

Three Pieces

I. Scherzino (A Peterborough Chipmunk)

Amy M. Beach
Op. 128, No. 1

Molto vivace (♩ = 126-132)

1

pp

sopra

2 5 2 5 2 5 3 1

8va

4

1

7

1 3 5 5 3 1 2 4 1 2 3 5 4 2 3 1

sopra

4 1 5 2 4 1

1 4 2-1 5-4 5 1 5

II. Young Birches

Amy M. Beach
Op. 128, No. 2

Moderato tranquillo (♩ = 69-72)

8va -
5 4 3 4 *sempre murmurando*
1 2 1 2

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. The middle and bottom staves are grand staff notation (treble and bass clefs). The middle staff has a *pp* dynamic marking. The bottom staff has a *dolcissimo* dynamic marking and a quarter rest with a 4-measure fermata. A dashed line above the top staff indicates an octave shift.

una corda

The second system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff continues the eighth-note accompaniment. The middle staff has a melodic line starting with a quarter note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note with a fermata. The bottom staff has a bass line with a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note with a fermata. A dashed line above the top staff indicates an octave shift.

The third system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff continues the eighth-note accompaniment. The middle staff has a melodic line starting with a quarter note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note with a fermata. The bottom staff has a bass line with a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note with a fermata. A dashed line above the top staff indicates an octave shift.

III. A Hummingbird

Amy M. Beach
Op. 128, No. 3

Allegro grazioso (♩. = 96–104)
quasi trillo, ad lib.

sopra

pp

una corda

a tempo

4

6

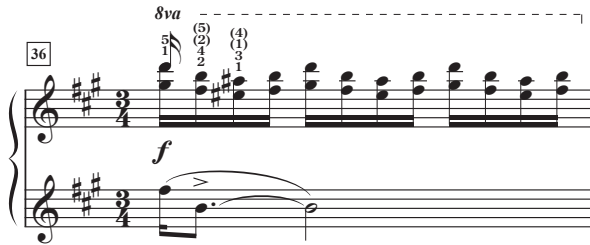
8va

mf

dim.

$\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$

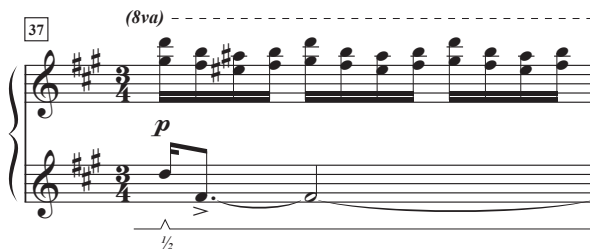
After employing the above methods, the double notes will eventually become comfortable. The pattern found in mm. 36–40, however, may need additional attention due to the apparent stretch required. Two different fingering options are indicated, and either can work as long as two points are observed: first, do not rush between the first and second notes of each RH group; and allow the wrist to rise and fall as the thumb traverses black and white keys, respectively.



Beach uses a double stem to highlight the top note when it moves in m. 24 and several other places throughout the piece. Sufficient voicing of this note will require a firm fifth finger and will benefit from a bit of forearm rotation “outward” (the RH palm faces the right side and the hand falls level again to strike the note).



Pedaling is generally straightforward and continuously *legato*, with the exception of a few places where half-pedaling may be useful. (This term refers to the rapid raising and lowering of the pedal, decreasing some of the “blur” without totally eliminating the accumulated sound.) To achieve the *subito piano* at m. 37, try a slight hesitation at the downbeat accompanied by a half-pedal change.



Another half-change on the third beat of m. 40 will prevent excessive blurring—clearing out some of the prevailing RH D-natural—while preserving the atmosphere.

In the final four measures of the piece, Beach employs a device known as a “written-out *ritardando*.” By gradually increasing note values—from 16ths, to triplets, to 8ths (the last one tied to a quarter), to half notes (tied to a dotted half)—these measures create the impression of slowing down without actually altering the *tempo*. A gradual relaxation of the pulse beginning where indicated in m. 48 will be sufficient; the “slowing” notes themselves obviate the need for any additional *rit.* at the end.



A Hummingbird

Although more volatile than “Scherzino,” this piece still employs a wide variety of softer dynamics. One finds markings such as *sempre diminuendo* following *pp*, and even a *diminuendo* after the score already indicates *ppp*.

In “Scherzino,” Beach consistently places *fermatas* over 16th rests or the barline, suggesting there could either be a simple hold or an actual “breath” (a gap in the pedal) before proceeding. In “A Hummingbird,” the same interpretive choices exist at the ends of mm. 10, 34, and similar.

The half-pedal technique sporadically employed in “Young Birches” will be indispensable to keep the texture of “A Hummingbird” transparent while maintaining a resonant glow. Particularly in making a *diminuendo*, it is necessary to thin out the pedal resonance bit by bit, such as in mm. 9–10. Depending on the specific piano and acoustic, the pianist should feel welcome to employ half-pedaling elsewhere in this piece when the texture threatens to grow too thick.

