

Beach: Complete Works for Piano Duo

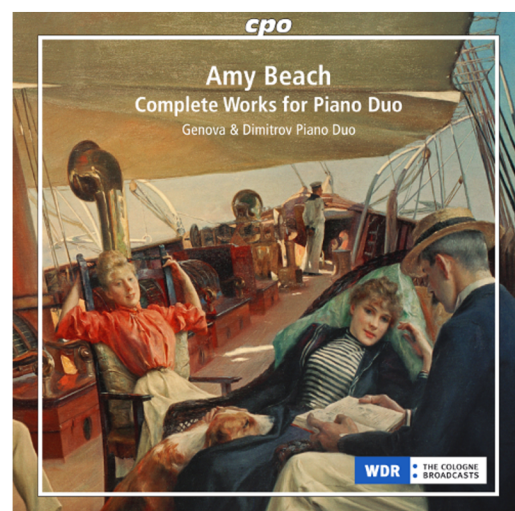
Genova & Dimitrov Piano Duo (CPO)

Our rating

★★★★☆ 4.0

By **Michael Beek**

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Beach

Variations on Balkan Themes; Three Pieces (for piano four-hands); Suite Founded upon Old Irish Melodies; Summer Dreams

Genova & Dimitrov Piano Duo

CPO 555 453-2 63:51 mins

Playing from newly published editions, Aglika Genova and Liuben Dimitrov have done both Amy Beach and the piano duo repertoire an excellent service here. From the splendidly Brahmsy *Variations on Balkan Themes* to the audibly 20th-century tapestries in the *Suite Founded Upon Old Irish Melodies*, these are works that should be welcomed with open arms by duo-pianists and audiences alike.

A pianist and composer from childhood, who won through without formal conservatoire training, Beach (born Amy Cheney) was one of the most important American composers of her day and enormously respected in her lifetime. Her first works for piano duo, the *Three Pieces*, simple but atmospheric and deftly written, were written when she was just 16. *Summer Dreams* (1901) is a series of short tone-poems, each bearing a line or several of poetry by way of inspiration from Shakespeare, Whitman and more. Folksong was a preoccupation for Beach as for many of her peers in early 20th-century music, and poetry by way of inspiration from Shakespeare, Whitman and more. Folksong was a preoccupation for Beach as for many of her peers in early 20th-century music, and Bulgarian folk music, which a missionary friend who had worked there played to her, inspired the substantial *Variations* Op. 60. Finally the *Suite* Op. 104, was written before World War I, but published in 1924 and enjoyed notable public success thereafter.

Genova and Dimitrov, who have devoted themselves to their duo since their student days, perform this technically demanding and richly imagined music with enormous affection and flair, conjuring its atmospheres and textures seamlessly, as if with one mind. A must-hear album for all who want to explore Beach's highly rewarding output.

Jessica Duchen



Michael Beek

Reviews Editor, BBC Music Magazine

Michael is the Reviews Editor of BBC Music Magazine. He was previously a freelance film music journalist and spent 15 years at St George's Bristol. Michael specialises in film and television music and was the Editor of MusicfromtheMovies.com. He has written for the BBC Proms, BBC Concert Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Albert Hall, Hollywood in Vienna and Silva Screen Records.