



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hot Off the Press and Silenced No More
A Rebecca Clarke Reader Available Now in Paperback

WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, August 15, 2005—The Rebecca Clarke Society has produced a new printing of *A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, a volume of writings by and about British-born composer and violist Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979). Previously published by Indiana University Press, the book was recalled from circulation last year in response to threats of legal action from Clarke's estate. This past June, Indiana released its distribution rights to feminist activist and music historian Liane Curtis, the book's editor, who subsequently agreed to make a paperback version available in time for the 119th anniversary of Clarke's August 27 birthday.

A Rebecca Clarke Reader is the first major publication on the life and works of a remarkable woman and musician. As a noted violist, Clarke blazed trails for female performers of her time. As a female composer, however, Clarke faced nearly insurmountable obstacles. Her music, composed mostly in the 1920s, was rarely performed or published during her lifetime. Only recently has it gained recognition by musicians and music historians.

And recognition is indeed deserved. Since its rediscovery in the late 1970s, Clarke's sonata for viola has become the single most frequently performed work for that instrument. Listeners consistently find Clarke's music compelling for its passion, intelligence and accessibility. The undeniably engaging story of Rebecca Clarke—of her life, work and play—moreover provides invaluable insights into the many and vibrant artistic communities to which she belonged.

And yet, much of Clarke's work—her literary and autobiographical writings as well as her music—remains unavailable today, in part due to the status of her estate, the management of which has at times invoked copyright law to deny access to crucial sources of information.

Curtis, who has written numerous articles on Clarke, states that "women composers continue to face difficulties in the modern world of classical music today." According to the College Music Society, women comprise less than 5% of the more than 1,900 university and college faculty teaching music composition in the United States. The American Symphony Orchestra League reports that less than 1% of music programmed last year by professional orchestras was written by women composers. Curtis believes that attending to Rebecca Clarke and her music should help shed light on the complex reasons for such dismal statistics in our own time. The story of Clarke's life and work, and the power and beauty of her music, can provide inspiration for us all.

The Rebecca Clarke Society, based at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, was founded in 2000 as a non-profit organization. Its mission is to honor and promote interest in the life and work of composer and violist Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979) by encouraging and supporting performances and recordings of her music, publication of her music and writings, and scholarship concerning Clarke and her music.

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Press kits, including an electronic copy of the Clarke Reader, are available upon request.