

AMY BEACH:

THE VICTORIAN WOMAN, THE AUTISM SPECTRUM, AND COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Amy Laemmli

Dr. Robert Shay, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Celebrated American composer and pianist Amy Marcy Cheney Beach (1867-1944) became the subject of the dedicated interest of a number of scholars during the last decades of the twentieth century, but her idiosyncratic behavior and compositional style traits have not yet been analyzed in terms of a possible neurological condition. This document demonstrates Beach's behavioral idiosyncrasies that point to an Autism Spectrum Disorder effecting both her career and compositional choices. As Victorian mannerisms and culture faded in favor of the personality driven twentieth century, Beach attempted to change her compositional style and in doing so, incorporated elements that reflect her true nature and aspects common among individuals with an autism spectrum disorder.