TOCCATA CLASSICS

Helen HOPEKIRK

PIANO MUSIC

SCOTTISH FOLKSONGS
TWO TONE-PICTURES
SUITE FOR PIANO
IONA MEMORIES
MINIATURES

Gary Steigerwalt

FIRST RECORDINGS

HELEN HOPEKIRK, PIANIST AND COMPOSER

by Gary Steigerwalt and Dana Muller

Helen Hopekirk was born on 20 May 1856 at Portobello, a seaside town just to the east of Edinburgh. The second child of Helen Croall and Adam Hopekirk, a printer, bookseller and piano-retailer, she received her earliest musical training at Windsor Lodge Academy in Portobello, where she played in public for the first time in July 1868. While in her teens, she attended the Edinburgh Institution for the Education of Young Ladies in Charlotte Square, continuing her piano instruction under the Hungarian pianist George Lichtenstein, studying music theory with Alexander Campbell MacKenzie, and appearing as soloist with the Edinburgh Amateur Orchestra Society on three occasions. Fulfilling her father's dying wish, Hopekirk relocated to Leipzig to study at the Conservatorium under Louis Maas, Salomon Jadassohn and Carl Reinecke in 1876–79.

By her mid-twenties, Hopekirk had appeared several times as soloist with the orchestras of the Gewandhaus in Leipzig and the Crystal Palace in London. She married William A. Wilson (1853–1926), partner in the Edinburgh rope- and twine-manufacturing firm of Lees & Wilson, on 4 August 1882, and thereafter adopted the stage name 'Mme. Helen Hopekirk'. For a number of prominent women instrumentalists in Victorian Britain (Kate Loder, for example), marriage meant the end of a career as a public performer. Not so for Hopekirk: for many years William Wilson limited his business activities so as to be able to manage his wife's career. He organised two arduous tours of Great Britain for her in 1882 and 1883, encompassing a total of 42 recital, chamber-music and orchestral engagements. With a repertoire said to exceed that of any other pianist save Anton Rubinstein, she followed her British successes with extended tours of the United States in 1883–86, appearing as recitalist in New York, Brooklyn, Chicago and Boston, among other cities.

She presented as many as four different programmes in as few as twelve days and was lauded for her prodigious memory and perceptive approach to the music. *The Chicago Tribune* declared that her well-attended recitals 'would do more for musical taste than any recitals previously given in Chicago'.[1]

When her American tours ended, Hopekirk wished to study piano again under a master teacher. Her first choice, Franz Liszt, died before she could join his class in Bayreuth, but her second, Theodor Leschetizky, became the single most important influence on her playing and teaching. Working with Leschetizky in Vienna during various periods from the mid- to late 1880s, she acquired the dexterity and expanded tonal variety that were hallmarks of his approach, integrating finger-technique with use of the wrist, arm and shoulder.

Hopekirk's second American tour (1891–92) comprised solo recitals as well as appearances with orchestras under some of the foremost conductors of the period, among them Walter Damrosch, Arthur Nikisch and Theodore Thomas. Returning to Europe, she reduced her performing activities to allow more time for composition. But when her husband suffered severe injury in a London traffic accident in January 1897, Hopekirk realised that she would have to procure a more dependable source of income. Accepting an invitation from her former Leipzig classmate George Chadwick to head the piano department at the New England Conservatory, she moved to Boston with her husband in the autumn of 1897. She remained at the Conservatory for four years, thereafter teaching privately in her home in Brookline, Massachusetts, and performing in major venues throughout New England. After 1900, Hopekirk's programming interests increasingly turned toward the works of late-Romantic and Impressionist French composers. She gave the American premieres of d'Indy's Piano Quartet and Fauré's Piano Quintet with members of the Kneisel Quartet in 1902 and 1907, respectively, and her performances of solo works by Debussy were among the first heard by Boston audiences. Her last extended stay in Scotland came in 1919–20, when she presented her own Piano Concerto in D major with the Scottish Orchestra under Landon Ronald.

[1] 'The Hopekirk Recitals and Their Influence Upon Music Taste', *The Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1886, p. 17.

The list of her concerts in the United States and Canada grew to include, in addition to nearly 200 solo recitals, twelve appearances as soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (twice in her own compositions) and multiple collaborations with New England-based chamber groups and soloists. Her last public performance, at age 82, was a Boston recital devoted entirely to her own compositions. She died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 19 November 1945.

Although better known as a pianist during her lifetime, Hopekirk maintained a strong interest in composition throughout her career. As a student at the Leipzig Conservatorium, she wrote short piano pieces and vocal selections that combined aspects of art- and parlour song. Following additional study with Karel Navrátil (1867–1936) in Vienna in the late 1880s and with Richard Mandl (1859–1918) in Paris in the early 1890s, she initiated a pattern in which winters were devoted to teaching and limited performing, and summers were spent solely on composition. Over the last decade of the nineteenth century, Hopekirk added a number of large-scale works to her *œuvre* of piano pieces and art-songs, including two sonatas for violin and piano, a *Concertstück* in D minor and the Concerto in D major (now lost) for piano and orchestra, six short works for orchestra and an unfinished piano trio. When she and William Wilson relocated to Boston in 1897, Hopekirk became the only foreign-born member of the famous circle of composers there that included Amy Beach, George Chadwick, Mabel Daniels and Arthur Foote.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, Hopekirk's repertoire interests as a recitalist stimulated her own composing style, which then reflected a mix of Baroque and contemporary French influences. But the most distinctive elements of her music after 1900 came from her Scottish heritage. Between 1901 and 1907, she investigated the music of the Highland and Island Scots during summer trips to Iona and Oban. This personal research, combined with close readings of prose and poetry by Fiona Macleod, inspired a spate of folk-inspired character pieces for piano in the last 25 years of her career.

As well as these character pieces, published either in collections or as stand-alone works, Hopekirk's solo piano works include transcriptions of Scottish folksongs and

Neo-Baroque dance-movements, likewise issued either as independent compositions or assembled into suites. This album includes examples from each of these genres, ranging chronologically from the parlour-style *Romance* (1885) 5, written shortly after she left the Leipzig Conservatorium, to *Two Tone-Pictures* (1930) 18 19, produced in the waning years of her performing career and blending elements of Celtic folk-music and French Impressionism.

Iona Memories takes its title from a richly historic island, barely three miles square, off the western coast of the Isle of Mull among the Inner Hebrides. There, in 563AD, the Irish monk St Columba established a Celtic church and monastic community, from which he spread the Christian faith across pagan areas of Scotland and northern England. For centuries Iona served as a destination of pilgrimage and, by the late Victorian era, as a tourist attraction valued for its scenic beach and ancient ruins.

Composed mainly in Boston, the four movements of *Iona Memories* chronicle Hopekirk's musings on the island during the summers of 1901–3 and 1907. During that last visit, she listened to old Gaelic songs accompanied with a clàrsach (Celtic harp) and 'walked five or six miles uphill & down dale, barefooted' to view the art-work of local brass artisans. 'The island seemed to be under a spell', she later told a piano student, 'it rained hard, & we went through delicious flooded meadows, with the sound of the sea in our ears, & the salt air making us happy.'[2]

In the four years separating 'In the Ruins' (1903) 3 from 'A Twilight Tale' (1907) 4, Hopekirk may have considered several options for the overall structure of *Iona Memories*: a final movement in rondo form and quick tempo, for instance, could have resulted in a satisfying multi-movement sonata of mid-Romantic tradition. But, possibly influenced by her 1907 folklore investigations, she opted to close *Iona Memories* with a poetic movement, thereby eschewing sonata structure in favour of a suite of four character pieces unified by a single extramusical concept. *Iona Memories* was published by G. Schirmer and Boston Music Co. in 1909, and Hopekirk performed the entire work for the first time in Steinert Hall in Boston on 22 February 1910. The next day *The Boston*

[2] Letter to Frances Hall Johnson, dated 23 August 1907, held in the Frances H. Johnson Papers, Box 1, Folder 5, Smith College Archives.

Herald admired the way in which the pieces captured the 'atmosphere reminiscent of the sturdy bleak little island, with its fine historic past and its present of heather, Scotch mist and marvelously tinted sea'. In later years Hopekirk might have suggested prose narratives for three of the four movements of *Iona Memories* to her friend Florence Hutton, who published them in *The Scottish Musical Magazine* in 1922.[3]

'Wandering', the first movement of *Iona Memories* 1, was written in Boston in 1902. Hopekirk initially gave it the Gaelic title *Allaban* (which does indeed mean 'wandering'), and it first appeared on her recital programmes under that name. With well-defined primary and secondary themes that recur after a contrasting middle section, 'Wandering' appears to be the closest Hopekirk ever came to writing a solo-piano movement in conventional sonata-allegro form. The proclamatory introduction and primary theme recall the first movement of Edward MacDowell's Sonata No. 4 in E minor, Op. 59 ('Keltic'), a work Hopekirk often played in recitals. Employing Dorian and Lydian modes and dotted-note punctuation in her melodies, Hopekirk explicitly refers to the ancient Gaelic and later nineteenth-century Scottish tunes she had heard in the Highlands and Hebrides.

According to Florence Hutton, 'Wandering' recounts the heroic exploits of Fingal, the father of legendary bard Ossian, whose poetry was immortalised in English 'translations' by James Macpherson (1736–96) in the mid-eighteenth century. Although Macpherson's Ossianic poems proved to be of his own creation and his manuscript sources virtually non-existent, the ostensible writings of Ossian were of central influence to the early Romantic movement and the Celtic revival of later times:

> Fingal in his cave sleeps, wrapped in the Scottish flag with its one lion [...]. This number tells of one of his awakenings, and opens with a magnificent call to arms [...], followed by a martial strain of remarkable power and vigour [...]. It is broken, at times by a fine, syncopated idea, which [...] suggests the eternal lapping of the waves. Always surging through the quiet passages, which seem of domestic interest and love-making, comes a further development of the martial theme, followed by Fingal's call rising by a tone, then a

[3] Florence Hutton, 'A Review: Iona Memories. By Helen Hopekirk', *The Scottish Musical Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1922), p. 11.

semitone [...]. It finishes with the warriors having answered the call, said farewell to home, wives, sweethearts and bairns [children], marching away with the colours flying bravely.[4]

In 'Cronan: A Hushing Song' (1902) 2, Hopekirk infuses her lullaby melodies with a Scots snap at the end of each section and complements the tunes with a rocking *ostinato* similar to that found in the accompaniment of Chopin's *Berceuse*, Op. 57. Hutton applauds Hopekirk's use of $\frac{4}{4}$ metre: 'The clever syncopation giving the rocking motion in a fresh fashion is a relief from the ordinary $\frac{6}{8}$ of lullabies'.[5] The metre shifts to $\frac{3}{4}$ in the contrasting middle section which suggests the mother's vision of her son's sometimes difficult future. The piece concludes by returning to the idyllic $\frac{4}{4}$ lullaby. Hopekirk orchestrated 'Cronan' for a 1913 performance by the Boston Pops orchestra, which gave it another outing in 1916.

'In the Ruins' 3 evokes the mystical remnants of Iona Abbey by borrowing ethereal textures, modal scale-systems and parallel harmonies from Debussy, whose *Masques*, 'Jardins sous la pluie' (from *Estampes*) and *Deux Arabesques* Hopekirk was preparing to perform in Boston recitals. The Iona Abbey had been reduced to rubble during the Reformation, and 'In the Ruins' reflects Hopekirk's impressions of her visits to its remains while it was undergoing partial restoration. The movement opens with chords drifting in contrary motion, the ascending bass line in Dorian mode juxtaposed against the descending pentatonic line in the treble, creating an effect similar to the opening of Debussy's *prélude* 'La Cathédral engloutie', published seven years later.

Florence Hutton's vivid scenario for 'In the Ruins' emphasises St Columba's potential to deliver divine comfort. In the opening section, the ghosts of Columba and his monks process down the aisles of the Abbey, accompanied periodically by crashing ocean waves. A *tranquillo* melody depicts a wife grieving for her lost husband. A lovely flowing passage follows, in which the wife has a vision of the Blessed Virgin, who assures her that she soon will experience much joy. As the ghosts pass by once more, an exultant *fortissimo* passage foretells her jubilation, and at the point of highest

[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*

ecstasy, Hopekirk adapts the wife's grieving theme into 'a hymn of thanksgiving with a harp accompaniment'.[6] Confirming St Columba's power, the movement ends with a *decrescendo* into a calm stillness.

The only movement of *Iona Memories* composed in Scotland, 'A Twilight Tale' 4 is among the finest examples of Hopekirk's capacity for poignant lyricism and counterpoint. The charming innocence of the opening melody is offset by intense melodic sequencing in the middle section, and the movement concludes with falling E flat minor-seventh chords that come to rest gently on a G flat major triad.

The *Magazine of Music* was a journal popular with the London public as a source of entertainment for the home parlour. For an annual fee of 13/6d (thirteen shillings and six pence), subscribers received twelve monthly issues of the periodical, plus a shiny new 'Viaduct' brand pocket-watch thrown in for commercial enticement. The issue of December 1885 included Hopekirk's first published piano composition, a ***Romance*** in A minor 5, which is notable for its ardent melodies and unceasing 'heartbeat' accompaniment. Hopekirk's sole performance of the work took place in Edinburgh in 1886, shortly after her first tour of the United States.

The ***Serenade*** in F sharp major (1891) 6 is dedicated to Susan Lee Warner (1838–1921), a distinguished pianist and promoter of the arts who arranged private performances for Hopekirk at her home in Hartford, Connecticut. Her husband, Charles Dudley Warner, was editor of *The Hartford Courant* and co-author (with Samuel Clemens) of *The Gilded Age*. Thanks to its bravura style and Lisztian octaves, the *Serenade* was the first of Hopekirk's compositions to receive commendation in the press. She performed the work more than two dozen times in the decade between arrival for her second tour of the United States (1891) and the end of her teaching at the New England Conservatory (1901). In April 1892, a critic from *The Indianapolis Journal* noted that the work 'combined piano and fortissimo effect in an original style', and that Hopekirk's performance drew 'most vociferous applause – a double testimonial, one as composer and the other as *pianiste*'.[7]

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] 'Madame Helen Hopekirk's Piano Recital at the School of Music,' *The Indianapolis Journal,* 14 April 1892, p. 4.

Hopekirk's reverence for Celtic culture extended to a degree of personal identification. As early as 1889, she was much taken with a museum near an early Iron Age settlement in Halstatt, Austria, which featured exhibits of bracelets, brooches and necklaces imprinted with Celtic designs. By the summer of 1901, when she began seeking out folk-tunes in the Hebrides, Celtic ornaments had become a part of her daily attire.

The first of Hopekirk's major compositions to bear the full imprint of her Celtic passion was the volume *Seventy Scottish Songs*, published by the Boston firm Oliver Ditson[8] in 1905. This collection bundled together ancient, unfamiliar Highland songs alongside popular Lowland melodies, with texts attributed to Romantic authors such as Robert Burns and Lady Nairne. Hopekirk set each tune to a sophisticated piano accompaniment which underscored the meanings and gestures of the lyric. Fourteen years after the publication of *Seventy Scottish Songs*, Boston Music Company issued ***Five Scottish Folksongs*** in which Hopekirk arranged five of those songs for solo piano ('Land o' the Leal', 'Turn Ye to Me', 'Gaelic Lullaby and Love Song', 'Aye, Wakin O', and 'Eilidh Bhan'). Three of the five are recorded here, selected for their particularly compelling and pianistic settings.

The first of them is 'Land o' the Leal' (1919) 7, the melody of which is thought to have originated as a battle song ('Hey, tuttie, tatie') sung as early as 1314 at the battle of Bannockburn, where Scots celebrated a victory that brought them independence from English rule. Later the tune served as a drinking song, and it was also the melody to which Burns set the words of 'Scots wha hae' in 1793. Hopekirk's rendition treats a touching lyric applied to the tune by Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne (1766–1845), in which a dying woman claims to her husband that she is 'wearing away' to the 'land o' the leal' (heaven) to join their deceased daughter, and that she looks forward to the day when she will welcome him there as well. A portion of Nairne's lyric reads as follows:

[8] The choice of publisher may not have been accidental: the founder of the firm, Oliver Ditson (1811–88), was himself of Scottish ancestry.

I'm wearin' awa', Jean
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, Jean,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.
There's nae sorrow there, Jean,
There's neither cauld nor care, Jean,
The day's aye fair
I' the land o' the leal.

[…]

Now fare-ye-weel, my ain Jean!
This warld's cares are vain, Jean,
We'll meet and aye be fain,
I' the land o' the leal.

Hopekirk's adaptation asks the pianist to draw subtle contrasts of character among three verses of the song: the first is reflective, marked 'with simplicity and pathos'; the second is expectant and more animated; and the third is unburdened, to be played 'very freely'. Brief passages of sensuous chromaticism introduce and separate the verses.

For 'Turn Ye to Me' 8, Hopekirk selected a text by John Wilson (the pseudonym of Christopher North (1785–1854)) which reverses the speaker and listener of 'Land o' the Leal', depicting instead a deceased husband who beckons the attention of his beloved widow, the 'Dark-haired Mary' ('Mhairi dhu'). With enhanced perception of nature, he analogises the subsistence of a lone seagull to his current isolation:

The waves are dancing merrily, merrily,
Horo [exclamation], Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.
The seabirds are wailing wearily, wearily,
Horo, Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.
Hushed by thy moaning, lone bird of the sea,

Thy home on the rocks is a shelter to thee.
Thy home is the angry wave, mine but the lonely grave,
Horo, Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.

Hopekirk sets the scene with a looping gesture in the left hand that modulates constantly during interludes between the verses.

'Eilidh Bhan', the fifth of Hopekirk's piano transcriptions from *Seventy Scottish Songs* 9, is an exuberant tune featuring the dotted rhythms and pentatonicism characteristic of Highland folksong. With the last line of each verse reading 'Who could help but love her?', the song conveys a lad's joy in beholding the beautiful lassie named Ailie Bain o' the Glen. Hopekirk selected her rendering from *Celtic Lyre*, a famous collection of Gaelic songs assembled by Henry Whyte in 1883. This tiny piece must have been one of the composer's favourites, as it appeared on most of her recitals after 1920 and as the finale of her last public performance in Boston on 10 April 1939.

Composed in Edinburgh in 1905, the beautifully proportioned ***Sundown*** 10 remains Hopekirk's most often performed piece for solo piano. The score is dedicated to fellow pianist Florence Raeburn, one of Hopekirk's Leipzig classmates, and prefaced with six lines from *In Memoriam: Margaritae Sorori*, a poem written in 1888 by William Ernest Henley (1849–1903) in memory of his sister-in-law:

And from the West,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, gray city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.

Hopekirk may have intended her piano piece as a musical expression of the simple contentment conveyed in these lines, but the triumphant *fortissimo* climax and abrupt denouement on the last page of her work can be heard in the context of later verses from Henley's poem:

The sun, closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night –
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.
So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

Hopekirk arranged *Sundown* both for piano trio and for full orchestra, which last version was played many times by the Boston Pops, the Cleveland Orchestra and the Burlington Symphony in Vermont.

As a young woman, Hopekirk expressed admiration for the works of J. S. Bach, and markings in her copies of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* pointed to her serious investigations into counterpoint and polyphonic structure. Like most pianists of her era, she rarely performed Baroque keyboard compositions in public, but in 1904 she deviated from that norm by programming, in several recitals, a composition entitled *Two Dances from XVII Century*, reportedly arranged by her from Scottish manuscripts that had come to her notice during a summer visit to Scotland in 1903. Five years later, she and her husband befriended Arnold Dolmetsch, the leading performer of early keyboard music and builder of clavichords and harpsichords for the Chickering Piano Company in Boston. Hopekirk purchased one of Dolmetsch's instruments for her home and thoroughly digested his landmark book *Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*.[9] These experiences inspired her to create a new edition of ten pieces by François Couperin (1916) and to compose two original Neo-Baroque

[9] Novello, London, 1915.

dance-collections: a ***Suite for Piano*** (1917), dedicated to the pianist Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler, and a ***Serenata Suite*** (1918), inscribed to her fellow Bostonian composer Arthur Foote. Modelling her suites after other Neo-Baroque creations – among them Grieg's *From Holberg's Time*, Op. 40 (1884), Debussy's *Pour le piano* (1894–1901) and Ravel's *Le Tombeau du Couperin* (1914–17) – Hopekirk populated her collections with standard dance-movements of the French Baroque, with the *Suite for Piano* comprising a sarabande, minuet, air, gavotte and rigaudon; and the *Serenata Suite* featuring a prelude, minuet, sarabande, arioso and rigaudon. No purist, she merged facets of these early eighteenth-century forms with the harmonies, dynamics, articulation and pedalling typical of modern keyboard literature to take advantage of, in her words, 'the richness and variety of tone' that 'the modern piano has to offer'.[10]

In 1917, a reviewer for *Musical America* preferred Hopekirk's *Suite for Piano* to Grieg's *From Holberg's Time*:

> To say that Mrs. Hopekirk's suite compares favorably with Grieg's is but to utter the truth. She has handled the form finely and her thematic materials are noteworthy [...]. The *Air in B Major* is a conception of rare beauty.[11]

But Hopekirk seldom played her complete suites in her recitals, preferring instead to mix and match movements in varying combinations – an example I have followed here by pairing the introductory movement of the *Serenata Suite* (*Maestoso*) with the first three dance-movements from the *Suite for Piano* ('Sarabande', 'Minuet' and 'Air'). In accordance with Baroque practice, the three dance-pieces are ternary in structure.

Often performed by Hopekirk as an encore, perhaps because it epitomised the bravura aspects of her playing, the *Maestoso* 11 employs full chords to support the principal melody and features toccata-like interludes of repeated semiquavers (sixteenth-notes). All the sections are bathed in thick pedal, resulting in a grand, lustrous tone-quality. The 'Sarabande' 12 emulates the slower type of dance preferred

[10] Helen Hopekirk, 'Introduction', *Album of Ten Piano Pieces by François Couperin*, Boston Music Co., Boston, 1916.
[11] 'New Music Vocal and Instrumental', *Musical America*, 26 May 1917, p. 36.

in seventeenth-century France and England, rather than the more vibrant version developed in Italy. As such, the movement proceeds ceremonially in triple metre with gentle emphases on the second beats of most bars. Hopekirk opts for a simple melody ranging over a single octave and ornamented with only an occasional mordent or slide. As in all her Neo-Baroque movements, she eschews the dry clarity of harpsichord sound by indicating near-constant use of the damper pedal. She imbues the crotchet (quarter-note) rhythm of the opening and closing sections of her 'Minuet' 13 with an elegant cast, but her central section morphs into a waltz featuring gracious counterpoint among the inner voices. In the 1920s, Hopekirk's student Persis Cox recorded this movement for release on a reproducing piano roll by the American Piano Company (better known as Ampico). The 'Air' 14 opens with an elongated melody spun over gently undulating chords in the left hand. Chromatic harmonisation and disquieting activity in the accompaniment darken the contrasting middle section.

Hopekirk wrote her unpublished **Waltz in F sharp major** 15 for her friend and colleague, the Polish pianist Antoinette Szumowska-Adamowska (1868–1938) around 1915–20. After piano studies at the Warsaw Conservatoire and private lessons from Ignace Jan Paderewski in Paris, Szumowska settled in Boston and married Joseph Adamowski, a cellist in the Boston Symphony Orchestra. With Joseph's brother, the violinist and conductor Timotheus Adamowski, the couple performed widely as the Adamowski Trio. As a soloist, Szumowska was admired for her refined interpretations of works by her compatriot Fryderyk Chopin. Although little correspondence between Hopekirk and Szumowska survives, the two musicians did occasionally cross paths, sometimes appearing in the same Boston concert venue only days apart. Szumowska joined the faculty of the New England Conservatory in 1902, the year after Hopekirk's departure from the institution, and continued to work there until 1907, when she took a thirteen-year hiatus from teaching in order to tour as a performer. Adamowska used her concert appearances during World War I to solicit donations for Polish citizens caught up among the fighting powers of the German Empire, Russian Empire and Austria-Hungary. For her fund-raising efforts, Adamowska rose to the position of Vice-President

of the National American Committee of the Polish Victims' Relief Fund centred in New York and Boston. The *Waltz* may have been written in tribute to Szumowska's war efforts: it is unique among Hopekirk's works in its simulation of Chopin's compositional style. Following an ingratiating introduction, the principal section of the piece abruptly modulates to the darker key of F sharp minor and takes on the rhythmic energy of the mazurka, in which the second (or sometimes third) beat is accented or elongated. A waltz-like central section recalls the opening melody of the introduction, elaborated with long, chromatically inflected runs of improvisational quality. The piece concludes with a brief return to the mazurka melody, now transposed to a bright F sharp major and played rather coyly over languorous broken chords. Incorporating both a waltz and a mazurka into her gift for Szumowska, Hopekirk invokes the spirit of Chopin's substantial outputs in both genres.

'Shadows' (1924) 16 illustrates Hopekirk's compositional shift in the 1920s, away from late-Romantic and Neo-Baroque styles and toward French Impressionist textures and chordal formations. Dedicated to Edith Thompson (1876–1925), Hopekirk's most prominent piano student, the piece was published by the Boston Music Co. in 1924 as the first of ***Two Compositions for Piano***. The opening hypnotic stream of parallel-seventh chords, reminiscent of passages from Impressionist works such as Selim Palmgren's famous 'May Night' (1907), No. 4 of his *7 Klavierstücke*, Op. 27, is indicated to be performed 'delicately and dreamily'. Melodic lines played in the tenor range by the left hand imply the warm timbre of a cello. (Hopekirk's unfinished adaptation of the work for strings and woodwinds does, in fact, assign these melodies to the cello.) The middle section introduces a touching interplay between the top notes of the right-hand chords and the continuing tenor/cello line of the left hand.

Fairies, good and evil, have been a constant in human story-telling since time immemorial and, naturally, in music as well, with abduction by spirits a theme often addressed by composers. Schubert's *Erl-König* (1815) is probably the best-known example; two others from nearer Hopekirk's time are Pfitzner's *Herr Oluf* (1891) and Sibelius' *Skogsrået* ('The Wood-Nymph'; 1894–95). In medieval English folklore, Robin Good-Fellow was a malicious fairy who lured travellers into dangerous situations

through his ability to take on animal forms. Better known as 'Puck' in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he was deemed more mischievous than evil, pulling pranks to frustrate housewives in their daily chores and causing general annoyance by shape-shifting into a three-legged stool, only to disappear so that the unsuspecting person would land on the ground. Journalists and writers of children's literature kept fairies alive in the popular imagination well into the twentieth century. In *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906), Rudyard Kipling identified two types of fairy: the valorous People of the Hills, gifted with magical powers and desirous of daring exploits; and the more commonly imagined 'buzzflies with butterfly wings and gauze petticoats, and shiny stars in their hair, and a wand like a schoolteacher's cane for punishing bad boys and rewarding good ones'.[12]

In writing ***Robin Good-Fellow*** (1922), Hopekirk may have wished to complement the reading interests of young piano students, but its asymmetry and awkward gestures make it better suited for the concert stage than the teaching studio. The work has elements of both the benevolent and sinister sides of fairies, as indicated by Florence Hutton's programme note in the score: 'Who doesn't believe in fairies? Believe, and they may invite you to join their revels, but if you do, you will never come back to ordinary mortal life. Just thank them kindly, and they will dance on in friendly fashion'. Extravagant introductory passages devolve into erratic gestures in Hopekirk's little character portrait. She dedicated the piece to Heinrich Gebhard (1878–1963), a fellow Leschetizky student though 22 years her junior, whose talent and quirky nature may have offered her additional inspiration.

In ***Two Tone-Pictures***, her last published work for solo piano, Hopekirk drew on folksong and -dance material collected by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser on the Outer Hebrides over a twenty-year period from 1905 onwards. Concerned that the future of Gaelic folksong was endangered by declining populations on the islands, Kennedy-Fraser recorded tunes on a wax-cylinder phonograph and later transcribed them for voice and simple piano accompaniment. Her transcriptions appeared in three volumes

[12] Rudyard Kipling, *Puck of Pook's Hill*, Macmillan, London/Doubleday, Page & Company, New York, 1906, p. 14.

as *Songs of the Hebrides* between 1909 and 1921, and in a fourth volume entitled *From the Hebrides: Further Gleanings of Tale and Song* in 1925, coupled with translations of the Gaelic lyrics and/or original texts by the Rev. Kenneth Macleod. Both of Hopekirk's pieces are settings of *port-a-beul* ('mouth music'), a type of vocal performance heard either on its own or as accompaniment to Highland dance, in which the lyrics comprise mostly meaningless syllables. Writing as Fiona Macleod in 1900, William Sharp describes at length a *port-a-beul* performance by Mary Macrae, a resident of the Isle of Harris, who is exalted as a 'half forlorn and weird, half wildly gay' representative of 'her ancient, disappearing race':

> [Mary] stands for her people, who, poor and ignored remnant as they are, [...] go their own way, singing their songs and ballads, intoning hymns or incantations, chanting their own wild, sea-smitten music, and dancing to their own shadow, to the shadow of their ancestral thought and dream, whether in blithe waywardness or in an unforgetting sorrow.[13]

The solo–piano settings of 'Dance to Your Shadow' 18 and 'The Seal-woman's Sea-joy' 19 were published by the Boston Music Co. in 1930 with dedications to Evelyn Benedict (1867–1967). As a young woman, Benedict had studied voice; in later years she became a valued contributor to Hopekirk's circle of musicians and music-critics.

'Dance to Your Shadow' ('Bandò Ribinnean') appeared in the third volume of *Songs of the Hebrides* as an example of *port-a-beul* danced and sung on the Isle of Eigg by local resident Marion Macleod. Hopekirk's exuberant incantation of the Kennedy-Fraser transcription consists of two eight-bar tunes, the first entirely pentatonic and the second marked by swift repeated notes. Kenneth Macleod attached to the first tune these meaningless vocables sung by Marion Macleod:

> Ho ro haradal, 'Hind ye' haradal,
> Ho ro haradal, 'Hind ye' hand an.

[13] Fiona Macleod (William Sharp), 'The Gael and his Heritage', *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 48 (November 1900), p. 841.

and to the second tune, he wrote the following original text in Gaelic and English:

> Bandò ribinnean a shioda's de ribinnean,
> Dance to your shadow when it's good to be Living, lad,
> Bandò ribinnean a ruidealadh mu'd cheannsa.
> Dance to your shadow when there's Nothing better near you.

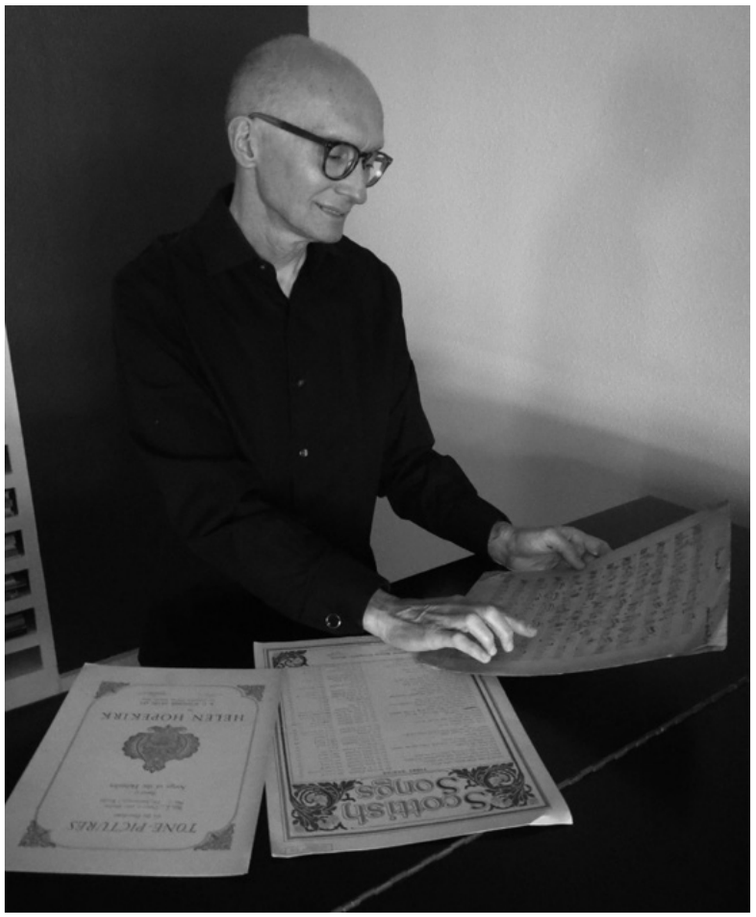
Hopekirk gave the first performance of 'Dance to Your Shadow' in a recital at Wellesley College on 27 April 1930.

'The Seal-woman's Sea-joy' is based on a tune of the same title collected by Kennedy-Fraser from the singing of Catriona Campbell in South Uist and published in 1913. As with the lyrics of the first tune in 'Dance to Your Shadow', the words of 'The Seal-woman's Sea-joy', according to a note in the score, are said to 'have no meaning save their musical emotional effect':

> Ionn da, Ionn do, Ionn da, odar da
> Hio dan dae, Hio dan dao,
> Hio dan da, odar da.

An unattributed quotation printed under the title ('She sang this Sea-joy all night long, In the cool calm joy of the cool sea waves') points to the Gaelic tale of the selchie, or seal-people. The story begins when a fisherman traps a seal woman, hides her sealskin and forces her to be his human wife. The woman bears and raises his children and brings good fortune to the family, but when she unexpectedly locates her hidden sealskin, she is transformed back into a seal and returns to the ocean. The selchie avoids seeing her human husband again but sometimes plays with her children in the waves.

Hopekirk borrows an evocative four-note motive from the accompaniment to Kennedy-Fraser's transcription for the introduction and coda. She conjures up the physical setting of the story by emphasising the pentatonic nature of the original folk-tune and exploiting broken chords and generous pedalling to convey a mystical selchie riding the waves.



Gary Steigerwalt is writing a biography of Helen Hopekirk, a project inspired by the doctoral dissertation completed by his wife, the pianist **Dana Muller**, in 1995. He recently retired as a professor on the music faculty of Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where he taught for 35 years. The couple frequently performs four-hand and two-piano recitals and has recorded four discs of works by Franz Schubert and a number of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century composers. Their interest in the life and music of Helen Hopekirk began in 1986, when Dana discovered some of Hopekirk's published compositions at a local Massachusetts library while researching an unrelated topic. Dana's doctoral dissertation on Hopekirk comprised a detailed account of her life, a catalogue of her compositions for solo piano and a performance edition of her *Concertstück for Piano and Orchestra* from sources preserved at the Library of Congress in Washington DC. The couple continues to research Hopekirk's career and to present her music in public venues, including a 2006 lecture-recital with the Scottish musicologist John Purser to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Hopekirk's birth in Portobello, east of Edinburgh, and the first performance in over a century of her *Concertstück* with the Mount Holyoke College Symphony Orchestra under Ng Tian Hui in 2015.

Earlier in his solo career Gary took Second Prize and an award for the best performance of a work by Béla Bartók at the Liszt-Bartók International Piano Competition in Budapest in 1976. He subsequently gave the New York premieres of Iain Hamilton's Sonata No. 3 in B and John McCabe's *Fantasy on a Theme of Liszt* and the world premiere of the Concerto in E flat major by the novelist Anthony Burgess with the Pioneer Valley Symphony (Massachusetts) under the Burgess authority Paul Phillips. He also performed as soloist in Aaron Copland's Piano Concerto with the National Symphony (Washington DC) under the direction of the composer.

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