A Stylistic and Performance Analysis of Selected Solo Piano Compositions by Helen Hopekirk

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ABSTRACT
This document explores Helen Hopekirk’s compositions for solo piano, presenting a brief overview of Hopekirk’s solo piano music and a detailed analysis of four selected works from her output. Helen Hopekirk (1856–1945) was a distinguished Scottish-American pianist, composer and pedagogue in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. Over the six decades of her professional career, Hopekirk concertized widely throughout Europe and the United States, worked with nearly 250 piano students and produced a substantial body of compositions in both large- and small-scale genres. Hopekirk is now counted among the first generation of professional American female composers.

Chapter 1 of this study outlines the purpose, need, procedures and limitations of the study and presents a review of related literature. Chapter 2 provides a biographical sketch and explores Hopekirk’s significance as a composer in the context of her American contemporaries, particularly the Second New England School of composers. Chapter 3 investigates Hopekirk’s contributions to the rise of the American female composer and offers a thorough review of her compositional output and style. It also surveys Hopekirk’s complete body of solo piano music. Chapters 4 through 7 offer analyses of four selected piano works by Hopekirk: Iona Memories, Suite for Piano, Five Scottish Folk-Songs and Two Tone Pictures. For each work, these analyses provide historical background, explore salient compositional features and offer practical teaching and performance suggestions. Chapter 8 provides a brief conclusion and recommendations for further research. By exploring Helen Hopekirk’s piano music, this study recognizes the work of a noteworthy American female composer-pianist and serves as a resource for teachers and performers interested in Hopekirk’s music.

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