation see Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 22, n.3.

<sup>130</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 23.

<sup>131</sup> Ernst Perabo, “A Word About Teaching,” *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 115, no. 4 (April 1903): 111.

<sup>132</sup> Perabo, “A Word About Teaching,” 111.



However kind and thoughtful a teacher Perabo was, Amy's lessons were private, just like her academic lessons with her mother, thus, as Block points out, preventing her from sharing music with other children.<sup>133</sup> Opportunities for relationships outside of her family were sparse until c.1879 when she began attending school full time. As Block explains, Amy also joined "The Attic Club", a literary group that began in 1879 and flourished until 1953.<sup>134</sup> The club was organized by two young girls in imitation of their mothers' writing clubs and met regularly to write and share their stories with one another. The club left an enjoyable impression on Amy. Years after leaving the club she wrote to Edith B. Brown, one of the founders of the club, to express her fond memories of her time with friends. She wrote, "I recall so vividly our meetings in those early days, for they meant so much enjoyment to me in the life I had to lead, with little companionship of friends near my own age."<sup>135</sup>

Amy's "enjoyment" in "companionship" demonstrates her openness to relating to others, and by extension, to taking "political action" as Arendt argues. For Cavarero, Amy's enthusiasm towards friendship indicates a desire for the narration of her own story since desire for unity involves a desire to hear one's own story narrated by another.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, Cavarero argues that historically women have been alienated from interactive scenes, where their uniqueness could be expressed, because of patriarchal order.<sup>137</sup> For Amy, the absence of friendship was a direct result of being kept from school or social activities. Therefore, by developing friendships Amy was expressing her "self" to others and they to her. As such, each friend was expressing not only a "self," but a "narratable self": one whose identity would be narratable by another as a

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<sup>133</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 23.

<sup>134</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 27.

<sup>135</sup> Letter to Edith Brown, 6 November 1940 (Attic Club Papers, Boston Athenaeum) quoted in Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 27.

<sup>136</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 86.

<sup>137</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 57.

result of having shared pieces of herself with the other.<sup>138</sup> The lack of opportunity to engage in meaningful relationships with other children meant that Amy's "narratable self" was only being expressed and developed in relation to her parents and to her piano teacher. Thus, attending school and joining the "Attic Club" provided opportunities not only to find "enjoyment" in "companionship," as Amy admitted, but to develop her "self" more deeply. Moreover, the unity of Amy and her friends through writing and sharing their own stories is an example of what Cavarero claims to be a solution to philosophy's struggle to explain *who* a person is without naming *what* they are. That is, by existing in relation to others and by sharing tales through narration a person can express their uniqueness.<sup>139</sup> Finally, Amy's involvement in the "Attic Club" is an example of what Arendt calls "political action" because she was interacting with others in a meaningful way—participating in a reciprocal exchange of the expression of "self" through oral and written narration.

Over the course of Beach's professional life, the relationships she developed with friends, colleagues, mentors, protégés, music critics, and members of her audiences would become significant to her compositional style and to her performance practice. Her time spent with the "Attic Club" was but one example of her willingness and consciousness of existing in the world in relation to others. From the many correspondences to and from close friends and colleagues such as Cécile Chaminade, John Knowles Paine, and Teresa Carreño between 1880 and 1944 it is evident that Beach expressed herself with a very authentic and natural warmth.<sup>140</sup> In an undated letter addressed to Cécile Chaminade, for example, Beach expressed her joy in hearing

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<sup>138</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 34.

<sup>139</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 54.

<sup>140</sup> Beach to Cécile Chaminade, undated letter, F. 4, Box 4, Walter S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Collection, 1914-2008, MC 232, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, NH, USA; John Knowles Paine to Beach, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1905, F. 3, Box 1, Amy Cheney Beach (Mrs. H. H. A. Beach) Papers, 1835-1956, MC 51, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, NH, USA; Teresa Carreño to Beach, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1900, F. 3, Box 1, Beach Papers.

her colleague play a concert in Boston, her frank belief in personal expression, and her sincere apologies for her poor written French.<sup>141</sup> In this example, Beach expressed appreciation for her friend's performance, a personal belief regarding expression of self, and a personal flaw, all demonstrating her willingness to be authentic and relatable. Furthermore, Beach valued the opinion of the public regarding her compositions and her performances, as she expressed in a published article in 1942. In her own words she stated: "the public was my best teacher, both as pianist or composer. When my compositions were performed by the Boston Symphony, the audience reaction was a determining factor so far as I was concerned."<sup>142</sup> Beach's openness to her audience's criticism of her performances and of her compositions in addition to her expression of self in her personal correspondences are evidence of her development of self in relation to others and the impact that these relationships had on her work as a professional artist.

### 2.3 Relating Beach's Gender to her Work

In addition to developing a "self" as a pianist and as a composer, Beach developed a "self" in association to her performed gender, as Butler would say.<sup>143</sup> That is to say that as a woman in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Beach was aware of her duties as a woman and as a wife by nature of her gender. For example, in a published article, Beach stated that "a woman must be a *woman* first, then a *musician*, and as naturally as the night follows the day, 'thou canst not then be false to any man' (or child)."<sup>144</sup> To her, therefore, the responsibility of a woman was to behave appropriately as a woman and to be obedient to men. Her awareness of self in relation to her gender contributed to her professional relationships, her relation to her compositional

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<sup>141</sup> Beach to Cécile Chaminade, undated letter, F. 4, Box 4, Walter S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Collection.

<sup>142</sup> Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, "How Music is Made," 11.

<sup>143</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, xv.

<sup>144</sup> Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, "Music After Marriage and Motherhood," 520.

contemporaries and masters of the past, and played a role in her work as a professional performing pianist. While Block's investigation of primary sources contributed to her discussion of the societal context in which Beach was brought up and lived her life as a professional musician, she does not theorize how Beach's gender contributed to the development of her "narratable self" or her "uniqueness of self" as Cavarero argues, nor does Block link Beach's relationships to others or the relationality of her musical work to "political action" as Arendt argues.

My investigation of primary sources housed at the Amy Beach archival collection at the University of New Hampshire indicates that while Beach's awareness of gender norms influenced her professional musical activities, she never compromised her authenticity or "uniqueness of the self" in order to gain international respect as an artist.<sup>145</sup> Additionally, the majority of the published concert reviews and the personal correspondences between Beach and her colleagues demonstrate the extent to which her musical work was valued for its individuality of expression and style. For example, the *Saturday Evening Gazette* published an article on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1884, following Beach's second piano recital at Chickering Hall in Boston describing her playing in great detail, and mentioning explicitly the artistry of her performance style: "This extraordinarily gifted, young artist again excited astonishment by the maturity of her taste, the versatility of her style, the innate artistic feeling with which she is endowed, the remarkably fluent and masterly command of technique she has already attained [...] She is manifestly an artist by instinct and therefore must continue to grow in her art."<sup>146</sup> This critic was able to identify that the reason Beach's performance was so successful was not only because of

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<sup>145</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

<sup>146</sup> "Miss Cheney's Recital," *Saturday Evening Gazette*, March 22, 1884, box 4, folder 9, (p. 21-22), Walter S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Collection, 1914-2008, MC 232, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library.

technical skill and artistic intelligence, but because of her highly developed “self” which had been expressed through her playing and related to an audience.

In addition to reviewers noting Beach’s individuality in musical style, most interesting is the fact that many reviewers documented how her playing and her compositions did not fit into any one category of gender. Rather, they categorized Beach’s musical output by their artistic qualities demonstrating the reviewers’ consideration of her gender, but still being impressed by her musical expression. In March 1897, the *Journal of Fine Arts* stated of the Gaelic Symphony that “[i]t does *not* suggest the sex of its composer, but rather the mind of a well-balanced master in form and color.”<sup>147</sup> Additionally, an article published in *Music* in February 1898 claimed that Beach’s instrumental compositions “are not women’s compositions. They are just ordinary music of a very superior kind. The musical spirit is unquestionable, the technic of developing ideas that of a well-trained artist, and the writing for the instrument that of an accomplished pianist. At the same time, Mrs. Beach makes no effort to be boisterous and to prove that she is a man by the brute force necessary to play her works. Unless I am very much mistaken, her music will have a much wider currency than it has yet received, because it deserves it.”<sup>148</sup> Both of these authors identified Beach’s individuality as an artist above all else and the lack of a style of composition or of playing the piano that would fit into any one category of gender which was prevalent throughout the nineteenth century.

For Beach to be performing and composing such large works as noted by the critic of the *Saturday Evening Gazette* on March 22, 1884 was an impressive accomplishment at her young age, but more importantly a testament to her perseverance in spite of the societal expectations for

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<sup>147</sup> “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” *Journal of Fine Arts*, March 1897, box 11 (p. 29), Amy Cheney Beach (Mrs. H. H. A. Beach) Papers, 1835-1956, MC 51, Milne Special Collections and Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Durham, NH, USA.

<sup>148</sup> W. S. B. Mathews, “Instrumental Compositions by Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” *Music* 13 (February 1898): 548.

a woman to conform to certain behaviours.<sup>149</sup> According to scholar Katharine Ellis female pianists began to emerge on the concert stage in Paris between the years 1844 and 1845 causing a great deal of confusion and criticism of gender within piano composition and performance from male critics.<sup>150</sup> Historically, learning and playing the piano was a domestic activity for young women, one that demonstrated her modesty and adherence to proper societal behaviour.<sup>151</sup> Thus, for a woman to perform a public display of virtuosity at the piano was cause for a great deal of criticism about her sex. The gendering of repertoire institutionalized by the Paris Conservatoire caused a divide between what was appropriate for men and women to perform in public. For example, according to Ellis, male students were assigned works by Beethoven through the year 1900, while women were never assigned Beethoven, and instead were assigned works by Chopin, —a composer whose music was associated to femininity because of its emotional content—Joseph Haydn, and J.S. Bach whose works did not require too much physical movement at the instrument or outward displays of power or forcefulness.<sup>152</sup> Women faced a social trap wherein they were criticized for exhibiting strength and agitation as public performers, and at the same time considered weaker than men and incapable of composing intellectual music. Composer-pianist Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944) faced so much criticism despite her capacity to compose large, difficult works, that she chose to surrender to composing pieces that were deemed suitable for women to compose such as single-movement works like the

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<sup>149</sup> “Miss Cheney’s Recital,” *Saturday Evening Gazette*. Reviewer mentions the performance of Handel’s Suite in F Minor with a “strong and imposing fugue,” Beethoven’s Six Variations, op. 34, a Sonata by Scarlatti, Rubenstein’s Barcarolle in G Minor, Chopin’s Bolero, Henselt’s Cradle Song, and a Valse Impromptu by Liszt.

<sup>150</sup> Katharine Ellis, “Female Pianists and their Male Critics,” in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50, no. 2/3, (Summer-Autumn, 1997): 355.

<sup>151</sup> Matthew Head, “‘If the Pretty Little Hand Won’t Stretch’: Music for the Fair Sex,” in *Sovereign Feminine: Music and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 51; Annegret Fauser, “‘La guerre en dentelles’: Women and the ‘Prix de Rome’ in French Cultural Politics,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 1 (Spring, 1998): 88-89.

<sup>152</sup> Ellis, “Female Pianists and their Male Critics,” 363.

nocturne, and *mélodies* that were sweet and charming.<sup>153</sup> Nonetheless, Chaminade, like other dedicated women of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, believed in perseverance in order to secure a place in musical history. Pianist Marie Pleyel (1811-1875), committed to pursuing her art professionally, found a way of being accepted amongst male critics by combining qualities that were gendered male with qualities that were gendered female in her playing. For example, one critic noted on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1845, how Pleyel played both with power and grace, acknowledging her ability to move her audience with her strong, yet expressive playing.<sup>154</sup> Five and a half decades later, in 1899, an American journalist similarly commented on women's capacity to succeed in art and music just as much as men and expressly pointed out Beach's inclusion in the category of women who continued to work at her craft regardless of societal beliefs about gender. In a published article on American women composers, this journalist (whose name is unknown) said that "[w]hile much argument has been had during the past decade as to whether women were intellectually capable of competing with men in the arts, a number of women, both in America and Europe have not wasted time in useless discussion, but have simply gone on and produced work both in music and painting which amply proves that certain feminine minds under proper cultivation and environment will produce remarkable results in the fine arts[...]Probably the best known of these composers is Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, of Boston."<sup>155</sup>

As this journalist pointed out, while Beach certainly faced societal oppression as a woman and as a musician, her ability to "produce remarkable results" as an artist led to her

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<sup>153</sup> Oxford Music Online, s.v. "Chaminade, Cécile (Louise Stéphanie)," by Marcia J. Citron, accessed June 2, 2023, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com).

<sup>154</sup> W.S., "Concert de Madame Pleyel," *Le Monde musical* 6, no. 14 (3 April 1845): 2.

<sup>155</sup> "American Women Composers: I. Mrs. H. H. A. Beach," Journal Article (1899), Scrapbook (1835-1956), box 11, Beach Papers, (p. 45 of scrapbook).

recognition as a notable pianist and composer. Like Pleyel, Beach defied the social standards of behaviour for female pianists and composers by writing works with pathos. As journalist Adelaide R. Halderman pointed out, “[t]he salient characteristics of Mrs. Beach’s style are strong, passionate conception and powerful emotional impulse, tempered and controlled by never-failing command of the means of expression; hand in hand with an exquisite sense of melodic and rhythmic beauty; and serious, scholarly technical treatment which is as effective as it is always refined.”<sup>156</sup> While Halderman, writing as a female journalist, did not make any mention of gender, she spoke to qualities that at the turn of the twentieth century were still gendered such as “scholarly technical treatment,” and “powerful emotional impulse” which would have been gendered “male,” coupled with terms such as “melodic and rhythmic beauty,” and “tempered and controlled,” which both had “feminine” qualifications. It is clear that despite the conventions of what Butler would consider gender performativity at the end of the twentieth century, Beach was brave enough to publish works such as her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34—a work whose structural integrity is based on what I call “autobiographical” expression combining compositional practices that were gendered “male” with those that were gendered “female”—and to perform it in public, thus illustrating through her professional musical activities what Arendt would later call “political action.”

Understanding the history of gendering musical compositions sheds light on the remarkable reviews of Beach’s compositions. In the United States during the same time that the Paris Conservatoire was still segregating girls’ piano education from that of their male colleagues, Beach was receiving praise for the originality of her compositions and of her performances as a pianist. Notable American composers such as George Whitefield Chadwick

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<sup>156</sup> “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, One of the World’s Greatest Composers,” *The Modern World* (Dec. 1906), Denver, NY, Scrapbook (1835-1956), box 11, Beach Papers.



(1854-1931), John Knowles Paine (1839-1906), and Arthur Foote (1853-1937) supported Beach in her musical career and welcomed her as an important composer of the Second New England School. In a personal letter addressed to Beach on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1896, Chadwick praised her Gaelic Symphony and accepted her as one of the leading American composers. “[...] I always feel a thrill of pride myself whenever I hear a fine new 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.”<sup>157</sup> Additionally, Paine wrote to Beach of his belief that women should be able to achieve as much in music as men. “I hope you will live long enough to enjoy the full recognition of your great gifts as a composer. I am proud of you as an American composer. Art knows no sex. Why should not women achieve as much in creative music, as in literature?”<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, an article printed in the *Boston Evening Transcript* on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1905, cited pianist Raoul Pugno’s (1852-1914) recollection that he and violinist Eugène Ysaÿe (1858 – 1931) had performed Beach’s Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 34 in France “without suspecting that the composer was a woman or knowing that she was an American.”<sup>159</sup> The journalist explained how the two performers “chanced upon the sonata in a bundle of music, scanned it, liked it, and added it to their repertory.”<sup>160</sup> Elaborating further, the journalist concluded that “[p]erhaps this is the way and not through incense-burning clubs and patronizing special concerts that American composers win recognition—when they deserve it.”<sup>161</sup> This article is especially significant to the history of women in nineteenth-century Western art music. While French women composers were desperately trying to have their works performed without biased judgment, an American

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<sup>157</sup> George Whitefield Chadwick to Amy Beach, Boston, November 2, 1896.

<sup>158</sup> John Knowles Paine to Amy Beach, Cambridge, December 8, 1901.

<sup>159</sup> “News of the Day,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 22, 1905, last edition, 11.

<sup>160</sup> “News of the Day,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 22, 1905, last edition, 11.

<sup>161</sup> “News of the Day,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 22, 1905, last edition, 11.

woman's composition was found in a pile of other music by two of Europe's most well-respected performers—Pugno and Ysaÿe—and added to their performance repertory, and both were completely unaware of Beach's gender. Moreover, the author of the article completely agreed that Beach deserved every bit of praise for her composition as well as all of the performances of the sonata because of its compositional quality.

Of course, some critics still believed that women were weaker than men, not only in physical strength, but in artistic and compositional skills, which resulted in biased reviews of Beach's music. For example, rather than acknowledging the influence that masters such as Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) and Robert Schumann (1810-1856) had on her style and noting how their compositions inspired her to develop her compositional style, writer Robert Werfenthin diminished the feminine gender by calling the reference to Brahms and Schumann a common weakness for a female composer. Werfenthin commented that "[i]n style [Beach] is not individual; her dependence upon Schumann and Brahms is unmistakable, which is a weakness, for which the feminine character furnishes ground and excuse."<sup>162</sup>

Other reviews recognized Beach's compositional and pianistic skills while perpetuating gender stereotypes. *The Evening Transcript* published an article on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1885, that alluded to women's lack of conception in musical interpretation. The critic stated that "[i]t is so easy to go wrong in playing Chopin! His works present so many dangerous pitfalls to inartistic stupidity and virtuoso pretentiousness! Miss Cheney, possibly because she is neither stupid nor pretentious, avoided them all [...] she played with rare delicacy, warmth, and purity of sentiment, and as the Germans say, 'with a totality of conception' that one seldom finds in

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<sup>162</sup> Albert Werfenthin, "Konzerte," *Volks-Zeitung* 510, Berlin, October 30, 1899, 1. (Translator unknown). "*Im Stil ist sie nicht eigenartig, unverkennbar ist die Anlehnung an Schumann und Brahms, doch das ist eine Schwäche die im Frauencharacter Begründung und Entschuldigung findet.*"

players of her sex.”<sup>163</sup> Even though the author complimented Beach’s mindful playing, he still essentialized a style of playing of the female sex and diminished the intelligence (“stupid”) of women performers in general. Other articles described Beach as “the foremost composer of her sex in America,” and “the only woman composer of note that America possesses.”<sup>164</sup> Likewise, an article published in *The Musical Leader* on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1915, quoted conductor Walter Damrosch (1862-1950) discussing his interest in programming Beach’s piano concerto despite his firm belief that women were physically weaker than men:

I have already told Mrs. Beach that I would like to give it, and it will be my delight to do so—but perhaps I may take this occasion to say that I have been very much misquoted and misunderstood. I think Mrs. Beach will agree with me when she knows that I set my standards of measurement by Beethoven, Brahms, and masters of that caliber. I appreciate sincerely and honestly what women have done, what they are doing, and the ambitions that lead them forward, but I also feel that *they have physical handicaps*. This does not in the least lessen my respect for what they have already done and are doing, but I cannot say conscientiously that I expect the fair sex to evolve a Brahms. Mrs. Beach should be an example and inspiration to women as to what may be achieved.<sup>165</sup>

Damrosch’s comments are perplexing. On the one hand, he seemed enthusiastic about Beach’s piano concerto and his last statement is complimentary of her work on the whole. However, his discussion of the work done by women in comparison to that of masters such as Beethoven and Brahms severely diminishes his support of women as composers. His frank expression that women were physically inferior to men is offensive and his comments regarding his support of the work that women have already done are condescending. The entire statement reads as though he would like others to know that he is supportive of women composers, especially of Beach, but

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<sup>163</sup> “Boston Symphony Orchestra,” *Boston Evening Transcript* 58, no. 17,771, March 30, 1885, 1.

<sup>164</sup> “Mrs. Beach’s Symphony,” *Woman’s Journal*, Nov. 7, 1896, box 11, Beach Papers (p. 26 of scrapbook); *New York Herald* March 20 (?) 1897, box 11, Beach Papers (p. 29 of scrapbook).

<sup>165</sup> “Music in the Exposition City,” *Musical Leader*, August 12, 1915, 78-79. [my emphasis]

that in truth they will never equal composers who are male, thus the trap in which Beach found herself at the turn of the twentieth century.

All of the above reviews compliment Beach's compositions and her interpretive skills as a performer, but they explicitly express the peculiarity that a woman could be so gifted. None of these reviews make any mention of the unfair social standards beset upon women or of their unequal musical education in comparison to that of a man. Rather they state the common belief at the turn of the twentieth century that "woman" as a general category of humanity was in fact inferior to "man." Thus, while it is remarkable that Beach was gaining critical acclaim for her musical work such as the Gaelic Symphony (1894-96), the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 (1896), and the Romance for Violin and Piano (1893), despite her gender, she was rarely evaluated *without* mention of her gender.

While certain reviews were applauding Beach's individuality as a successful female musician, others pointed out a gender binary present in her compositions. For example, *The Diapason* published an article dated February 1, 1945, following Beach's death, stating that "she wrote both like a man and like a woman. Her music manifests feminine traits of a delicacy and tenderness scarcely attainable by a masculine nature and masculine traits as genuine and virile as any man could exhibit."<sup>166</sup> While this article is not pointing to any weakness on Beach's part, it explicitly separates human characteristics and qualities into gendered categories that women musicians were struggling to overcome. Similarly, the journalist of an undated article (probably 1903) published in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, commented that the first movement of Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 had a "chief theme of forcible and masculine

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<sup>166</sup> "Mrs. H. H. A. Beach Dies; Passing of Composer," *Diapason* 3, no. 423 (February 1, 1945): 6.

character, contrasted with a most tender and beautiful subordinate theme.”<sup>167</sup> Again, the distinction between masculine and the feminine in this statement highlights Beach’s individuality in compositional style by not conforming to predetermined notions of how a woman should or could compose at the turn of the twentieth century.

The gender binary presented in both of the articles published in *The Diapason* and in *The Boston Daily Advertiser* is related to the history of music that was specifically composed for the female amateur pianist in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.<sup>168</sup> According to Head, such composers as Christoph Nichelmann (1717-1762), Johann Nikolaus Tischer (1707-1774), Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Wenkel (1734-1803), Carl Philipp Emanuel (C. P. E.) Bach (1714-1788), Ernst Christoph Dreßler (1734-1779), Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752-1814), Johann Rudolph Zumsteeg (1760-1802), Johann Christian Gottfried Gräser (1766-1790), P. J. von Thonus (dates unknown), Carl Wilhelm Müller (1728-1801), Karl Friedrich Ebers (1770-1836), and Christian Friedrich Schale (1713-1800), composed collections of piano and vocal music for female pianists that were appropriately “easy.”<sup>169</sup> As Head argues, the English word “easy” was related to various German terms used in musical criticism to describe music that was galant, or melody-oriented, or accessible to young women.<sup>170</sup> The titles of these collections explicitly expressed the intended demographic of the pieces pointing to the appropriateness of their nature for women and not for men to play. Examples of these titles include C. P. E. Bach’s *Sonates à l’usage des dames* (Sonatas for use by ladies) (1770), Dreßler’s *Gesänge fürs schöne Geschlecht* (Songs for the fair sex) (1775), and Reichardt’s

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<sup>167</sup> “Musical Matters: The Hoffman Quartette Concert,” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, March 4, 1903(?), Scrapbook (1835-1956), box 11, Beach Papers (p. 62 of scrapbook).

<sup>168</sup> Head, “‘If the Pretty Little Hand Won’t Stretch’,” 50-52.

<sup>169</sup> Head, “‘If the Pretty Little Hand Won’t Stretch’,” 54-55.

<sup>170</sup> Head, “‘If the Pretty Little Hand Won’t Stretch’,” 55.

*Wiegenlieder für gute deutsche Mütter* (Lullabies for good German mothers) (1798). By highlighting that these pieces were meant for women the messaging was clear that there was a certain type of keyboard music that was appropriate for women and that all other music was inaccessible because it was reserved for men. The result was a limiting of creative possibilities for women and a perpetuation of a standard that men were more capable at both playing the piano and composing for the piano than women.

In addition to the many collections of music composed specifically for women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the flourishing of the piano nocturne in the mid-nineteenth century, as scholar Jeffrey Kallberg argues, resulted in reviews written by men who were qualifying the genre as “feminine” due to the sensitivity that the nocturne expressed, and by extension were diminishing its value.<sup>171</sup> For example, a review by G. W. Fink in 1834 describes the femininity of Chopin’s Nocturnes, op. 15: “The Nocturnes are really reveries of a soul fluctuating from feeling to feeling in the still of the night, about which we want to set down nothing but the outburst of a feminine heart after a sensitive performance of the same.”<sup>172</sup> In this example, though the critic is not undermining the genre due to its sensitivity, they are classifying the genre by qualities that, in the mid-nineteenth century, were believed to be inherently “feminine.” However, Kallberg asserts that the gendering of music as “feminine” was paired with devaluing of such music.<sup>173</sup> As a result, women were taught to believe that there was a difference between “women’s” music and “men’s” music. For example, in Clara Wieck’s (1819-1896) diary dated October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1846, she wrote about her own Piano Trio in G Minor op. 17 that

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<sup>171</sup> Jeffrey Kallberg, “The Harmony of the Tea Table: Gender and Ideology in the Piano Nocturne,” *Representations*, no. 39 (Summer, 1992): 104.

<sup>172</sup> G. W. Fink, *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, August 13, 1834, col. 543. Translated by Jeffrey Kallberg in Kallberg, “The Harmony of the Tea Table,” 104.

<sup>173</sup> Kallberg, “The Harmony of the Tea Table,” 110.

“[t]here are some nice passages in the Trio, and I believe it is also rather well done in its form, naturally it still remains women’s work, which always lacks force and here and there invention.”<sup>174</sup> Wieck’s contention that her Trio fell into a category of “women’s work” as a result of its “lack [of] force” and “invention” demonstrates her belief in her limitations as a female composer imposed on her by male critics—a belief that never held Beach back from composing with both “masculine” and “feminine” qualities.

In support of the perspective that Beach’s compositions were gender-neutral, the author of a published article focusing on contemporary American women composers argued that successful composers were those who chose to write regardless of the narrow view of the public. His statement reads that “[w]hile much argument has been had during the past decade as to whether women were intellectually capable of competing with men in the arts, a number of women, both in America and Europe have not wasted time in useless discussion, but have simply gone on and produced work both in music and painting which amply proves that certain feminine minds under proper cultivation and environment will produce remarkable results in the fine arts[...]. Probably the best known of these composers is Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, of Boston.”<sup>175</sup> This author rightly acknowledged the frustrating social discussion about women’s ability to create valuable arts while also recognizing that some women were courageous to be creative all along.

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<sup>174</sup> “Es geht doch nichts über das Vergnügen, etwas selbst komponiert zu haben und dann zu hören. Es sind einige hübsche Stellen in dem Trio, und wie ich glaube, ist es auch in der Form ziemlich gelungen, natürlich bleibt es immer Frauenzimmerarbeit, bei denen es immer an der Kraft und hie und da an der Erfindung fehlt.” [Kallberg’s translation] Beatrix Borchard, *Robert Schumann und Clara Wieck: Bedingungen künstlerischer Arbeit in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Weinheim: Beltz, 1985), 292. Quoted in Kallberg, “The Harmony of the Tea Table, 116-117. For more information on Clara Wieck, see, notably Valerie Woodring Goertzen, “Clara Schumann: 1819-1896,” in *Women Composers: Music Through the Ages*, eds. Martha Furman Schleifer and Sylvia Glickman, vol. 6 (New York: G. K. Hall, 1999), 44-104; Nancy B. Reich, “Clara Schumann,” in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, eds. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 249-281; Eugene Gates, “Clara Schumann: A Composer’s Wife as Composer,” in *The Women in Music Anthology*, eds. Eugene Gates and Karla Hartl (Toronto: The Kapralova Society, 2021), 76-94; and Alexander Stefaniuk, *Becoming Clara Schumann: Performance Strategies and Aesthetics in the Culture of the Musical Canon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2021).

<sup>175</sup> “American Women Composers: Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” box 11, Beach Papers (p. 45 of scrapbook).

While history tends to perpetuate the narrative that there were few notable composers who were female, recent studies of various composers demonstrate that it was not for lack of competency among women that their stories are told the way they are. Rather, proper documentation of their stories is lacking in addition to unjust social expectations that were upheld over countless centuries.<sup>176</sup> The author of an article published in the *Boston Home Journal* on Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1898, appropriately acknowledged this unfortunate reality indicating that there existed in the modern era many successful women composers who were writing serious and ambitious works. Of these composers, the author noted specifically Mrs. H. H. A. Beach and included a significant overview of her life and work as a musician in Boston:

For many years, and until very recently, women were charged with total inability to write music. A certain degree of ability in the other arts was acknowledged, but of women composers it was asserted not only that there were none, but that there never could be any. Owing to the enslavement of the sex in times past, it will probably never be known exactly what proportion is held by the work of women in the musical products of the past. That it has not been small is now generally realized. [...] Women musical composers are found in all nations, and it is gratifying to one's patriotism to be assured that American women are doing much of the more serious and ambitious work. The most ambitious of all, as well as one of the most successful, is a resident of Boston."<sup>177</sup>

Pointing out that Beach was producing “serious” and “ambitious” work is a testament to her perseverance despite the challenges she faced as a female composer at the turn of the twentieth century. It shows that her focus in composition was not limited to the gendering of

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<sup>176</sup> See for instance the newest edition of Burkholder, Grout, and Palisca's *A History of Western Music*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 2019). Unfortunately, even this 10<sup>th</sup> edition, published in 2019, includes insufficient information and documentation of the contribution that women have made to the evolution of classical music which only perpetuates the lack of information being taught to students of music in post-secondary institutions. Relating to the timeline of this particular topic, chapters 29 and 30 should cover the many female composers of the nineteenth century whose works and political efforts made tremendous impacts for the future of music. However, while discussions of Hans von Bülow, Johannes Brahms, Franz Liszt, Anton Bruckner, Hugo Wolf, and Richard Strauss take up nearly twenty pages, there is no mention of any female composers or why they would be excluded from such a chapter. Similarly, chapter 30 which focuses on the later nineteenth century only briefly looks at Amy Beach and only briefly mentions her *Gaelic Symphony*, which is her most significant work. Furthermore, these chapters do not include any classical composers of the BIPOC community, female, or male. Peter, J. Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2019), 711-753.

<sup>177</sup> “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” *Boston Home Journal*, March 12, 1898, 13.



music that was prevalent throughout the nineteenth century, but that she was committed to creating works that would reflect her skills, her interests, and her individuality. In other words, she was not composing works that would fall into a category of “women’s work” as Wieck expressed of her Trio, rather she was composing music that reflected *who* she was. In this way, Cavarero might say that Beach was sharing her “narratable self” through her compositions. By extension, I argue that the sharing of her “self” in a meaningful way is a form of what Arendt might call “political action.” Finally, the use of the adjectives “serious” and “ambitious” affirms Beach’s ability to compose with similar competency to any competent male composer and in this way the author of the article published in the *Boston Home Journal* on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1898, was relating Beach to male compositional masters.

## **2.4 Beach’s Professional Work in Relation to the Masters**

Despite the challenges of being a woman composer at the turn of the twentieth century, Beach took it upon herself to learn all that she could about classical music compositions. According to an essay she published in 1943, she taught herself French in order to be able to read all of the treatises on orchestration by Berlioz and Gevaert, she attended myriad concerts only to return home and transcribe entire pieces, by ear, a practice that deepened her knowledge of orchestration, and she memorized Bach fugues from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* transcribing them to learn the composition of successful fugues.<sup>178</sup> A review dated October 1894 shows that she kept a diary of her own reviews of musical concerts which would sometimes include short transcriptions of themes or motifs that had made an impression on her.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, she performed many of the most popular works by classical masters such as J.S. Bach, Beethoven,

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<sup>178</sup> Benjamin Brooks, ed., “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition: A Conference with Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” *Etude* 61 (March 1943): 152.

<sup>179</sup> Music Reviews, v. II (of the compositions of others), October 1894, folder 1, box 4, Beach Papers.

Mozart, Liszt, Brahms, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Moscheles providing her with special insight about each composer's compositional style. As the many reviews of her compositions and of her performances show, her own works were often programmed alongside those of other historically acclaimed male masters of composition. This programming practice positioned her amongst some of the greatest classical music composers of the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. For example, on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1912, she performed her Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor, op. 34 with violinist Dr. Wolfgang Bülau. On the same programme were the Jules Conus Violin Concerto, Johann Adam Birkenstock's *Siciliano*, Mozart's Adagio in E Major, and Gavotte, and Saint Saëns' Rondo Capriccioso.<sup>180</sup> In each of these ways, Beach was relating to male masters of composition whom she never had the opportunity to meet, but who she understood to be valuable "others" in reflecting back to her and to the world her "uniqueness of self."<sup>181</sup>

Not only were Beach's works being programmed alongside works by well-known composers such as Mozart and Saint-Saëns, but her works were receiving more praise from audiences and critics alike than the well-known works. For example, following the premiere of Beach's Sonata for Violin and Piano, on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1897, the *Boston Globe* published an article that highlighted the concert. The article informs readers that the concert began with Beethoven's String Quartet in E Minor op. 59, no. 3, but that "[t]he really notable feature of the program was the second number, a sonata in A minor, for violin and piano, composed by Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, her 34<sup>th</sup> work, and played last evening for the first time."<sup>182</sup> After significant description of each movement of the sonata, the author briefly mentions that the concert ended with a Mozart quartet in E-Flat Major. Not only does this article devote more space on the page to Beach's work, but it

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<sup>180</sup> Concert Programme, Monday, October 28, 1912, folder 6, box 19, Beach Papers.

<sup>181</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 81-92.

<sup>182</sup> "Kneisel Quartet Concert," *Boston Globe* 51, no. 5 (January 5, 1897): 3.

divulges the success of the performance of the sonata and most importantly, to the success of the composition itself. The author even states that “much of the time during the selection one was tempted to forget the pianist and think only of the composer.”<sup>183</sup> In addition to being programmed alongside two of history’s most well-respected masters of composition, namely, Beethoven and Mozart, Beach’s sonata received much acclaim upon its premiere and overshadowed the two other large compositions on the same programme. Furthermore, the *Boston Courier* published an article on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1897, that stated that Beach’s “writing was not crushed by the Beethoven and that the Mozart did not make it seem less than lucid and fluent,” highlighting the success of the composition even by comparison to works by Beethoven and Mozart.<sup>184</sup> Louis C. Elson, journalist for the *Boston Daily Advertiser* agreed saying that Mrs. Beach was not “crushed” between the Beethoven and the Mozart. He also believed that the concert was “interesting because it presented an important new work by a resident composer.”<sup>185</sup> Evidently, Beach’s Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 34 marked the Boston public and critics alike, and stood out amongst works by well-known male masters of composition.

Sometimes her works were programmed alongside other large-scale works by notable composers and performed by pianists other than herself. For example, on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1899, pianist Teresa Carreño (1853-1917), alongside the Halir-Quartett (Carl Halir, first violin, Gustav Exner, second violin, Hugu Dechert, cello, and Adolph Müller, viola) performed works by Stephan Krehl (1864-1924), Beach, and Beethoven.<sup>186</sup> The programming of Beach’s sonata

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<sup>183</sup> “Kneisel Quartet Concert,” 3.

<sup>184</sup> “Music: The Kneisel Quartette, Max Heinrich, Sieveking and Symphony Concerts,” *Boston Courier*, January 10, 1897, box 11, Beach papers (p. 26 of scrapbook).

<sup>185</sup> Louis C. Elson, “The Kneisel Quartette Concert More Than Ever Interesting,” *Boston Daily Advertiser* 169, no. 4 (5 January 1897): 4.

<sup>186</sup> Concert Programme, Sunday, October 28, 1899, box 11, Beach Papers (p. 49 of scrapbook). For published works by Stephan Krehl see Stephan Krehl, *Fuge: Erläuterung und Anleitung zur Komposition derselben* (Berlin: G.J. Göschen’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1914, and Krehl, *Kontrapunkt: die Lehre von der selbständigen Stimmführung* (Berlin: G.J. Göschen’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1908). For more information on Teresa Carreño see, notably,

alongside a Beethoven string quartet reflects that others viewed her composition as equal to or comparable to the value of that of Beethoven's compositions. As such, those that put together such programmes can be seen as what Cavarero would consider "necessary others" to Beach, reflecting back to her part of who she was.<sup>187</sup> To Cavarero, "[i]t is the necessary aspect of an identity which [...] is intertwined with other lives—with reciprocal exposures and innumerable gazes—and needs the other's tale." In other words, identity is developed by relating to others and by having one's story reflected back to them from an "other's" perspective. Though Cavarero does not discuss relationships inferred by others, I extend her point by arguing that an identity can be developed by the inference of relating to another. Thus, in light of the critics and those who programmed Beach's works alongside works by other compositional masters, I contend that not only did they reflect back to Beach her compositional competency, but they inferred relationships between her and other compositional masters.

Occasionally, critics would point out comparisons between Beach's compositional style and that of other masters of composition such as Schumann, Brahms, Grieg, Liszt, Mendelssohn, and Wagner. For example, following the October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1912, performance of the Sonata for Violin and Piano by Carreño and Halir, a number of German newspapers published reviews that likened Beach's writing to that of Schumann, Brahms, and Grieg.<sup>188</sup> Similarly, an undated clipping of an article preserved in one of Beach's scrapbooks points out the influence of Grieg and Wagner in the sonata. The author stated that "[t]he influence of two very different men is so

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Anna Kijas, *The Life and Music of Teresa Carreño (1853-1917): A Guide to Research* (Middleton, Wisconsin: A-R Editions, 2019); Kijas, "Teresa Carreño: 'Such Gifts Are of God, and Ought not to Be Prostituted for Mere Gain,'" in *Musical Prodigies: Interpretations from Psychology, Music Education, Musicology, and Ethnomusicology*, ed. Gary E. McPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 621-637; and Franco Gurman, "Teresa Carreño and Her Piano Music" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2006).

<sup>187</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 81-92.

<sup>188</sup> See, notably, *Berliner Fremdenblatt*, October 31, 1899, Beach Papers, folder 6, box 19; *Rundschau*, October 31, 1899, Beach Papers, folder 6, box 19, and "Konzerte," *Volkzeitung* 510, Berlin, October 30, 1899, 1.

patent as not to be gainsaid: that of Grieg and Wagner. A certain Northern cast of melody, certain Scandinavian cadences, strike the ear with peculiar frequency; again, which is rare as composers go today, there are frequent Wagnerian turns to the harmony. Of actual reminiscence there may be, upon the whole, little; although King Mark's 'Wozu die Dienste?'—from the second act of 'Tristan'—pursues you doggedly through parts of the third movement."<sup>189</sup>

Likewise, the programme notes for the Sonata for Violin and Piano from a performance given by the Louisville Quintette Club during the 1899-1900 season point out Beach's influence from composers of the nineteenth century. "The harmonies of this movement, as of the others in somewhat lesser degree, are handled with a freedom and largeness of touch which proves the composer to be familiar with the best models of the romantic school."<sup>190</sup> Furthermore, although Elson, of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, was not specifically pointing out a connection between Beach and any particular composer, his closing remarks in the article published on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1897 acknowledge Beach's exploration of important musical forms from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries relating her to such composers as J. S. Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Schumann. Elson stated that "the finale [of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34] exhibited some very well-made counterpoint, some canonic work between the two instruments being commendable and the slow episode remarkably effective."<sup>191</sup> As Beach stated during a conference that was published in 1943, she learned to write fugues by transcribing J.S. Bach fugues by memory, "voice by voice," and then compared what she had written with what Bach had written.<sup>192</sup> Similarly, as she explained in the conference, Beach

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<sup>189</sup> Undated clipping, Scrapbook (1835-1956), Beach Papers, box 11 (p. 57 of scrapbook).

<sup>190</sup> "Louisville Quintette Club," Concert programme, Scrapbook (1835-1956), box 11, Beach Papers (p. 50 of scrapbook).

<sup>191</sup> Elson, "The Kneisel Quartette Concert More Than Ever Interesting," 4.

<sup>192</sup> Benjamin Brooks, ed., "The 'How' of Creative Composition," 152.

would attend orchestral concerts and upon arriving home transcribe the themes with appropriate instrumentation as she remembered them.<sup>193</sup> Furthermore, she stated in a published article in 1942 that she studied harmony, orchestration, and counterpoint on her own after only one year of study with Junius W. Hill. Her method of study was to learn from reading books and “studying the best treatises to be obtained as well as orchestral scores.”<sup>194</sup> As a result, Beach’s study of composition treatises, score study, and attention to detail while attending live performances influenced her own compositional style. Additionally, the influence the compositional masters that Beach studied appeared in her work such that critics observed this influence. Beach’s study of other composers’ work reflected in her own compositions was a way of her relating to them; the critics’ remarks that liken her writing to that of others reflected this relationality.

In addition to her compositions being programmed alongside works by other compositional masters, Beach chose to perform works composed both by herself and works composed by others. As a recitalist, Beach chose her own programmes and included works by a variety of well-known classical masters in addition to her own works. For example, in an article published by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1902, the author indicated that Beach had chosen a well-balanced programme of works that would interest a diverse audience including works by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Liszt and Chopin. The author also indicated, however that “[o]f special interest was a serenade in manuscript played for the first time [...], the theme being from Richard Strauss and the elaboration by Mrs. Beach.”<sup>195</sup> The choice to elaborate a theme by Richard Strauss demonstrates both her skill as a composer and her desire to compose in the same genres that other composition masters of the nineteenth century

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<sup>193</sup> Brooks, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” 152.

<sup>194</sup> Beach, “How Music is Made,” 11.

<sup>195</sup> “Recital By Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 62, no. 70 (March 19, 1902): 12.

were composing, situating herself among them. According to scholar Charles Suttoni, “the opera-based fantasy for the piano flourished during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>196</sup> Well-known composers such as Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1784-1849), Sigismund Thalberg (1812-1871), and Liszt each composed numerous fantasies and other similar pieces for solo piano using well-known tunes from popular operas.<sup>197</sup> Sometimes, composers used a well-known tune or musical theme that was not from any opera in particular, such as Liszt’s *Totentanz: Paraphrase über das Dies irae* [Dance of Death: Paraphrase on the Dies Irae] (1849). These pieces often involved technical virtuosity and were a way to demonstrate their physical strength as Ellis describes.<sup>198</sup> Therefore, by Beach choosing to programme the transcription and elaboration of Strauss’ *Serenade* shows that she believed in her capacity to compose in the same genre as virtuoso compositional masters of the nineteenth century. It also demonstrates the belief that she was worthy of being performed on the same programme as works by male masters of composition. Furthermore, the review published in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* attests to the success of the *Serenade* affirming Beach’s worthiness to be fairly compared as a master of composition. In this way, Beach was relating herself to the composers whose works she performed as a pianist and to Strauss by not only performing his work, but by elaborating his theme. In order to elaborate a theme by another composer, Beach would need to first understand the style of the music and to interpret its meaning—much like acknowledging another’s “narratable self”—before adding her own ideas—reflecting back to the other *who* they are—so that the two could connect in a logical

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<sup>196</sup> Oxford Music Online, s.v. “Piano Fantasies and Transcriptions,” by Charles Suttoni, accessed February 24, 2024, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>197</sup> Oxford Music Online, s.v. “Paraphrase,” by Richard Sherr, accessed February 24, 2024, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>198</sup> Ellis, “Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris,” 356.

manner. Therefore, I argue that this type of relation—through the elaboration of a musical theme by another composer—Beach was taking “political action” as Arendt argues.

This type of understanding of another composer’s style and musical meaning was common for Beach and was recognized by critics. When she performed works by other virtuoso pianist-composers such as Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, and Brahms, critics often remarked how clearly Beach was able to communicate individual ideas and emotions of each composer. For example, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* wrote that “[i]t would almost seem as though Brahms was a favorite writer with the artist so sympathetically were the numbers played by her,” adding that “[t]he poetry of Chopin’s style so captivated the audience that Mrs. Beach was applauded until she consented to give an encore as half of the people were getting up to leave.”<sup>199</sup> This critic noted Beach’s informed interpretations (“the *poetry* of Chopin’s style” applauding her ability to capture the essence of what each composer intended in his work. Similarly, following a concert that Beach gave on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1897, the critic of the *Boston Evening Transcript* observed the deep connection between Beach and Beethoven, whose variations she chose to perform that evening. He elaborated that no matter the composer whose music Beach chose to perform, “[t]here is truth, purity and imagination in whatever [she] does; she gives out all good or great musical thought, of any style or school, in an intimate way, suggestive of a near acquaintance with the very heart of the masters.”<sup>200</sup> Even in early performances, critics noticed that the young pianist had a distinctive ability to relate to each composer whose music she played. The journalist of the *Beacon* noted that above all of Beach’s technical mastery at the instrument, “it is rather that mental and sentimental *relation* which she establishes with each author, and by which she gives him truthfully and intelligently; not with the depth and fervor which is to come, of

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<sup>199</sup> “Recital By Mrs. H. H. A. Beach,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 12.

<sup>200</sup> “Music Hall: The Cecilia,” *Boston Transcript*, February 5, 1897, 8.



course, but with no concealment and no admixture of what is not his.”<sup>201</sup> It is fascinating how the critic recognized Beach relating to each composer by way of her mindful and intelligent preparation. Importantly, as both Arendt and Cavarero discuss, in order to relate to others, one must first develop a “self,” then one must express this “self” to others in meaningful ways. Thus, only through a highly developed “self” and through meaningful experiences with others could Beach possibly relate to composers from the past, although they were deceased by the time she performed their works.

Not only were her works programmed alongside those of historically great compositional masters, but Beach was often considered part of the group of great American contemporary composers. It must be mentioned that during her lifetime, she was most often the only woman considered as one of the great American composers. Additionally, the scholarship published after her death most frequently discusses her work in relation to other women composers, rather than in the broad category of American composers.<sup>202</sup> The *Journal of Fine Arts* wrote that “[i]n the words of an eminent musical critic: ‘Mrs. Beach at once took rank among the foremost of America’s composers.’”<sup>203</sup> Similarly, Oscar Sonneck (1873 – 1928), chief of the music division at the Library of Congress, wrote to Beach expressing his desire to house some of her large-scale compositions. “It seems to me that our National Library should possess representative specimen of every prominent American composer’s art, be it even only to impress on foreign visitors the

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<sup>201</sup> “Miss Cheney’s Recital,” *The Beacon*, March 22, 1884, Early Performance Reviews, transcriptions, folder 9, box 4, Walters S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Collection. [my emphasis]

<sup>202</sup> Oxford Music Online, s.v. “Women in Music,” Judith Tick, Margaret Ericson, and Ellen Koskoff, accessed February 24, 2024, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>; Oxford Music Online, s.v. “United States of America,” Richard Crawford et al., accessed February 25, 2024, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>; Louis C. Elson, “American Women in Music,” in *The History of American Music* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1904), 293-308; Candace Bailey, “Women’s Work in Music,” *American Music* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2022): 464-468; Hannah Roberts, “‘Inherently Deficient’ or Created Equal?: The Rise of the American Woman Composer,” *American Music Teacher* (June 1, 2023): 28-31.

<sup>203</sup> *Journal of Fine Arts*, March 1897, box 11, Beach Papers (p. 29 of scrapbook).

fact that we Americans feel proud of our Edward MacDowell, Mrs. H. H. Beach, George W. Chadwick, Horatio Parker, John Knowles Paine, Arthur Foote, Henry V. Hadley and so forth.”<sup>204</sup> Moreover, the French government asked Beach to contribute an autographed manuscript “to be placed on exhibition in the Library of the Opera House in Paris with those of contemporaneous and dead composers.”<sup>205</sup> Thus, not only was Beach respected and valued as a composer in the United States during her lifetime, but was honoured in France, a country that was not yet allowing women to participate in the prestigious *Prix de Rome* competition for music composition.

## **2.5 Beach’s Reciprocal Relationships with her Contemporaries**

While the published articles about Beach and the reviews of her music and performances all demonstrate relationality between Beach and other masters of composition, her diaries and correspondences demonstrate a different kind of relationship: one developed by the reciprocal exchange of each person’s “narratable self,” as Cavarero would say, through the exchange of words. As an active member of the classical music circle, Beach developed close friendships and relationships with her contemporaries. Her personal communications show that she valued each of her relationships with friends and colleagues and that she made a genuine effort to stay in touch and to make a positive contribution to the relationship. One such relationship developed between Beach and French composer Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944), —one of the rare prominent female composers active in the same period, but in continental Europe.<sup>206</sup> An undated

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<sup>204</sup> Oscar Sonneck, Chief of the Music Division, Library of Congress, letter to Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, January 7, 1911, folder 9, box 1, Beach Papers.

<sup>205</sup> Clipping, box 11, Beach Papers (p. 49 of scrapbook); Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra, op. 45,” autographed manuscript, July 23, 1900, Autographs of contemporary musicians collected by Charles Malherbe for the Universal Exposition in 1900, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

<sup>206</sup> For more information on Cécile Chaminade, see, notably John Jerrold, “Piano Music of Cécile Chaminade,” *American Music Teacher* 37, no. 3 (January 1988): 22-23, 46; Marcia J. Citron, *Cécile Chaminade, a Bio-Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); Citron, “European Composers and Musicians, 1880-1918,” in

letter written in French to Chaminade from Beach, for example, demonstrates Beach's respect for her contemporary both as a composer and as a person.<sup>207</sup> The fact that Beach wrote in French, and that her French is excellent in grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and syntax, shows a desire to connect with Chaminade in a way that may have been less comfortable for Beach, but would express care for her contemporary since Beach's native language was English. Chaminade acknowledged the strength of Beach's written French in a written response dated March 2<sup>nd</sup>, though there is no year indicated. In her letter she expressed that she "marvelled at [Beach's] way of writing in French." She continued by stating: "one might imagine that you had spent your life in France, and I envy you for also possessing a language that is considered difficult [...]." <sup>208</sup>

In Beach's letter to Chaminade she expressed her sincere admiration for her contemporary and the impact that her music and performance had on Beach.

For many years I have had the great pleasure of playing your pieces for piano, so full of tenderness and originality, and also, I have had a deep relationship with your songs that seem to me among the most beautiful melodies that France has produced! I heard you play your music with such charm when you came to Boston. One never forgets pleasures such as this! [...] Please accept my most affectionate feelings and I implore you to continue to

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*Women and Music: A History*, ed. Karin Pendle, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 178-181; Lydia Ledeen, "Cécile Louise Stephanie Chaminade," in *Women Composers: Music Through the Ages*, eds. Martha Furman Schleifer and Sylvia Glickman, vol. 6 (New York: G. K. Hall, 1999), 515-554; Michele Mai Aichele, "Cécile Chaminade as a Symbol for American Women, 1890-1920" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2019); and Jessica Stankis, "Rethinking Cécile Chaminade's Concert Tour of the United States, 1908" (PhD diss., Arizona State University, May, 2006).

<sup>207</sup> While the specific date of this letter is unknown, its contents and those of a letter from Chaminade to an unknown recipient (she addressed the letter "Very dear friend") suggests an approximate date. In Beach's letter to Chaminade she mentions having heard Chaminade play in Boston. Newspaper articles confirm that Chaminade had performed in Boston in 1908. See, for example, "Mme Chaminade and Candy: The French Composer's Concert on Saturday Afternoon—Her Music, Her Audience and Herself," *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 14, 1908, p. 13.

Additionally, in a letter that Chaminade wrote to an unknown friend dated June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1934, she thanks the recipient for having included a note from Beach to Chaminade with her letter. She proceeds to say how much she has admired Beach for a long time, but has not had the pleasure of meeting her. She continues that if she had had Beach's address she would have written to her directly. This information shows that Beach and Chaminade were not directly connected until after the date of this letter meaning that Beach's letter to Chaminade could not have been dated earlier than 1934. Beach to Cécile Chaminade, undated, folder 4, box 4, Walter S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Collection; Chaminade to unknown recipient, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1934, folder 3, box 1, Beach Papers.

<sup>208</sup> Chaminade to Beach, March 2, folder 3, box 1, Beach Papers.

give us your beautiful musical ideas that we need so much! Your very sincere admirer,  
Amy M. Beach.<sup>209</sup>

Beach's "deep relationship" with Chaminade's songs is an example of a different kind of relationship than those described by Cavarero since it is not an inter-personal relationship. Rather, Beach was saying that she was connecting to the music itself, and specifically to the "beautiful melodies." However, since music composition is a form of personal expression, or in Beach's words, music "express[es] the things of the spirit," Beach's relationship with Chaminade's songs was also, by extension, a relationship with the composer.

In response to Beach's warmth and sincerity, Chaminade's letters to Beach which were also kept in the Beach archive in the University of New Hampshire Special Collections, reciprocate the companionable sentiments. For example, in a letter dated March 2<sup>nd</sup> without a specified year, she wrote:

Very dear Madame, Your very charming letter touched me so deeply that I wanted to write to you right away to thank you. Your big personality has no equal in your great modesty and I am extremely touched by your interest in my works. We musicians who love our art and serve it with faith, need to support each other, so as to not get discouraged by the invasion of music without music [...] Again, thank you, dear colleague, and friend, for your kindness which is very dear to me, and believe my feelings of affectionate admiration. C. C. Chaminade.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> "Depuis bien des années j'ai eu le grand plaisir de produire vos morceaux pour piano, si pleins de tendresse et d'originalité, et aussi j'ai eu un[e] connaissance intime avec vos chansons qui me semblent parmi les mélodies les plus belles que la France ait produites. Je vous ai entendu jouer votre musique avec tant de charme quand vous êtes venue à Boston. On n'oublie jamais des bonheurs comme cela ! [...] Recevez toujours, je vous prie, mes sentiments affectueux et aussi je vous prie de continuer à nous donner de vos belles idées musicales dont nous avons tant besoin ! Votre admiratrice bien sincère, Amy M. Beach." Beach to Cécile Chaminade, undated, folder 4, box 4, Walter S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Collection. [In this dissertation, translations are mine unless noted otherwise.]

<sup>210</sup> "Bien chère Madame, Votre si charmante lettre m'a tellement touché que je voulais vous écrire de suite pour vous en remercier. Votre grande personnalité n'a d'égale pour votre grande modestie et je suis extrêmement touché de l'intérêt que vous voulez bien porter à mes œuvres. Nous avons bien besoin de nous soutenir entre musiciens, qui aimons vraiment notre art et le servons avec foi, pour ne pas nous laisser décourager par l'invasion de la musique sans musique [...] Encore merci chère collègue et amie de votre sympathie qui m'est très chère et croyez à mes sentiments d'affectueuse admiration. C. C. Chaminade." Cécile Chaminade to Beach, undated, folder 3, box 1, Beach Papers.

In this response, Chaminade reflected back to Beach *who* she was (“*Votre grande personnalité n’a d’égale pour votre grande modestie*”) assuming the role of Beach’s “other” in their reciprocal relationship. Similarly, Beach reflected back to Chaminade her identity as a pianist (e.g. “*Je vous ai entendu jouer votre musique avec tant de charme*”) in her letter. In this way, both Chaminade and Beach reflected back to the other her “uniqueness” as Cavarero says, and “unity” was created between the two composers as a result.<sup>211</sup>

The correspondence between Beach and Chaminade demonstrates a professional relationship based on admiration. Each uses respectful and affectionate language (e.g., *sentiments d’affectueuse admiration*) and expresses her own feelings about life, music, and relationships. Furthermore, although Chaminade and Beach were professional female composers—which were exceedingly rare at the turn of the twentieth century—I argue that they developed a friendship through their written correspondences by sharing intimate ideas about classical music composition and performance, and also by sharing their own feelings about life and their relationship to one another (e.g. “*nous avons besoin de nous soutenir entre musiciens*”). To Cavarero, the difference between “friendships” and “acquaintances” lies in the sharing of “autobiographical materials to a biographer, who, in turn, is an accomplice in the whole operation.”<sup>212</sup> In other words, the sharing of details about one’s identity to another who is able to reflect back *who* that person is demonstrates the existence of a friendship rather than a relationship between “acquaintances.” Therefore, the relationship between Beach and Chaminade can be qualified as a friendship since both were willing to reciprocally share their “narratable selves.” Moreover, Chaminade expressly called Beach not only a “colleague,” but a “friend,” thanking Beach for her kindness which for Chaminade was “very dear” to her.

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<sup>211</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 71.

<sup>212</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 63.

Similarly, the correspondences—written in English—from Carreño (1853-1917) to Beach demonstrate Carreño’s admiration for Beach’s compositions and for her as a human.

Venezuelan-born pianist, singer, and composer, Carreño was one of the first female pianists to tour the United States and contributed to the dissemination of American music by performing music by American composers in the United States and abroad.<sup>213</sup> Beach’s personal record of performances of her works, states that Carreño performed Beach’s sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 in Berlin with violinist Carl Halir on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1899.<sup>214</sup> In Carreño’s letter to Beach dated December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1899, she expressed how deeply she had enjoyed learning and performing the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, as well as the great impact it had on its audience in Berlin.

I assure you I have never had a greater pleasure in my life than the one I had in working out your beautiful sonata, and having the good luck to bring it before the Berlin public. I consider this a great privilege, and I assure you I know how to appreciate it, for you have no greater admirer of your great talent than I am. [...] As you had friends at the concert here, it is not necessary for me to enter into detailed accounts of how your sonata was received by the public, but perhaps it will please you to know from an experienced old artist as I am that it met with a decided success, and this is said to the credit of the public. I think that you would have been pleased with the success, and perhaps, with the interpretation, especially that of Professor Halir, who played it most beautifully and felt and expressed the greatest admiration for you. We both longed to have had you with us.<sup>215</sup>

By 1899, Carreño was “an experienced old artist” having nearly thirty years (1863-1899) of professional experience as a pianist playing works by many well-known composers such as Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Louis-Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869), Camille Saint-Saëns

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<sup>213</sup> Oxford Music Online, s.v. “Carreño, (Maria) Teresa,” Laura Pita, accessed March 3, 2024, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>214</sup> Journal of Performances, folder 3, box 4, Beach Papers.

<sup>215</sup> Teresa Carreño to Amy Beach, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1899, folder 3, box 1, Beach Papers.

(1835-1921), and Edvard Grieg (1843-1907).<sup>216</sup> However, her letter to Beach from December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1899, demonstrates great appreciation for Beach's compositions in particular (e.g., "*I assure you I have never had a greater pleasure in my life than the one I had in working out your beautiful sonata*"). In this way, Carreño was acting as one of Beach's "necessary others" by reflecting back to Beach the success of her composition. Furthermore, Carreño shared with Beach how Halir had also expressed admiration for Beach and that they both "longed" to have had her with them at the performance. Carreño was not only expressing admiration and appreciation for Beach's music, but she was sharing a desire to connect with Beach in person. This longing for connection in person rather than by written correspondence points to a closer relationship than that of two professionals.

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1900, Carreño wrote to Beach again, but rather than primarily expressing admiration for Beach's work, she shared details of her health (e.g., "having been very ill with influenza"), gratitude for the dedication of Beach's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C-sharp Minor (1899), and thoughts about the philosophy of musical criticism.<sup>217</sup> To her, "the moment a work is serious and based on deeper thoughts, and feelings, we [performers] must study it and grasp it into our mind and into our soul and then we can do it justice as far as our individual "*Empfindung*" (I cannot find the English word for this!) can help us."<sup>218</sup> At the close of her letter, Carreño wrote, "[k]eep well my dear friend for the happiness of all and specially for those who have the privilege of knowing you. To your dear husband and mother, kindly give my most cordial greetings and to you, my most affectionate love." As with the correspondences

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<sup>216</sup> Anna E. Kijas, "Teresa Carreño: 'Such Gifts Are of God, and Ought Not to Be Prostituted for Mere Gain,' in *Musical Prodigies: Interpretations from Psychology, Education, Musicology, and Ethnomusicology*, ed. Gary E. McPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 635.

<sup>217</sup> Carreño to Beach, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1900, folder 3, box 1, Beach Papers.

<sup>218</sup> Carreño to Beach, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1900, folder 3, box 1, Beach Papers. [Carreño's emphasis]

between Chaminade and Beach, Carreño's letters demonstrate how deeply she cared for Beach as her friend and colleague. In asking Carreño to perform Beach's sonata, and in dedicating her concerto to Carreño, Beach acknowledged her colleague's skill at the piano. Carreño's letters to Beach demonstrate that their relationship was more than professional business by expressing Carreño's appreciation of Beach as a very dear friend, as well as Carreño's sharing of intimate thoughts about music with Beach. In other words, Carreño shared her "narratable self" with Beach. Furthermore, in Carreño's letter to Beach dated December 17th, 1899, it is clear that Beach had invited Carreño to her home as Carreño responded with delight at the idea. In her own words, Carreño wrote: "How delighted will I be to come to your house and spend a few delightful hours with you, your dear husband, and your dear ones! These will be indeed be full of sunshine to me and thank you ever so much for your kind invitation."<sup>219</sup> Such an invitation and the enthusiastic acceptance of the invitation demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between the two pianist-composers. Whereas it is uncertain whether or not Beach met Chaminade, the correspondence from Carreño to Beach shows that their relationship extended beyond their written communication and that through their reciprocal exchange of their "narratable selves" they were "necessary others" for each other.

Notably, the letters to Beach from Arthur Foote, Maud Powell, Marian MacDowell, Emil Paur, William Mason, Wilhelm Gericke, and Leopold Stokowski all express similar, warm sentiments towards Beach—their beloved friend and professional colleague.<sup>220</sup> Often, they voiced gratitude in having received Beach's letters, in having her as a friend, or in having had the

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<sup>219</sup> Carreño to Beach, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1899, folder 3, box 1, Beach Papers.

<sup>220</sup> Note that while the published scholarship by Block, Brown, and biographer Walter Jenkins notes that Beach's colleagues supported her professional work, and often points out that some of these relationships were close friendships, none of the scholars discuss the correspondences to Beach in relational terms.



pleasure of meeting either as friends, or as colleagues to work on music together.<sup>221</sup> Of course, these letters were expected to carry a degree of formality appropriate to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; still, the outpouring of warmth and the explicit acknowledgement of friendship in many of the letters shows that Beach was appreciated beyond her professional work and valued as a friend. In a letter to Beach dated March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1915, from the great conductor Leopold Stokowski on behalf of the Philadelphia Orchestra, it is evident that Beach made efforts to develop meaningful and reciprocal relationships beyond the professional relationship. After having conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra in a performance of Beach's Symphony in E Minor, "Gaelic," (1894) on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1915, Stokowski corresponded with Beach about her music.<sup>222</sup> Stokowski's letter reads:

Dear Mrs. Beach: It was very kind indeed of you to write me about our production of your Symphony. It is not often one enjoys so thoroughly the producing of what is to one a new work as I did your ["Gaelic"] Symphony, because it is so full of real music, without any pretense or effects that are plastered on from the outside, but just real, sincere, simple, and deep music; and one can only say that of about one percent of contemporary music. It made me very happy to see how much the Philadelphia public enjoyed the work, and it was a true musical satisfaction for us of the Orchestra to rehearse and produce such a really fine creation. I am looking forward to doing the [Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in C-sharp Minor, op. 45] some day with you, as you so very generously offered. With true congratulations and friendship, Yours sincerely, Leopold Stokowski.<sup>223</sup>

The first line of this letter from Stokowski to Beach indicates that Beach had reached out to the conductor, which was already an effort on her part to create or maintain a relationship—mainly professional, but also personal—with Stokowski as a friend and a colleague. For

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<sup>221</sup> See, notably, letters from Arthur Foote to Amy Beach, folder 5, box 1, Beach Papers; letter from Marion MacDowell to Amy Beach, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1938, folder 10, box 1, Beach Papers; letter from Emil Paur to Amy Beach, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1900, folder 11, box 1, Beach Papers; letter from Maud Powell to Amy Beach, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1901, folder 19, box 1, Beach Papers.

<sup>222</sup> "The Orchestra," and "The Symphony," *Evening Ledger*, Philadelphia 1, no. 143 (February 27, 1915): 7.

<sup>223</sup> Letter from Leopold Stokowski to Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1915, folder 14, box 1, Beach Papers.

some performers, writing to a conductor of an orchestra may have been a strategy to get ahead in the musical world, and whether this thought crossed Beach's mind cannot be verified. However, based on her many statements about music bringing people together, and her very warm correspondences with her friends, it is evident that, regardless of her desire to achieve a successful career as a composer and as a pianist, Beach came across as a person generous of spirit, compassionate, and one with a keen interest in acting for the benefit of others. Her diaries (1926-1944) also show her value for companionship and for sharing conversation with friends. Often her entries state that she had dinner with a friend (e.g., February 10, 1937), that she had a "good talk" with a friend (e.g., February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1940), or she was writing letters (e.g., February 11, 1941).<sup>224</sup> Stokowski also points to Beach's success in connecting to others in his discussion of her symphony by expressing his appreciation for the composer's authentic expression of self within the composition ("*real, sincere, simple, deep music*"). Additionally, he indicates how much "the public enjoyed the performance of the work." His point reveals many *types* of relationships involved in this one performance—Beach the composer with the conductor, the composer with the musicians of the orchestra who performed her piece, and by extension the composer with the audience.

Importantly, not only was Beach connected to her Boston contemporaries, but she had contacts across the Atlantic Ocean, such as Chaminade and Pugno, whom she cherished and who cherished her as a person, as a friend, and as a colleague. These relationships were not one-sided, but were reciprocal relationships where each person acted as the other's "necessary other" in the development of their "narratable selves" as Cavarero would say. The many correspondences between Beach and her colleagues show that she was cherished

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<sup>224</sup> Amy Beach Diaries, 1936-1941 and 1941-1944, folder 6, box 3, Beach Papers.

for her individuality both as a human in society and as a composer-pianist. Beach's diaries demonstrate her value for friendships and meaningful conversations. Her compositions were cherished during her lifetime for their individuality and for their authentic expression of Beach's "narratable self" above any other aspect of their brilliance.

## **2.6 Beach in Relation to a Network of People**

As Stokowski's letter mentions, Beach's relation to others extended beyond her close circle to her audiences and to the general public who might have read about her or read her published articles. Many reviews of Beach as a composer or as a pianist directly mention her ability to create relationships between herself and others. Other reviews, however, observe her development of "self," which Arendt and Cavarero both identify as a necessary step in the ability to relate to others. In the early years of her performing career many critics followed her progress and noticed her developing an individual quality in her playing, not only her technical advancement at the piano. For example, on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1885, just two years after her debut with the Boston Symphony, the journalist for the *Daily Advertiser* raved about Beach's ability to combine many types of artistic skills in one performance. Specifically discussing her performance of Chopin's F Minor Concerto, op. 21, the anonymous author stated that "there is none so far as we know who can unite so many of the requisites for a true rendering of the best literature of the piano." Commenting on the incredible development of her technical virtuosity in a short amount of time, the author also observed that "this excellence of mechanism and touch so nearly approaching perfection was not so gratifying as the evidence given by every page of the definite understanding of the rhetorical form, the purpose, the meaning and the sentiment of the author; the correct apprehension of the relations between pianoforte and orchestra and between the phrase

essential to the thought and those which are only its adjunct and ornaments.”<sup>225</sup> This music critic identified Beach’s already advanced skill in musical interpretation including dissecting the intentions of the composer and communicating these intentions with an audience thus uniting composer, performer, and listener.

By extension of Beach’s personal expression in her public performances, she connected to her audiences so much that critics noted the audience’s engagement with her playing. In March 1887, Beach gave a recital at which she performed five solo piano sonatas by five different composers (Mozart, J. Christian Bach, Scarlatti, Beethoven, and Chopin). Critics of the *Boston Courier*, *Boston Post*, and the *Boston Home Journal* all acknowledged Beach’s ability to retain the audience’s attention throughout such a substantial program and to bring to life the musical expressivity specific to each work. For example, the *Boston Courier* noted that “Mrs. Beach was able to pervade each different Sonata with the peculiar characteristics of the age in which it was composed, thus presenting a study in Sonata development, intensely interesting to the musical listener, and which the large audience evidently recognized by their close attention to the very end.”<sup>226</sup> Similarly, the *Boston Post* noted that “Mrs. Beach belongs to that class of pianists who do not rely on any tricks of effect or affectation, or on any sensational methods to captivate the audience. She plays as if imbued with a love of her art and of its dignity, and with a due sense of respect and piety towards the composer whom she is interpreting.”<sup>227</sup> Both articles recognize Beach’s meticulous study of each score and of each composer’s work in order to craft an intelligent interpretation of each sonata. Yet, these articles acknowledge that in being true to her own personal expression she captivated

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<sup>225</sup> “Twenty-fourth Symphony Concert,” *Daily Advertiser* 145, no. 76 (March 30, 1885): 4.

<sup>226</sup> “Mrs. Beach’s Recital,” *Boston Courier* (March 12, 1887), folder 9, box 4, Beach Papers (p. 42 of reviews).

<sup>227</sup> “Mrs. Beach’s Recital,” *Boston Post*, March 10, 1887, folder 9, box 4, Beach Papers (p. 41 of reviews).

her audience beyond paying attention to musical details in the scores. In keeping with Cavarero's argument, Beach's commitment to authentic expression informed by careful study and mindful reflection of self led to a relatable experience for the audience. Importantly, the authors of the articles in the *Courier* and the *Post* were not pointing out that the audience was mesmerized by Beach's technical virtuosity; rather, they emphasized her *expressive* virtuosity which, in the end, is the very element in a live musical performance that unites humans. On this note, Arendt's argument for living life through meaningful interactions with others is reflected in Beach's expressive performance in 1885, and thus I argue that this performance exemplifies Arendt's idea of "political action." Not only was Beach seeking relationships with her friends and close circle, but she was extending her personal expression into the public space to include audiences. For her "the public was [her] best teacher, both as pianist or composer."<sup>228</sup>

## **2.7 Beach as a Social, Artistic, and Spiritual Advocate**

Above all, Beach's music reflects her strong social and artistic advocacy. While she was evidently an ambitious composer and performing pianist, she was not a self-serving person. Rather, her published and unpublished writings indicate her desire to contribute to society in meaningful ways. The fact that she was willing to have her social and political views published in newspapers and magazines also speaks to her tendency to be an advocate for a cause. When she felt strongly about a social issue, she bravely voiced her opinions and ideas so that others could share in her objectives. For example, when asked to speak about the MacDowell Colony at the Music Teachers National Association in 1932, Beach used the opportunity to advocate for the completion of the Endowment Fund to maintain the Colony. Beach was concerned about

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<sup>228</sup> Beach, "How Music is Made," 11.

humanity and often engaged in philosophical discussion about the state of the world. To her, spirituality was the antidote to the challenges of modern existence, specifically to extreme materiality. In support of the preservation of the MacDowell Colony, Beach argued that the Colony offered “solitude” during an era that was growing noisier as a result of technological advances.<sup>229</sup> In her own words, “[i]t is daily growing more impossible to find quiet in this age of the motor, the radio, the telephone—this riveting machine age! And the pity of it is that the world needs the spiritual influence of great art as never before in history! [...] And where can we find solitude? Ask yourselves! We know of *one* place [the MacDowell Colony] where it *can* be found in its perfection [...].”<sup>230</sup> Nine years later, Beach was again imploring her readers to support the MacDowell Colony after a hurricane caused significant damage to certain buildings including the studio in which she composed her two “Hermit Thrush” pieces for solo piano (1921). The published article reminds her readers of the bird that inspired her piece for piano and asks for a small sum of money in order to repair the studio so that more composers and birds alike could enjoy the space.<sup>231</sup> Although she had a personal connection to the MacDowell Colony because of her friendship with Marian MacDowell, and to the particular studio that had been damaged by the hurricane, Beach’s petition was not self-serving, but a genuine appeal for the sake of artists seeking appropriate conditions for creative work. By extension, her plea matches her belief that the world needs spiritual influence; if musical compositions are created mindfully and made available through performance or personal study others may also experience something otherworldly, intangible, inexplicable.

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<sup>229</sup> Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of a Vision,” *Proceedings of the Music Teacher’s National Association* 27 (1932): 47.

<sup>230</sup> Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of a Vision,” 47. [Beach’s emphasis]

<sup>231</sup> Beach, “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach Asks MacDowell Colony Aid: Appeals in Name of ‘Hermit Thrush’ for Rebuilding Work,” *Musical Courier* 123, no. 7 (April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1941): 7.

In a similar way that Beach wanted her readers to understand the necessity for quietude at the MacDowell Colony, she often expressed her belief that music and the arts were imperative to life, and that personal expression be instilled in creative work. Furthermore, she believed in the power of music to unite humans. In an article published in the *The Etude*, Beach voiced her strong belief in the necessity for singing and for meaningful, personal expression: “[W]as there ever a time when singing was more badly needed than now? Singing, not only with our throats but with our spirits. If we have no special voices, we can try to make our fingers sing on keyboard or strings. The main thing is to let our hearts sing, even through sorrow and anxiety. The world cries out for harmony.”<sup>232</sup> Beach would not have had the opportunity to know either Cavarero’s or Arendt’s philosophies regarding the sharing of one’s uniqueness by means of the voice, but her statements align with both philosophers’ views.<sup>233</sup> For all three women, at the heart of a meaningful life is relationality—expressing one’s “self” to others as a way of relating to other humans and in this way finding unity, or harmony as Beach stated.

As Beach’s statement alludes (e.g., *The world cries out for harmony*), she was often concerned about the unrest in the world, and expressed that music reflects the inner feelings of a composer and of a performer. In the winter 1942 issue of *Keyboard*, Beach stated that “the creative artist today is living in a world of unrest, and if [they are] attuned to the spirit of the times, [their] work will reflect that disquiet...Painting, music, poetry are all colored by the unrest of an upset world...And if the art mirrors the times, it is but just that it should be so.”<sup>234</sup> In the same article she shared her belief that music be a positive influence on humans’ ability to find courage in challenging situations, though only when spirituality be present. “There is *spirituality*

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<sup>232</sup> Beach, “The World Cries Out for Harmony,” *Etude* 62, no. 1 (January 1944): 12.

<sup>233</sup> See, for example, Adriana Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 198; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 179.

<sup>234</sup> Beach, “How Music is Made,” 11.

in music, above and beyond mere technique and mechanism, though these must be mastered in order to express the things of the spirit. Music must elevate. Because it is spiritual, it must give us courage to live and to fight for those things in life worth fighting for—whether we struggle on the battlefield or in our daily lives.”<sup>235</sup> This last statement is powerful because not only was Beach saying that music can positively impact one’s mood, but that it has the power to motivate a person to do good in the world. Furthermore, her belief was that the purpose of music is not “merely a means of entertainment. It is—and must be—a source of spiritual value. If it is not, it falls short of its function as music.”<sup>236</sup> To her, music should incite a person to take “political action,” in the way that Arendt discusses. Moreover, by sharing these beliefs with the public in print, according to Arendt’s belief that “finding the right words at the right moment [...] is action,” Beach was taking “political action.”<sup>237</sup>

As a progressive thinker, Beach acknowledged the power that music could have to uplift one’s morale while also recognizing that challenge and unrest are necessary to making any kind of progress. In an unpublished document she shared that “[o]ut of unrest comes progress. [Humans are] dissatisfied because [they have] caught a glimpse of something greater than what [they have]. Unrest is always followed by greater advance—and so I am sure it will be with music. We today are on the threshold—tomorrow we may step through the door into larger halls, greater vistas, and deeper and more lasting beauty than our minds have yet conceived.”<sup>238</sup> While this statement demonstrates Beach’s acknowledgement that much about life is out of our control and we must find ways of adapting to the present circumstances, she also believed that it was a human’s duty to be in control of their actions (“we may step through the door into larger halls”)

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<sup>235</sup> Beach, “The World Cries Out for Harmony,” 11. [Beach’s emphasis]

<sup>236</sup> Beach, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” *Etude* 61, no. 3 (March 1943): 209.

<sup>237</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 26.

<sup>238</sup> Beach, Unpublished document, folder 6, box 4, Beach Papers (p. 5 of document).



and to make mindful decisions (“deeper and more lasting beauty”) in order to live a full life. Similarly, in a published article entitled “Music After Motherhood,” she stated that “[o]ne must learn early in life to distinguish between the important and the unessential things, not allowing the latter to divert the energy that belongs by right to the former; to concentrate all our powers, so far as is possible, on the serious work in hand and to put aside as unworthy of attention nine-tenths of the frivolous and exhausting demands that the world makes on us. When we have found courage to do this, we are a long way on the road to the accomplishment of our chosen task.”<sup>239</sup> Beach’s statements about making progress and about the “accomplishment of chosen tasks” reflect a desire to make a positive contribution to her community and to the world by way of music-making. In this way, I argue that Beach was an advocate for what Arendt calls “political action” and that in publishing her arguments for such “progress” is in itself an example of Beach taking “political action.”

## **2.8 Beach as a Positive Role Model**

Though she did not teach music privately or in a classroom, Beach was seen as a positive role-model for aspiring composers and pianists, especially young girls, and often voiced her thoughts and ideas about music in public settings. Often she shared her belief that music must reflect humanity rather than functioning only as an exercise in technical virtuosity; that music must be substantial and communicate something individual from the composer. These beliefs were frequently voiced during presentations for the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), an organization originally created in 1876 in response to the inadequacy of musical education in the United States.<sup>240</sup> During her presentation in 1931, Beach discussed that unifying

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<sup>239</sup> Beach, “Music After Motherhood,” *Etude* 27, no. 8 (August 1909): 520.

<sup>240</sup> Shelley Cooper and Robert Bayless, “Examining the Music Teachers National Association Papers and Proceedings 1906 to 1930,” *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 29, no. 2 (April 2008): 129.

emotion and intellect was the best solution to composing in the modern era. For her, the tendency in modern music was of a strictly intellectual nature and lost anything that could be connected back to life experience. After offering examples of composers whom she believed to have achieved a great balance between emotion and intellect in their works, Beach stated that “[s]urely we may be allowed to reach out in both directions—the intellectual and the emotional—in our efforts to express what is, after all, the inexpressible.”<sup>241</sup> She made similar comments in a conference that was published in *The Etude* in March 1943. While the presentation for the MTNA was directed at a more general audience of music appreciators, the conference published in *The Etude* was directed at aspiring composers or those interested in how composers create their art. Beach shared anecdotes from her years of learning about composition on her own as well as some pieces of advice. Yet, her main argument throughout, as in the MTNA presentation, was for a composer to embed their personal ideas and expression into their composition. For her, “the composer must have emotional and spiritual feeling to put into [their] work; [they] must achieve a comprehensible translation of [their] feeling through form; and [they] must have at [their] disposal a tremendous background of technical, musical craftsmanship in order to express [their] feelings and [their] thoughts. Thus, the craftsman, vital though it is, serves chiefly as the means toward the end of personal expression.”<sup>242</sup> As a role-model for aspiring composers Beach shared wisdom and knowledge about composition that she had acquired from many years of study, and also from many years of relating to other composers. By sharing her knowledge about composition to other composers she was also expressing her

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<sup>241</sup> Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “Emotion Versus Intellect in Music,” *Studies in Musical Education, History, and Aesthetics: Proceedings of the Music Teachers National Association* 26<sup>th</sup> series, 1931 (Oberlin, Ohio: Music Teachers National Association, 1932), 19.

<sup>242</sup> Beach, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” *Etude* 61, no. 3 (March 1943): 151.

“narratable self”—that is a self that has been developed through meaningful and reciprocal interactions with others—which, to Cavarero and to Arendt, makes a person relatable to another.

The following year, in 1932, another of Beach’s MTNA conferences was published. This time she focused on advocating for the MacDowell Colony, a place of solitude and repose allowing an artist to focus on their craft uninterrupted.<sup>243</sup> In order to fully express what a composer needs to be able to create without abandon, Beach took the time in her presentation to delve deeper into her belief that musical composition be a representation of one’s authentic identity. She explained that “[t]he materials out of which our work is made are our very innermost feelings, the actual nerve force and pulse beats of our bodies, guided by our specially trained minds and the technique acquired through long years of drudgery. Those of you who are composers know the truth of what I am saying. In projecting our very selves on to paper, or canvas, or clay, we literally have to lose our life in order to save it in the shape of any tangible result of our labors.”<sup>244</sup> In other words, Beach believed that a composer of any artform must turn inwards to reflect on themselves and understand *who* they are in order to then represent that identity in their craft for others to experience.<sup>245</sup>

In 1942, Beach published an article in the winter issue of *Keyboard* discussing musical composition and once again, offering advice to aspiring artists. As always, her focus was on personal expression while being aware of how this expression of self would affect others. She recommended not to “create music because someone says you ought to—write because you are impelled to write.” Later, she elaborated that although composition must be a personal endeavour, a realization of some inner expression, it must not be a selfish endeavour. “A

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<sup>243</sup> Beach, “The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of a Vision,” 47.

<sup>244</sup> Beach, “The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of a Vision,” 46.

<sup>245</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

composer who has something to say must say it in a fashion that people will listen to, or [their] works will lie in obscurity on dusty shelves.”<sup>246</sup> Beach was interested in finding ways for music to unite humans. For her, this emphasis on interpersonal connection through music—and example of relationality—meant beginning from a place of self-identification and then understanding how this “self” could relate to others. It is clear that this connection between humans was a priority for her throughout her process of composition and she wanted to share this philosophy with others. It is notable that during any of the opportunities that arose for her to offer advice or to act as an educator, her focus was rarely only on practical skills; rather, it was centered around the development and expression of self and the larger impact that the craft would make in the community.

By extension of Beach’s advocacy for the expression of self within musical composition she advocated for action in the way that Arendt argues. For example, in 1932, Beach published an article in *The Etude* discussing the balance that a musician must seek after she was married and after she had children in order to continue her pursuit of artistic success. To Beach, a woman was first a wife and second a musician, but this did not mean that she ought to abandon her creative ambitions. She firmly acknowledged that “[t]he great experiences of life are important factors in the educational forces which produce a fine musician.”<sup>247</sup> Similarly, in the conference that was published in *The Etude* in 1943 Beach said that she believed “in the power of personal work, individual trial and error, more than in theoretic, abstract studies.”<sup>248</sup> These last two statements show that Beach understood the power of living life fully, and being self-aware; observing how we feel about certain experiences, learning from our mistakes, and continuing to

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<sup>246</sup> Beach, “How Music is Made,” 11.

<sup>247</sup> Beach, “Music after Marriage and Motherhood,” 520.

<sup>248</sup> Beach, “The ‘How’ of Creative Composition,” *Etude* 61, no. 3 (March 1943): 151.

be mindful about our actions. In this way she is an example of someone who lived her life by what Arendt called “political actions.”<sup>249</sup>

In a similar way, Beach acted by advocating for the musical education and professional development of young girls and by acting as a role-model for others who would have inevitably felt isolated and/or discouraged by societal restrictions in the early twentieth century. Her encouragement of aspiring young women and her advocacy of women as professional musicians was pragmatic, however. She wrote candid articles expressing the reality of being a woman in the professional music world, never romanticizing the idea, but being honest about the challenges involved. For example, in an article published in *The Musician* in 1912, Beach genuinely approached the topic of young women aspiring to professional, public careers as performers. She acknowledged that the number of people who have the capacity to invest the work and have an innate affinity towards public performance is slim, but for those young women who did, she offered her most sincere encouragement.<sup>250</sup>

Not only was Beach an advocate for women who aspired to professional careers as musicians, but she voiced the equal capacity for women to be successful in their musical careers and advocated for the promotion of their work for further advancement in the field. For example, in 1898, Beach was asked to write a column in *The Etude* to contribute to the portion of the journal on women in music. Though she refused the offer, the newspaper chose to publish a portion of her response which includes poignant information about the realities of the professional performer’s life. Furthermore, Beach offered her thoughts about

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<sup>249</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.

<sup>250</sup> Beach, “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach: A Conversation on Musical Conditions in America,” *Musician* 17, no. 1, rec. Arthur Wilson (January 1912): 10.

how women composers could succeed just as well as their male counterparts. Her letter reads:

With regard to your request for an article on 'Woman's Work in Music,' as a contribution to that interesting department of your journal, I can only say that, having already refused a number of offers for a similar article from other musical papers, I cannot consistently send one to yours. My time is entirely devoted, of necessity, to the exacting requirements of musical composition, with sufficient piano practice to admit of occasional public appearances. This leaves me with no surplus time in which to do literary work. To prepare such an article as you desire would involve exhaustive research in the work accomplished, in the past and present, by women, and the sifting of a large mass of detailed evidence, before even the first words could be written. Of course, the subject should be treated as thoroughly and accurately as possible, with plenty of the fresh material and the avoidance of repetition of the matter contained in previous articles by women writers. All this I could not do without making too great encroachments upon time already promised for compositions still unfinished.<sup>251</sup>

Though she was not explicitly saying it, her arguments point out how completely committed she was as a serious composer defying the societal mindset that a woman was destined for a domestic lifestyle. In this way Beach was advocating for a woman's place in the professional world, and as such, acting as a positive role-model for other young women aspiring for public careers. As she continued in the letter, she advocated more specifically for the equal comparison of women's work in music to that of men's.

In the best interests of those of my sex who are working in the field of musical composition, I believe that they can be advanced more rapidly and with greater certainty, not through their efforts as *littérateurs*, but by solid practical work that can be printed, played, or sung. In this way a record can be made of composition that should bear the test of measurement by the standards of good musicianship, and of comparison with the productions of any writer. The incontestable facts of its bearing such comparison will supply, in my opinion, the best evidence of the capacity of any composer, male or female, and will doubtless, in time, lead the public to regard writers of music in the same light as astronomers, sculptors, painters, or poets, estimating the actual value of their works without reference to their nativity, their color, or their sex.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Beach, "A Letter from Mrs. Beach," *Etude* 16, no. 4 (April 1898): 100.

<sup>252</sup> "A Letter from Mrs. Beach," 100.

In this second portion of the letter Beach pointed out that women, as composers, were no different than composers who were men, and as such should have been seen as equals. She acknowledged, however that there was a lack of published works by women, and encouraged women to document their creative efforts so that they could be shared publicly. By sharing these thoughts with the *Etude* Beach was also educating whoever her contact was about the unjust view that women were lesser composers than men.

In addition to being a public mentor so to speak, Beach had many close relationships with musicians and artists, who often asked her for advice or guidance in their craft, and sometimes simply for her thoughts on a particular subject. The Mu Phi Sorority, for example, asked her to write something about her “particular part in the music world to-day” to which she obliged, offering three possibilities for modern composers. “It seems to me that we composers of to-day must choose between three paths. First, that of furnishing sadly needed diversion from the severities of life. Second, that of reflecting (perhaps unconsciously) the actual restlessness and chaos. Third—that of appealing to the things of the spirit as they may be illustrated by music. Behind all these must naturally lie a proper technical equipment, also one’s own personal expression of what life means.”<sup>253</sup> As usual, her response leads back to her belief that musical composition must include personal expression highlighting her deep interest in self-development and connection to others, and the desire to share these thoughts with others.

Personal correspondences also demonstrate Beach’s generosity in providing valuable feedback to other composers, such as her close friend Mabel Daniels. In a letter to Daniels dated January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1932, Beach commented on a performance of her friend’s composition,

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<sup>253</sup> Beach, Unpublished letter, folder 6, box 4, Beach Papers. [Beach’s emphasis]

“Deep Forest” gushing about her writing and “skill in delicate orchestration.” As she was a decade older than Daniels and as her younger friends referred to her, Beach signed the letter, “Always your devoted ‘Aunt Amy.’”<sup>254</sup> Both the feedback about Daniels’ composition and the signature are examples of Beach’s warm support of her friend’s artistic work and her acknowledgement of her role as a mentor to younger women composers. In order to understand how deeply Beach was respected as a woman in music one needs to remember that approximately 900 women crowded Copley Hall to welcome the composer back to Boston in 1914 after her time in Europe. An undated published article states that “[w]hen Mrs. Beach entered the hall the entire audience rose and the assembly of women cheered the distinguished composer and pianist for fully five minutes.”<sup>255</sup>

## **2.9 Beach in Relation to Future Generations**

In conclusion, because of Beach’s conscious desire to embed her compositions and her performances with personal expression she left a legacy after her death. In other words, because personal expression was important to her and she believed in composing music from a place deep within herself she left behind many relatable compositions for musicians and audiences alike to explore and experience. Furthermore, Beach’s published and unpublished writings shed much light on her character, her values, her thoughts, and her inspiration as a human and a musician. By documenting her ideas, she left behind a way for future generations to relate to someone of the past and to bring to life her music in their own lifetime, hopefully inspiring future generations of musicians to carry on Beach’s legacy of personal expression and unity amongst humans in a variety of situations. From the last line of her thoughts about the Mu Phi

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<sup>254</sup> Beach to Mabel Daniels, January 6, 1932, folder 1, box 2, Beach Papers.

<sup>255</sup> “Boston Welcomes Mrs. Beach,” box 12 (scrapbook 1835-1956), Beach Papers.



Sorority, it is clear that Beach believed in legacy and in cultivating beauty for future generations. In her words, “[t]he sisterhood is an outstanding example of unified effort to work in harmony, not only by notes but by lives. May it long continue its great influence for good throughout our land!”<sup>256</sup> By this statement, Beach was acknowledging the value in developing meaningful relationships and her hope that such concerted collaborative work as the sorority facilitated would be carried forward into the future.

Shortly after her death in 1944, many newspapers and magazines published articles to honour Mrs. Beach— “one of the outstanding composers of America.”<sup>257</sup> Most recognized her extensive career and included lists of notable compositions, but one in particular observed how deeply Beach had impacted those around her and projected that her works would leave a lasting impression for years to come. The author of *The Musical Leader* wrote that Beach had “a long and beautiful career in which the radiance of her personality and her high spiritual nature, kindness, unselfishness and encouraging sympathy to all who came in touch with her, made her a much-loved person. All those who visited the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, N. H., had occasion to know her and admire her, not only as a musician but as a gracious, lovable woman. Her music is of a type that will live long after her.”<sup>258</sup> The author of this article recognized that Beach’s impact on others was not limited to a close circle of friends and family; rather through her compositions she would reach future musicians and audiences alike. By commenting on Beach’s personal qualities, the author was alluding to the belief that Beach’s compositions would leave a lasting impression because of her highly developed self which was extant in her compositions.

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<sup>256</sup> Beach, Unpublished document, folder 6, box 4, Beach Papers (p. 4 of document).

<sup>257</sup> “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach Dies; Passing of Composer,” *Diapason* no. 3, whole no. 423 (February 1, 1945): 6.

<sup>258</sup> “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach Dies,” *Musical Leader* (January 1945), folder 11, box 4, Walter S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Papers.

Similarly, in 1976, journalist Robert Jones promoted a performance of Beach's piano concerto and pointed out that the reason she was a notable composer was because of *who* she was and because of her influence on American music. His statement reads:

Attention, piano freaks! Snap to it, all you people who keep writing letters about American music! Get out to Hempstead, L.I., next Sunday afternoon. They're going to play Mrs. Beach's piano concerto. And who, I hear you cry, is Mrs. Beach? And why should you care an eighth note whether she wrote a piano concerto or not? And why should you trek out to Long Island to hear it if she did? Because Mrs. H. H. A. Beach—the former Miss Amy Marcy Cheney of New Hampshire—is one of the legendary figures of America's musical past. And if you've never heard of her, then you don't know as much about music as you thought you did.<sup>259</sup>

Jones didn't mention anything about Beach's virtuosity as a pianist or proficiency as a composer, he stated that Beach was a "legendary figure" alluding to her entire being or "self." He could have used a different noun to describe her such as "composer," "pianist," or "musician," but he chose to use the word "figure." This choice of wording acknowledges that what made Beach relevant nearly thirty years after her death was not her skill as a composer, but *who* she was, as Cavarero and Arendt would say, and how that was translated into her creative and artistic work.

As shown in Beach's personal correspondences, published and unpublished writings, and diaries through a lens of relationality it is evident that she was deeply connected to the world and to the universe at large (or as much of it as she had the capacity to reach). She had a love for nature, for personal expression, and for relationships with all sorts of people. Beach lived her life mindfully and with purpose. She contributed to her circle, small and large, and she was an advocate for social and artistic justice. By relating herself to composers and pianists of the past she was both learning from musical masters—what made them great in their time—and communicating to others that she, and women at large, were

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<sup>259</sup> Robert Jones, "The Composer is a Lady," *Sunday News*, March 28, 1976.

also capable of greatness. By developing her “self” and by her willingness to express this “self” to others through personal relationships and through her compositions, Beach left a profound legacy for musicians, artists, and humans in general for generations to come. Her works are relatable because she lived her life as a relatable human, always aware of the impact that she would have on another’s life or experience. Her works are relatable because she believed in relating to others through music as she acknowledged how music influences lives. In living her life with such purpose, and in creating music with such purpose and personal reflection, Beach was living a daily life of what Arendt called “political action,” and I argue that her compositions themselves are its examples.

## **Chapter 3: The Composer's Self: Identity and Agency in Amy Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In her article entitled “A ‘Veritable Autobiography’? Amy Beach’s Piano Concerto in C-sharp Minor, op. 45,” (1994), Adrienne Fried Block quotes Beach’s claim that a musical composition may be a form of autobiography.<sup>260</sup> Beach believed that “some writers have been influenced at once by some tremendous happening in their lives, or in the world around them, and have been able to burst forth with some musical utterance that was directly the result of circumstances. Another composer might remain apparently unaffected by even the most terrific onslaught upon all that was deepest in [their] life, and years afterward give expression in music, perhaps unconsciously, to all that the experience had cost [them].” As a result, Beach claimed that “[i]t may be not only the creation of an art-form, but a veritable autobiography, whether conscious or unconscious.”<sup>261</sup> Accordingly, Block argues that Beach’s piano concerto reflects her struggle to live the domestic life imposed by her mother and her husband and that it suggests her wish to pursue a career as a public performer. Based on the primary sources that I have consulted and on Block’s research and findings, I support Block’s claim that Beach’s piano concerto suggests autobiographical expression. In light of Block’s published research and the fact that Beach began working on the concerto just months after she finished composing the Sonata for Piano and Violin, op. 34 in June 1896, I will offer an interpretation of the sonata in this chapter through a similar lens. While my reading of the sonata does not reflect the struggle

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<sup>260</sup> Block, “A ‘Veritable Autobiography’?,” 395-396.

<sup>261</sup> Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “To the Girl Who Wants to Compose,” *Etude* 35 (1918): 695.

between piano and violin in ways similar to what Block hears between piano and orchestra in the concerto, my study of the sonata suggests that Beach's writing for the piano suggests her desire to be recognized in the public sphere.<sup>262</sup> She might have used the composition as a vehicle to proactively fashion her identity in the way that she wanted to rather than fulfilling others' expectations of her. This distinction is crucial. As Cavarero argues, the many representations and images of women throughout history have created a false understanding of *what* a woman is rather than *who* a woman is— "for the most part a mother or a wife, and, on occasion [...], a combination of the two."<sup>263</sup> In the previous chapter, I contextualized Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin within a framework of her relationships to family, friends, colleagues, composers—both contemporaries and predeceased—, and to members of the public. In this chapter I argue that Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin suggests her strong desire to change the image that had been predetermined for her based on her gender by expressing *who* she was through composition and performance of the piece.

As Cavarero makes clear, just as biography requires the perspective of another, so, too, does autobiography, for the action of doubling oneself accurately represents one's self.<sup>264</sup> In other words, the sharing of a biography is the expression of one's story by a different person who has made observations of the subject before framing these observations as a narrative for others. However, in autobiography the observer is also the subject who would need to consider themselves from the perspective of another person—that is, someone who is *not* them. This doubling, I argue, is crucial to understanding Beach's compositions. In order to accurately narrate her own story through her composition, Beach would need to reflect on herself from the

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<sup>262</sup> Block, "A 'Veritable Autobiography'?", 410-411.

<sup>263</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 50.

<sup>264</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 84.

perspective of another. Since she premiered the work on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1897, and performed it on numerous occasions following the premiere, it is evident that she composed the sonata for herself to play.<sup>265</sup> Furthermore, the copyright date on the manuscript of the score is 1899, which indicates that the music was not available to the public until two years after she premiered the piece.<sup>266</sup> By publishing the score, Beach made it possible for other pianists to perform this work. Thus, other pianists would act as *her* others by sharing her story through musical performance in public. Therefore, the act of composing the sonata and of performing it herself are two versions of her same sharing of herself as if she wrote an autobiography.

Since the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 (1896) was the first multi-movement work that Beach wrote for piano, the magnitude of the piece might reflect her desire for significant self-expression. While Beach did not speak about her desire for self-expression explicitly in extant primary sources, she often discussed the necessity of infusing self-expression into artistic creations and of sharing these personal beliefs in public. See, for example, an undated letter she wrote to pianist, Cécile Chaminade in which she says that “we must repeat, without end, our Credo in front of the entire musical world if necessary.”<sup>267</sup> Similarly, in an article published in 1932, Beach claimed that “[t]he materials out of which our work is made are our very innermost feelings, the actual nerve force and pulse beats of our bodies [...] In projecting our very selves on to paper, or canvas, or clay, we literally have to lose our life in order to save it in the shape of any tangible result of our labors.”<sup>268</sup> Both of Beach’s statements demonstrate a belief in expressing one’s “uniqueness of self” as Cavarero would say.<sup>269</sup> The

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<sup>265</sup> See, for example, “Music: The Kneisel Quartette, Max Heinrich, Sieveking and Symphony Concerts,” *Boston Courier*, January 10, 1897, box 11, Beach Papers (p. 26 of scrapbook).

<sup>266</sup> Mrs. H.H.A. Beach, “Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin, op. 34,” score, 1899, folder 9, box 28, Beach Papers.

<sup>267</sup> “Il nous faut répéter sans cesse notre Credo, en face de tout le monde musical, s’il est nécessaire !” Beach to Cécile Chaminade, undated, folder 4, box 4, Walter S. Jenkins Amy Cheney Beach Papers. [original emphasis]

<sup>268</sup> Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, “Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of a Vision,” 46.

<sup>269</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

scope of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 can, therefore, be interpreted as Beach's effort to "project herself" onto the manuscript of the composition, and by extension into the public concert space as a performer. Additionally, since the *Romance* op. 23 for violin and piano was composed in 1893-94, the *Gaelic* Symphony in E minor op. 32 in 1894-96, and her work on the piano concerto began almost immediately after finishing the sonata in 1896 the timeline of composition of the sonata shows a progression of increasing desire to compose large-scale works for piano. Furthermore, while she did write for solo piano, her first ambitious works include partnership between piano and other instruments. The magnitude and virtuosity of the piano part in the sonata indicate her intent to compose a large-scale solo work such as a concerto or a piano solo. Thus, Beach's choice to compose a concerto immediately afterward suggests her attempt to be ambitious. However, the choice to compose for piano *and* violin raises the question of why she didn't compose a sonata for solo piano. While my study of Beach's primary sources has not led me to any explicit answers to this question, the fact that she composed for another instrument in partnership with the piano demonstrates explicitly what Cavarero might call an interesting "other" to which the piano part can be related. Her preference for musical collaboration with another performer is consistent with her relationships with others in her life. As shown in Chapter Two, her correspondences, published and unpublished writings, and diary entries show a pattern of herself in relation to her colleagues, friends, family, acquaintances, and compositional masters of the past.

Publishing the work for others to learn and perform also shows a willingness to have others tell her story as if they took her sonata as her biography. I argue in this chapter that Beach wove aspects of her identity, and more specifically, her "narratable self"—using Cavarero's formulation into the composition. Specifically, I propose that three musical characteristics in the

composition make her identity narratable: 1) the structure of the music, 2) the relationship between the piano and the violin, and 3) the virtuosity of the piano writing.

### 3.2 Literature Review of Sonata Form

As many scholars such as James Hepokoski, Julian Horton, Janet Schmalfeldt, and Steven Vande Moortele discuss, nineteenth-century *Formenlehre* (theory of forms) is difficult to qualify because unlike classical sonata form, nineteenth-century sonatas often distort normative practices of form.<sup>270</sup> To Hepokoski and Darcy, the term “deformation” addresses the adjustments that composers make to classical form.<sup>271</sup> Not wanting readers to mistakenly interpret the term “deformation” as a negative descriptor of form, Hepokoski and Darcy emphasize that the reason that composers distort classical form is to achieve maximal expressive effect. Furthermore, they state that in “applying such forces and purposeful generic ‘misshapings’ is just what can give a composition personality, memorability, appeal, interest, expressive power.”<sup>272</sup> In other words, the “deformation” of form is what makes a musical work individualized. Schmalfeldt shares Hepokoski and Darcy’s argument that to understand nineteenth-century sonata form inevitably involves acknowledging the cultural norms of form in the eighteenth century. However, to her, “the principal tenet [of early nineteenth-century form] must be the idea of processual approaches

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<sup>270</sup> See, for example, James Hepokoski, “Brahms, Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, op. 68/iv, finale (Adagio; Allegro non troppo, ma con brio),” in *A Sonata Theory Handbook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 234-237; Julian Horton, “First-Theme Syntax in Brahms’s Sonata Forms,” in *Rethinking Brahms*, ed., Nicole Grimes and Reuben Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 195-196; Janet Schmalfeldt, “Introduction: The Idea of Musical Form as Process,” in *In the Process of Becoming: Analytic and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6-21; and Steven Vande Moortele, “Introduction,” in *The Romantic Overture and Musical Form from Rossini to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1-14.

<sup>271</sup> James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, “Appendix 2. Terminology: ‘Rotation’ and ‘Deformation’,” in *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 614-621.

<sup>272</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 617.



to form.”<sup>273</sup> That is to say that for Schmalfeldt the “deformations” described by Hepokoski and Darcy must be understood as part of a musical “process” where one idea “becomes” another rather than conceptualizing a musical idea as “distorting” a common practice of form.<sup>274</sup> By contrast, Horton’s contribution to nineteenth-century *Formenlehre* involves the consideration of a work’s syntax.<sup>275</sup> Whereas Hepokoski, Darcy, and Schmalfeldt view structural “distortions” or the processes of musical ideas “becoming” something different than what would be expected in relation to classical form, Horton argues that the form of nineteenth-century sonatas be understood in relation to the work’s internal form. Like Horton, Vande Moortele disagrees that nineteenth-century *Formenlehre* be considered only in relation to classical form. Rather, Vande Moortele suggests that the form of a “romantic work” be understood both in consideration of the conventions of classical form and in consideration of the continuous contributions to form by subsequent composers of the nineteenth century including a composer’s own works.<sup>276</sup> Though each of the aforementioned scholars understands sonata form in the nineteenth century differently, they each address the importance of considering a composer’s individual contributions to compositional form and the expressive integrity of each work. In order to guide readers through my analysis of Beach’s Sonata for Piano and Violin in A minor, op. 34 I will consider all of the perspectives on sonata form presented by Hepokoski and Darcy, Schmalfeldt, Horton, and Vande Moortele. In particular, I analyse Beach’s sonata in a similar way that Hepokoski and Darcy explain that the distortions to form are viewed as “marks of originality and personal voice.”<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, 15.

<sup>274</sup> Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, 9.

<sup>275</sup> Horton, “First-Theme Syntax in Brahms’s Sonata Forms,” 197.

<sup>276</sup> Vande Moortele, *The Romantic Overture and Musical Form from Rossini to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 11-12.

<sup>277</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 617-618.

### 3.3 Political Action in Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34

#### 3.3.1 Structure of the First Movement of the Sonata Through a Relational Lens

Although Kang provides a detailed analysis of form in the first and fourth movements of Beach's sonata, my analysis of the first movement differs from hers.<sup>278</sup> Additionally, to date, there is no analysis of Beach's sonata that addresses in detail the structure of the third movement, or the contextualization of a fugue within sonata form. The following three chapters, thus, fill these gaps in scholarship. One key difference in my analysis of Beach's first movement, is that I do not analyse the first 32 measures as the primary theme. Rather, I analyse measures 1-32 as an introduction. (See Table 3.3.1.1) It is important to note that Todd also mentions that the first 32 measures are an "opening theme" and that the *Animato* in bar 33 "mark[s] the transition to the second theme."<sup>279</sup> I acknowledge that these first 32 measures are not organized as a "slow introduction" as scholar William Caplin describes, nor are they organized as what he calls a "thematic introduction."<sup>280</sup> Yet, the first 32 measures of the first movement of Beach's sonata do present certain qualities of Caplin's definition of "slow introduction," such as evoking a sense of anticipation created by "instabilities of harmonic progression, [...] and chromaticism," and "clos[ing] with an authentic cadence that elides with the beginning of the exposition."<sup>281</sup> However, the opening to Beach's sonata is obviously not slow. The tempo marking is "*Allegro moderato*" (moderately fast) with a metronome marking of 120 beats per minute (bpm). At the same time, at measure 33, Beach indicates for the tempo to be "*Animato*" (animated) which

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<sup>278</sup> Kang, "Sonata Form in the Romantic American Violin Sonata," 21.

<sup>279</sup> Todd, "Worthy of Serious Attention," 125-126.

<sup>280</sup> William Earl Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 15, 203-208.

<sup>281</sup> Caplin, *Classical Form*, 205.

typically implies a quicker tempo.<sup>282</sup> Additionally, while measure 32 does present the dominant chord (E major in the key of A minor) and the tonic, A minor, arrives on the downbeat of measure 33, the dominant harmony of measure 32 is obscured by the B-flat octave in the bass. (Figure 3.3.1.1) On beat one of measure 32 the octave B (the fifth of the dominant chord) in the bass is tied over the bar so it is not heard directly at the same time as the change of harmony in the right hand. Furthermore, the right hand plays a lowered seventh (D natural) on beat one, so the dominant harmony is not functionally strong until beat three when the D is raised to become D sharp (the leading tone in A minor). At this point, however, the B in the bass has become a B-flat passing chromatically downwards to the A in measure 33. Therefore, while the harmonic progression is V-i in A minor, it is not a strong cadential moment as would be expected from the close of a “slow introduction” as Caplin argues.

Table 3.3.1.1 Form in Beach’s Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I

Exposition (1-116)	Introduction – 16-measure period followed by 16 measures of continuation	mm. 1-32	A minor/C major (i/III) – ends in measure 32 with V harmony in A minor
	Primary Theme – Period (consequent has weak cadence)	mm. 33-40	A minor/C major (i/III)
	Transition	mm. 41-44	A minor/C major (i/III)
	Dominant Lock	mm. 45-56	C major (III)
	Medial Caesura	mm. 56	
	Expanded Caesura Fill – dominant lock in E major	mm. 57-64	E major (V)

<sup>282</sup> *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (2003), s.v. “animando, animandosi, animato.”

	Secondary Theme 1.1 – period	mm. 65-84	E major (V)
	Secondary Theme 1.2	mm. 85-112	Modulatory
	Essential Exposition Closure	mm. 113	E major (V)
	Closing-Theme Zone	mm. 113-116	E major (V)
Development (117-189)	Introductory Theme	mm. 117-157	Modulatory
	Secondary Theme 1.1	mm. 148-163	Modulatory
	Primary Theme/Introductory Theme	mm. 164-179	Modulatory
	Introductory Theme	mm. 180-189	Modulatory
	Introduction	mm. 190-218	Modulatory – authentic cadence in A minor mm. 218-219
Recapitulation (219-302)	Primary Theme	mm. 219-230	A minor (i)
	Transition	mm. 231-234	D major (IV)
	Dominant Lock	mm. 235-242	D major (IV)
	Medial Caesura	mm. 242	
	Expanded Caesura Fill – dominant lock in G flat major	mm. 243-250	G flat major ( <sup>b</sup> VII)
	Secondary Theme 1.1	mm. 251-270	Modulatory
	Secondary Theme 1.2	mm. 271-298	Modulatory
	Essential Structural Closure (ESC)	mm. 299	A major (I)
	Closing-Theme Zone	mm. 299-302	A minor (i)

Coda (303-335)		mm. 303-335	A minor (i)
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Figure 3.3.1.1 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 30-33

Similarly, Beach's opening to the movement does not qualify as a "thematic introduction" because of its length. Caplin defines a thematic introduction as "generally short, two to four measures at most."<sup>283</sup> Furthermore, Caplin argues that a thematic introduction lacks melodic-motivic material and as such anticipates the beginning of the theme.<sup>284</sup> By this definition, the first 32 measures of Beach's first movement cannot possibly be categorized as a thematic introduction because it is not lacking in "melodic-motivic" material. Rather, Beach's opening to the sonata presents important motivic material that is developed throughout the movement. As Schmalfeldt discusses in her analysis of Beethoven's *Tempest* sonata (Sonata in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2), the boundaries between introduction and theme can be difficult to define.<sup>285</sup> As a result, she suggests the expression "introduction becomes main theme" to

<sup>283</sup> Caplin, *Classical Form*, 15.

<sup>284</sup> Caplin, *Classical Form*, 15.

<sup>285</sup> Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, 34-51.

reconcile the role that the first 21 measures of Beethoven's *Tempest* sonata fulfills. While Beethoven's *Tempest* sonata is not organized in the same way that Beach's opening to her sonata is organized, it does raise similar questions of formal analysis pertaining specifically to the role of the first 21 measures within the form of the movement.

Perhaps an even more illuminating example of unclear boundaries between introduction and theme exists in Brahms's Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor, op. 120 (1894) which scholar Walter Frisch examines. While Frisch could not use the same vocabulary as Caplin and scholars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century since his monograph was written before Caplin's book was published, he addresses the challenges of defining the themes and formal structure of Brahms's F Minor sonata. Rather than using terms such as "primary theme" and "secondary theme" as Hepokoski and Darcy suggest, Frisch uses letters to distinguish between themes. Therefore, he uses the letter A to define the thematic material in measures 1-4 of the first movement and the letter B to define the thematic material in measures 5-12.<sup>286</sup> Although he acknowledges the separate roles that A and B play, he states that "these symbols, however, can scarcely convey the fluency with which A and B material are interwoven, nor the considerable formal ambiguities Brahms generates."<sup>287</sup> In other words, to Frisch, in order to understand A and B as purely independent motives does not accurately represent the relationship between the two. Furthermore, he acknowledges the development of both A and B in relation to one another throughout the movement. As Frisch elaborates his analysis of the first movement of Brahms' F Minor sonata, he clarifies that A is, in fact, an introduction to B which is structured as a period.<sup>288</sup> However, he also refers to it as an "introductory theme" highlighting the

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<sup>286</sup> Walter Miller Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 147-151,

<sup>287</sup> Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation*, 147-148.

<sup>288</sup> Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation*, 148.

interconnectedness of A and B.<sup>289</sup> The expression “introductory theme” is appropriately suggestive of the ambiguity of qualifying the first four measures of the movement as an introduction or as a theme in itself.

### **3.3.2 Beach’s “Narratable Self” Expressed in the First Movement of the Sonata**

While the first 32 measures of Beach’s Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor are evidently a much larger structure than what Frisch considers to be an introduction in Brahms’s Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor, the questions he raises concerning the qualification of the first four measures as thematic or introductory are helpful precedents in analysing Beach’s sonata. It is especially interesting to note that Beach heard Brahms’s Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor just two years before she composed her sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor. According to scholar Claude Rostand, the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor op. 120 was composed in the summer of 1894 and published in 1895.<sup>290</sup> Rostand states that clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld met Brahms in Vienna at the end of September 1894 to work on the sonata in preparation for a first private performance shortly thereafter.<sup>291</sup> The public premiere of the work did not occur until January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1895 in Vienna.<sup>292</sup> Astonishingly, Beach attended a performance of the F Minor sonata in Boston in October 1894 and documented her observations following the performance.<sup>293</sup> Unfortunately, she did not document where she heard the performance or who was performing. Relating to the structure of the first movement, Beach wrote, “[t]he 1<sup>st</sup> movement begins with a theme given out by the piano in octaves, similar to the

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<sup>289</sup> Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation*, 148.

<sup>290</sup> Claude Rostand, *Brahms* (Paris: Fayard, 1978), 707.

<sup>291</sup> Rostand, *Brahms*, 709.

<sup>292</sup> Rostand, *Brahms*, 709.

<sup>293</sup> Beach, Music Reviews, Beach Papers (p. 39-42 of document).

1<sup>st</sup> theme of the f minor Quintet [...] The 2<sup>nd</sup> theme is more suave & attractive. I could not catch either.”<sup>294</sup> By Beach’s aural analysis, the first four measures of Brahms’s sonata are a “theme.” However, it was common for Beach to notate musical themes in her diaries if she could remember them. One such example is the first theme of the third movement of Brahms’s F Minor sonata.<sup>295</sup> In the same entry as she documented her observations of Brahms’s first movement, Beach transcribed the first eight measures of the clarinet part in the third movement and a harmonically accurate piano reduction, though the piano’s figuration is not accurate. The only error she made in her transcription of the clarinet’s theme is in measure six and underneath the last three notes of the bar she wrote “uncertain.”<sup>296</sup> The fact that Beach was unable to commit either of the themes in the first movement to aural memory could arguably have been a momentary lapse in focus during the performance. However, it is possible that the interconnectedness of the motivic material presented by the piano in measures 1-4 and the theme presented by the clarinet in measures 5-12 could have obscured Beach’s ability to comprehend the form of Brahms’s first movement of the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor and thus to be able to transcribe the first and second themes.

Regardless of Beach’s capacity to remember Brahms’s themes (or introduction and theme as Frisch argues), there can be no denying that Brahms’s music influenced Beach’s compositional style in the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34. As theorist, teacher, and supporter of Beach’s compositions Percy Goetschius (1853-1943) explained of Beach’s sonata, “she adopts the modes of development peculiar to the classic masters, thus implying that no commonplace models can satisfy her; and her perfect success in handling these strictly logical

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<sup>294</sup> Beach, Music Reviews, folder 1, box 4, Beach Papers (p. 39 of document).

<sup>295</sup> Beach, Music Reviews, (p. 41 of document).

<sup>296</sup> Beach, Music Reviews, (p. 41 of document).



methods proves that they are a part of her own individual thought and conviction, and not merely borrowed means. The themes of the Sonata [for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34] are of that rugged, almost uninviting melodic type frequently encountered in the writings of Brahms.”<sup>297</sup>

Though Goetschius does not elaborate what he meant by “uninviting melodic type” it is clear that he recognized a similarity in melodic writing between Beach and Brahms. Additionally, while Beach did not “catch” the themes of the first movement upon her first hearing of Brahms’s sonata in October 1894, she did remember that the first “theme” was played in octaves in the piano. (Figure 3.3.2.1) Interestingly, Beach began her first movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor with four measures of octaves played by solo piano as well. (Figure 3.3.2.2)

Therefore, in light of Frisch’s arguments that the first four measures of Brahms’s sonata are introductory, and are also interconnected with the theme presented in measures 5-12, and that Beach was influenced by Brahms’s compositional style—perhaps in particular by his opening of the first movement of the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano—I argue that the first 32 measures of Beach’s sonata are an introduction, and that they are also interconnected with the subsequent themes of the first movement. In this way—perhaps a more modern way of analysing this music—one might consider, like Schmalfeldt, that the introduction “becomes” the primary theme.

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<sup>297</sup> Percy Goetschius, *Mrs. H. H. A. Beach: Analytical Sketch* (Boston: Arthur P. Schmidt, 1906), 14.

Figure 3.3.2.1 Brahms Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor, op. 120, I, mm. 1-4



Figure 3.3.2.2 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 1-4



As discussed in Chapter two, Beach related to other composers by studying their scores and their published writings such as treatises, attending performances of works and documenting her observations of the music including transcriptions of themes by ear, and transcribing Bach fugues from memory. Considering that she heard Brahms's Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor less than two years before she began composing her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, the fact that the similarity of their opening four measures and the interconnectedness of their respective introductions/themes, and in light of Goetschius's recognition of the similarity of style between the two composers I argue that the first movement of Beach's sonata is an example of her relating to Brahms. At the same time, as Goetschius noted, through understanding the

music of others, Beach developed her own individual style. In this way, as Cavarero would say Brahms was a “necessary other” to Beach as a composer.<sup>298</sup> While Brahms did not reflect back to Beach *who* she was by using his physical voice, in the process of understanding Brahms’s music, Beach was able to develop her own compositional style. In this way, she was looking at herself from the perspective of an “other” much like Gertrude Stein who wrote her autobiography from the perspective of Alice Toklas.<sup>299</sup> Furthermore, I argue that the form of Beach’s Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor was not only a result of her knowledge of the conventions of sonata form, but was a result of her *relating* to other composers and by extension developing her own style. Though Hepokoski does not discuss compositions in terms of relationality, or expressing a “narratable self” as Cavarero would say, the concept of a musical work reflecting a composer’s own life story is supported in his claim that “pre-sonata material can be read as a ‘representation of the “narrator” ...or the animating force...of the tale told in the sonata.’”<sup>300</sup> Therefore, I analyse not only the introduction to the first movement of the sonata, but Beach’s entire sonata through an autobiographical lens. That is to say that in understanding her life and her relationships to others, I analyse her music as a personal reflection of *who* she was in relation to others.

As a whole, the Sonata for Piano and Violin, op. 34 is characterised by long, substantial structures and phrases that are marked by unstable harmonic progressions. While each movement establishes a home key, Beach rarely remains in one key for more than a few measures, and these measures are often fraught with chromaticism and non-chord tones, which increase tension and obscure any sense of tonal orientation. Addressing the harmonic structure of the sonata through

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<sup>298</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 82.

<sup>299</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 82.

<sup>300</sup> Hepokoski, *A Sonata Theory Handbook*, 243; Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 304.

the lens of Beach's expression of self suggests her struggle between being a composer and being a performer. The long phrases replete with dissonance and chromatic passing only to resolve very briefly reflect unrest, dissatisfaction, and a consistent build-up of tension. They also mirror her persistence and perseverance in the face of personal trials and deep self-reflection to resolve all of the questions and dilemmas in her life. From the very beginning of the sonata, tonal instability sets the stage for thirty minutes of emotional turbulence.

The unstable tonality presents a problem for the first movement from the outset. The first phrase of the piano's introduction in the first movement is tonally ambiguous (Figure 3.3.2.3). While the first notes suggest the key of A minor (notes A to E, or tonic to dominant in A minor, not A minor chord to E minor), and although there are Es again in bars three and four, there is no leading note in A minor (i.e., G-sharp) that strongly establishes A minor. Rather, the cadence of the phrase reinforces the key of C major with a plagal cadence. The F-major and C-major chord forming the IV-I plagal cadence in C major can also be heard as VI to III in A minor, but this progression does not constitute a cadence. Thus, this harmonic progression does not reinforce A minor as the tonic chord, leaving the listener tonally lost. The tonal disorientation is intensified further. The violin's entrance in measure six outlines a C major seventh chord leading the listener to hear C major and to assume that it is the home key. Yet measure nine again reinforces A minor with the notes A to E suggesting a I-V harmonic progression without sounding the leading note of A minor—G-sharp—in the piano part (Figure 3.3.2.4). Consequently, the beginning of the sonata oscillates between A minor and C major without settling on either key.

Figure 3.3.2.3 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm.1-6

Allegro moderato. (♩=120.)

Violine.

Piano.

*pp* *legatissimo* *p*

A minor i (V) (iv) (V) (iv) (V) (VI) VI III

C Major IV I

Figure 3.3.2.4 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 6-9

Allegro moderato. (♩=120.)

Violine.

Piano.

*pp* *legatissimo* *p* *pp*

*p* *tranquilla*

Cmaj7

A minor i V

The second statement of the introductory theme beginning in measure nine is more convincing than the first as the piano's cadence emphasizes A minor with a half cadence in measure 13, although A minor is still not tonicized. However, rather than beginning the next phrase in A minor, —beginning in measure 17—in A minor, measures 17 to 22 are suddenly in C major again (Figure 3.3.2.5). Based on the first two phrases (mm.1-8 and mm.9-15), it is clear that there is a struggle between A minor and C major. Even within phrases that are obviously in one key or the other there is significant uncertainty reflected by non-chord tones, suspensions, and open octaves lacking a third—elements that would stabilize a key as the home key for this movement.

Figure 3.3.2.5 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 1-29

2 Sonate.

Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, Op. 34.

**Allegro moderato.** (♩ = 120)

Violine. 9

Piano. *pp* *legatissimo* *p* *pp*

10 Half cadence

A minor ii<sup>#5</sup> V C Major

20 *cresc.* *cresc.* *mf* *dim.*

Even in passages that are tonally stable, Beach rarely cadences in a strong way to reinforce the tonality. Instead, she often builds up a cadential moment only to abruptly shift tonality. For example, measures 45 to 56 are quite clearly in the key of C major articulated by dominant pedal and  $V^{11}$  harmony that resolves to  $V^7$  both in measures 45 and 55, but never resolves to the tonic—in this case C major—which is the common resolution of an extended dominant chord.<sup>301</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy would call this extended dominant harmony a “dominant lock” before the medial caesura.<sup>302</sup> (Figure 3.3.2.6) By contrast, rather than

<sup>301</sup> Bruce Benward and Marilyn Saker, *Music in Theory and Practice*, eighth ed., vol. 2 (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009), 180.

<sup>302</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 30.

reinforcing the key of C major by resolving  $V^{11}$  in C major in measure 57, Beach suddenly veers towards the key of E major, which is subsequently tonicized by a perfect cadence in measures 64 to 65 (Figure 3.3.2.7). In measure 57, the violin plays B, the root of  $V^7$  in E major. The piano plays the second inversion of the same  $V^7$  chord. What makes the transition away from C major towards E major in measures 55–57 noteworthy is that Beach moves from  $V^7$  of C major directly to  $V^{4/3}$  of E major. In this transition, none of the two keys is tonicized firmly. Both of them are suggested by dominant harmony. Listeners hear a *tendency* to C major, followed by another tendency to E major. However, although E major is remotely related to C major, what makes this transition smooth is that Beach skillfully uses chromatic notes. The F in the piano part in measures 53–56 creates a smooth semitone voice-leading to the F-sharp in measure 57. Likewise, the D in measures 53–56 leads smoothly to D-sharp (i.e., the leading note of E major) in measure 57. Furthermore, in keeping with these two chromatic lines, the violin plays the chromatic line leading A to B through A-sharp in measure 56, although A-sharp appears to serve locally as an inconsequential chromatic passing note in that measure. All in all, these three short chromatic lines—D to D-sharp, F to F-sharp, and A to A-sharp to B—change the tonal direction away from C major towards E major in an exceptionally efficient way. Remarkably, the decrescendo in measure 56 draws attention to this exceptional compositional moment of tonal shift. However, rather than beginning the secondary theme in E major immediately following the medial caesura in measure 56—a practice that Hepokoski and Darcy explain was the most common at the end of the eighteenth century—Beach included eight measures—measures 57 to 64—of expanded caesura-fill.<sup>303</sup> To Hepokoski and Darcy, “[e]xpanded caesura-fill provides an opportunity for careful compositional fashioning, elegant or special effects, wit, or an exquisitely

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<sup>303</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 41.

poised attenuation of previously gained energy combined with a psychological preparation for the [secondary theme]-to-come.”<sup>304</sup> In Beach’s case, the expanded caesura-fill extends the E major dominant harmony to create a second dominant lock before the long-anticipated authentic cadence in measures 64-65. The violin also prepares the perfect cadence by arpeggiating the tonic triad in root position over measures 60-63 (Figure 3.3.2.8). This authentic cadence is the first strong cadential moment of the first movement, but the modulation to E major occurs from the unexpected tonal transition within the medial caesura in measure 56. Nonetheless, the buildup of harmonic tension within the expanded caesura fill in measures 57-64 resolving to the tonic of E major in measure 65 provides brief respite from the instability of A minor and C major harmony from measures 1-56. I argue that the harmonic unrest expressed in the first 64 measures of the movement mirrors Beach’s inner unrest and the composition is, thus, a way for the composer to express her “narratable self” and by extension to take “political action” as Arendt would say.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 41.

<sup>305</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 34; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.



Figure 3.3.2.6 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 42-62

42

47

55

C Major

V11 V7

V ped.

pp

legato

molto espressivo e poco

Figure 3.3.2.7 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 55-69

Figure 3.3.2.7 shows the musical score for measures 55-69 of the Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 55-62) is in E Major, with a yellow box highlighting measures 55-62. The second system (measures 63-69) is in B major, with a yellow box highlighting measures 63-69. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp*, *legato*, *dolce cantabile*, and *rall.* The key signature changes from one sharp (F#) to two sharps (F# and C#).

Figure 3.3.2.8 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 55-69

Figure 3.3.2.8 shows the musical score for measures 55-69 of the Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 55-62) is in E Major, with a yellow box highlighting measures 55-62. The second system (measures 63-69) is in B major, with a yellow box highlighting measures 63-69. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp*, *legato*, *dolce cantabile*, and *rall.* The key signature changes from one sharp (F#) to two sharps (F# and C#).

By contrast to the tonal instability within both the introductory theme and the primary theme, the secondary theme ( $S^{1.1}$ ) in measures 65-72 is more clearly defined in the key of E major. (Figure 3.3.2.9) However, the second statement of the theme in measures 73-80 (Figure

3.3.2.10)—shared between the piano and the violin—is modulatory and tonicizes F major in measures 77-80. Nonetheless, an authentic cadence in measures 84-85 confirms the key of E major (Figure 3.3.2.11). When the secondary theme is repeated ( $S^{1.2}$ ) in measures 85-92 Beach uses the same harmony as the first statement of  $S^{1.1}$ , but varies the melody by accelerating the melodic rhythm (melody played in eighth notes rather than quarter notes) and adding passing tones in between the notes that belong to the original melody. (Figure 3.3.2.12) With so many passing tones and suspensions  $S^{1.2}$  expresses a more agitated iteration of the secondary theme even though Beach writes “*poco più tranquillo e ben espressivo*” (a little bit calmer and expressive). Additionally, while there is another authentic cadence that confirms the key of E major in measures 92-93, there are so many suspensions and passing tones that it is not a strong cadential moment. Furthermore, immediately following this cadence Beach proceeds to a modulatory closing-theme zone in measures 113-116. Therefore, throughout the exposition of the first movement and despite the well-defined structures of the introduction, primary theme, and secondary theme (i.e., themes organized as periods), Beach consistently employs chromaticism, passing harmony, and suspended harmony to prolong tonal instability and harmonic unrest.

Figure 3.3.2.9 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 63-76

63 *rall.* *dolce cantabile*

*pp* *poco rall.* *dolce*

E major I *Red.* \* *Red.* *vii°7/V* \* *Red.* *vii°7* \* *simile* *V7* *vi*

70 *cresc.* *marcato* *cresc.*

V7/V V7 I

Figure 3.3.2.10 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 32, I, mm. 70-83

70 *cresc.* *marcato* *cresc.*

E major I *bI* *vii°7/F*

4

77 *pp* *dolciss.* *sempre con pedale* *dim. e rall.*

F major *V<sup>6</sup>* *4* *5* *3* *V<sup>6</sup>* *4* *5* *3*

Figure 3.3.2.11 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 84-85

C

poco più tr

app. rall.

E major  $V \begin{smallmatrix} 9-8 \\ 7 \\ 4-3 \end{smallmatrix} I$

Figure 3.3.2.12 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 84-95

C

poco più tranquillo e ben espressivo

rall.

E major

vii°7/V

vii°7

V7

vi

V7/V

V

a tempo

p

cresc.

f

stringendo

As Hepokoski and Darcy emphasize, developments within sonata form are individual and should thus be analyzed according to their own structure.<sup>306</sup> That is to say that the diversity of developments makes analysis challenging to categorize in any one way or pertaining to any set of typical rules. However, Hepokoski and Darcy suggest that many developments tend to revisit

<sup>306</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 228.

material presented in the exposition though not necessarily in the same order and do not necessarily develop all thematic or transitional materials. The development of Beach's first movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A minor, op. 34 does revisit material from the exposition and does continue to develop all thematic materials. Like Brahms, Beach overlaps the material from her introduction with the primary and secondary themes in the development demonstrating the interconnectedness of the introduction with other thematic materials. For example, in measures 160-163 the piano plays fragments of S<sup>1.1</sup> while the violin plays a variation of the introductory material. (Figure 3.3.2.13) Then, in measures 164-172 both the piano and the violin play fragments of the introductory theme and of the primary theme. Additionally, the themes overlap in a similar way that Brahms continues to develop the introductory theme in the development of his Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F minor overlapping a different theme with that which the other instrument is playing. (Figure 3.3.2.14) However, whereas Brahms does not revisit the primary theme, or "B" as Frisch calls it, Beach continues to develop all thematic materials in her development of the first movement. Therefore, Beach manages to create structural cohesion or stability despite the tonal unrest that continues to pervade the movement. However, because the thematic materials introduced in the exposition were either tonally unstable (introduction) or fraught with chromaticism (primary and secondary themes), the development magnifies the tonal unrest.



Figure 3.3.2.13 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A minor, op. 34, I, mm. 158-163

158

introduitory

S1.1

*mf*

*cresc.*

*pianissimo*

*Red.* \* *Red.* \* *simile*

Figure 3.3.2.14 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A minor, op. 34, I, mm. 164-172

164

introduitory

*f*

*con fuoco*

*P*

*f*

*Red.* \* *Red.* \* *Red.* \* *Red.* \* *Red.* \* *Red.*

*agitato* *cresc.*

*agitato* *cresc.*

While Beach does end up in the tonic—A minor—in the recapitulation, the trajectory to getting there is through a modulatory restatement of the introduction in measures 190-218. (Figure 3.3.2.15) As Frisch discusses, the end of Brahms’s development of the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F minor op. 120 reiterates the “A” theme, or the introduction, though it is played in F sharp minor rather than in the original key of F minor. (Figure 3.3.2.16) To Frisch, this restatement is the culmination or the climax of the development rather than the beginning of the recapitulation, “but because of its past history, it may also be expected to assume an

introductory role.”<sup>307</sup> In Beach’s sonata the restatement of the introduction functions much in the same way as the restatement of the introduction in Brahms’s sonata where its transitions links the development to the recapitulation by chromatic modulation. That is to say that for Brahms, the harmonic transition is from F sharp minor to F minor—just a half step down—whereas for Beach, since her introduction is significantly longer than Brahms’s introduction the harmonic transition is not so clear or so simple. Beach uses pedal points in the bass to highlight a semblance of a tonality in addition to passing chromatically from one harmony to the next. In measures 190-194 and in 211-218 Beach writes an E pedal in the bass which points to A minor since E is the dominant of A. By contrast, in measures 203-206 she writes a C pedal relating back to the duality between A minor and C major in the exposition. From measures 215-219 Beach transitions from C major harmony to A minor harmony by transitioning chromatically through an augmented C chord in measure 217 (G becoming G sharp), then the C stepping down to B to become the dominant of A minor and the E descending to D to create the seventh of the chord. (Figure 3.3.2.15) Both Brahms and Beach return to their respective tonic keys upon the restatement of their primary theme after the restatement of their modulatory introductions.

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<sup>307</sup> Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation*, 149.



Figure 3.3.2.15 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 189-222

189 *mf* *p* *espress.*

A minor? *rit.* \* *rit.* \* *Vii<sup>7</sup>/C* *V* *(P)V* *Vii<sup>7</sup>/C* *i* *V7/Bb*

*V ped.* |

197 *pp* *pp* *atempo* *rit.* *dolce*

*C ped.* | *FM* *B<sup>b</sup>M7* *Vii<sup>7</sup>/F* *FM* *Dm*

207 *cresc.* *f* *mf* *cresc.*

*Am* *Vii<sup>7</sup>/C* *FM* *Vii<sup>7</sup>/C* *Am* *(P)* *Dm* *CM*

217 *poco rall.* *animato* *p* *cresc.*

*A minor* *C#5* *V7*

Figure 3.3.2.16 Brahms Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F minor, op. 120, I, mm. 129-137



When the first movement comes to a close, Beach is very clear that the key is A minor and the 33-measure coda—mm. 303-335—is a long awaited resolution to the tonal unrest throughout the movement. From measures 303 to the end (Figure 3.3.2.17), the harmonic progression is punctuated by a tonic prolonged by predominant and dominant harmony embellished by an unraveling of the melodic material that had been so intricately woven throughout the movement. However, although the A pedal in measures 303-305 suggests the tonic, Beach does not confirm this with an authentic cadence. In fact, there is never an authentic cadence confirming the tonality of A minor. Rather, through tonic prolongation of predominant and dominant harmony Beach eventually ends on the tonic after predominant harmony only—VI to i (F major to A minor). Therefore, throughout the entire movement, there are few moments of tonal rest or security. The opening of the movement is tonally ambiguous because of the fluctuation between A minor and C major and the end of the movement closes without strong confirmation of the tonality by way of an authentic cadence. Though, structurally, the movement

is clear, the constant chromatic modulations and lack of strong confirmations of tonality evoke a consistent sense of unrest. I argue that this harmonic unrest mirrors Beach's personal unrest relating to her professional engagements and the desire to be seen and heard for *who* she was—an ambitious composer and pianist who related deeply to others. Furthermore, the structural similarities between the Brahms sonata in F minor, op. 120 and Beach's sonata op. 34 point to Beach's personal study of Brahms's music. By extension, I argue that these compositional similarities are an example of Beach relating to Brahms as a compositional master.

Figure 3.3.2.17 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 303-335

303 *p* *sempre dim.*

A minor VI (ii<sup>#4</sup>) i (ii<sup>#2</sup>) i V<sub>3</sub>/V i

309 *con nullo espressione*

V<sub>3</sub>/V ii<sup>#3</sup> i<sup>#4</sup> V7 chr. passing

315 *pp* *dolce*

IV + i IV + i i i

324 *pp* *espr.* *rall.* *rall.* *senza per'ale*

(iv) i VI i i VI i

### 3.3.3 Expression of a “Narratable Self” Within the Structure of Movements II and III

Just as the structure of the first movement reflects Beach’s personal unrest, the three subsequent movements strongly suggest the composer’s desire for self-expression, and they convey her “narratable self.” The perpetual excitement of the scherzo leaves both players and listeners breathless suggesting Beach’s youthful energy and her desire to be an ambitious performing pianist. By contrast to the A minor tonality of the first movement, the brightness of G major in the scherzo indicates inspiration, enthusiasm, and gusto consistent with Beach’s expression of self in her published and unpublished writings. As discussed in Chapter Two, Beach believed that musical composition was a vehicle for self-expression as she stated in an unpublished and undated article at the request of the Mu Phi Sisters: “I believe that music must be a form of our personality, expressing itself in musical terms. In other words, we must feel something if we are to make other people feel it.”<sup>308</sup> Beach’s reflection demonstrates her value of personal development and the projection of a “narratable self” within a musical composition. While the composer does not use the term “narratable self,” as Cavarero explains, in order to express oneself, first one must develop *who* they are in relation to others.<sup>309</sup> Beach’s statement establishes that she believed in the expression of self in music specifically with the goal of creating a relatable experience for audiences. In her scherzo, the consistent sixteenth notes and the articulations in both the violin and the piano parts express a liveliness and playfulness not expressed in the first movement. I argue that this musical vitality reflects Beach’s enthusiasm and dedication to her craft despite the challenges of being a married woman so young in life and not being allowed to pursue a professional career as a pianist. In a published article in 1909, Beach advocated for learning

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<sup>308</sup> Beach, unpublished document, folder 6, box 4, Beach Papers (p. 2-3 of document).

<sup>309</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 34.

early in life to distinguish between the important and the unessential things, not allowing the latter to divert the energy that belongs by right to the former; to concentrate all our powers, so far as is possible, on the serious work in hand and to put aside as unworthy of attention nine-tenths of the frivolous and exhausting demands that the world makes on us. When we have found courage to do this, we are a long way on the road to the accomplishment of our chosen task.<sup>310</sup>

Her statement, reflected by her scherzo, expresses her focus and commitment to pursuing the work in her life that was meaningful to her regardless of any obstacles that she faced in her musical career as a woman at the end of the nineteenth century.

By contrast to the outward expression of self within the scherzo, Beach's trio reflects the composer's introspection. Although the trio is in the key of G minor, and although each motif descends chromatically, the trio does not evoke the unrest presented in the first movement. The pedal G sustained over 31 measures creates strong stability of tonality despite the chromatic passing harmony. (See Figure 3.3.3.1) This sustained pitch creates a sonic and tonal foundation on which the rest of the musical material can be presented providing tonal stability even amongst the highly chromatic passing harmony. Additionally, the *legatissimo* markings indicate that the players should aim for highly coordinated collaboration. When the violin takes over the melodic material in measure 93 Beach indicates for all of the notes to be played "*sempre sul G*"—on the G string—which creates a darker, warmer sound. Violinist and scholar David Milsom explains that "G-string writing [implicitly] invites not only more obvious/wider/slower vibrato than at higher pitches, but also a more regular use of it, tying in with the inherent mood-context of rendering such a passage on the most darkly resonant of the violin's strings."<sup>311</sup> More specifically, composer Samuel Adler states that "the G string is the thickest and most sonorous of

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<sup>310</sup> Beach, "Music after Marriage and Motherhood," 520.

<sup>311</sup> David Milsom, *Romantic Violin Performing Practices: A Handbook* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2020), 265.

the four violin strings. As the player moves into the higher positions on it, the sound becomes very intense because the vibrating portion of the string is constantly being shortened.”<sup>312</sup> Both scholars highlight the resonant colour quality of the G string and the subsequent effect that would be created by playing a passage on the singular string. Furthermore, in addition to Beach’s request that the violinist plays on the darkest quality string from measures 93-103, she asks both players to play “*molto tranquillo*”—very quietly—creating a veiled, ethereal quality. The overall effect of the trio is one of introspection which mirrors Beach’s advocacy for solitude and self-reflection. In an Arendtian sense, Beach’s trio expresses the composer’s thoughtfulness and relation to herself. This trio is, thus, an example of Arendt’s antidote to the self and world-alienation of the modern world: “think[ing] what we are doing.”<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Samuel Adler, *The Study of Orchestration*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016), 60.

<sup>313</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 5.



Figure 3.3.3.1 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, II, mm. 69-104

69 *Più lento. (♩ = 96.)*  
*f i ped.*  
*p legatissimo*  
*Red. \* Red. \**

76 *C a tempo*  
*rit. pp cresc.*  
*rit. p pressivo cresc.*

83 *mf dim. p*

90 *D sempre sul G*  
*pp molto tranquillo molto tranquillo*  
*legatissimo poco cresc. dim.*  
*pp*

98 *i ped. Pedale sostenuto*  
*dim. pp*  
*sul D.*

By contrast to the effervescence of the second movement, Beach's third movement carries the listener and the players into intimate expressions of longing, desire, and sorrow as demonstrated by the technique of developing variation throughout the ternary form. Unlike the clearly defined ternary form of the second movement—Scherzo-Trio-Scherzo—the form of the third movement is challenging to qualify. Whereas the first movement of Brahms's Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in F Minor, op. 120 is a helpful guide in understanding the form of Beach's first movement, the second movement of Brahms's Sonata for Violin and Piano in G Major, op. 78 provides similar formal material to Beach's third movement. As Frisch argues, Brahms's op. 78 "assume[s] the thematic or *motivic* legacy: its harmonic language is not especially remarkable, but the purely horizontal dimension unfolds with a sophistication and flexibility that Brahms himself was never to surpass."<sup>314</sup> In other words, Brahms had reached the height of his ability to employ the technique of developing variation in the op. 78 sonatas. As an autodidact, Beach learned composition by studying the works of other skilled composers and transcribing their works from memory. While there is no documentation of Beach transcribing the second movement of Brahms's G Major, op. 78, as other scholars such as Goetschius and Todd, and music critics such as Werfenthin have pointed out, Beach's sonata demonstrates a similar compositional style to that of Brahms. Her third movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 demonstrates clear application of developing-variation technique in a similar way that Brahms exploited the "purely horizontal dimension" of his thematic material. However, while it is evident that Beach exploits a singular theme throughout her third movement, the form of the movement as a whole is challenging to define. As a result, Brahms's second movement of the G Major sonata provides a useful model of formal analysis.

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<sup>314</sup> Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation*, 120. [original emphasis]



Scholar Joel Lester provides a detailed analysis of Brahms's second movement of the G Major sonata and points out, in a similar way to Frisch, that the composer's developing-variation technique "foster[s] the ever-present sense of continuously evolving music—music that over and over again muses on what has just been heard."<sup>315</sup> However, despite the "continuously evolving music," Lester argues that there are clearly defined boundaries to the overall form of the movement. Even still, he offers two possibilities of conceptualizing the movement's form as shown in Table 3.3.3.1. Beach's third movement does not return to material from 'B' and, therefore, the form is more obviously in a large ternary form. Yet, the boundary between the end of 'A' and the coda remains questionable. The only authentic cadence in the tonic key in the entire movement occurs between measures 72-73 which is in the middle 'b' from the large 'A' section. (For the form of 'A' see Tables 3.3.3.4 and 3.3.3.5). It is important to note that this cadence actually confirms the tonic major rather than the tonic minor. This cadence causes ambiguity of structure because, as Caplin explains, a coda's primary function "is to express the temporal quality of 'after-the-end.'"<sup>316</sup> He states that the function of the recapitulation is to structurally close a movement, and therefore, a coda is an addition of musical material after a recapitulation. Beach's choice to cadence in measures 72-73, thus, seems to appear in the middle of a statement of melodic-motivic material rather than at the end of the recapitulation. However, Caplin also explains that a coda generally "tends to remain in the home key, although various tonal regions may be briefly explored."<sup>317</sup> In light of this understanding of a coda's tonal function, I contend that Beach's coda begins in measure 73 because of the authentic cadence confirming the key of E Major. While she does explore other tonal regions over measures 76-84,

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<sup>315</sup> Joel Lester, "The Middle Movements," in *Brahms's Violin Sonatas: Style, Structure, Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 178.

<sup>316</sup> Caplin, *Classical Form*, 179.

<sup>317</sup> Caplin, *Classical Form*, 179-181.

she affirms the key of E Major in the last four measures, and therefore the announcement of the key in measure 73 confirms the boundary between the recapitulation and the coda despite the overlap of melodic-motivic material. (See Table 3.3.3.2) Similarly, the boundary between ‘A’ and ‘B’ is ambiguous because Beach does not cadence at the end of ‘A’, and she does not indicate a new tempo as Brahms does in his sonata. However, Beach does indicate for the piano part to be played “*molto tranquillo e legato*” —very tranquil/calm and smoothly—which is an expressive change within the structure of the movement. Furthermore, in measure 26 the violin introduces new melodic-motivic material. The formal structure of this third movement is further blurred because the continuously evolving melodic-motivic material rarely cadences. In fact, Beach does not even finish the movement with an authentic cadence. Instead, she oscillates chromatically between the tonic major—E major—and the half diminished seventh of E ending with three measures of E major harmony in the piano and a high E in the violin. (See Figure 3.3.3.2)

Table 3.3.3.1 Brahms, Violin Sonata in G, second movement, two possible formal outlines<sup>318</sup>

Section	Measures	Tempo	Measures	Section
A	1-24=24	Adagio	1-24=24	A
B	25-67=43	più andante	25-67=43	B
A’	68-91=24	Adagio come prima	68-91=24	A’
Coda	92-122=31	(same)	92-110=19	B’
		(same)	111-122=12	Coda

<sup>318</sup> Lester, “The Middle Movements,” 195.

Table 3.3.3.2 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, Formal Outline

A	1-24=24	Largo con dolore
B	25-52=28	(same) - poco a poco più animato - più cresc. e agitato - accel. - appassionato
A'	53-72=20	Tempo I
Coda	73-89=17	(same)

Figure 3.3.3.2 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, mm. 85-89

The figure displays a musical score for the third movement of the Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, specifically measures 85 through 89. The score is written for piano and violin. The piano part is in the lower staves, and the violin part is in the upper staves. The tempo and mood markings include 'ben tranquillo' and 'rall.' (rallentando). The piano part starts with a 'ppp' (pianissimo) marking. The violin part has a 'morendo' (dying away) marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are also some handwritten annotations in blue ink, including 'xii#5' and 'xii#6'.

Lester's formal analysis of Brahms's 'A' section is also helpful in determining the structure of Beach's 'A' section. As shown in Table 3.3.3.3, Lester analyses 'A' as a ternary form as well. By comparison, Beach's 'A' is loosely in ternary form, though it could also be understood as a binary form since the material from 'a' returns in the piano while the violin continues to develop the material presented in 'b'—mm. 17-20. (See Tables 3.3.3.4 and 3.3.3.5) Additionally, whereas Brahms introduces 'b' in the violin immediately after the piano's first

statement of ‘a’, Beach states the ‘a’ material twice in the opening—once by the piano and once by the violin—before introducing ‘b’. Furthermore, while the ‘a’, ‘b’, and ‘a’ sections are not of equal length in Brahms’s sonata, they are of similar length. By contrast, Beach’s ‘a’ section is an even eight measures whereas the ‘b’ section is twice as short at only four measures. Moreover, when adding the second statement of ‘a’ by comparison to the statement of ‘b’ the difference is significant because ‘a’ is heard over 16 measures by comparison to the four of ‘b’. Though, when ‘b’ is conceived as a full eight measures with ‘a’ heard as a complement to ‘b’ the total length of ‘b’ becomes eight measures just like ‘a’. It is now clear that Beach’s use of developing-variation in the third movement of her sonata causes what scholar Yoel Greenberg would call a “fuzziness of form.”<sup>319</sup>

Table 3.3.3.3 Brahms, Violin Sonata in G, Second Movement, the Opening *Adagio* (mm. 1-24)<sup>320</sup>

Sections	Measures	Keys	Comments
a	1-9=9	I (Eb) → V	<u>Piano solo.</u> A phrase modulating to and cadencing in the dominant.
b	10-17=8	<sup>on</sup> V	<u>Violin enters and leads.</u> Texture begins in the middle of m. 9. A four-mm. sentence (mm. 10-13) beginning and ending <sup>on</sup> V, then a more continuous four-mm. phrase also ending <sup>on</sup> V.
a'	18-24=7	I	<u>The a phrase recomposed,</u> ending on I. Violin leads. Harmonies are less hesitant. Delayed bass in final cadence segues into the <i>più andante</i> .

<sup>319</sup> Yoel Greenberg, “The Fuzziness of Form,” in *How Sonata Forms: A Bottom-Up Approach to Musical Form* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 12-26.

<sup>320</sup> Lester, “The Middle Movements,” 185.

Table 3.3.3.4 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, the Opening *Largo con dolore*, mm. 1-24: First Possibility

Sections	Measures	Keys	Comments
a	1-8=8	i (Em) → VI	<u>Piano solo.</u> An eight-measure hybrid theme (antecedent + continuation) in E Minor with continuation in C Major. Neither the antecedent nor the continuation cadences.
a'	9-16=8	i (Em) → modulatory	<u>Violin enters with restatement of a.</u> Mm. 9-10 measures are the exact same melody as mm. 1-2 then the subsequent 6 measures develop the basic idea presented in <b>a</b> in both the piano and the violin parts.
b	17-20=4	modulatory	<u>Violin introduces new melodic material.</u> Piano plays a duet with the violin in measures 17-18 then fulfills a supporting harmonic function. Cadence in B Major mm. 20-21.
a" + b'	21-24=4	V (Em) → modulatory	<u>The a and b material superimposed.</u> Both piano and violin are equal partners in motivic development. V7/V in mm. 24 transitions chromatically to the G Major harmony in mm. 25.

Table 3.3.3.5 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, the Opening *Largo con dolore*, mm. 1-24: Second Possibility

Sections	Measures	Keys	Comments
a	1-8=8	i (Em) → VI	<u>Piano solo.</u> An eight-measure hybrid theme (antecedent + continuation) in E Minor with continuation in C Major. Neither the antecedent nor the continuation cadences.
a'	9-16=8	i (Em) → modulatory	<u>Violin enters with restatement of a.</u> Mm. 9-10 measures are the exact same melody as mm. 1-2 then the subsequent 6 measures develop the basic idea presented in <b>a</b> in both the piano and the violin parts.

b	17-24=8	modulatory	<u>Violin introduces new melodic material.</u> Piano plays a duet with the violin in measures 17-18 then fulfills a supporting harmonic function. Cadence in B Major mm. 20-21. From mm. 21-24 the piano plays a return of material from ‘a’ while the violin continues to develop the material from ‘b’. Both piano and violin are equal partners in motivic development. V7/V in mm. 24 transitions chromatically to the G Major harmony in mm. 25.
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In addition to the “fuzziness” of the movement’s form as a whole, Beach’s frequent use of chromaticism within phrases, lack of cadential closure to large sections, and delayed harmonic resolutions cause a persistent sense of tonal restlessness. This restlessness also evokes Beach’s tempo marking “*Largo con dolore*”—slow and broad with pain or suffering. For example, in the piano’s opening statement of ‘a’, the melody begins with the leap of an octave—a richly expressive interval—followed by a descending major second and then a descending minor third which resolves by ascending minor second (Figure 3.3.3.3). Even though the harmony of the first half of measure one supports the tonic—E Minor—the very first chord that is heard does not include the root of the chord—E—resulting in the aural recognition of the tonic retrospectively. When the basic idea presented in measures one and two concludes, it ends with dominant harmony that is delayed until the last eighth note of the beat. The contrasting idea begins on the following eighth note in the right hand of the piano, so the dominant harmony is only heard for one third of a beat. As a result, the listener barely has time to comprehend the arrival on the dominant. (See Figure 3.3.3.4). Both the melodic contour and the prolonged dissonance within the basic idea evoke deep sorrow.

Figure.3.3.3 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, mm. 1-2



Figure 3.3.3.4 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, mm. 1-4

When the violin enters in measure 9 it imitates the piano's opening melody from measures one and two, but the piano's harmony is different than in the beginning and rich with instability in an unpredictable progression (Figure 3.3.3.5). Where the anticipated harmony upon the violin's entrance is the tonic, Beach uses an augmented mediant chord instead where the D sharp serves as an appoggiatura to be resolved to the tonic, E. However, by not resolving this D sharp Beach increases the feeling of unrest. Additionally, the piano's rhythmic values quicken propelling each new dissonant chord forward to another unsettling harmony. Each of the violin's phrases also express a desire to be resolved only to continue in a new direction. When, finally, at measure 21 (Figure 3.3.3.6) there is a perfect cadence in the key of B major and the violin's

melody settles momentarily, the piano takes over its opening melody pushing the emotional content forward without rest.

Figure 3.3.3.5 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, mm. 9-11

Figure 3.3.3.5 shows measures 9-11 of the Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III. The piano part features a treble and bass clef, with a red 'app. #3' marking and a 'pp' dynamic. The violin part has a single clef and a 'cresc.' marking. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is annotated with 'E minor' and 'III+' in blue text.

Figure 3.3.3.6 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, mm. 19-23

Figure 3.3.3.6 shows measures 19-23 of the Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III. The piano part features a treble and bass clef, with a 'piu dim.' marking and a 'dim.' marking. The violin part has a single clef and a 'dim.' marking. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is annotated with 'B Major' and 'V7' in blue text.

Even though Beach writes in moments that suggest calmness the rhythm and the harmony are always actively upsetting the feeling of tranquillity. Each phrase is filled with non-chord tones, suspensions, and syncopations. By measure thirty-one the piano is playing repeated chords on offbeats while both instruments increase in tempo. The off beats are constantly pushing the

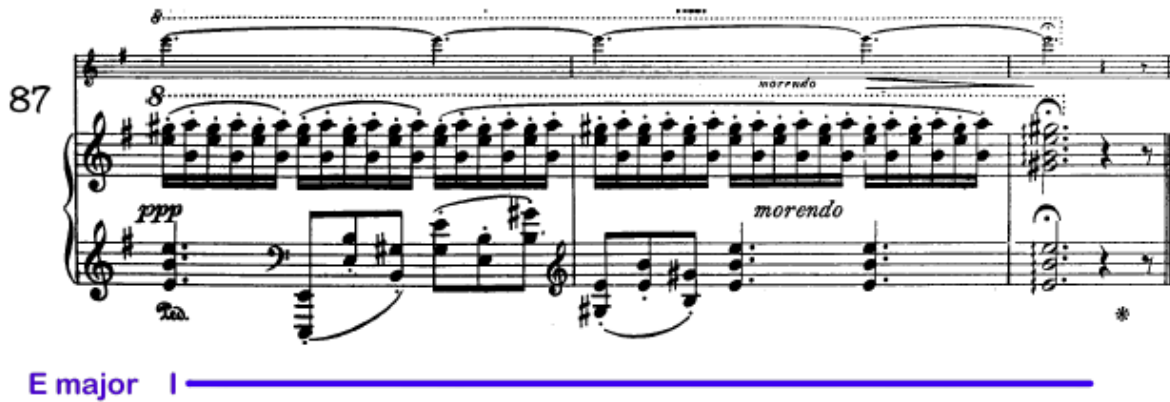


melody forward and building in agitation culminating in a loud pianistic outburst of diminished and half diminished harmony (C<sup>x</sup> diminished, and C<sup>#</sup> half diminished) in measures 44 and 45 while the violin plays the melody with all of its force (Figure 3.3.3.7). The tremendous buildup of dissonant harmony, increase in the violin's register, accelerated rhythmic values in the piano part, the overall acceleration, and the augmentation of volume contribute to an enormous climax that inevitably needs to be resolved. While the tempo returns to the original largo at the return of 'A' the harmonic restlessness never fully resolves until measure 87 (Figure 3.3.3.8) when Beach writes a tonic chord in root position which lasts a full three measures including the fermata over the final iteration of the chord. Finally, there is resolve. Beach writes a quarter rest and an eighth rest of silence following the decay of the last chord allowing the listener to aurally process the final resolution even beyond the resonance of the tonic chord.

Figure 3.3.3.7 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, mm. 43-46

The image displays a musical score for measures 43-46 of Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III. The score is written for piano and violin. The piano part features dense, dissonant chords, while the violin part plays a melodic line. A blue box highlights measures 43-44, and a red box highlights measures 45-46. The piano part is marked 'ff appassionato' and the violin part is marked 'contutta forza'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 3.3.3.8 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, mm. 87-89



Block points out that the third movement of Beach's piano concerto "is the darkness before dawn" for it, too, is a deep lament.<sup>321</sup> Furthermore, in light of Block's informed argument that the piano concerto embodies the composer's conflicting feelings about her role as a woman in society—the expectations to live a domestic life rather than to be a public performer—and Beach's many public statements about her musical compositions as her personal expression, as detailed in Chapter Two, I contend that the third movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin is an expression of her deep grieving of the life she dreamed of having as a performer and the longing to still achieve the aspiration of a public career. The long phrases without cadences, suspended dissonances, frequent phrase endings by descent and the incredible climactic build-up suggest Beach's pent-up energy and frustration at being held back from her dreams. Although the sonata does not have any words attached to it—it does not have lyrics like a song, and Beach did not include any poetry or other extra-musical material with the score—the music in itself can be listened to as one might listen to a personal story. Cavarero points out that women throughout history have had an aptitude for the particular which is what makes them such great storytellers,

<sup>321</sup> Block, "A 'Veritable Autobiography'?", 408.

and that within their stories lies “existence, relation and attention.”<sup>322</sup> In other words, in existing in relation to others an individual can develop a “narratable self”—an identity that can be reflected back to an individual by another. As such, a person’s story is developed.<sup>323</sup> Considering Cavarero’s argument and considering that Beach believed that music could be autobiographical, I propose that the sonata’s third movement is a deeply personal story of Beach’s conflicted existence in the world at that time and of her relation to those who held her back from pursuing a career as a concert pianist, such as her mother and her husband. Yet, the end of the third movement resolves tension leading the listener to experience through her music that all feelings of resentment and frustration have dissipated.

On its own, the end of the third movement can be understood as the narrator’s acceptance of the present circumstances, but when considering the fourth movement that follows the third, the end of the third seems more like an acceptance of the struggle to come or the calm before the storm, so to speak. The violin’s last four notes introduce a motif that becomes central to the organization of the fourth movement (Figure 3.3.3.9) which suggests Beach’s perseverance in her quest to pursue her dreams as a pianist. In other words, had she ended the sonata with the third movement or had she written a different ending to the third movement that links weakly to the fourth on the motivic level, the emotional subtext based on Beach’s treatment of musical stability and instability would not have so clearly suggested autobiographical content. Incidentally, the reoccurrence of motivic material between movements also occurs in Brahms’s Sonata for Violin and Piano in G Major, op. 78. In this case, Brahms returns to the opening motive of the second movement in the middle of his third movement. As such, Beach’s linking of motivic material from her third movement to her fourth movement recalls Brahms’s mastery

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<sup>322</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 54.

<sup>323</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

of developing-variation which is another example of Beach relating to other masters of musical form. At the end of Beach's third movement, the violin's last four notes suggest the composer's resolve to persevere in her aspirations to show the world what she was capable of as a public artist. While the end of the third movement presents musical resolution evoking calmness, the last four notes of the violin's melody, I suggest, foreshadow Beach's ambition.

Figure 3.3.3.9 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, III, mm. 83-89



### 3.3.4 Beach's Ambitious "Narratable Self" Expressed in her Fugue

In addition to understanding Beach's "narratable self" as expressed through the structure of the first movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I argue that this "self" can also be identified in the fugue within the development of the fourth movement. In order to fully appreciate Beach's fugue, it is important to understand the history of fugal writing within nineteenth-century sonata form. As described by scholar Paul M. Walker, the term fugue has been used since the 14<sup>th</sup> century though it has evolved over time and many scholars and musicians have debated the definition of the term.<sup>324</sup> In particular, he notes that in the early nineteenth century musicians were considering the role that the fugue would play in their modern compositions. As cited by scholar Keith Chapin the founding editor of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, Freidrich Rochlitz argued that a musical work would stand the test of time

<sup>324</sup> Oxford Music Online, s.v "Fugue (from Lat. *fuga*: 'flight', 'fleeing'; Fr. *fugue*; Ger. *Fuge*; It. *fuga*)," Paul M. Walker, accessed June 24, 2024, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com).

if it contained a successfully composed fugue.<sup>325</sup> Additionally, Chapin argues that “the fugue has often stood as a token of durability, of timelessness.”<sup>326</sup> He explains that various nineteenth-century composers such as Robert Schumann (1810-1856) and Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) paid homage to J.S. Bach’s (1685-1750) fugues by writing fugues in a similar style to Bach’s, but with their own compositional technique and “interpretive practice.”<sup>327</sup> Finally, he notes that nineteenth-century fugues became “ever less a token of being and ever more one of becoming.”<sup>328</sup> In other words, nineteenth-century composers were using “fugue” as a compositional technique of developing a theme rather than composing fugues in the traditional style of the baroque and classical masters. One such example that Chapin discusses is the fugues of Schumann on the name BACH, five of which, he points out, move towards homophony at the end. This, he argues, is an example of a “metamorphosis” or the practice of “becoming.”<sup>329</sup>

Scholar Evan Jones also discusses fugal development, though his argument is not for “becoming.” Rather he discusses how nineteenth-century composers often used fugal passages as a way to further develop a theme within sonata form.<sup>330</sup> Some notable examples of male composers of piano music who included fugal passages within sonata form and within other large forms such as variations are Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) (e.g., Piano Sonatas op. 101 (1816), 106 (1817-1818), 109 (1820), 110 (1821-1822), 111 (1821-1822), Diabelli Variations (1819 and 1823), and the Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor (1800-1803)), Franz Liszt (1811-1886) (e.g., Piano Sonata in B minor (1853)), Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) (e.g., Handel Variations op. 24 (1861)), and César Franck (1822-1890) (e.g., Prélude, choral et fugue

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<sup>325</sup> Keith Chapin, “Time and the Keyboard Fugue,” *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 188.

<sup>326</sup> Chapin, “Time and the Keyboard Fugue,” 187.

<sup>327</sup> Chapin, “Time and the Keyboard Fugue,” 187.

<sup>328</sup> Chapin, “Time and the Keyboard Fugue,” 195.

<sup>329</sup> Chapin, “Time and the Keyboard Fugue,” 197.

<sup>330</sup> Evan Jones, *The Principles and Practice of Tonal Counterpoint* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 203.

(1884). Fugal writing was, thus, a common practice for nineteenth-century male composers and was seen as a valuable practice, one that would secure a composer's music in a category of "timelessness." Furthermore, the "fugue d'école" (scholastic fugue) was an important compositional skill taught at the Paris Conservatoire in the nineteenth century.<sup>331</sup> However, women were not so fortunate as to have the same opportunities as their male colleagues in the study of counterpoint and fugal writing which limited their ability to learn such a valued compositional skill.

As scholar Nancy B. Reich discusses, even though women were accepted into the Paris Conservatoire upon its inception, their education was separate from that of the male students.<sup>332</sup> The classes were even scheduled on different days of the week and entrances to the conservatory and staircases were separated. As discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, not only was education segregated at the Paris Conservatoire, but the classes offered to women and the assignments required of them was different from what was offered and expected of the men. Reich explains that in 1859 men were offered two classes in written harmony, but women were not allowed to take written harmony until the year 1879.<sup>333</sup> Furthermore, the rules of the Conservatoire stated in 1822 that "harmony, counterpoint, and fugue were 'for men,'" and it wasn't until the end of the century that women were allowed to study such "intellectual" subjects as counterpoint.<sup>334</sup> American composer and long-time friend to Beach, Mabel Daniels

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<sup>331</sup> Oxford Music Online, s.v. "Fugue d'école (Fr.: 'school fugue')," Paul M. Walker, accessed June 24, 2024, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com).

<sup>332</sup> Nancy B. Reich, "Women as Musicians," in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 134-135.

<sup>333</sup> Reich, "Women as Musicians," 135-136.

<sup>334</sup> Reich, "Women as Musicians," 136.

documented in her travelogue that she was the first woman to ever join the score-reading class at the Munich Conservatory in 1902.<sup>335</sup> On the subject of counterpoint she wrote that

five years ago, women were not allowed to study counterpoint at the Conservatory. In fact, anything more advanced than elementary harmony was debarred. The ability of the feminine intellect to comprehend the intricacies of a *stretto*, or cope with double counterpoint in the tenth, if not openly denied, was severely questioned. This carefully nourished conservatism has yielded considerably. The counterpoint class is now open to women, although as yet comparatively few avail themselves of the opportunity. Formerly, too, all the teachers in the Conservatory were men, but one finds to-day two women enrolled as professors among the forty on the list.<sup>336</sup>

Daniels's statement highlights the degree to which women were considered less intelligent and less capable than men in compositional ability specifically regarding contrapuntal writing. It is also important to note that the year Daniels refers to as a time when women were excluded from studying counterpoint was 1897—one year after Beach composed her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34. Of course, as Beach documented in a published article in 1942, her husband, Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, forbid her from taking lessons in composition so she was excluded from formal music education altogether after she was married in 1885.<sup>337</sup>

Whereas fugal writing was a common practice for male composers of the nineteenth century, few women were composing fugues, likely because they were excluded from learning counterpoint in the European conservatories. Clara Schumann wrote three preludes and fugues, op. 16 (1845), three four-part fugues on themes of J.S. Bach (1845), a prelude and fugue in F-Sharp Minor (1845), and she wrote a fugal passage into the fourth movement of her Piano Trio in G Minor, op. 17 (1846), though it is not as extensive as the fugue that Beach included in the fourth movement of her sonata. Fanny Hensel also wrote individual fugues and preludes and

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<sup>335</sup> Mabel W. Daniels, *An American Girl in Munich: Impressions of a Music Student* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905), 42-44.

<sup>336</sup> Daniels, *An American Girl in Munich*, 41-42.

<sup>337</sup> Beach, "How Music is Made," 11.

fugues, but no fugue within a movement of a multi-movement work. Her recently discovered *Easter Sonata* (1828) does include a prelude and fugue, but the prelude and fugue stands as the second movement of the sonata rather than being incorporated into the development of a single movement as in Beach's sonata.<sup>338</sup> Therefore, Beach's choice to include a fugue within the fourth movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin is notable because fugal writing was not a common compositional practice for a female composer of the nineteenth century.

### 3.4 “Narrative Friendship” in the Sonata as a Form of Political Action

While the use of a single motif as the structural anchor to a movement can be seen as Beach's single expression of resolve to persevere in her public work as an artist, the integration of a fugue to the development demonstrates her awareness of being in relation to other masters of fugal composition. In other words, by composing a fugue into the middle of her fourth movement she was positioning herself amongst the greatest composers that had ever composed fugues such as J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Franck, and who were composing fugues during her lifetime; she was making a political statement that she, too, could write “timeless” and sophisticated music even though she was a woman, had taught herself composition, and was supposed to live a sensible, domestic lifestyle.

In addition to what I consider a “political” statement that Beach made by including a fugue in her fourth movement, the partnership between the violin and the piano parts suggests the many friendships and professional relationships that Beach had over many years. Although this sonata was composed fairly early in her life the collaborative nature in this sonata reflects her desire to build meaningful relationships with others and to share her self within these

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<sup>338</sup> Angela Mace Christian, “The *Easter Sonata* of Fanny Mendelssohn (1828),” *Journal of Musicological Research* 41, no. 3 (2022): 182-184.



reciprocal relationships, rather than presenting the pianist as a supportive role to the violin's part. This style of writing a substantial part for the piano with another instrument was a common practice for male composers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and was termed "accompanied sonata."<sup>339</sup> In this case, the piano was considered the solo instrument and the other instrument considered to be the accompanying instrument. Other nineteenth-century composers of accompanied sonatas were Brahms, Robert Schumann, Franck, Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), and Chopin, to name a few. However, in a similar way that fugal writing was not so common amongst women composers of the nineteenth century, such substantially collaborative piano parts within sonatas with other instruments was not a common practice for women. Because, according to Reich, chamber music was associated with private music making at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the composition of chamber music was considered an acceptable genre for women to compose.<sup>340</sup> However, Reich also states that most women who were composing for piano in the nineteenth century were composing smaller forms and shorter pieces such as art songs for piano and voice. She adds that shorter pieces and simpler forms did not "compete with the more complex, 'masculine' genres such as sonatas or symphonies, which required the more intensive study frequently denied to women musicians."<sup>341</sup> Therefore, the composition of a four-movement sonata for piano and violin places Beach in relation to the male composers of substantial chamber works for piano. Furthermore, in addition to the collaborative nature of Beach's sonata, her reviews of music composed by others express her value for partnership between instruments. For example, in 1894, after attending a

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<sup>339</sup> Oxford Music Online, s.v. "Sonata (from It. *suonare*: 'to sound')," by Sandra Mangsen, John Irving, John Rink, and Paul Griffiths, accessed July 6, 2024, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com).

<sup>340</sup> Reich, "European Composers and Musicians, ca. 1800-1890," in *Women and Music: A History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., edited by Karin Pendle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 163.

<sup>341</sup> Reich, "European Composers and Musicians, ca 1800-1890," 152.

performance of Polish composer Ignacy Paderewski's (1860-1941) Violin Sonata in A Minor, Beach wrote in her diary that in the second movement "[t]he piano and violin answer[ed] each other gracefully and blend[ed] together better than in any other portion of the work."<sup>342</sup> The dialogic and reciprocal properties shared between the two parts are evident in Beach's sonata mirroring the composer's active efforts in developing relationships with friends and professional colleagues.

Throughout the sonata the piano and violin are equal partners in thematic development and take turns introducing new material. In the fourth movement, for example, the violin introduces the primary theme in measures 13-20, while the piano introduces the secondary theme in measures 47-55. In the recapitulation, their roles are reversed where the piano begins the primary theme (beginning in measure 125) and the violin begins the secondary theme (mm. 157-165). In the scherzo of the second movement, while the violin plays the first theme (mm. 1-8), the piano often plays in imitation with the violin, or in contrary motion to the violin linking the two parts in an equal partnership of thematic development. (Figure 3.4.1) That is to say that even though the violin has the theme, and it is not shared between the two instruments, the piano's imitations and supporting passages in contrary motion actively contribute to the development of the theme. Other times, the two parts are so well integrated that even though there are two separate instruments playing there is only one cohesive whole rather than two independent musical ideas. For instance, in measure 33 of the first movement, the piano's dotted rhythm propels the violin forward. Additionally, the violin fills in the two beats of the piano's half notes with continuous triplets which creates the illusion that the piano's half notes are not static even though a piano cannot increase in volume after the hammers have hit the strings. (Figure 3.4.2).

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<sup>342</sup> Beach, Music Reviews, Beach Papers (p. 76-77 of document).

Similarly, even when one instrument is playing a theme on its own, the other instrument supports in a way that contributes to the impetus of the thematic development. For example, when the piano takes over the first theme in the fourth movement (mm. 21-28), the violin supports with continuous sixteenth notes. (Figure 3.4.3) However, rather than writing a purely harmonic supporting part, Beach builds a melodic line into the violin part that supports the sweep of the piano's melody. In other words, the contour of the violin's part in measures 21-25 plays a vital role in shaping the first theme played by the piano rather than only being a background accompaniment to the theme. By contrast, see, for example, the first movement of Farrenc's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Major, op. 39 in which the piano and violin take turns accompanying one another. As shown in Figure 3.4.4, the piano does not contribute to the thematic development by supporting the expressive impetus of the phrase; rather, its function is to provide harmonic support of the melody by way of a simple Alberti figure in the right hand and solid chords in the left hand. Comparatively, Franck exploits the capacity of the piano to collaborate in the shaping of the melody in his Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Major. See, for example, the second movement of the sonata where both the piano and violin play the melody in unison, but where the piano's continuous sixteenth notes contribute to the direction and shape of the phrase. (Figure 3.4.5)

Figure 3.4.1 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, II, mm. 1-12

**Molto vivace.** (♩ = 126.)

1

7

*p*

*p*

*sempre leggiero*

*poco a poco cresc.*

*Rit.*

*Rit.*

Figure 3.4.2 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I, mm. 30-36

*poco rall.*

**Animato.**

30

*poco rall.*

*pp*

*cresc.*

*Rit.*

Figure 3.4.3 Beach Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 19-30

The musical score is presented in four systems, each corresponding to a specific measure number: 19, 22, 25, and 28. The notation is for a piano and violin duo in A minor. The piano part is characterized by a dense, rhythmic texture with frequent triplets and slurs. The violin part provides a melodic counterpoint. Key musical elements include the tempo marking 'con energico' at measure 19, the dynamic marking 'mf' at measure 28, and various performance instructions such as 'Ped.' (pedal) and 'Red.' (redaction or correction). The score is written on a grand staff, with the piano part occupying the lower staves and the violin part occupying the upper staves.

Figure 3.4.4 Louise Farrenc Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Major, op. 39, I, mm. 9-14

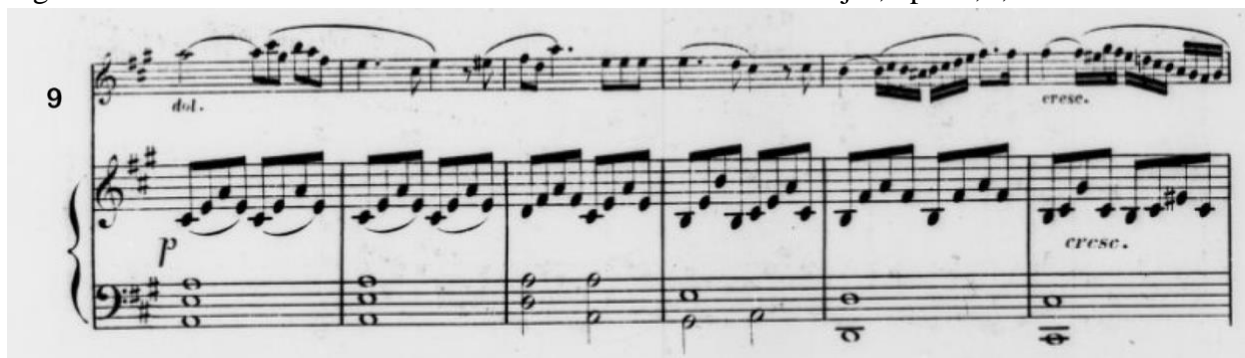


Figure 3.4.5 César Franck Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Major, II, mm. 13-18



It is evident that in many instances the piano and violin parts in Beach's sonata are very equally partnered and oftentimes thematically interconnected. It is also clear that this collaborative style of writing was not typical for a woman at the end of the nineteenth century. This partnership reflects a mutual respect between two performers in a meaningful relationship, similar to Beach's relationships with her friends and colleagues. Cavarero would describe this type of connection as a "narrative friendship" where each person contributes to the other's life

story by being an “accomplice” in the narration of the biography.<sup>343</sup> In other words, the reciprocal relationship between the violin and the piano in Beach’s sonata highlights the expressive quality of each instrument and each instrument’s line, mirroring Beach’s reciprocal relationships with friends and professional colleagues in her life.

The virtuosity of the piano writing, on the other hand, may suggest Beach’s desire to be seen as an equal amongst the male-dominated music community. Unlike Beach’s piano concerto, where there is a clear battle between soloist and orchestra, the piano writing in the sonata is more collaborative. As Block points out, Beach’s concerto “reflects the contemporary view of the genre as a battleground where two opposing forces, the heroic virtuoso soloist and the full late romantic symphony orchestra, struggle with each other for dominance, and where [Beach] as the pianist assumed control.”<sup>344</sup> By contrast, partnership is developed throughout Beach’s sonata through equal thematic development between both the piano and the violin. However, the massive role that the piano plays throughout the sonata in terms of introducing and developing thematic content, not to mention the sheer virtuosity of the part, makes a statement about Beach’s longing to be seen and heard for her artistry not only as a composer, but also as a pianist, as sources indicate that she wrote this sonata for herself to perform. In other words, rather than composing the piano part for another pianist, Beach wrote her “self” into the composition by showcasing, first and foremost, herself as a virtuoso collaborative pianist. Cavarero would theorize Beach’s need for an outlet in which to express her identity by explaining that women have historically been excluded from interactive spaces where uniqueness of each individual can be expressed. This aspect of social exclusion often results in their

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<sup>343</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 63.

<sup>344</sup> Block, “A ‘Veritable Autobiography’?,” 399.

alienation and social misrepresentation.<sup>345</sup> In Beach's case, because she did not have access to the same kind of musical education or performance career as her male colleagues, such as George Whitefield Chadwick, Horatio Parker, John Knowles Paine, Arthur Foote, and Edward MacDowell, she was left out of an important interactive social space in which she could develop her competence in musical composition and performance more easily. Therefore, by composing a technically demanding, expressive, and thematically important part for the piano, one that she would perform herself, Beach found a way to participate in the musical scene professionally.

From her 1894 personal musical reviews it is clear that Beach was thinking about the importance of pathos in music as well as the virtuosity and individuality of the piano part. In her review of Johannes Brahms' (1833-1897) Clarinet Sonata in F Minor for example, Beach commented on the beautiful expression in the clarinet's part in the first movement, but criticized the fourth movement saying that it had "little if any pathos, (no tragic force) given to any of its phrases. I wished it might have shown a little of its darker, deeper side."<sup>346</sup> Of the piano part she commented that it "seemed a trifle dry on a first hearing, not well-knit, and only seldom of importance save as an acc[ompaniment] to the clarinet."<sup>347</sup> By contrast, although Beach did not like Paderewski's last movement of his Violin Sonata stating that "the whole movement seems barbaric and unattractive," she found the piano part delightful commenting on the rapid passages and the occasional outburst of pianistic authority.<sup>348</sup> These reviews convey the importance that Beach placed on expressive piano writing within multi-movement works for piano and one other instrument and her highly developed critical mind as she situated herself amongst other masters of composition. As her Sonata for Piano and Violin was composed just two years after she heard

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<sup>345</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 57.

<sup>346</sup> Beach, Music Reviews, (p. 43 of document). [Beach's emphasis]

<sup>347</sup> Beach, Music Reviews, (p. 43 of document).

<sup>348</sup> Beach, Music Reviews, (p. 77-78 of document).



and reviewed Brahms's Clarinet Sonata and Paderewski's Violin Sonata for the first time, it is apparent that her sonata is a product of her deep self-reflection in relation to others, specifically her musical writing in comparison to the writing of other compositional masters.

In understanding the collaborative role of the piano in relation to the violin within Beach's sonata, it is clear that both the piano and the violin parts act as a "necessary other" to the other. Writing such an enormous part for a pianist in an instrumental sonata speaks to the role that the piano can play in collaborative music in general—that of a partner rather than an accompaniment—and it also speaks to Beach's capacity as a pianist herself to play large-scale works. This last statement is especially important because after she was married, in 1885, she was no longer allowed by her husband to perform publicly except for a few times a year during benefit concerts organized by her husband's work or when she was invited to play as a soloist with orchestras and ensembles.<sup>349</sup> Thus, composing a substantial and virtuosic part for herself to play suggests Beach's determination to have her artistry heard not only through the means of others playing her music, but by her own hands and mind made clear during a performance in public.<sup>350</sup> In a similar way to Gertrude Stein's *Autobiography of Alice Toklas*, Beach's sonata, I argue, is a form of musical autobiography told through the lens of each pianist who performs it. In Stein's book, she is telling her own story through the lens of Alice Toklas, even though the title of the book is *Autobiography of Alice Toklas*. Beach is similar to Stein by expressing herself through the medium of autobiography, but through the lens of another pianist who would take on a similar role to Toklas. By composing this large work for herself to perform, Beach was positioning herself within the interactive scene and thus taking what Arendt calls "political

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<sup>349</sup> Block, "A 'Veritable Autobiography'?", 400.

<sup>350</sup> See Appendix A.2 for a full list of performances of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 during Beach's lifetime.

action.” Additionally, by publishing the score of this sonata, Beach was allowing other pianists to express her “narratable self” to audiences linking herself to pianists and audiences alike in a reciprocal relationship.

It would be important to note that Beach’s proactive development of a “narratable self” through enlisting her necessary others was progressive in the history of music and in the history of women’s studies. To further acknowledge the exceptionality of the large-scale and virtuosity of Beach’s sonata, it is important to note that in the same year of the sonata’s composition, in 1896, her contemporary female composers in Paris were still facing incredible oppression and prejudice concerning musical composition and performance. For example, they were still not allowed to compete in the prestigious *Prix de Rome* competition for musical composition; women would not be allowed to compete until 1903.<sup>351</sup> Not only were they not allowed to compete for prizes that had the potential to greatly influence their careers as composers, but women were still limited in terms of their institutional education in composition, and criticized by male critics for not adhering to standards of composition and performance deemed appropriate for women. According to scholar Katharine Ellis, the mid-nineteenth century Europe saw the rise of the male virtuoso-composer as well as a number of female composers such as Marie Pleyel (1811-1875), Louise Mattmann (1826-1861), and Wilhelmine Szarvdy (1832-1907), who began to push the boundaries of gender norms within piano performance in Europe.<sup>352</sup> However, whereas the male virtuosos such as Chopin, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff were applauded for composing tremendously difficult works for solo piano, due to societal expectations of a woman’s behaviour in public spaces, female pianist-composers were

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<sup>351</sup> Fauser, “‘La guerre en dentelles’: Women and the ‘Prix de Rome’ in French Cultural Politics,” 86-87.

<sup>352</sup> Ellis, “Female Pianists and their Male Critics,” 378.

scrutinized even for the repertoire they chose to perform, let alone for the content of their own compositions.<sup>353</sup>

As discussed in Chapter Two, the gendering of musical compositions institutionalized by the Paris Conservatoire contributed to misguided understandings of a woman's ability to compose or perform, in particular, her ability to perform at the same level as her male colleagues. Despite Beach's courage in the composition and performance of her sonata, it is important to note that in 1896, Boston's institutions for musical education were only a few decades old—John Knowles Paine was the first professor of music at Harvard University in 1862 while the Boston Conservatory and the New England Conservatory did not open until 1867—by contrast, the Paris Conservatoire was already a century old and deeply rooted in traditions of gender discrimination.<sup>354</sup> In the 1890s, American composers Margaret Ruthven Lang (1867-1972), Helen Hopekirk (1856-1945), and Clara Kathleen Rogers (1844-1931) were also beginning to expand their compositional output to include larger scale works for chamber ensembles and for piano with orchestra, including Hopekirk's Violin Sonata in E Minor (1891),

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<sup>353</sup> Ellis, "Female Pianists and their Male Critics," 369-378. See also Ellis, *French Musical Life: Local Dynamics in the Century to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022); Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: La Revue et gazette musicale de Paris 1834-80* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Fauser, "La guerre en dentelles"; Kallberg, "The Harmony of the Tea Table"; Oxford Music Online, s.v. "Women in Music," by Judith Tick, Margaret Ericson, and Ellen Koskoff, accessed July 9, 2024, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com); Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Judith Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Carol Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present*, rev. ed. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996); Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou, eds., *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

<sup>354</sup> See, for example, Oxford Music Online, s.v. "Education," *Paris* by Elizabeth Cook et al., accessed June 2, 2023, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com); Oxford Music Online, s.v. "Boston: Education and Libraries," by Leonard Burkat, revised by Pamela Fox, accessed June 2, 2023, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com).

her *Conzertstück* for piano and orchestra (1894), Rogers' Violin Sonata in D Minor, op. 25 (1893), and Lang's *Evening Chimes* for violin and piano (1898). Thus, perhaps Beach, as an American female composer, had an opportunity to compose a large-scale work in the U.S. that many of her female contemporaries in France did not enjoy. Regardless, Beach was among the first American women to compose such a substantial and virtuosic work for piano which demonstrates a strong will to share aspects of her identity publicly with others.

### 3.5 Summary

Viewing Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 through an autobiographical lens helps to understand the structure of the music within each movement and as an entire work. The virtuosity of the piano part, the relationship between the piano and the violin, the harmonic construction of phrases, and the inclusion of a fugue in the sonata's fourth movement set the sonata apart from other instrumental sonatas by women of the same era in Europe and the United States and positions it in relation to sonatas by other nineteenth-century male masters of composition such as Brahms, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, and Franck thus making what Arendt might call a "political" statement about women's capacities as composers and pianists. By skillfully crafting a four-movement sonata that showcased her firm control of large compositional forms, thematic development, and partnership between instruments, Beach pushed the boundary of what was socially acceptable for women to compose and to perform while at the same time embedding her identity into the composition. In other words, by composing a work that was intellectually strong she created a framework within which her personal expression could reside without being essentialized as "feminine". By composing a virtuosic part for the pianist, and by composing a part equal in its thematic role to the violin, Beach suggests through

her music that she was equally capable of large-scale composition and professional, public performance. The extensive correspondences, the reviews of her compositions and performances, and the published and unpublished writings provide a rich collection of primary sources. These sources reveal Beach's connection to friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and society at large demonstrating a high level of social and political awareness. It is clear by the positioning of herself in relation to her contemporaries and compositional masters of the past that she was seeing herself through the "gaze of others," as Arendt and Cavarero would say.<sup>355</sup> Thus, I advance an autobiographical reading of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, and by extension I argue that this work is a form of "political action." Furthermore, I argue that by learning this piece through an embodied practice another pianist—such as myself—can take similar "political action." Although Arendt never relates her notion of "political action" to music, I argue in this chapter that Cavarero's analysis of the narrative self helps to relate the music performance of a composition to "political action."

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<sup>355</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 82.

## Chapter 4: The Composer's Self: Beach in Relation to Living Pianists through Embodied Practice of the Fourth Movement of her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34

### 4.1. Introduction

Scholar and cellist Elisabeth Le Guin argues that a performer can create a reciprocal relationship with a composer through performance—understood as an embodied practice of their compositions—and that this relationship should be a primary source of knowledge about these musical works.<sup>356</sup> Through meticulous physical study of Boccherini's Cello Sonata in E Flat Major, *Fuori Catalogo*, Le Guin plays the piece with the physical gestures and the emotional intention with which she believes the composer would have also felt the music as he played it. This study, she argues, displaces the “performance of the self” from the composer onto the performer, linking them in a reciprocal relationship.<sup>357</sup> For political philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), this reciprocity would be a form of “political action.”<sup>358</sup> To Arendt's mind, the political realm arises when people share in words and in deeds relating them to one another.<sup>359</sup> Therefore, as Le Guin relates to Boccherini through embodied practice— sharing with the composer in deeds— she is taking what Arendt would call “political action.” Similarly, I argue that a pianist can take political action by creating a reciprocal relationship to Beach in embodied practice of her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34. As I study Beach's published and unpublished writings—taking in her written expressions of self—and as I learn her fourth movement of the sonata through embodied practice, I consider how we relate to one another

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<sup>356</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 14.

<sup>357</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 33.

<sup>358</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.

<sup>359</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 198.

through our shared experience of playing the same music. In this way, I am also taking what Arendt called “political action” through my “embodied” performance experience.

In Chapter Three I explored ways that Beach reclaimed agency for herself by composing and performing her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34. In Chapter Four I explore another facet of relationality by using Le Guin’s work on embodied performance as a model. I argue that through an embodied performance practice of the fourth movement of Beach’s Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 a pianist can create a reciprocal relationship to the composer. Consequently, a pianist takes what Arendt called “political action” through fostering a reciprocal relationship with a composer.

## **4.2 Political Action Through an Embodied Practice**

As Le Guin argues, the first step in learning a piece of music is a visual act of looking closely at the musical score and determining what physical gestures will be required to play the music.<sup>360</sup> Approaching Beach’s fourth movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 in this way, I notice that, at first glance, the opening twelve measures command physical strength, digital agility, and clarity in balancing of the voices in the piano part. The chords in the first two measures are dense and articulated with staccatos under a pedal marking, indicating that Beach was seeking a clarity of sound that would be full in resonance and at the same time punctuated as if calling the violin to attention. (See Figure 4.2.1) While the left hand’s chords on beat one of both measures are open octaves, the right hand’s octaves are filled out with two other chord tones (D and F in measure one, and F and A in measure two) in between to achieve the B half diminished seventh chord. In order to achieve the balance of tone that Beach was seeking

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<sup>360</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini’s Body*, 14-15.

both hands must balance the density of the texture by voicing the bass and the soprano. That is, more weight must be distributed into the pinkies. For this balance to occur the arms need to rotate slightly towards the pinkies. According to Block, Beach had small hands, but they were flexible.<sup>361</sup> Throughout the entirety of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 Beach does not write any chords larger than an octave, suggesting that an octave would have likely been the largest interval that she could have played with ease without stretching to the point of injury. However, she frequently writes octaves with additional notes between the notes of the octaves which creates tension between the fingers. Over time, this texture may cause significant fatigue if too many of such chords are played in a row for a pianist with small hands. Thus, from the very opening of this fourth movement, Beach's right hand would have been stretched open and required to rotate slightly outwards on both sides, generating an even less comfortable position in order to bring out the outer notes played by both hands with proper balance.

The first chord in measure two is slightly more difficult than the first chord in measure one because of the need to emphasize the top B in relation to the A just below it and played by the fourth finger which has a hard time being independent from the third or fifth fingers. In Chapter Three I discussed that it was not common for a typical late nineteenth-century female pianist to demonstrate this kind of physical strength.<sup>362</sup> As a pianist with a small frame and small hands, I am aware of the physical exertion required in this opening of Beach's fourth movement. Any pianist would need to throw their arm weight into these large chords, but a pianist with a larger hand would have less difficulty voicing notes—making certain notes louder than others to

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<sup>361</sup> Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 30.

<sup>362</sup> Note that Clara Schumann's hand was wide enough to "play tenths with a loose wrist" according to scholars Eckart Altenmüller and Reinhard Kopiez. Eckart Altenmüller and Reinhard Kopiez, "Suffering for Her Art: The Chronic Pain Syndrome of Pianist Clara Wieck-Schumann," *Frontiers of Neurology and Neuroscience* 27 (April 2010): 105.



create proper balance of tonal quality—or even reaching the large stretches. Thus, I contend that this opening is an embodied example of Beach taking political action as a pianist: By requiring her body to be physically stretched and forceful, she was, I argue, expressing to the audience that she could be just as virtuosic—virtuosic in the sense of physically strong enough to make loud chords—as any male pianist such as Franck, Liszt, or Brahms. Furthermore, I argue that as a living performer of this work, I, too, can take political action. Not only can I physically demonstrate what it means for a small-framed woman to play this physically demanding music, but I can also feel what Beach must have felt at the piano, as Le Guin would have by feeling her body as a cellist what Boccherini would have felt when he played the cello.<sup>363</sup> My political action means that by playing this music, I allow Beach’s personal expression to flow through me during performance, relating me to her in a physical intimate, interpersonal relationship between two pianists’ bodies.

Figure 4.2.1 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 1-3



Following the powerful opening chords in measures one to three, the materials from measures 3-12 place varying physical demands of the pianist within each measure (Figure 4.2.2).

<sup>363</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 19.

In measure three, the pianist plays a rapid scale spanning four octaves accelerating and building dynamic volume towards its peak in measure five. The fingers must have sufficient strength and agility to maintain clarity of pulse and rhythm within the phrase. In measure four the pianist must increase the weight of the fingers incrementally towards the end of the scale in order to make the crescendo and sforzando effects that Beach requests in measures four and five. Because the violin is playing expanded chords with arpeggios in measure 4 starting from the lower part of its register, it is important for the pianist to be able to play their scale with vigor without overshadowing the violin part. That is, the pianist is required to display vigor while listening to the violin's part. Thus, the fingertips need to be firm, but without too much weight that would create too loud a sound. In relational terms, the pianist must maintain a high degree of virtuosity while maintaining a relational awareness indicative of good ensembleship.

Figure 4.2.2 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 1-12

*Allegro con fuoco. (♩ = 144)*

The musical score is for the fourth movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, by Frédéric Chopin. It is marked 'Allegro con fuoco' with a tempo of 144 beats per minute. The key signature is A minor (three flats). The score shows measures 1 through 12. The piano part is written in the left hand, and the violin part is written in the right hand. The score includes various musical notations such as staccato, legato, and dynamic markings like 'sempre f' and 'dim'.

Whereas the interplay between the piano and violin in the first four measures of the movement only require the pianist to change their physical gesture once (shifting from the staccatos in measures 1-2 to the legato scale in measures 3-4), measures 5-6 require frequent changes of articulation. The relational demands of the players, thus, accelerate. That is to say that because the music is fragmented in even shorter segments than in the opening four measures, both pianist and violinist need to accelerate the rate at which they listen to their partner and then

take over the thematic material. In measures five to six the piano part oscillates between playing a supporting role to the violin's melody, and driving thematic development by imitating the violin's melody. The rapid shift between playing quick arpeggios propels the music forward without outshining the violin part. The projection of the melodic fragments demands masterful assuming of the various roles—leading, following, foreshadowing, receding to the background—that the piano needs to play. In other words, the pianist's fingers and arms must be prepared to vary their gestures and allocate suitable amounts of weight in the fingertips approximately every two beats. Furthermore, some of the arpeggios require the thumb to pass under the hand which risks unevenness across the sixteenth notes. Whenever the thumb passes under the hand or the hand rotates over the thumb the wrist must twist slightly and the fingers shift in towards the middle of the hand to assume a more closed position, but must extend once again after the thumb passing to reach the following notes. Some arpeggios fit more comfortably within the hand despite the thumb passing under the hand or the hand over the thumb, and others feel more awkward and require more practice to develop relevant muscle memory. This statement is true in the case of measures five to seven in Beach's fourth movement where certain arpeggios feel more idiomatic or "natural" and others less so or more "unnatural." For example, whenever the left hand begins an arpeggio with two notes played at the same time (see Figure 4.2.3) the wrist needs to shift quite significantly in order to successfully connect the upper note to the next note in the arpeggio. Because the thumb needs to play the second note in the arpeggio the wrist needs to cross over the thumb immediately afterwards, thus resulting in two rapid shifts of the wrist successively. Additionally, as the harmony is changing so quickly, the hands must change their positions very quickly despite the unidiomatic gestures required to play each arpeggio. Furthermore, each new harmonic shift begins in a higher register indicating a building of tension.

Therefore, the pianist needs to convey this buildup by shaping each gesture with direction towards the next beat with utmost precision of weight distribution. The fingers need to be slightly lighter at the beginning of the gestures and increase weight by the end of each gesture.

Figure 4.2.3 Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor, op 34, IV, m. 7



As the introduction to the movement comes to a close in measures 11 and 12, the pianist's scale only requires slight changes in weight distribution by contrast to the rapid shifting of articulations as a result of the shared thematic material in measures 5-10. The piano's descending chromatic scale serves as a transition into the primary theme heard by the violin. (Figure 4.2.4). The emotional buildup in the first ten measures overflows in the form of a descending chromatic scale in measures 11-12 while seamlessly leading into a slightly different character. As the scale descends, Beach asks for a decrescendo indicating that the piano should start strong as it takes over from the violin's scale at the beginning of the bar and then back away as the violin prepares for the statement of theme one. Contrary to the weight distribution of the previous gestures, here the fingers must begin with more weight and gradually become lighter while maintaining precision of tone and energy over the two measures. In relational terms, the

piano's scale reflects an "other" who is willing to listen to their partner's expression of self by backing away dynamically and leaving space for their partner's theme.

Figure 4.2.4 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 IV, mm. 10-15



As Le Guin argues in her book entitled *Boccherini's Body: An Essay on Carnal Musicology* (2006), one of the first questions a performer may pose to the music upon their first encounter with a composition is: "What do you have to show me?"<sup>364</sup> She explains that as the musician continues to explore the music they begin to ask not "what," but rather "who" is being revealed by the music.<sup>365</sup> If a pianist was beginning to learn Beach's fourth movement of her sonata for the first time and they were approaching it out of context of the rest of the sonata they may question "what" the movement would reveal from a thematic perspective. However, if the pianist had already worked through the other three movements and discovered many facets of the composer's musical style by the beginning of the fourth movement they may already be asking

<sup>364</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 27.

<sup>365</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 27.

“who” would be revealed. As I discussed in Chapter Three, this opening of the fourth movement expresses Beach’s vitality, determination, and perseverance. While structurally the first 12 measures are introductory this passage already reveals much about the embodied state of the composer as the first pianist to play and perform this work.

Similarly, even though the pianist’s role in measures 13-20 is to support the violin’s statement of the first theme, the composer’s vitality can be understood from the way that she composed the piano’s supporting material. (Figure 4.2.5) That is to say that the physical demands of this passage demonstrate that even in a supporting role, Beach wanted to have an equal role to her partner’s—that this support would be mutual in the sense of remaining engaged. Physically, both arms need to leap approximately an octave and a half from beat one to the second half of beat one. While not an enormous leap, the ambitiously fast tempo that Beach requests means that the hands have to play the bass note on beat one and then land precisely in their new position. Furthermore, the bass note should be played with more weight in order to create a foundation of sound upon which the rest of the sixteenth notes in the measure can sound. This foundation means that the remaining sixteenth notes must also be much lighter so that they do not cover the richness of the bass note. Additionally, the repeating alternation between the hands suggests a quiet, yet active energy and needs to be played as a vital contribution to the thematic development while not overpowering the violin’s theme. That is to say that while the violin is sustaining one note, the piano can add shape to the phrase by building in a little crescendo. Thus, the pianist’s role in measures 13-20 is not passive; rather, it can be thought of as the internal build-up that eventually spills over into a declamation of the theme in measure 21. As such, the pianist must ensure strong and robust bass notes (always a leap to and from these notes requiring the arm to lift and fall with weight on each of them) and quietly engaged

alternations between the hands thereafter. As in the opening of the movement, each ascending gesture also builds volume and therefore the weight of the arms and fingers must be adjusted to bring out the dynamic buildup.

Figure 4.2.5 Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor, op. 34, mm. 13-21

The musical score for measures 13-21 of the Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor, op. 34, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 13-15) shows the violin part with a melodic line and the piano part with a repeating eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a more complex melody in the right hand. The second system (measures 16-18) continues the piano part with a repeating eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a more complex melody in the right hand. The third system (measures 19-21) shows the piano part with a repeating eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a more complex melody in the right hand, including a triplet and a fermata. The score includes dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f', and performance instructions like 'con energico'.

When the piano takes over the primary theme in measures 21-28, the physicality of the piano part suggests an emotional intensity that mirrors Beach's clear expression of self in her



published and unpublished writings.<sup>366</sup> (Figure 4.2.6) As in the opening, the right hand's melody is never played in single notes, but often in octaves and occasionally thirds or fourths. Physically, the repetition of octaves in the right hand (with added notes in between certain octaves) demands a loose wrist with firm fingers in order to play fast and precisely without becoming tired. Meanwhile, the left hand's arpeggios always begin with an extended hand, rapidly ascend without returning down the keyboard, and then begin in a new position deep in the bass. The arm needs to lift off the keyboard and reset each time in the lower register which does facilitate full and resonant bass notes, but also means that the arm is frequently leaping downwards. For a small hand the combination of large extensions with the necessity to project bass notes can be very tiring. It is essential that tension be released whenever possible. For example, there is an opportunity to release tension during a leap down to the bass, or whenever the hand can return to a more closed position. As the violin takes over the theme in measure 28, the piano's musical figure returns to the sixteenth notes alternating between the hands in measures 29-32. This time, however, the bass notes change more frequently creating dramatic shapes within bars 31 and 32. For the performer, this scoring means that the fingertips and arms need to vary their weight with every note. The momentum of the piano's sixteenth notes and the modified restatement of theme one in the violin culminate in an adapted return of the introductory material from measures 33-42 (Figure 4.2.7) followed by a transition over four measures into theme two.

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<sup>366</sup> See, for example, an excerpt from Beach's talk at the M.T.N.A. Proceedings in 1932: "The materials out of which our work is made are our very innermost feelings, the actual nerve force and pulse beats of our bodies, guided by our specially trained minds and the technique acquired through long years of drudgery. Those of you who are composers know the truth of what I am saying. In projecting our very selves on to paper, or canvas, or clay, we literally have to lose our life in order to save it in the shape of any tangible result of our labors." Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, "The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of a Vision," 46.

Figure 4.2.6 Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 19-30

This musical score is for the fourth movement of the Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor, op. 34, by Frédéric Chopin. It covers measures 19 through 30. The score is written for violin and piano. The key signature is A minor (no sharps or flats). The time signature is 3/4. The tempo/mood is marked *con energico*. The score is divided into four systems, each starting with a measure number (19, 22, 25, 28). The violin part is on the upper staff, and the piano part is on the lower staff. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many triplets and sixteenth notes. The violin part has a melodic line with some triplets and slurs. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). There are also asterisks (\*) and the word *ped.* (pedal) indicating specific performance techniques.

Figure 4.2.7 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 31-44

The musical score is for the fourth movement of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, by Franz Liszt. It covers measures 31 to 44. The key signature is A minor (one flat). The time signature is 4/4. The score is written for piano and violin. The piano part is characterized by dense, often chromatic textures, while the violin part provides a more melodic counterpoint. The score is divided into four systems, with measure numbers 31, 35, 38, and 41 indicating the start of each system. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings like *f*, *ff*, *dim.*, *mf*, *piu dim.*, and *rallent.*. There are also some performance instructions like *Red.* and *\*.* scattered throughout the score.

As Le Guin notes, the way the repetitions are written in a score indicates varying levels of physical calmness or muscular activity within the performer's body.<sup>367</sup> In light of this argument, it is easy to see how the first 46 measures of Beach's fourth movement of her Sonata for Piano and Violin require significant physical strength. The piano part is frequently changing its pattern while maintaining quite a high level of energy and agitation. This means that the body is consistently in a state of physical activity rather than in a state of physical calmness. We can thus conclude that a pianist performing the opening of this fourth movement would need to embody Beach's physical strength, agility, and mastery of varying weight in order to successfully convey her musical expressions.

In addition to her discussion of physical activity at the instrument as an indication of the composer's expression, Le Guin argues that certain physical gestures on the cello evoke more pathos than others. For example, in the first movement of Boccherini's Cello Sonata in E Flat Major, *Fuori Catalogo*, the descending chromatic scale in measure 14 requires a slight shift of the hand toward the center of balance, or the heart of the player. She explains that this drawing in towards the heart references gesturally the motion associated with heartfelt sincerity in classical oratory.<sup>368</sup> According to her, this gesture is common in Boccherini's music and is a significant indicator of pathos. She adds that Boccherini often expresses pathos through writing that resembles a vocal line which evokes the "understanding of the voice as the ideal marker of a feeling selfhood."<sup>369</sup> In other words, writing a musical line for an instrument other than the voice can relate that instrument to the voice and, Cavarero might say by extension, relates that particular musical phrase to the composer's self. At the piano, the arms move horizontally to and

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<sup>367</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 21-22.

<sup>368</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 23.

<sup>369</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 24.

from the center of the body along the keyboard and the body follows the arms whenever possible so that the heart is in front of the hands. The gesture of drawing in towards the heart, therefore, does not create the same effect as what Le Guin describes of the hand gesture on the cello. It is common for the hands to play closely together in the middle of the keyboard where they are in front of the centre of gravity, but typically, this posture does not necessarily indicate any particular expression. As such, in order to express pathos through the piano a composer must use other means. For Beach, the common practice is leaning into dissonance either through appoggiaturas or suspensions. See, for example, the secondary theme in measures 47-55 (Figure 4.2.8). The emphasis of the dissonance before resolution creates an effect akin to a sigh—a kind of vocal expression but different from speech. As Le Guin notes, the body is able to internalize kinesthetic memory from one place in the body to another.<sup>370</sup> Therefore, when a musical line mimics the shapes in the vocal folds required to create breath or make sound of a sigh most players will understand how to recreate this imitation on the instrument in order to create a comparable expression of pathos in their performance.

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<sup>370</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 22.

Figure 4.2.8 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 45-58

45 *Più tranquillo. (♩ = 96)*  
*il canto molto tenuto*  
*pp*

50 *legato*  
*sempre espressivo*

55 *rall.* *a tempo* *p con molto tenerezza* *cantabile*  
*dolce grazioso*  
*pp*

In her book entitled *For More Than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, Cavarero explores the philosophy of breath in detail by studying such philologists, theologians, and philosophers as Corrado Bologna (1950-), Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929), Emmanuel Levinas (1905-1995), and Walter Benjamin (1892-1940). According to her, Levinas argues that breathing is a profound communication of identity because the air that is exhaled by one is inhaled by another.<sup>371</sup> Consequently, the exchange of air indicates a reciprocal sharing of oneself. As such, I argue that Beach's expression of self within her vocalistic writing is immediately physically relatable to players and listeners alike since it relies so heavily on the imitation of a natural exhalation of breath. Furthermore, Le Guin argues that in learning a piece

<sup>371</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 31.

of music through an embodied practice, that is to say, by learning to play the work rather than only studying the music cerebrally through harmonic and structural analysis, a performer develops a reciprocal relationship with the composer. I will add that this statement is only convincing if the composer is/was also a proficient and informed player of the instrument for which they write/wrote the music. Returning to Beach's secondary theme of the fourth movement of her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, I argue that, combining Levinas' argument that breathing is a reciprocal exchange of identity and Le Guin's argument that embodied practice of a musical work as an alternative kind of reciprocal exchange, Beach's vocalistic writing relates not only the player to the composer, but also the player to the audience, and by extension audience to composer.

I have discussed how the melodic construction of the second theme immediately draws the pianist into a physical embodiment of the composer's expression through dissonance. For the fingers and arms that need to play the notes of this theme in order to sound like a sigh the task is not simple. At the onset of the secondary theme, the left hand plays two roles: 1) to provide a sonic and harmonic foundation that supports the melody, and 2) to shape the melody which Beach has requested be played "molto tenuto". (In this case, the word "tenuto" indicates for the melody to be played with weight, very legato, and with expression.) The left hand, therefore, must leap down to the bass C and G in order to capture the harmonic foundation, and then leap up to play four notes of the melody, and then leap back down to play the bass again. Meanwhile, the right hand plays chords on offbeats and should project the upper notes as a countermelody. Because of the slower tempo and the expressive quality of the music in this theme, the hands have time to move where they need to go while maintaining an expressive quality. Additionally, while Beach's right hand would be stretched to play the octaves, these octaves do not occur

quickly in succession, therefore not creating too much tension. The pianist playing this passage would embody what Le Guin would call Beach's "physical calmness."<sup>372</sup>

Beginning in measure 56, the violin takes over the second theme while the piano supports with graceful arpeggios in sixteenth notes. For the first two measures of this statement (measures 56 and 57) the arpeggios are shared between both hands where the left hand passes the arpeggio over to the right hand from one beat to the next creating a sort of rocking effect in the body. The slight rocking back and forth feels somewhat like a self-soothing motion (See Figure 4.2.9.). Then, in measures 58-61, the piano plays a melodic duet with the violin in the right hand while the left hand continues the arpeggiations on its own. Rather than continuing the feeling of participating in a lullaby, this melody expresses yearning and a surge of emotion through syncopations, an ascending scale, and leaning into dissonance (Figure 4.2.10.). Because of the nature of the two hands being physically separated from one another and the right hand continuously ascending, the calm effect of the rocking gives way for three measures becoming a large surge of physical energy even though the left hand is still playing arpeggios. The three and a half measure ascent in the right hand—each ascending note more insistent than the last—mirrors the physical sensation of emotion building up in the body, which may approximate a long inhale. Then, without any physical resolution, or descending gesture, the piano returns to its role of supporting the violin through arpeggios passed between the hands in measures 62-64 (Figure 4.2.11) before beginning an imitative passage of thematic material between both instruments in measures 65-74 (Figure 4.2.12).

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<sup>372</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 21.



Figure 4.2.9 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 55-57

55

*rall.* *a tempo*

*rall.* *a tempo* *p con molta tenerezza*

*pp* *dolce grazioso*

*And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \*

Figure 4.2.10 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 55-61

55

*rall.* *a tempo*

*rall.* *a tempo* *p con molta tenerezza*

*pp* *dolce grazioso*

*And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \*

*cantabile*

*piu cresc.*

59

*poco cresc.*

*And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \*

Figure 4.2.11 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 IV, mm. 62-64

62

*poco rall.* *pp*

*pp* *poco rall.* *dim.* *crescendo*

*And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \* *And.* \*

Figure 4.2.12 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 65-75

The musical score for measures 65-75 of the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, shows a progression of energy and tempo. Measure 65 begins with a piano introduction marked 'a tempo' and 'mf espressivo'. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many triplets and sixteenth notes. The violin part has a melodic line with some triplets. Measure 68 introduces a tempo change to 'poco a poco più mosso' and 'più cresc.'. Measure 71 continues the 'poco a poco più mosso' tempo. Measure 74 marks the beginning of 'Tempo I.', where the tempo increases significantly. The piano part continues with its complex, rhythmic accompaniment, and the violin part has a melodic line with some triplets. The score includes dynamic markings like 'mf espressivo' and 'cresc.'.

As the thematic fragments are passed back and forth between the piano and violin they become progressively more energized, an effect reinforced by Beach's indication for the music to accelerate. This buildup of energy and exchanges between the performers suggests a return to the power at the beginning of the movement. In measure 69 (Figure 4.2.13) the pianist's right hand begins to play quick, successive octaves in triplets while the left hand is playing sixteenth

notes creating a polyrhythm between the hands. In addition to the faster note values and the accelerating tempo, the polyrhythm makes the music sound and feel busier and more agitated. The hands have to be independent while being coordinated all while building speed and momentum and projecting a melody. Physically, the right hand needs to be quite strong and firm in projecting the top notes that the pinky plays while the wrist remains loose. Meanwhile, the left hand is ascending and descending the keyboard, but it does not feel like the calm rocking from before as the top note of the arpeggio is always tied over and then repeated causing a brief pause in the flow of the sixteenth notes. This tied note creates a jolting sensation because the thumb actually stops playing for the length of an eighth note, lifts off the keyboard and then has to land back down on the same key it just played. By contrast, the right hand plays large leaps in measures 70, 71, and 73 (Figure 4.2.14) which demands large physical motions of the arm. Additionally, even though the note values in the right hand are longer than those in the left which means that the arms do not need to move so rapidly, the melody should sound very sustained and therefore the arm needs to be consistently creating larger motions.

Figure 4.2.13 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 68-70



Figure 4.2.14 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 68-73

By beat three of measure 73 (Figure 4.2.15) the right hand begins to join the left hand for three out of four sixteenth notes. Because the right hand only joins the left hand on the second sixteenth note of the group, the motif feels physically unstable; while both hands are playing at the same time, they are not meant to create the same musical shape. By allowing the left hand to begin the gesture with the first sixteenth note, it can play a strong bass note, but the accent for the right hand is on the following strong beat (i.e., beat four in measure 73). The gesture in each hand spans two beats, but the left hand's gesture begins with more weight (which assumes a kind of accent), while the right hand does not begin its gesture until the second sixteenth note, moving towards the next beat where the left hand has no accent. Thus, the hands do not have even weight distribution, which demands a high level of physical coordination for the pianist. In summary, from measures 69-74 the left and right hands/arms/fingertips have to be independent in order to play their respective contrasting gestures. The physical instability heightens tension in the music.

Figure 4.2.15 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 71-73



As Beach transitions out of theme two and into a restatement of material from the introduction of the movement, (measures 65-74), the “physical calmness” recedes and as Le Guin would say, “muscular activity” increases.<sup>373</sup> The pianist’s fingers that were playing gracefully calm arpeggios only moments ago, are now building momentum and becoming more engaged in their tips. The pressure must be sustained for each note as the energy of the music builds up, which recalls the powerful opening of the movement. In measure 82 the energy explodes into heroic repeated dominant chords played by both hands before settling into an unwinding of the second theme material from measures 83-90 (Figure 4.2.16) and then a transition into the fugue in measure 95. Beach indicates for the chords in measure 82 to be played fortissimo with a sustained pedal for the entire measure. Therefore, the arms should be playing with lots of strength with rotation of the wrist towards the pinkies, as in the opening of the movement. However, the articulation is not as punctuated as it needs to be in the first two measures of the movement, rather it should be broad and heavy to create a majestic tone in this climax of the first half of the movement.

<sup>373</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini’s Body*, 21-22.

Figure 4.2.16 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 82-96

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 82-86) features a piano introduction with a violin melody. The second system (measures 87-90) is marked 'cantabile' and features a piano melody with violin accompaniment. The third system (measures 91-94) is marked 'Tempo I.' and features a piano melody with violin accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (ff, p, pp, f), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (a tempo, con gran espressione, poco a poco dim., sempre p, poco accel., cresc., marcato).

The physical gestures required for measures 83-90 resemble those of the piano's statement of the secondary theme, except that the roles of the hands are reversed where the right hand has the melody in octaves and the left hand is playing the syncopations. As previously discussed, the body can recall sensations from different places in the body once a sensation has been felt in one place. Therefore, although the roles in each hand are switched in measure 83-90, the body can still remember what it is supposed to do without too much struggle because of muscle memory, which creates a foundation for a different set of muscles. From measures 91-94, however, the music transitions again, building momentum, accelerating, and foreshadowing the

subject of the upcoming fugue. The left hand needs to navigate large leaps while shaping short fragments of melodic material while the right hand continues to play syncopations that propel the music forward towards measure 95.

As I discussed in Chapter 3, Beach sets up the thematic core of the fourth movement at the end of the third movement. The last four notes that the violin plays in the third movement become the melodic and rhythmic impetus for the entire fourth movement. Throughout the first half of the fourth movement, Beach develops this motif to become both a primary theme and a secondary theme, as well as cohesive fragments connecting each different section with the others. Therefore, the beginning of the fugue in measure 95 is not aurally shocking since the material for the fugue's subject is derived from the four-note motif that has been developed throughout the movement. Additionally, as Le Guin argues, by the halfway point in a movement, the listener and the performer would be familiar with the "what" of the music (i.e., the thematic content), based on which they would inquire "who" the music portrays.<sup>374</sup> However, in measure 95, the style of writing for the piano immediately changes. For the first 93 measures, the writing for the piano is extremely dense, demanding a lot of pedalling to sustain harmonies, and often large physical motions from the arms and wrists. Suddenly, in measure 95 there are just two voices in the piano part and the articulation is very short and marked, very much in the style of a fugue by J.S. Bach (Figure 4.2.17). The physical motions are much smaller because there is not much leaping, the dynamic is marked *pianissimo*, and in order to capture the baroque style of playing (such as the opening of this fugue suggests by the articulations) the fingers must be light, only adding small amounts of weight to accented notes or to create a more dramatic shape. When the violin enters at measure 100, it, too, is marked *pianissimo* meaning that the pianist must play

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<sup>374</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 27.

much softer and much lighter so that it does not overpower the statement of the subject that the violinist is playing. In light of the sudden change of pianistic style, the fugue would seem to suggest: “What else do you have to show me about Beach?” Or, a more specific question would be, “what else does the further development of this 4-note motif show me about Beach?”

Figure 4.2.17 Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 93-100



As Beach develops the fugue, her writing for the piano becomes increasingly denser, and the pianist’s body, therefore, becoming more physically active, the answer to the aforementioned questions becomes clearer: By relating herself to other masters of fugal writing—predominantly male composers—Beach expressed through her own fugue that her composition was worthy of serious attention during her lifetime and thereafter. The physicality of the part also suggests Beach’s resolve to express her competency as a performing pianist regardless of her gender and the predetermined associations of such. As she develops the fugue, the pianist needs to become more physically active in order to successfully voice the chords, project the subject entrances, and shape any supporting material. In measure 113, while the



violin plays a fragment of the subject, the pianist suddenly plays a succession of solid sixths in both hands (Figure 4.2.18), completely changing the texture of the music. When the right hand of the piano plays the subject fragment in measure 115, it also begins to play an alto line on beat three. Meanwhile, the left hand plays octaves and then sixths and then thirds over bars 115-117. While neither hand is stretched to capacity here, they are both expanded more than they had been. These are not the large chords played from the beginning of the movement, but their staccato articulations ask for a lot of wrist movement. As the note values shorten in measure 117 and a short fragment of the subject is passed back and forth from the violin to the two voices in the piano part (Figure 4.2.19), each hand needs to change its articulation every two beats. Because the hands are shifting their roles so frequently, and because the tempo is so rapid, the arms and fingers create a flurry of energy. The buildup continues with both hands playing successive sixteenth notes in measures 121-122 followed by a two-measure descent in both hands transitioning into measure 125. The sixteenth notes in measure 121 and 122 are slightly awkward due to some changes in the pattern causing some potential tension in the fingers and wrist. In order to dissipate muscle tension, the pianist needs to find a fingering with which they feel confident playing, which would allow for a relaxed wrist wherever possible. Furthermore, the fingertips need to remain light even though the intensity of the music builds up continuously. Then, while measure 124 looks like slight reprieve after all of the sixteenth notes, once the fingers and arms begin to learn the notes in the body, the pianist recognizes the difficulty of playing all of these similar intervals that actually have very different shapes required for each. Therefore, the fingers and wrists cannot remain in a fixed position and simply shift slightly down the keyboard. There is, with every new chord, a pianist's need to shift the wrist to make sure the fingers are successfully placed on the correct notes before being played. Some pianists may also

want to change fingers for some chords so that they are not always using the fifth finger, if the fourth or third fingers of the hand permit. Beach may have liked using finger number five and finger number four, or maybe she preferred using only finger number five, but unfortunately there is no way of knowing because she did not mark fingerings in this measure.

Figure 4.2.18 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 113-116



Figure 4.2.19 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, 117-119



After so much buildup of physical and emotional energy over thirty measures, the pianist seeks reprieve, but Beach demands still more physical strength transitioning out of the fugue and into the return of the primary theme than she did throughout the fugue. Now, from measures 125-137 the right hand plays large, dense chords, always projecting the theme, while the left hand plays successive triplets that require large leaps and an extended hand. As in the opening of the

movement, the right wrist needs to rotate to the right in order to project the top notes above all of the other notes in the chord and above the rumbling triplets in the left hand. The shoulder and the arm need to consistently throw weight into the right side of the arm and wrist which requires both strength and endurance over so many measures. Meanwhile, the left hand is actively opening and closing to facilitate the change of hand positions and to remain relaxed wherever possible. It, too, needs endurance in this section, and needs to project its bass notes played by the pinky. Therefore, the left shoulder and arm also need to rotate towards the outside of the body to send enough weight into the pinky so that the bass notes can provide enough power and harmonic support for the thematic material. Because a pianist playing this movement needs to put weight from both hands into the pinkies, the torso must remain mostly in front of the centre of the keyboard. However, at the end of measure 137 both hands are quite close to one another and play in rapid alternation in a tumultuous descending passage (Figure 4.2.20). Here, the torso needs to shift to the right to be in front of both hands as they begin their descent from the upper part of the keyboard, and then it follows the hands as they descend. Now the body is also moving significantly, not only the hands, wrists, and arms. Because the right foot is also managing the damper pedal and the left foot needs to act as a sort of anchor to the floor, the entire body is fully engaged in what feels like a sort of unleashing of wild energy.

Figure 4.2.20 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 135-141



Over the next 16 measures (mm. 141-156), all of the material from the fugue and from the return of the primary theme unravels and gradually calms down (Figure 4.2.21). The physical activity slows down as the tempo decreases, and the volume diminishes, which requires less physical force. Additionally, as the music settles down, the hands gradually join in a close position in the middle of the keyboard. While this drawing in towards the middle of the keyboard does not have quite the same effect as Le Guin suggests the cellist has by descending in register on the cello and thus drawing in towards the heart, the close hand position in the middle of the keyboard is quite comfortable to play especially after all of the physical unrest of the fugue and the return of the first theme. This physical comfort and the drawing in of the arms towards the centre of balance mirror emotional comfort, which prepares the player and listener for the “heartfelt sincerity” of the secondary theme.<sup>375</sup> In other words, it is not just the physical gesture of bringing the hands close together in the centre of the keyboard that expresses an embodied

<sup>375</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 23.

comfort; rather, the physical gesture acts as a transition from the previous agitated passage into the deeply felt, more intimate secondary theme.

Figure 4.2.21 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 139-156

139

142

145

149

153

*dim.*

*sf*

*mf*

*cresc.*

*dolce marc.*

*dim.*

*f*

*acc.*

*pmo rall.*

*sempre più tranquillo*

*più dim.*

*pp*

*poco rall.*

Whereas the statement of the second theme in the exposition is first played by the piano, in the recapitulation, it is the violin that takes the lead. Glancing at the piano part for the first

nine measures while the violin carries the theme, a pianist will notice Beach's indication of "*mormorando*"—murmuring— (Figure 4.2.22). This indication makes a sonic effect, requiring that the fingers play softly and evenly so as not to over articulate strong beats. For the most part the left hand oscillates back and forth between the pinky and the thumb playing quiet octaves while the right hand plays on offbeats, creating a feeling of rhythmic counterpoint despite the calm nature of the theme. Top notes in the right hand need to be projected both to balance the sonic effect, and to fulfill its supporting role with short counter melodies or responses to the violin's melody.

Figure 4.2.22 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 157-167

The image shows a musical score for the Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, measures 157-167. The score is in A minor (three sharps) and 3/4 time. It features a piano part with a violin part above it. The piano part has a "mormorando" instruction and a "sempre legatissimo" instruction. The violin part has a "Più lento. (♩ = 96.)" instruction and a "con molto tenerezza" instruction. The score includes measures 157, 161, and 165. The piano part has a "rall." instruction and a "K a tempo" instruction. The violin part has a "rall." instruction and a "dolce marcata" instruction.

When the piano takes over the theme in measure 166, the physical patterns and gestures resemble those of the first statement of the secondary theme in the exposition. While not written in the same key, and the gestures do vary, the overall idea of the music is similar and therefore the pianist remembers the shapes and weight distribution required to voice the melody and bass notes. From the restatement of the secondary theme in measure 157 to the end of the movement, the musical content is primarily thematic restatements rather than further thematic development or introduction of new material. Beach always restates thematic material in new keys, but the musical gestures and the thematic material remain the same, and therefore the pianist plays embodied physical gestures. Nevertheless, the last 17 measures (Figure 4.2.23) build with consistently vigorous energy that does not peak until the very last notes in the final measure. Thus, the body is very active—the arms leaping across the keyboard, hands alternating between each other, and fingertips engaged and flexible. Within the last 17 measures alone (mm. 194–211), Beach, as the pianist, would have had to push herself physically. That is to say that her small hands would have often been stretched to full capacity within these 17 bars, and she would have been exerting significant physical strength just to create the volume that she requests by the end of the movement.<sup>376</sup> The indication of *fff*—the loudest dynamic marking in the entire sonata—on the last chord in itself is an extreme request for this note to be played as loudly as possible. In addition, Beach would have needed to have incredibly loose wrists and arms to endure such physical activity over so many measures in a row, and her fingers would have needed to be extremely precise in their connection to the keys to be able to play the final scale as rapidly as she indicated. In Le Guin’s discussion of virtuosity, she explains that composers, such

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<sup>376</sup> According to Block, Beach had small hands, but that they “were quite flexible.” Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian*, 30. Additionally, in Jenkins’s autobiography of Beach, he includes a recollection of Ella Lord Gilbert, a musician and supporter of Beach: “Her hand was so soft and so tiny, yet pliable and supple enough to reach the largest of musical chords.” Jenkins, *The Remarkable Mrs. Beach*, 14.



as Boccherini, explored the idiomatic writing of their instruments as a means of self-expression in their musical works. In particular, she explains that “[i]n music-making it is the nature of embodiment to demonstrate itself somewhat episodically—a passage here, a tendency there.”<sup>377</sup> In other words, repetitions of rhythmic or motivic material can demonstrate a composer’s expression of self in a composition. Accordingly, I argue that Beach’s continuous demand for a pianist—namely herself—to exert so much physical strength and control reflects her “embodiment to demonstrate” *who* she was as a composer-pianist of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>377</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini’s Body*, 158.

Figure 4.2.23 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34, IV, mm. 193-209

**M Assai animato.**

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a measure number on the left. The piano part is written in treble and bass staves, while the violin part is in a single staff. The key signature is A minor (three sharps). The tempo is marked 'M Assai animato.' at the top. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings like *ff* (fortissimo). The piano part features complex textures with many beamed notes and arpeggiated figures. The violin part includes rapid runs and arpeggiated figures. The score ends with a double bar line and a final chord.

193

197

200

203

206

### 4.3 Conclusion

In her book, Le Guin argues that a performer develops a reciprocal relationship with the composer by embodying the physical gestures needed to play the piece of music that a composer-performer such as Boccherini wrote for himself to play. That is to say, by the way the music is written in the score, a performer must learn to physically play those notes and in so doing they are physically feeling what the composer must have felt.<sup>378</sup> Furthermore, Le Guin refers to the term, *expression*, defined by the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), and the Italian term, *sentire*, defined by Italian linguist Francesco Alberti di Villanova (1737-1801), to argue that a composer can “inhabit” a performer’s body.<sup>379</sup> The part of Rousseau’s definition of expression that Le Guin references involves physically doing everything that the composer would have done including their energy, their shaping of phrases, and their articulation. Similarly, Villanova defines *sentire* as a “generic term with which one commonly expresses the suffering or receiving of those impressions that are produced either in the body by external sensible things, or in the soul by internal passions.”<sup>380</sup> For Le Guin, practicing *sentire* as she learns Boccherini’s Cello Sonata in E Flat Major, *Fuori Catalogo*, relates her so closely to the composer that she feels his presence *inhabiting* her body, thus creating a reciprocal relationship between two bodies.

In a similar way, I argue in this chapter that a pianist can develop a reciprocal relationship to Beach in their embodied practice of the fourth movement of her Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34. When I play the last 17 measures of the movement, in particular, I

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<sup>378</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini’s Body*, 24.

<sup>379</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini’s Body* 24-25. Note that Le Guin states that Rousseau’s entry is on execution, but what she references is in fact under the term “expression.” See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: veuve Duchesne, 1768), s.v. “Expression.”

<sup>380</sup> “Termine generico, col quale si esprime comunemente il soffrire, o ricevere tutte quelle impressioni, che si producono, o nel corpo d’all’esterne cose sensibili, o nell’animo dalle interne passioni.” Francesco Alberti di Villanuova, *Nuovo dizionario italiano-francese* (Nice: Gabriele Floteront, 1780), s.v. “sentire.”

can *feel* Beach's presence inhabiting my body much like Le Guin describes of her experience learning Boccherini's cello sonata. The way in which Beach writes definitive gestures in combination with extreme velocity and technical virtuosity suggests a rapid buildup of fervent energy, and when I play this ending while practicing *sentire* in the way Le Guin theorizes, I physically and emotionally feel this energy. It is not an energy I would feel if I were playing the notes without inquiring into the composer's intentions and thus my recognition of my reciprocal relationship with Beach. By contrast, when I play the statements of the secondary theme, I feel in my body a calmness suggestive of Beach's personal preference for solitude and tranquillity. In conclusion, by learning the fourth movement of Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 through an embodied practice, I am engaging with the composer in a reciprocal relationship and therefore, I argue, taking *political* action in the way Arendt argues. Furthermore, when I perform this music for a live audience, I would be connecting Beach to the audience and the audience to Beach because I have spent the time and made the conscious effort to get to know Beach through my embodied practice. Hence, I am able to express aspects of her identity that I would not be able to express otherwise. Thus, as a living player of Beach's music, I am acting as what Le Guin calls her "agent" in reciprocal relationality with the audience.<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 24.

## Chapter 5: The Siren's Self: Maurice Ravel's Musical Interpretation of Ondine's Voice

### 5.1 Introduction

In my discussion of Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor throughout Chapters Two, Three, and Four, I explored ways that she was able to reclaim agency by composing and performing such a large-scale work for piano—very notable acts for a woman at the end of the nineteenth century. By contrast, my discussion of French composer Maurice Ravel's (1875-1937) Ondine explores ways that mythological figures such as the water sprite and Sirens have been depicted in literature, art, and music throughout history, specifically linking their sexuality and *lack* of agency to their physical voices. I argue that the perpetuation of oppression and violence inflicted upon these literary, artistic, and musical representations of water sprites and Sirens mirrors the injustices that women have faced globally throughout history, even in Canada in 2024.

Although the first literary documentation of Sirens occurs in Homer's *Odyssey* (c. 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE), the mythological figures were known to the Greeks through stories passed down orally. However, the origins of the Sirens is uncertain. Scholars such as John Pollard, Judith Peraino, and Linda Austern and Inna Naroditskaya mention artistic depictions of the figures in the sixth and seventh centuries BCE whereas scholar Avi Kapach states that the Sirens were known in ancient Greece as early as the Mycenaean period (ca. 1600-1050 BCE).<sup>382</sup> The

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<sup>382</sup> John Pollard, "Sirens," in *Seers, Shrines, and Sirens: The Greek Religious Revolution in the Sixth Century B.C.* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), 137; Judith Peraino, "Songs of the Sirens," in *Listening to the Sirens: Musical Technologies of Queer Identity from Homer to Hedwig* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 13; Linda Austern and Inna Naroditskaya, *Music of the Sirens* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 17-18; Avi Kapach, "Sirens," Mythopedia (website), updated March 25, 2023, <https://mythopedia.com/topics/sirens#origins>.

countless artistic and literary representations of the figures raise many questions about the Sirens' power, intelligence, physical appearance, and voices which continues to intrigue scholars, artists, and musicians, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Recently, scholars such as Peraino, Silvia Montiglio, Elisabeth Le Guin, Alexander Rehding, and Adriana Cavarero have been particularly interested in the Sirens' voices in relation to the instability of their identities. That is to say that the diverse portrayals of the Siren's use of the singing voice or not has caused scholars to consider her agency or lack thereof. For Peraino, Montiglio, and Rehding the various rewritings and interpretations of the Sirens in Homer's *Odyssey* suggest a duality between the seductive quality of the figure's voice, and her vulnerability in relation to her gender. For example, in recounting Apollonius of Rhodes' interpretation of the Homeric epic, Montiglio argues that despite the well-known power of the Sirens' voices, the figures "suffer violence" inflicted by the male protagonist, Orpheus, whose powerful playing on the lyre drowns out the Siren's voice.<sup>383</sup> To Le Guin, the Sirens that Cristóbal Colón saw and who are evoked in the songs that circulate around the Eastern shores of Mexico suggest a clear physical metamorphosis linked to her singing voice which calls into question the stability of her identity.<sup>384</sup> For Cavarero, the portrayal of the Siren without the ability to narrate—one who has a pure voice, but no semantic quality—is directly linked to her sexuality and a lack of agency.<sup>385</sup> In the first part of this chapter I will provide an overview of various artistic and literary depictions of Sirens from antiquity to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in particular how the figures' voices have been portrayed. In the second part of this chapter I will discuss ways in which French composer Maurice Ravel (1875-

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<sup>383</sup> Silvia Montiglio, "The Song of the Sirens Between Sound and Sense," in *Sound and the Ancient Senses* ed. Shane Butler and Sarah Nooter (London: Routledge, 2018), 174.

<sup>384</sup> Elisabeth Le Guin, "Metamorphosis and the Sirena," *Journal of Musicological Research* 40, no. 3 (2021), 250-252.

<sup>385</sup> Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 106-116.

1937) portrayed the voice of the water sprite, Ondine, in his composition for solo piano by the same name inspired by the poetry of French poet Aloysius Bertrand (1807-1841). In particular I will explore the ways that Ravel musically depicts Ondine's song melodically and harmonically, the ways that he musically depicts her diabolical laughter, and the way that the virtuosity of the piece at large alludes to Ondine's supernatural being. I argue in this chapter that Ravel's musical portrayal of Ondine's voice perpetuates the notion that there is a link between a water sprite's — or a Siren's—voice and her sexuality and by extension to her lack of agency. Additionally, I argue that this perpetuation mirrors the oppression and violence that women have faced globally throughout history.

## 5.2 Artistic and Literary Depictions of Sirens and their Voices from Antiquity to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In Book Twelve of Homer's *Odyssey*, the enchantress and goddess, Circe, warns Odysseus of the power of the Sirens' song:

First you will come to the Sirens who enchant all who come near them. If anyone unwarily draws in too close and hears the singing of the Sirens, his wife and children will never welcome him home again, for they sit in a green field and warble him to death with the sweetness of their song. There is a great heap of dead men's bones lying all around, with the flesh still rotting off them. Therefore, pass these Sirens by, and stop your men's ears with wax that none of them may hear; but if you like you can listen yourself, for you may get them to bind you as you stand upright on a cross-piece half way up the mast itself, that you may have the pleasure of listening. If you beg and pray the men to unloose you, then they must bind you faster.<sup>386</sup>

Later, as Odysseus recounts the experience of nearing the Sirens' island, he describes the wind and the water becoming calm as he puts wax in the ears of all of his men so that they might not

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<sup>386</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Samuel Butler (Ottawa, ON: Engage Books), Book Twelve, 117, accessed October 21, 2023, <https://canadacommons.ca/artifacts/1878792/the-odyssey/2628345/>.

hear the Sirens' voices. Meanwhile, Odysseus explains how he stood upright on the crosspiece, hands and feet bound to the mast. Then, as the ship came within earshot of the Sirens, Odysseus heard them singing:

“Come here,” they sang, “renowned Odysseus, honour to the Achaean name, and listen to our two voices. No one ever sailed past us without staying to hear the enchanting sweetness of our song – and he who listens will go on his way not only charmed, but wiser, for we know all the ills that the gods laid upon the Argives and Trojans before Troy, and can tell you everything that is going to happen over the whole world.”

They sang these words most musically, and as I longed to hear them further I made by frowning to my men that they should set me free; but they quickened their stroke, and Eurylochus and Perimedes bound me with still stronger bonds till we had got out of hearing the Sirens' voices. Then my men took the wax from their ears and unbound me.<sup>387</sup>

As many scholars including Austern and Naroditskaya, Peraino, and Cavarero affirm, the Sirens' physical appearances are not described in Homer's epic, while their voices are the focus of their identity. All three narrators—Circe, Homer, and the Sirens themselves—describe the beauty of the figures' voices. Circe and the Sirens describe the “sweetness of the song,” while Homer explains that the Sirens sang “musically.” Additionally, in Odysseus' recollection of the song, the Sirens proclaim to know all that occurred to the Argives and Trojans before Troy and all that is to come across the world. Furthermore, as Montiglio explains, in addition to the possession of their own wisdom the Sirens offer knowledge to all those who listen to their song.<sup>388</sup> Thus, as Cavarero contends, the Sirens described by Homer are dangerous, omniscient figures, with an ability to narrate. Because, as Cavarero explains, “in the symbolic patriarchal order, man is conceived as mind and woman as body,” the Greek term *phone* (sound) is gendered feminine, whereas *semantikon* (meaning) is gendered masculine.<sup>389</sup> In this way, Cavarero argues that the

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<sup>387</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, 119.

<sup>388</sup> Montiglio, “The Song of the Sirens Between Sound and Sense,” 171-172.

<sup>389</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 107.



Homeric Sirens “work to upset the androcentric system; they usurp the masculine speciality of logos.”<sup>390</sup> In other words, because the Homeric Sirens are conscious, intelligent beings,—qualities gendered masculine—and they narrate through song,—a use of the voice that is gendered feminine—they symbolize a confusion of gender roles. Scholar Judith Butler might theorize this confusion as “gender trouble.”<sup>391</sup>

By contrast to the Sirens’ omniscience and the semantic quality to their voices described in the Homeric epic, the Sirens described by the Argonauts in Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautika* (3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE) have only “lily-pure voices.”<sup>392</sup> These Sirens do not upset the androcentric system because, in the symbolic patriarchal order, they are strictly female in their expression of identity—they do not narrate, but they have beautiful voices. The only other descriptions of the Sirens’ voices include the adjectives “high,” “clear,” and “seductive.”<sup>393</sup> Montiglio also points out that in the original Greek, the term *parthenien* (virgin) is used to describe the Sirens’ voice, although the recent translation by Peter Green (2008) does not use this term. Additionally, the Argonauts describe the physical appearance of the figures as “partly like birds, and partly like young maidens.”<sup>394</sup> Just like Odysseus, Orpheus sails by the Sirens unscathed due to his quick thinking. However, rather than being bound to the mast of his ship, Orpheus seizes a lyre and begins to play so loudly that it drowns out the Sirens’ singing. As Montiglio argues, for both Homer and the Argonauts, the Siren’s voice is irresistible, regardless of the song’s content or lack thereof.<sup>395</sup> However, many scholars including Montiglio and

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<sup>390</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 107.

<sup>391</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 46.

<sup>392</sup> Apollonius of Rhodes, *The Argonautika*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, trans. Peter Green (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2008), 174-175.

<sup>393</sup> Apollonius of Rhodes, *The Argonautika*, 174-175.

<sup>394</sup> Apollonius of Rhodes, *The Argonautika*, 174.

<sup>395</sup> Montiglio, “The Song of the Sirens Between Sound and Sense,” 173.

Cavarero argue that the lack of semantic quality in the figure's voice makes her a weaker character than the men on the ship. Furthermore, Montiglio argues that the use of the word "virgin" to describe the Sirens' voices suggests vulnerability to male force. She goes so far as to state that the "voices are raped, as it were, by the powerful music of the male player, which 'does violence', *ebiesato*, to them."<sup>396</sup> In Apollonius of Rhodes' interpretation of the sailors' encounter with the Sirens not only do the mythological figures not have any perceived intelligence or wisdom to impart, and they are only seductive due to the purity of their voices, but they are vulnerable to male force, even in the form of music played on a lyre. As Montiglio states, the Sirens "suffer violence not even from a better singer but from a louder one."<sup>397</sup>

While Montiglio's argument concerns the voice on its own, Cavarero argues that the various depictions of Sirens from Franz Kafka (*The Silence of the Sirens*, 1946) to Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1997), and such artists as René Magritte (*The Collective Invention*, 1934) link the figure's vulnerability not only to her voice, but also to her sexualized physical appearance. Cavarero explains that although the Homeric Sirens were omniscient beings, whose bodies were, according to Apollonius of Rhodes, half woman and half bird, later artistic and literary depictions of the figures were beautiful fishlike creatures whose voices have no semantic quality, —no ability to narrate— or who lose their voices, seducing men not only by their singing voices, but by their physical beauty, often leading men to an erotic death.<sup>398</sup> It is interesting to note that, as Pollard explains, the earliest depictions of Sirens showed bearded creatures which put into question their sex. There were women such as the priestess of the Pedasians who wore beards on occasion, thus the sex of these depictions of

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<sup>396</sup> Montiglio, "The Song of the Sirens Between Sound and Sense," 174.

<sup>397</sup> Montiglio, "The Song of the Sirens Between Sound and Sense," 174.

<sup>398</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 103-116.

Sirens is ambiguous.<sup>399</sup> Pollard also confirms that the early illustrations of Sirens on Corinthian ware were birdlike creatures, often perching on rocks. However, despite the earliest depictions of Sirens showing creatures of unknown sex, the majority of the artistic and literary portrayals of the figures are female. Just as the voices of the Sirens in the *Argonautica*, are described by the term “virgin,” the figures themselves are described as “weeping virgins” in Euripides’ play *Helen* (412 BCE).<sup>400</sup> Ovid’s Sirens in *Metamorphoses* (8 CE) are also female with “virgins’ mouths” and a “virgin’s face.”<sup>401</sup> Thus, even in early representations of Sirens, their gender was confirmed as female. However, her gender was not the only aspect of her identity that was in question. As Cavarero asserts, the question of the Siren’s physical appearance as a creature of land or of water also inspired a variety of different illustrations.

Austern and Naroditskaya confirm that despite the earliest representations of Sirens as birdlike creatures, female figures with the tail of a fish are known from ancient art dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. These figures were known as tritonesses, but as Austern and Naroditskaya contend, these figures were conflated with Sirens.<sup>402</sup> However, it was not until the eighth century that Sirens with fishtails were found in literature. In the *Liber monstrorum* Sirens are described as “sea-girls, who deceive sailors with the outstanding beauty of their appearance and the sweetness of their song, and are most like human beings from the head to the navel, with the body of a maiden, but have scaly fishes’ tails, with which they always lurk in the sea.”<sup>403</sup> Yet, as Austern and Naroditskaya explain, until the Renaissance the image of the Siren was not

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<sup>399</sup> Pollard, “Sirens,” 137.

<sup>400</sup> Euripides, “Helen,” in *Euripides, 2: Hippolytus, Suppliant Women, Helen, Electra, Cyclops*, ed. David R. Slavitt and Palmer Bovie (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 156.

<sup>401</sup> Ovid, “Metamorphoses,” 5.592-602, in *Metamorphoses by Ovid* trans. Stephanie McCarter (New York: Penguin Books, 2022), 145.

<sup>402</sup> Austern and Naroditskaya, *Music of the Sirens*, 29.

<sup>403</sup> Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the “Beowulf” Manuscript* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 263 (Latin text 262).

consistent where some depictions of the figure continued to have the feet and tail of a bird, whereas others showed a figure with a fishtail.<sup>404</sup> Nonetheless, both a dictionary of Calepine and a book of madrigals printed in Rome in 1533 confirm that the Siren had a woman's figure to her waist, but a fishtail below.<sup>405</sup> Furthermore, the Siren began to be equated with the mermaid from folklore and as such, Austern and Naroditskaya contend that the Siren is a figure known to scholars whereas "mermaids are for sailors."<sup>406</sup> In other words, the stories told through folklore and legends influenced the perception of the Siren's identity causing conflicting ideas between scholars and popular belief. Yet, despite Austern and Naroditskaya's claim that Sirens are for scholars and mermaids are for sailors, the image of the Siren as a fishlike creature is the one that has prevailed well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In 1811 German author Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777-1843) published a fairy-tale of an elemental water sprite (made entirely of water) named Undine (*Undine*). Though not a Siren as the Greeks imagined and not a mermaid from folklore, Undine's appearance is that of a human woman despite her origins from the water. After her marriage to the knight, Huldbrand, Undine explains that as an elemental water sprite, she comes from the waters of the sea, the lakes, and the streams, where women undulate like waves amidst which they play. She describes the beauty of the women, of the crystal palaces in the depths, and the gardens where coral trees bloom. She explains that the beautiful women are called Undines and that she is one of them. Undine tells Huldbrand that although life in the depths is better than human life, Undines do not have souls. There is a way, however, that an Undine can receive a soul: by gaining the love of a human. Since Huldbrand loves Undine, she now has a soul, just as her father wanted for her.

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<sup>404</sup> Austern and Naroditskaya, *Music of the Sirens*, 36.

<sup>405</sup> Austern and Naroditskaya, *Music of the Sirens*, 36-37.

<sup>406</sup> Austern and Naroditskaya, *Music of the Sirens*, 37.

Although Huldbrand accepts what Undine tells him and they continue to live their lives as humans, after a time, he falls in love with another woman, Bertalda, and Undine returns to her life in the water as a water sprite. Despite warnings from Undine, Huldbrand decides to marry Bertalda and Undine returns to kiss Huldbrand, drowning him with her tears.<sup>407</sup> This fairy tale is not the same story of a Siren's use of her voice to lure sailors to their deaths, but there are many similarities between the two figures such as their beauty, their enigmatic entities, their association to water, their search for connection to human men, and their danger. Additionally, while Undine does not seduce Huldbrand with her voice, she does sing a song for Bertalda's birthday in which she explains the mysteries of Bertalda's life and how Undine and Bertalda's stories came to be linked. Upon hearing this song Bertalda calls Undine a witch.<sup>408</sup> The content of Undine's song reinforces the myth that Sirens or water sprites have knowledge that humans do not, and that this knowledge makes them dangerous beings.

Nearly three decades later, in 1837, Danish author Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) published a fairy tale entitled "The Little Mermaid" in a collection of tales for children. Contrary to Disney's film adaptations (1989 and 2023), Andersen's story does not have a happy ending.<sup>409</sup> The original tale resembles the German fairy tale of Undine in that the protagonist lives within the water as a mermaid, but she seeks love from a human man as well as the acquisition of a soul. However, where Undine is childish, rash, and unpredictable before her marriage to Huldbrand, the little mermaid (unnamed) is described as "silent and pensive," qualities that were much more acceptable for a young woman in the nineteenth century.<sup>410</sup> Describing the little

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<sup>407</sup> Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, *Ondine*, translated from the German [translator unknown], illustrated by Arthur Rackham (Paris: Hachette, 1913).

<sup>408</sup> Fouqué, *Ondine*, 69.

<sup>409</sup> Hans Christian Andersen, *The Little Mermaid and Other Stories*, trans. R. Nisbet Bain, illustrated by J. R. Weguelin (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1893), 34-36.

<sup>410</sup> Andersen, *The Little Mermaid*, 4.

mermaid as “silent and pensive” is a reminder to readers that men prefer when women do not speak, do not disobey, or do not cause trouble. Nevertheless, both water figures are beautiful beings whose enigmatic bodies and understanding of a world beneath the sea, and whose voices set them apart from human life. To be loved by a human—thus acquiring an immortal soul—both beings need to take the form of a human. Undine is fortunate to be a sort of shapeshifter, but the little mermaid seeks the help of a sea-witch who offers her a potion that will turn her fish tail into a pair of human legs. The cost of the trade is significant for the little mermaid; not only does the potion cost her voice, but the trade of her tail for legs causes sharp pain, “as though a two-edged sword pierced right through her body.”<sup>411</sup> When the sea-witch tells the little mermaid that she needs to cut out her tongue, the little mermaid asks: “if you take my voice, what will be left for me?” to which the witch responds: “Your lovely shape, [...] your lightsome gait and your speaking eye; you can fool a man’s heart with them.”<sup>412</sup> Again, Andersen teaches readers that it is more important to have a beautiful body than to have a physical voice with which to express opinions and ideas. Nevertheless, the little mermaid is determined to gain the love of the prince she saw on the ship on the first night that she was allowed to surface above the water. Andersen describes the little mermaid’s beauty as “graceful,” “light as a bubble,” with “lovely white arms.”<sup>413</sup> He emphasizes how “none in the whole palace was so lovely as she, but she was dumb, she could neither sing nor speak.”<sup>414</sup> Even though the prince enjoys the little mermaid’s company, he falls in love with a woman who is even more beautiful than the mute mermaid. Because she has not won the prince’s love, the little mermaid knows that she will dissolve into sea foam. However, her sisters visit her with a knife that the sea-witch offered as an opportunity

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<sup>411</sup> Andersen, *The Little Mermaid*, 26.

<sup>412</sup> Andersen, *The Little Mermaid*, 25.

<sup>413</sup> Andersen, *The Little Mermaid*, 28.

<sup>414</sup> Andersen, *The Little Mermaid*, 28.

for the little mermaid to regrow her fish tail and return to her home in the sea. The little mermaid must drive the knife into the prince's heart and as his blood runs onto her feet they will grow together to become a tail once again. However, the little mermaid throws the dagger into the water before dissolving into sea foam. In Andersen's tale, the little mermaid's voice is central to the story and to her agency. Even though she has the "loveliest voice of all creatures on the earth or in the sea," she trades in her voice for a human body so that she can have the potential to be loved by the prince.<sup>415</sup> As such, Andersen's story teaches that not only are men primarily interested in beauty, —physical and vocal—but women will need to suffer—to be mutilated—in order to gain such a love. Even then, as scholar Marina Warner explains, "[t]o be saved, more is required: self-obliteration, dissolution."<sup>416</sup>

Published in 1842, French poet Aloysius Bertrand's *Ondine* poses challenging questions regarding the protagonist's intelligence and power. Just like Fouqué's Undine, the protagonist in Bertrand's poem is a water sprite with the capacity to narrate, whose goal is to seduce a mortal man. In Bertrand's tale, however, Ondine, like the many portrayals of Sirens from antiquity, wants the man to join her in the depths of the water.<sup>417</sup> Nonetheless, Ondine's efforts are rejected by the narrator who says that he is in love with a mortal. Ondine pouts, sheds a few tears, and then laughs before disappearing back into the water with a splash. As scholar Valentina Gosetti explains in her book entitled *Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit: Beyond the Prose Poem*, Bertrand's portrayal of the water sprite challenges Romantic clichés and contemporary ideas because Ondine is not represented as the typical Siren whose beauty and voice are fatally

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<sup>415</sup> Andersen, *The Little Mermaid*, 21.

<sup>416</sup> Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), 398.

<sup>417</sup> Aloysius Bertrand, "Ondine," in *Gaspard de la nuit: Fantaisies à la manière de Rembrandt et de Callot* (Angers, France: V. Pavie, 1842), 145-146. For full poem and English translation see Appendix C.

irresistible.<sup>418</sup> As Gosetti explains, most literary representations of Ondine in the nineteenth century followed the theme of a *femme fatale* where the water sprite lures a mortal to the depths of the water, and thus dies. In this way, Ondine is much like the many representations of Sirens whose songs seduce sailors and lure them into the water. However, in contrast to Homer's Sirens who are omniscient and powerful, and whose voices are fatally seductive, Bertrand's Ondine is not successful in her seduction. Gosetti also questions Ondine's capacity to understand human senses because of the duality presented in Bertrand's poem.<sup>419</sup> She argues that Bertrand's poem portrays Ondine as a figure who, at first glance, is immature and naïve, similar to the young Undine depicted by Fouqué. Throughout the poem, Ondine is portrayed as childish describing her sisters who mock the weeping willow, begging the mortal to marry her, and pouting and sulking after she is rejected. Nevertheless, as Gosetti argues, Ondine's tone and use of opposites suggest mockery hinting at a satanic side of her character. For example, the use of "belle" and "beau" (the same adjective, but different genders) in the same sentence suggests that Ondine is mocking the limited perspective of the mortal "dame chatelaine" (woman of the castle) who is not able to see all that occurs in the depths of the water, and at the same time mocking the clichéd portrayal of women in Romantic literature who are seen as "angelic figures, contemplating the beauty of nature, while waiting for their prince."<sup>420</sup> In this light, Bertrand's Ondine is more intelligent than her character appears by her behaviour. Her laughter at the end of the poem also relates back to her mocking tone as, according to philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, within Romanticism, "laughter was cut down to cold humor, irony, sarcasm."<sup>421</sup> Gosetti explains

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<sup>418</sup> Valentina Gosetti, *Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit: Beyond the Prose Poem* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2016), 103.

<sup>419</sup> Gosetti, *Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit*, 105.

<sup>420</sup> Gosetti, *Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit*, 107.

<sup>421</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 38.



that Bertrand's use of the phrase "éclat de rire" (burst of laughter) as opposed to the more reassuring "rire" or "sourire" (laugh, or smile) alludes to a certain violence, an idea supported by scholar Gisèle Vanhese who remarks that a burst of laughter from a supernatural being is always associated with a satanic presence in the works of Bertrand.<sup>422</sup> Therefore, while it would appear that Ondine was the weaker character based on her failed attempt to seduce the mortal and his quick dismissal of her marriage proposal, as Gosetti argues, Ondine's laughter points to a possible satanic revenge leaving her the one with power.<sup>423</sup>

As Cavarero argues, the metamorphosis of the Siren's body into a fishlike creature is significant because it is accompanied by a transformation into a beautiful being. In combination with her asemantic vocalizations this transformation fulfills the stereotype of a woman as a seductress, "as an object of masculine desire," who must not speak.<sup>424</sup> Taking this objectification of the female figure one step further, Magritte's startling painting of a Siren on the seashore (*The Collective Invention*, 1934) shows a creature who has the body of a fish from the waist up, and the body of a human from the waist down. In this depiction of the Siren, she has no capacity to vocalize, no human intelligence, washed up on the shore she has no capacity to breathe, she is no longer beautiful, and having the legs of a human the focus is now on her physical ability to satisfy man's pleasure.<sup>425</sup> Put simply, she is reduced to an object of sexual desire who inevitably dies washed up on the seashore.

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<sup>422</sup> Gosetti, *Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit*, 109. The original quote by Vanhese reads, "Par ce dernier trait, la seduction s'apparente explicitement à la seduction démoniaque, l'éclat de rire d'un être surnaturel étant toujours associé chez Bertrand à la presence satanique." Gisèle Vanhese, "Un sens à la fois précis et multiple: Poétique de l'ambigu dans *Gaspard de la Nuit*," in *Un livre d'art fantasque et vagabond*, ed. André Guyaux (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2010), 75.

<sup>423</sup> Gosetti, *Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit*, 107-109.

<sup>424</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 107.

<sup>425</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 109.

Reinforcing the power of the male gaze, Cavarero explains that writer Franz Kafka (1883-1924) imagined the Sirens with the same appearance as the Homeric Sirens,—the face of a woman and the body of a bird—but the arrogant smile with which Odysseus gazes upon the Sirens is so powerful that it renders the creatures silent.<sup>426</sup> In Kafka's interpretation of the Homeric epic, Odysseus is so confident in his strategy to block his ears with wax and to chain his arms to the mast of the ship that his face bears "a look of bliss" as he sails towards the Sirens.<sup>427</sup> According to Kafka, because Odysseus' ears are blocked he cannot confirm whether or not the Sirens sing, but in actual fact, distracted by the look on Odysseus' face, they do not. Because Odysseus observes the Sirens' "throats rising and falling, their breasts lifting, their eyes filled with tears, their lips half-parted," he believes that they are singing.<sup>428</sup> However, as his gaze shifts towards the distance, the Sirens disappear from view. To Kafka, Odysseus' gaze is so powerful, that the Sirens no longer have a desire to allure and only want to "hold as long as they [can] the radiance that [falls] from Odysseus' great eyes."<sup>429</sup> In her silence, the Siren loses her agency and her power over Odysseus. The fact that she was so bewildered by the arrogance in Odysseus' face also highlights the Siren's weakness by contrast to her unwavering power in Homer's epic. Kafka's Sirens, therefore, do not possess the intelligence that Homer's Sirens possess, and seduced by Odysseus' gaze, they lose their capacity to express themselves through the use of their voices entirely.

In each of the modern interpretations of the Siren by Magritte and Kafka, the mythological figure is silent, sexualized, and depicts a woman who is weaker than a man.

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<sup>426</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 110.

<sup>427</sup> Franz Kafka, "The Silence of the Sirens," in *The Complete Stories*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), 431.

<sup>428</sup> Kafka, "The Silence of the Sirens," 431.

<sup>429</sup> Kafka, "The Silence of the Sirens," 431.

Andersen's little mermaid (as well as Disney's little mermaid in the 1989 and 2023 film adaptations) is also silent and lacks agency. Additionally, in all three depictions of the Siren she lacks intelligence and the ability to express herself through narration. However, it is not just the interpretations of Sirens by Magritte, Kafka, and Andersen that are sexualized, but all of the interpretations of Sirens throughout history demonstrate sexualization of the figure's body and a link between her sexuality and her voice. Furthermore, danger and violence are always involved with any of the interpretations of Sirens or water sprites. Often the danger is related to the mysterious nature of the mythological figure—to her otherworldly knowledge and voice. As Peraino argues, “[t]o the masculine-gendered rational mind, sexually assertive women can represent the irrational, corporeal, emotional—and can represent these as threats.”<sup>430</sup> In other renditions, such as in Andersen's fairy tale and in Magritte's painting, the Siren is in physical and emotional danger linked to her lack of a voice. In both cases, the Siren suffers violence and death. Moreover, Apollonius of Rhodes' telling of the sailors' encounter with the Sirens involves danger and violence for all of the characters involved. The Siren's voice is dangerous in its seduction, but the action of Orpheus loudly playing his lyre causes the Siren to suffer violence, as Montiglio contends. Furthermore, even in interpretations where the Sirens' voices *have* semantic quality, they fail to prevail over the mortal man's intelligence or his power. In Homer's epic, for example, the Siren is feared because of her seductive song, but Odysseus' plan to be chained to the mast of the ship is successful and he does not succumb to her song. While Homer's Siren is not physically beautiful, her singing voice is linked to her sexuality in the powerful pleasure that it gives to mortal men. Additionally, Peraino explains that danger and sexuality are connected in Homer's *Odyssey* by combining terms involving bondage or

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<sup>430</sup> Peraino, “Songs of the Sirens,” 16.

containment with words that connote sexual pleasure.<sup>431</sup> For example, the binding of Odysseus to the mast of the ship is juxtaposed with the intensely heightened aural arousal resulting from hearing the Sirens' song. By contrast, Kafka interprets the Sirens as mute, unconscious, beautiful beings. His telling of the epic centres around Odysseus gazing upon the mythological figures, whose bodies and voices Kafka describes in a sexualized way. Although he interprets the Sirens as mute, he illustrates Odysseus watching their "throats rising and falling" in the same sentence as he describes their "breasts lifting" creating a link of sexuality between the voice and the figure's femininity. Furthermore, Kafka makes a point to describe their beauty in parallel with their lack of desire to allure due to Odysseus' powerful gaze. He states that they "lovelier than ever—stretched their necks and turned, let their awesome hair flutter free in the wind, and freely stretched their claws on the rocks. They no longer had any desire to allure; all that they wanted was to hold as long as they could the radiance that fell from [Odysseus'] great eyes."<sup>432</sup> By telling the tale in this way, where the focus is on the Sirens' beauty and lack of agency, Kafka highlights male dominance and power. This sexualization and lack of agency is even more evident in Magritte's painting of the Siren whose only purpose is to satisfy man's desire before she dies. In Bertrand's interpretation of Ondine, danger is presented in the form of violent, satanic laughter. Danger is also suggested by Ondine's marriage proposal to the mortal; readers know that if the mortal joins the water sprite in the depths of the lake he will die. However, just as in many of the interpretations of Sirens and water sprites, the man prevails over Ondine. In contrast to the renditions of sailors who outsmart the Siren with tricks, the man in Bertrand's poem simply rejects Ondine's proposal as if it were a ridiculous offer. In this way, Ondine is

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<sup>431</sup> Peraino, "Songs of the Sirens," 13-14.

<sup>432</sup> Kafka, *The Silence of the Sirens*, 431.

silenced like so many of the various interpretations of Sirens throughout history, and like so many women alive even today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, whose voices and ideas are rejected or ignored.

As Cavarero argues, the interpretation of Sirens being beautiful, sexual beings who are silent, and who give in to a man's power is parallel to the patriarchal view that a human woman should be seen and not heard.<sup>433</sup> In this view, in addition to a woman not having the ability to express an opinion, her silence also signifies consent, an image reflected by Magritte's painting of the Siren who is unable to speak, and whose human characteristics highlight her sexuality. Furthermore, Cavarero explains that the historical expectation for women to be silent not only removes from them the capacity to use their physical voices, but also their ability to express ideas or intelligence.<sup>434</sup> In this way, women throughout history have also lost a metaphorical voice and have lacked agency in their relationships with men and within society at large. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women have fought for social, political, and domestic equity, and significant progress has been made in the United States and Canada to decrease the gap of inequality between men and women. However, in 2024, women still face staggering gender injustices around the globe, even in such progressive countries as the United States and Canada.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 117.

<sup>434</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 117.

<sup>435</sup> Brittany C. Slatton and Carla D. Brailey, "Introduction: Inequality and the Complex Positionalities of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Women," in *Women and Inequality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 1. For Canadian statistics about pay inequality, see Melissa Moyser, *Measuring and Analyzing the Gender Pay Gap: A Conceptual and Methodological Overview* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2019). For more information about Canadian women and leadership in Canada, as well as gender-based violence in Canada see Canadian Women's Foundation and Platform, *Resetting Normal: Gender, Intersectionality, and Leadership* (2021). For statistics relating to women in American orchestras in 2023-2024 see Katherine Needleman, "Orchestra Statistics," Katherine Needleman (personal website), accessed July 11, 2024, <http://katherineneedleman.com/orchestra-202324-season-announcement-statistics>; For more information about sexual violence inflicted upon women in music see Sammy Sussman, "A Hidden Sexual-Assault Scandal at the New York Philharmonic: Two Musicians Were Fired for Sexual Misconduct. Why Are They Back With the Orchestra?" *Vulture*, April 12, 2024, (Updated April 16, 2024), accessed July 11, 2024, [https://www.vulture.com/article/new-york-philharmonic-sexual-assault-scandal.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawD5KnBleHRuA2FibQIxMQABHTnI5Ip7ImZ-qCWZTl8kfgO6U584jroPqkthk2XBLJRJZTNHxBKBsOXUxw\\_aem\\_5z4HKJJnNA3IAjw0sX8u-w&sfnsn=mo](https://www.vulture.com/article/new-york-philharmonic-sexual-assault-scandal.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawD5KnBleHRuA2FibQIxMQABHTnI5Ip7ImZ-qCWZTl8kfgO6U584jroPqkthk2XBLJRJZTNHxBKBsOXUxw_aem_5z4HKJJnNA3IAjw0sX8u-w&sfnsn=mo).

### 5.3 Maurice Ravel's Musical Interpretation of *Ondine* Inspired by the Poetry of Aloysius Bertrand

#### 5.3.1 Literature Review

Most studies of Ravel's *Ondine* describe the piece in terms of its structural aspects such as its musical form. Scholars Roy Howat, Roger Nichols, Paul Roberts, and Stephen Zank focus their analyses on the design of the music and how the musical depiction of the Siren's voice is woven into the representation of the water. For example, Howat argues that *Ondine* is structured as a sonata form—exposition, development, recapitulation—whereas Zank contends that the music is through-composed where two thematic ideas are continually developed, but there are no true internal repetitions.<sup>436</sup> Zank also discusses Ravel's use of mixed modes as a means by which to organize the piece. To him, the obfuscation of major and minor harmonies is an integral part of thematic and ornamental organization.<sup>437</sup> Similarly, Nichols explores the juxtaposition of major and minor harmony commenting on the duality between the soft expression of *Ondine*'s song and the "triumphant antitonal powers" within the augmented triad that the major/minor harmony create.<sup>438</sup> Scholar Gurminder K. Bhogal also interprets the structure of the music in sonata form, but her argument focuses on *Ondine* as a "femme fatale" portrayed through Ravel's pianistic treatment of ornaments.<sup>439</sup> Unlike the interpretations by Zank and Nichols who contend that there is a juxtaposition of major and minor harmony, Bhogal interprets the oscillating thirty-

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<sup>436</sup> Roy Howat, *The Art of French Piano Music: Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 47-48; Howat, "Ravel and the Piano," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, ed. Deborah Mawer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 82; Stephen Zank, *Irony and Sound: The Music of Maurice Ravel* (Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press, 2009), 246.

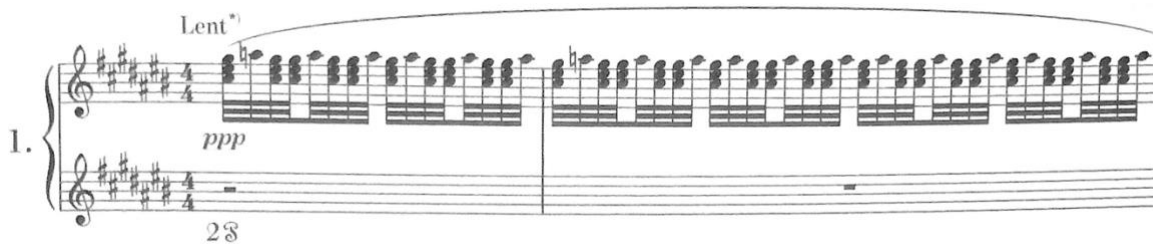
<sup>437</sup> Zank, *Irony and Sound*, 153.

<sup>438</sup> Roger Nichols, *Ravel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 101.

<sup>439</sup> Gurminder K. Bhogal, "Not Just a Pretty Surface: Ornament and Metric Complexity in Ravel's Piano Music," in *Unmasking Ravel: New Perspectives on the Music*, ed. Peter Kaminsky (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2011), 286-302.

second note figure introduced in measure one (see Figure 5.3.1.1) as a neighbour-note motif that suggests ornament. To her, this ornamental figure creates a frame for the entire piece where the motif is “conspicuous in the opening and closing of the piece, and recedes into the background once Ondine begins to sing.”<sup>440</sup> Furthermore, to Bhogal, this ornamental framing is an expression of Ondine’s identity that gets distorted and eventually dissolved—“rendered incapable of eternal song”—by the narrator’s fantasy and rejection of her marriage proposal.<sup>441</sup>

Figure 5.3.1.1 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 1



Although the majority of scholarship on Ravel’s *Ondine* focuses on thematic development, most scholars also mention the seductive nature of Ondine’s song. Yet, Bhogal and Paul Roberts are the only scholars to address sexuality in relation to the mythological figure’s identity. Roberts’ discussion centres around the implications of sexual climax suggested by the harmonic structure as well as the sexually charged symbolism of the nineteenth century expressed through virtuoso pianism.<sup>442</sup> As Roberts mentions, the virtuosity of the piece—akin to the virtuosity of Franz Liszt (1811-1886)—alludes to the “sexual charisma” with which many male pianist-composers were performing in the nineteenth century. Concert reviews often included audience reactions to such dazzling performances. For example, in 1837, the year of the keyboard battle between piano virtuosos Liszt and Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871), a review of

<sup>440</sup> Bhogal, “Not Just a Pretty Surface: Ornament and Metric Complexity in Ravel’s Piano Music,” 289.

<sup>441</sup> Bhogal, “Not Just a Pretty Surface,” 300.

<sup>442</sup> Paul Roberts, *Reflections: The Piano Music of Maurice Ravel* (Montclair NJ: Amadeus Press, 2012), 87.

Thalberg's *Moïse* Fantasy suggests strong control over the audience's emotions and even physical symptoms as a result of such overt emotional energy expended:

All the way through this piece, you should have seen the public ready to yield to its emotion, holding itself in check in order not to miss a single note, a chord, of this sublime performance; you should have heard these shudders run through and dwell a moment in all parts of the hall, then die away; the audience was gasping for breath, frantic, and seemed to be waiting impatiently for the last chord, so that it could allow the enthusiasm which was oppressing it to burst out.<sup>443</sup>

As Ellis explains, this review depicts a sort of sexual possession of the audience linked to control of the music by the pianist himself, control of the audience's captivation, and their "barely maintained self-control."<sup>444</sup> Roberts contends that Ravel related to the sexual allure of Bertrand's Ondine, and it is possible that Ravel chose to write in a virtuosic Lisztian style as a way to capture the mythological figure's historic seduction. However, from my study of primary sources housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, no correspondences, published, or unpublished materials make any mention of a link between Ravel's desire to compose a piece of such virtuosity and the sexual connotations from nineteenth-century pianism. Even still, if Roberts' contention were correct, (and there is no way of knowing this) the discussion about sexuality in relation to Ravel's music centres around a male-dominated concert space in the nineteenth century and a male pianist's ability to seduce an audience—almost to the point of loss of control—by his mesmerizingly difficult compositions and ability to conquer his performances through physical strength and command over the instrument. By extension, this places the character, Ondine, within a framework of male domination two times over—the first through

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<sup>443</sup> "Il fallait voir le public, pendant la durée de ce morceau, prêt à céder sans cesse à son émotion, se domptant lui-même pour ne pas perdre une note, un accord de cette execution sublime; il fallait entendre ces frissonnements courir et se prolonger dans toutes les parties de la salle, et s'éteindre aussitôt; l'auditoire était haletant, éperdu, et semblait attendre impatientement le dernier accord, pour laisser éclater un enthousiasme qui l'oppressait." (*Revue et gazette musicale* 4, no. 12 [19 March 1837]: 97).

<sup>444</sup> Ellis, "Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris," 357.



Bertrand's poetry, and the second through the lens of male-dominated pianistic virtuosity of the nineteenth century.

Though her argument does touch on male-dominated society, Bhogal focuses on allusions to Ondine's sexuality in Ravel's music through the structural and expressive value of the neighbour-note motif present throughout the majority of the piece. She explains that, historically, "reckless embellishment" was perceived as dangerous due to its feminine lure.<sup>445</sup> However, at the end of the nineteenth century French artists began to exploit the ambiguities associated with structure and ornament by depicting bejewelled women as both physically and morally degenerate, and at the same time dangerously alluring. To Bhogal, Ravel used the neighbour-note motif as a way to express Ondine's seductive quality because of the ornamental nature of the musical figure. She argues that this can be seen in the use of an *irregular* pattern within the motif, which symbolizes Ondine's desire, and the *regular* pattern which subdues Ondine's heightened energy as the mortal rejects her marriage proposal. Furthermore, Bhogal contends that over the course of the piece the neighbour-note motif becomes destabilized and disfigured depicting Ondine's dissolution of identity.<sup>446</sup>

Both Roberts and Bhogal propose intriguing possibilities for interpreting Ondine's sexuality within Ravel's music. I will add to the discussion by exploring how Ravel portrayed Ondine's voice, and how this voice is linked to her sexuality and to danger. First, I will look at the contour of Ravel's melodies—Ondine's song—as well as the general shapes of the musical gestures. Second, I will discuss the melody in relation to the textural music surrounding the

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<sup>445</sup> Bhogal, "Not Just a Pretty Surface," 287.

<sup>446</sup> Bhogal, "Not Just a Pretty Surface," 298-300.

melody. Third, I will explore the way in which Ondine's laughter is portrayed in Ravel's music. Finally, I will consider the virtuosity of Ravel's pianistic writing in relation to Ondine's identity.

### 5.3.2 Maurice Ravel's Musical Interpretation of Ondine's Voice

Unlike Amy Beach's archival collection of published and unpublished materials that are exquisitely generous in their expression of the composer's self and of her motivations and philosophies behind her compositions, Ravel's archival collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France leaves many questions unanswered. The collection is vast, and a scholar could spend significant time meticulously deciphering Ravel's handwriting in his numerous correspondences to friends, family, and colleagues preserved on microfilm, or the various conferences and personal memories of Ravel documented by friends and colleagues, or even Ravel's own published autobiographical sketch. However, the fact remains that Ravel was a private person who did not share much with others about his identity or even about his inspirations or motivations for composing certain pieces. As scholar Serge Gut affirms, if one is interested in Ravel's music in particular, the research is difficult and leaves much to be desired.<sup>447</sup> Thus is the case for Ravel's *Ondine* which was often discussed in the primary sources as a part of the collection of three pieces entitled *Gaspard de la nuit*. Nevertheless, Ravel's melody (which we can assume is Ondine's song based on Bertrand's poem and the history of Sirens and water sprites' seductive voices) was a point of interest for scholars and critics alike. For example, in his biography of Ravel, pupil Roland-Manuel wrote that "all of the virtues of [Ravel's] music, all of the powers of his genius are summed up [in *Gaspard de la nuit*]; first and foremost, in the sober richness and the purity of the melodic invention. Because the melody reigns supreme here. It

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<sup>447</sup> Jean-Claude Teboul, *Ravel : Le langage musical dans l'œuvre pour piano à la lumière des principes d'analyse de Schoenberg*, preface by Serge Gut (Paris : Le Léopard d'Or, 1987), 5.

springs from the flow of arabesques, takes shape, and only blends in to stand out in greater relief. In *Ondine* [the melody] brushes against the drops of water represented by light and pressed batteries.”<sup>448</sup> Roland-Manuel’s writing is poetic and challenging to interpret, but his claim that Ravel’s melody reigns supreme is clear: to Roland-Manuel, the melody is intelligently crafted to accommodate Ondine’s material shape. Similarly, critic Christian Megret noted that melody writing was one of Ravel’s strong skills as demonstrated in many of his works including in the three pieces of *Gaspard de la nuit*. He stated specifically that some of the qualities that defined Ravel’s style were “refinement of the melodic line, extreme modesty, touching on reserve, an inclination towards exoticism, fairy tale, the fantastical, tempered by the requirement for a perfectly balanced harmony.”<sup>449</sup> Both of the comments by Roland-Manuel and Megret demonstrate Ravel’s meticulous attention to detail when it came to constructing and shaping a melody, but neither comments on the composer’s interest in how Ondine’s voice is portrayed within the melody. However, in two different copies of the first edition of the score, printed in 1909, the pianists to whom the scores belonged (notably Vlado Perlemuter who was a pupil of Ravel’s) wrote in the margin of the first page, “Ravel ne voulait pas ‘Ondine’ trop lent. Très chanté. Très expressif. Très doux. Très tendre.”<sup>450</sup> (Ravel did not want “Ondine” too slow. Very

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<sup>448</sup> “Toutes les vertus de sa musique, toutes les puissances de son génie s’y résument; d’abord et surtout dans la sobre richesse et la pureté de l’invention mélodique. Car la mélodie règne ici en maîtresse souveraine. Elle jaillit du flot des arabesques, s’y profile et ne s’y mêle que pour s’en détacher avec plus de relief. Elle frôle, dans *Ondine*, les gouttes d’eau que figurent des batteries légères et pressées.” (Alexis Roland-Manuel, *Ravel* [Paris: Gallimard, 1948], 65.)

<sup>449</sup> “[...] les trois ballades pour piano de **Gaspard de la nuit**, d’après Aloysius Bertrand (1908), confirmèrent des qualités qui jamais ne se démentirent ; raffinement de la ligne mélodique, extrême pudeur, touchant à la réserve, penchant à l’exotisme, à la féerie, au fantastique, tempéré par l’exigence d’un équilibre parfaitement harmonieux.” Christian Megret, “Un talent original,” *Le parisien*, June 20, 1977, 4 SW 10109, [p. 51], Maurice Ravel Collection, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

<sup>450</sup> Maurice Ravel, “Ondine,” *Gaspard de la nuit*, piano score, previously owned by pianists Robert Casadesus, Gaby Casadesus, Vlado Perlemuter, and Olivier Messiaen (Paris: A. Durand, 1909), VM CASADESUS-489, Ravel Collection; Ravel, “Ondine,” *Gaspard de la nuit*, piano score, previously owned by pianist Yvonne Loriod (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1909), FOL-VM Fonds 30 LOR-197, Ravel Collection.

singing. Very expressive. Very soft. Very tender.) The manuscript of the score also includes the words, “très doux et très expressif” under the first entrance of the melody in measure two.<sup>451</sup> These instructions from the composer offer some insight into how he wanted to portray Ondine as a character and how he wanted to portray her voice—soft and tender, but very expressively. The qualifications “soft,” and “tender” relate directly to the image that women of the 19th and early 20th centuries were meant to uphold. However, the term “expressive” negates this social imposition of women’s behaviour opening up the possibility for Ondine to be able to express ideas and opinions. Ravel was most likely specifically concerned about the shape of his musical phrase, rather than the semantic quality of Ondine’s voice, but the juxtaposition of his instructions aligns with the conflicting descriptions of the figure’s intelligence in Bertrand’s poem.

As scholars such as Bhogal and Howatt argue, there are two main themes to Ondine’s song linked by transitional themes. The first beginning in measure two in the left hand for the pianist, and the second theme beginning in measure 32, again in the left hand. (See Figures 5.3.2.1 and 5.3.2.2.) As the melodies continuously rise and fall, their contours musically paint the undulations of water, the element from which Ondine is formed. As Bhogal explains, in Bertrand’s poem, the narrator imagines the water sprite as a disembodied voice “adorned by the intricate movement of water, a Freudian symbol of sexual desire.”<sup>452</sup> Ravel’s treatment of Ondine’s melodies alludes to the movement of water—the movement of Ondine’s material being—and by extension to her sexuality. The wave-like shapes that Ravel creates in his melodies also point to the mystery and enigmatic nature of her physical being, heightening the

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<sup>451</sup> Ravel, “Ondine,” *Gaspard de la nuit*, manuscript music for piano with revisions, signed, Sept. 5, 1908, box-folder 300, Carlton Lake Collection of French Music Manuscripts (1817-1987), Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>452</sup> Bhogal, “Not Just a Pretty Surface,” 287.



Figure 5.3.2.2 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 32-37



Harmonically, Ravel achieves cyclicity by relating each chord chromatically to one another. For example, the difference between the  $I^7$  chord in measure 4 and the  $V^9/iv$  chord in measure two is the major/minor seventh of the chord (B sharp in  $I^7$  versus B natural in  $V^9/iv$ ). (See Figure 5.3.2.3) Therefore, there is no organized tonic-predominant-dominant progression confirming tonality. Rather, the structure of the chords in the first theme shifts seamlessly from one to the other by semitone causing an ambiguity of tonality. Additionally, the relationship between the key signature and the structure of the harmonic progression is not always clear. The key signature and opening chord in the right hand in measure one indicate the key of C sharp major (with the A natural in the right hand as a neighbour note). However, when Ondine begins to sing in measure two, the melodic phrase begins by outlining dominant harmony of F sharp minor (iv). Rather than resolving the secondary dominant to F sharp minor harmony, Ravel introduces the tonic in measure four, quickly obscuring this home key in measure five by

introducing chromatic neighbouring harmony. This neighbouring harmony does anticipate a brief modulation to D sharp minor in measures 8 and 9. Then Ravel modulates again to F sharp minor for four measures before returning to the dominant of F sharp minor for a restatement of the first two measures. There are modulated repetitions of fragments of the theme, such as in measures 8-9, but there is no clear end punctuated by a cadence and thus theme one gives the impression of cyclicity, or being able to continue indefinitely. Furthermore, Ravel creates a sort of harmonic loop by relating the first harmony of the melodic phrase in measure two ( $V^9/iv$  in C sharp major) with the harmony in measures 10-13 ( $iv$ ) so that when the opening material returns in measure 14 it seems that the tonality is F sharp minor rather than C sharp major as indicated by the key signature and opening harmony in measure one.

Figure 5.3.2.3 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 1-15

The image displays a musical score for the first 15 measures of Ravel's *Ondine*. The score is written for piano and is divided into five systems, each containing two staves (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked 'Lent' and the dynamics are 'ppp'. The key signature is C# Major, and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various harmonic annotations in blue text, such as 'C# Major', 'V9 / iv', '17', '(vii<sup>7</sup> / ii)', 'V7 / ii', and 'D# minor i7'. The notation includes complex chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines with slurs and ties. The first system (measures 1-2) is marked 'Lent' and 'ppp'. The second system (measures 3-4) is marked 'très doux et très expressif'. The third system (measures 5-6) includes the annotation '17' and '(vii<sup>7</sup> / ii)'. The fourth system (measures 7-8) includes the annotation 'V7 / ii'. The fifth system (measures 9-10) includes the annotation 'D# minor i7'. The score concludes with measures 11-15, which are not explicitly annotated with harmonic analysis in this image.

1. *Lent*  
*ppp*  
C# Major  
28

2. *très doux et très expressif*  
V9 / iv

4. 17 (vii<sup>7</sup> / ii) 17

6. (vii<sup>7</sup> / ii) V7 / ii

8. D# minor i7



Figure 5.3.2.3 continued

2

10

*toujours pp*

F# minor i (D# minor 7) i

12

(D# minor 7) i

14

V9

The melody's continuous, circular contour lures the listener into a seemingly continuous, supernatural sphere, becoming almost hypnotic. There is no doubt that Ravel's Ondine is trying to seduce the mortal with this song. Furthermore, the contour of her song's melody hints at the physical curves of her feminine body. Therefore, not only do Ondine's words in Bertrand's poem describe her material being and the mysteries of her life in the water, but the shape of Ravel's melody illustrates her femininity. Because she is made of water, the contour of Ondine's melody not only depicts the water from which she comes, but her shape as a female figure.

By contrast, even though theme two is not organized by strong tonal harmony that would clearly indicate the beginning, middle, and end of a phrase, there is predominant harmony in

measures 33-35 resolving to dominant harmony in measure 36. If one considers the right hand's figure as a neighbour-note-motif, as Bhogal argues, then the harmonic structure of theme two is  $V^9\text{-iv}^7\text{-V}$ . (See Figure 5.3.2.4.) Beginning and ending theme two with dominant harmony creates another cyclical progression where, even though measure 36 is heard as an ending to the phrase, it creates a seamless harmonic link back to a restatement of the theme in measure 37. Ravel could have omitted bar 36 entirely and just begun theme two once again connecting measure 35 to 37 just as he went directly from one statement of theme one into another in the opening 15 measures. Thus, both themes in *Ondine* create melodic and harmonic contours that illustrate the water sprite's material and sexual being.

Figure 5.3.2.4 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 32-37

The musical score for Ravel's *Ondine*, measures 32-37, is presented in three systems. The key signature is C# major (three sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamic markings (*pp*) and articulation (accents). The harmonic structure is indicated by labels: **C# major V9** for measures 32-35, **iv7** for measure 36, and **V** for measure 37. The right-hand part features a complex figure with neighbour-note motifs, while the left-hand part provides a harmonic foundation. The score is annotated with measure numbers 32, 34, and 36.

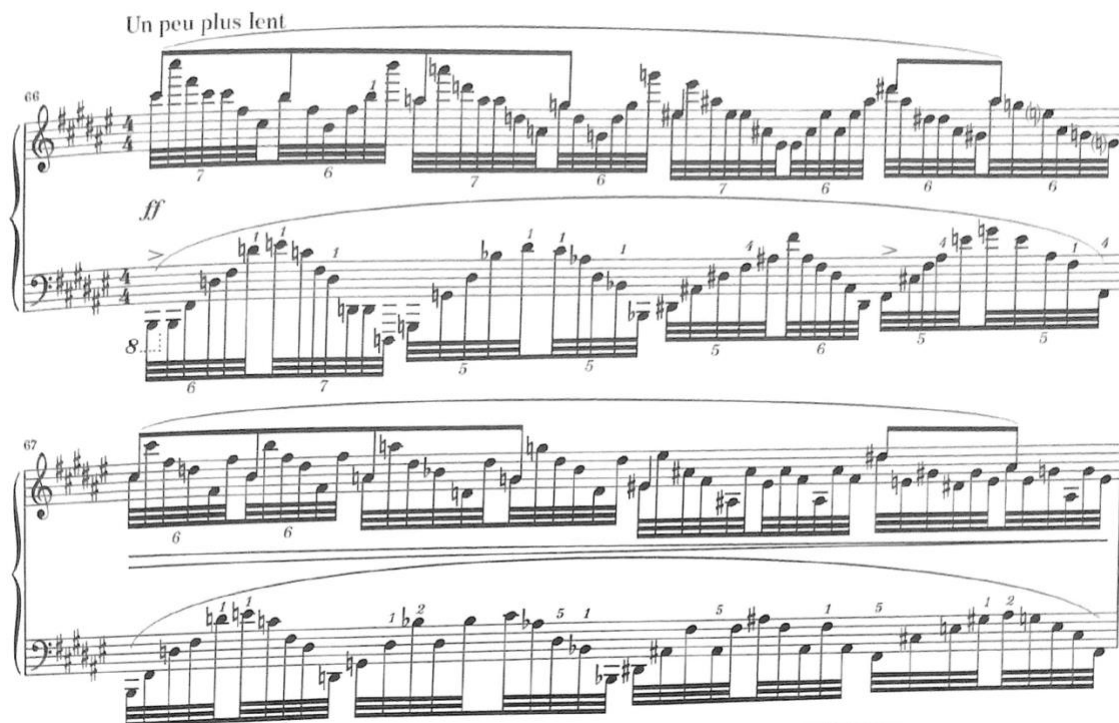
While the contour of Ondine's melody evokes water, the relationship between her song and the musical figuration that surrounds it depicts how her material being relates to this water. In other words, the relationship between the melody and the rest of the musical gestures illustrate how Ondine comes from the water and is also made of water. For the vast majority of the piece the melody emerges from the same register in the piano as the supporting musical figures. The pianist's hands are frequently overlapping and physically embodying the closeness of Ondine's voice emerging from the musical depiction of the water. This is true from bar two when Ondine begins to sing. (See Figure 5.3.2.3.) Later, as the song builds towards the climax, the melody becomes submerged within a texture where both melody and figuration are shared between the overlapping hands. (Figure 5.3.2.5.) This submerged texture reaches its peak in measure 66 when Ondine finally reaches the climax of her song, and the melody is surrounded by arpeggios spanning six octaves. (Figure 5.3.2.6.) The pianist must work very hard to distribute weight appropriately so that the melody can be heard amongst the ripples and splashes of the other notes especially when the hands are overlapping, and accommodations must be made so that they do not bump into each other. While Ravel's musical depiction of both Ondine's material being and her voice emerging from the water is ingenious, the placement of the melody in such close proximity to the surrounding music causes Ondine's voice difficult to project. He wanted the melody to be soft, and at the same time expressive. To what extent did he want the melody to blend into the water? Because the piece is for solo piano, there are no specific words associated with Ondine's melodies. Of course, the music is based on Bertrand's poetry, but on its own, the piece depicts asemantic vocalizations just like the many depictions of Siren songs throughout history. By overlapping the texture of the water figurations with the melody, Ravel commits Ondine to a fight to be heard. Whether this was the composer's intention or not, it is the reality

of the pianistic writing and the fate of his water sprite. Of course, a pianist could choose to project Ondine's melody far above the rest of the notes giving her character more agency and individuality. Or they could choose to play the melody in closer dynamic to everything else in order to depict the relationship between her voice, body, and the element. The fact of the matter remains that Ravel's construction of the melody—Ondine's voice—being submerged within the texture of the water mirrors the struggle that women have faced throughout history to have a voice in society, in their communities, and even in their domestic roles.

Figure 5.3.2.5 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 51-55

The musical score for Ravel's *Ondine*, measures 51-55, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 51-52) and the second system (measures 53-55) both feature a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part is characterized by a continuous eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex, syncopated pattern in the left hand. The vocal line is marked *p le chant bien soutenu et expressif* and features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. The score is divided into two systems, with measures 51-52 in the first system and measures 53-55 in the second system. The tempo is marked *augmentez* (increase). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is written for piano and voice.

Figure 5.3.2.6 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 66-67



By contrast to the way that Ondine's voice merges with the ripples and splashes of the water, her laugh at the end of the poem bursts from the water, opposing the quiet, seductive nature of her song. In her memoirs of lessons with Ravel, pupil Henriette Fauré describes a lesson on *Ondine* in which the composer pointed out that the last page of the piece illustrates the water sprite's burst of laughter and then disappearance:

I can't do much on a mechanical level about the iridescent and moving aspect of the drawing, about the insinuating light of the melody; it's a pianistic affair. Work on the silkiness of your sounds, their fluidity, their legato, and also all your thirty-seconds-note breaks in the right hand which should evoke a sort of flurry on a lake and take place in immateriality. Correct the heaviness of your thumbs. Yes, exactly what you are doing is too real. Here, work on Liszt, for example the Feux Follets. I insist on style; without any rhythmic softening, following very closely the plot of the poem, in the last page in particular (he leafed through the score), here, a slipping into the extreme pianissimo like magic, suggested; then afterwards, here, the naked melody in a white, diaphanous sound... He turned the page: in contrast to this, arpeggios running down the keyboard and the ascent again in a joyful and wild outburst (let out a burst of laughter) and the last two

lines in a very even elegant curve in a progressive decrescendo until the end and vanished in showers which trickled down...<sup>453</sup>

In this piano lesson, Ravel seems preoccupied with sound quality in order to achieve the magical, supernatural effect of the water sprite's essence in addition to capturing the gentle movement of water. The composer is very explicit in stating that the pianist should "follow the plot of the poem," though he makes no specific mention of his musical illustrations of the plot other than Ondine's burst of laughter on the last page. Thus, this laughter was important to Ravel, and he explicitly included pianistic gestures and harmonies to evoke the violent effect. Nichols rightly states that "by opposing harmony to melody, texture, rhythm and dynamics, [Ravel] evokes the danger lying beneath the attractive surface."<sup>454</sup> (See Figure 5.3.2.7.) That is to say that by suddenly removing Ondine's song, —her melody—the texture within which the melody resides, the incessant rhythmic figuration depicting water, and the softness of the music, Ravel makes clear the dangerous quality of Ondine's character. Suddenly, following four measures of monophonic melody, both of the pianist's hands play rapid arpeggios, ascending and descending the keyboard, building to fortissimo in the very first ascent. Harmonically, the right hand plays a C major triad while the left hand plays a dominant seventh arpeggio built on E flat (fifth of the chord omitted). Following the ascending and descending arpeggios, both hands descend by four-

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<sup>453</sup> "[J]e ne peux pas grand'chose sur le plan mécanique sur l'aspect irisant et mouvant du dessin, sur la lumière insinuante de la mélodie; c'est une affaire pianistique. Travaillez la soierie de vos sons, leur fluidité, leur legato, et aussi toutes vos brisures en triples croches de la main droite qui doivent évoquer une sorte de risée sur un lac et se dérouler dans l'immatérialité. Corrigez la lourdeur de vos pouces. Oui, exactement ce que vous faites est trop réel. Tenez, travaillez des Liszt, par exemple les Feux Follets. Moi j'insiste sur le style; sans aucun amollissement rythmique, épousant de très près la trame du poème, dans la dernière page notamment (il feuilleta la partition), tenez, un glissant dans l'extrême pianissimo genre magique, suggéré; puis après, ici, la mélodie nue dans une sonorité blanche, diaphane... Il tourna la page: en contraste ceci, arpèges dévalant le clavier et le remontant dans un emportement joyeux et déchaîné (poussa un éclat de rire) et les deux dernières lignes dans une courbe très égale élégante en un decrescendo progressif jusqu'à la fin et s'évanouit en giboulées qui ruisselèrent..." Henriette Fauré, *Mon maître Maurice Ravel: Son oeuvre, son enseignement, souvenirs et légendes* [Paris: Éditions ATP, 1978], 57-58.

<sup>454</sup> Nichols, *Ravel*, 101.

note groupings punctuated by the changing first note of each. In these gestures, the right hand, again, plays major triads, while the left plays diminished harmonies. The superimposition of opposing harmonies implies Ondine's contradictory emotional qualities. In other words, the major harmony evokes Ondine's naivety, depicted in Bertrand's poem, while the diminished harmony played in conjunction with the major triads implies Ondine's true sinister nature, as indicated by her satanic laugh. Furthermore, whereas the gesture of the preceding arpeggios evokes the *rising* of a diabolical laugh, the rhythm of the descending four-note groups elicits violent laughter. Thus, Ravel's musical interpretation of Bertrand's poem captures both the mesmerizing and seductive quality of her song as well as the danger evoked by her "burst of laughter."

Figure 5.3.2.7 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 88

The image displays a musical score for Ravel's *Ondine*, measures 88 to 120. The score is written for piano and voice. The piano part is in the upper system, featuring a rapid, shimmering arpeggiated figure in the right hand, marked *ff* (fortissimo). The voice part is in the lower system, with the lyrics "Retenez peu à peu" (Hold back a little by a little). The voice melody is marked *p* (piano) and *ppp* (pianissimo). The tempo and mood are indicated as "12 Rapide et brillant" (Rapid and brilliant). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

In addition to musically realizing the mysterious and threatening qualities of Ondine's voice, Ravel captures the element of the supernatural with transcendental virtuosity. In other words, the sheer technical difficulty of *Ondine* separates the accessible from the inaccessible. *Ondine* is a piece for very advanced pianists who have the utmost skill in controlling sound quality, have flexible and nimble fingers, and complete command of weight distribution in order to achieve the shimmering, rippling effect of the water in addition to "singing" Ondine's song with beauty of tone and phrasing throughout. While some of the published newspaper articles and biographical materials that mention *Ondine* comment on Ravel's exquisite melodic writing, most published and unpublished documents observe the incredible virtuosity with which the



composer wrote the piece. For example, pianist Wanda Landowska (1879-1959) commented that “these three pieces [*Gaspard de la nuit*] are arduous, only the virtuosos experienced in all difficulties can perform them. It is not permitted in *Ondine* to make any untimely accents; the dynamics are soft; they should not be changed, and the artist has no other resources, but their own talent to present the features that they will encounter throughout the execution of the piece.”<sup>455</sup> Landowska’s observations point to the inaccessibility of the music to pianists; the music is reserved for those who have already developed extreme technical skill. In his autobiography, Ravel wrote only one sentence pertaining to *Gaspard de la nuit* stating that they are “piano pieces after Aloysius Bertrand, [...] three romantic poems of transcendental virtuosity.”<sup>456</sup> Of course, by including the original text by Bertrand in the piano score, Ravel evidently valued the poetry and wanted to capture the text in his music. However, by only commenting on the virtuosity of the pieces in his published autobiography, the composer communicates that his priority was really to compose music of incredible technical difficulty, transcending humanity.

The technical difficulties in *Ondine* are often related to simultaneously creating a sound effect and projecting a melody. For most of the piece, the neighbour-note-motif, as Bhogal calls it, creates a watery, background soundscape out of which the melody should emerge. Though the tempo of the piece is very slow, (“très lent”) the speed at which the thirty-second notes should be played is quite quick requiring the wrist to be extremely relaxed and flexible in order to achieve

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<sup>455</sup> “Ces trois pièces sont ardues, seuls des virtuoses rompus à toutes les difficultés peuvent les interpréter. Il n’est pas permis dans *Ondine* de prendre un point d’appui sur quelque accentuation intempestive; les nuances sont douces; il ne faut pas les changer et l’artiste n’aura d’autre ressource que celle de son propre talent pour présenter les traits qu’il rencontrera au cours de son exécution.” Wanda Landowska, *Maurice Ravel: sa vie – son oeuvre* (Éditions ouvrières, 1950), 97.

<sup>456</sup> “Gaspard de la Nuit, pièces pour piano d’après Aloysius Bertrand, sont trois poèmes romantiques de virtuosité transcendante.” Maurice Ravel, *Esquisse autobiographique* (Éditions dynamo, 1943), 7.

a shimmery effect. When the melody enters, the overlapping hands cause a difficulty of projection, especially when both hands need to play the same pitch one after the other as in measure four, for example. (Figure 5.3.2.8.) A new technical challenge arises in measure 14 when the thirty-second-note motif is displaced across three octaves and the melody is played in broken octaves. (Figure 5.3.2.9.) Now, the main issue is beautifully shaping the melody even though the pianist's two hands are overlapping more often than not. Some pianists (including Perlemuter) choose to take some of the notes of the melody in the right hand, and some of the thirty-second notes with the left hand to avoid so many hand crossings.<sup>457</sup> While this can be an excellent solution, it requires meticulous practice in order to appropriately voice all melody notes between the two hands, and similarly in achieving the shimmering quality in the supporting material on the upper staff. Additionally, it can be challenging to maintain even thirty-second notes between two hands, requiring a great deal of careful practice and attention to detail. Evenness is a general difficulty in this piece because there are so many fast notes that need to be played with incredible control in order to create larger shapes depicting the water's waves.

Figure 5.3.2.8 Ravel, *Ondine*, m. 4



<sup>457</sup> Maurice Ravel, "Ondine," *Gaspard de la nuit*, piano score, previously owned by pianists Robert Casadesus, Gaby Casadesus, Vlado Perlemuter, and Olivier Messiaen (Paris: A. Durand, 1909), VM CASADESUS-489, Ravel Collection.

Figure 5.3.2.9 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 14-15



As the music builds towards the climax the technical demands shift to include shorter note values and successions of harmonic dyads in the right hand while the left hand sustains Ondine's melody. (See Figure 5.3.2.10.) In order to link the successions of dyads, Ravel includes rapid arpeggios in the right hand and low bass notes in the left hand that act as a sonic foundation on which the rest of the notes can float. The speed at which both the right hand and left hand have to move is incredible and requires tremendously focused practice in order to create the impression of bursts of water while still maintaining the contour and tonal quality of the melody. Similarly, despite Ravel's indication to play a little bit slower ("un peu plus lent") at the climax in measure 66, the velocity of the music causes this passage to remain challenging. The polyrhythms between the two hands are difficult to manage since they are not always the same and there is no pattern to the way the polyrhythms are organized so the pianist cannot lock into any feeling of stability until measure 67. Furthermore, the melody must always be projected amidst the chaos.

Figure 5.3.2.10 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 57-61

This image displays a musical score for measures 57 through 61 of Maurice Ravel's *Ondine*. The score is written for piano and is organized into two systems, each containing three staves: a treble staff, a grand staff (treble and bass), and a separate bass staff. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system begins at measure 57, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The second system begins at measure 58, marked with a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic. The notation includes complex chords, arpeggiated figures, and various musical ornaments such as mordents and grace notes. A large slur spans across measures 57 and 58, encompassing the first two staves. The score concludes at measure 61, which features a repeat sign and a final chord.

Figure 5.3.2.10 continued

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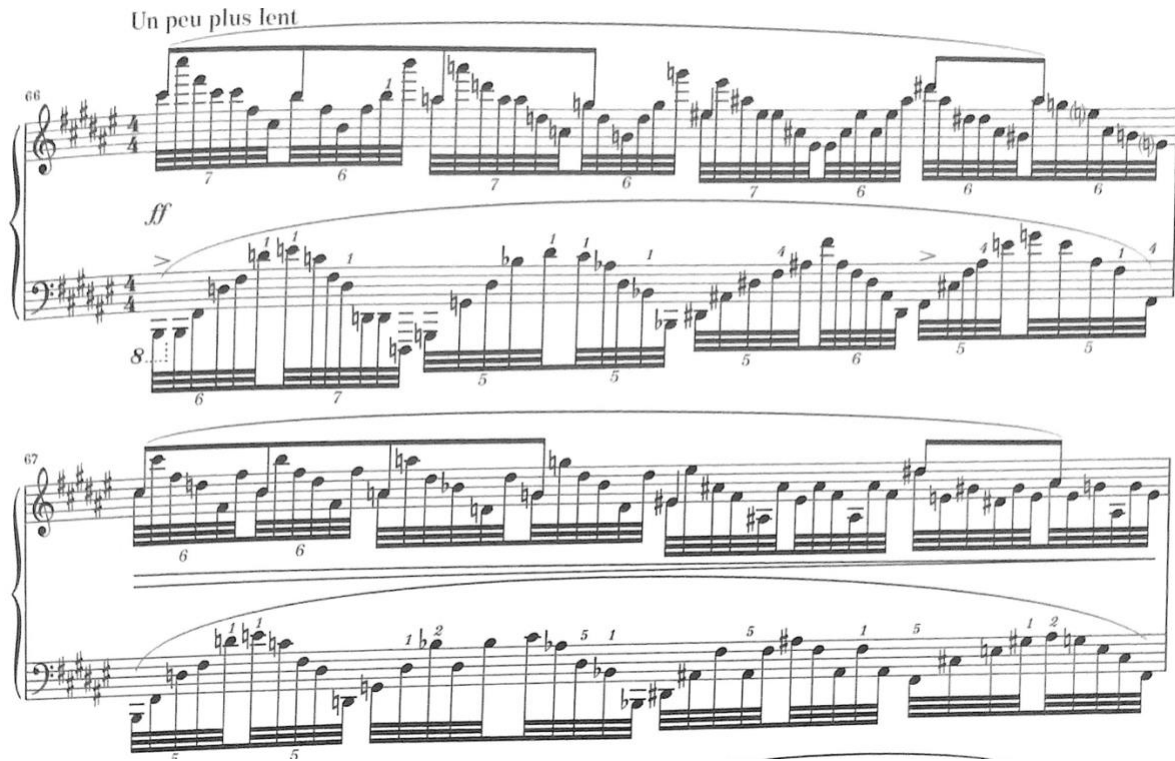
59

60

61

This musical score consists of three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system (measures 59-60) is in 3/4 time and features a complex, fast-moving melody in the treble clef with many beamed sixteenth notes. The bass clef provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. A large slur covers measures 59 and 60. The second system (measures 60-61) is in 4/4 time. The treble clef continues the complex melody, while the bass clef has a more active role with eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics *p* (piano) and *f* (forte) are indicated. The third system (measures 61-62) is in 3/4 time, showing the continuation of the complex melody in the treble clef and the accompaniment in the bass clef. A large slur covers measures 61 and 62.

Figure 5.3.2.11 Ravel, *Ondine*, mm. 66-67



Whether Ravel was intentionally writing a virtuosic piece as a way of creating the distance between humanity and the supernatural or not cannot be known. However, the technical demands of the music, and thus the inaccessibility of the piece to many pianists, mirrors the mystery of Ondine’s material being communicated by her voice. One critic even commented that listeners get “absorbed by the equally prodigious virtuosity and memory that [Ondine] requires of the performer.”<sup>458</sup> This statement alludes to listeners becoming so mesmerized by the virtuosity and skill of the pianist that this is all they notice rather than observing the way Ravel musically illustrates Bertrand’s story. By extension, Ondine’s voice is, thus, also overshadowed and lost. In this way, her voice lacks agency and importance just as in so many of the various

<sup>458</sup> “Et quand on l’écoute, le meilleur de l’attention reste absorbé par la virtuosité et la mémoire également prodigieuses qu’elle exige de l’exécutant. M. Ricardo Vinès joue cela sans avoir l’air d’y toucher.” Gaston Carraud, *La liberté* 44, no. 15,579 (Tuesday, January 12, 1909): 3.

artistic and literary depictions of Sirens throughout history whose voices either have no semantic quality, are silenced (as in Andersen's "The Little Mermaid), have no vocal capacity at all (as in Magritte's painting), or are easily drowned out (as in Rhodes' story of the Argonauts).

## 5.4 Summary

Even though Ravel was inspired by Bertrand's poetry and calls his three pieces "three poems for piano after Aloysius Bertrand," what has been most documented about them by scholars such as Howatt, Rogers, and Zank, music critics who wrote about *Ondine* in published journals in the early twentieth century, pianists Wanda Landowska, Maurice Delage, composer and critic Roland-Manuel, and the composer himself is their virtuosity rather than their literary content. Additionally, while many pianists and scholars have published observations and analyses about *Ondine* the focus tends to be on formal and motivic organization. There is no current scholarship that explores the ways in which Ravel portrays Ondine's voice and how her voice is linked to her sexuality—and, therefore, to danger, as it is made in numerous literary and artistic depictions of Sirens throughout history. While Ravel was not necessarily considering the mythological figure's agency, the way in which he constructed her melodies in relation to the other musical figurations (i.e., submerged within the musical textures) illustrates her material being as a water sprite, but also reflects a long history of Sirens depicted as beings with a lack of agency regarding their voices. Similarly, Ondine's voice is linked to her sexuality and to danger musically illustrated by Ravel through seductive melodies and diabolical laughter. Neither Bertrand's Ondine, nor Ravel's suffers any physical violence; rather, she foreshadows violent revenge on the narrator through her laughter at the end of the poem. This threat mirrors the image of women, from the male perspective, that they are mysterious and dangerous

seductresses. Moreover, as Warner argues, “[t]he seductiveness of women’s tongues still seems a paramount issue in the exercise of their sexuality; directing its force, containing its magic, is still very much to the point.”<sup>459</sup> In other words, a woman’s voice is still viewed as threatening and mysterious.

In conclusion, the history of Sirens’s voices and other related mythological figures such as the water sprite, reflects the history of women’s voices throughout history. This is a history in which women’s voices have been silenced—often suffering violence in the process—leaving them with a lack of ability to express *who* they are. The Sirens imagined by the Greeks were omniscient beings with complete ability to relate to others with their voices, telling stories of the past, present, and future. In this way, they were able to take political action as Arendt describes. However, many of the Sirens and water sprites depicted by other artists were not so fortunate. Bertrand’s Ondine does have the ability to relate who she is to the narrator and, by extension, so does Ravel’s musical interpretation of her. However, the seductive and threatening qualities of her voice linked to her sexuality portray her as a somewhat one-dimensional character. Bertrand’s depiction of her as being childish and naïve adds to the image of women who are not intelligent, but who are beautiful seductresses. It is true, as Gosetti explains, that Bertrand’s poem challenges the traditional image of the Siren or the water sprite by presenting her as ambiguously intelligent and naïve within the same setting. Perhaps this was a literary strategy, as Gosetti argues, but Bertrand could have portrayed Ondine as one or the other, and he chose to be ambiguous, which, in the end, adds to the character’s mystery and does not give her an equal voice to that of the mortal. Ravel’s Ondine does not have the capacity to narrate because she is played by a piano only. The piano score is accompanied by Bertrand’s poem, but unless an

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<sup>459</sup> Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, 404.



audience were to have this poetry printed in their program, they would have no idea what Ondine was saying. Additionally, it is unclear as to the extent to which Ravel followed the stanzas of the poetry exactly in his music which merges Ondine's reflections with those of the narrator, thus removing from Ondine her individuality. Finally, the narrator's easy rejection of Ondine's marriage proposal suggests men's dismissal of women and the lack of equity that still exists in modern society.

## Chapter 6: The Pianist's Self: Political Action in Repertoire for Vocalizing

### Pianist

*"Come on along, voice will be performing 'its subversive and disruptive workings'. You won't be disappointed."* – Norie Neumark<sup>460</sup>

#### 6.1 Introduction

Whereas the artistic, literary, and musical portrayals of Sirens' voices throughout history have mirrored women's lack of agency around the world, music that is composed for vocalizing pianist (i.e., a pianist who speaks or sings, or who vocalizes non-linguistic sounds while playing) offers a possibility for pianists to take "political action," as Arendt would say, within the context of solo performance. Because repertoire for vocalizing pianist is written to include the use of the physical voice, Cavarero and Arendt would say that this genre automatically relates the performer to the audience.<sup>461</sup> For Cavarero, the use of the physical voice in relation to other human beings becomes "a reciprocal self-communication, which simultaneously expresses uniqueness and relation."<sup>462</sup> In other words, when humans communicate with each other by using their physical voices they express an "insubstitutable" identity, or a "uniqueness of the self" that no other human possesses.<sup>463</sup> Additionally, because every human being is "unique" the act of expressing individuality through the use of the physical voice is a relatable practice. To Arendt, this very act of expressing one's individuality to another through speech becomes "political action."<sup>464</sup> Thus, I argue that a pianist can take "political action" by performing works for vocalizing pianist in a public concert space. In this chapter I will explore how pianists can

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<sup>460</sup> Norie Neumark, foreword to *Theatre & Voice* by Konstantinos Thomaidis (London, UK: Red Globe Press, 2017), xiii.

<sup>461</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 188-193.

<sup>462</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 193.

<sup>463</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

<sup>464</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 26.

express their “narratable self” in performance of select repertoire for vocalizing pianist. In particular I will examine how this “narratable self” can be expressed through vulnerability, self-exposure, narration, and even queering the norm of piano performance.<sup>465</sup> Case studies will include *Sunflower Sutra* (1999) by American composer Jerome Kitzke (b. 1955), *Myosotis* (2012) by Canadian composer Nova Pon (b. 1983), and *Tony Beaver and the Big Music* (2021) by Canadian composer Emily Doolittle (b. 1972).

## 6.2 Literature Review

As pianists Adam Marks and Mingyui Kevin Chau explain in their respective DMA dissertations, the genre of music composed for vocalizing pianist is still relatively new dating back to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>466</sup> Furthermore, works that are composed for pianist to speak full text while they are playing emerged as recently as the 1990s with American composer Frederic Rzewski’s (1938-2021) *De Profundis* (1992) and Kitzke’s *Sunflower Sutra* (1999). Previous works that featured vocalizations by a solo pianist were limited to isolated vocalizations such as whistling, moaning, shouting, whispering, audible breath, etc., that did not involve a narrative text. As both Marks and Chau state, one of the earliest compositions for solo vocalizing pianist was American composer George Crumb’s (1929-2022) *Makrokosmos I* (1972) in which the composer includes specific rhythmic and dynamic instructions for the pianist to use their voice. Therefore, since music for vocalizing pianist whose use of the voice includes narration of text throughout the piece is still very recent, the scholarship on such repertoire is

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<sup>465</sup> Freya Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flow* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 163.

<sup>466</sup> Adam Marks, “The Virtuositic Era of the Vocalizing Pianist” (DMA diss., New York University, 2012), 28-43; Mingyui Kevin Chau, “From Melodrama to *Vocalizing Pianist* – The Evolution of a Genre” (DMA diss., University of Arizona, 2018), 26-35.

currently reserved to DMA dissertations—no published scholarship on repertoire for solo vocalizing pianists currently exists.

The DMA dissertations by pianists Marks (2012), Michiko Saiki (2017), Chau (2018), and Elizabeth Pearse (2018), all contribute to scholarship on repertoire for the vocalizing pianist by exploring various repertoires as case studies and by pointing out the opportunities for pianists to push the boundaries of their performances. Although not the first pianist to write a dissertation on music for vocalizing pianist, Marks created a foundation of scholarship for the genre by providing a historical overview of the development of works for vocalizing pianist, a discussion of what he calls the “virtuosic era of the vocalizing pianist,” an exploration of compositional styles of music for vocalizing pianist, and interviews with various pianists and composers involved in repertoire for vocalizing pianist including pianist Anthony de Mare and composer Jerome Kitzke.<sup>467</sup> Furthermore, Marks’ dissertation includes an overview of how pianists Lisa Moore, Andrew Russo, and de Mare approach learning works for vocalizing pianist, and offers suggestions of ways to develop the voice and the character of the text for performance of such works. Among the many case studies included in his dissertation, Marks examines Kitzke’s *Sunflower Sutra* contributing background information about the way in which the piece was conceived, the use of word painting within the music, and analysis of the rhythm of the text in relation to the music.<sup>468</sup>

Although the focus of his dissertation is on the virtuosity of repertoire for vocalizing pianist and on how to develop the virtuosity of the voice in such repertoire, Marks argues that

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<sup>467</sup> Marks, “The Virtuosic Era of the Vocalizing Pianist,” 12-19. Note that Milton R. Schlosser’s dissertation examines Rzewski’s *De Profundis*, though it does not delve into the genre of music for vocalizing pianist at large. In fact, he uses the term “speaking pianist” to define this genre. Furthermore, his discussion focuses on the performativity of homosexuality within the piece and the politics of such performance in Canada in 1995. Milton R. Schlosser, “Queer Effects, Wilde Behaviour: Frederic Rzewski’s *De Profundis*” (DMA diss., University of Alberta, 1995).

<sup>468</sup> Marks, “The Virtuosic Era of the Vocalizing Pianist,” 10, 68-71.

based on musicologist Carolyn Abbate's argument that the physical voice indicates individuality, repertoire for vocalizing pianist allows a performer to develop and to express this individuality.<sup>469</sup> He comments that "the virtuosic era [of the vocalizing pianist] brought about an entirely new medium for performance—a renewal and a strengthening of bond between pianist and listener, performer and audience."<sup>470</sup> Because Marks does not elaborate his point or theorize how the use of the voice connects pianist and audience I will further this discussion in this chapter. In summary, Marks' dissertation paved the way for much future study of works for vocalizing pianist including the development of the physical voice, the self, and unity between performer and audience. His interviews with de Mare and Kitzke, in particular, provide much insight into the context of *Sunflower Sutra*'s composition, de Mare's development of self through the process of learning repertoire for vocalizing pianist, and Kitzke's conception and philosophy of performance of the piece. All of the interviews that Marks did with the various artists which are included in the appendices of his dissertation are invaluable to both understanding how this genre of repertoire has come to life since the 1970s, and how to approach these works as a performer.

While Marks provides foundational information about how a pianist can express their individuality in works for vocalizing pianist, Saiki elaborates how a performer can embody gender within performance of works for vocalizing pianist.<sup>471</sup> Drawing on the work of musicologists Suzanne Cusick and Carolyn Abbate, and sociologist Cecilia L. Ridgeway, Saiki argues that because the voice reveals personal information, "the vocalizing pianist creates a

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<sup>469</sup> Marks, "The Virtuosic Era of the Vocalizing Pianist," 61, 82.

<sup>470</sup> Marks, "The Virtuosic Era of the Vocalizing Pianist," 82.

<sup>471</sup> Michiko Saiki, "The Vocalizing Pianist: Embodying Gendered Performance" (DMA diss., Bowling Green State University, 2017), 79-80.

performance in which the audience's attention is drawn to the performer's body."<sup>472</sup> She elaborates by stating that because audiences have pre-conceived notions of gender in relation to physical appearance in addition to the sound of a particular voice they will automatically assume the gender of a vocalizing pianist. For Saiki, a pianist can challenge society's "culturally constructed ideas about the body, gender, and sex," by being vulnerable in performance and allowing their individuality to be expressed through their physical voice.<sup>473</sup> Additionally, she argues that because a pianist is a pianist and not a singer or an actor, they are more vulnerable when they have to use their physical voice in performance, and this vulnerability "invites the audience into an intimate space."<sup>474</sup> She also argues that the voice connects performer and audience because of its delivery from one physical, human body to another.<sup>475</sup> Furthermore, Saiki claims that "[w]hen the performer tries to retell a story as the 'self,' the vocalizing pianist genre can be seen not as a theatrical act, but as a political act."<sup>476</sup> Though she does not reference Cavarero's "narratable self" or Arendt's theory of "political action," Saiki's claim is important and opens possibilities for further study on selfhood and political action.

By contrast to the two dissertations by Marks and Saiki that explore personal expression within works for solo vocalizing pianist, the dissertations by Chau and Pearse focus on the development and definition of the genre. For Chau, whose entire dissertation is devoted to the genealogy of repertoire for vocalizing pianist, linking the evolution of contemporary works for vocalizing pianist to Romantic melodramas "shows the relevance of vocalizing pianist pieces to the more familiar works."<sup>477</sup> In other words, by showing a lineage of works for vocalizing pianist

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<sup>472</sup> Saiki, "The Vocalizing Pianist: Embodying Gendered Performance," 3.

<sup>473</sup> Saiki, "The Vocalizing Pianist," 91.

<sup>474</sup> Saiki, "The Vocalizing Pianist," 56.

<sup>475</sup> Saiki, "The Vocalizing Pianist," 56.

<sup>476</sup> Saiki, "The Vocalizing Pianist," 65.

<sup>477</sup> Chau, "From Melodrama to *Vocalizing Pianist* – The Evolution of a Genre," 43.

that have evolved from Romantic melodramas (works for music and spoken text performed by more than one performer) Chau argues that works for vocalizing pianist can be understood as related to popular works from the past. On the other hand, Pearse's discussion of works for vocalizing pianist is limited to highlighting the difference between works composed for a pianist who vocalizes while playing and repertoire for "self-accompanying" singer.<sup>478</sup> Because Pearse's dissertation focuses on works for "self-accompanying" singer, her inclusion of information about repertoire for vocalizing pianist is but a small section of her work aimed at defining the genre. However, her claim that the examples of works for vocalizing pianist that she includes in her dissertation "require a performer with a higher level of keyboard skill than vocal skill," points to the vulnerability that a pianist faces when having to use their physical voice in performance. Throughout her dissertation she examines works for "self-accompanying" singer where the performer needs to have equal, if not greater, skill as a singer than as a pianist.<sup>479</sup> This distinction between an advanced pianist with little to no education in vocal development and an advanced singer with adequate skill in piano to be able to perform both as a singer and as a pianist is crucial to understanding the demands that pianists face within performance of works for vocalizing pianist. Additionally, Pearse's distinction links the discussions on individuality and vulnerability by Marks and Saiki.

Similarly, Chau highlights the fact that the role of a pianist who performs works for vocalizing pianist is also to be an actor.<sup>480</sup> Not only does a pianist need to use their potentially untrained voice, but they must also play the role of the speaker of the text imposed in the

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<sup>478</sup> Elizabeth Pearse, "'Because there is no Basis for Comparison': The Self-Accompanying Singer and Roger Reynolds' *Sketchbook for the Unbearable Lightness of Being*" (DMA diss., Bowling Green State University, 2018), 11.

<sup>479</sup> See, for example, Pearse's discussion of works by composer George Henschel. Pearse, "'Because there is no Basis for Comparison': The Self-Accompanying Singer and Roger Reynolds' *Sketchbook for the Unbearable Lightness of Being*," 15.

<sup>480</sup> Chau, "From Melodrama to *Vocalizing Pianist* – The Evolution of a Genre," 9.

composition. Moreover, he claims that “[b]y using the pianist’s voice and body as well as the piano itself, composers are able to create a different type of atmosphere and *stage tension* through the use of a vocalizing pianist.”<sup>481</sup> Although he does not elaborate what he means by “stage tension” nor does he theorize how the use of the physical voice in performance of piano repertoire would create such tension, Chau alludes to the concept of vulnerability that both Marks and Saiki discuss in their dissertations. Therefore, in addition to his contribution to scholarship on works for vocalizing pianist through the evolution of the genre from the Romantic melodrama, Chau includes statements that connect to musicologist Ruth Solie’s concept of “difference” and how the act of performing such difference can connect performer and audience.<sup>482</sup> For Solie, “[d]ifference is about power” where expressing one’s individuality can challenge societal norms and expectations of gender, sexuality, and cultural performativity.<sup>483</sup> Whereas Marks explicitly states in his dissertation that the new developments of experimental vocal techniques employed by performers David Burge, Anthony de Mare, and Frederic Rzewski “essentially queer[...] the performance of solo piano using Butler’s concept of separation from the norm,” Chau does not mention Butler or Solie or any scholar who has worked on “difference.” However, including this statement about “stage tension” does leave room for future research and study which I will address in this chapter.

In summary, all four dissertations that include any information about works for vocalizing pianist refer to the extraordinary demands placed on a performer of such works, especially in relation to their identity. For Pearse this identity is limited to what Cavarero and Arendt consider to be *what* the pianist is—a pianist who vocalizes while playing is still a *pianist*

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<sup>481</sup> Chau, “From Melodrama to *Vocalizing Pianist* – The Evolution of a Genre,” 9. [my emphasis]

<sup>482</sup> Ruth A. Solie, *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 6.

<sup>483</sup> Ruth A. Solie, *Musicology and Difference*, 6.



who must also use their voice. Chau's understanding of the pianist's identity is also limited to *what* they are, though his focus is on the pianist as *actor*. By contrast, both dissertations by Saiki and Marks discuss implications for self-identification, or what Cavarero and Arendt would call *who* the performer is, within works for vocalizing pianist. For Saiki, the identity of the performer that audiences hear just from the audible voice in performance comes with implications of gender. Marks' focus is on the freedom that a performer has to express their personality by using the physical voice within works for vocalizing pianist. However, none of these dissertations theorize the necessity to express a "narratable self" in order to relate to others in the way that Cavarero and Arendt have discussed. Furthermore, no scholar to date has addressed how a vocalizing pianist can take "political action" in performance of such works. Therefore, this chapter will address this gap and elaborate the discussion about self-expression within works for vocalizing pianist begun by Marks, Saiki, Chau, and Pearse.

Each of the dissertations by Marks, Saiki, Chau, and Pearse examines various works for vocalizing pianist and includes musical examples to further demonstrate their arguments. Additionally, both Marks and Chau explore Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra* in their respective dissertations contributing information relating to specific characteristics of the way the text is composed in relation to the music, as well as discussion surrounding the development of a theatrical performer.<sup>484</sup> Among the four dissertations by Marks, Saiki, Chau, and Pearse only one work by a female composer (American composer Amy Beth Kirsten (b. 1972) is studied, and no work by a Canadian composer is investigated. By contrast, the works for solo vocalizing pianist of five male American composers—Rzewski, Kitzke, David Rakowski (b. 1958), Stuart

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<sup>484</sup> Chau, "From Melodrama to *Vocalizing Pianist* – The Evolution of a Genre," 38-41; Marks, "The Virtuositic Era of the Vocalizing Pianist," 68-71.

Saunders Smith (b. 1948), and Roger Reynolds (b. 1934)—and one male English composer—Brian Ferneyhough—are used as case studies and musical examples within these four dissertations. Therefore, there is no scholarship to date that explores Canadian composer Nova Pon’s *Myosotis*, or Canadian composer Emily Doolittle’s recently composed *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*. As a result, this chapter will not only further the discussions about Kitzke’s *Sunflower Sutra*, but it will also address the gap in scholarship pertaining to women and Canadian composers who have written for solo vocalizing pianist.

### **6.3 Vulnerability and Self-Exposure within *Sunflower Sutra*, *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*, and *Myosotis***

Though Arendt’s argument for humans to take “political action” through shared deeds and words does not explicitly address vulnerability, it does involve exposure of a self to and among others.<sup>485</sup> She calls for humans to “reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world” in order to take “political action.”<sup>486</sup> Her focus, therefore, is both on a person’s willingness to share their identity through speech, and also on the plurality of such an act. In other words, action cannot exist in isolation, and there can be no action without speech. Furthermore, Arendt explains that “[s]peechless action would no longer be action because there would no longer be an actor, and the actor, the doer of deeds, is possible only if [they are] at the same time the speaker of words.”<sup>487</sup> This means that without speech, no individual qualities of a person can be revealed, and without such expression of self, there can be no action. Similarly, Cavarero does not speak about vulnerability, but she argues the necessity

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<sup>485</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 179-180.

<sup>486</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 179-180.

<sup>487</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 178-179.

for self-exposure to others.<sup>488</sup> In his introduction to Cavarero's book, philosopher Paul A. Kottman (b. 1970) draws on Butler's notion of "linguistic vulnerability" to understand both Cavarero's and Arendt's requests for self-exposure. He explains that "[e]ach of us is open, and therefore vulnerable, to what others tell or call us. But this is a vulnerability that, beyond being a condition for social existence in a general sense, also belongs to *who* each of us is; for we are all uniquely vulnerable, in different ways, to different words, at different times."<sup>489</sup> Kottman's statements identify what is really at stake when humans interact through deeds and words: true vulnerability, or more specifically, the possibility to be hurt or affected by the words or actions of others.

As Marks and Saiki have pointed out, a vocalizing pianist is vulnerable because using the physical voice in performance is unusual which can make a performer feel uncomfortable or exposed. However, it is not just the act of doing something unusual while playing that makes a performer vulnerable, but the act of using the physical voice which exposes individual qualities of the pianist, as Cavarero would say. Paraphrasing Arendt, Cavarero explains that before humans express anything in particular—any thoughts or opinions or feelings—they express their uniqueness.<sup>490</sup> Thus, in works for vocalizing pianist, the mere act of using the physical voice in the concert space exposes what is innately individual about the performer. Additionally, because this self is only relatable to others if it has been developed through interactions with others in relatable experiences, the pianist must first understand *who* they are in order to comprehend *who* the character of the piece is. In other words, a vocalizing pianist must first be aware of who they

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<sup>488</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

<sup>489</sup> Paul A. Kottman, introduction to *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, by Adriana Cavarero, trans. Paul A. Kottman (London: Routledge, 1997), xx.

<sup>490</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 181.

are in order to relate to the character of the piece they are performing and in order to relate this character to an audience.

In Doolittle's *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*, the identity of the narrator is open to interpretation, but the role is to tell a story, and thus the performer has a great deal of freedom in their expressive delivery. While this freedom allows myriad different possibilities for interpretation, it also requires the pianist to deeply consider how they want to tell the story of *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*. As a result, they must be open to various possibilities and explore what feels the most authentic to them. For example, from measure 136 to measure 166 there is a lot of repetition in the text and in the music without any indication of vocal inflection, rhythm, or dynamics. (See Figure 6.3.1) In a similar way that Arendt calls humans to "think what [they] are doing" a pianist must think what they are saying and to consider what these words mean to them.<sup>491</sup> In response to Arendt's request, and in the context of measures 136-166 of Doolittle's piece, a pianist might ask themselves questions such as:

What emotion(s) do I want to evoke within each phrase of text?  
How do I feel when I embody the actions that I am describing in this text?  
What is Tony Beaver's relationship to the Dewdrop and what is their emotional response to discovering it?  
Why is Tony Beaver winking and blinking?  
Why is the Dewdrop winking and blinking?  
What is Tony Beaver's reaction to the Dewdrop filling with a "frosty light"?  
What does the phrase "shimmered like the whole world was contained inside it" mean to me? How can I convey this meaning to an audience with my physical voice?

These types of questions can help a pianist develop an emotional response to a text which contributes to the development of *who* the character is that is portrayed in the work for vocalizing pianist. Moreover, the vulnerability and exposure of this character's "self" by

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<sup>491</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 5.

extension of the pianist's "self" is necessary in order to relate the content of the work to audiences.

Figure 6.3.1 Doolittle, *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*, mm. 132-168

132  $\text{♩} = 92$

4/4 6/8

Tony Beaver woke

138

with the first rays of the sun. He opened his eyes, and

2/4

144

2/4 6/8 2/4 6/8

saw a Dewdrop shining on the grass beside him. Tony Beaver winked.

Figure 6.3.1 continued

150

The Dewdrop winked. Tony Beaver blinked. The Dewdrop blinked.

154

Tony Beaver winked the Dew Drop winked, and filled with a

158

frosty light. It twinkled on one side, then the other, one side,

161

then the other, one side, then the other, and shimmered like the whole

The musical score consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment is characterized by a complex, repetitive pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, creating a shimmering effect. The vocal line is simple, with lyrics that describe a sequence of events. The time signature is 6/8, and the key signature has one flat (B-flat). The measures are numbered 150, 154, 158, and 161 at the beginning of each system.

Figure 6.3.1 continued

163

world was contained inside it.

Despite the necessity for a pianist to reflect on each phrase, and at times particular words, within *Tony Beaver and the Big Music* the text is straightforward and reads much like a children’s story. By contrast, the text of Pon’s *Myosotis* is a poem by Italian-Canadian writer Monica Meneghetti that requires more advanced skills in poetic interpretation as well as creative reflection on how to deliver such a sophisticated text, broken up by imposed musical timing, to an audience who is likely hearing it for the first time. For example, from measures 151-192 (see Figure 6.3.2) the text reads: “You wanted a touchstone for your wild senses, for how your vision loses zoom, becomes wide-angled eye so you may see fescue and bluegrass relinquish their single blades to form tussocks of undulation, while in the same wind, spruce and pine list in unison like the fur of an enormous mammal.”<sup>492</sup> Here, nearly every word evokes the senses in one way or another requiring the pianist to seriously consider how they want to deliver this text. Potential questions a pianist might consider are:

- What is the meaning of this sentence?
- What specifically am I evoking when I speak these words to an audience?
- How do I relate to this imagery?
- Which words do I want to highlight and why?
- How can my voice help to evoke imagery and/or emotional responses for the audience?

<sup>492</sup> Monica Meneghetti, “Myosotis” text in *Myosotis*, unpublished musical score by Nova Pon, 2012.



In opening themselves to vulnerability through reflection of the text and how it makes the pianist feel and on how they respond to certain words in particular, and through exploring different ways that the voice can heighten the performance experience for audiences, they are developing what Cavarero calls a “narratable self”—a unique existent who is in relation to others.<sup>493</sup> However, as Arendt rightly states, “action [...] is never possible in isolation; [a]ction and speech need the surrounding presence of others.”<sup>494</sup> Thus, in order for a pianist to take “political action” in the way that Arendt describes, they require an audience who will hear their voice in performance. The first step for a vocalizing pianist is to develop their “narratable self” in practice, but only in public performance can “action” occur.

Figure 6.3.2 Pon, *Myosotis*, mm. 151-192

151/1 **A little faster** You want-ed a touch - stone for your wild  
 153 sen - ses, for how your  
*p*  
*mp*

<sup>493</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 34.

<sup>494</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 188.

Figure 6.3.2 continued

155 vis ion los es zoom, be comes wide - angled eye

158 A little faster

161 **J** Slowly (♩. = c. 46) so you may see \* (pizz.) fes - cue and

167 blue-grass re - lin-quish their sing-le blades to form

173 tus-socks of un-dul - at - ion, while

*mf*

*p* *mp* *mf*

*ff* *mf* *Red.*

\* (strum strings)

\* (silently depress these keys)

*Red.* *8<sup>vb</sup>* Sostenuito Pedal

The musical score is presented in five systems. The first system (measures 155-157) features a piano accompaniment with a complex, rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a simpler bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 158-160) is marked 'A little faster' and shows a more active piano accompaniment with a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes. The third system (measures 161-165) includes a tempo change to 'Slowly' and a key signature change to B-flat major. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment that includes a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction. The fourth system (measures 166-172) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with a 'Red.' (Reduction) instruction. The fifth system (measures 173-175) shows the final measures of the piece, with a 'Sostenuito Pedal' instruction and a '8<sup>vb</sup>' (8th vibration) marking.

Figure 6.3.2 continued

**Flowingly** (♩. = c. 66) **molto accel.** . . . . .

**K** in the same wind, spruce and pine list in

180

*pp* *p* *mp*

un-i-son like the fur of an en-or-mous mam-mal.

**Fast** (♩. = 136) **L** **Lively** (♩. = c. 66)

187

*mf*

Ped.

Both of the pieces by Doolittle and Pon require self-reflection, and from a technical perspective, significant practice in coordinating the act of speaking while playing, especially since the text is often unmeasured (i.e., not written out rhythmically in relation to the piano part). Additionally, Pon requests that the pianist sing the word “myosotis” (Figure 6.3.3 and 6.3.4) twice throughout the piece which might make some pianists feel even more vulnerable than speaking text because while most pianists use their speaking voice in everyday life, they don’t necessarily sing regularly, or at all, or ever in front of others. However, both *Myosotis* and *Tony Beaver and the Big Music* are quite accessible pieces from the perspective of the demands of the performer. That is to say that outside of the unusual act of speaking (or briefly singing) while playing the piano, the pianist does not need to use their voice in any other way besides speaking text or singing in performance. By contrast, Kitzke’s *Sunflower Sutra* is significantly more

demanding in terms of vocalization and the text that is set to music can be challenging to interpret and thus to know how to deliver to an audience.

Figure 6.3.3 Pon, *Myosotis*, mm. 35

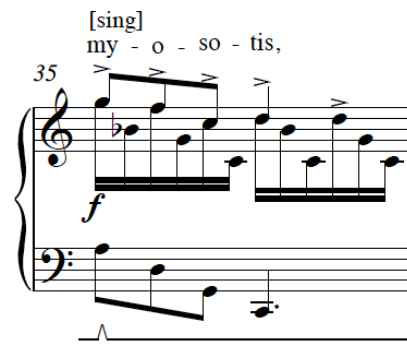
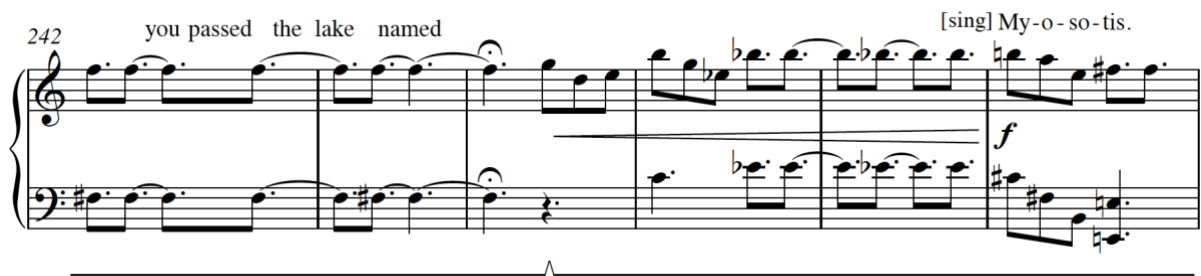


Figure 6.3.4 Pon, *Myosotis*, mm. 242-247



In addition to speaking and singing text, Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra* asks the performer to speak and sing nonsense syllables, perform measured and unmeasured rhythmic breathing, laugh, hiccup, sigh, gasp, and improvise vocalizations. Even without the speechless vocalizations, the Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) text that Kitzke set to music, is difficult to interpret because of the style of writing and because of the content of the poem. A member of the "Beat Generation," Ginsberg's poetry encapsulates the exhaustion that people felt during the post-World-War II era in the United States, and at the same time, the energy of being able to express his reflections of

the modern era in writing.<sup>495</sup> In his book, “Nothing More to Declare,” author, “beat” poet, and friend to Ginsberg, John Clellon Holmes (1926-1988) describes the vitality of his generation despite the challenges that they faced. To him, “if other generations have lamented the fact that theirs was the ‘worst of all possible worlds,’ young people today seem to know that it is the only one that they will ever have, and that it is *how* a [person] lives, not why, that makes all the difference.”<sup>496</sup> Furthermore, he explains that for friend and colleague Jack Kerouac (1922-1969), what made them “beat” was that “they were on a quest, and that the specific object of their quest was spiritual. Though they rushed back and forth across the country on the slightest pretext, gathering kicks along the way, their real journey was inward; and if they seemed to trespass most boundaries, legal and moral, it was only in the hope of finding a belief on the other side.”<sup>497</sup> The “Beats,” therefore channelled their reflections of life in the postwar era and their enthusiasm about persevering through adversity into their writing.

Ginsberg’s “Sunflower Sutra” (1955) was written during this era of “beat” poetry and is full of references to the “Beat Generation” and to the violence, poverty, consumerism, and loneliness of the time in juxtaposition with the beautiful message that each human has a light within that deserves to shine. (See Appendix C.1) In the final stanza, Ginsberg writes, “We’re not our skin of grime, we’re not our dread bleak dusty imageless locomotives, we’re all beautiful golden sunflowers inside, we’re blessed by our own seed and golden hairy naked accomplishment-bodies growing into mad black formal sunflowers in the sunset, spied on by our own eyes under the shadow of the mad locomotive riverbank sunset Frisco hilly tincan evening sitdown vision.”<sup>498</sup> The juxtaposition of life and death within this sentence sums up the

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<sup>495</sup> Steven Belletto, *The Beats: A Literary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 107-111.

<sup>496</sup> John Clellon Holmes, *Nothing More to Declare* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1967), 126.

<sup>497</sup> Holmes, *Nothing More to Declare*, 117.

<sup>498</sup> Allen Ginsberg, *Sunflower Sutra* (New York: Peermusic, 1955).

philosophy of the “Beat Generation,” but unless a person has spent time learning about the “Beats” the text is very difficult to comprehend. Thus, for a pianist, whose background is in learning music without text, confronting Ginsberg’s text within Kitzke’s *Sunflower Sutra* can be overwhelming.

Once a pianist works out what the message of Ginsberg’s poem is—that each human is individual and is a product of their experiences in life despite societal challenges—they are met with the task of exploring ways that they can deliver this text to an audience in a way that the audience can feel the weight of the words that the pianist is performing. This requires tremendous vulnerability from the pianist because of the complexity of the text and the potentially difficult emotions that might come up in response to this text. For example, in the first two stanzas of Ginsberg’s poem it is evident that the narrator is struggling emotionally and that their physical surroundings are troublesome. (See Appendix C.1) In order for the text to be relatable to an audience, the pianist must first relate to the text themselves. That is to say that they must understand and interpret the text from their own lived experiences and be open to delivering the text with their own, raw perspective, which demands emotional vulnerability. Furthermore, as Cavarero says, “the relational character [...] is intertwined with other lives [...] and needs the other’s tale.”<sup>499</sup> In the context of Kitzke’s piece, the character of the narrator, written by Ginsberg, needs an actor/pianist to share their tale with others and needs an audience to hear it. The pianist/actor needs the author’s tale as a way to understand and relate to others in order to develop their own uniqueness, and they need an audience to whom they can express this uniqueness. The audience needs the pianist/actor to share their uniqueness of self through the delivery of text as a way to see themselves in the character in order to reflect back to themselves

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<sup>499</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 88.

who *they* are. Thus, in order for Ginsberg's character, the pianist, and members of the audience to be relatable to each other, the pianist must be willing to expose their "insubstitutable" identity throughout the performance of the piece.<sup>500</sup>

For Cavarero, this insubstitutable identity is automatically shared by using the physical voice, but for Arendt one's identity must be communicated through speech specifically, which reveals an ableist assumption about the expression of one's identity and raises the question of alternative expressions by deaf-mutes or persons with speech impediments discussed in disability studies. Furthermore, Arendt argues that action can only occur in a plural environment where the agents of speech are mindful about their purposes for communication rather than speaking as a means to an end.<sup>501</sup> She uses the example of violence becoming the result of speech as a means to an end and explains that in this instance the communication becomes "'mere talk,' simply one more means toward the end, whether it serves to deceive the enemy or to dazzle everybody with propaganda; here words reveal nothing, disclosure comes only from the deed itself, and this achievement, like all other achievements, cannot disclose the 'who,' the unique and distinct identity of the agent."<sup>502</sup> In the context of Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra* where the text is predetermined, the pianist/actor must contemplate the meaning of the words in order to relate them meaningfully to an audience otherwise the words will become "mere talk," as Arendt argues. This contemplation and then meaningful delivery in performance requires a pianist to be willing to expose their insubstitutable identity through the use of their physical voice.

In addition to the text of *Sunflower Sutra* being challenging to interpret and to perform, Kitzke composed four sections of music entitled "Mad American Locomotive of the Heart"

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<sup>500</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

<sup>501</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 180-181.

<sup>502</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 180.

interspersed with the Ginsberg text (see Appendix C.2) that involve speaking and singing nonsense syllables, whistling, or humming, laughing, sighing, gasping, hiccupping, and improvising vocalizations. As Marks points out, “this queering of the standard performance model shows the vulnerability of the performer, and can immediately forge an intimacy with an audience.”<sup>503</sup> What Marks is saying is that the obscurity of speaking nonsense syllables (see Figure 6.3.5) or of improvising vocalizations (see Figure 6.3.6) for example, can make a pianist feel vulnerable because of the unusual nature of vocalizing while playing the piano. By extension, Marks claims that this vulnerability connects pianist to audience. However, Cavarero would say that what relates the pianist to the audience in this example is in fact the mere use of the physical voice—even without words—which exposes a pianist’s insubstitutable identity. Furthermore, Cavarero says that “unity lies precisely in this *insubstitutability* that *persists* [*permane*] in time because it continues to present itself in time.”<sup>504</sup> A vocalizing pianist is therefore vulnerable because in using the physical voice—be it laughing or singing or humming, etc., —unchangeable qualities of the pianist’s identity are revealed and continuously exposed, and this exposure of *who* the pianist is unites performer and audience.

Figure 6.3.5 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 20-23

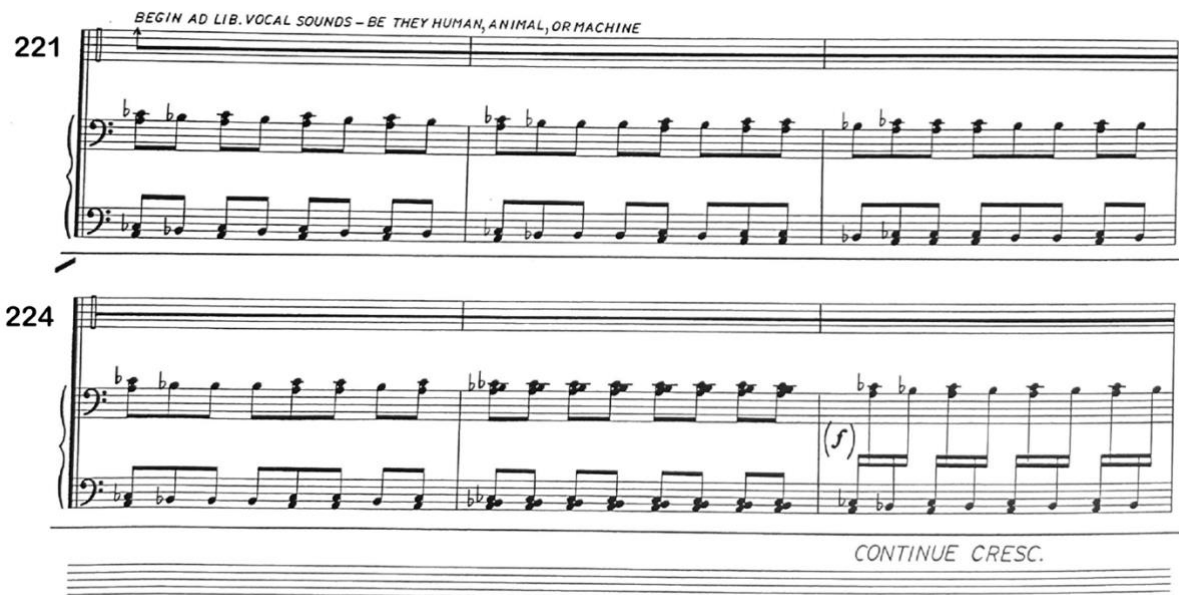


<sup>503</sup> Marks, “The Virtuositic Era of the Vocalizing Pianist,” 68-69.

<sup>504</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 72.



Figure 6.3.6 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 221-226



#### 6.4 Narration of *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*, and Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra* as Political Action

For both Cavarero and Arendt, a particular type of unity is created through narration—one in which a person can see themselves in the other. To Arendt, “[c]ompared with the reality which comes from being seen and heard, even the greatest forces of intimate life—the passions of the heart, the thoughts of the mind, the delights of the senses—lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance. The most current of such transformations occurs in storytelling and generally in artistic transposition of individual experiences.”<sup>505</sup> In other words, until emotions or thoughts are vocalized in the presence of others they remain in the private realm and cannot be shared or confirmed by others. Arendt elaborates that “[t]he

<sup>505</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 50.

presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves.”<sup>506</sup> Although her argument is about the confirmation of reality, she is also saying that in sharing one’s thoughts and emotions in a public space a person is engaging in a relational experience. Cavarero also contends that narration is a relational practice, but whereas Arendt’s argument overtly involves artistic performance as an example of the deprivatization of thoughts and feelings, Cavarero’s argument for narration is always reserved to the narration of one’s own story without any mention of artistic performance. She explains that “[i]n the exchange of auto-biographical tales, the recognition of the uniqueness of the other and her desire for narration is, within the narrative scene, often mixed with the tendency to recognize the meaning of one’s own self within the other’s story, especially if that story speaks of suffering and misery.”<sup>507</sup> Here, Cavarero is describing a situation where two or more people are explicitly sharing intimate details about their own lives, and in listening to the other’s tale they are able to relate to aspects of the story from their own experiences and thus to understand their own identity with more clarity. Although Cavarero and Arendt use the terms “storytelling” and “narration” in slightly different capacities, they both argue the necessity for the plural and reciprocal exchange of intimate details of one’s existence and identity through narration as a way to relate to others and to develop one’s own identity. Furthermore, as Kottman explains in his introduction to Cavarero’s book, “[t]he narration of a life-story, therefore, offers an alternative sense to politics not only because it deals with unique persons, but because it illustrates the *interaction* of unique persons. [...] [N]arration is political for Cavarero and Arendt first of all because it is *relational*.”<sup>508</sup> In other words, because humans relate to one another through

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<sup>506</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 50.

<sup>507</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 91.

<sup>508</sup> Kottman, Introduction to *Relating Narratives*, x.

narration, or they are communicating in meaningful ways by use of the physical voice, they are taking political action as Arendt argues.

Because music composed for the vocalizing pianist involves narration it, thus, offers the possibility for a pianist to take political action in the way that Arendt argues. By comparison, music composed for the non-vocalizing pianist (for example, a solo piano sonata) does not permit a pianist to “deprivatize” thoughts or emotions.<sup>509</sup> Even though *Myosotis*, *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*, and *Sunflower Sutra* all include imposed text (i.e., not the pianist’s own thoughts and ideas), the pianist is still narrating relatable experiences and emotions. Most importantly, in performance of these pieces, a pianist is deprivatizing the ideas of the author/poet and sharing them in a public space where others can hear and relate to them. For both Arendt and Cavarero the relational aspect of narration occurs when a person can recognize themselves in the other. Specifically, Cavarero points out that there is a greater tendency to recognize oneself within a story when it involves “suffering and misery,” though she does not elaborate why this is the case.<sup>510</sup> Arendt, however, explains that pain is the most intense feeling and therefore “the most private and least communicable of all.”<sup>511</sup> In light of both Cavarero’s and Arendt’s arguments it is evident that what makes pain so relatable is first and foremost the intensity of the sensation. However, as Arendt explains, because pain is the most private feeling it is challenging to communicate the extent to which it is felt. Therefore, when suffering or pain are successfully communicated through narration, as Cavarero points out, there is a greater tendency for intimacy or greater tendency to recognize oneself in the other’s tale. Consequently, the texts of *Tony Beaver and the Big Music* and *Sunflower Sutra* provide a pianist with opportunities to

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<sup>509</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 50.

<sup>510</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 91.

<sup>511</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 50-51.

communicate deep feelings of physical and emotional pain that have the potential to be poignantly relatable to members of the audience. More specifically, these texts offer opportunities for members of audiences to recognize themselves in the stories.

The text for *Tony Beaver and the Big Music* (see Appendix C.4) is predominantly lighthearted, but in measures 40 to 93 in the musical score (Figure 6.4.1), the words and music rapidly increase in intensity and describe the development of a physical fight. In particular, the words beginning in measure 70 and ending in measure 81 describe mounting emotional pain being inflicted upon others resulting in physical assault in measure 81. The quick progression of teasing which becomes physical blows imitates the chaos and rapid rise of conflict that occurs in the modern world when, As Arendt says, “speech becomes ‘mere talk.’” Although not all humans can relate to the experience of living through war or a physical altercation with another human being, the intensity of the actions described in measures 70-81 is relatable. By extension, the pain—both emotional and physical—felt by the characters in the story is relatable. Doolittle’s music in measures 44-93 also mirrors the mounting intensity and physical violence described in the text by progressively increasing in dissonance, progressively shortening the breaks between the phrases, progressively ascending the keyboard, and progressively augmenting in dynamic. Though the music on its own would not be able to convey the relatable aspects of the text with as much clarity as the text is able to convey, the music does contribute another layer to the way the text can be interpreted. As a result, the combination of text and music together offers pianists the opportunity to bring narration into solo piano performance, and greater opportunities for audiences to recognize themselves within performances by solo pianists.

Figure 6.4.1 Doolittle, *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*, mm. 40-93

*expansively*  
40 ♩ = approx. 100

Eel river was usually a happy place but to - day the air lay

*f*

Figure 6.4.1 continued

4

Measured  
playful  
♩ = 184

43

heavy with un-rest. The men liked to kid around,

48

telling jokes, playing pranks. But today,

56

the pranks turned sour. Chatter turned to banter,

64

banter turned to teasing. Chatter turned to banter, banter turned to teasing,

70

becoming angry

teasing turned to taunting, taunting turned to jibes, turned to yelling, turned to shouting

The musical score consists of five systems of piano accompaniment. Each system has a treble and bass staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Measured' and 'playful' with a quarter note equal to 184 beats per minute. The dynamics range from piano (p) to mezzo-forte (mf). The lyrics are written above the treble staff, and the music is written below the bass staff. The score shows a progression from playful pranks to angry shouting.

Figure 6.4.1 continued

5

76

turned to mocking, turned to jeers, turned to ribbing, turned to insults, turned to threats, turned

81

to fists, turned to blows

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  ( $\text{♩} = \text{approx. } 124$ ) or a bit faster

*ff*

85

poco rit.

89

$\text{♩} = \text{approx. } 100$

Even though Ginsberg's poetry in *Sunflower Sutra* is not always a linear progression of events as Doolittle's text is in *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*, his text does, also, involve the deeply relatable feelings of suffering and misery. In the middle of the poem, for example, Ginsberg talks about thoughts of death, loneliness, and misery—intimate feelings that Arendt and Cavarero would argue have the most potential for relational experience. Ginsberg's text reads:

[...] The grime was no man's grime but death and human locomotives,  
all that dress of dust, that veil of darkened railroad skin, that smog of cheek, that eyelid of  
black mis'ry, that sooty hand or phallus or protuberance of artificial worse-than-dirt—  
industrial—modern—all that civilization spotting your crazy golden crown—  
and those blear thoughts of death and dusty loveless eyes and ends and withered roots  
below, in the home-pile of sand and sawdust, rubber dollar bills, skin of machinery,  
the guts and innards of the weeping coughing car, the empty lonely tincans with their  
rusty tongues alack [...]

Because, in this excerpt, there is so much description of the narrator's surroundings, and the descriptions are organized in long lists, it is easy for a reader or listener to get lost amongst the individual adjectives and objects. However, the vocabulary that Ginsberg uses throughout this excerpt (and the poem at large) evokes physical and emotional sensations even within fragments of the text. In other words, even if the larger meaning of a stanza may be unclear, certain strong words and fragments of text such as “grime,” “black mis'ry,” “blear thoughts of death,” and “empty, lonely tincans,” stand out and the text can still be relatable. Additionally, in a similar way that Doolittle's music contributes to the understanding of the intensity of the text in *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*, Kitzke's musical setting of Ginsberg's text provides both pianist and listener a greater understanding of his interpretation of the harshness and weight of the poem. (See Figure 6.4.2.) For example, in measures 133-142 the pacing of the piano's chords in relation to the text imposes a slower, heavier rhythm than if the rhythm of the text was completely free with no relation to the piano part. Additionally, the solid, open fifth chords in the piano part



mirror the author's "beat-ness" –the solid chords mirroring the weight of life in the post-World-War-II era and the open fifth quality mirroring the curiosity and wiliness of the "Beats."

Similarly, in measure 148-150 the rhythm of the text is the same as the rhythm of both hands in the piano part which adds an aural heaviness to the delivery of the text. Additionally, the descending melodic seconds in the piano part contribute a further sense of weight and misery.

Overall, Ginsberg's text is an example of how complex it can be to express intense pain. Kitzke's musical setting of Ginsberg's text gives pianists the opportunity to bring this challenging poem to audiences and to create a relational concert space and by extension to take political action.

Figure 6.4.2 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 133-157

The image shows a musical score for measures 133-157 of Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra*. The score is written for piano and voice. The piano part consists of two staves. The right hand plays a melody of eighth notes, starting on F4 and ascending to E5. The left hand plays a descending melodic line of eighth notes, starting on B3 and descending to A2. The tempo is marked 'S L I G H T R I T.' (Slight Rit.). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The voice part is on a single staff, with the word 'The' appearing in measure 157. The score includes performance instructions: 'SUB. (J=ca168)' at the top right, and 'LIFT SOST. PED.' at the bottom right. The measure number '133' is written at the beginning of the piano part.

Figure 6.4.2 continued

136 grime was no man's grime but

LOCO *p* UNA CORDE PED.

139 death and hu - man no - co -

142 mo - tives, *sva* *fff* SENZA UNA CORDE PED.

Figure 6.4.2 continued

145

all that dress of dust,

KEEP BOTHS GOING

*mp* *p*

2-3" ... STOP LOCO that veil of darkened railroad skin, that smog of cheek, that eyelid

*mp*

of black mis'ry, that sooty hand or phallus or protuberance of artificial worse-than-dirt—

A BIT LOUDER *f*

Figure 6.4.2 continued

INHALATION  
 industrial modern all that civilization spotting your BVA-crazy.....golden crown  
 mf mp RAPID REPETITION  
 PED.  
 7" and those bleary thoughts of death and  
 STOP p=ca72 4/4 mp  
 STOP  
 149 dust-y love-lesseyes ardends and with-ered roots be-low, in the home-pile of sand and saw-dust,  
 A TEMPO SHORT  
 RIT. p POCO RIT.  
 PED.  
 ♩=ca160 A BIT WACKY  
 152 rub-ber dol-lar bills, (AAK) skin of ma-chin-er-y, the guts and their-nards of the  
 mf  
 155 weep-ing cough-ing car, the emp-ty lone-ly tin-cans with their rusty tongues a-lack,  
 R I T.

In addition to Arendt's belief that political action can be taken through the art of storytelling, she argues that "the theat[re] is the political art par excellence; only there is the political sphere of human life transposed into art."<sup>512</sup> In other words because, to her, action always involves speech no other form of art outside of the theatre can imitate political action. Because in theatre there are speakers and actors, they imitate the reality of being in relation to others and thus taking political action. Arendt explains that Aristotle believed that the imitation of human existence could be reified in all art forms, but to Arendt the element of speech is necessary for the imitation of political action. Thus, to her, only in dramatic arts is political action possible. In performance of works for vocalizing pianist, because of the narration of a story or the necessity to be an actor as well as a pianist, the concert space is transformed into a theatre in the way that Arendt describes. The space is no longer simply a space where music and sound are heard and felt, but a space in which a pianist, by using their voice in narration, is creating a *relational* space due to the imitation of human experience. Therefore, by extension, a pianist is taking political action within piano performance.

## **6.5 Taking Political Action by "Queering" the Norm in Performance of *Myosotis* and *Sunflower Sutra***

In addition to the possibilities for pianists to create a relational concert space through vulnerability, self-exposure, and narration, repertoire composed for the vocalizing pianist pushes the boundaries of what is typically expected from solo pianists resulting in "political action." To Arendt, "[a]ction [...] no matter what its specific content, always establishes relationships and therefore has an inherent tendency to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries."<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>512</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 188.

<sup>513</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.

In other words, because, to Arendt, action requires the sharing of thoughts and ideas by way of speech it creates relationships between people, and these relational experiences have the potential to break down barriers between humans and to open up myriad possibilities for further action. In repertoire composed for the vocalizing pianist, action is taken by using the physical voice during performance which immediately creates a relational concert space—one in which the audience hears the insubstitutable uniqueness of the performer’s vocal quality which reveals aspects of their identity and to which the audience can relate. By taking such action—by performing works that involve use of the physical voice in concert—a pianist is pushing the boundaries of what is expected of a solo pianist. To scholar Wayne Koestenbaum, this act of performing in an unexpected way would qualify as “queering the pitch.”<sup>514</sup> In his book chapter, *Queering the Pitch: A Posy of Definitions and Impersonations*, he explores various anecdotes pertaining to difference in relation to music. As such, he uses the expression “queering the pitch” to mean anything out of the ordinary or anything that would subvert the expectations. Similarly, Musicologist Freya Jarman-Ivens would consider a pianist’s subversion of the norm by way of vocalizing while playing to be “queering” the expectations, or “queering” the norm of solo piano performance.<sup>515</sup> She argues that “queer is not an identity, but resists the stability implicit in the very notion of ‘identity.’ Rather, it is a practice, an ongoing operation, requiring an engagement by the reader/listener in an act of queering.”<sup>516</sup> What Jarman-Ivens is saying is that, to her, the term “queer” does not serve to identify a person, but to describe their actions. Additionally, she concludes that in relation to sexuality and gender, what is considered stable is also considered

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<sup>514</sup> Wayne Koestenbaum, “Queering the Pitch: A Posy of Definitions and Impersonations,” in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-8.

<sup>515</sup> Freya Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flaw* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 163.

<sup>516</sup> Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 163.

normal, but “queer is committed to the disruption of [normalized gender and sex] relations.”<sup>517</sup> Therefore, in the context of musical performance, one could say that while the pianist who is performing music for vocalizing pianist does not necessarily identify as queer, their act of performing music that requires the use of the physical voice—because it is unusual for a pianist to use their physical voice while performing solo repertoire—is an act of “queering.” In addition to using the physical voice in narration of their respective texts, both Kitzke’s *Sunflower Sutra* and Pon’s *Myosotis* “queer” the norm of solo piano performance by pushing the boundaries of vocal expression as well as pushing the boundaries of physical gestures imposed upon the performer for further expression of the text. By performing these works, I argue that a pianist is *queering* the norm of solo piano performance, and by extension is taking political action in the way that Arendt argues.

In their own ways, both Kitzke and Pon ask the performer to explore their range of vocal and personal expression throughout *Sunflower Sutra* and *Myosotis*. In addition, both pieces involve non-normative use of the physical body in performance, whether the music requires the pianist to play parts of the instrument that are not the keyboard (e.g., the strings of the piano), or to add physical gestures as a sort of choreography. While these types of demands of pianists can also be found in works for non-vocalizing pianist such as Henry Cowell’s *The Banshee* (1925), Frederic Rzewski’s *Ballade No. 6: The Housewife’s Lament* (1980), and Andy Akiho’s *Vicki/y* (2008), combining vocalization with choreography or other experimental techniques on the piano adds an extra element of “queering” to the performance and requires the pianist to also consider how their physical body influences the expression of the work. In Pon’s *Myosotis*, for example, the pianist needs to “lean over and exclaim into the piano strings” or “lean over and speak into

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<sup>517</sup> Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 17.

the piano strings” and then “turn to the audience to speak.”<sup>518</sup> (See Figures 6.5.1 and 6.5.2) The extra indications for the pianist to physically lean over the piano and then turn to the audience to speak rather than speaking the text facing the keyboard, for example, or facing the score, challenges the pianist to use their imagination to determine what they are looking at when they exclaim into the piano, how their body language contributes to the expression of their exclamation, and then to be brave enough to face the audience and speak directly to them. In this case, the pianist is both actor—living the moment of awe written into Pon’s score in measure 38—and narrator who “break[s] the fourth wall.”<sup>519</sup> Author J. A. Cuddon explains that the idea of the “fourth wall” is typically attributed to French philosopher Denis Diderot (1713-1784) who wrote in 1758 that actors should imagine a curtain that is drawn across the front of the stage separating them from the audience and to behave as if the curtain never rose. In other words, actors should play their roles on stage in front of an audience as if no one was watching at all. The concept of “breaking the fourth wall” occurs in theatre when an actor speaks directly to the audience disintegrating the illusion that the actors are unaware of the audience’s presence. Therefore, when the fourth wall is “broken” the audience is invited in to the actor’s reality within the plot of the story. In *Myosotis*, the indication to speak directly to the audience adds an extra element of “queering” to the experience of performing a work for vocalizing pianist because even in many works for vocalizing pianist such as Rzewski’s *De Profundis*, and Doolittle’s *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*, the pianist does not need to face the audience at all to speak their text. However, by asking the pianist to turn to the audience to speak, Pon builds in a further opportunity for the pianist to relate to their audience in a more intimate way than when they are

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<sup>518</sup> Nova Pon, *Myosotis*, unpublished score, 2012.

<sup>519</sup> J. A. Cuddon, “Fourth Wall,” in *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, fifth ed., rev. M. A. R. Habib, ed. Matthew Birchwood, Vedrana Velickovic, Martin Dines, and Shanyin Fiske (John Wiley & Sons, 2013).



speaking into the instrument or towards the score. To face the audience—to break the fourth wall—a pianist is inviting their audience into their imaginary world within the story they are telling. Though Arendt was not talking about physical boundaries when she argued that action tends to cut across limitations, and admittedly, the fourth wall is figurative, but in instructing the pianist to turn to the audience and to speak directly to them, Pon offers pianists the possibility to push the boundary of what is expected of a pianist even within repertoire for the vocalizing pianist. The effect is, as Arendt argues, political action because of the way the self is being expressed directly to others through speech and, in this case, speech *and* action.

Figure 6.5.1 Pon, *Myosotis*, mm. 35-44

[sing]  
my - o - so - tis,

35 *f* *rit.* like, "oh my! so it is"

lean over and exclaim into the piano strings

**C** Slowly (♩. = c. 46)

39 a dis - co-ver-y

turn to audience to speak *mf* (turn back to piano) *f* *p*

*Ped.*

Figure 6.5.2 Pon, *Myosotis*, mm. 248-253

Kitzke also challenges the performer to push the boundaries of vocal and physical expression of self within *Sunflower Sutra*. However, rather than asking the pianist to “break the fourth wall” Kitzke asks the pianist to explore their vocal capacity in terms of range (i.e., how high, and how low can the pianist vocalize) and in terms of variety of vocalizations (i.e., singing versus exclaiming or laughing, etc.), as well as asking the pianist to explore a variety of physical gestures with the arms, fingers, and hands that would not typically appear in music written for solo pianist. The four sections of music entitled “Mad American Locomotive of the Heart” (Appendix C.2) do not use Ginsberg’s text, but rather text written by Kitzke as well as nonsense syllables and improvised vocalizations. While the rhythm and general outline of pitches is provided, a pianist still needs to experiment with tone, breath, and expression in order to make sense of what these exclamations might mean within the context of the piece. For example, in measures 24 to 28, the pianist is speaking nonsense syllables that are written out in meticulous rhythm with approximate pitches, but they are not meant to be sung and therefore the pianist would need to experiment with their own voice’s capacity for expression. (Figure 6.5.3) Because each voice resonates differently from other voices and because the actual vocal range and quality is individual, each pianist needs to explore how their voice can create sound that would match the expression that they aim to deliver to an audience. For example, the musical phrase in

measure 24 is written out above the staff indicating that the syllables be spoken in quite a high tessitura of the vocal range. However, what is considered high in one person's voice might not be high to another. Furthermore, for some, speaking in the highest part of their range may not actually produce the expression that they are hoping to convey because the quality of their voice might suggest a different tone than the accented and fortissimo (i.e., very loud) quality that Kitzke requests. Someone with a high voice, for example, might be tempted to speak the syllables in a similar range as to the location of the notes on the treble staff (i.e., C, B, A, G, A, B, C) which might end up sounding squeaky and thin rather than excited and bold. Therefore, slightly lower pitches might be preferable in that case. Similarly, in measure 28, a pianist might explore the effect created when using their full range of low and high registers in comparison to using a shorter vocal range between the syllables written below the staff and those written at the top of the staff. Exploring the voice's range of pitch in relation to its range of expression challenges a pianist to consider how their voice expresses their "insubstitutable existence" as Cavarero says, and how expressing this "self" in performance contributes to creating a relational concert space.<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>520</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

Figure 6.5.3 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 24-29

The musical score for Figure 6.5.3, Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra*, measures 24-29, is presented in two systems. The first system, measures 24-27, shows a vocal line with a series of 'DI' syllables and a piano accompaniment with a fast, repetitive pattern. The second system, measures 28-29, shows a vocal line with 'DI KA DI KA' syllables and a piano accompaniment with a slower, more melodic pattern. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mf*, and *f*, and performance instructions like 'SUB. = ca 50 WISE AND CLEAR' and 'SLIGHT RIT.'

In addition to the range of approximate pitches that Kitzke asks the pianist to explore, the range of ways that he asks the pianist to use their voice and their body is extreme. For example, in the first section of the work, called “Mad American Locomotive of the Heart 1,” the pianist needs to speak text in measured and unmeasured rhythm (Figures 6.5.4 and 6.5.5), speak nonsense syllables in measured rhythm with approximate pitches (Figure 6.5.6), sing vowels while exploring their vocal capacity for sliding from one pitch to another (example 6.5.7), inhale and exhale in measured rhythm (example 6.5.8), hiccup (Figure 6.5.9), laugh in measured rhythm with approximate pitches (example 6.5.10), sing in short outbursts of sound with fast vibrato (example 6.5.11), sing in a manner that imitates an electric guitar (example 6.5.12), and use their breath to create a “wind sound” (Figure 6.5.13). Additionally, Kitzke asks the performer to “drum on top of [the] piano above [the] fingerboard” (example 6.5.14), “raise hands smoothly up and down” (Figure 6.5.15), use their finger inside their mouth to create a “finger-in-cheek mouth pop” (Figure 6.5.16), and to perform a “fast roll on [the] chest with fists” (Figure 6.5.17). With the vocal effects and physical gestures changing every few bars Kitzke challenges the performer to explore the extremes of their vocal and physical capacities, to rapidly shift from one

extreme to another, and to push the boundaries of personal expression within each different effect. By including such variety of vocal effects and physical gestures, he also challenges the performer to consider how the various vocalizations and gestures contribute to the overarching expression of the work. The precision of dynamics, rhythm, and articulations written into the vocalizations and gestures are helpful guidelines for the pianist to develop a range of vocal and physical expression from one phrase to the next. However, it is up to each pianist to explore the expressivity of their own voice and body and how they can successfully convey meaningful expression to an audience throughout the work. In this way, Cavarero and Arendt would say that a pianist is not appearing to their audience simply because they have encountered each other, but the pianist is actively showing the audience *who* they are.<sup>521</sup> While Kitzke built in opportunities for a pianist to use their voice and their body in unusual ways during performance, it is up to the performer to embrace the “queerness” to its full potential so that their identity can be expressed. In so doing, a pianist can create a relational concert space and take what Arendt calls “political action.”

Figure 6.5.4 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 1-3

Sunflower Sutra

Allen Ginsberg (1955) Jerome Kitzke (1999)

[Mad American Locomotive of the Heart]

voice WISE AND CLEAR EXPRESSIVELY LIGHT AND PRECISE

There is a sto-ry to x WAIT mf BADA BE BA WUP BADA BOO BADA BADO KADEKADOKADEKADOKA

tell. ca 108

piano 7 4

DRUM ON TOP OF PIANO ABOVE FINGERBOARD (SEE KEY)

mf PEDAL-ALWAYS →

<sup>521</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 21.

Figure 6.5.5 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 31

31

*TIED, WILY, BUMMY, YET CURIOUS*

name. Hey Jack. What's that pullin' in? The S.P.1249?

4"

**f.p**  
RAPID ROLLING  
OFF FINGERS

STOP

Figure 6.5.6 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 20-23

20

DO WU PA WU PA WU PA PA WU PA PA BA DO KADE KADA DI DI DI DA DO DA BADO BADA BADO BADA BADO KADE KADO KA DE KADO KADE KADO KA

Figure 6.5.7 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 12-15

12

[illegible]

31

TIERED, WILY, BUMMY, YET CURIOUS

name. Hey Jack. What's that pullin' in? The S.P. 1249?

FINGER-IN-CHEEK MOUTH POP

LAUGH-RAUCOUS FIRM DRUNK

THICK AND STEELY

4"

f.p

RAPID ROLLING OF FINGERS

STOP

PED UP

35

oon cha cha cha oon cha cha oon chi-ka oon chi-ka oon cha cha ho

(FAST VIBR.)

38

ho

mf cha cha cha cha

10

Figure 6.5.11 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 51-55

51

TIRED, WILY...  $\text{♩} = 58$

sub  $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 112$

LIKE AN ELECTRIC GUITAR/WAH-WAH

Ah blessed be, it is the 12 forty-nine

we - ow

8VA BASSO...

7 8

53

we - ow we - ow we - ow - ow we - ow - ow we - ow we - ow - ow wow - o we - ow we - ow we - ow - ow

10 8 7 8

Figure 6.5.12 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 65-72

GRAD. BIG RIT.

SOTTA VOCE (SEMPRE *p*)

WS = WIND SOUND

65

8VA  $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 96$

ti to ti to ti to to ti ti to ti to

*mp*

*ff*

70

"OH MOUTH" EXHALATION

SING

ooh

CHANGE MOUTH SHAPE TO PROCEED TO LOWEST AH

HICCUP

ATTACA

*ffz* VERY SLOW  $\text{♩} = 3$

UNA CORDE

FAST ROLL ON CHEST WITH FISTS



Figure 6.5.13 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 1

1. Mad American Locomotive of the Heart 1  
WISE AND CLEAR

voice

There is a sto-ry to tell. X WAIT

$\text{♩} = \text{ca } 50$

piano

7  
4

DRUM ON TOP OF PIANO ABOVE FINGERBOARD (SEE KEY)

$\text{mf}$

PEDAL-ALWAYS →

EXI

Figure 6.5.14 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 8-15

8

ADD VIBR.

SLIDE

$\text{mp}$  ti ti ti ti ti ti ti

$f$

RAISE HANDS SMOOTHLY UP

12

N.V.

ti ti ti ti ti ti  $f$  woo woo

$f^z p$

ADD VIBR.

AND DOWN

PREP. BOUNCE

Figure 6.5.15 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 31

Figure 6.5.16 Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra*, mm. 70-72

In a similar way that Cavarero argues that the voice is relational because the voice “strik[es] the ear of the other, even when it does not mean to do so,” Jarman-Ivens argues that the voice “links two bodies together” because it leaves one body and enters another by way of the ear.<sup>522</sup> The core of Cavarero’s argument is that the voice is relational, but the crux of Jarman-Ivens’ argument is that the space in between the two bodies—the one from which the voice is emitted and the one into which the voice enters—is unstable and thus is a “site for the emergence of queer.”<sup>523</sup> To her, the resonant space between two bodies is unstable because the detachment of the voice from the body puts into question the identity of the person whose voice is being heard by the other. Jarman-Ivens’ argument is substantiated by scholar Serena Guarracino who

<sup>522</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 177-178; Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 2-3.

<sup>523</sup> Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 3-4.

argues that the penetrative quality of the voice is “a relation between two bodies, the voicing body and the body receiving the voice, [that] is easily sexualized.”<sup>524</sup> In other words, because the voice leaves one body and penetrates the ear of another there is a link to sexuality. Furthermore, Jarman-Ivens argues that although the voice is genderless it is gendered by listeners because of preconceived associations between the quality of the voice and the body from which the voice emerges.<sup>525</sup> For example, typically a higher voice is attributed to a woman and a lower voice attributed to a man. If a high voice is heard in a space where the speaker/singer is not visible, it would be easy to assume that the voice belonged to a woman. However, Jarman-Ivens contends that it is important to be open to the possibility for multiple gender identities until the identity of the speaker/singer has been confirmed.<sup>526</sup> Therefore, to Jarman-Ivens, it is the liminality of the space between the body that emits the voice and the ear that is penetrated by the voice, as well as the “contradictions and paradoxes of the voice” that contribute to the voice’s queer potential.<sup>527</sup> Ultimately, as Jarman-Ivens contends, “queer” does not define *who* a person is, but is an ongoing practice that is shared between a voicing body and a listening body in an act of queering. In this way, when a pianist performs music composed for the vocalizing pianist, they are inviting their audience into a “queer” space where the pianist’s voice can perform its paradoxes and contradictions. As a result, there is potential to break down some of the preconceived notions and expectations surrounding gender in relation to the voice.

Because the text to Kitzke’s *Sunflower Sutra* was written by two men—Kitzke and Ginsberg—and because the Ginsberg poem is told in the first person, the assumed character of

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<sup>524</sup> Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 3. For original quote see Serena Guarracino, “‘I Would Like to Disappear Into Those Vowels’: Gender-Troubling Opera,” *Newsletter for the LGBTQ Study Group of the American Musicological Society* 16, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 1.

<sup>525</sup> Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 161.

<sup>526</sup> Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 3.

<sup>527</sup> Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 161.

the narrator is Ginsberg himself. The Kitzke text also alludes to the speaker being Ginsberg because of the reference to Jack Kerouac, a close friend and colleague of Ginsberg's. (See Appendix C.1) Therefore, when a pianist who does not identify as a man performs Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra*, they are challenging the expectations of gender surrounding the performance of the work. Moreover, in light of Jarman-Ivens' argument that the voice is full of paradoxes and contradictions, it is the voice itself that challenges the expectations of gender performativity within *Sunflower Sutra*. For example, in a Butlerian sense, a pianist might perform their gender as a man, but their voice might sound like a voice that would typically be associated with a woman. In performance of *Sunflower Sutra* the queer effect of the voice not matching the preconceived ideas of gender associated to the appearance of the pianist would already challenge the audience's perception of the pianist's gender. Then, to hear the vocal quality of what has historically been attributed to a woman performing the role of Ginsberg would add another layer of queering. As Jarman-Ivens argues, "a voice that does not comply with the visible signs of gender is as disruptive to the performance of gender as any other silent sign could be."<sup>528</sup> Therefore, the paradoxes associated to gender that are inherent in the voice allow a pianist to push the boundaries of what might be expected of them based on their performed identity. Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra* is an opportunity for pianists to explore their performed identity and to "force open all limitations [of preconceived ideas pertaining to gender] and cut across all boundaries" as Arendt would say by allowing their voice to resonate in the concert space. For women, in particular, the opportunity to subvert the historical expectations of behaviour and social realm is meaningful. In other words, because women have historically been expected to behave in a certain way and have historically been excluded from the public realm, Kitzke's

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<sup>528</sup> Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 20.

*Sunflower Sutra* presents an opportunity for women to boldly perform their gender in a potentially unexpected way, but certainly to reclaim agency in the public realm by expressing their “narratable self.” As quoted by Cavarero, the Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective eloquently states that “in women’s struggle, the symbolic revolution—the representation of oneself and of one’s fellow women in relation to the world—is fundamental and must come first.”<sup>529</sup> In light of this statement and in relation to performance of Kitzke’s *Sunflower Sutra*, women pianists have an opportunity to share with audiences *who* they are in relation to *preconceptions* of what it is to present oneself as a woman, and specifically what it means to present oneself as a woman in the public realm of piano performance.

## 6.6 Summary

While, as Jarman-Ivens argues, instrumental music has “powerful effects, and is able to bring about its own set of identificatory points, [...] the voice, understood as being synonymous with the self, has a particular capacity in this regard, and [...] queer spaces [are] opened up by the voice.”<sup>530</sup> In other words, while instrumental music is powerful in its own way and is able to reveal identity—the composer’s and the musician’s—to a certain extent, the voice is directly linked to selfhood and therefore immediately relates humans and opens up the liminal space between speaker/singer and listener to multiple possibilities regarding gender and identity. In performance of works for vocalizing pianist performers are able to create a more relational concert space simply by using their physical voice connecting performer and listener through vulnerability, self-exposure, narration, and queering the norm of solo piano performance. Works composed for vocalizing pianist offer a vehicle for a pianist’s agency within public performance

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<sup>529</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 55.

<sup>530</sup> Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices*, 2.

and by extension to take “political action” as Arendt argues. Actor, director, musician, and scholar Konstantinos Thomaidis points out, like Jarman-Ivens, that “voicing bodies incorporate complex gendered histories and are constructed both by their physiologies and by the ideologies in which they partake.”<sup>531</sup> In other words, the history of gender construction is complex and the voice is implicated in the performativity of gender. However, as Thomaidis argues of singers, in performance audiences are confronted with various and unique voices and bodies that have the ability to act with agency and they can “subvert any fixed meaning allegedly residing in the music and text.”<sup>532</sup> The same statement can be made of vocalizing pianists and provides them with the opportunity to push the boundaries of the constructed expectations surrounding solo piano performance, expression of self within solo piano performance, and audience engagement within solo piano performance.

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<sup>531</sup> Konstantinos Thomaidis, *Theatre & Voice*, with a foreword by Norie Neumark (London, UK: Red Globe Press, 2017), 46.

<sup>532</sup> Thomaidis, *Theatre & Voice*, 37-38.

## Chapter 7: Epilogue

As I argue in six chapters of this dissertation, it is now clear that Cavarero's idea of "ethics of relation" and Arendt's notion of "political action" can be applied to live piano performance.<sup>533</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I have discussed various ways that a pianist can relate to audiences, composers, and poets in the performance of piano works. By extension, I argue that a pianist can in concrete terms take "political action" in the concert space by developing their "narratable self" through meaningful interactions with their various "necessary others" and by expressing this self through the use of the physical voice in public performances.<sup>534</sup> While the life and work of Amy Beach, and Maurice Ravel have received recent scholarly attention, no scholar has to date discussed aspects of their compositions in relational terms. Nor has any scholar explained in detail how a pianist can take "political action" in performing Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op 34, or Ravel's *Ondine*. Similarly, while Jerome Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra* and other works composed for vocalizing pianists have recently been analyzed by graduate students in their dissertations for their Doctor of Musical Arts programs, none of them has theorized how a pianist can take "political action" in performance of such works. Furthermore, no published scholarship analyzes Emily Doolittle's *Tony Beaver and the Big Music* or Nova Pon's *Myosotis*. This dissertation, thus, fills these gaps in scholarship. Finally, this dissertation highlights oppression women in music have faced throughout history and proposes possibilities for pianists—female or beyond—to reclaim agency by expressing their "narratable self" with the physical voice within the concert space.

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<sup>533</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 125; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.

<sup>534</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 34, 82.

In applying Cavarero's and Arendt's theories of relationality to music for piano, I have studied various facets of self-expression, including the development and expression of a "narratable self," as mentioned above, the development of reciprocal relationships with friends, colleagues, and composers, practices of vulnerability and self-exposure, as well as queering the norm in a public space. In Chapter Two of this dissertation, I provided a biographical overview of Beach's life and relationships supported by primary sources that I collected at the Special Collections of the University of New Hampshire. There I theorize how her "narratable self" was developed through reciprocal relationships with friends, colleagues, canonized composers, and how this self was expressed in her performance as a pianist and in her musical compositions. Additionally, I discuss how Beach deliberately related to audiences and members of the public at large through her published writings and conferences. Through the many relationships that Beach cultivated over her life, I argue that she took "political action" by purposefully expressing her "narratable self" to others.

In Chapter Three, I provided a detailed analysis of Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 from a relational lens. By using Beach's relationships with her husband, Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach and with her mother as contexts for analyzing this composition, I argue that any pianist who plays this work can understand the autobiographical content of this sonata through performance. Furthermore, I argue that by composing a virtuosic work for piano and violin comparable in degrees of virtuosity and compositional sophistication to other nineteenth-century sonatas composed by major male composers, Beach took "political action" in a way that extends Arendt's notion. Moreover, through the "embodied" practice of this composition as theorized by Elisabeth Le Guin, I argue in Chapter Four that a pianist can



develop a “reciprocal relationship” with the composer.<sup>535</sup> By extension, I argue that a pianist can take “political action” in the concert space by performing Beach’s sonata and, therefore, relating Beach’s “narratable self” to an audience.

While Beach’s Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 is considered music devoid of a “program”—i.e., a kind of music without an associated story or descriptive title—Ravel’s *Ondine* is based on a text by French poet Aloysius Bertrand that tells the tale of a water sprite. Therefore, in Chapter Five, I discussed Ravel’s treatment of Ondine’s physical voice in his piece for solo piano. To fully understand the portrayal of Ondine’s voice in Ravel’s piece, I trace a lineage of literary and artistic representations of the mythological figure, the Siren—a figure related to the water sprite—throughout the history of the Western culture from antiquity to the present. I discuss how the Siren’s voice (and other related figures such as the water sprite) has been linked to sexuality and, by extension, to danger and—most specifically—to her lack of agency. Additionally, I argue that such representations of mythological figures have mirrored the lack of agency that women worldwide have suffered throughout history and still experience today, in 2024. Supported by primary sources that I consulted at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, I analyzed Ravel’s treatment of Ondine’s voice in his piece, specifically in the structure of the melody as follows: 1) Ondine’s song indicates the relationship between the melody and the supporting musical material, 2) the evocation of water; and 3) the way the composer chose to depict the water sprite’s laughter at the end of the work. In so doing, I argue that Ravel’s portrayal of Ondine contributes to perpetuating the belief that the water sprite’s voice symbolizes danger, her sexuality, and a lack of agency.

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<sup>535</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini’s Body*, 25.

By contrast to the Siren's (or water sprite's) lack of agency, in Chapter Six I argue that a pianist can take "political action" in the concert space by performing works composed for vocalizing pianists, which require the pianists to use their voices while playing the piece on the piano. Using Kitze's *Sunflower Sutra* (1999), Doolittle's *Tony Beaver and the Big Music* (2021), and Pon's *Myosotis* (2012) as case studies, I discuss the vulnerability and self-exposure of a pianist in performance of these works. In particular, I theorize that the act of narration constitutes a relatable practice and that this practice "queers," as it were, the norm of piano performance by pushing the boundaries of the traditional piano recital.<sup>536</sup> Additionally, I explore how such repertoire offers pianists opportunities to expose *who* they are, as Cavarero and Arendt would say, and thus reclaim agency within the concert space. Because repertoire for vocalizing pianists demands that a performer be willing to take risks on stage by exposing their identity through the use of their physical voice, which is a fundamental criterion Cavarero identifies to express one's selfhood, and sometimes by using their physical body to perform prescribed actions, I argue that there is space for a pianist to defy the conventions of gender performativity during a piano recital. As such, not only can a pianist create a relational concert space in which they express their "narratable self" through the use of the physical voice, but they can boldly push the boundary of how gender is perceived and accepted within the piano performance.

Though this dissertation has remained focused on analyzing specific works for piano, my research has implications for piano pedagogy and for reimagining the concert space. Because the concept of relationality is broad and both Cavarero's and Arendt's discussions of the use of the physical voice cover a wide range of implications for meaningful human interaction, the implications for piano pedagogy are also widespread. As scholar Nina Sun Eidsheim claims, "it

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<sup>536</sup> Freya Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flow* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 163.

seems more scholarly to talk about pitch, rhythm, form, historical context and debates, and meaning than it is to describe, for example, the feeling and effect of being transformed.”<sup>537</sup> However, Eidsheim argues that focusing on the listener’s experience of music can inform a performer’s choices about how the music is played and can create a greater impact on an audience than merely focusing on the notation of the music.<sup>538</sup> For Eidsheim, to consider a listener’s experience of music, a person must first develop a relationship with sound and understand its impacts on their body. Furthermore, she relates a performer’s relationship to sound to their relationship with the world, much like Arendt’s discussion of “the reality of one’s self” vis-à-vis the world.<sup>539</sup> In light of Eidsheim’s, Cavarero’s and Arendt’s arguments for unity between humans and, by extension, a relationship with the world, I argue that within piano pedagogy there is room to implement the concept of relationality. For example, a teacher can become a “necessary other” for a student in the way that they shape certain characteristics of the student’s self through piano pedagogy, and not only information about the way the notes are being played on the instrument. In this way, a teacher can help a student to develop their “narratable self” within piano performance and thus express this self to audiences.<sup>540</sup> Similarly, a teacher might inquire into a student’s ideas about the music they are learning or their experience of listening to the musical work to help a student develop a meaningful relationship with their craft, similar to taking “political action” in the concert space.

While Le Guin argues that a listener may learn to feel what the performer feels in performance without verbal communication of their sensations, Arendt argues that relationality

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<sup>537</sup> Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 5.

<sup>538</sup> Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 5.

<sup>539</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 208.

<sup>540</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 35.

and political action can only occur when speech is involved.<sup>541</sup> Likewise, Cavarero argues that the use of the physical voice is imperative to the expression of self and thus to relating to others. To her mind, “[t]hinking and speaking are rather different activities. [Thinking] is always solitary, even when it takes place between several people.” On the contrary, Cavarero recognizes “a dependence on others that passes through a plural connection of mouths and ears.”<sup>542</sup> Accordingly, Cavarero might say that the act of performing in a concert space without using the physical voice is solitary. Even amongst others—an audience—a pianist is not revealing their “insubstitutable existence,” which creates a disconnect between performer and audience.<sup>543</sup> By contrast, when a pianist uses their physical voice in the concert space, they immediately create a *relational* space. Therefore, for those pianists who are interested in taking “political action” in the way Arendt argues, I propose that the performer consider ways in which they can use their physical voice in the performance space—whether by addressing the audience to discuss the music, by programming works for vocalizing pianist, or by reimagining their concert format altogether to create a more reciprocal experience for the audience. In the last scenario, audience members can also use their voices.

Because my dissertation focuses on live performance, I have not addressed the implications of digital concerts, either live-streamed or pre-recorded. Moreover, my research has not covered any implications of how the voice is perceived or portrayed through microphones or other technological devices. However, based on Arendt’s and Cavarero’s main arguments that self-development and self-expression through the physical voice are the core elements of relationality, I argue that a pianist can create a relational experience for audiences through digital

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<sup>541</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini’s Body*, 24; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 198.

<sup>542</sup> Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 174.

<sup>543</sup> Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 73.

formats. Theorizing the intricacies and possibilities for relational digital concerts would be an area for future research. Similarly, my dissertation has not addressed various possible limitations to the capacity to express oneself with the physical voice in the concert space. For example, I do not discuss people who live with disabilities such as speech impairment that restricts their ability to use the voice, non-native speakers who may feel uncomfortable—doubly vulnerable and exposed—when asked to speak in the concert space, or anyone who feels uncomfortable using their voice in the concert space for any reason. Some might feel safer not to speak as a way to avoid criticisms. While I hope that, ideally, no pianist would feel unsafe to use their voice in the concert space, and I hope to inspire pianists to reclaim agency in their work by using their voices in the concert space, I acknowledge that the circumstances for performance vary, and pianists might not always feel comfortable or safe to use their voice in the concert space. Furthermore, my dissertation does not discuss the implications of performing for the hearing-impaired community. Finally, I have limited my discussions of agency to women specifically and have not addressed agency for the queer population or other marginalized groups. All of the limitations that I have addressed here are out of the scope of this dissertation. Still, I hope that these areas for future research inspire other scholars to further the discussion on Arendt’s idea of “political action” in musical performance. Ultimately, I hope to inspire others to live meaningful lives in relation to those around them in order to create more unity and connection in the world.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### A.1 Works Composed Before Beach's Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 (1896)

##### Abbreviations

A	alto
Arr.	arrangement
B	bass
obbl.	obbligato
org	organ
orch	orchestra
pf	piano
Ps.	psalm
rev.	revised
S	soprano
T	tenor
vn	violin
vc	violoncello
v(v)	voice(s)

##### Juvenilia

###### *Piano*

- "Mamma's Waltz," 1872
- "Air and Variations," 1877
- "Menuetto," 1877
- "Romanza," 1877
- "Petite valse," 1878

###### *Vocal/Choral*

- "The Rainy Day" (H. Longfellow), 1v, pf, 1880 (Ditson, 1883)
- Four Chorales*: "Come Ye Faithful" (J. Hupton), "Come to Me" (C. Elliott), "O Lord, How Happy Should We Be" (J. Anstice), "To Beav'n I Lift My Waiting Eyes"; 4 voices, 1882
- "Whither" (W. Müller), v, pf [after Chopin: *Trois Nouvelles études*, no. 3]

##### 1885-1895

###### *Songs*

- |            |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Opus 1/1-4 | <i>Four Songs</i> : "With Violets" (K. Vannah) (1885), "Die vier Brüder" (F. von Schiller) (1887), "Jeune fille et jeune fleur" (F. R. Chateaubriand) (1887), Ariette (P.B. Shelley) (1886) |
| 2/1-3      | <i>Three Songs</i> : "Twilight" (A.M. Beach) (1887), "When Far From Her" (H.H.A. Beach) (1889), "Empress of Night" (H.H.A. Beach) (1891)                                                    |
| 10/1-3     | <i>Songs of the Sea</i> (1890): "A Canadian Boat Song" (T. Moore), S, B, pf; "The Night Sea" (H. P. Spofford), S, S, pf; "Sea Song" (W.E. Channing), S, S, pf                               |



- 11/1-3 *Three Songs* (W.E. Henley): “Dark Is the Night!” (1890), “The Western Wind” (1889), “The Blackbird” (1889)
- 12/1-3 *Three Songs* (R. Burns): “Wilt Thou Be My Dearie?” (1889) “Ye Banks and Braes O’ Bonnie Doon” (1891), “My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose” (1887, 1889)
- 14/1-4 *Four Songs*, 1890 (1891): “The Summer Wind (W. Learned), “Le secret” (J. de Resseguier), “Sweetheart, Sigh No More” (T.B. Aldrich), “The Thrush” (E. R. Sill); nos. 2-3 rev. (1901)
- 19/1-3 *Three Songs* (1893): “For Me the Jasmine Buds Unfold” (F.E. Coates), “Ecstasy” (A.M. Beach), 1vn, pf, vn obbl, “Golden Gates”
- 20 *Villanelle: Across the World* (E.M. Thomas) (1894), arr. 1v, vc obbl
- 21/1-3 *Three Songs* (1893): “Chanson d’amour” (V. Hugo), arr. 1v, orch, arr. 1v, vc obbl (1899), “Extase” (Hugo), “Elle et moi” (F. Bovet)
- 26/1-4 *Four Songs* (1894): “My Star” (C. Fabbri), “Just for This” (Fabbri), “Spring” (Fabbri), “Wouldn’t That Be Queer” (E.J. Cooley); no. 4 arr. chorus (1919)
- 29/1-4 *Four Songs*, 1894 (1895): “Within Thy Heart” (A.M. Beach), “The Wandering Knight” (anon., Eng. Trans., J.G. Lockhart), “Sleep, Little Darling” (Spofford), “Haste, O Beloved” (W.A. Sparrow)

#### *Sacred Choral*

- 5 Mass in E Flat, S, A, T, B, org, orch, 1890
- [5] *Graduale: Thou Glory of Jerusalem*, T, orch, insertion in Mass, piano score (1892)
- 7 *O Praise the Lord, All Ye Nations* (Ps. 117) (1891)
- 8/1-3 *Choral Responses*: “Nunc dimittis” (Luke 2.29); “With Prayer and Supplication” (Phil. 4.6-7) “Peace I Leave with You” (John 4.27) (1891)
- 17 *Festival Jubilate* (Ps. 100), 7vv, orch, 1891, piano score (1892)
- 24 *Bethlehem* (G.C. Hugg) (1893)
- 27 *Alleluia, Christ is Risen* (after M. Weisse, C.F. Gellert, T. Scott, T. Gibbons) (1895), arr. with vn obbl (1904)
- 33 *Teach Me Thy Way* (Ps. 86. 11-12) (1895)

#### *Secular Choral*

- 9 *The Little Brown Bee* (M. Eytinge), treble chorus 4vv (1891)
- *Singing Joyfully* (J.W. Chadwick), children’s chorus 2vv, pf
- 16 *The Minstrel and the King*: Rudolph von Hapsburg (F. von Schiller) T, B, bass chorus 4vv, orch, piano score (1890)
- *An Indian Lullaby* (Anon.), treble chorus 4vv (1895)

#### *Orchestral*

- 18 *Eilende Wolken, Segler die Lüfte* (F. von Schiller), A, orch, 1892, piano score (1892)
- 22 *Bal masque* (see also *Keyboard*), perf. 1893
- 32 *Symphony in E Minor*, “Gaelic,” 1894-96; score (1897)

### Keyboard

- 3 Cadenza to Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 3, op. 37, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt. (1888)
- 4 *Valse-Caprice*, pf (1889)
- 6 *Ballad* (1894)
- 15/1-4 *Four Sketches* (1892): “In Autumn,” “Phantoms,” “Dreaming,” also arr. vc, pf, “Fireflies”
- Untitled, 3 mvts, pf 4 hands, before 1893
- 22 *Bal masque* (1894) arr. orch
- 25/1-6 *Children’s Carnival* (1894)
- 28/1-3 *Trois morceaux caractéristiques* (1894): “Barcarolle,” rev. 1937, arr. vn, pf, 1937; “Minuet italien” (1894); “Danse des fleurs” (1894)

### Chamber

- 23 *Romance*, vn, pf (1893)
- 34 Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor (March 11<sup>th</sup> – June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1896)

## A.2 Performances of Beach’s Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Minor, op. 34 During her Lifetime

Date	Pianist	Violinist	Location	Occasion
January 4th, 1897 (premiere of the work)	Amy Beach	Franz Kneisel	Boston, MA	Concert of the Kneisel Quartet in Association Hall
February 25th, 1897	Mrs. David Mannes	Mr. David Mannes	Buffalo, NY	String Quartet Concert
March 15th, 1897	Amy Beach	Franz Kneisel	Boston, MA	New England Conservatory Concert
March 14th, 1899	Amy Beach	Franz Kneisel	Cambridge, MA	Harvard University Concert
October 28th, 1899	Teresa Carreño	Carl Halir	Berlin, Germany	Halir String Quartet Concert
March 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1899 (?)	John Surmann	Hattie Bishop	Louisville, KY	Louisville Quintette Club
March 28th, 1899	Amy Beach	Franz Kneisel	New York, NY	Last Chamber Music Matinee at Mendelssohn Hall
April 24th, 1900	Eugène Ysaÿe	Raoul Pugno	Paris, France	Salle Pleyel
March 20th, 1901	Amy Beach	Max Bendix	Unknown	Bendix Quartet Concert
November 27th, 1901	Henry Bird	Sigismund Beel	London, UK	Unknown

December 17th, 1902	Henry Bird	Sigismund Beel	London, UK	Concert at St. James Hall
March 3rd, 1903 (?)	Amy Beach	Mr. Hoffman	Unknown	Hoffman Quartette Concert
April 1903	Amy Beach	Olive Mead	Unknwon	Women's Club Meeting
October 28th, 1912	Amy Beach	Wolfgang Bülau	Dresden, Germany	Unknown
October 30th, 1912	Amy Beach	Rudolf Bauerkeller	Leipzig, Germany	Unknown
January 17th, 1913	Amy Beach	Richard Rettich	Bayer Concert Hall, Germany	Alfred Schmidt Concert Agency
November 9th, 1915	Amy Beach	Sigismund Beel	Loring Theatre, Riverside, CA	Tuesday Musical Club
November 11th, 1915	Amy Beach	Sigismund Beel	First Baptist Church, San Diego, CA	Southern California Teachers Institute
January 28th, 1934	Amy Beach	Ruth Kemper	New York	New York Madrigal Society

## Appendix B

**Original excerpt by Aloysius Bertrand from *Gaspard de la nuit : Fantaisies à la manière de Rembrandt et de Callot*. English translation by Roger Nichols<sup>544</sup>**

Ondine	Ondine
<p>...Je croyais entendre</p> <p>Une vague harmonie enchanter mon sommeil. Et près de moi s'épandre un murmure pareil Aux chants entrecoupés d'une voix triste et tendre.</p> <p>Ch. Brugnot. – <i>Les deux Génies</i>.</p> <p>— « Écoute! —Écoute! —C'est moi, c'est Ondine qui frôle de ces gouttes d'eau les losanges sonores de ta fenêtre illuminée par les mornes rayons de la lune; et voici, en robe de moire, la dame châtelaine qui contemple à son balcon la belle nuit étoilée et le beau lac endormi.</p> <p>« Chaque flot est un ondin qui nage dans le courant, chaque courant est un sentier qui serpente vers mon palais, et mon palais est bâti fluide, au fond du lac, dans le triangle du feu, de la terre et de l'air.</p> <p>« Écoute! —Écoute! —Mon père bat l'eau coassante d'une branche d'aulne verte, et mes sœurs caressent de leurs bras d'écume les fraîches îles d'herbes, de nénuphars et de glaïeuls, ou se moquent du saule caduc et barbu qui pêche à la ligne. »</p> <p>Sa chanson murmurée, elle me supplia de recevoir son anneau à mon doigt, pour être l'époux d'une Ondine, et de visiter avec elle son palais, pour être le roi des lacs.</p> <p>Et comme je lui répondais que j'aimais une mortelle, boudeuse et dépitée, elle pleura quelques larmes, poussa un éclat de rire, et s'évanouit en giboulées qui ruisselèrent blanches le long de mes vitraux bleus.</p>	<p>...I thought I heard</p> <p>A vague harmony casting a spell over my slumber, And near me a murmuring break out like The interrupted song of a sad and tender voice.</p> <p>Ch. Brugnot. – <i>Les deux Génies</i>.</p> <p>“Listen! —Listen! —It is I, it is Ondine who brushes with these drops of water the vibrant panes of your window, lit by the melancholy rays of the moon; and here, in a robe of watered silk, is the lady of the castle who, from her balcony, gazes at the beautiful, starry night and the beautiful sleeping lake.</p> <p>Each wave is a water-sprite swimming in the current, each current is a path that winds towards my palace, and my palace is built of water, in the depths of the lake, in the triangle of fire, earth and air.</p> <p>Listen! —Listen! —My father beats the croaking water with a green alder branch, and my sisters caress with their arms of spray the cool islands of grass, of water-lilies and gladioli, or mock the weeping, bearded willow as he dips his fishing-line in the lake.”</p> <p>She finished her murmured song and begged me to put her ring on my finger, to be the husband of a water-nymph, and to come down with her to the palace as king of the lakes.</p> <p>And when I told her that I was in love with a mortal woman, she began to sulk in annoyance, shed a few tears, gave a burst of laughter, and vanished in a shower of spray which ran in pale drops down my blue window-panes.</p>

<sup>544</sup> Maurice Ravel, *Gaspard de la nuit*, ed. Roger Nichols (London: Peters, 1991)

## Appendix C

### C.1 Allen Ginsberg, *Sunflower Sutra*

\* Italicized text written by Jerome Kitzke

*There is a story to tell.*

*The story itself is the name.*

*"Hey Jack! What's that pullin' in? The S.P. 1249?*

*A blessed be, it is the 1249."*

I walked on the banks of the tincan banana dock and sat down under the huge shade of a  
Southern Pacific locomotive to look at the sunset over the box house hills and cry.

Jack Kerouac sat beside me on a busted rusty iron pole, companion, we thought the same  
thoughts of the soul, bleak and blue and sad-eyed, surrounded by the gnarled steel roots of  
trees of machinery.

The oily water on the river mirrored the red sky, sun sank on top of final Frisco peaks, no fish in  
that stream, no hermit in those mounts, just ourselves rheumy-eyed and hung-over like old  
bums on the riverbank, tired and wily.

Look at the Sunflower, he said, there was a dead gray shadow against the sky, big as a man,  
sitting dry on top of a pile of ancient sawdust—

—I rushed up enchanted—it was my first sunflower, memories of Blake—my visions—Harlem  
and Hells of the Eastern rivers, bridges clanking Joe's Greasy Sandwiches, dead baby carriages,  
black treadless tires forgotten and unretreaded, the poem of the riverbank, condoms & pots,  
steel knives, nothing stainless, only the dank muck and the razor-sharp artifacts passing  
into the past—

and the gray Sunflower poised against the sunset, crackly bleak and dusty with the smut and  
smog and smoke of olden locomotives in its eye—

corolla of bleary spikes pushed down and broken like a battered crown, seeds fallen out of its  
face, soon-to-be-toothless mouth of sunny air, sunrays obliterated on its hairy head like a  
dried wire spiderweb,

leaves stuck out like arms out of the stem, gestures from the sawdust root, broke pieces of plaster  
fallen out of the black twigs, a dead fly in its ear,

Unholy battered old thing you were, my sunflower O my soul, I loved you then!

The grime was no man's grime but death and human locomotives,

all that dress of dust, that veil of darkened railroad skin, that smog of cheek, that eyelid of black  
mis'ry, that sooty hand or phallus or protuberance of artificial worse-than-dirt—  
industrial—modern—all that civilization spotting your crazy golden crown—

and those blear thoughts of death and dusty loveless eyes and ends and withered roots below, in  
the home-pile of sand and sawdust, rubber dollar bills, skin of machinery, the guts and  
innards of the weeping coughing car, the empty lonely tincans with their rusty tongues  
alack, what more could I name, the smoked ashes of some cock cigar, the cunts of  
wheelbarrows and the milky breasts of cars, wornout asses out of chairs & sphincters of  
dynamos—all these

entangled in your mummied roots—and you there standing before me in the sunset, all your  
glory in your form!

A perfect beauty of a sunflower! a perfect excellent lovely sunflower existence! a sweet natural eye to the new hip moon, woke up alive and excited grasping in the sunset shadow sunrise golden monthly breeze!

How many flies buzzed round you innocent of your grime, while you cursed the heavens of the railroad and your flower soul?

Poor dead flower? when did you forget you were a flower? when did you look at your skin and decide you were an impotent dirty old locomotive? the ghost of a locomotive? the specter and shade of a once powerful mad American locomotive?

You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a sunflower!

And you Locomotive, you are a locomotive, forget me not!

So I grabbed up the skeleton thick sunflower and stuck it at my side like a scepter, and deliver my sermon to my soul, and Jack's soul too, and anyone who'll listen,

—We're not our skin of grime, we're not dread bleak dusty imageless locomotives, we're golden sunflowers inside, blessed by our own seed & hairy naked accomplishment-bodies growing into mad black formal sunflowers in the sunset, spied on by our own eyes under the shadow of the mad locomotive riverbank sunset Frisco hilly tincan evening sitdown vision.

*"So Jack, there she goes—isn't she beautiful? the S.P. 1249, going, maybe forever, but never, gone.?"*

## C.2 Structure of Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra*

Musical Section	Text/Syllables
1. Mad American Locomotive of the Heart 1	1. Kitzke
2. Look at the Sunflower	2. Ginsberg
3. Mad American Locomotive of the Heart 2	3. Kitzke
4. All That Dress of Dust	4. Ginsberg
5. Mad American Locomotive of the Heart 3	5. Kitzke
6. We're Not Our Skin of Grime	6. Ginsberg
7. Mad American Locomotive of the Heart 4	7. Kitzke

### C.3 Monica Meneghetti, *Myosotis*

Recall how the sky-blue alpine  
forget-me-not in Latin sounds like  
my-oh-so-tis, like “oh my! so it is”—a discovery.

Remember how, mind-altered from hours of pure air, you returned  
to Skoki’s main lodge, and reclined on the daybed, still  
tingling from the spell of tarn and meadow.

What did you wish for then? A reminder  
of sensation:  
head-to-toe hum,  
bones tuned to pitch of peaks.

You wanted a touchstone for your wild  
senses, for how your vision loses zoom, becomes wide-angled eye  
so you may see  
fescue and bluegrass relinquish  
their single blades to form tussocks of undulation,  
while in the same wind,  
spruce and pine list  
in unison like the fur of an enormous mammal.

Leaving for home, you passed the lake named Myosotis.  
“oh, ‘tis so mine”—an affirmation.

You needed a poem.  
I gave you a blossom of sound.

### C.4 Emily Doolittle, *Tony Beaver and the Big Music*

As the sun rose on Eel River Lumber Camp it seemed like just another day. Men (\*omit) waking to the sound of the bugle, throwing on coats, hats, boots, rushing to the cookhouse, jostling to be first in line for breakfast, wolfing down eggs, bacon, stacks of flapjacks, mugs of gritty coffee, and heading off to the forest. Men (\*omit) tramping through the woods. Clearing brush, cutting branches; fording rivers, climbing hills; choosing trees, clearing a fall path, grabbing saws and axes; then chopping, cutting, hacking, sawing, chopping, cutting, hacking, sawing, chopping, cutting, hacking, sawing, creaking, groaning, falling, shouting, and begin again. Eel river was usually a happy place but today the air lay heavy with unrest. The men (\*We) liked to kid around, telling jokes, playing pranks. But today, the pranks turned sour. Chatter turned to banter, banter turned to teasing. Chatter turned to banter, banter turned to teasing, teasing turned to taunting, taunting turned to jibes, turned to yelling, turned to shouting, turned to mocking, turned to jeers, turned to ribbing, turned to insults, turned to threats, turned to fists, turned to blows. Tony Beaver tried to calm folks, to no avail. Tony Beaver, camp

strongman, camp clown. Tony Beaver; mighty as an ox, stubborn as a mule. Not used to being ignored! He climbed up the mountain to think. He got to the top just as it was growing dark. The stars came out one, by one, by one. Tony Beaver took off his coat, hat, boots, unfurled his bedroll, lay down, and slowly drifted off to sleep. Tony Beaver woke with the first rays of the sun. He opened his eyes, and saw a Dewdrop shining on the grass beside him. Tony Beaver winked. The Dewdrop winked. Tony Beaver blinked. The Dewdrop blinked. Tony Beaver winked, the Dewdrop winked, and filled with a frosty light. It twinkled on one side, then the other, one side, then the other, one side, then the other, and shimmered like the whole world was contained inside it. Tony Beaver heard some music playing from far, far away. Was it Fiddler Jimmy? But the music sounded so odd! As the sun rose, Tony Beaver began to worry the Dewdrop would evaporate. So he wrapped it in moss and leaves for protection, and carried it down the mountain. He was running so fast he almost ran in to Fiddler Jimmy. He said Jimmy I heard you play. Fiddler Jimmy said no! Fiddler Jimmy said no, that wasn't me, that was the Big Music be careful or you'll spring a hole right through the other side, and the Big Music will break through! And who cares if it does, says Tony Beaver! And who cares if it does, says Fiddler Jimmy! Who cares if it does, who cares if it does, who cares if it does. So the next morning before dawn Tony Beaver blew the bugle to gather the men (\*us) together. He unwrapped the Dew Drop and it started to twinkle and shine, twinkle and shine, twinkle and shine. Fiddler Jimmy (\*The Preacher) said "no," the Preacher (\*Fiddler Jimmy) said "no," but it was too late. The Big Music burst through, and all were caught up in the dance. (\*omit) And then, as quickly as it came, the music receded. Peace and calm washed over Eel River lumber camp. Men (\*omit) jostling in line to be first for breakfast; tramping through the woods, cutting branches, clearing paths; laughing, joking, playing; and always time for a dance!

\*Adjustments to text by Ben Willis