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WOMEN'S COMPOSITIONAL VOICES AND THE AMERICAN ART SONG
AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

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To my beloved parents

Woogil Park and Bongjo Kim

For your love, kindness, and inspiration

Women's Compositional Voices and the American Art Song at the End of the Nineteenth Century

Abstract

Studies of American classical music have focused primarily on male composers, whereas studies of women composers have been scarce. Yet American classical music has also seen important contributions from notable women, many of whom have not yet received enough attention from musicologists. Because these composers have been understudied, their compositions remain hidden treasures of musical history. As Jane Bowers and Judith Tick have written: “The absence of women in the standard music histories is not due to their absence in the musical past. Rather, the questions so far asked by historians have tended to exclude them.”¹

In particular, two American women composers of classical music whose careers spanned the late 19th and early 20th centuries produced remarkable music that is very little known, and they form the subject of this thesis: Clara Kathleen Rogers and Amy Beach. In a time when most women composers and performers remained in the venues of amateur music parlors and salons, Rogers and Beach had public professional careers. These two composers also had a special interest in songwriting, and both composed significant settings of texts by the English poet Robert Browning.

This thesis will discuss similarities and differences in musical styles of Rogers and Beach, addressing specifically Rogers's *First Series of Browning Songs* and the *Three Browning*

¹ Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, ed., *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 3.

Songs by Beach. In addition, it will also examine women's status as composers during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. My goal is to understand the work of women composers during this time period and to rediscover song repertoires that will be valuable for present day singers.

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Program for performance of Rogers, and Beach's songs

Clara Kathleen Rogers (1844–1931)

First Series of Browning Songs Op.27

Out of my own great Woe

Summum Bonum

Apparitions

Ah, Love, But A Day

I have a more than Friend

The Year's At The Spring

Amy Beach (1867–1944)

Three Browning Songs Op.44

The Years At The Spring

Ah, Love, But A Day

I Send My Heart Up To Thee

I. Introduction

Clara Katherine Rogers and Amy Beach were two distinguished female composers in the late nineteenth-century America. A study of their songs reveals that they took very different approaches to the treatment of their texts. Rogers tried to project poets' message by keeping her music simple and retaining the original form of the poems she set, keeping her accompanying parts simple and steady; these features are clearly present in her settings of the Browning poetry. Beach, by contrast, adapted her poetry to project her own interpretation of the texts. She treated the Browning poems flexibly, repeating phrases or sentences as much as she wished. In a sense, she became a main character in these songs. In this paper, I will demonstrate how these two composers treated poetry differently.

Thus, the difference between Beach and Rogers in the usage Browning's poems shows two different methods of approaching poetry in composing music. Whereas Rogers sought to find the poet's intention in the poem, Beach put more weight on her own imagination, creating new forms and meanings. Exploration of both composers' work will show not only their individual musical styles; it will also shed light on these distinct compositional methods. In addition, it will help increase understanding of the roles of women composers during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

II. The status of women composers

Until the early 19th century, American women's music-making had been regarded as a leisure activity, to be done in the context of the family. Adrienne Fried Block, a feminist music critic, has called this model of the female musician the "angel in the

house.” She has described the status of women in music during this time: “Although music continued to play a role in courtship, women also played at home to promote domestic harmony and uplift and charm their children. Indeed, music was associated with the ideal of women as angel in the house. The abundant literature about women in music included advice about maintaining the image of the angel—modest, patient, sober, unselfish, and submissive—who sang only parlor songs with chaste words.”¹ However, with increased opportunities for music education available to middle class women in the mid-19th century, names of professional women music-makers started to emerge.²

A. Music education and women in music in 19th-century America

The change in female musicians’ status in America in the 19th century was deeply connected to new developments in musical education during that time. With the founding of music conservatories in the United States, educated female music-makers increased steadily in number, and professional women musicians arose in society. Examples of conservatories attended by women are Oberlin College–Conservatory, which opened its music curriculum in 1865, and the Cincinnati, Boston, and New England Conservatories which launched in 1867. Specifically, the ratio men to women in New England conservatory in 1868 were 1,097 female, and 317 male students.³ Between 1870 and 1910 American music saw a significant increase in the percentage of women in the field, as Judith Tick’s research, *Women in Music and Music Teaching 1870–1910*, shows:

¹ Adrienne Fried Block, “Women in American Music 1800–1918,” in *Women & Music: A History Second Edition*, ed. Karin Pendle (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 198–99.

² Block, “Women in American Music,” 199.

³ Block, “Women in American Music,” 199–200.

Table I. Women in music and music teaching 1870–1910 as demonstrated by Judith Tick⁴

	Percent Female				
	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
Musicians	2 (6,519)**	*	*	*	*
Music Teachers	60 (9,491)**	*	*	*	*
Total	36	43	55	56.4	66
Total employed in Profession	(16,010)**	(30,477)	(62,155)	(92,174)	(139,310)
*Not available. After 1870 the census does not distinguish between music and music teaching.					
**Numbers in parentheses indicate total number of males and females in the occupation.					
Source: U.S. Census Reports, 1870–1910.					

B. The emergence of women composers

Although greater availability of education and performance opportunities broadened the boundaries of women's role in music, the realm of musical composition was yet to be explored. The 19th-century critic Helen J. Clarke proposed one reason for this difficulty—women composers of the 19th century, she said, faced a “lack of training.”⁵ Even though music education had significantly increased, the newly founded conservatories did not allow women to take theory and composition classes because of their gender. Classes for harmony and counterpoint were also restricted. Clara Kathleen

⁴ Judith Tick, “Passed Away is the Piano Girl: Changes in American Musical Life, 1870–1900,” in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150–1950*, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 326.

⁵ Helen J. Clarke, “The Nature of Music and Its Relation to the Question of Women in Music,” *Music: A Monthly Magazine, Devoted to the Art, Science, Technic and Literature of Music*, Volume VII, ed. W.S.B. Mathews (Chicago: The Music Magazine Publishing Company, 1895), 459–461.

Rogers, who attended conservatory in Europe, was likewise discriminated against in this regard; Rogers was not able to take composition classes when she was attending the Leipzig conservatory. It is noteworthy that under these circumstances, she nevertheless wrote the first movement of her string quartet while she was still a student.⁶

Amy Beach, another notable woman in 19th-century American music, did have a chance to study general music theory, but only for one year. But she had to learn counterpoint and orchestration outside of class, and she accomplished it by reading and playing through such renowned music books as Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* and Berlioz's *Treatise on Instrumentation*.⁷ Madelyn Spring Gearheart has cited Beach's interview with Harriette Brower to describe how difficult it was to study composition at the time: "In studying Bach I memorized a large number of fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavichord, not for the mere sake of committing them, but because I had made such a careful study of them. I wrote many of them out in score, in order to find exactly how they were constructed, and how the voices were led. I could write out the parts from memory, so thoroughly did I know them."⁸ In spite of these difficult circumstances, Clara Kathleen Rogers and Amy Beach overcame this hardship with self-motivation and passion for professional music composition, and they stood among the first women composers in America.⁹

⁶ Block, "Women in American Music," 213–19.

⁷ Janet Nichols, *Women Music Makers, An Introduction to Women Composers* (New York: Walker and Company, 1992), 95–96.

⁸ Madelyn Spring Gearheart, "The Life and Solo Vocal Works of Amy Marcy Cheney Beach (1867–1944)," (Ed.D.diss., New York Teachers College, Columbia University, 1998), 34. She cited the interview from "A Personal Interview with Mrs. H.H.A.Beach," *Musical Observer* 12 (May, 1915), 274.

⁹ Block, "Women in American Music," 212–22.

III. The life and musical activities of Clara Kathleen Rogers and Amy Beach

A. Life as a performer and composer

Clara Kathleen Rogers was born on January 14, 1844 in Cheltenham, England. She moved to America during 1872–1873 and spent the rest of her life in Boston. Her father, John Barnett (1802–1890), was an English opera composer, cited by George P. Upton, a music critic, as “The Father of English Opera,”¹⁰ and her mother, Eliza Lindley, was a gifted amateur singer.¹¹ Rogers’ musical education naturally began in her family. Rogers described her early music education from her parents as follows: “There was no teacher in Cheltenham to whom my father was willing to entrust our musical grounding, therefore it devolved on my mother to teach us the rudiments of music and to superintend our practice. There are musicians who are not musical as there are also musical people who are not musicians. My mother belonged to the latter class. She had made no study of through-bass and had never had much musical training, but she was naturally endowed with a musical ear and excellent musical intuition, therefore she was better qualified to undertake our early musical training than any of the professional teachers that Cheltenham could boast at that time. When we were sufficiently advanced to play classical music my father took us in hand.”¹²

From 1857 to 1860, Rogers pursued music studies at the Leipzig Conservatory in Germany. After that period her family moved to Italy, where she studied with Antonio San Giovanni in Milan. After she finished her music education, she started her musical career as an opera singer, performing her debut role as Isabella in Giacomo Meyerbeer’s

¹⁰ Clara Kathleen Rogers, *My voice and I, or, The Relation of The Singer To The Song* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1910), ix.

¹¹ Rogers, *Memories of a Musical Career* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1919), 4.

¹² Rogers, *Memories*, 9–10.

opera *Roberto il Diavolo* in Turin, Italy.¹³ After her debut, she spent about five years performing various operatic roles under her Italian name, Clara Doria.¹⁴ She built her operatic career in Italy until 1867, when she returned to England. She continued her singing activities in England, later undertaking a tour to America with the Parepa-Rosa Opera company. During her stay in America, she met Henry Munroe Rogers, a Boston lawyer and a patron of local theater. The two were married in 1878.¹⁵ Now based in Boston, Clara established herself as a teacher and composer, ultimately joining the faculty of the New England conservatory in 1902. She later expanded the range of her work by writing books on singing technique, as well as a personal memoir and other autobiographical works. Her works are listed in Table II.

Table II. The list of Clara Kathleen Rogers's writing

Books related to singing (Published year)	Autobiographical books (Published year)
<i>The Philosophy of singing</i> (1893) <i>My voice and I</i> (1910) <i>English Diction in Song and Speech</i> (1912) <i>The Voice in Speech</i> (1915) <i>Your Voice and You</i> (1925) <i>Clearcut Speech in Song</i> (1927)	<i>Memories of a Musical Career</i> (1919) <i>The Story of Two Lives</i> (1932) <i>Journal-Letters from the Orient</i> (1934)

¹³ Sylvia Glickman and Martha Furman Schleife, "Composers Born 1800–1899: Vocal Music," in *Women Composers: Music through the Ages*, ed. Judith Radell and Delight Malitsky (New York: G.K.Hall & Co., 2003), 7:300–301.

¹⁴ Rogers, *Memories*, 269–270.

¹⁵ "Rogers, Henry Munroe, 1839-1937, Collector. Rogers Memorial Collection: Rogers Memorial Room records: Guide." Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, Accessed September 4, 2014.
http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deepLink?_collection=oasis&uniqueId=h01910.

Rogers also started to publish her compositions in the 1880s, beginning with songs. She described her passion for composition in her book *The Story of Two Lives*: “From childhood up I had always a strong bent for composition—much of my thought having been quite naturally in terms of music.”¹⁶

She continued her teaching and composing activities until she died in 1931. Throughout her musical life, she had diverse and rich experiences in singing, teaching, writing, and composing in different parts of the world, England, Italy and America.

Amy Beach was born on 5th September 1867 in West Henniker, New Hampshire. Her early education and musical career were, like those of Rogers, shaped by her parents. Beach’s father was a salesman in paper production business, and her mother was an amateur pianist and singer. During her childhood, Beach learned how to play piano from her mother, having been home-schooled until the age of ten.¹⁷ She stood out for her brilliant musical ability from her early years and was advised by notable Boston musicians to continue studying music in Europe.¹⁸ (As Rogers’s case also shows, it was common for young musicians to spend time studying abroad; frequently, students obtained musical training in Germany.) Nevertheless, Beach had to remain in the United States because of her parents’ resistance.¹⁹

At the age of 16 Beach made her debut as a pianist in Boston, and she became well known as a highly gifted concert pianist. Her talent was well appreciated, despite the fact that she had missed the opportunity to study in Europe—a step often considered a

¹⁶ Rogers, *The Story of Two Lives: Home, Friends, and Travels* (Norwood, Mass: Plimpton Press, 1932), 80–81.

¹⁷ Glickman and Schleife, “Composers,” 492.

¹⁸ Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian: The Life and Work of An American Composer 1867-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 21.

¹⁹ Block, *Amy Beach*, 22.

requirement for American musicians.²⁰ Beach's career as a concert pianist seemed promising in the beginning, but her musical activities became limited by her husband, Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, whom she married in 1885 at the age of 18. Her new husband was a physician and surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital and one of the crucial members of elite Boston society. He limited Amy's activities outside the home—performance at the piano in particular—and encouraged her to pursue composition instead.

Thus Beach became successful as a composer, with the support of her husband and her mother. Beach noted the influence her husband had on her work: "Very often he and I would discuss works as I was preparing them. He might differ as to certain expressions and so would my mother, with the result that I had two critics before facing a professional critic. And Dr. Beach could be very impartial and hard-boiled....It was he more than anyone else who encouraged my interest upon the field of musical compositional in the larger forms. It was pioneer work, at least for this country, for a woman to do, and I was fearful that I had not the skill to carry it on, but his constant assurance that I could do the work, and keen criticism whenever it seemed to be weak in spots, gave me the courage to go on."²¹

Following her marriage Beach reduced her activities as a pianist and spent more time composing; she composed about 200 works while she was married to Dr. Beach. After her husband's death and that of her mother in 1910, however, she began to rebuild her career as a pianist. She went to Europe and had performed numerous recitals in cities

²⁰Janet Nichols, *Women Music Makers, An Introduction to Women Composers* (New York: Walker and Company, 1992), 93–94.

²¹Block, *Amy Beach*, 48.

including Dresden and Leipzig, where she played her violin sonata. After these successful concerts, she also presented a concert in Munich that juxtaposed her own songs with works by Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms.²² For these European audiences Beach displayed her talents not only as a pianist, but also as a composer.²³

Beach spent three years in Europe and returned to America in 1914, when World War I broke out.²⁴ She continued to present piano concerts and to compose. Her works received much attention during 1920s. Following her own musical success, she cultivated the development of women composers more generally, organizing the Society of American Women Composers in 1924 and serving as its first president.²⁵ She passed away in 1944 in New York City after composing approximately 300 works in her life.

B. Musical career after marriage

Studying the lives of Rogers and Beach reveals a shift in their musical careers after marriage, with increased concentration on composition rather than performance. For example, Beach rarely performed during her marriage, and rebuilt her performance career after her husband's death. Both women married men in the intellectual elite in Boston, and as such these women had to conform to the standards of their station. A historian Laurie K. Blunsom describes Rogers's social duties in particular: "Another part of Rogers' social obligations to which she dutifully attended was charity work, which was an important feature of Boston women's activities."²⁶

²² Block, *Amy Beach*, 184.

²³ Block, *Amy Beach*, 180–185.

²⁴ Block, *Amy Beach*, 197.

²⁵ Nichols, *Women Music Makers*, 102.

²⁶ Laurie K. Blunsom, "Gender, Genre and Professionalism: The Songs of Clara Rogers, Helen Hopekirk, Amy Beach, Margaret Lang and Mabel Daniels, 1880–1925" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1999), 43.

Because of these other duties, Blunsom has proposed that Rogers herself probably understood that her musical activities would be different after marriage. (In fact, Rogers became to a voice teacher in New England Conservatory in 1902, and focused on teaching and composing rather than performances.²⁷) As she has written, “It is interesting to note that Rogers divided her memoirs into three volumes, two of which deal her musical activities. The first, *Memories of a Musical Career* covers the period of her operatic career until her marriage. The second which includes her life in Boston after her marriage and her compositional career is called *The Story of Two Lives*. Thus, in Rogers’ mind, her second career as a teacher and composer was part of her married life.”²⁸

Beach also changed her musical life following her marriage. Like Rogers, Beach had to participate in charity work and to take part in social gatherings such as lunch clubs.²⁹ Beach had some public performances, but they were very limited by her husband, and what money she earned from performances and compositions she contributed to charitable organizations in Boston.³⁰ Block describes Beach’s reduced performance activities: “Regarding the curtailment of Amy Beach’s public performances, we can only guess at the nature of their agreement by its results. Following their marriage, Amy gave only one solo recital a year, a far cry from her busy recital schedule of the past two years....The change in her life that was most important and with far-reaching consequences was that from giving recitals to composing.”³¹

²⁷ Glickman and Schleife, “Composers,” 7:300.

²⁸ Blunsom, “Gender, Genre and Professionalism,” 40.

²⁹ Blunsom, “Gender, Genre and Professionalism,” 49.

³⁰ Nichols, *Women Music Makers*, 97.

³¹ Block, *Amy Beach*, 47.

Although these cultural norms led Beach and Rogers to alter their musical careers after marriage, both took full advantage of their social status to continue their musical activities in other ways. Instead of professional performance activities on a large scale, they found ways to continue their musical work through composing, often presenting their works in the context of small society groups. For example, Rogers sang her own songs at social meeting with well-known musicians in Boston, and Beach also presented her pieces at local social meetings.³² Thus through their social networks, both composers found the opportunity to disseminate their music within the élite community in Boston. Rogers described an episode in which she presented one of her own Browning songs, “Ah, Love but a Day,” to a group of well-known musicians in Boston, including Arthur Nikisch who was the chief conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1889³³ and Arthur B. Whiting, a native of Boston composer³⁴: “One evening, when Nikisch had been dining with us together with Arthur Whiting and his wife, after we adjourned to the parlour, Nikisch said in that attractive and persuasive tone of his, ‘Won’t you sing to me a little?’ I seated myself forthwith at the piano and began with Schumann’s ‘Waldesgesprach,’ after which the impulse took me to sing my own setting of Browning’s ‘Ah, Love but a Day.’ At the end Nikisch turned to Arthur Whiting with, ‘*Was war denn das?*’ (What was that?) ‘Was it something by Brahms that I don’t know?’ I, of course, passed lightly over the mistaken identity of the composer, but the fact that Nikisch had instinctively put my song on so high a plane acted on me as a tremendous stimulus, and

³² Blunsom, “Gender, Genre and Professionalism,” 44–51.

³³ “Arthur Nikisch.” Naxos online, Accessed October 25, 2014. http://www.naxos.com/person/Arthur_Nikisch/52908.htm.

³⁴ “Arthur B. Whiting.” Library of Congress, Accessed October 25, 2014. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihis/loc.natlib.ihis.200185361/default.html>.

renewed my confidence in my own powers. Such things sink in deep, especially when one happens not to have an over-exalted opinion of oneself!”³⁵

Beach’s home environment was very supportive of her musical activities. Block has argued that Beach’s musical success was based on several factors, including her elevated social status after her marriage—not just on her gifted musicality. Even though there were other women musicians as talented as Beach during her lifetime, Beach was able to succeed in part because of her wealth and social level. Block has cited Gaye Tuchmann’s concept of “absolute necessities for the success of women,” applying it to the case of Beach: “The condition [Tuchmann] mentions are birth into a family of wealth and high social position, and a male sponsor....These advantages had a profound effect on Beach’s early life and career, beginning at birth and, for the purposes of this paper, lasting through the Boston years to 1910.”³⁶

Janet Nicholas has also mentioned Beach’s advantageous marriage: “Dr. Beach did everything he could to promote and encourage his wife’s composing. Amy Beach was one of the very few composers in all of history who never had to worry about money. Even Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin had to teach to make ends meet. Also, unlike many women composers, Amy was never kept from her composing by the duties of motherhood: Her marriage produced no children.”³⁷

In summary, although Rogers and Beach could not perform in public as freely as they had done before marriage, both belonged to the upper class, a circumstance that enabled them to present their musical abilities to the cultural élite of their community.

³⁵ Rogers, *The Story*, 82–83.

³⁶ Adrienne Fried Block, “Why Amy Beach Succeeded as a Composer: The Early Years,” *Current Musicology* 36, no.1 (1983): 41.

³⁷ Nichols, *Women Music Makers*, 98.

Thus, they continued their musical activities and fully enjoyed the advantages of their social connections.

C. Rogers's and Beach's approach to the art of composition

Rogers composed approximately 100 songs in her lifetime. She wrote about her passion for song composing in her autobiography: "I have found in song writing a keen interest and satisfaction by seeking to reproduce the mood of the poet with the subtlest touches of emotion suggested in the poem."³⁸ Beach also had deep attention in song composing. Her song pieces comprise a large portion of her over 300 works. Although she wrote in many different genres, producing a symphony, an opera, and numerous chamber and piano pieces, the songs stand out among her most important works.³⁹

Whereas both composers took a great interest in the composition of songs, Beach and Rogers had different approaches to the art of composition. While Rogers wanted the music to project the poetry, Beach sought instead a more independent conception of the poem, cultivating her own artistic vision.

Rogers believed that the music has no meaning without a poem; she also stressed the importance of projecting the poet's sentiment through her songs. In her book *Clearcut Speech in Song*, she wrote, "Never forget the poem is the vital root of the song! In fact, the poem is the song!"⁴⁰ Rogers also described the enjoyment that she found from rediscovering the poet's intentions and emotions embedded in the poetry. Of her settings of Robert Browning's poems in particular, she wrote "I have found in song writing a keen

³⁸ Rogers, *The Story*, 81.

³⁹ Blunsom, "Gender, Genre and Professionalism," 36.

⁴⁰ Clara Kathleen Rogers, *Clearcut Speech in Song* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1927), 2–3.

interest and satisfaction by seeking to reproduce the mood of the poet with the subtle touches of emotion suggested in the poem.”⁴¹

Whereas Rogers sought to find the poet’s intention in the poem, Beach put more weight on her imagination through the poems and created new characters. Madelyn Spring Gearheart has cited Beach’s interview with the music magazine *The Etude*, noting that Beach stressed the importance of expressing her *own* feelings through her music: “I believe that music must be a form of our own personality, expressing itself in musical terms. In other words, we must feel something if we are to make other people feel it... So long as we write exactly what we ourselves feel and believe, so honest is our work and so high its quality.”⁴²

I will turn to a comparison of Beach’s and Rogers’s settings of Browning’s poetry in a moment; first, however, I will describe the status of Browning’s poetry in America during their lifetimes.

IV. The history of Browning’s poems in America

A. Robert Browning and his poems in the United States

Robert Browning was an English poet, born on 7 May 1812, in Camberwell, South London. He started to publish his poems during the 1830s beginning with his first work, “Pauline” (1833). His early works were not received favorably at first. However, his reputation improved later in the century; the establishment in 1885 of the Boston Browning Society ensured that his fame would spread across the United States. Earlier, in the 1860s, his *Poetical Works* (1863), *Dramatis Personae* (1864), and *The Ring and the*

⁴¹ Rogers, *The Story*, 81.

⁴² Gearheart, “The Life and Solo Vocal Works,” 313, citing an interview from *The Etude* (1929).

Book (1868–1869) received widespread public attention, and his earlier works were re-evaluated by readers in England and the United States.⁴³ Louise Greer has described the popularity of Browning's poems in America as attributable to the "sudden springing up and flourishing of Browning clubs and societies in the United States during the 1880's."⁴⁴ With the increase in American readers of Browning's works, research on his poems also improved.⁴⁵ Members of the Browning Society in Boston played an important role in increasing studies of Browning's poems and the prominence of his name throughout the United States. Blunsom has described this "Browning Craze": "The Boston Society has been particularly fortunate in having among its essayists a number of men and women who have attained eminence as specialists in philosophy, theology, and literature: and these have contributed to the work of the Society the efficiency and weight that came from the trained eye and practiced hand, as well as of a sound and broad culture."⁴⁶

Thus, as the Browning Society grew, so did the popularity of Browning's works. For Blunsom, this "craze" helped to ensure the success of Amy Beach's settings of Browning's poetry: "One of the factors in the popularity of Beach's Browning songs was, no doubt, the fashion of Browning clubs, lending to *The year's at the spring* another level of accessibility to a broader public. In fact, Beach's song was praised by members of other Browning societies, by literati and by common people."⁴⁷

Thus, it is apparent that The Browning clubs and societies in the United States play a pivotal role in spreading and enhancing the value of Robert Browning's poems.

⁴³ Anna Barton, "Robert Browning," Oxford Bibliographies, Accessed September 5, 2014. <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199799558/obo-9780199799558-0010.xml>.

⁴⁴ Louise Greer, *Browning and America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), 163.

⁴⁵ Greer, *Browning*, 172.

⁴⁶ Blunsom, "Gender, Genre and Professionalism," 225.

⁴⁷ Blunsom, "Gender," 226.

B. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poems

Elizabeth Barrett was an English poet, born on 6 March 1806, in County Durham, England. She stood out for her writing ability from her early years and her works were published privately by her father when she was only fourteen years old.⁴⁸ During her early twenties, she studied diverse languages and literatures such as Greek, Latin, and German.

In 1826 her first collection of poems, *An Essay on Mind, with Other Poems*, was introduced to the public; it demonstrated her interests in Byron and Greek literature. In 1837, she moved to London and continued writing poems, soon presenting *The Seraphim and Other Poems* (1838). Two volumes of her works were published in 1844, both in English and American editions. Following the publication of these poems, she received a letter from her future husband Robert Browning, containing high praise of her works. Robert Browning's first letter to her served as a springboard for their relationship; they began to exchange letters and eventually married in 1846, when she was forty years old. She continued to write poems after her marriage; these include *Casa Guidi Windows* and *Aurora Leigh* (1856).⁴⁹

Following her marriage to Robert Browning, Elizabeth became known not only as an English poetess, but also as the wife of Robert Browning.⁵⁰ Her poems were highly regarded when she died in 1861, included "among the chief English poets of century,"⁵¹ but her life and love story with Robert Browning often attracted more attention than her works. The letters of Elizabeth were published in 1897 by Kenyon, and Elizabeth's name

⁴⁸ Virginia L. Radley, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1972), 15.

⁴⁹ Radley, *Elizabeth*, 17–22.

⁵⁰ Radley, *Elizabeth*, 26.

⁵¹ Angela Leighton, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 2.

was regarded more as the ideal main character of a love story than as notable English poet.⁵²

Interestingly, Rogers used two of Elizabeth's poems in her *Browning Song Series One*, whereas Beach did not put any of Elizabeth poems in her Browning songs. This is likely because they took a slightly different path of career in their later lives. While Beach successfully resumed her performance career after her husband death, Rogers only concentrated on teaching and composing works after her marriage. Rogers's interest in Elizabeth's poem as expressed in the Browning songs may be attributable to her wish to recover the work of a talented woman writer eclipsed by her husband and the story of their love life.

V. Rogers' and Beach's settings of the Brownings' poetry

Rogers and Beach both composed songs based on poems by Robert Browning. Beach selected three of Robert's poems for her Three Browning songs, and Rogers used four of Robert's poems and two poems by his wife, Elizabeth, for her first series of Browning songs. All of these songs—by both Rogers and Beach—through composed. Later, in 1900, Rogers also composed her second series, Op.32, consisting of six of Robert's other poems.

Interestingly the two composers overlapped in their choice of poems: both Beach and Rogers set the poems "The Years At The Spring," and "Ah, Love, But A Day." Beach sets "The Years At The Spring" as the first song of her *Three Browning Songs*, and Rogers puts it as the last song of her *Browning Song Series One*. Beach's "The Years

⁵² Leighton, *Elizabeth*, 3-4

At The Spring,” was commissioned by the Browning Society for the annual celebration of Browning’s birthday, while it was Rogers’ decision to put it at the last. Rogers explained her interest in the poems of Robert Browning in her autobiography, *The Story of Two Lives*: “The verses of...the unlyrical Robert Browning making special appeal to me by drawing on all one’s musical ingenuity for adequate expression!”⁵³

Table III. Amy Beach, *Three Browning songs*, Op.44

Poet	The title of song
Robert Browning	1. “The Year’s At The Spring” From <i>Pippa Passes</i>
Robert Browning	2. “Ah, Love, But A Day” From <i>James Lee’s Wife</i>
Robert Browning	3. “I Send My Heart Up To Thee” From <i>In A Gondola</i>

Table IV. Clara Rogers, *Browning songs series*, 1st Series. Op.27

Poet	The title of song
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	1. “Out of my own great Woe” From <i>Last poems in Paraphrases on Heine</i>
Robert Browning	2. “Summum Bonum” From <i>Asolando: Fancies and Facts</i>
Robert Browning	3. “Apparitions” From <i>Prologue to the two poets of Croisic</i>
Robert Browning	4. “Ah, Love, But A Day” From <i>James Lee’s Wife</i>
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	5. “I have a more than Friend” From <i>The Romaunt of Margaret</i>
Robert Browning	6. “The Year’s At The Spring” From <i>Pippa Passes</i>

“The Years At The Spring” is a poem included in Browning’s drama called *Pippa Passes*. *Pippa Passes* appears in the first volume of *Bells & Pomegranates*.⁵⁴ The

⁵³ Rogers, *The Story*, 81.

⁵⁴ Robert Browning, *The Poems and Plays of Robert Browning* (New York: Modern Library, 1934), 368.

story of *Pippa Passes* focuses on the journey of a young Italian girl, Pippa, who works in a silk mill on her only holiday, New Year's Day; it takes place in four scenes: Morning, Noon, Afternoon, and Night. In these four scenes, she encounters “the Four Happiest Ones” in a town called Asolo. In contrast to what their name implies, the truth is that the four characters rationalize themselves in the midst of murdering others in the town. Despite this dark reality, Pippa's texts (Ex. 1) express optimism through the use of words such as spring, morning, and dew-pearl. Also her confidence in God's sovereignty in the world is expressed from the lyric “God's in his Heaven” Her such firm faith in God for the future makes it possible for her to say “All's right with the world” in her dark environment.

Example 1. “The Year's At The Spring” by Robert Browning

The Year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;

The hill-side's dew-pearl'd;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven---
All's right with the world!⁵⁵

Although both Rogers and Beach set the poem “The Year's At the Spring,” they took very different approaches. Rogers made only extremely minor changes to the text of the original poem in her attempt to keep the poem in its original form as much as possible. This helps to deliver the original message—the poet's intention. Rogers's vocal

⁵⁵ Robert Browning, *My Last Duchess and Other Poems* (New York: Dover Publications, 1993), 1.

line repeats its simple rhythmic and melodic patterns. The accompany part doubles the voice line in the beginning of the song (Ex. 2, mm. 1–3), a gesture that again represents simplicity. Rogers’s conscious effort to deliver the original message of the poem is more evident upon close examination of the tempo.

The tempo of Rogers’ song is *Animato* (“Animating; usually with the implication of [increasingly] rapid tempo”⁵⁶). One can feel that the song has more weight compared to Beach’s song to the same texts, which is marked with the tempo *Allegro di Molto*—“very fast.”⁵⁷ The significance of the difference in tempo between the two songs can be appreciated through an understanding of the context of the original poem. “The Year’s At The Spring” does not simply portray the happiness of “the Four Happiest Ones” in the town of Asolo, nor merely the optimism felt by Pippa and her hope for the future. Rather, it is a solemn declaration of optimism and faith in God despite the truth of the town, which was dire reality of darkness and unhappiness. A song with fast tempo might give the impression of brightness, hope, and joy, but it may fail to deliver the context of such message and therefore not read the poet’s intention.

Rogers’s effort to deliver the original message as intended by the poet can also be seen in other aspects of her song. Through its repetition of motifs, the melody of Rogers’s song gives the impression of constancy, rather than change of emotions, and the accompanying part of piano adds dignity and consistency to the entire song. The end result is that the song gives the impression of marching steadily forward. This in turn signifies Pippa’s optimism through her firm faith, her unyielding trust in God’s

⁵⁶ Don Michael Randel, *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 46.

⁵⁷ Randel, *The Harvard Dictionary*, 243.

sovereignty and justice, even in a town full of murder and injustice. Thus, the source of Pippa's optimism is from her faith in God—an optimism that Rogers amplified. Rogers put the climax of the song with the lyric, “God’s in his heav’n” along with piano parts playing at mm.11–14, and she used repeated grand accompany part’s interlude before the song moves to the last stanza, “All’s right with the world.” Thus, the music matches exactly to the poetic meaning that the world will be fine because “God’s in his heav’n.”

From the perspective of singers as well, Rogers’ emphasis on delivering the message of the poem is clear. The song itself is easy to sing because of its simple melody line, and the simple structure of the song helps singers to focus on the lyrics and express the literal meaning of the poem.

Example 2. Clara Rogers, *The Year’s At The Spring*, Op.27, mm.1–21

Animato.

Clara Kathleen Rogers.

The Year's at the spring, and days at the morn;

Mornings at sev-en; The hill side's dew pearled; The lark's on the wing; The

snail's on the thorn; The lark's on the wing the snail's on the thorn;

f *grandioso*

allarg.

God's in his heav'n, God's in his



heav'n.

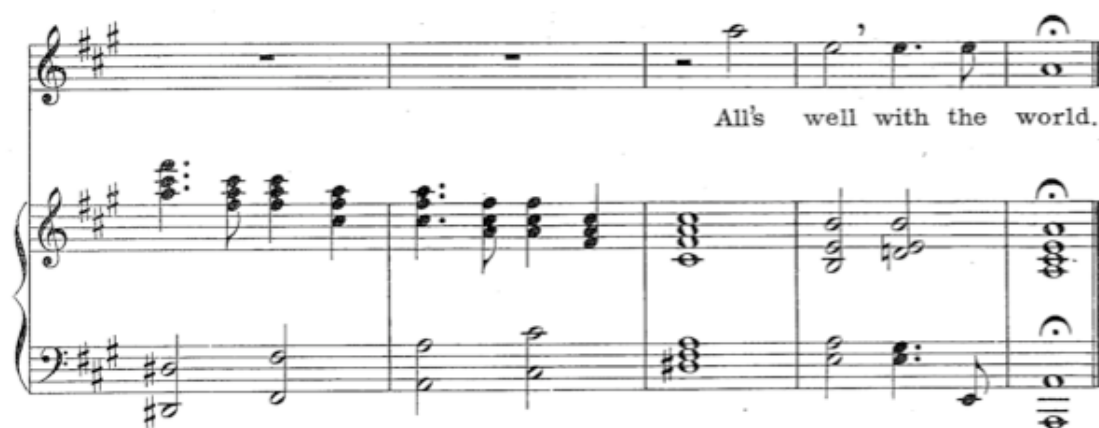
Adagio.

a tempo

f



All's well with the world.



By contrast, Beach took a dramatically different course in adapting Browning's poem. With respect to "The Year's At The Spring," knowing how the song came about helps shed light on Beach's approach. Beach wrote this song while riding in a train. Janet Nicholas has cited Amy Beach's interview with music magazine *The Etude*; as Beach explained, "The Boston Browning Society had asked me to set that poem for their annual celebration of Browning's birthday. I agreed to do it, but put it off because of pressing work. Shortly before the celebration I went to New York, for the premiere of my Violin Sonata. On the train going back it occurred to me that the time was getting short for my Browning song. I did nothing whatever in a conscious way; I simply sat still in the train, thinking of Browning's poem, and allowing it and the rhythm of the wheels to take possession of me. By the time I reached Boston, the song was ready."⁵⁸ This statement in a sense casts Beach as the main character in this journey on the train in the springtime—a replacement for Pippa as the main character of the poem.

Beach's interview also highlights another important idea: she was thinking of the poem, of course; but she was also influenced by the rhythmic rocking of the train. This rhythmic impulse appears in Beach's song, in the form of a repeated triplet rhythm in accompany part. This continuous triplet rhythm in the accompanying parts gives listeners the sense of the steam train moving. The song starts energetically with the left hand's strong accented staccato D flat (Ex. 1, m. 1), and this particular musical motion gives the impression of starting engine of a departing train. Then, as the train wheel goes around, the triplet rhythm in the accompanying parts of the song also moves forward. Just as the train sometimes speeds up or down, the triplet rhythms of the song change tempo along

⁵⁸ Janet Nicholas, *Women Music Makers*, 101.

with ascending or descending tones. In Example 4, at m. 7 the accompanying part's triplet rhythm stays, but the tempo gradually slows down back to the original tempo at m. 8, then it reduces the tempo again at m. 9 and finally back to the very first tempo at m. 10. Also, along with the slow down of the tempo, the right hand of the accompany parts gradually descends through G-flat-F-E-flat-D-flat-C-B-flat-B-double-flat, to G, and ascends to A when the tempo come back to the original fast tempo at m.10.

Example 3. Amy Beach, The Year's At The Spring, Op.44, no.1, mm.1–2

Allegro di molto.

VOICE. *mf* The year's at the spring, _____

PIANO. *p* *rit.*

Example 4. Amy Beach, The Year's At The Spring, Op.44, no.1, mm.7–10

poco rall. hill - side's dew - pearled; _____

a tempo *p* *rit.* *p a tempo* *pp dolce marcato*

The year's at the

If the accompanying part is considered similar to the movement of the train, the voice line sometimes seems like the steam whistle. Beach frequently uses the repeated perfect fourth interval in the singing line. As shown in Examples 5 and 6, the perfect fourth occurs consistently from the beginning of the singing line in mm. 1–8: “The year’s” (m. 1), “And day’s” (m. 3), “Morning’s” (m. 5), “The hillside’s” (mm. 6–7), “and dew pearly” (m. 8). Those singing lines give the impression of blowing of the outgoing train’s whistle. Also, she increases the sound of the whistle with repetitions of the perfect fourth from mm. 18–21, and makes the climax of the song at m. 22. Just as the steam whistle of the train toots, the sustained high A-flat from mm. 22–24 shows the peak of the train ride.

Example 5. The use of perfect fourth in Amy Beach’s song, The Year’s At The Spring, Op.44, no.1

The year’s, m. 1

Allegro di molto.

Perfect 4.
The years_ at the

p

And day’s, m. 3

Perfect 4
And day's_ at the

Morning’s, m. 5

Perfect 4
cresc.
Morn - ing's at

cresc.

The hillside's dew-pearled, mm.6–8

Perfect 4

f

The

hill - - side's dew - pearled;

poco rall

Perfect 4

a tempo

p

f poco rall

p a tempo

Ad.

The musical score for measures 6–8 shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line features a perfect fourth interval between the notes 'side's' and 'dew'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a single-note line in the left hand. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). Tempo markings are *poco rall* (poco rallentando) and *a tempo*. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat).

Example 6. Repeating of perfect fourth in voice line, mm.18–24

Perfect 4

f

God's in his

heaven,

God's in his

heaven,

All's

ff

Perfect 4

Perfect 4

Perfect 4

Perfect 4

Perfect 4

f

marcato

Ad.

right, **Steam whistle of the train** All's

The musical score for measures 18–24 shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line features a repeating perfect fourth interval. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a single-note line in the left hand. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). The tempo marking is *marcato*. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat).

As mentioned above, the poem “The Year’s At The Spring” expresses Pippa’s optimism in the face of the realities of murder, injustice, and unhappiness. Browning

emphasized Pippa's faith in God as the source of her optimism. However, through her song, Beach depicts a colorful spring scene through this unique rhythmic and melodic progression. It appears that Beach took the texts from the poem only in its literal sense, without considering the context or the background of the poem. This point is critical in differentiating the methods of poetic setting between Rogers and Beach. Beach focused on melody and tempo of her song itself and adapted the poem to fit her idea of the song, thereby projecting her own interpretation of the poem.

Unlike Rogers's song with its climax at the lyric "God's in His Heaven," the climax of Beach's song appears at the text "All's right" as it is repeated twice in the song (m. 21, and m. 24). Beach's song has the lyric "God's in His Heaven" as well, but without the understanding of the background of the poem or acknowledging of it, the message that the actual poet was trying to convey through the lyric "God's in His Heaven," is not as powerful, and is a little out of place. It could be considered the most important text in the poem as it states the source of Pippa's optimism, and Rogers treated it that way; but because Beach interpreted and adapted the poem differently, "God's in His Heaven" is used as a supportive text and melody (mm. 18 and 20) before the conclusion, "All's right" (see Example 7).

Example 7. The use of the text, “God’s in his heaven, All’s right with the world” in Beach’s song, mm.18–25

The musical score for Example 7 consists of two systems of music. The first system (mm. 18–25) features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The vocal line begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment features a dense, rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second system (mm. 26–33) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a ritardando (*rit*) marking. The piano accompaniment includes a *marcato* marking and a ritardando (*rit*) marking. The score is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "God's in his heaven, All's right with the world".

Further examination of Beach’s use of the text reveals that the composer chose to repeat texts from the original poem as much as needed in order to fit her melody; the text repetitions are shown in Example 8. Because of this, her song with its escalating melody and very fast tempo, becomes the main artwork—not the lyrics or its message. This also has implications for the singers; due to large up-and-down swings of the melody line and the fast overall tempo, the song is more challenging for the singers; it is also more difficult for singers to focus on the lyrics rather than just the melody and tempo.

Example 8. Comparing the use of poem, “The Year’s At the Spring,” by Robert Browning on Beach and Rogers song

Original Poem	Beach’s song	Rogers’s Song
The Year’s at the spring, And day’s at the morn; Morning’s at seven; The hill-side’s dew- pearl’d;	The Year’s at the spring, And day’s at the morn; Morning’s at seven; The hill-side’s dew- pearl’d;	The Year’s at the spring, And day’s at the morn; Morning’s at seven; The hill-side’s dew- pearl’d;
The lark’s on the wing; The snail’s on the thorn; God’s in His heaven--- All’s right with the world! ⁵⁹	The Year’s at the spring, And day’s at the morn; The lark’s on the wing; The snail’s on the thorn; God’s in His heaven God’s in His heaven All’s right All’s right with the world!	The lark’s on the wing; The snail’s on the thorn; God’s in His heaven God’s in His heaven All’s well with the world!

The other poem that both Beach and Rogers used in composing their songs is “Ah, Love, But A Day” (Ex. 9). It is one of the many parts of another long poem, “James Lee’s Wife,” which appears in one of Robert Browning’s poetic collection, *Dramatis Personae*. The lyric reflects the thoughts of the main character, James Lee’s wife, regarding love, which is compared to the change of seasons. The main character in the poem is afraid that her love would come to an end. Thus, she keeps asking her lover, “Wilt thou change too?” (verse 2); she is so desperate that she is almost begging her lover to embrace her, which the poet makes explicit in verse 3.

Example 9. The poem “Ah, Love, But A Day” by Robert Browning

1. Ah, Love, but a day, And the world has changed!
--

⁵⁹Robert Browning, *My last Duchess*, 1.

The sun's away,
 And the bird's estranged;
 The wind has dropped,
 And the sky's deranged:
 Summer has stopped.

2.

Look in my eyes!
 Wilt thou change too?
 Should I fear surprise?
 Shall I find aught new
 In the old and dear,
 In the good and true,
 With the changing year?

3.

Thou art a man,
 But I am thy love.
 For the lake, its swan;
 For the dell, its dove;
 And for thee-(oh, haste!)
 Me, to bend above,
 Me, to hold embraced⁶⁰

As with “The Years’ At The Spring,” Rogers and Beach took very different approaches to the poem in their settings of “Ah, Love, But a Day.” Just as Rogers tried to minimize any structural changes to the poem for “The Years’ At The Spring,” she didn’t make any modifications to the texts for “Ah, Love, But a Day.” Rogers’s setting delivers the poet’s anxiety regarding love with a simple musical structure. Rogers keeps her voice and piano parts very simple, again repeating motifs from the melody throughout. Due to the simple and repetitive music (Ex. 10), it is very easy for singers to sing and focus on lyrics. Even though the tempo of the song is very fast (*allegretto con moto*; moderately

⁶⁰ Robert Browning, *An Introduction to The Study of Robert Browning’s Poetry*, ed. Hiram Corson, (Boston: D.C. Heath& Company), 197.

fast, with an animated and energetic movement⁶¹), the message of the original poem is easily conveyed because of its musical simplicity.

Example 10. Repetitions of motifs in the melody line in Rogers's song, "Ah, Love, But A Day", mm. 8–13

musical score for "Ah, Love, But A Day" (mm. 8–13). The melody line is circled in red, showing a repetition of a motif. The lyrics are: "Ah, Love, but a day, And the world has changed!". The score includes piano (p), mezzo-forte (mf), and tenor (ten.) markings.

mm.27–36

musical score for "Ah, Love, But A Day" (mm. 27–36). The melody line is circled in red, showing a repetition of a motif. The lyrics are: "Look in my eyes! wilt thou change too?". The score includes piano (p), mezzo-forte (mf), and tenor (ten.) markings.

⁶¹ Theodore Baker, *A Dictionary of Musical Terms* (New York: G. Schirmer, inc. 1923), 14, 126.

mm.51–56

Beach's approach to "Ah, Love, But a Day" shows very dramatic musical structure from that of Rogers's song. Overall, the melody of the Beach's song is very emotional, and it is rich in deep human feelings about love. The singing part has a climax at measures 20 and 40, demonstrated by high notes. Her song also has a distinctive harmonic progression. For example, the song starts with f minor i chord and moves to $ii \frac{4}{3}$ -v-i. But, at the mm.3, the ii chord occurs with the word "Love", and suddenly the chord changes from minor mode to major mode along with the use of $V \frac{4}{2}$ chord of A-flat major at the third beat. Then, it goes back to f minor again at m. 4. As the lyric tells of the speaker's fear of unsteadiness in love, analogous to the changes of seasons, Beach attempts to show such emotions through this harmonic progression (Ex. 11).

Example 11. Key changes in Amy Beach's song "Ah, Love, But a Day", mm. 1–4

Lento con molto espressione.

p Ah, Love, but a

pp

fm: i ii₃⁴ V - ⁴/₂ i⁶ ii A^b: V ⁴/₂

day, And the

fm: VI

From the singer's point of view, even though this song is slow (*Lento con molto espressione*, slowly with expression⁶²), this song is challenging due to the large intervals between notes and the continuous dramatic flow of the melody. Rogers's song is faster, but it is easier to sing and to convey the text.

One important difference in the approach of the two composers to "Ah, Love, But a Day" is that Beach omitted the third stanza entirely, while Rogers included all of the text exactly as written in original poem. As noted above, the main message of the original poem is explicitly stated in the third stanza. The main character in poem is expressing her

⁶² Baker, *A dictionary*, 233, 237.

love only vaguely in the first two stanzas; there, she poses questions rather than telling her emotions directly. But, when the poem reaches the third stanza, she states her love and need explicitly. Therefore, by leaving out the third stanza completely, Beach omitted this explicit text. Instead, her focus was clearly on the beautiful and rich melody of emotions than delivering the message of the original poem. Furthermore, here too, she Beach repeated different parts of the texts many times, but without the main theme of the original poem, it appears that Beach adapted the texts to match her musical idea.

Example 12. Comparing the use of poem “Ah, Love, But A Day” by Robert

Browning on Beach and Rogers song

Original Poem	Beach	Rogers
1. Ah, Love, but a day, And the world has changed! The sun’s away, And the bird’s estranged; The wind has dropped, And the sky’s deranged: Summer has stopped.	Ah, Love, but a day, And the world has changed! Ah, Love, but a day, And the world has changed! The sun’s away, And the bird’s estranged; The wind has dropped, And the sky’s deranged: Summer, Summer has stopped, Summer has stopped.	Ah, Love, but a day, And the world has changed! The sun’s away, And the bird’s estranged; The wind has dropped, And the sky’s deranged: Summer has stopped.
2. Look in my eyes! Wilt thou change too? Should I fear surprise? Shall I find aught new In the old and dear, In the good and true, With the changing year?	Ah, Love, but a day, And the world has changed! Look in my eyes! Wilt thou change too? Look in my eyes! Wilt thou change too? Should I fear surprise? Shall I find aught new In the old and dear, In the good and true, With the changing year?	Look in my eyes! Wilt thou change too? Should I fear surprise? Shall I find aught new In the old and dear, In the good and true, With the changing year?
3. Thou art a man, But I am thy love. For the lake, its swan; For the dell, its dove; And for thee-(oh, haste!) Me, to bend above, Me, to hold embraced ⁶³	Ah, Love, Look in my eyes, Look in my eyes! Wilt thou change too?	Thou art a man, But I am thy love. For the lake, its swan; For the dell, its dove; And for thee-(oh, haste!) Me, to bend above, Me, to hold embraced.

Other Browning songs written by Rogers also generally have simple repeating melodies and straightforward forms, both in the voice and piano parts. For example, the second song of Rogers’ Browning song, “Summum Bonum” also has simple and clear repeated music, designed to stress the narration of the poetic story. The poem depicts a

⁶³ Robert Browning, *An Introduction*, 197.

boy's view that the world seems bright and shiny when he receives a kiss from a girl, which, for him, is the greatest moment—the Summum Bonum (The *Oxford Dictionary* defines Summum Bonum as “The highest good, especially as the ultimate goal according to which values and priorities are established in an ethical system”⁶⁴). The boy describes all the beauty of nature with the use of diverse texts such as “all the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee,” and “In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea.” Rogers once again focused on the delivery of the poem itself, along with use of similar descending and ascending melody forms in voice parts with its repeating rhythmic pattern from the beginning of the song until m. 6 (Ex. 13).

⁶⁴ Oxford Dictionaries Online, “Definition of Summum Bonum in English in Oxford Dictionaries,” Accessed September 4, 2014. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/english/summum-bonum>.

Example 13. Clara Rogers, *Summum Bonum*, Op. 27, mm. 2–6

p

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee:

e rhythm well marked)

am

rit.

All the won-der and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem:

colla voce

CM

Also, the piano part starts to imitate the rhythmic pattern and melody originally stated by the voice part from m. 8 (Ex. 14).

Example 14. Rogers, Summum Bonum, mm. 8–15

First system of the musical score. The vocal line (treble clef) begins with the lyrics "shine of the sea" and "Breath and bloom,". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting line in the left hand. A red oval highlights a specific passage in the piano's right hand, marked with the instruction *delicately*. The tempo/mood is indicated as *espress.* and the dynamic as *p*.

Second system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "shade and shine," "wond-er, wealth," and "and". The piano accompaniment continues with the same melodic and supporting lines. A red oval highlights a passage in the piano's right hand, marked with the instruction *delicately*. The dynamic is indicated as *p*.

Third system of the musical score. The vocal line concludes with the lyrics "how far a - bove them" and "Truth, that's brighter than gem". The piano accompaniment continues with the same melodic and supporting lines. A red oval highlights a passage in the piano's right hand, marked with the instruction *delicately*. The dynamic is indicated as *mp*.

Even though the lyric changes from verse to verse, the music maintains its uniformity and its simplicity. This way, the lyrical expression stands out in the midst of the fine musical flow. Here too, Rogers focuses on bringing out the poet's emotions through the faithful use of original texts.

Beach, on the other hand, consistently shows her tendency to adapt the poems and add her own interpretation through her songs. Beach's third song in the Browning set, "I send my heart up to thee," shows such flexibility in the use of poem. She repeats textual phrases as much as she needed for the melody, and conveys the image of waves on the shore through coordination of the voice and piano parts. Whereas Rogers's accompanying part remains in an accompanying role in her songs, Beach piano part cooperates with the voice part in developing the poetic image. Indeed, Beach's music as a whole gives the impression of seascape where someone misses her love and sings a love song. The piano pattern has two beats of ascending, spread chords with a full chord on the last beat in 9/8. The voice lines go up and down consistently. The movement of both the piano and voice parts gives the image of waves crashing on the beach. As the speaker of the poem sends her love to him as the weaves of the sea, the music repeats its movement from the bottom note of each chord to the top note. For example, the piano part spreads I chord of D-flat Major, and plays the chord in full at the third beat of m. 1. The accompanying parts keep this form until m. 8. The voice part starts at f and goes to high e, and back to the low f between mm. 2–3. The voice line keeps its ascending and descending styles throughout the entire music. Beach uses important words such as "heart, stars, sea, thy face, thee" at every first beat of the measure with higher tone than

the other two beats. These top notes carry the speaker's emotion wanting to let her heart reach out to her lover (Ex. 15).

Example 15. Amy Beach, I send my heart up to thee, Op.44, no.3, mm.1–8

Andante con affetto.

tranquillo

pp

D^b M :

p

I send my

heart up to thee, all my heart In this my

sing - - ing. For the stars help me, and the sea, and the

sempre con Pedale

In addition, a key change occurs in the middle of song, and it represents the speaker's deeper longing emotion. The song starts with D-flat Major but melody goes up to E major at m.10 when Beach repeats the lyric "I send my heart up to thee" (Ex. 16).

Example 16. Beach, I send my heart up to thee, mm. 9–12

Key change, and emphasizing of the important words

The musical score for 'I send my heart up to thee' by Debussy, measures 9-12. The score is in two systems. The first system shows measures 9-10, and the second system shows measures 11-12. The key signature changes from D-flat major to E major at measure 10. The lyrics are 'sea bears part; I send my heart up to'. The piano part is marked 'pp' and 'dolce marc.'. The vocal part is marked 'p' and 'pp'. The key change is indicated by a red circle around the key signature change at measure 10. The word 'heart' is highlighted with a red box. The tempo/mood is marked 'D♭ M:V:'. The key change is marked 'EM: I'.

It is clear that Beach's music shows her own imagining of the poem: she interprets the poem through harmonic change, repeated text passages, and suggestive, "pictorial" piano parts.

Throughout this examination of Rogers' and Beach's musical characters, Rogers's simple approach to the poems and Beach's expressive personal musicality are clearly detected in their songs. Their musical works are both characteristic representatives of these composers and invaluable treasures in American musical history.

VI. Conclusion

As my discussions and analyses have shown, Clara Rogers and Amy Beach took different approach to the setting of poetry in composing Browning songs.

Rogers considered the context in which poems were written, why and what circumstances the poet wrote these poems in her composition work. Her primary goal was to deliver the original message or the very intention of the poet as it appeared in the poem itself. In order to accomplish that goal, she preserved the poems in their original forms, and tried to avoid any modifications of the lyrics in her songs. Accordingly, her songs were characteristically simple in form.

It is understandable why Rogers took such a course in her composing career and methods of setting of poetry if one considers her background. She was a professional singer, and that made her more conscious of singer's perspective in music. She considered herself as a deliverer of the message of the poem, and she naturally put more weight on the importance of the lyrical expression of her music.

In contrast, Beach's musical background was as a pianist, and she was well-known for her talent on this instrument from a very young age. Thus, by her training, she was used to focusing more on melody, tempo, and other musical parameters besides lyrics. For the same reason, Beach composed songs with more colorful piano parts than are found in Rogers's songs, and her natural intention made her songs more vibrant and rich in emotions. Clearly her talent and focus was on expressing her musical imagination and inspiration. Because of this difference in focus, Beach often repeated texts from the original poems as needed to fit the melody and tempo, even omitting important parts of some poems if it aided in expressing her musical ideas.

In summary, Rogers and Beach are two great examples of women composers in 19th century in American music history. Despite social and educational limitations during that time, they developed their own way of expressing their musical talents. Each composer contributed in her own ways to the understanding and interpretation of poetry through music. Their distinct approaches show the different musical ideals of these two very important women composers in late 19th- and early 20th-century America.

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