
I. Recent Essays about Rebecca Clarke

We may safely assert that the knowledge that men can acquire of women, even as they have been and are, without reference to what they might be, is wretchedly imperfect and superficial and will always be so until women themselves have told all that they have to tell.

—*John Stuart Mill*

Certainly many male scholars have made important contributions to the feminist recovery of women's roles in music history. But given women's interest in understanding figures of the past with whom we share an important aspect of identity, it is no surprise that most of the scholarship on women composers has been carried out by female musicologists. Nancy B. Reich is truly one of the pioneers of feminist musicology, having for many years engaged in precise, detailed, and thoughtful work on that long-misunderstood artist Clara Schumann. Reich's biography of Schumann was the first scholarly book on a woman composer, and its influence on myself (as well as others) is of vast importance. Through Reich's enduring work, Clara Schumann was transformed from a marginal figure rarely recognized as a composer to one whose influence on the music culture of the nineteenth century is acknowledged and whose wide range of important compositions are widely known and performed.¹

I was fortunate to meet Reich in person when she gave a talk at Duke University in the late 1980s. Also at that time I discovered the recent reprints of Clarke's pieces (the Viola Sonata of 1919, reprinted in 1986, and the Piano Trio of 1921, reprinted in 1981), and the confluence of their impact on me, together with exposure to Reich's scholarship and the then radical (and still often radical) notion that women could be the focus of scholarly work in music, was nothing short of transformative. In

1993 Reich served as a respondent to the paper I gave on Clarke at the national meeting of the American Musicological Society, and I benefited from her insights and stimulus. Since then we have often corresponded and conversed at meetings, and I invited her to participate in the 1999 conference on Clarke, although she was unable to attend. It is a great honor to be able to include her 1993 essay on Clarke in the present volume.

Deborah Stein and I were both teaching at Harvard in the fall of 1994, and I knew of her fine work on nineteenth-century song, so I was happy to invite her to participate in the 1999 conference on Clarke. Her paper here is a revised version of the one she prepared for that conference. Bryony Jones first contacted me in 2001 concerning her research on Clarke for her doctoral thesis at the University of Liverpool, and we have stayed in touch ever since. Her insights into Clarke's music are always valuable to me, and she is unflaggingly committed to conveying the importance of the whole of Clarke's musical achievement.

Two scholars whose work I had planned to include in this volume are Cyrilla Barr and Maria Foltz Baylock. Because the estate of Rebecca Clarke (currently managed by Christopher Johnson) would not permit the quotations from primary source materials to be included in this volume, Barr's and Baylock's valuable scholarship unfortunately could not be included.² Baylock has written a remarkable master's thesis on the English Ensemble, the piano quartet that Clarke organized and performed in during the late 1920s and 1930s. Baylock's command of a wide range of journals from the early twentieth century was impressive as well as providing much significant material on Clarke's reception and activity. I corresponded with Baylock and obtained a copy of her 1998 thesis, and I met her when she attended the 1999 conference on Clarke.³ I have repeatedly been impressed by her helpfulness and knowledge.

Although her essay is not included, Cyrilla Barr's work resonates throughout this volume. I met Barr in 1991 when she gave a paper on Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge at the national meeting of the American Musicological Society. She already had much valuable information on Clarke to share, and she told me about some Clarke scores in the library of the Britten-Pears Collection, as well as Frank Bridge's diaries there that offer insight on some of the Coolidge Festivals. Thus, on my first Clarke research trip in 1992, I was able to discover some music by Clarke ("Take, O Take Those Lips Away," and a second version of "Sleep," both for vocal duet and piano, and neither mentioned in any previous catalogue of Clarke's work). The excitement of finding something new

and important, and of working on a subject so little studied, was exhilarating, and the support of scholars involved in similar efforts has proved to be continually uplifting as well as useful. Barr generously answered all manner of questions (extremely helpful as I struggled to decipher Clarke's diaries), and she provided copies of her work in advance of publication. Her article and then her book about Coolidge have been of immense help to me.⁴

Ann Feldman, writing about the "Eternal Feminine" in music, has commented on the "unique community of women historians who have devoted their careers to researching and championing the work of women composers." Feldman quotes Judith Tick: "The stories of the scholars and the stories of the composers that they have become so attached to are very moving. And the phrase 'sisters across time' occurred to me. . . . A kind of personal advocacy drives so many women in musicology to advocate for their history in the past. There's a unique relationship between a scholar and her subject."⁵ All the women whose essays are included (or should be included) in this volume are part of a valuable community which I have depended on and drawn strength from in my continuing process of inquiry and discovery into the life and music of Rebecca Clarke.

Notes

1. Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann, the Artist and the Woman*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001 [1985]).
2. Cyrilla Barr, "Rebecca Clarke's 'One Brief Whiff of Fame'"; and Maria Baylock, "Rebecca Clarke and the English Ensemble."
3. "Women Musicians in Early Twentieth-Century London: The String Players in the English Ensemble," M.M. thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1998.
4. "A Style of Her Own: The Patronage of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge," in *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860*, ed. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 185-203; *Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge: American Patron of Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1998).
5. CD notes by Ann Feldman, *The Eternal Feminine*, Susanne Mentzer, mezzo-soprano; Craig Rutenberg, piano. Songs by Amy Beach, Lili Boulanger, Rebecca Clarke et al. Koch International Classics, 3-7506-2, 2001. Judith Tick is the author of *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), and editor with Jane Bowers of *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).