

Amy Beach  
*CABILDO*

An Opera  
Premiere  
and Six  
Short Pieces



*Amy M. Beach*

DE 3170



The professional premiere  
of AMY BEACH's *CABILDO* was presented  
by "Great Performers at Lincoln Center" on May 13, 1995.  
This recording features the original cast, conducted by Ransom Wilson



DE 3170

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# CABILDO — AN OPERA PREMIERE AND SIX SHORT PIECES BY AMY M. BEACH

## **Cabildo**, Op. 149 (46:02)

- 1 Introduction
- 2 "Ladies and Gentlemen...
- 3 "One night as they danced...
- 4 "Ladies and Gentlemen, we will now...
- 5 Largo espressivo
- 6 "Dominique!...
- 7 "Dominique, what news?...
- 8 "When she danced...
- 9 "She was like a flower...
- 10 Largo con dolora
- 11 "Thy boat Pierre...
- 12 "Ah Love, is a jasmine vine...
- 13 Tempo di Duetto

## 14 **A Hermit Thrush at Eve** Op. 92, No. 1 (1921) (5:14)

Christopher O'Riley, *piano*

## 15 **Give Me Not Love**, Op. 61 (1905) (5:13)

Lauren Flanigan, *soprano*, Paul Groves, *tenor*, Christopher O'Riley, *piano*

## 16 **In the Twilight**, Op. 85 (1922) (3:27)

Charlotte Hellekant, *mezzo-soprano*, Christopher O'Riley, *piano*

## 17 **O Mistress Mine**, Op. 37, No. 1 (1897) (2:43)

Paul Groves, *tenor*, Christopher O'Riley, *piano*

## 18 **Dark is the Night**, Op. 11, No. 1 (1890) (1:31)

Lauren Flanigan, *soprano*, Christopher O'Riley, *piano*

## 19 **Jeune fille et jeune fleur**, Op. 1, No. 3 (1884) (4:20)

Thomas Paul, *bass*, Christopher O'Riley, *piano*

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 68:30



## *CABILDO*

Chamber Opera in One Act  
Libretto by Nan Bagby Stephens  
Music by Amy M. Beach

Conducted by Ransom Wilson  
Directed by Hans Nieuwenhuis  
Chorus preparation by Judith Clurman  
Knighen Smit, Assistant Director  
Giovanni Reggioli, Rehearsal Pianist

The professional premiere of this opera was presented by  
"Great Performers at Lincoln Center" on May 13, 1995.  
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### *Cast in order of appearance*

Barker	Stephen Mo Hanan (spoken role)
Tom	Anthony Dean Griffey, <i>tenor</i>
Mary	Charlotte Hellekant, <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Pierre Lafitte	Eugene Perry, <i>baritone</i>
Dominique You	Paul Groves, <i>tenor</i>
Gaoler	Thomas Paul, <i>bass</i>
The Lady Valerie	Lauren Flanigan, <i>soprano</i>
Chorus of tourists and prisoners	The New York Concert Singers

Mark Peskanov, *violin*  
Carter Brey, *cello*  
Christopher O'Riley, *piano*

The action takes place in the Cabildo, the Governor's palace and prison in New Orleans.  
The Prologue and Epilogue take place in the present, the Dream scene in 1814,  
toward the end of the War of 1812.

## AMY M. BEACH (1867-1944)

Amy Beach was a major American composer, the most gifted member of the Boston School of composers and the pioneer among American women in the creation of large scale art music. She was not the only woman writing art music in the Boston of her early years, but she was the most prolific, and by far the best known. In her later years she earned the unofficial honorary title of "Dean of American Women Composers," both by her record as a composer and concert pianist, and by her generous support of other women musicians.

Born Amy Marcy Cheney in West Henniker, New Hampshire, on 5 September 1867, she was first known to Boston's musical community as an eight-year-old piano prodigy. She received all her musical training in Boston; her parents could not afford to send her to Europe for study. Her public piano debut at age 16 was in 1883, when she played Moscheles's G-minor Piano Concerto with orchestra. Critics decided hers was an important talent — "plainly a pianist to the manor born and bred" — and that she was an artist with a great future. She declared, "Life is beginning!"

Although her career as a concert pianist was brilliantly begun, two years later she gave up regular performing when she married Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach. She was eighteen, he forty-three. Not only did

she change her professional name to Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, but also, and at her husband's request, she limited her playing to a yearly recital, occasional solo performances with the Boston Symphony and other orchestras, and the presentation of her own works in concert. Her major time and efforts from then on were devoted to composition.

Amy Cheney had begun composition when she was still a toddler, improvising tunes to nursery rhymes and singing altos to her mother's soprano. Her first piece to survive in written form, "Mamma's Waltz," was composed at age four, while her first published song, "The Rainy Day," was written at age thirteen, after a visit to Longfellow, the poem's author. In contrast to the fine training she had as a pianist, Beach had but one year of formal lessons in theory and harmony. Thereafter, on advice from the conductor of the Boston Symphony, she taught herself orchestration by translating the famous texts by Berlioz and Gevaert, and composition by studying the masterworks, especially those of Beethoven, Liszt, Brahms, and Wagner.

Beginning in 1885, almost everything she wrote was published and had public performances, often many times and by leading artists and orchestras. With the premiere in 1892 of her first large-scale work, the *Grand Mass*, Op. 5, given by the Boston Handel and Haydn Society chorus assisted by members of the Boston Symphony, she became established as a composer of art music and

received her first commissions. Following the introduction in 1896 of her *Symphony in E Minor "Gaelic,"* Op. 32, by the Boston Symphony, she was celebrated as one of America's leading composers. She shared with most contemporary composers the major influences of Brahms and Wagner, yet her compositions have an individual stamp. Her intensity, indeed passion, and her ambition to conquer the world with her compositions transcended the late 19th century Victorian model, especially for women, who were expected to be both passionless and passive.

Her husband died in 1910, ending twenty-five years of marriage. In 1911 she left for three years in Europe, where she resumed her concert career and had her major works performed. While in Europe she changed her professional name to Amy Beach; on her return, however, she reverted to using "Mrs. H. H. A. Beach," deciding that it was too late to rename herself. Thereafter she led a peripatetic existence, composing in the summer and between concert tours. From 1921 to 1941 she wrote most of her works at the MacDowell Colony, a retreat for creative artists in Peterborough, New Hampshire. By the time of her death in 1944 she had composed over 300 works. In her will she established the Amy Beach Fund for the MacDowell Colony, which since her death on 27 December 1944 has received the substantial royalties from her compositions.

The music by which Beach is best known dates from her Boston years, most notably two songs, "The Year's at the Spring," and "Ah, Love, But a Day," Op. 44, Nos. 1 and 2, and her Gaelic Symphony. These works share late Romantic style with Mahler and the young Richard Strauss. But her style changed in the second half of her long and productive career. Her works became more chromatic, and more dissonant, some even probing the limits of tonality, while retaining her intense lyricism. This recording offers both early and late works, several of them rarely heard.

#### **CABILDO:** SYNOPSIS

**Prologue.** A group of tourists, including the newlyweds Mary and Tom, follow the Barker or tour guide to the cell where the notorious pirate, Pierre Lafitte, was imprisoned during the War of 1812. The Barker tells the story of Pierre and his beloved Lady Valerie, then leads the group to another part of the Cabildo. Tom and Mary, however, linger in the cell to sing of their happiness. Tom rejoins the tour group while Mary remains, pondering the means of Pierre's escape. She falls asleep and dreams the answer.

**The Dream.** The British hold New Orleans under siege. The pirate Pierre Lafitte awaits execution in his cell. He is wrongly accused of having ordered the destruction of his own ship, the Falcon, and of the death of the Lady Valerie, a passenger and the

woman he loves, in order to cover his supposed theft of her bracelet. Alone in his cell, he vows to find Valerie before facing the firing squad. The drunken Gaoler brings the Lafittes' lieutenant, Dominique You, into the cell and leaves with a warning against trying to escape.

Dominique tells Pierre that General (later President) Andrew Jackson has come to an agreement with Pierre's brother Jean Lafitte. Pierre will find the cell door open for his escape, in return for the pirates' full participation in breaking the British siege and defending New Orleans. Pierre, however, is more concerned about the fate of Valerie. Dominique reluctantly tells him that the Falcon is lost, and urges him to tell the truth about the bracelet, which Valerie gave him as a token of their love. Pierre refuses, then sings of his love for Valerie. Dominique gives Pierre the bracelet which, minutes earlier, he had surreptitiously removed from the Governor's desk. He leaves as Pierre invokes Valerie's name.

The ghost of Valerie appears and tells of the destruction of the Falcon by one of Lafitte's own men, and her drowning. Pierre now wishes only to join her in death. But Valerie insists that he pay his debt to New Orleans and the United States by joining General Jackson and thus clearing his name. They recall the evening when she gave Pierre the bracelet, and then sing of their love in a climactic duet. As she leaves, Valerie tells

Pierre she has unlocked the cell door, making way for his escape.

**Epilogue.** Tom returns to the cell to find Mary awakening from her dream. She insists that her dream was real, and that "it was not the General who made a hero of Lafitte. It was the Lady Valerie and love."

#### FACT AND FANCY IN *CABILDO*

Much of Nan Bagby Stephens's libretto is based on historical fact. Pierre and Jean Lafitte were pirates, and Pierre was framed by the Governor and imprisoned in the Cabildo under a death sentence. General Jackson did make a secret deal with the pirates to fight with the Army to lift the siege of New Orleans. He rewarded them beforehand by freeing Pierre, and later by gifts of land. It is possible that without the help of the Lafittes and their pirate fleet, the war might not have been won.

Pierre and Jean Lafitte were "gentlemen" pirates, sending their crews out to maraud, or to transport Africans to New Orleans to be sold as slaves, while they remained at their base on the island of Grand Terre, some one hundred miles east of New Orleans.

Although their money was an important, if illicit, element in New Orleans's economy, the two Lafittes were shunned by its social elite.

The fictional elements concern the love between Pierre and Lady Valerie. Pierre—called in the opera "a prince of a pirate"—would never have been welcomed at a

Governor's Ball. Lady Valerie is an invented character whose cross-class relationship with Pierre would have been strictly taboo.

#### NOTES ON *CABILDO*

The composer, who long wished to write an opera on an American subject, had delayed for lack of a suitable libretto. Adept at incorporating folk melodies into her symphonic, solo, and chamber music, Beach sought a libretto that would be enhanced by the use of indigenous music. She found the perfect subject in a play by her friend, Nan Bagby Stephens, an author, playwright, folklorist, and musician from Atlanta, who specialized in southern subjects. Both her novel and play on the pirate Pierre Lafitte, also entitled *Cabildo*, were set in New Orleans, a city with a rich musical heritage not only in jazz but also in Creole songs and opera. Stephens presented Beach with the libretto in April 1932, and later sent a group of Creole tunes with texts that matched characters and events in *Cabildo*.

In *Cabildo*, Beach uses the folk songs in a variety of ways. The overture is in the style of Creole folk music, with at least two actual quotations from the songs. In the Prologue, fragments of songs become motives for development as well as leitmotifs, while longer quotations color the accompaniments to recitations in *parlando* style and to the spoken voice. For example, a Creole dance song accompanies the Barker's story of Pierre

and Valerie at the ball.

In the Dream scene, when Beach quotes folk songs *in extenso*, she transforms them in various ways, skillfully weaving them into the texture of the scene. For example, in the choral number about "The good ship Falcon," which is based on a folk song about a woman who falls in love with a man below her station, the meter is changed from duple time to 5/8. The only exception is the *arioso* for the Gaoler, who sings a Creole song—virtually unchanged—about a man who cadges snuff and "cognac sweet."

The love duet that is the climax of both the dream scene and the opera is based on Beach's art song, *When Soul is Joined to Soul*, Op. 62, published twenty-seven years earlier. Beach recomposed the full-blown late Romantic song into a soaring duet between Pierre and the Lady Valerie that begins with the words, "Ah, love is a jasmine vine."

The contrast between this duet in art song style and the folk-like original love duets for Tom and Mary is also a contrast of character. Music for less sophisticated or lower class characters is in folk style; so is music for Pierre the pirate. But music for the Lady Valerie and for Pierre ennobled by his love, is in high art style. Beach also chooses her keys to match the class of the characters. In the prologue, the unsophisticated tourists sing in G major, and subsequent solos and choruses are in near-related keys. In contrast, the dream sequence is in flat keys, finally reach-

ing its darkest strain in the G-flat major of the love-duet—a tonality at the opposite end of the spectrum from the bright G major of both the Prologue and Epilogue. Thus Beach delineates character through musical style and key, portraying the tourists Tom and Mary as young and naive, the Governor as a pompous bureaucrat, the Gaoler as drunken, corrupt, and menacing, Valerie as complex, tragic and noble, and Pierre as both pirate and prince.

Beach began work on the opera on 1 June 1932, the day after she arrived at the MacDowell Colony for a month's work. The sketch was completed on the 18th, and the final copy in August. She played the opera for friends and colleagues that summer and fall of 1932, generating considerable excitement, but had to wait through years of depression and war for a public performance. Hugh Hodgson, who headed the Opera Workshop at the University of Georgia in Athens, began planning a performance in 1940, delayed because of the war, and finally presented the opera 27 February 1945, two months after Beach's death. It is one of a handful of Beach's works that remain unpublished and in manuscript.

The seven works on this disc were presented at a concert in the series, "Great Performers at Lincoln Center," at Alice Tully Hall on 13 May 1995. The same artists recorded the music two days after the performance. The disc makes available the first

recordings of the opera *Cabildo* and of the songs, *Jeune fille et jeune fleur*, *Give Me Not Love*, and *In the Twilight*.

#### NOTES ON THE SIX SHORT PIECES

Amy Beach was a passionate lover of nature. For her, no beautifully appointed studio could match the woods as a place to compose. Indeed, she reported that being close to nature put her in touch with the infinite. During her first residency at the MacDowell Colony, from July to early August of 1921, she worked on the studio's porch or out under the trees, with the surrounding woods her only prospect, revelling in the Colony's gift to creative artists, "solitude in silence." The compositions that confirm the influence of nature on her musical creativity include those based on bird songs, which she began collecting at age ten. Outstanding were the two she composed that summer in the Peterborough woods, **The Hermit Thrush at Eve**, and *The Hermit Thrush at Morn*, Op. 92, Nos. 1 and 2.

Beach was working one morning when her concentration on the piece in progress was continually broken by the song of "a most voluble thrush." After trying in vain to ignore his cascading song, she gave up, deciding to record his "lonely but appealing" music. Bird and composer had an extended conversation:

"I took the songs down at the bird's dictation, and oh, how hard I worked! Even the most expert stenographer would have had difficulty keeping up with him! I took them



exactly, even as to key (except for a few intervals too small to be transcribed) and rewrote and corrected as he sang them over and over. Then I played them back to him and he would answer."

Out of his songs Beach then fashioned her two hermit thrush pieces, among her most original and successful piano compositions. They also mark the beginning of her late style.

*A Hermit Thrush at Eve* is in ternary (or ABA) form with a coda. The opening and closing sections are securely anchored in the dark key of E-flat minor. But in the middle section, Beach's extensive quotations from the thrush's song lead her into remote tonal bypaths. There also are patches of tonal ambiguity: hints of keys flash by, only to be cancelled out by further abrupt modulations. These together with dissonant clashes are all connected by the logic of voice leading. The Coda recalls the song of the thrush.

Beach's songs are at the core of her creative impulse. She began by memorizing the poem, saying it over and over until the words all but dictated the setting. This was however not a mechanical art. The songs, which exhibit a wide range of lyric invention, are full of surprising twists and unexpected phrase extensions. The accompaniments are pianistic with figurations that express the dominant idea of the poem, a defining feature of art songs. Finally, her harmonic language is rich and expressive, underscoring the meaning of words and ideas. These quali-

ties made them the favorites of great singers from Adelina Patti to Arleen Auger.

*Give Me Not Love*, Op. 61 (1905), a duet to words by Florence Earle Coates, offered Beach opportunities for tone-painting that she cannily exploited. The poet asks for a love that frees rather than confines, and the music depicts both states. For example, at the end of the first quatrain, on the word "soar" the tenor reaches the high A-flat and gently floats down an octave to end the phrase. In contrast, "The bird that close to the earth doth cling" is sung to a stepwise melody that circles around one note. We have returned to Beach's earlier lyrical style in this song that amply fulfills her direction, "con molto espressione."

*In the Twilight*, Op. 85 (1922), is a setting of Longfellow's narrative poem about a fisherman's wife and son watching a storm at sea from inside their cottage and waiting fearfully for their loved one's return. While the sea in this song, as depicted by the piano accompaniment, is as turbulent as it was in "Dark is the Night," both the poem and the musical means are different. Here the sea is central actor. The music, which owes much to French Impressionist style, is dissonant, chromatic, and restlessly modulating as it depicts the distant roar, the flash of whitecaps, the uneasy quiet in the fisherman's cottage, and the piping of a child's voice. The total cessation of motion at the end recalls Schubert's

"Erlkönig," as the narrator describes the wife's fears in the unaccompanied and unresolved final phrase.

**O Mistress Mine**, Op. 37 No. 1 (1897), has a lyric from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (II.iii). Beach gives it a light and lilting setting that suggests the Elizabethan madrigal without imitating sixteenth-century style. The music is singularly free of chromatic inflections, keeping its bright quality almost all the way through. But on the line that ends the third tercet, "What's to come is still unsure," there is a sudden turn to the dark side as the music briefly modulates from G major to B-flat. But it quickly returns to G major, finishing as lightheartedly as it began.

**Dark is the Night**, Op. 11, No. 1 (1890), is one of a number of songs about the sea, a topic that fired Beach's imagination. The text, by the late nineteenth century English poet William Ernest Henley, uses the typical Romantic device of mirroring in nature the emotional state of the subject. Here the turbulent sea, depicted in the piano's chromatic vibrations, reflects the speaker's "restless thoughts." The song opens "Allegro con fuoco," but subsides into a calmer passage as the speaker recalls happier times. Then the sea's low roar abruptly changes to wild crashing for an even more turbulent ending. Beach also recomposed this song to create a large-scale work: it provided material for the first and fourth movements of her "Gaelic" Symphony.

**Jeune fille et jeune fleur**, Op. 1, No. 3 (1884) is a setting of a melodramatic poem by the early Romantic poet Chateaubriand. It is not hard to imagine the impact on the seventeen-year-old composer of this poem in which a father buries his daughter as he grieves over her foreshortened life. Beach's setting intensifies the idea of each quatrain: the heavy chords as the coffin is lowered, the piano tremolos when the father imagines the buffeting life would have offered her, the gentle grief of the lyrical third verse, the outburst of the fourth, and resignation of the quiet close. More than a decade later, Beach drew on this and two other early songs for themes in her Piano Concerto, Op. 45 (1900).

*Adrienne Fried Block* © 1995

## **CABILDO** — *Libretto*

### **PROLOGUE**

#### **Barker**

Ladies and Gentlemen! This way, This way —

#### **Chorus**

This way, this way, over here

#### **Barker**

Right-o!

Ladies and Gentlemen: Now you are standing in the Courtyard of the Cabildo —

#### **Chorus**

Cabildo, Cabildo, What does it mean?

— Cabildo —

**Barker**

The Spanish Governor's Palace —  
Later the famous prison —  
Hence the name, Cabildo.

**Chorus**

All around are cells —  
This is the Spanish Governor's Palace, —  
The famous prison-palace, —  
The Cabildo.  
Look at that wall!  
Look at the bullet-holes!  
Ev'rywhere are bullet-holes!

**Barker**

Genuine – identical bullet-holes!  
Those were the days!  
More'n a hundred years ago  
Before Prohibition,  
Before Chicago was thought of —  
When New York was a village  
New Orleans had her bullet-holes!

**Chorus**

Those were the days!

**Barker**

Ladies and Gentlemen!  
In this cell was imprisoned  
The notorious pirate Pierre Lafitte —  
Yes sirree!  
Read your guidebooks.

**Chorus**

The two notorious awful Pirates  
Jean and Pierre Lafitte

**Barker**

Right O!  
Pierre was the older brother,

the Governor seized him and threw him in this cell.

**Chorus**

See his handcuffs! On the wall!  
See his bed!  
Pierre Lafitte was a Pirate!  
He sunk ships and he killed people!

**Barker**

That's what the Governor said.  
But he was a politician.  
What can a politician say about a Pirate?

**Chorus**

The Lafittes sold slaves —  
Sold their slaves like cattle in the city.

**Barker**

Right-O!  
In this cell where you're now standing —  
This verree cell — sentenced to be shot  
Lived the handsome Pirate, Pierre Lafitte —

**Chorus**

The handsome, dare-devil Pirate, Pierre Lafitte.

**Mary**

Show us the bullet hole  
that killed Pierre Lafitte!

**Barker**

Laydee, if I could show you *that* bullet hole  
There would have been no New Orleans!  
There would have been no United States!

**Chorus**

No New Orleans! No United States!  
The two Lafittes fought with General Jackson,  
Fought with all their men in the hour of peril  
to save their country!  
To their timely aid

This country owes the victory for freedom!

**Barker**

No, Ma'am!

They never did shoot Pierre Lafitte!

**Tom**

He escaped?

**Barker**

No – the door was opened. Yes-sirree!

He walked out bold as brass!

Some says, it was his brother —

Some says the legislature —

*Some* says it was a Laydee!

**Chorus**

Oh! —

**Barker**

Laydees was very sentimental in *those* days.

**Mary**

No right-minded woman

would allow a Pirate to escape!

**Barker**

Pardon, Ma'am!

I said, Laydees was very gentle

and sentimental in those days!

**Chorus**

Oh —

**Barker**

Well y'all have it your way —

I'd as soon The General did it —

Andy Jackson, he needed Pierre Lafitte to help

him defend New Orleans! The war of 1812.

**Mary**

You mentioned a Lady

who might have assisted Lafitte to escape?

**Barker**

Yes, Ma'am.

An old legend tells that Pierre Lafitte

fell in love right here in New Orleans, with a beautiful lady, a mysterious lady, a lady from France.

**Chorus**

France?!

**Barker**

One night, as they joined in the dance,

at a ball, a costume ball, in this same Cabildo,

As a token of love and remembrance

The mysterious laydee gave the handsome pirate  
a bracelet.

**Mary**

Ah, — A token of love to a Pirate!

**Barker**

But this was no ordinary pirate,

this was a notable Pirate

A gentleman Pirate

A very Prince of Pirates

No wonder the Lady Valerie

loved Lafitte the Pirate,

Read your Guide-books!

**Chorus**

The good ship Falcon sailed the sea,

Bearing the Lady Valerie,

Never made port —

It was said that she was sunk by pirates.

Oh my! Oh me!

The poor fair Lady Valerie!

The bracelet was found with Pierre Lafitte!

Would he admit how he came by the token?

Oh no, not he!

So the Governor issued his decree,  
Charging Lafitte with Piracy  
And the murder of Lady Valerie.

**Barker**

Under sentence of death was he  
When he was thrown in this cell, you see.

**Chorus**

Oh, my! Oh me!

**Mary**

Dearest —

**Tom**

Darling!

**Mary**

It must have been the Lady  
who helped Lafitte to escape.  
The lovely Lady Valerie!

**Tom**

Would you like it to be the Lady Valerie?  
Then of course it was the Lady Valerie!

**Barker**

Laydees and gentlemen!  
We will now proceed to the grand staircase  
to view the treasures — the boat models —

**Mary**

Could we just stay here?

**Tom**

I'd like to see the rest —  
The boat models — jolly little schooners and brigs!  
Mary, we're married! It's wonderful!

**Mary**

Yes! I shall never feel that ours  
is an ordinary marriage!

**Tom**

The most marvelous thing  
that ever happened.

**Mary and Tom**

Together, Together, whatever the weather,  
No matter how stormy, how stormy the sky —  
We'll trust to each other,  
Nor seek any further  
to question our fate — you and I.  
In joy and in sorrow,  
Today and tomorrow  
Together we'll weather, we'll weather the sea  
And when we come home  
we'll come home together —  
Whatever the journey,  
the journey may be!

**Mary**

Oh! It's queer, so strange in here!  
Dearest! All this has happened before!

**Tom**

Of course, Darling —  
Since Adam and Eve!

**Mary**

I mean Romance has lived in this cell!

**Tom**

Now you're remembering the story of the bracelet!  
Come along, darling! Let's go and find the boats.

**Mary**

I'll rest and wait for you here —

**Tom**

Sure you don't mind my going?

**Mary**

— Provided —

**Tom**

I'll be back directly!

**Mary** (touching shackles on wall)

O you wicked, cruel —

You once held Pierre Lafitte!

Pierre Lafitte! Pierre Lafitte!

Pierre Lafitte! Come back,

come back and tell me about the Lady Valerie!

Ah! .....

(gradually falls asleep)

**THE DREAM**

**Prisoners**

Ah!... Ah!...

**Pierre**

I will be free, I must be free!

I cannot die before the firing squad —

Till I have found her!

I must be free!

Dominique!

**Gaoler**

Dominique You!

No pranks from you pirates!

There's a regiment of soldiers nearby.

**Dominique**

No pranks! Master gaoler!

Important business brings me!

**Gaoler**

Important business?

O-ho! for a man condemned to die!

Important business for the great Pierre Lafitte!

O-ho! he'd best forget his business!

He'd best make peace with his soul!

Well, half an hour.

When I was on the highroad

A grand sight I did see.

I asked him what the time was,

He told me, "half past three."

I asked of him a pinch of snuff

He gave me a bandanna!

Cognac sweet, cognac sweet

Pinch of snuff and a bandanna.

Cognac sweet – cognac sweet

Better than money!

Half an hour — no longer!

But mind ye Dominique,

No pranks!

**Dominique**

No pranks! I promise you!

Master! Master Pierre!

**Pierre**

Dominique! What news?

**Dominique**

A message from your brother Jean!

He bids you keep your courage!

He works day and night to free you!

**Pierre**

What news? Dominique?

What news —

**Dominique**

Master, General Jackson!

The General himself

Has talked with Master Jean!

We must not let it be known!

It might arouse our enemies!

But we fight! Think, Master!

We shall defend New Orleans!

We the Pirates!

We shall be honored soldiers  
We shall fight for Louisiana,  
For America!

**Pierre**

Ah! We shall fight!  
We shall fight! We shall fight!

**Dominique**

So you must take courage!  
The General needs you,  
Soon the order will come  
The door will be left unlocked —  
you will walk out free!

**Pierre**

Free! Dominique!  
Tell me the news I wait for —  
Hast thou heard aught of the *Falcon*?  
(Dominique shakes his head)  
Ah! has she made port?  
No official statement?  
Speak! Dominique!

**Dominique**

The *Falcon* is believed to be lost!

**Pierre**

No one saved?  
No word of her crew? and passengers?

**Dominique**

Master, don't despair  
She may yet — with the August storms —  
The *Falcon* may be driven off of her course!  
She may yet limp into port!

**Pierre**

I, Pierre Lafitte! am accused of piracy!  
I am said to have sunk the *Falcon*.

**Dominique**

Master!

**Pierre**

Destroying her for whom I would gladly die!  
Dominique! Go! Beg my brother —

**Dominique**

— Master! —

**Pierre**

— To send his swiftest ship  
in search of the *Falcon*!  
My Lady, even now —

**Dominique**

— Master! —

**Pierre**

My Lady may be drifting —  
Tied to some bit of wreckage!  
Go! Go, Dominique, go quickly!  
beg my brother —

**Dominique**

Master, it is useless.  
France has sent ships,  
There is no sign of the *Falcon*!  
Master! Save yourself!  
Tell the truth about the bracelet!

**Pierre**

No! that is sacred —  
It was a keepsake, a token —

**Dominique**

But, all New Orleans had seen it  
On my Lady's arm!  
When she danced with the Governor,  
When the city crowned her queen of Beauty!  
Master! Master! My Lady danced with you —

She gave you her bracelet!  
It belongs to thee! Tell the truth!

**Pierre**

Who would believe me?  
My Lady sails on the *Falcon*,  
She fails to make port!  
Rumors of pirates sinking her —  
My Lady's bracelet is found in my keeping.  
Plain enough — I am accused,  
When I would give my soul to save her!

**Dominique**

But you have not left New Orleans since she sailed!

**Pierre**

I am responsible for my men!  
*The Black Petrel* was in the Gulf  
when the *Falcon* sailed.  
Grambio is a traitor!  
He hates me and my brother —  
This may be his villainy —  
I cannot bear to think of it!

**Dominique**

You will soon be free!  
Master! Watch the door!

**Pierre**

I am in torment!  
If Grambio has sunk the *Falcon*! —

**Dominique**

— Master! —

**Pierre**

Dominique!  
Say there is hope!  
If I dared hope! —

**Dominique**

— Master! —

**Pierre**

She is too lovely to die!

**Dominique**

— Master! —

**Pierre**

She must not die!

**Dominique**

Master!  
Master! Watch the door!

**Pierre**

She was like a flower —  
So like a flower —  
So gentle! So fair!  
When I held her in my arms  
I could but wonder  
If she were of this earth!

**Dominique**

Here is the bracelet, Master!  
It was on the Governor's desk.

**Pierre**

How didst thou come by it?

**Dominique**

I dawdled along with the sentry  
until he turned his back.  
Voila! It was mine!

(gaoler is heard returning)

**Pierre**

Oh, Dominique!  
Bring me news of the *Falcon*!  
Search the proclamations in the square!

**Dominique**

Ay, Master! Watch the door!



**Gaoler**

Get ye gone! Ye piratical rogue!

Get ye gone!

Show your face again, I'll lock ye up!

**Dominique**

Au revoir Master!

**Pierre**

Send me news of the *Falcon*!

Lovely Lady Valerie,

Lovely Lady Valerie,

Lovely Lady, O Valerie, Valerie!

**Valerie**

Pierre! Pierre!

**Pierre**

Valerie! Is it really thou?

**Valerie**

I have come to thee!

**Pierre**

But thou art so pale!

Thy clothes are dripping!

Thou art chilled!

**Valerie**

I am warm again, now that I see thee!

**Pierre**

Thou art come from the sea!

The *Falcon* went down? Thou!

**Valerie**

That is over!

I am here with thee!

**Pierre**

The name of the boat that sunk the *Falcon* —

I must know!

**Valerie**

Thy boat Pierre — *The Black Petrel*!

**Pierre**

Grambio! Grambio shall pay!

**Valerie**

At first it was fearful! I was afraid!

Then in a moment all was over!

The green water received me tenderly!

I thought of thee —

**Pierre**

— Valerie! —

**Valerie**

— and was content.

**Pierre**

Content! O my dear love!

**Valerie**

Remember!

Had I returned to France,

My father had chosen a husband for me

I could never, I could never have seen thee again!

Now I may come when thou hast need of me!

**Pierre**

I will follow thee!

**Valerie**

No, Pierre!

New Orleans, New Orleans needs thee!

There is work for thee here!

Thou must pay — pay thy debt

To Louisiana!

Thy debt is not to vengeance!

How could I know that thy men

sought revenge?  
Pay thy debt to America!  
To Louisiana!  
They saved me from a bitter fate!  
I thank them truly!  
Fight for Louisiana!  
Clear thy name!

**Pierre**  
No! My men killed thee!  
I am responsible for my men!  
I shall pay! I shall pay for this!  
Will not all debt be cancelled  
before the firing squad?

**Valerie**  
— Fight! —

**Pierre**  
— My debt to thee! —

**Valerie**  
— Clear thy name!

**Pierre**  
Ah! —

**Valerie**  
That is thy debt to me.

**Pierre**  
The Governor fixed thy death  
upon me because of thy bracelet —

**Valerie**  
I know — I saw them take it from thee —  
Saw thy fierce protest that they should touch  
the token of our love!  
It made thee seem the more guilty!

**Pierre**  
Dost thou remember?

**Valerie**  
The terrace in the moonlight —  
The scent of the jasmine —  
Thine arms about me!  
Ah yes! I remember!

**Pierre**  
Thy song still haunts me!

**Valerie**  
Ah, Love is a jasmine vine  
With tendrils delicate and strong.  
Caressing arms that long  
To twine, to twine and wreath  
themselves around you.  
My dear, my dearest one, ah,  
my dear, my dearest one,  
my dear, my dearest one!

**Pierre**  
Ah love is a fragrance rare —

**Valerie**  
A murmur borne on summer wind.

**Pierre**  
Entreating, unresigned to bear  
a tear to shine upon you!

**Valerie**  
My dear, my dearest!  
My dear, my dearest one!

**Pierre**  
— Ah! —

**Valerie**  
My dear, my dearest one!

**Pierre**  
My dear —

**Valerie and Pierre**

My dearest one! My dearest one!  
Oh Love is a tender voice —  
with song so penetrating sweet —  
It wings to meet, and to rejoice,  
rejoice and breathe its blessing to you,  
My dear, my dearest one!

**Valerie**

— Ah! —

**Valerie and Pierre**

My dearest, dearest one!  
My dearest one! rejoice  
my dear, my dearest one,  
my dearest one! —

**Valerie**

— Ah! —

**Pierre**

My Love let me come to thee! —

**Valerie**

— Ah —

**Pierre**

Let me come!

**Valerie**

I've come to open the door for thee  
The guard is even now  
gone from the courtyard.  
Open the door Pierre Lafitte!

**EPILOGUE**

**Tom**

Mary! Come along, Darling!  
Why you've been asleep in this musty old cell!

**Mary**

Oh Tom!  
It's marvellous!

**Tom**

You've been dreaming!

**Mary**

— Tom! —

**Tom**

See, dear, these rusty old manacles  
fell from the wall!

**Mary**

— Oh Tom! —

**Tom**

I heard them clanging from the second floor!

**Mary**

— Tom! —

**Tom**

There, my darling! —

**Mary**

— I was not dreaming! It was real!

**Tom**

Darling!

**Mary**

Tom!  
All this has happened before!

**Tom**

Come here —

**Mary**

— Here in this cell. —

**Tom**

— darling! We must leave!

**Mary**

Oh Tom!

It was not the General that made a Hero of Lafitte!

**Tom**

Mary!

**Mary**

It was the Lady,  
Lady Valerie —

**Tom and Mary**

And Love!

## FIVE SONGS

### **Give Me Not Love, Op. 61**

*Text: Florence Earle Coates*

Give me not love which would inthrall  
A spirit panting to be free;  
But give me love which more than all  
Would find it sweet to soar with me!

The bird that close to earth doth cling,  
May, darkling, be content to sing,  
But full the sunlight shines afar  
And there be heights where eagles are.

Give me not love which hour by hour,  
Like to the rose, doth pale its hue;  
But love still constant as the flower  
Which opens to each morn anew:  
Not love which, shadowed by the tomb,  
A little space doth languid bloom,

Give me not love which hour by hour  
Like to the rose doth pale its hue;  
But love which draws its deeper breath  
From altitudes that know not death.

Give me love which draws its breath  
From altitudes that know not death.

### **In the Twilight, Op. 85**

*Text: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

The twilight is sad and cloudy,  
The wind blows wild and free,  
And like the wings of seagulls  
Flash the white-caps of the sea.

But in the fisherman's cottage  
There shines a ruddier light,  
And a little face at the window  
Peers out into the night.

Close, close it is pressed to the window,  
As if those childish eyes  
Were looking into the darkness,  
To see some form arise.

And a woman's waving shadow  
Is passing to and fro,  
Now rising to the ceiling,  
Now bowing and bending low.

What tale do the roaring ocean,  
And the night wind bleak and wild,  
As they beat at the crazy casement  
Tell to that little child?

And why do the roaring ocean  
And the night wind wild and bleak  
As they beat at the heart of the mother  
Drive the color from her cheek?

### **O Mistress Mine, Op. 37, No.1**

*Text: William Shakespeare*

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?  
O stay and hear, your true love's coming,

That can sing both high and low.  
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;  
Journeys end in lovers meeting,  
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;  
Present mirth hath present laughter;  
What's to come is still unsure;

In delay there lies no plenty;  
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

**Dark is the Night, Op. 11, No. 1**

*Text: William Ernest Henley*

The sea is full of wand'ring foam,  
The sky of driving cloud;  
My restless thoughts among them roam.  
The night is dark and loud.

Where are the hours that came to me  
So beautiful and bright?  
A wild wind shakes the wilder sea.  
O dark and loud's the night!

**Jeune fille et jeune fleur, Op. 1, No. 3  
(Young Girl and Young Flower)**

*Text: Chateaubriand*

Il descend, le cercueil, et les roses sans tâches,  
Qu'un père y déposa, tribut de sa douleur,  
Terre, tu les portas, et maintenant tu caches  
Jeune fille et jeune fleur.

Ah! ne les rends jamais à ce monde profane  
A ce monde de deuil, d'angoisse et de malheur,  
Le vent brise et flétrit, le soleil brûle et fane  
Jeune fille et jeune fleur.

Tu dors, pauvre Elisa, si légère d'années!  
Tu ne sens plus du jour le poids et la chaleur;  
Vous avez achevé vos fraîches matinées,

Jeune fille et jeune fleur.

Mais ton père, Elisa, sur sa tombe s'incline;  
De ton front jusqu'au sien a monté la paleur;  
Vieux chêne! Le temps a fauché sur ta racine  
Jeune fille et jeune fleur.

*The coffin descends with unblemished roses  
A father placed there, as token of his sorrow.  
Earth, you bore them and now conceal  
Young girl and young flower.*

*Ah! never return them to this profane world,  
To this world of grief, sadness, and despair,  
The wind breaks and withers, the sun  
burns and fades*

*Young girl and young flower.*

*You sleep, poor Elisa, so light in years!  
No longer do you feel the heaviness  
and heat of day;*

*You have reached your last fresh morning,  
Young girl and young flower.*

*But your father, Elisa, stoops over your grave;  
A pallor has risen from your brow to his;  
Aged oak! Time has lopped from your roots  
Young girl and young flower.*

*Ruby M. Beach*

1867 ...

**A Photo Portrait**



age 2



age 4 or 5

**From child  
piano prodigy to  
major American composer**

... 1944



age 10 or 11

age 16



Her intensity, passion and ambition to conquer the world with her compositions transcended the conventions of her era ... by the time of her death, she had composed over 300 works



**AMY BEACH (1867-1944)**  
**AMERICAN COMPOSER**

**A**my Beach was not allowed to touch the piano until she was four years old. Her mother was afraid she would tire of the instrument if she played it too soon. But like any forbidden fruit, it was all the more tempting because she could not have it. When after a couple of years of coaxing and pleading, she finally was allowed, it was as if she had been studying for years: she said she knew how to play instinctively "as a cat knows how to jump."

How was that possible? She was a prodigy, and everything musical was important to her

practically from birth. She had perfect pitch — that is, she could identify any note just by hearing it — and she had an extraordinary memory. What went into her ears—and eyes — stayed in her head. She had been watching her mother play the piano for all those years, and miraculously knew just how to make the piano recreate the music imprinted on her brain. Once seated at the piano she played everything she had ever heard — hymns, Strauss waltzes, music by Chopin and Beethoven. She also proved her mother wrong, because the more she played, the more she wanted to play.

She had a creative gift as well.



She could dream up a piece in her head and hold it there forever. Her mother found that out when Amy, still four years old, came back from a summer on her grandfather's farm in New Hampshire. She told her mother that she had composed "Mamma's Waltz." Her mother couldn't believe it because there was no piano on the farm, but Amy sat down and played the piece. A few years later she wrote it out.

Like most nineteenth-century mothers, Amy's mother didn't believe in careers for women. Amy, however, knew almost from the beginning that music would be her profession. As a result there was disagreement every step of the way. Amy wanted piano lessons right

away, but her mother put her off until she was six. She loved to play for people, and cajoled until her mother let her play a short recital in church. When concert managers in attendance offered to put her on the concert circuit, her mother said "no" to both the concert managers and to any further public performances.

From the age of eight, however, life became more exciting. The family moved to Boston, where Amy was allowed to go to evening concerts. She heard oratorios, symphonies and operas, and recitals by violinists, singers and pianists. She also had progressed so fast that she needed another piano teacher, one who expected her to practice four hours a day. Thus she

began a lifetime of building piano technique and a repertory of pieces that she would always be ready to play. When she was sixteen she made her debut with orchestra, playing solo in a piano concerto. She never had a moment's stage fright. Critics gave her rave reviews and predicted a wonderful career for her. For Amy, "life was beginning!" But her mother still would not let her become a professional pianist. Middle-class girls like Amy had only one future in those days — as wives and mothers.

Meanwhile, Amy had a year's course in music theory and harmony and continued to compose. She wrote her first published piece at age thirteen after a visit to the poet Henry

Wadsworth Longfellow; it was a song on Longfellow's poem, *The Rainy Day*. Encouraged by the success of the publication, she looked around for a composition teacher. Again she ran into a roadblock because of her gender. The most important musician in Boston, the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, advised her to teach herself. That was in 1884, a time when few people believed that women could write important music. Amy knew she could, and began a ten-year course, working all alone, studying every textbook she could find locally, ordering others from Europe, learning to write for orchestra by translating an entire treatise from the French, and memorizing sections of symphonies. It was such

hard work that she said she wouldn't recommend her method to anyone else.

The year 1885 was an important one for Amy. She turned eighteen, played solo for the first time with the Boston Symphony, found a publisher who agreed to issue all her music, and married Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, a society physician and surgeon a few months older than her father. He was old-fashioned, and believed a wife should stay home, not go away on concert tours. She continued to play occasionally in Boston, but only for charity. Her husband decided that her future lay in composition, and so she spent most of her time composing in the music room of their handsome townhouse. He did allow her to col-

lect the royalties on her published music, which soon became substantial.

Hers was a very successful and productive life. In the end she composed over three hundred compositions, including the "Gaelic" Symphony, the opera *Cabildo*, a piano concerto, lots of choral pieces including a *Grand Mass* for chorus, solo singers, organ, and orchestra, much music for solo instruments, and well over a hundred songs. Almost everything she wrote was published and performed; the orchestral works were played by symphony orchestras in Europe and from coast to coast in the United States. Perhaps most important, she was the first American woman to prove that she could

write music of high quality not only for the amateur singer or pianist, but for a large modern symphony orchestra.

Amy Beach composed the music on this disc between 1884 and 1932; that is, between the ages of seventeen and sixty-five. The world changed drastically during those years. Born in 1867 during the Victorian Era (named for Queen Victoria of England) and at a time when kings and queens and emperors still ruled European countries, her life encompassed World War I, revolutions that overthrew the monarchs in Germany and Russia, the “roaring” 1920s, and the Great Depression. She died when she was 77, in 1944 toward the end of World War II.

Music changed as well during

her lifetime, from the late Romantic symphonies of Johannes Brahms and the operas of Richard Wagner, to the modern French works of Claude Debussy and the exciting and disturbingly dissonant works of Igor Stravinsky, Edgard Varèse, and Arnold Schoenberg. Beach’s style also changed over the years, and in three late works, *Cabildo*, *The Hermit Thrush at Eve*, and *In the Twilight*, you can hear some of those changes, especially their clashing sounds and floating effects.

Amy Beach finally found the right subject for an opera in 1932, when she wrote **Cabildo**, which takes place in New Orleans. Its hero is the notorious pirate Pierre Lafitte, the same one who in real life

helped General (later President) Andrew Jackson break the British siege of New Orleans during the War of 1812. The opera begins in the present time with a group of tourists visiting the very prison cell in the Cabildo where Pierre Lafitte almost two hundred years ago had awaited execution. One of the tourists falls asleep in the cell, and dreams of Pierre Lafitte.

The dream scene takes us back to the year 1814. Pierre appears, and tells of his love of the Lady Valerie, a French aristocrat. Her father, who was in France, ordered her to return there to marry a man he had picked out for her. The ship carrying her back to France sank and Pierre was sentenced to death for his

alleged role in the sinking. As Pierre laments her death, he calls out her name, and Valerie returns as a ghost. Out of love, she helps Pierre escape from the Cabildo. He then becomes a hero of American history for joining the fight to save New Orleans. Be sure to read the libretto, which will help you follow the story as you listen to the music.

Composers find ideas for musical compositions in many different places. A bird, one of nature's instinctive singers, gave Amy Beach some of the actual notes for her piano piece, **A Hermit Thrush at Eve**. She was composing another piece in a little house in the woods one morning when a hermit thrush sang such an enchanting song that she dropped the piece she

was composing to write down its notes. The bird sang, and Beach went to the piano and played its song back. In that way, the bird taught the composer how to sing its song. After their conversation ended, Beach wrote this piano piece using the hermit thrush's melodies. In the beginning and end of the piece, the music paints a picture of a quiet evening. In the middle of the composition the cascading song of the hermit thrush sounds out, just as it did that morning when Amy Beach learned to "sing" like a bird. This is one of Beach's most famous piano pieces.

Her songs also were famous and sung by some of the greatest opera singers. Some of them recorded her songs beginning in

1906 when recordings were still very much a novelty.

**Give Me Not Love** is a duet for soprano and tenor in which the singers ask each other for a love that frees them rather than tying them down. Beach's music alternately soars free or clings to earth, illustrating the main ideas of the song.

The sights and sounds of the sea inspired several of her compositions. The words of **In the Twilight**, a poem by Longfellow, tell the story of a sailor's wife and son who wait anxiously for his return while watching a violent storm at sea. In this song the piano accompaniment conveys the sea's destructive power over the sailor who must battle its furies. This is the most modern sounding of the six songs, com-

posed in 1921.

The next song shows that Beach could also write light-hearted and playful music. Her setting of **O Mistress Mine** has words from William Shakespeare's comedy, *Twelfth Night*.

The sea becomes a mirror of the singer's emotions in **Dark is the Night**. The agitated accompaniment portrays a turbulent sea, but calms down briefly in the middle as the singer recalls more peaceful times. At the end,

when "a wild wind shakes the wilder sea," Beach builds a powerful ending.

**Jeune fille et jeune fleur** was written in 1884, making it the earliest of the six. The poem describes a father burying his young daughter. The composer, who wrote the song when she was seventeen, must have been deeply affected by the poem, and found several musical ways to intensify the feelings it expresses.

*Adrienne Fried Block* © 1995

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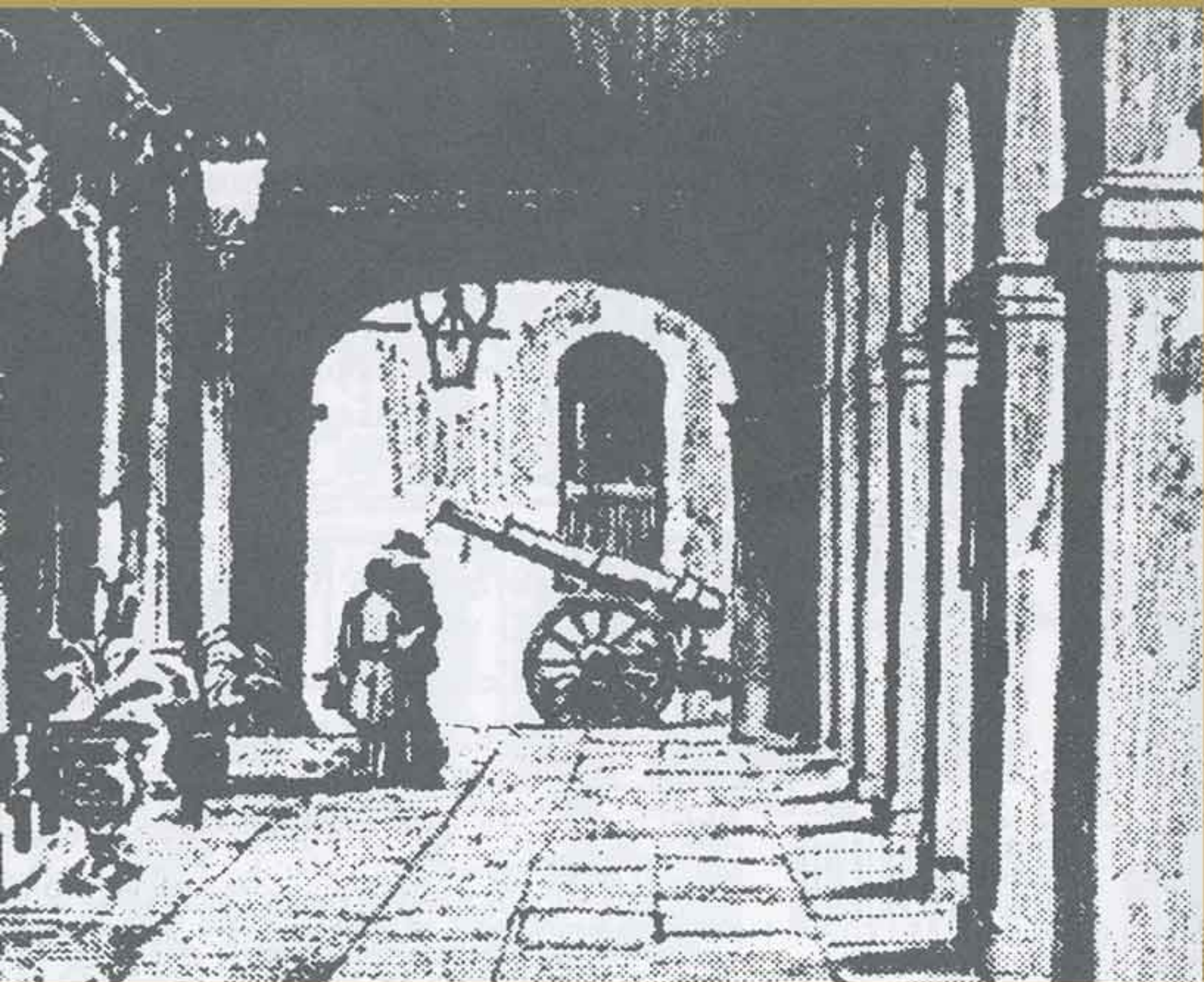
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