

# MARION BAUER

Prelude and Fugue for  
Flute and Piano, Op. 43

Six Preludes, Op. 15

Fantasia Quasi Una Sonata for  
Violin and Piano, Op. 18

Aquarelle, Op. 39, No. 1

A Fancy, Op. 21, No. 1

Dance Sonata for Solo Piano, Op. 24

VIRGINIA ESKIN, piano  
DEBORAH BOLDIN, flute  
IRINA MURESANU, violin



*I am living a full rich life and am so deeply grateful for the opportunity for having this study and life to myself. Of course, the days are not long enough to do all I want to do.*

—Marion Bauer (Paris, 1923)

The fascinating career of composer, author, critic, and music professor Marion Eugenie Bauer (1882-1955) developed from her initiative and steadfast determination to forge a professional life in music. Born in Walla Walla, Washington, the youngest of seven children of Jacques Bauer, a shopkeeper, and Julie Bauer, a teacher of modern languages, Marion Bauer was not content to remain in the Pacific Northwest. After Jacques Bauer died in 1890, the family moved to Portland, Oregon, where, according to Bauer, her oldest sister, Emilie Frances Bauer, "became literally the father of the family, working with my mother to give the younger brothers and sisters an education and every opportunity for cultural development. To her I owe the fact that I went into the serious study of music." A music critic for the *Portland Oregonian* as well as a composer and teacher, Emilie Bauer was able to build a career as a critic, first in Boston and then in New

York City. After graduating from St. Helen's Hall in Portland, Marion Bauer moved in 1898 to join her sister Emilie in New York, where she continued to study piano with her sister, and piano and harmony with Henry Holden Huss. In 1906, she sailed for Paris, where she studied piano with Raoul Pugno and harmony with Nadia Boulanger.

Bauer's birthdate has been reported as August 15, 1887 in a number of books from the 1940s through the 1990s. Susan Pickett and Christine Ammer have recently uncovered evidence in the public records of Walla Walla and Portland that Bauer misrepresented her birthyear so she would seem to be five years younger than she actually was. Perhaps Bauer wanted to appear to be the same age as her teacher Boulanger (born on September 16, 1887) and consequently recast her birthyear as 1887 rather than 1882.

Upon returning to New York in 1907, Bauer studied with Eugene Heffley and Walter Henry Rothwell, both of whom advised her to concentrate on composition. In 1910, she returned to Europe in order to study counterpoint and form with Paul Ertel for a year in Berlin. She established a reputation as a composer by 1912, the year that she signed a seven-year contract with

wide scale of modification. And sounds which were painful, when once accepted and organized by the brain may become pleasurable. We are children of an age of great complexities not the least of which is modern harmony, but the public soon accustoms itself, unless it is enslaved by prejudices, to new combinations of tone." Bauer also served the cause of modern music as a board member of the American Composers Alliance, the League of Composers, and the Society for the Publication of American Music, all of which promoted twentieth-century music.

Bauer's own music is more influenced by French impressionism than by German serialism, and is more conservative than the music she advocated of the Second Viennese School. It is plausible that her publisher's preference for a more conservative style and her experience of having her *Violin Sonata* marked down from first to second place in the Society for the Publication of American Music's 1928 competition, expressly for its "modern tendencies," may have led her to favor a pitch-centered style over "ultra-modern" composition. The *Violin Sonata* was published under the title "Fantasia Quasi Una Sonata."

In her writings, Bauer advocated music by women including Ruth Crawford, Louise Talma, Miriam Gideon, Vivian Fine, Germaine Tailleferre, Mabel Daniels, Ulric Cole, Ethel Glenn Hier, among many others. She also recognized the necessity of organizing the Society of American Women Composers, which she co-founded with Amy Beach and eighteen other composers. As for her own views on being a "woman composer," she declared: "My early aspiration was not to listen to the sly remarks of intolerant men regarding women composers...if given a reasonable chance for development, an individual talent, regardless of sex, can progress and grow."

With pianist Harrison Potter, who taught at Mount Holyoke College from 1946 to 1957 and at Miss Porter's School from 1947 to 1950, Bauer gave a series of lecture-recitals on twentieth-century music at the Chautauqua Summer Music Institute in Chautauqua, New York from the 1920s to the 1950s. During Bauer's lifetime, Potter performed her piano music at concerts organized by the League of Composers, the WPA Federal Music Project, the MacDowell Club, and Phi Beta National Fraternity of Music and Speech. Bauer died in South Hadley, Massachusetts, in August, 1955.

language in the *Fantasia* suggests Bauer's years of study in France—particularly in her lilting writing for violin and use of quartal harmonies—and is reminiscent of the style and aesthetic of Lili Boulanger's *Deux Morceaux* for violin and piano (1914).

True to its title, *Aquarelle*, op. 39, no. 1 (1944) presents a delicate wash of pastels whose shadings subtly darken and shift during its brief duration. *A Fancy* (1927), composed nearly twenty years before *Aquarelle*, provides an even more fleeting glimpse of the composer's hand at muted harmonic colors.

Some of Bauer's finest writing is for piano, as Eskin brilliantly demonstrates in the *Dance Sonata*, op. 24 (1932). Performed at several concerts during the course of Bauer's lifetime, including a WPA Federal Music Project concert in 1936 in New York and a program devoted to her music held at New York's Town Hall in 1951, this three-movement work is Bauer at her best. The first movement, *Allegro appassionata*, develops its striking opening theme through a lushly impassioned harmonic landscape; the more restrained second movement, *Sarabande and Variations*, projects a quiet dignity and overarching sense of precise compositional control;

and the evocative third movement, *Scherzo—Allegretto giocoso*, is alternately humorous and poignant, propelled by Bauer's vivid rhythmic imagination.

—Ellie M. Hisama,

author of *Gendering Musical Modernism: The Music of Ruth Crawford, Marion Bauer, and Miriam Gideon*

and Director, Institute for Studies in American Music at Brooklyn College

### Virginia Eskin

Virginia Eskin is known for her wide-ranging and unusual repertoire. She has performed as a soloist throughout the United States, Europe and Israel, including concerto appearances with the Annapolis, Buffalo, Louisville, New Hampshire, Rochester, San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Utah Symphony Orchestras; the Boston Classical, the Israel Sinfonietta, and the Boston Pops. She has also performed as a soloist with the New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center, with the New England Ragtime Ensemble under Gunther Schuller, and at the Sedalia, Missouri Ragtime Festival.

Ms. Eskin has nearly 20 recordings to her credit on the Channel Classics, Koch, Arabesque



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Deborah Boldin



Irina Muresanu

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