

The Clarinet

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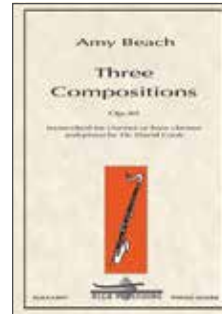


Victoria SAMEK

Bass Clarinet Etude and Method Books
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Eybler's Forgotten *Concerto for Clarinet*
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Amy Beach. *Three Compositions*, Op. 40.

Transcribed for clarinet or bass clarinet and piano by David Cook. Alea Publishing, 2022. PDF or hard copy \$20.00



American composer and pianist Amy Beach originally created her *Three Compositions*, Op. 40, for violin and piano in 1898. She then followed this with a version featuring cello and piano five

years later. The work is romantic in style, primarily homophonic in texture and rich in harmony. Its first movement, “La Captive,” wanders meditatively, featuring melodies principally in the lower register of the solo instrument, while the second movement, “Berceuse (Lullaby),” is lighter in feel, higher in tessitura, and brighter in tempo. By contrast, the solo part for the concluding movement, “Mazurka,” encompasses a much larger range and leaps about energetically.

David Cook has recently transcribed this work by Beach such that it reflects both the violin and cello versions, with parts for clarinet and bass clarinet respectively. His piano score, which includes the clarinet part notated in C, remains the same for both versions. In his transcription, Cook has honored the small modifications that Beach has made for artistic and technical motivations in the cello version. He has added his own editorial suggestions, indicated with dotted lines to differentiate them from the original notation, and he has included a change from written G# major to written A♭ major for the bass clarinet to render the part more legible. The clarinet part, in B♭ with alternate A clarinet version for the second and third movements, generally fits comfortably within the range of the clarinet, only occasionally venturing up to an E above the staff. As such, the transcription would be well-suited for a strong intermediate-level performer,

although it could benefit from some added slurs in the final page of the last movement, to ease an extended stretch of articulated eighth notes. At the same time, although the bass clarinet part is essentially the same as the clarinet part, only sounding an octave lower, it is more taxing to perform, in that much of the piece sits in the clarion register, and some of the music ventures into the altissimo. While this would be no issue for an advanced player, it would prove challenging for an intermediate student in ways in which the clarinet part would not. This is doubly so regarding the staccato articulation that has been added to the bass clarinet part in the clarion register of the third movement.

Broadly speaking, all the parts are spiral bound, and the music is clear, large, and easy to read. The only exception is the first page of the bass clarinet part, in which one wishes that the notes had been spaced out more to take advantage of the abundance of white space on the page. Moreover, while the clarinet and bass clarinet parts contain no awkward page turns, the piano part would likely require a page turner. Nevertheless, the 9-minute collection is charming and would make a lovely addition to a clarinetist's library, particularly for a performer searching for a relatively short, harmonically lush, 19th-century recital work.

– *Lacey Golaszewski*