

# WOMEN IN THE ARTS



Robert and Clara Schumann

## 5. DOMESTIC? WHY?

October 21, 2024

# DOMESTIC? WHY?

ONLY SEVEN ARTISTS THIS WEEK: two composers, two painters, three poets; two Europeans in the first hour, five Americans in the second. Much of the *oeuvre* of each is small in scale and intimate in subject—qualities that are often called “feminine.” But is this necessarily so and, where it is, does it result from choice or circumstance? I think we shall find that each of these artists transcended the stereotype in many ways, though not perhaps to the extent that would have been possible for their male colleagues. *rb.*

## A. A LITTLE BEACH

Two short pieces by **Amy Beach**, and the questions they raise about genre and scale in the work of female artists.

- ♪ **Beach:** *Sliding on the Ice* (Jeanine Barrett)
- ♪ **Beach:** *Four Songs, Op.14: “The Summer Wind”*

## B. THE ARTIST’S IDENTITY

The life and work of the Swiss-born artist **Angelica Kauffmann**, whose early success in Rome led to doors being opened for her in England, making her one of only two female foundation members of the Royal Academy. Unusually, she preferred the higher-ranked genre of history painting to the portraiture that was her bread and butter.

- Kauffmann:** *Self-Portrait* (1770/75, London NPG)
- Kauffmann:** *Self-Portrait Aged 13* (1753, Innsbruck)
- Kauffmann:** *Self-Portrait Between Painting and Music* (1794)
- Vincent:** *Zeuxis Selecting Models for Helen of Troy* (1791, Stanford)
- Kauffmann:** *Zeuxis Selecting Models* (1778, Brown)
- Zoffany:** *Academicians of the Royal Academy* (1772, Royal Coll.)
- Kauffmann:** *The Elements of Painting* (Royal Academy ceiling, 1778)
- Kauffmann:** *The Spencer Children* (c. 1766)
- Kauffmann:** *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi* (1770s, Richmond VA)

## C. THE POWER OF PERFORMANCE

The child prodigy **Clara Wieck** started performing at age 9, and soon became one of the great pianists of her time. Her marriage to the slightly older Robert Schumann was distinguished by lasting love on both sides, though it curtailed her parallel career as a composer.

- ♪ **Film clip:** *Song of Love* (1947)
- ♪ **Clara Wieck:** *Piano Concerto* (1835), first movement exc.
- ♪ **Clara Schumann:** *Romanze #1* (1853), first movement
- ♪ **Clara Schumann:** *Lorelei* (1843)
- ♪ **Clara Schumann:** *Piano Trio* (1846), slow movement

## D. MOTHERHOOD BY PROXY

The American painter **Mary Cassatt**, who worked in Paris alongside the Impressionists, became famous for her paintings of mothers and young children. Yet she herself was unmarried and childless. We examine this paradox, especially in the light of Cassatt's role as a suffragist.

- ♪ **Cassatt:** montage of child paintings
- Cassatt:** *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair* (1878, Washington NGA)
- ♪ **Film clip:** *Mary Cassatt: American Impressionist*
- Cassatt:** *Modern Woman* (Chicago World's Fair, 1893, destroyed)
- Cassatt:** *Young Woman in a Green Bonnet* (c.1890, Princeton)
- Cassatt:** *The Boating Party* (1893, Washington NGA)

## E. THREE AMERICAN POETS

Our three poets—the settler **Anne Bradstreet** in the 17th century, the African slave **Phillis Wheatley** in the 18th, and social activist **Julia Ward Howe** in the 19th—would define the word “domestic” in quite different ways, yet in each case their work transcends the limitation.

- ♪ **Video:** Cory MacLaughlin on Anne Bradstreet
- Bradstreet:** *On the Burning of our House, 1666*
- Bradstreet,** from *Contemplations*
- ♪ **Bradstreet:** *To my dear and loving husband* (Helen Mirren)

- ♪ **Video** on Phillis Wheatley
- Wheatley:** *On being brought from Africa to America*
- ♪ **Film clip:** *Phillis Wheatley*
- ♪ **Howe:** *Battle Hymn of the Republic*
- Howe:** "Coquette et froide"
- Howe:** "Outside the Party"

## F. SOME BIGGER BEACH

Finally we return to **Amy Beach**, with two of her works conceived on a larger scale: her *Piano Quintet* of 1907 and her *Gaelic Symphony* from 1896, the first symphony ever published by an American woman.

- ♪ **Beach:** *Piano Quintet*, opening (American Virtuosi)
- ♪ **Beach:** *Gaelic Symphony*, ending (Seattle Symphony)

Amy **Beach** (1867–1944, *American composer*), Anne **Bradstreet** (1612–72, *American poet*), Johannes **Brahms** (1833–97, *French composer*), Mary **Cassatt** (1844–1926, *American painter*), Julia Ward **Howe** (1919–1910, *American poet*), Angelica **Kauffmann** (1741–1807, *Swiss painter*), Mariana **Martines** (1744–1812, *Spanish Austrian composer*), Clara Wieck **Schumann** (1819–96, *German composer*), Robert **Schumann** (1810–56, *German composer*), François-André **Vincent** (1746–1816, *French painter*), Phillis **Wheatley** (1753–84, *African American poet*), Johann **Zoffany** (1733–1810, *German English painter*)

The course website is [www.brunyate.com/MusicStage](http://www.brunyate.com/MusicStage)  
I will always respond to mail at [rogerbrunyate@gmail.com](mailto:rogerbrunyate@gmail.com)