

**Women's Involvement in Music History**

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## Introduction

Throughout history, women have made a lasting impact on the progress of music. Women's impact was initially limited because of traditional social norms, lack of extra time, little availability for music education, and need for financial stability. To pursue music, they had to overcome these barriers. The limitations are intertwined and affect one another.

Women were commonly inhibited from getting involved in music because for many centuries it was inappropriate for women to publically perform or to pursue music as a profession; this was especially true for women of the aristocratic and higher classes. It was seen as unseemly for women of high classes to seek a profession or to accept money for labor. Working in public or performing in public was socially and ethically unbecoming of a wealthy woman. Women in lower classes could pursue musically professionally, but they commonly did not have the time or the education to become a composer or performer. Traditional social norms placed women in domestic roles, which forced them into the home, to clean, cook and care for the children, which did not leave much time for musical pursuits.

Finding the time to write music, practice, or perform was difficult for many women during the centuries. Because women were forced into domestic roles, they did not have the time to efficiently practice, hone their technique, or compose. They were forced to focus on the responsibilities of the home, leading many women to lack the leisure time necessary to work on hobbies or passions, such as music. Those who could afford to hire help to save time, were those of the higher classes, and because of social norms, they could not pursue music as a profession.

Receiving an education in music and obtaining financial stability was a key factor in affecting women's ability to become involved in music. Obtaining a music education is vitally important because it helps the person understand musical repertoire, theory, and techniques.

Unfortunately, many of those in the lower classes could not obtain an education and those of the higher classes who did, could not pursue music as a profession because it was seen as improper. For many centuries, women could not gain access to conservatories or music teachers to receive a proper education. To pursue music, women had to have the ability to become financially stable. The most common way women obtained financial stability was by getting married. Once married, they were usually expected to play domestic roles, and if they were poor they lacked the time to get involved in music, and often lacked the education.

With the advancement of time saving technologies and relaxed social norms, larger numbers of women were able to become involved in music over time. New technological innovations saved women time and allowed them to spend more of their energy focusing on hobbies, such as music, than on domestic issues. Over time it became more socially acceptable for women to receive musical education through public and private institutions, to perform publically, and to pursue music as a profession. Through the centuries, women overcame the limitations, pursued music, and became pioneers and important figures of their time. They became composers, performers, and patrons. What follows is a history of some of these women who forged the path for women who came after them.

## **I. Antiquity and Middle Ages**

Christianity stresses that all people are equal. In the Middle Ages, there was a great deal of inequality for men and women in the Christian church. Women were originally left out of the priesthood and were prevented from singing openly in the church. Women were prohibited from singing in the church because of St. Paul's 14:34 Corinthians declaration: "Let your women keep

silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.”<sup>1</sup> It was seen as unfit for women to sing, but many still did in the company of other women or in the privacy of nunneries and convents. The church was a great outlet for women to receive an education and obtain a level of status. Though educations varied, most convents taught sacred singing of the liturgical repertoire. Unlike other women of the era, the nuns in the convent had a larger amount of time to devote to the creation of music. With their education and time, nuns became the largest source of female composition during this period.

The first well-known female to compose music is Kassia, a Byzantine nun who lived AD 810 – AD 867. She was from a wealthy family and at one point, received the chance to marry Emperor Theophilis, but she consciously rejected him and abstained from marriage. Because of her refusal to marry, she was driven to the church where she became a nun. A great deal of her music is still in existence, including fifty hymns and 789 non-liturgical verses. Kassia composed music that was typical of her time. Most of the music featured a simple monophonic passage declaring the glory of God. One of her compositions that has retained popularity over time is *Apostate Tyranno*. This hymn is simple and contains an untraditional structure of music of the period, because instead of being a monophonic composition it is homophonic. In *Apostate Tyranno*, there is a sustained note as the background to a chorus of singers that sing a melody in unison. This work exhibits attributes of later musical compositions after Kassia’s time and her willingness to strive for uniqueness and creativity.

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<sup>1</sup> The Holy Bible: King James Version, (Dallas: Brown Books Publishing, 2004).

Hildegard von Bingen was born in 1098 and at the age of eight she was sent to a nunnery at Disibodenberg on the Nahe River.<sup>2</sup> There she learned Latin, needlework and psalm singing. She moved to a convent in Rupertsberg near Bingen, where she became the abbess and wrote most of her compositions. A great deal of her music is still extant. Hildegard is credited with creating the first liturgical drama extant along with other morality plays. The morality play was meant to teach a moral lesson. The characters often represented vices or concepts such as youth or death. The music commonly represented the movement of time and characters, and sometimes

**Figure 1:** Manuscript of *Ordo virtutum* from 1175-1190



religious figures such as angels and devils. Morality plays had a religious subject matter but were often performed outside of the church. They could be performed anywhere, out in the open or even on wagons. Typically, a morality play was performed by semi-professional poor actors, which is why the works were often short. Music in the plays consisted of “solo and ensemble songs, items of plainchant, polyphonic settings, and instrumental music.”

Hildegard’s *Ordo virtutum*, her morality play set to music, was an important work because it “predates by about two centuries any other works in this genre.”<sup>3</sup> Hildegard was also a

<sup>2</sup> Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, ed., *Women Making Music: The Tradition, 1150-1950* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

well-rounded and important figure. She was a religious visionary, botanist, pharmacologist, writer of thirteen books, and she gave advice to noblemen, kings, and the pope.<sup>4</sup> Around 1150, Hildegard created *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum*, which was a collection of seventy-seven of her sacred compositions.<sup>5</sup> A great deal of the music in the collection included hymns, sequences, and antiphons like *O Spiritus sanctus*.

*O Spiritus sanctus* is an example of her work that was dedicated to a female saint and written because of a vision. Hildegard dedicated a lot of her music to women and Saints, and much of her music is inspired by her religious visions. She was plagued with severe migraines that caused her to see flashes of white and spiritual revelations. The example is an antiphon written in respect for St. Ursula and describes her religious vision of a pure flower untouched by a serpent's breath. The flower symbolized the virgins who were unplucked and untouched by the impurity of evil. St. Ursula was a British princess who was killed along with 11,000 virgins in her company by Huns while on a pilgrimage from Rome.<sup>6</sup> Her bones were discovered at a Roman cemetery and made into relics. Some bones were put on display in Disibodenberg at the monastery where Hildegard lived during her adolescence.

This song *O Spiritus Sanctus* was written for the feast of St. Ursula where it was sung or

**Figure 2:** Hildegard von Bingen melodic leap up a fifth in *O Spiritus Sanctus*.



recited before and after each psalm and Magnificat during Matins or Vespers. It is in the Dorian mode and begins and ends on D. To prevent a

tritone, called *diabolus in musica* during her time, she made the B a B-flat. The song is

<sup>4</sup> Craig Wright and Bryan Simms, *Music in the Western Civilization*, (Belmont: Thomson/Schirmer, 2006), 42.

<sup>5</sup> Bowers, *Women Making Music*, 28.

<sup>6</sup> Craig Wright and Bryan Simms, *Anthology for Music in the Western Civilization*, (Belmont: Thomson/Schirmer, 2006), 24.

monophonic and it was composed for a cappella voices. The work is in the plainchant style. With this style there is a single melodic line sung by a choir of singers. In this piece Bingen uses her characteristic melodic leap of a fifth followed by a leap of a fourth upwards in the first line of this piece, as seen in Figure 3.<sup>7</sup> There is a wide vocal range, the song is fluid, has a slow tempo and changing rhythmic patterning. This is a powerful, somber and simple piece of music. Music in this song soars because it uses extremes of the higher register as if to bring heaven and earth together.



**Figure 3:** Excerpt of Hildegard von Bingen's *De undecim mil. virginibus* in dedication to St. Ursula. The work originates from a morality play. It is performed by the ensemble, *Canta Filia* at the Benedictine monastery, Corvey Abbey, near the Rhine.

### **Troubadours and Trouveres**

Comtessa de Dia is the most well-known female troubadour and is the author of the only extant song by a troubaritz, the term for a female troubadour.<sup>8</sup> According to scholars, fewer than

<sup>7</sup> Nancy Fierro, "Hildegard of Bingen: Symphony of the Harmony of Heaven." *Hildegard Von Bingen Music*. Mount St. Mary's College, 1997, <http://www.hildegard.org/music/music.html> (accessed 15 October 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Sylvia Glickman and Martha Furman Schleifer, *From Convent to Concert Hall*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 24.

fifty songs were created by troubaritz between 1170 and 1260.<sup>9</sup> Comtessa de Dia's surviving composition is titled "A chantar." The song consists of five strophes and details her failure at love. The countess was the wife of Lord Willam de Poitiers and the lover of Lord Raimbau d'Orange. Her poems were often about her lover. "A chantar" is a beautiful song with a small range, simple texture, and a duple meter. The song is for a single voice; each strophe has seven lines, and the overall form is strophic because for each stanza the music is repeated. The work is similar to other troubadour chansons of the period. Though the troubaritz are represented by little music and not much is known about them, Comtessa de Dia stands out as the single figure to represent this inspiring group of women.

Troubadours were a group of twelfth- and thirteenth-century poet-musicians in southern France. The movement spread to northern France, where they were called trouveres. Troubadours were the first to write vernacular songs or chansons. Chansons were usually written in one of three French formes fixes: ballade, rondeau, or virelai. The virelai and rondeau originated with the troubadours and trouveres as monophonic dances that involved choral singing. The virelai and rondeau were originally dance pieces that called for a soloist to sing the verse, chorus, and the refrain. As time progressed in the fourteenth century, the refrain and verses came to be performed solely by a single voice. Though originally a lively dance composition, the chanson became more associated with intimate chamber music, as time progressed. "According to Maria V. Coldwell, 'about 2600 poems by 450 troubadours have been preserved...and fewer than 300 melodies.'"<sup>10</sup> Most of the music of the troubadours was monophonic and revolved around the subject of love, relationships between men and women,

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<sup>9</sup> James R. Brisco, *New Historical Anthology of Music by Women*. (Bloomington: Indiana United Press, 2004), 21.

<sup>10</sup> Glickman, *From Convent to Concert Hall*, 24.



and “their language—Old Occitan—is couched in stereotyped codes that are circumscribed by gender identity.”<sup>11</sup>

In periods of social equality, came flourishes of aristocratic women composers. During this time, it was equally acceptable for both men and women to create music and poetry. In France during the Middle Ages, women of noble birth had obtained a high level of social status due to the law that allowed them to inherit the land that was theirs. Therefore French women obtained a greater amount of equality, as compared to women in other European nations. Furthermore, “during the Crusades of this period many aristocratic women governed fiefdoms during their husband’s absence.”<sup>12</sup> These circumstances allowed for an increase in female troubadours due to their increased standing and freedom to “find their voices.” These factors were large steps for women towards equal rights and ability to perform and compose music.

In the Middle Ages, the music education was equal for men and women aristocrats, but not the social expectations. As the church had preached, women could be like either Mary or Eve. If a woman was to be like Mary, she would be virtuous, kind, loving, but weak. If a woman was to be like Eve, she would be a temptress and a harlot. The two classifications gave women a small amount of leeway to fully express themselves and live. Women were also limited in their ability to be politically accepted professional musicians: “when Eleanor of Aquitaine ruled southern France, women composed and performed on a relatively equal basis with men; but when law prohibited the passage of the French crown through women, women were no longer able to compete as composers with men.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Brisco, *New Historical*, 21.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.



Eleanor of Aquitaine was the queen consort to Louis VII, the king of France, and Henry II, the king of England, the granddaughter of the first troubadour and a patroness of the arts. At the age of fifteen she succeeded her parents and became the Countess of Poitiers and the Duchess of Aquitaine. Because of her high social standing, she was chosen to marry Louis VII. Her marriage was annulled in 1152 by the Pope Eugene III

**Figure 4:** Effigy of Eleanor of Aquitaine, tomb at Fontevraud

because of consanguinity in the fourth degree and her inability to produce a son.<sup>14</sup> Eight weeks later, she married Henry II and together they had eight children, four of which were sons. Two of her sons would later become kings of England. As a patroness, Eleanor of Aquitaine supported Robert Wace, Benoit de Ainte-Maure and Bernart de Ventadorn. She was the most influential patroness of the twelfth century because of “flowering of artistic revival unmatched in any other part of Europe.”<sup>15</sup>

Eleanor drew musicians and poets to her court. To increase the prestige of one’s court, it was commonplace during this time for rulers, like Eleanor of Aquitaine, to “provide dance music for festivals of the court, and singers and poets to create lyric verse.”<sup>16</sup> The first writer of the King Arthur tale, Marie de France, was a member of her court as was Bernard de Ventadorn, a notable troubadour and writer of the popular chanson, *Can vei la lauzeta*. He was born poor, but was able to win the affections of a noblewoman. This woman was the wife of his Lord; when the

<sup>14</sup> Glickman, *Convent to Concert Hall*, 26.

<sup>15</sup> Lindenmuth, Paul. "Eleanor of Aquitaine." *Eleanor of Aquitaine*. King's College, November 2000, <[http://departments.kings.edu/womens\\_history/eleanor.html](http://departments.kings.edu/womens_history/eleanor.html) (accessed 15 October 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Wright, *Music in the Western Civilization*, 42.

<sup>16</sup> Bowers, *Women Making Music*, 45.

Lord found out, he became furious and locked his wife away. Bernard moved to Eleanor of Aquitaine's court and remained there until he joined a monastery. Eleanor was able to surround herself with troubadours and troubaritz because of the expectations of the "refinement of court life."<sup>17</sup>

Her son Richard the Lionheart was a poet, singer, and king of England. Eleanor supported her three sons', Richard, Henry, and Geoffrey's, coup against their father. She was imprisoned until 1184, three years before the death of Henry II. She helped secure her son, Richard I's, accession into power, and ruled as regent as he fought in a crusade. Richard I was affected by his mother's deep appreciation and patronage of the arts and music. He became involved in the composition of music. A famous song by Richard I is *Ja nus hons pris* or *Ja nuls om pres*, which he wrote while he was imprisoned during the crusade. He wrote the song in both French and Occitan, the most common language for chansons. Eleanor of Aquitaine outlived Richard I and witnessed the accession of her youngest son as King John. She lived a long life and died 1 April 1204. Her importance as a powerful female patron established a model for later women of nobility.

## I. Renaissance

During the Renaissance, women were still subjected to domestic roles, denied political rights, and ruled by either their parents or their husbands. Women had little power to choose their husbands, yet they were controlled by them for most of their lives. Women who did not marry

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<sup>17</sup> Marcus Graham Bull and Catherine Léglu. *The World of Eleanor of Aquitaine: Literature and Society in Southern France between the Eleventh and Thirteenth Centuries* (Rochester: Boydell, 2005), 113.

still had few rights and were often forced to move in with male relatives, or joined a convent like Hildegard von Bingen had done. It was frowned upon for women of the lower classes to participate in the arts, but the Renaissance saw the rise in the expectation that aristocratic women be able to perform music as part of their wifely duties. Peasant and middle class women were fated to working in the fields or in the homes sewing, cooking, and taking care of the family. Because women of the highest class were mostly assisted by servants, they had more time to pursue the arts and become as musically versed as their wifely duties expected them to be.

Because music during this period became more secular in nature, the focus moved away from the church to the court. This period saw a larger emphasis on court music, best illustrated by Queen Elizabeth or the Three Ladies of Ferrara. Women before this period who were involved with music were more closely related to the church, but during this period there was a definite shift to the court. Women were seen more often as performers and as parts of festive celebrations. Women were hired to perform music in the courts and aristocratic women became important patrons and amateur players of music.

The Renaissance saw the increase in depiction of women in paintings engaging in courtly life by playing instruments. They were often shown with female friends or their male counterparts. Such images include Jacopo Tintoretto's *Women Playing Music*, Mattias Grunewald's *Concert of Angels* or the paintings of Andrea Solario. One of the most well-known Renaissance instruments is the lute. It was featured in many compositions of the time. Andrea Solario illustrated the instrument in his painting circa 1510. The painting shows a woman in elegant dress playing the instrument, as seen in Figure 5. Many painters, like Tintoretto, featured several instruments in their work. In Tintoretto's painting, each woman is naked and enjoying instruments, including a keyboard, a psaltery, flute, Renaissance guitar, viol, and viola da



**Figure 5:** Painting of woman playing the lute circa 1510 by Andrea Solario (b. 1495, d. 1524).  
gamba. The viola da gamba was also pictured in Grunewald's *Concert of Angels*. The painting shows several Christina images including the Virgin Mary holding a baby Jesus, Jesus after he

was taken off the cross, and a resurrected Christ on right-hand panels. The panels on the left feature angels engaged in various activities, including playing music. These images are powerful because they show the rising acceptance of women playing music, especially virtuous Christian women.

Ferrara is a small city in Italy and became an important musical landmark because of its central location and strong political leadership. The ruling family was the Este. They valued a lively musical court culture. Their court became associated with composers



**Figure 6:** *Women Making Music* by Tintoretto (b. 1518, d. 1594).

such as Josquin des Presz, Adrian Willaert, Cipriano de Rore, and Carlo Gesualdo. At the end of the sixteenth century, during the height of its fame, the court had forty full-time musicians and singers.<sup>18</sup> Most famously this musical establishment included the Three Ladies of Ferrara. The musical life of the Este court at Ferrara was dominated by the Three Ladies of Ferrara. Also known as the “Concerto delle Donne,” (“Consort of Women”), the Ladies of Ferrara were important figures who spread the appreciation of female secular singers in the sixteenth century.

The Three Ladies of Ferrara were highly praised singers by rival courts because of their supreme skill and technique. According to Giustiniani, “The ladies of Mantua and Ferrara were highly competent, and vied with each other not only in regard to timbre and training of their voices but also in the design of exquisite passages (*passaggi*) delivered at opportune points, but

<sup>18</sup> Wright, *Music in the Western Civilization*, 168.

not in excess.”<sup>19</sup>

The Cavalier Grana to Cardinal Luigi d’Este described their singing as not only beautiful but also “decorated with such lovely and *diversi passaggi* that one could not [hope to] hear better.”<sup>20</sup> Other courts, like Mantua, Florence, and Rome, created similar ensembles composed of women. In a letter to his patron, Francesco de’ Medici, composer Alessandro Striggio wrote, “These ladies sing excellent both with instruments and from part books [and] they are sure in contrapuntal improvisation,” and when he returned home he would compose “in imitation of these songs of Ferrara.”<sup>21</sup>

The Ladies of Ferrara popularized the establishment of female professional secular singers. During this time, women were commonly replaced by men in drag for stage plays, like in the productions of Shakespeare. Because of the Ladies of Ferrara, there existed a new acceptance and appreciation of trained female singers. Because of this development, when the new genre of opera emerged at the end of the Renaissance, people expected women to participate and sing. Female voices also had an effect on the style of the madrigal. The madrigal came to



**Figure 7:** Portion of *Concert of Angels* by Matthias Grünewald (b. 1470, d.1528).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Carol Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 51.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 52.

become arranged for two to three difficult parts in the treble clef, thus showing off the skills of female performers. Women also added improvisatory elaborations to the music they sang. There were many madrigals written for the Ladies of Ferrara, including many of the works by the Ferrara court composer Luzzasco Luzzaschi.

**Figure 8:** Luzzasco Luzzaschi's *O Dolcezz' Amarissime D'Amore*, mm. 16-17.

The image shows a musical score for three cantus parts and keyboard accompaniment. The three cantus parts are labeled [CANTUS I], [CANTUS II], and [CANTUS III]. The keyboard part is shown in a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The lyrics are: - sco Fug - Fug - gi - - Fug - gi - - te A - mo - re. The score shows a stepwise melodic line in the cantus parts, with the first voice introducing the text and the others following in a round-like fashion.

One of Luzzaschi's most popular compositions was *O Dolcezz' Amarissime D'Amore*. The work is secular madrigal in Italian for three sopranos accompanied by keyboard. The madrigal describes bitter love that slowly poisons. As seen in Figure 8, Luzzaschi features many notes that fall and rise in a stepwise motion, which have a similar form to a trill. Though the singers begin in harmony, a round-like form begins in the music as it progresses, as seen in Figure 8. In the piece, a voice introduces a line of text. That text is repeated by one singer, and then repeated by the remaining singers. The first voice to introduce text varies in the composition. Though following and repeating one another throughout the piece, the singers end



in harmony French women obtained a greater amount of equality, as compared to women in other European nations on the G chord with the word “do.”

### Queen Elizabeth: Music Patron

Queen Elizabeth was an important lover, performer, and patron of music. On 17 November 1558, Princess Elizabeth Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, ascended the throne as Queen of England. She ruled for forty-five years until her death in 1603. She was nicknamed ‘the Virgin Queen’ because she never married. Her relationship with music mirrored that of her father.



**Figure 9:** Queen Elizabeth I by Unknown artist, oil on panel, early 17th century with 18th century over painting, from The National Portrait Gallery, London.

English music flourished at the royal court of the Renaissance. During Henry VIII’s reign, art, poetry, and music were important

parts of court life. Court musicians would stage

music for festivals, military campaigns, and the Royal Chapel. “In the time of Edward IV, there had been five permanent musicians on the court payroll. By the time Henry’s reign was at an end, that number had grown to 58.”<sup>22</sup> Henry VIII also enjoyed playing and making music. He was said to be highly skilled at the organ, the virginal, and the lute.<sup>23</sup> He spread his love for music to his daughter, Elizabeth I.

<sup>22</sup> Suzanne Lord and David Brinkman, *Music from the Age of Shakespeare: A Cultural History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), x.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

As a youth, Queen Elizabeth was educated in mathematics, astronomy, geography, and music. Elizabeth I was taught to play the virginal and lute.<sup>24</sup> She was very accomplished in the two instruments. Her tutor stated, “she delights as much in music as she is skillful in it.”<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth I was taught music not only because of her father’s fondness for the art, but also because of the expectations of the aristocratic class.

During the Renaissance, it was expected for women to be well versed in musical technique and able to play an instrument such as the lute, virginal, cittern, harp, or spinet. Once they were married, it was common for women during this period to no longer play the instruments they were taught in their youths. They would instead hire people to create and play the music. Aristocratic women were highly respected if they were patrons of the arts. Queen Elizabeth followed the pattern of the times by becoming a patron and player of music. Because the queen never married, she was able to continue her musical pursuits. “Even as late as 1589 (when the queen was 56), it was said that Elizabeth’s musical skill ‘is so well as I assure you six or seven galliards in a morning, besides music and singing is her ordinary exercise.’”<sup>26</sup>

Elizabeth was an important patron and music lover. Because she was a queen, a great number of pieces were dedicated to her, which indicated the emergence of an artistic age. In 1558, at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, a “Golden Age” began. The period was marked by a cultural blossoming in music and art. This was partly due to the Queen’s tolerance and acceptance of music in the court, and a new invention by Gutenberg. Johannes Gutenberg created a new method of printing called movable type. It revolutionized the way in which music was written and distributed. His invention made it easier for people to obtain music. A great

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<sup>24</sup> David C. Price, *Patrons and Musicians of the English Renaissance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 16.

<sup>25</sup> Wright, *Music in the Western Civilization*, 224.

<sup>26</sup> Lord, *Music from the Age of Shakespeare*, 9.

deal of music was created and dedicated to Elizabeth. According to Price, she was the “inspiration to her pastoral courtiers, as the ‘Fair Oriana’ [Golden Queen] of her musical subjects.”<sup>27</sup> The best example is the celebratory publication *The Triumphs of Oriana* – a collection of twenty-one madrigals by Thomas Morley, Thomas Weelkes and twenty-two other English composers, published in 1601, just two years before her death in 1603.<sup>28</sup> Each madrigal in the collection ends with the common refrain:

Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana,  
Long live fair Oriana!<sup>29</sup>

William Byrd, the pupil of Thomas Tallis, was the preeminent composer to Elizabeth. He wrote an anthem around 1570 entitled *O Lord, make thy servant, Elizabeth*. It is the most commonly performed anthem at the Chapel Royal and other cathedrals throughout England, but through the years, the text is changed to conform and include the name of the current monarch in power. The text is based on Psalm 21: 2 and 4. There’s a great deal of text painting in the example. In this piece words like “Lord” or “our Queen” have longer note values. The word “rejoice” is always sung on considerably higher notes and there is a constant repetition of the “request of her lips” as to emphasize that the Queen should receive what she desires. The song was written for six voices: Soprano, 2 Altos, 2 Tenors, and a Bass. The disposition, range, and scoring of the voices of the piece conform to parameters already established as norms for music intended for the liturgy generally such as in this period. The only exception to this is that instead of the standard doubling of countertenors, he doubles the alto voices, which creates a rich six-

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<sup>27</sup> Price, *Patrons and Musicians*, 16.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

part texture.

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SOPRANO  
- li - za - beth our Queen, to re - joice in thy strength; give

ALTO 1  
- li - za - beth our Queen, to re - joice in thy strength, to re - joice in thy

ALTO 2  
- li - za - beth our Queen, to re - joice in thy strength; give her her

TENOR 1 & 2  
- li - za - beth our Queen, our Queen, to re - joice in thy strength, in thy.

BASS  
- li - za - beth our Queen, to re - joice in thy strength;

ORGAN

The image shows a musical score for a six-part setting of 'Lord make thy servant, Elizabeth' by William Byrd. The parts are Soprano, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1 & 2, Bass, and Organ. The score is in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'li - za - beth our Queen, to re - joice in thy strength; give her her our Queen, to re - joice in thy strength, in thy.' The organ part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a steady bass line and a more active treble line.

Figure 10: William Byrd's *Lord make thy servant, Elizabeth*, mm. 4-8.

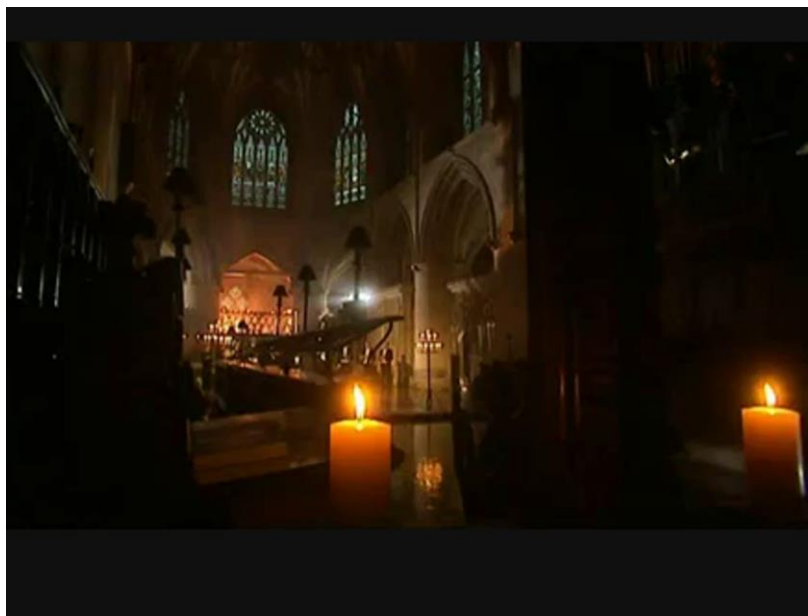


Figure 11: William's Byrd's *O Lord, make thy servant, Elizabeth*, performed by the Tallis Scholars at Tewkesbury Abbey.

## II. Baroque

During the Baroque period, it became more acceptable for women to create music because of increased music education accessibility, the emergence of opera, and the widespread acceptability of women professionally composing and performing music. More women were now creating music outside the church. Musical careers did not center around the convent, but flourished outside it. In the Baroque period, women were able to obtain new roles as instrument makers and opera singers. Opera was the pivotal genre that came out of this period that made women performers extremely important. Opera flourished in Italy, especially in centers such as Venice, Florence, and Mantua. Florence was the home to early opera and public opera began in Venice in the 1630s. Opera was a new genre in the 1600s that revolutionized the position of women in music. Because of opera, women could now become acclaimed professional singers. The birth of the prima donna also came about during this period and continued into the 18th century.

### Italy

There were many prolific female composers in Italy during the Baroque era including Antonia Bembo, Chiara Margarita Cozzolani, Isabella Leonarda and Barbara Strozzi. Antonia Bembo was an Italian composer and singer who left six volumes of music still extant. Cozzolani was one of the finest composers in Italy from the Benedictine order. She was a nun at the musically famous Santa Radegonda, a convent in Milan. Isabella Leonarda from Novara, published twenty volumes containing over two hundred works. Leonarda was a productive composer who, like Cozzolani, produced music while in a convent. She was the first woman to publish sonatas and she created motets, sacred concertos, and masses.

## Barbara Strozzi

Barbara Strozzi was one of the most prolific composers of printed secular vocal music in Venice in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. She was born in Venice and raised by her adopted father Guilio Strozzi. She became a member and performer at her father's musical academy, *Accademia degli Unisoni*. Nicolò Fontei dedicated two volumes of solo songs to her in the *Bizzarrie poetiche* of 1635 and 1636.<sup>30</sup> She was taught by Francesco Cavalli, a famous opera composer. Despite being surrounded by opera, she never created a work from this genre. She published eight volumes of music containing hundreds of vocal pieces between 1644 and 1664.<sup>31</sup> She is strictly known for her publications because she did not perform publicly. She mostly composed secular music and was the productive composer of secular chamber music in the 1600s.

One of Barbara Strozzi's most famous religious collections is Op.5, *I sacri musicali affetti*, featuring beautiful musical settings of fourteen Latin poems. The collection is dedicated to Archduchess Anne of Innsbruck and most of the music in the collection are motets dedicated to the Virgin Mary. *Erat Petrus*, the first of the set, is a melodic work that features a single female voice accompanied by a harpsichord in an allegro tempo and duple meter. The piece has a major tonality and the Latin text describes St. Peter who was imprisoned and chained. He is seen by a woman passing by and released. The message of the text is for Peter to forgive us of our sins and to erase the punishment.

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<sup>30</sup> Ellen Rosand and Beth L. Glixon, "Strozzi, Barbara," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/26987> (accessed 6 November 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Karin Pendle, *Women & Music: A History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 105.

### Francesca Caccini

Francesca Caccini was the eldest daughter of famous composer Giulio Caccini. Her work, *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall' isola Alcina* is the first known opera composed by a woman and is still extant. Unlike her other contemporaries, she was educated in music, not because of the resources of the church or a convent or conservatory, but by her father. Giulio Caccini also taught his wives and other daughters music and composition. The “Caccini family led in the development of the dramatic style of solo song accompanied by figured bass at the beginning of the seventeenth century.”<sup>32</sup>

Francesca made her debut as a professional singer in her father’s opera *Euridice* at the age of thirteen.<sup>33</sup> In 1607, she married singer Giovanni Battista Signorini. She and her husband became the earliest artists to tour when they traveled around Italy performing with a group which was patronized by Cardinal Carlo de’Medici. Her singing ability was praised by many. When Caccini traveled as a young girl with her family’s ensemble “il concerto Caccini,” the French king was said to have asked her to stay in his court, but her Florentine court would not discharge her. When Caccini performed in the church, her singing was described as “perfectly in the interpretation of the music of every style, sacred as well as secular, and contrapuntal as well as melodic.”<sup>34</sup>

Caccini created a copious amount of popular works. In 1618, Caccini published *Primo libro delle musiche a una e due voci*. It was a collection of seventeen secular and nineteen sacred works. It was dedicated to Cardinal Carlo de’Medici and consists of mostly solo songs. *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall' isola Alcina*, the first ever opera composed by a female, was one of

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 102

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 103.

her most famous works. The work was commissioned by Christina de Lorena and Maria Maddalena for Prince Ladislas Sigismund of Poland's 2 February, 1625 visit to Florence's Pitti Palace.<sup>35</sup>

After her husband's death in 1626, Caccini married aristocrat Tomaso Raffaelli. Unlike many other women, Caccini stayed musically active after her marriage. She was especially active in her husband's *Accademia degli Oscuri*, an academy that put on many musical productions. In 1630, Tomaso Raffaelli too died, leaving Caccini in a high social status with a son and daughter.

Despite her daughter's musical talent, Francesca refused to let her sing because she believed it would compromise their position, jeopardize her daughter's ability to establish a good marriage and "tarnish the social position of her son and break the terms of Raffaelli's will."

### France--Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre

Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre was an exceptional female prodigy. As described by an onlooker, "She sings at sight the most difficult music. She accompanies herself, and accompanies others who wish to sing at the harpsichord, which she plays in a manner that cannot be imitated. She composes pieces, and plays them in all the keys asked of her...and she is still only ten years old."<sup>36</sup> She was trained in music by her father, Claude Jacquet. She performed for King Louis XIV and Madame de



**Figure 12:** Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre, oil portrait by François de Troy, c. 1694–1695.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 118.



Montespan at the age of five and was given a place as a court musician. After leaving Versailles at the age of nineteen, she married and became a highly praised teacher, composer, and performer. She published “three volumes of cantatas in the first wave of French cantata production” and wrote violin trio and solos.<sup>37</sup> In 1694, she became the first woman in France to write an opera, which was titled *Cephale et Procris*.<sup>38</sup> That same year she gave birth to her son, who was one of the only two known students of Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre. He later passed away at the age of ten. Louis-Claude Daquin was the other student of La Guerre. He was a celebrated and well-known composer and musician. Daquin would become the organist to the king of France in 1739 and in 1755 he became the titular organist at Notre Dame in Paris.<sup>39</sup>

### **Germany--Anna Magdalena Bach**

Anna Magdalena Bach was the second wife of Johann Sebastian Bach and bore him thirteen children. She married the famous musician at twenty-years of age and took care of Bach’s surviving children from his previous marriage. She was a singer and keyboard player, which was typical for women during this period. Scholars have learned that she was a talented singer because of her high salary at the court of Cöthen. In 1722, she was earning 300 rthl, or reichsthalers— silver coins annually. This was a large sum, because in comparison, pastors earned 175 rthl annually.<sup>40</sup> She was a copyist and possibly a composer. To help her husband, Anna employed herself as a copyist of his music. She was very skilled, but in her handwritten copy of the Cello Suites, BWV 1007, as seen in Figure 13, there are many mistakes that do not

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>38</sup> Catherine Cessac, "Jacquet de La Guerre, Elisabeth," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/14084> (accessed 6 November 2012).

<sup>39</sup> Jean-Paul Montagnier, "Daquin, Louis-Claude," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07208> (accessed 6 November 2012).

<sup>40</sup> Hans T. David, Arthur Mendel, and Christoph Wolff, eds. *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 527.

mirror her husband's versions. Scholars, like Yo Mita, have asserted that Anna's copy is the original and she is the true composer of the work. Because of the time, it is possible she composed the piece and had it published under her husband's name.<sup>41</sup> It was common in the period for women to publish works under a pseudonym or under the name of a man

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<sup>41</sup> Yo Tomita, "Anna Magdalena as Bach's Copyist." *Understanding Bach 2* (2007): 59-76.

Figure 13: The first page of BWV 1007 in Anna Magdalena Bach's handwriting.

The image displays a page of handwritten musical notation for BWV 1007. The score is written on ten staves. The first staff is labeled "Middle" and the second staff is labeled "Prelude". The notation is dense and characteristic of the Baroque period, featuring complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The handwriting is in black ink on aged paper.

. A famous collection connected with her are the two manuscripts of songs and arias known as the *Anna Magdalena Notebook*. The collection from 1722 includes

compositions J.S. Bach wrote for her including keyboard suites and other miscellaneous works while the 1725 manuscript includes forty-three various works by Bach and other artists. From the works, we can interpret that Anna Magdalena Bach was a very skilled pianist and vocalist.

### **Italy in the 18th century**

By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the “prima donna” (“first lady”) was the star and highly talented singer in the opera world. Female opera singers had to compete with the *castrati*, the highly talented male singers who maintained their ability to sing in high registers. One of the most famous prima donnas of the late Baroque period was Faustina Bordoni.

### **Faustina Bordoni**

Bordoni was a highly trained opera singer from a respected wealthy noble Venetian family. Because of her status, she did not have to worry about obtaining an education, patronage, or a reputation. Her position helped her attain an extensive education. She was taught by Antonio Bernachi, Benedetto Marcello, and Michelangelo Gasparini. She made her debut at sixteen in 1716 in Carlo Francesco Pollarolo’s *Ariodante*. She soon became well known as the “new siren” and for her talents. She moved to London with the help of impresario Owen Swiny. Her first English performance was in 1726 at the King’s Theatre as Roxana in Handel’s *Alessandro*, with her rivals soprano Cuzzoni and male soprano Senesino in the other leading roles.<sup>42</sup> In 1730, she married composer Johann Adolph Hasse, who wrote and dedicated a great deal of music to Bordoni including arias from *Il Ciro riconosciuto*, *Didone abbandonata*, *Numa Pompilio*, and *Zenobia*. One of Hasse most famous works written for his wife is the aria, “Digli ch’io son

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<sup>42</sup> Winton Dean, "Bordoni, Faustina," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03574> (accessed 6 November 2012).

fedele” from the opera *Cleofide*. This opera seria was written for and could only be composed at the Saxon court in Dresden. He later changed the name of the opera to *Alexander the Great in India*, and it was performed outside the court, most famously under the direction of Antonio Vivaldi. The aria shows off the ability of the soloist. There are many ornamentations and flourishes to demonstrate the skills of the soprano, as seen in Figure 14.



**Figure 14:** Johann Adolph Hasse's aria "Digli ch'o son fedele" from *Cleofide*, mm. 13-15.

This and many works like it exhibited Bordoni's skill and helped gain recognition for her talent. Despite earning a great deal of acclaim, by the time of her marriage, she had lost her title because of her profession. She and her husband were later hired by the court of Dresden where they worked until they could retire.

Francesca Cuzzoni was an Italian operatic soprano and a rival of Bordoni. Born in Parma in 1696, Cuzzoni exhibited signs of talent early on and became the pupil of Lanzi. She first debuted on her hometown stage of Parma in 1714 in *La virtù coronata, o Il Fernando*. Her performance was successful and she began to sing in various opera houses throughout Italy including Bologna, Florence, Siena, Mantua, and Genoa. She debuted in Venice in 1718 as Dalinda in Pollarolo's *Ariodante*, with Faustina Bordoni as Ginevra. She continued to perform in various operas throughout Italy, but crossed paths with her rival again in Orlandini's *Nerone* where she played Poppaea with another rival soprano Faustina as Octavia. She married and

moved to London where she made her debut in Handel's *Ottone* at the King's Theater in 1723.

She remained in Handel's company as the leading singer in all of his operas until 1728.

Cuzzoni's diva ways annoyed and often infuriated Handel. After refusing to perform one of his arias because it had been written for another singer, Maddalena Salvai, Handel threatened to dangle Cuzzoni out of a window unless she changed her mind. According to historian John Mainwaring, Handel stated "Oh! Madame, I know well that you are a real she-devil, but I hereby give you notice that I am Beelzebub, the chief of devils," and threatened to take her "up by the waist and, if she made any more words, swore that he would fling her out of the window."<sup>43</sup>

Cuzzoni's rivalry with Bordoni was at its worst in 1727 when the two singers began to fight on stage during Bononcini's *Astianatte*. "Cuzzoni was dismissed, but reinstated when the King threatened to end his subsidy." Their feud was even portrayed in John Gay's ballad opera, *The Beggar's Opera*. Cuzzoni moved around Europe for many years, including to Amsterdam, Vienna, Hamburg, and back to London. In 1750 she was arrested in London for debt and spent her last years in jail and in poverty, making buttons to financially support herself.<sup>44</sup>

### Venetian Conservatories

Female composition and musical performance greatly grew in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy, especially Venice, because of the increase in the number of music conservatories. These conservatories created a society where not only could noble women receive a music education, but now destitute and orphaned girls had the chance. Some of the most famous conservatories included the Ospedale della Pietà, dei Mendicanti, degli Incurabili,

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<sup>43</sup> Molly Peacock, *The Paper Garden: An Artist (begins Her Life's Work) at 72*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 115.

<sup>44</sup> Winton Dean and Carlo Vitali, "Cuzzoni, Francesca," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06995> (accessed 6 February 2013).

and dei Derelitti.<sup>45</sup> The conservatories were run by donations and public funds. They were composed of orphaned children. Girls who exhibited musical skill and intelligence were given superior educations in the arts. Ospedaletto, founded by a wealthy Venetian nobleman, Girolamo Miani, was aimed at teaching poor and less fortunate children. The schools had choirs and orchestras run by excellent musicians, like Antonio Vivaldi. These schools created artistically educated and skilled women who would become future composers of the late Baroque and Classical era. Maestra Anna Maria della Pietà was one of the most well-known musicians from a Venetian conservatory. Antonio Vivaldi, the maestro at the Ospedale della Pietà wrote twenty-two violin concertos to show off Anna Maria's brilliance. Maddalena Lombardini was the most famous composer to come out of a Venetian conservatory. She was trained and lived in Ospedale dei Mendicanti since the age of seven, and remained there for fourteen years.<sup>46</sup> After marrying violinist Ludovico Sirmen in 1767 and spending many years touring and composing, Maddalena acquired a great deal of praise and respect; even Leopold Mozart "considered her concertos 'beautifully composed.'"<sup>47</sup> The acclaim obtained by the many pupils of the conservatories demonstrates notable successes and positive impacts on underprivileged gifted females. The teaching style of the conservatories not only produced talented musicians, but also female teachers.

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<sup>45</sup> Pendle, *Women & Music: A History*, 112.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

### III. Enlightenment and Classical Era

The Enlightenment philosophies of the eighteenth century placed doubt on accepted beliefs and advocated for freedom, liberty and reason. The movement grew out and was the reinvigoration of the Scientific Revolution of the 1500s and 1600s, in which people began to reexamine ancient ways of thought on physical laws, causing them to later question natural laws. People began to desire natural rights such as life, liberty, and property, as Locke promoted.

Music of this period is described at first as in the galant style. The music is characterized as being graceful, natural, clear, and simple. Opera seria was at first dominant, but as time passed comic opera or ‘opera buffa’ came into popularity. By the high classical period in the 1780s, opera buffa was dominant. Opera seria appealed more to the aristocratic class, because of its portrayal of enlightened rulers, whereas the comic opera appealed to the lower and middle classes because it featured everyday characters and was light-hearted.

In the Classical period of music, an even larger increase in women being educated in music and composing occurred, as compared with the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Because of the expansion of the middle class, domesticated women were able to partake in leisurely activities such as music studies, composition, and performance. Musical studies were also seen as a prominent part of feminine education of the higher classes, during this period.

#### **Maria Anna Mozart**

Maria Anna Mozart is a prime example of such a woman who received a music education as a part of her



**Figure 15:** A family portrait of the Mozarts from 1780 or 1781 by Johann Nepomuk della Croce. Wolfgang, center, with his sister Maria Anna (known as Nannerl), and father, Leopold. The painting at center depicts the children’s mother, Anna Maria, who died in 1778.



upbringing. Maria Anna Mozart, also known as “Nannerl,” was the older sister of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. She was taught by Leopold Mozart and was said to be one of the most skillful pianists in Europe.<sup>48</sup> She traveled with her famous brother on a concert tour throughout Europe from 1762 to 1767, in the company of their parents. She adopted the ways of the “Enlightenment and lived as the epitome of contemporary ideas of femininity (piety, self-sacrifice, propriety, modesty).” She was forced to stop performing by her father Leopold Mozart when she reached a marriageable age. Because of her father, she renounced her “love for the captain and private tutor Franz d'Ippold and married instead Johann Baptist von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg,,” a man with more money and greater social status.<sup>49</sup> After her husband’s death, she became blind in 1825 and lived the rest of her life in deep poverty.

### **Aloysia Weber**

During the classical period, Italian and German operas and singspiels became popular. They showcased the talents of female singers. Aloysia Weber was a soprano, prima donna, and love interest in 1777 of twenty-one year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. She performed in German and Italian comic operas at the Burgtheater in Vienna and sang the part of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in 1788. She studied with Georg J. Volger in Mannheim and later with Mozart in Vienna.<sup>50</sup> She was the inspiration for a great deal of Mozart’s works including “concert arias K. 294, K. 316/300*b* and probably K. 538” and the part of Madame Herz in *Der*

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<sup>48</sup> Cliff Eisen, et al., "Mozart," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40258pg2> (accessed 13 November 2012)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Philipp Spitta, et al., "Weber," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 13, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40313pg4>.

*Schauspieldirektor*.<sup>51</sup> Mozart himself described her singing by stating that “it can scarcely be denied that she sings with the greatest expression.”<sup>52</sup>

In 1778 she moved to Munich and in 1780 she married actor Joseph Lange. In 1782, Mozart married her younger sister Constanze and in the same year Aloysia and her husband moved back to Vienna. Their move was due to Lange’s reinstatement at the Burgtheater and Aloysia’s hiring as prima donna. After 1785, she became famous because of her performances at the Kärntnertortheater where she sang the role of Konstanze in Mozart’s singspiel *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.<sup>53</sup>

Aloysia Weber’s talents ran in the family. She and her fellow Weber sisters were known to be important singers, including the elder sister Josepha Weber who in 1791 premiered the role of the Queen of the Night in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*.<sup>54</sup>

### **Maria Theresaia Paradis**

Maria Theresaia Paradis was an accomplished composer, pianist, singer, and organist who became blind at an early age. Her father worked as the Imperial Secretary and Court Councilor to Empress Maria Theresa of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She began her musical education at a young age from Salieri, Leopold Kozeluch, Abbe Vogler, and Carl Friedrich. She began her professional musical career performing in various Viennese salons. She eventually earned a name for herself and toured around Europe. She became acclimated with famous musicians who wrote music for her. Mozart wrote the Piano Concerto No. 18 in B flat major, K456 and Haydn wrote the piano concerto HXVIII: 4, both for her. She, too, began to write and

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<sup>51</sup> "Weber, Aloysia," *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev.. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 13, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e10930>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Jon Tolansky, "Lange, Aloysia," *The Oxford Companion to Music*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e3842>. (accessed November 13, 2012).

<sup>54</sup> Cliff Eisen, et al, "Mozart," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40258pg4> (accessed 6 February 2013).

compose music. The earliest work attributed to her is a 1777 composition that consists of a set of four piano sonatas, but it is highly debated whether they are by her or the male composer Pietro Domenico Paradisi. Her most famous work is *Sicilienne in E flat major*. The beautiful work is meant for a piano and violin, but the violin is commonly replaced with a cello. This slow piece is in a triple meter, and has the typical rhythmic patterns of the siciliano dance. The soft melody is both beautiful and striking because of its cantabile and simple characteristics. Paradisi defied a great deal of odds being both a woman and blind composer and performer. She broke many barriers and was still able to succeed as a musician despite the factors against her.

#### IV. Romantic Period

In the Romantic era of the nineteenth century, the ability for women to become involved in music improved even further. During this period, the larger number of concert halls and conservatories created a greater demand for musicians and original compositions.<sup>55</sup> This change in society allowed for the flourishing of female composers. Music became a regular part of the education of bourgeois and middle class women during this period. Because of this, many middle class homes had a wife or daughter who was able to play a keyboard instrument or sing. During this period many of the female performers also began to compose, such as Clara Wieck Schumann.

In the Romantic period, musicians began to look back at the music of the past. Before this time, performers tended to focus on playing contemporary music, but artists like Clara Wieck

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<sup>55</sup> Pendle, *Women & Music: A History*, 147.

promoted the works of Bach and Beethoven. Whereas women were originally shut out of musical conservatories, the nineteenth century saw the rise of women attending and teaching at music schools because of the greater number of available spaces and increased social acceptability.

Many principles of Jean-Jacque Rousseau and the French Revolution had had a great influence on the eighteenth century. Rousseau's Enlightenment principles prevented many women from focusing their attention on music, as seen with Maria Anna Mozart. Rousseau states "There are no good morals for women outside of a withdrawn domestic life; the peaceful care of their family are their lot."<sup>56</sup> Women of the nineteenth century who sought a musical profession were subject to "societal displeasures" and a low class status.<sup>57</sup> Despite this unfortunate circumstance, women still pursued musical careers.

What predominately led to the Romantic Period was the French Revolution. Because of this event, many changes began in the European social order. "Aristocratic patrons of the pre-revolutionary period were replaced by a moneyed bourgeois class that supported composers and performances by attending concerts rather than by commissioning new works."<sup>58</sup> This new change allowed for women to become involved in music without the need of obtaining patronage.

### **Clara Wieck Schumann**

Clara Wieck Schumann was a well-known performer, one of the first pianists to perform from memory, making it the standard for concertizing. She eventually became the wife of famous composer, Robert Schumann. She grew up in Leipzig and started studying music at the age of five with her father, Fredrick Wieck. She was a child prodigy who had the honor of

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Léonie Rosenstiel and Margaret Ross, *Schirmer History of Music*. New York: Schirmer, 1982), 457.

playing at the Gewandhaus at the age of nine in 1828 and toured Europe at eleven.<sup>59</sup> In 1830, Wieck organized and presented in Dresden with her trio, Op. 17, her first chamber work where she was featured as the main performer. One onlooker critiqued that "the basic foundation has been designed with confidence, the individual parts have been fashioned with taste, and throughout the whole, there is a tender, poetic quality that pervades the entire piece and consecrates it as a work of art."<sup>60</sup>

Clara Wieck met her future husband Robert Schumann at a young age and fell in love with him almost instantly. Because she was so young, parental consent was needed for the two to be joined in holy matrimony, but her father did not approve. Not until she turned twenty-one could the two wed without the need of parental approval. After a grueling lawsuit against her father because of his insistence on withholding consent, Clara finally married Robert in 1840. It was a happy marriage and eventually together they had eight children.

Clara was important for performing and publicizing many of her husband's works after Robert Schumann's hand became paralyzed by a hand-stretching contraption. She not only promoted the works of her husband, but also that of older composers including Beethoven and Bach, the masters of the past. After her husband's death in 1856, Clara Schumann became a close friend of Johannes Brahms. The two practiced together and formed a tight bond. In 1896, Brahms composed *Four Serious Songs*, Op. 121, in honor of their forty-three-year friendship.

Clara Wieck Schumann was a great composer who published twenty-three opuses between 1831 and 1856.<sup>61</sup> Since publishing her first work in 1831, Wieck Schumann has received positive reviews from critics and has been compared with the great composers of her

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<sup>59</sup> Wright, *Music in the Western Civilization*, 535.

<sup>60</sup> Pendle, *Women & Music*, 163.

<sup>61</sup> Walter Frisch, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 2013), 89.

day including Chopin and Schumann. Her first published composition was Four Polonaises for Piano, Op. 1. Each polonaise is in a major key, has a lively tempo, and shows off her abilities as a gifted pianist.

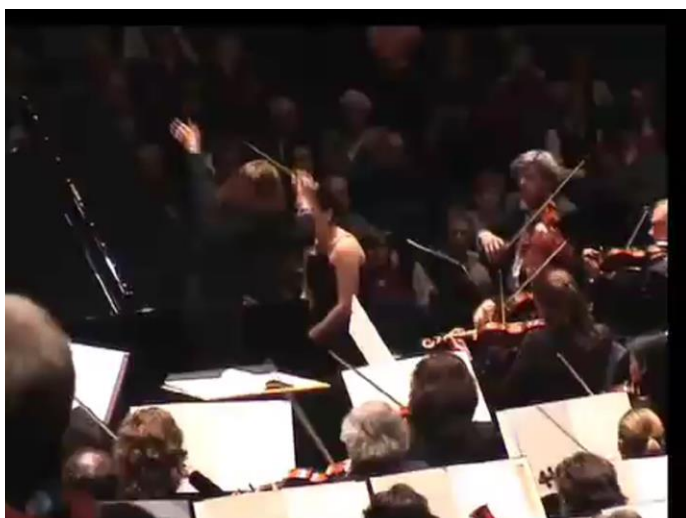
The Piano Concerto in A Minor Op. 7 is a work that stands out the most from her early childhood compositions. Op. 7 shines as a powerful piece that fully exhibits the abilities of Schumann as a virtuosic performer and skilled composer. The work fully has the attributes of Romantic music with its rubato sections, powerful fortissimo solos, and its dramatic changing of dynamics. Though she began to write the work at the age of thirteen, she did not publicly perform it until she was sixteen on 11 November 1835 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus under Felix Mendelssohn's direction.<sup>62</sup> Like Op. 7, many of the works she composed during this period in her life show off her virtuosity. Such pieces, including Romance variée Op.3 and Souvenir de Vienne Op.9, feature sections similar to Chopin and Liszt that show off the piano player's ability. She also created four Pieces caractéristiques, Op. 5 for solo piano. The style of these works, along with Op. 6, features a more unique and creative side to Wieck Schumann's composition abilities.

**Figure 16:** Clara Schumann's Op. 7 piano concerto, mm 17-20.



<sup>62</sup> Nancy Reich, "Schumann, Clara," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/25152> (accessed 29 January 2013).

Op. 7 was first called *Konzertsatz* (Concert movement), and original was a one-movement work for piano and orchestra. She then continued writing and added the second and third movements. In the first movement there is a modulation to A-flat major from the main key of A minor. Critics found the A-flat major tonality very unconventional and shocking. One critic even attributed it to the “moods of women.” There are passionate melodies in the right hand, often reinforced with the use of octaves, as seen in Figure 16. We also hear rubatos, fast scales, and arpeggios that all help demonstrate the virtuosic ability of the pianist. This is done to show off the soloist’s skill and to promote the career of the performer.



**Figure 17:** Daria van den Bercken played the Clara Schumann Concerto with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by JoAnn Falletta in 2007.

After marrying composer Robert Schumann in 1840, Wieck Schumann strayed away from composing character pieces and virtuosic music, and focused on creating lieder and works in the large-scale instrumental genres. Her most famous lieder cycle, Op. 12, was published in 1841 with her husband’s Op. 37. The song cycle, set to the poems of Friedrich Rückert, uses the piano and solo alto voice. It was Robert Schumann’s idea to publish his songs with hers as a way to connect with his wife after their marriage.<sup>63</sup> Uncommon for the time, her husband Robert Schumann, encouraged her to compose music and even contacted publishers on her behalf.<sup>64</sup> His only stipulation was that his music be of the most importance and that she could only compose when he was not. The couple got along well and

<sup>63</sup> Nancy Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 304.

<sup>64</sup> Frisch, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 89.

both sought to elevate the taste of their listeners, and “to wean them away from contemporary works of superficial appeal.”<sup>65</sup>

During her marriage, she wrote many piano works, but her greatest achievement is believed to be the Piano Trio in G Minor, Op. 17, published in 1846. The first movement is in a quick tempo with a great deal of rubato. The second movement has a light feel that allows the piano, cello, and violin to play off one another. The third movement, Andante is a purely beautiful work that exhibits the Romantic characteristics of passion and drama.

Clara Schumann ceased composing after the death of her husband in 1879 but continued to perform and taught piano in Frankfurt until her death on 20 May 1896.

### **Other Women Composers in 19th c. Germany**

Fanny Hensel was the sister of Felix Mendelssohn . A number of her compositions were published under her brother’s name, including his Opus 8 and 9 collections. Despite the changing and increasing acceptability of having a career in music, Fanny Mendelssohn, like Maria Anna Mozart before her, was impeded by her father’s expectations. Her father wrote to her in a letter on 16 July 1820 “Music will perhaps become his (Felix Mendelssohn’s) profession, while for *you* it can and must be only an ornament.”<sup>66</sup> Despite her father's insistence that she not compose music, Fanny Mendelssohn was exceptionally prolific. In her lifetime she wrote music for organ and piano, chamber, choral, and orchestra music, and around three hundred songs.<sup>67</sup>

Josephine Lang was born in 1815 to a large family of musicians. She was taught the piano by her mother and made her musical debut at eleven, performing the music of Henri

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 154.



Herz<sup>68</sup>. She wrote her first song in 1828 at thirteen. In 1836, she became a singer at the Munich court. She later became acquainted with Felix Mendelssohn, and Robert Schumann. She studied theory with Mendelssohn for some time and Mendelssohn and Schumann inspired her further her work as a composer. In the 1830s, Lang gave piano and singing lessons, while performing and composing. Like many women before her, Lang stopped composing frequently after being married. After the death of her husband, Christian Reinhold Köstlin, she returned to writing and teaching music.

Alma Schindler Mahler was the wife and muse of Gustav Mahler. She studied composition with Alexander Zemlinsky. During her marriage to Mahler, Schindler was forced to give up composing. "The role of 'composer,' the 'worker's' role falls to me, he insisted, 'yours is that of the loving companion and understanding partner.'"<sup>69</sup> In 1910, the year before his death, Schindler was able to convince Mahler to let her continue composing and between 1910 and 1912 fourteen of her songs were published.<sup>70</sup> Today most of her music is lost, because of her flight from Hitler and the Nazi Regime to America. She composed several types of instrumental pieces, but only 17 of songs are still extant.

### **France and England in the Changing Era**

Louise Dumot Farrenc held the highly ranked position of Professor of Piano at the Paris Conservatory for thirty years, and was the only female professor to be hired there in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She was born in Paris in 1804 and studied piano with her godmother, Elisabeth Soria.<sup>71</sup> She is famous for her anthology of Classical music she put together with her husband

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<sup>68</sup> Marcia J. Citron. "Lang, Josephine." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/15965> (accessed 16 November 2012).

<sup>69</sup> Wright, *Music in the Western Civilization*, 592.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 160.

Aristide Farrenc. Titled, *Tresor de's pianistes*, their anthology helped bring music of the previous periods to the attention of the French people. Her most famous composition, *Air russe varié* Piano Variations, was described in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, as: “so sure in outline, so logical in development ... that one must fall under their [the variations’] charm, especially since a subtle aroma of romanticism hovers over them.”<sup>72</sup> She went on to compose many other orchestral and chamber pieces and in 1861 and 1869, Farrenc was awarded the Chartier Prize for her “contributions to chamber music.”<sup>73</sup> Because of the respect and fame she obtained through the years, Auber, the director of the Conservatoire, appointed Farrenc to a position of professor of music in 1842. She remained at the Paris Conservatoire for over thirty-years.

Lovers and mistresses closely associated with prominent musicians were also well versed in music and art. One of the famous lovers of Franz Liszt was Countess Marie d’Agoult. She was a highly educated woman who learned about the great music, art, and literature of the past. Chopin’s mistress Geroges Sand was a novelist and used a male pseudonym to publish her works, because there was still a stigma about being a female writer.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, important women in French and English music included Lili Boulanger, Marie Grandval, and Alice Mary White. Lili Boulanger was a renowned pianist and the first female composer to be awarded the Prix de Rome, the coveted composition prize at the Paris Conservatory. She was born in 1893 to a family of musicians in Paris. She was the sister to Nadia Boulanger, a highly respected composition teacher and their father, Ernest Boulanger, had been a previous recipient of the Prix de Rome. Vicomteses Marie de Reiset de Grandval published a great deal of her works under a pseudonym and was the

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<sup>72</sup> Bea Friedland. "Farrenc." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/093336pg2> (accessed 16 November 2012).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

most played composer in the Societé Nationale de Musique. She was born into an aristocratic family in 1830, which allowed her to study with teacher Friedrich von Flotow and later Camille Saint-Saens.<sup>74</sup> Alice Mary White played a major role in the London music scene and was elected an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music in 1884.

### Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield

Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield was the first internationally acclaimed African American concert singer.<sup>75</sup> She was respected by the likes of Harriet Beecher Stowe and sang for Queen Victoria. She had a resounding voice that helped her gain respect and status. She was born as a slave in 1824 in Natchez, Mississippi, but was moved to Philadelphia and was adopted and freed by a Quaker widow named Mrs. Greenfield. Although it was forbidden by the Quaker community or the Society of Friends, Mrs. Greenfield taught her music and allowed her to

sing. She also learned how to play the harp, piano, and guitar.

Elizabeth Greenfield toured throughout the U.S. and Canada<sup>76</sup> In 1851 she moved to and had her first reviewed performance in Buffalo, New York for the Buffalo Musical Association.<sup>77</sup> She toured under the nickname “Black Swan” which

**Figure 18:** Handbill for a concert by Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield.



<sup>74</sup> Pendle, *Women & Music*, 158.

<sup>75</sup> Richard Crawford, *An Introduction to America's Music*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001) 264.

<sup>76</sup> Julia J. Chybowski. "Greenfield, Elizabeth Taylor." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2088603> (accessed 14 October 2012).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

was given to her by the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser* in 1851.<sup>78</sup> Greenfield's performances usually included a classical selection of songs, but she did perform antislavery songs while on her tour.<sup>79</sup> While touring in the U.S. and abroad, she performed Handel's "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth," from *Messiah*, Wallace's "Cradle Song," Stephen Foster's "Old Folks at Home," Sir Henry Bishop's "Sweetly o'er my Sense Stealing," "Like the Gloom of Night Retiring" from Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, Bishop's "Home, Sweet Home," and Donizetti's "Holy Beauty! Child of Nature."<sup>80</sup> While on tour she was managed by Colonel J.H. Wood. With his help and her raw talent, she gained the attention and respect from many including a journalist from *The Toronto Globe* who wrote: "The amazing power of the voice, the flexibility, and the ease of execution took the hearers by surprise...The higher passages of the air were given with clearness and fullness, indicating a soprano voice of great power...It is said she can strike thirty-one full, clear notes; and we could readily believe it."<sup>81</sup> In 1853, she moved to England to further her studies in music and to escape the persecution of racism in the U.S.

Handel's "I know That my Redeemer Liveth," is scored for solo soprano, harpsichord, and orchestra. This piece is valuable for emerging singers because it shows off the breath control of

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<sup>78</sup> Darryl Glenn Nettles, *African American Concert Singers Before 1950*, (Jefferson: Mcfarland & Company Inc., 2003), 69.

<sup>79</sup> Martin R. Delany and Robert S. Levine. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2003), 228.

<sup>80</sup> Samuel R. Spencer Jr., *Notable American Women, 1607-1950; a Biographical Dictionary*. Ed. Edward T. James and Barbara Sicherman (Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard University Press, 1971), 88.

<sup>81</sup> Eileen Southern, *The Music of the Black Americans: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton Press, 1971), 104.

**Figure 19A:** Example of sustained "sleep" in Handel's "I know That my Redeemer Liveth," from *Messiah*, mm 128-132

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line features a long, sustained note on the word "sleep," which is underlined. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and chords in the right hand. The lyrics "them that sleep, of them that sleep, the" are visible below the vocal line.

**Figure 17B:** Example of leap up a sixth in Handel's "I know That my Redeemer Liveth," from *Messiah*, mm 112-117

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line features a melodic leap up a sixth interval on the word "know." The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and chords in the right hand. The lyrics "know that my Redeemer liveth." are visible below the vocal line.

the soprano. There are long sustained notes for words such as "sleep," and several melodic leaps throughout the work and in the main phrase "I know that my Redeemer Liveth" as seen in Figures 17A and 17B. Greenfield gained a great deal of acclaim for performing this piece. The *London Times* reported "Miss Greenfield sings 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' with as much pathos, power, and effect as does the 'Swedish Nightingale,' Jenny Lind," another famous soprano of the period.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> James M Trotter, *Music and Some Highly Musical People* (Boston: Lee & Shepherd, 1878), 83.

Even though the Nineteenth Century could be called an “era of progress,” by scholars like E. Douglas Bomberger, this was an era of regression for African Americans.<sup>83</sup> At the peak of her career, the political and social status of African Americans was low. Just three years before Greenfield performed for the Queen Victoria of England, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was passed. This act forced Northerners to return any slave, or any black they believed to be a slave, to the South. This created a great deal of tension for blacks, because many free blacks were accused of being slaves, and were sent to the South to be shackled, sold, and forced into slavery. This Act prevented blacks from living carefree lives, and further pushed them into the lowest class in America.

In the same year as Greenfield’s performance for Queen Victoria, tensions rose because of the Kansas-Nebraska debates. Kansas and Nebraska were territories that had not yet been annexed. Before they could become states, the issue of whether each would be a slave or free state had to be determined. The Kansas-Nebraska Act declared that the states would be decided by popular sovereignty, the act of allowing the people of the state to vote and choose. The Act repealed the Missouri Compromise, which prohibited slavery in territories above the 36°30’ line. The extension of slavery into these states worsened the position of African Americans by increasing the visibility of their low position and enslaving their people.

The hardest blow during Greenfield’s career was the 1857 Dred Scott decision. *Scott vs. Sanford* was a Supreme Court case over whether Dred Scott was or was not a free slave. Scott was brought to a free Wisconsin territory by his owner from the slave state of Missouri. Because of the regulations of the Missouri Compromise, which prohibited slavery in territories above the 36°30’ line, Scott was a free man. He was later taken back to Missouri by his master. He argued

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<sup>83</sup> Glickman, *From Convent to Concert Hall*, 153.

in court that because he was in a free state, he too was free. The courts ruled that Congress did not have the right to ban slavery in the states with the Missouri Compromise and that slaves were not citizens. This was devastating for blacks. Those who were free, like Greenfield, and had obtained land, now had no civil rights. Like the other acts of the period, this event was a detrimental setback to the struggle for blacks to obtain social and political equality and recognition.

Because Greenfield was in England, she did escape a great deal of the persecution and turmoil in America. While in England, she lived under the patronage of Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Duchess of Sutherland and was taught by Royal Organist, George Smart.<sup>84</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, novelist of the anti-slavery work: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, introduced Greenfield to many influential people because she highly respected Greenfield's vocal talents. Stowe wrote about Greenfield stating: "her voice, with its keen, searching fire, its penetrating, vibrant quality, its timbre as the French have it, cut its way like a Damascus blade to the heart."<sup>85</sup> Because of her talents and Stowe's assistance, Greenfield performed for Queen Victoria in Buckingham Palace. She was one of the first black performers to appear in front of royalty.<sup>86</sup> The performance was on May 10, 1854, and she was accompanied by her teacher, Sir George Smart. Compared to the U.S., England was more accepting of blacks in the 1850s. Slavery had been abolished in the British Empire in 1833 with the Slavery Abolition Act. Slavery was not fully abolished in America until 1865 with the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The U.K. was more progressive than the U.S. in matters of black rights. Despite her popularity and the better conditions for blacks, Greenfield was not able to financially support herself and had to return to

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<sup>84</sup> Southern, *The Music of the Black Americans*, 104.

<sup>85</sup> Crawford, *An Introduction to America's Music*, 264.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

the U.S. in July 1854. Her manager, Colonel J. H. Wood, the former manager of the Cincinnati Museum, had stolen her earnings and disappeared, leaving her without a dime.

After her return to America, she continued touring, directed a music studio in Philadelphia and eventually an opera troupe. Later in her career, Greenfield took up the profession common for many black women.<sup>87</sup> By becoming a teacher, Greenfield helped to provide the black community with first-rate musical education. African Americans obtained an education in music in four ways, as described by historian, Josephine White: “1) through private instructions in metropolitan centers, 2) through private instruction abroad, 3) through instruction at a few American conservatoires of music after the 1860s, and 4) through instruction at private Negro land-grant colleges that were founded as co-educational institutions for ex-slaves.”<sup>88</sup>

Black churches, like the African Methodist Episcopal or the Zion Churches, also provided places for blacks to learn and perform. Some of Greenfield’s most well-known students included Carrie Thomas, the “leading soprano of the original Hampton Institute Singers,” and Thomas J. Bowers, a prominent African American concert singer.<sup>89</sup>

Greenfield was an important figure because, despite the many political setbacks during her career, she was still able to obtain recognition from many for her talents. She showed people that talent can cross color barriers. She also opened doors for many aspiring black performers after her. Greenfield died on March 31, 1876 in Pennsylvania.

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<sup>87</sup> Josephine Wright, “Black Women and Classical Music” *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1984), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40003932> 19 (accessed October 13, 2012).

<sup>88</sup> Wright, *Black Women and Classical Music*, 191.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.



## V. Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century

After the emergence of the Industrial Revolution, women began assuming new roles and positions including professional orchestra players, professors of music, and composers of large scale works. “In the late Victorian era women were still thought to be better suited to the small, light genres of salon music than to larger, more intellectually demanding compositions.”<sup>90</sup> Despite this assumption, many prolific women composers created works in the large-scale genres of ballet and opera. Women were able to take on new roles because of the Industrial Revolution, with its new devices that helped women save time in the home. This gave them more time to focus on issues outside the house. The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 brought women suffrage and inequality to the forefront of public conversation. As the Seneca Falls Convention showed, women wanted to obtain equal political and social rights with men.

### Cecile Chaminade

Cecile Chaminade was born in Paris in 1857. As a child she received singing and piano lessons from her mother and later was taught by faculty members of the Paris Conservatoire including Antoine Marmontel, Benjamin Godard, and Félix Le Couppey.<sup>91</sup> At eighteen, she made her debut performing the piano. Her playing was so well received, she toured Germany and England, and even performed for Queen Victoria. From 1908-1909 she toured the United States, obtaining accolades and acclaim. She was a highly awarded performer and composer. She received the Jubilee Medal from Queen Victoria in 1897 and was the first female composer to receive admission into the French Legion of Honor in 1913. She was a prolific composer as well. She wrote two-hundred solo piano pieces and one hundred twenty five songs for solo voices, a

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<sup>90</sup> Glickman, *From Convent to Concert Hall*, 170.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

symphonic ballet entitled *Callirhoë*, an opera entitled *La Sévillane*, and many other works.

Chaminade gained a great deal of popularity because of women's groups known as Chaminade Societies which showed resounding enthusiasm for her music.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 171.

*Tristesse* Op. 104 or *Au pays dévasté* was written as a reaction to the Great War.<sup>93</sup> It is a beautiful, dramatic, and melancholy piano work by Cecile Chaminade. It is obvious that this piece is a reaction to the War because of the juxtaposition of two ideas; a beautiful A Theme and a dramatic B Theme. The A section contains a great deal of the graceful rubato melodies to represent the hope and peaceful moments after the war. The B theme features more dramatic octaves and rising and falling chromatic notes as seen in Figure 20, to represent the fighting and struggles of the conflict. It begins with an A theme in an andante tempo, leading to a B section with allegro tempo, a reiteration of the A theme followed by a B theme now with a vivace tempo

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<sup>93</sup> Chris Woodstra, Gerald Brennan, and Allen Schrott, eds. *All Music Guide to Classical Music: The Definitive Guide to Classical Music* (San Francisco: Backbeat, 2005), 268.

marking, and ending with a slightly varied A theme. The alternation of slow and fast sections of this work are ameliorated by a transitional cascading note pattern. There is a great deal of legato and rubato in the slower tempo A theme, as compared with the B. Strong staccato techniques and

**Figure 20:** Tristesse, Op. 104, Cecile Chaminade, mm. 36-44.

faster rhythms are used in the B themes. This work, and many others by Chaminade, was significant but it was not identifiable as being by a man or woman. This song is neither dainty nor characterized by notions of the period of what was feminine. This work is similar to other works of the period, including Chopin, and easily falls into the same level of quality without standing out as being written by a female composer. As this work shows and contemporary

composer Ambrose Thomas remarked: “this not a woman who composes, but a composer who happens to be a woman.”<sup>94</sup>

### Amy C. Beach

Amy Marcy Cheney Beach was the first successful American female composer of large-scale music and was an exceptional composer and performer. She wrote many popular works including “The Year’s At the Spring” from *Three*

*Browning Songs, Op. 44* and the Mass in E-flat

major which was performed by the Handel and

Haydn Society in 1892. She was born in

Henniker, New Hampshire in 1867, and as

scholar Glickman explains, Beach was

remarkably talented at an early age: “she sang a

large repertoire of songs at the age of two, could

improvise an alto line to her mother’s soprano,

and demonstrated absolute pitch by crying

whenever her mother sang a song to her in the

‘wrong’ key.”<sup>95</sup> At the age of four, Beach

composed her first works and played the piano. At

nine years of age she began piano lessons with Ernest Perabo and later was taught by Carl

Baermann. She was only professionally taught counterpoint for one year by Junius Welch, but

she independently studied from books to learn new techniques and skills.

**Figure 21:** Photo of Amy Beach circa 1900.



<sup>94</sup> Glickman, *From Convent to Concert Hall*, 170.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

Amy Marcy Cheney made her musical debut on 24 October 1883 at the age of sixteen, performing Ignaz Moscheles' *Piano Concerto No. 2* at Chickering Hall in Boston. Just one year after her debut, Beach was honored with performing with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Theodore Thomas Orchestra.

At eighteen, Beach married Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach. Her husband did not approve of her career because he did not believe it was an appropriate profession for a doctor's wife. Dr. Beach forced his wife to reduce her performances to annual charity recitals, decline payment for performances, and never teach. Despite these limitations, Beach was allowed to compose. Most of her works were for solo piano, voice, and chorus. After her husband's death, she continued to compose and went back to performing publically. Her most acclaimed works include her *Variations on Balkan Themes* for piano, Op. 60 and her Mass in E-flat major, Op. 5.

Her 1897 publication, *Waltz Op. 36 no. 3*, is a delicate and beautiful work. Though the key is C Major, there are moments of chromaticism, and colorful notes, such as of a flat and d sharp as seen in Example 1. This work contains a ternary structure, which is ABA. The A sections are in the key of C but the B section modulates to E Minor and G Major. The music is dancelike because it contains a typical waltz triple meter. It sticks to a higher register and is quite pretty sounding, pleasing, graceful and has interesting chord changes.

**Figure 22:** Beach *Waltz*, Op. 36 no.3, mm. 18-26.



### Rebecca Clarke and the Growth of the Orchestra

Rebecca Helferich Clarke was a pioneering figure in the growth of the orchestra as the first professional female in an orchestra. She was born in Harrow, England in 1886. In 1903 she began her studies of the violin and music at the Royal Academy of Music. In 1905, she ceased her education at the Academy when Percy Miles, her harmony teacher, proposed to her. In 1907, she continued her education at the Royal College of Music, but was unable to finish because she was banished from the home, after criticizing her father for his extra-marital affairs.<sup>96</sup> When she joined the Queen's Hall Orchestra in 1912 as a violist, she became the first professional woman in an orchestra ensemble. She was admitted by Sir Henry Joseph Wood, the orchestra's co-founder and occasional conductor. Not only was Clarke a well-respected violist, but also composer. In 1919 she wrote her Viola Sonata and in 1921 her Piano Trio.

Rebecca Clarke was also a pivotal figure because when "American patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge commissioned the Rhapsody for Cello and Piano in 1923," it made her "the only woman composer the famous Maecenas Coolidge supported."<sup>97</sup> After the outbreak of World War II, Clarke moved to the United States of America to live with her brothers. After coming to America in 1942, she became a nanny and ceased composing.<sup>98</sup> Two years later, she married a founding member and teacher of music at Juilliard. They met while studying at the Royal College of Music in Britain, but crossed paths in Manhattan, NY. He encouraged her to continue composing and performing, but she only worked on three arrangements entitled "God Made a Tree," an arrangement of the song "Down by the Salley Gardens" and, around her 90th birthday,

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<sup>96</sup>Liane Curtis. "Clarke, Rebecca." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 30, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44728>.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

revisions of earlier scores, including “Cortège” and “The Tiger.”<sup>99</sup> She sold her Stradivarius and initiated the May Mulke cello prize at the Royal Academy of Music; she also began to write a memoir. She never returned to Britain after the Second World War, but died in New York at the age of ninety-three in 1979.<sup>100</sup>

### **Famous Teachers-- Nadia Boulanger**

Nadia Boulanger was a teacher who was famous for teaching the likes of Aaron Copland, Philip Glass, Igor Markevitch and John E. Gardiner and being awarded second in the Prix de Rome contest in 1908.<sup>101</sup> She was the first woman to conduct many major orchestras in America and Europe including the New York Philharmonic. Boulanger was born into a musical French family in 1887. Her father, Ernest Boulanger, was a teacher at the Paris Conservatory, and her mother, his former student. Nadia was enrolled in the Paris Conservatory in 1897 and was taught harmony by Paul Vidal and composition with Charles-Marie Widor and Gabriel Fauré, and the organ with Louis Vierne and Felix Alexandre Guilmant. After her schooling until the 1920s, Boulanger spent most of her time composing. She wrote an opera, *La vile morte*, and many other vocal works. She stopped composing after the death of her sister, Lili Boulanger, and took up the teaching profession.

Boulanger was well known as a teacher at many institutions. She first taught at the École Normale de Musique in Paris, from 1920 to 1939, and at the American Conservatory from 1940 to 1946. After World War II, she became a teacher at the Paris Conservatory. During her travels she also taught at Wellesley College, Radcliffe College and the Juilliard School.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Caroline Potter. "Boulanger, Nadia." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 30, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03705>.



Boulanger was the first woman to conduct many orchestras and societies. In London in 1937, she became the first woman to conduct a complete concert for the Royal Philharmonic Society. She was also the first full concert female conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1938, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in 1939 and the Hallé Orchestra in 1963. She conducted the premiere of Stravinsky's work *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto* in 1938 in Washington D.C.<sup>102</sup>

### **World War I – Women Gaining New Roles and More Respect**

World War I had a large impact in increasing the social standing and capabilities of women. Because of industrialization and many of the able-bodied workers on the war front, women became a major part of the labor force. Women in the work force broke down barriers and changed their roles. Women were now seen as more capable and independent functioning members of society. After the war, a wave of feminism swept western civilization and women began to fight for rights, including the right to vote. Women were now accepted into music societies and respected for their musical contributions.

On August 20, 1920, the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was added to the Constitution, and women in the United States earned the right to vote. This large success in the fight for women's rights created a surge in feminism and self-expression that gushed through North America and Europe. Because of this, women like Germaine Tailleferre, Imogen Holst, and Ruth Crawford Seeger made great accomplishments. Germaine Tailleferre, born in 1892, was the only female member of *Les Six*, a group of composers working in Montparnasse, and holder of the Paris Conservatory's highest awards. In addition to being accepted to musical societies, women were now taking respected positions as teachers at highly esteemed musical institutions. Imogen Holst,

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

born in 1907, was the daughter of the famous composer Gustav Holst. Holst composed several works that achieved a great deal of success and was awarded the Cobbett Prize for a string quartet in 1928.<sup>103</sup> Ruth Crawford Seeger was one of the first composers to “extend serialism to musical elements other than pitch and to develop formal plans based on serial operations.”<sup>104</sup> During this period, not only was there an increase in the acceptability of female composers, but also an increased acceptance of new musical forms, such as jazz.

### **Jazz**

The emergence of jazz in the early twentieth century helped African Americans come to the forefront of music composition and performance. Jazz was a new musical form that combined ragtime, the blues, and popular dance music, and emphasized the use of improvisation. Jazz was most often performed by blacks. It was popularly believed that women could not understand and properly compose jazz music. According to scholar Michael J. Budds, an anonymous male jazz pianist stated “Jazz is a male language. It’s a matter of speaking that language and women just can’t do it”<sup>105</sup> It was also believed that “women function in secondary roles as pianists, singers, dancers, and mothers, homemakers, breadwinners, and sex objects, but seldom are first-line musicians.”<sup>106</sup> Many women were hindered in their ability to become great jazz musicians outside of keyboard players and singers because of outstanding circumstances. Wind instruments were commonly used in jazz music, but the process of achieving proficiency required lessons. Many African Americans could not afford the cost of lessons nor had the ability to afford the instruments. During this period, a musical profession was not encouraged for

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<sup>103</sup> Bob Morabito, "Ruth Crawford Seeger," *Composers' Forum*. 10 October 2010, <http://composersforum.ning.com/forum/topics/ruth-crawford-seeger> (accessed 15 September 2012).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Michael J. Budds, ed. Pendle, *Women & Music*, 467.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

women. Gender norms of the period limited women to domestic roles or commonly believed gender appropriate professions such as a secretary or a teacher. Women of the period defied popular assumptions and expectations and became leading jazz composers and performers of the time.

Mary Lou Williams was an African American jazz pianist and composer who broke popular stereotypes about women's abilities and achieved greatness because of her talents. Her success was even measured in the critical belief that she "played like a man."<sup>107</sup> She was born in Atlanta, Georgia on 8 May 1910, but grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She originally

**Figure 23:** The first variation from *Little Joe from Chicago*, a work improvised upon by Mary Lou Williams, mm. 1-12.

performed under the name Mary Lou Burly, using her stepfather's surname, but gained popularity as Mary Lou Williams, using her first husband's last name. She first

joined a group in 1925 led by her husband Jon. Four years later she joined a group under the direction of Andy Kirk as its lead pianist and arranger. Williams' arrangements helped the group

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

gain popularity and acclaim. She also wrote music for others including Benny Goodman, Earl Hines, Tommy Dorsey, and Duke Ellington, for whom she wrote *Trumpets No End*.<sup>108</sup>

The *Trumpets No End* is a fast rhythm, high-energy piece that features a roaring trumpet solo throughout. The work is significant in its ability to show off the trumpet's talents while ensuring interesting and complementary parts for the accompanying music. The piece begins with a short line from the horns and an opening clarinet phrase that leads into the solo trumpet. Since jazz music is meant to be partly improvised, the trumpet presents several ideas that range in meter and style. It is a wonderfully upbeat work that can always surprise listeners because of its amount of improvisation with varying embellishments.

Mary Lou Williams's skills are revealed in her improvisation upon the song "Little Joe From Chicago." (see Figure 23) The work originates from the latter part of the 1930s, but Mary Lou Williams improvises upon the piece in the 1970s in Figure 24. The original uses a blues progression, common for the basis of jazz improvisers. The common harmonic structure and the structure is four measures of I, two measures of IV, two measures of I, one measure of V, one measure of IV, and two measures back to the I, totaling twelve measures. Mary Lou Williams provides her own personal take on the song by playing numerous variations. There are five variations in the example. The first presents the theme. The second features new additions to the melody and small accents in the left hand. The third features staccato repetitions in the right hand and the tremolo notes as an add-on to the melody. The fourth has new rhythms and additions in the left hand as the focus of this variation. The fifth variation features new rhythms in the right hand by added new and faster notes onto the melody.

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<sup>108</sup> J. Bradford Robinson. "Williams, Mary Lou." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30355> (accessed 7 December 2012).

Williams obtained many achievements in her lifetime. In 1940s, she was able to start her own band and leading orchestras began to perform her works. In 1946 the New York Philharmonic Orchestra played movements of her piece, *Zodiac Suite*, at Carnegie Hall. She was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship, nominated for a Grammy Award, and received honorary



**Figure 24:** Mary Lou Williams's improvisation upon *Little Joe From Chicago*, variations 1-5.

doctorates from several American universities.<sup>109</sup>

Williams was important because she acted as a role model for aspiring African American musicians, especially women, and has had a lasting impact to this day. Each year since 1996, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. hosts an annual Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival and in 1983, shortly after her death, Duke University created and named the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture in her honor because of her impact, talents, and service to the institution.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

### **Billie Holiday**

Billie Holiday was one of the best singers of the jazz era and the co-writer for several songs that later became jazz standards, including “Fine and Mellow.” She was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on 7 April 1915 in New York City. Holiday had rough beginnings. Her father abandoned her mother at an early age, so she was left in the care of relatives who treated her poorly. She was not well educated and grew up in dismal circumstances. She first began performing in 1930 in Brooklyn but moved to a club in Harlem, which was known to be a hotbed for jazz music and its followers. She was discovered by John Hammond who set up recording sessions and arranged gigs for her. The recordings of Holiday earned her a great deal of popularity. All types of musicians and people asked her to perform for them, after the release of her recordings. In 1937 she became the first African-American singer to be featured by a Caucasian orchestra, and in 1946 she was a part of a film *New Orleans*, that featured Louis Armstrong and Kid Ory.<sup>111</sup>

Although the 1930s and 1940s was a period of great success for Holiday, it also was her downfall. During this period, she began to use hard drugs and consume large amounts of alcohol, which caused the deterioration of her health, leading to her early death at age forty-four.<sup>112</sup>

### **Ella Fitzgerald**

Ella Fitzgerald was a talented American jazz singer who gained international recognition for her talents, improvisational ability, and her vocal range, which spanned three octaves. Fitzgerald was born in Newport News, Virginia in 1918. Like Holiday, she grew up in poor conditions with relatives instead of her parents; she, too, performed in Harlem clubs and soon

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<sup>111</sup>James Lincoln Collier. "Holiday, Billie." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/13207> (accessed 7 December 2012)

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

became discovered by bandleader Chick Webb. Fitzgerald, who was in a music group, soon joined, sang for, and led it after Webb's death. She left the group and became internationally renowned after her tour with the Norman Granz's 'Jazz at the Philharmonic' and after singing with her husband Ray Brown's group. Her acclaim even brought her to Carnegie Hall, where she performed with Duke Ellington. Later on in her career she made several recordings of songbooks devoted to various American composers such as George Gershwin, Irving Berlin and Richard Rodgers. In her later career, she appeared with various popular performers, including Count Basie, Oscar Peterson, and Duke Ellington.<sup>113</sup>

"Mack the Knife" is one of the most famous works sung by Ella Fitzgerald. She had a famous live recording of the piece in 1960, which featured an improvised verse after she forgot the lyrics.<sup>114</sup> This version earned her a Grammy Award. In her career, she would win a total of thirteen Grammy Awards. She received other accolades including a National Medal of Arts by Ronald Reagan and the Presidential Medal of Freedom by George H. W. Bush. Ella continued to record and perform until late in her life. In 1991 she made her last recording and two years later she had her last performance. She died peacefully in her home at the age of seventy-nine in 1996.<sup>115</sup>

## VI. Opera in the Mid-20th Century

Because of new inventions, composers and performers were gaining more exposure than previously. Recording devices, radio broadcasts, LPs and tapes allowed for the average person to

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<sup>113</sup> J. Bradford Robinson. "Fitzgerald, Ella." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09760> (accessed 28 March 2013).

<sup>114</sup> Stuart Nicholson, *Ella Fitzgerald: A Biography of the First Lady of Jazz* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1994), 190.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

gain access to the musical greats of their time. This allowed for the flourishing of opera and opera singers, as the music came into the home of the common man. One prima donna who benefited from the new technologies of the day was Maria Callas.

Maria Callas was one of the most renowned opera singers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She was awarded the greatest soprano of all time by the *BBC Music Magazine* and awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. Callas was born in Manhattan in 1923, but studied music in Greece at the Athens National Conservatory in 1937. She made her professional debut in Athens as Beatrice in Franz von Suppé's *Boccaccio* in 1940 and continued performing in several operas including d'Albert's *Tiefland* as Santuzza and Beethoven's *Fidelio* as Leonore. In 1944, World War II forced her back to the United States. Soon after her arrival she was offered a contract at the Metropolitan Opera, which she soon turned down. She believed the contract was unbecoming of her talents and that she was too over-weight for the roles it offered her, such as the lead in *Madame Butterfly*. She got married in 1949 to Giovanni Battista Meneghini, who soon took control of her career. After the war ended, she performed in Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* in Verona and as Aida at the La Scala Opera House in Milan. This set her career to new heights.

She gained a great deal of fame during this period that was offset by her tumultuous tantrums and diva attitude. Around 1959, she began developing vocal problems, "inequality of registers, harshness in the middle voice and tremolo on sustained high note," which was attributed to her quick weight-loss and poor health. After losing her voice and the love of her life Aristotle Onassis to Jackie Kennedy, she never recovered and remained out of the public eye. She died of a heart attack in 1977 at the age of fifty-four.



## VIII. The Modern Age

### Freedom of Expression - Evolution of Atonality and Neoclassicism

In modern society, women enjoy a plethora of freedoms, which allow them to pursue any profession, including music. The freedom to choose and social acceptance of music as a profession has allowed for an abundance of talented women composers and performers to come to the forefront. Because of new technologies, women have a copious amount of time to spend on music, and education is generally free and available in today's world. With new media such as Amazon and iTunes and new social norms, female musicians do not have to worry about getting married to be financial stable and can support themselves from their musical endeavors.

### Joan Tower

Joan Tower is the most influential living American composer because she has been a three-time Grammy award winner and in 1990 she became the first woman to win the prestigious Grawemeyer Award, which gives a \$150,000 prize for a large orchestral work. She was born in New Rochelle, New York on 6 September 1938, but mostly grew up in South American countries like Bolivia, Chile, and Peru. She studied at two American colleges, Bennington College from 1958 to 1961 and Columbia University from 1965 and 1978. She founded the group Da Capo Chamber players in 1969. Many of her works have been written for this chamber ensemble. She played with the group for fifteen years and together they won the Naumburg Award in 1973.

Tower has also been commissioned for many works. She has received commissions from various foundations including the Koussevitzky, Fromm, Jerome and Naumburg. *Sequoia* was a work commissioned by the Jerome Foundation and it was debuted in 1981 by the American Composers Orchestra under the direction of Dennis Russell Davies. Since then, this work has been performed by many orchestras including the San Francisco Symphony, New York

Philharmonic, and the St. Louis Symphony. She has been the composer-in-residence for the St. Louis Symphony since 1985 and has worked with several orchestras since.<sup>116</sup>

Many of the initial works by Tower in the 1960s used the serial technique, including *Prelude for Five Players*. According to Tower, it “is divided into six sections which are differentiated by changes in tempo, texture, register and dynamics which, for the most part, are associated with various hierarchies of the twelve-tone set structure.”<sup>117</sup> She shifted away from serial procedures and began to produce more lyrical music with more sonority in the 1970s. In the 1980s, she moved away from creating music in this way and began to focus more on rhythm.

In 2005 Tower created her critically acclaimed album, *Made in America*. One of the most fascinating pieces on the album is *Concerto for Orchestra Part One*, a creation from 1991. The work features concertos for the flute, violin, and clarinet. The piece first begins pianissimo and slow but gradually builds and becomes louder and louder, until it has a strong booming fortissimo. The crescendo and climb is accented by the increase in instruments as the music progresses. The piece is meant to take the listener on a travel down a large and “spacious” road.<sup>118</sup> Because of the eerie, mysterious, and booming nature of the piece, one can imagine a deep outer-space odyssey. Throughout the piece the energy jumps and grows, as expressed through the “alternating chords” and motives.<sup>119</sup> The album earned Tower three Grammys for Best Classical Album, Best Classical Contemporary Composition, and Best Orchestral Performance.

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<sup>116</sup> Sharon Prado Howard, “Tower, Joan,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49198>. (accessed 4 December 2012).

<sup>117</sup> J. Michele Edwards, ed. Karin Pendle, *Women and Music*, 325.

<sup>118</sup> Joan Tower, *Composer Notes for Concerto for Orchestra*. Schirmer. [http://www.schirmer.com/default.aspx?TabId=2420&State\\_2874=2&workId\\_2874=34004](http://www.schirmer.com/default.aspx?TabId=2420&State_2874=2&workId_2874=34004) (accessed 1 December 2012).

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

In May 1998, Joan was inducted into the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters for her accomplishments in music and she was also awarded the Delaware Symphony's Allred Du Pont Award for Distinguished American Composers. Tower was also a teacher of music at Bard College beginning in 1972. She briefly left her post, and has continued teaching in 1987 until the present day.

### Laurie Anderson

Laurie Anderson is a pioneer in electronic music of the twentieth century and the inventor of several instruments and devices that she commonly uses in her performance art shows and recordings<sup>120</sup> As Anderson explained: "I've never been a filmmaker or musician in the classic sense...I use film and music...to be a subtext for the stories. The real subject, the real work, is the spoken words. I feel that's what I'm best at."<sup>121</sup>

Anderson was born in Chicago in 1947 where she learned the violin at an early age. Despite being a proficient musician, she studied visual arts at Barnard College in 1969 and at Columbia University in 1972. Her training and creativity spilled over to her musical creations. She has used graphics, lighting, film, speech, and electronic devices in her artistic works and these carry over into her music.<sup>122</sup>



**Figure 25:** Performance artist Laurie Anderson performs at the Highline Ballroom in New York in 2007. Photo by Damien Neva.

<sup>120</sup> Douglas Eby, "Laurie Anderson: Be Something Different Every Day If You Want," The Talent Development Resources, 22 May 2012, <http://talentdevelop.com/5803/laurie-anderson-be-something-different-every-day-if-you-want> (accessed 15 September 2012).

<sup>121</sup> Caterin Roma, Ed. Karin Pendle, *Women & Music*, 344.

<sup>122</sup> Susan McClary, "Anderson, Laurie," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42737> (accessed 4 December 2012).

She invented several instruments including the tape-bow violin. The instrument is similar to an electronica violin, but it does not have strings. Instead of a bridge, it has a tape head, audio tape instead of horsehair and magnetic tape instead of a fingerboard. The sound it produces is similar to the scratching of vinyl.

As scholar, Susan McClary stated: “Anderson has achieved greater visibility than most composers of her generation, in part because of her originality: coming to music from the visual arts, she was free to manipulate sounds as she liked. Her unexpected crossover into the popular domain brought her a degree of fame usually unavailable to avant-garde artists, making her one of the most influential women composers of her time.”<sup>123</sup>

### **Sally Beamish**

Sally Beamish is a highly decorated composer who is influenced by jazz and traditional Scottish music. She was born in London in 1956. She studied the viola, the violin, and composition at the Royal Northern College of Music . She was a professional viola player in several ensembles throughout London. Her first commissioned work was *Dance and Nocturnes*. As she herself has admitted, motherhood and Scotland have greatly influenced her *Tuscan Lullaby*....It features poems by Elizabeth Jennings in Latin. *Piobaireachd* stands out as a work with definite Scottish influences.<sup>124</sup>

### **Jennifer Higden**

Jennifer Higdon is a Pulitzer-prize winner and neo-Romantic composer. She has been commissioned by several organizations, including the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Baltimore, Dallas, and Chicago. Higdon originates from Brooklyn, New York but grew up in Atlanta, Georgia and Seymour, Tennessee. She learned to play percussion instruments in middle

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Sophie Fuller, "Beamish, Sally," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45630> (accessed 4 December 2012)

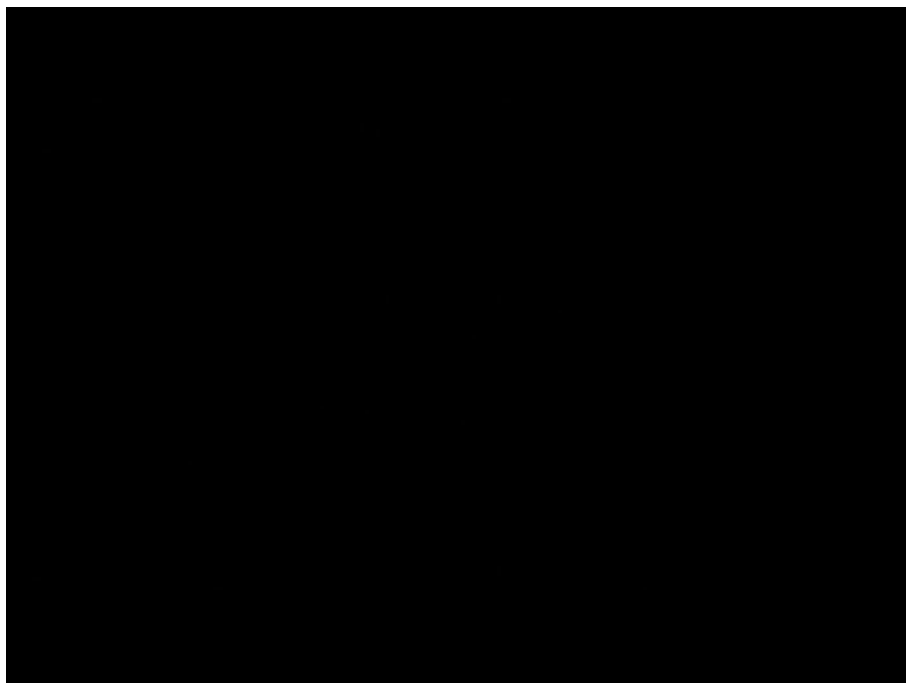
school and taught herself the flute. She became a flute performance major at Bowling Green State University where she wrote her first compositions.

One of her most famous compositions and one of the most played contemporary pieces by orchestras in America is her 1999 work, *blue cathedral*. It has been performed by more than 400 orchestras. When writing the piece she stated: "It was about deciding if life was going to be about living or about death...[but] I was surprised it turned out so positively."<sup>125</sup> The work is an upbeat piece with a rondo form. Higdon attempted to create the recurring A section to represent the "peace and repose of the afterlife."<sup>126</sup> The death of her brother Andrew Blue inspired the composition. The piece begins with a light and slow section, alternating strings and chimes, as heard in Figure 26. In the program notes, Higdon explains that she is represented by the solo flute and her brother, Andrew Blue, is the clarinet. In writing the piece, Higdon states "I found myself imagining a journey through a glass cathedral in the sky. Because the walls would be transparent, I saw the image of clouds and blueness permeating from the outside of the church." For the piece she continues: "The listener would float down the aisle, slowly moving upward at first and then progressing at a quicker pace, rising towards an immense ceiling which would open to the sky...as the journey progressed the speed of the traveler would increase rushing forward and upward."

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<sup>125</sup> Andrew Druckenbrod, Interview with Jennifer Higdon, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Pittsburgh, November 2, 2005.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 26:** Introductory section of Jennifer Higdon's blue cathedral performed by the New England Youth Conservatory Philharmonic Orchestra.

Figure 27: Jennifer Higdon's blue cathedral mm 143-153.

90

141 142 143 144

fl. 1

fl. 2

ob. 1

cl. 1

bn. 1

CHORUS WHOLE BILLS  
PLAY 21

hp.

vn. 1A

vn. 1B

vn. 2

vn. 2A

vn. 2B

vla.

vla. A

vc.

vc. A

cb.

cb. A

The musical score consists of 21 staves, each with a label on the left. The top four staves are for woodwinds: fl. 1, fl. 2, ob. 1, and cl. 1. The fifth staff is for the bassoon (bn. 1). The sixth staff is for the harp (hp.). The next five staves are for brass: vn. 1A, vn. 1B, vn. 2, vn. 2A, and vn. 2B. The next two staves are for violas (vla. and vla. A). The next two staves are for violas and cellos (vc. and vc. A). The final three staves are for cellos and double basses (cb. and cb. A). The score features various dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*. There are several annotations in the string staves, including 'CHORUS WHOLE BILLS PLAY 21' and 'PLAY 21' with arrows pointing to specific measures. The measures 141, 142, 143, and 144 are highlighted with boxed numbers above the staves. The overall texture is dense and atmospheric, characteristic of Higdon's style.





32

149 150 151 152 153

fl. 2  
ob. 1  
cl. 1  
cl. 2  
bn. 1  
bn. 2  
tpc. 1  
tpc. 2  
tpc. 3  
trom. 1  
trom. 2  
b. trom.  
tb.  
b.p.  
kybd.  
timp.  
perc. 1  
perc. 2  
perc. 3

149 150 151 152 153

vin. I  
vin. 1A  
vin. 1B  
vin. 2  
vin. 2A  
vin. 2B  
vln.  
vln. A  
vc.  
vc. A  
cb.  
cb. A

“I wanted to create the sensation of contemplation and quiet peace at the beginning, moving towards the feeling of celebration and ecstatic expansion of the soul, all the while singing along with heavenly music.” One can hear this because, as the second example will show, the slow tempo ceases and the work starts to build in sound and tempo. The detached fast rhythm of the strings and the resounding horns add life to the slow work, creating new heights in the music.

The work ends much like it began. As Higdon wished to show, “at the end of the work the instruments continue their dialogue, but it is the flute that drops out and the clarinet that continues upward progressing the journey.” This can be seen in Figure 28. The slow tempo is maintained throughout the piece until the end. The work experiences a building of sound and tempo near the conclusion. The rhythm in the drums and the loud horns add new life to the music, bringing the work to an exciting end.

## CONCLUSION

As centuries have passed, there has been a crescendo of women’s opportunities and activities and it is reflected in the increased number of female composers and performers. As illustrated in this thesis, each woman was able in some way to overcome traditional barriers and pursue music. They had to fight and bypass the four main obstacles to pursue their passion for music. Amy Beach overcame the barrier of social norms, by bypassing her husband’s wishes that she cease performing publically. She still played at an annual charity event and after his death resumed her public performances. Kassia was able to overcome the barrier of time by joining a convent, where time was ample. The convent allowed her to overcome the financial limitation by providing her with economic stability. Louise Dumot Farrenc overcame the barrier of obtaining a

music education, which impeded women for centuries. She also established a new opportunity for all women by becoming a professor of piano at the renowned Paris Conservatory.

When you compare Hildegard von Bingen of the middle ages with Jennifer Higdon, you can truly see the new freedoms, and the lack of limitations placed upon women of today. Women of the Twenty-First Century who wish to pursue music as a profession do not face as many barriers as their past counterparts. Education is often free and easily accessible. Obtaining financial stability is easier and does not require a woman to marry, as it had been in the past. Technological advances have freed up ample time for leisurely pursuits, such as music. There are no overwhelming social barriers that inhibit women from becoming involved in music. Bingen was limited greatly by the restrictions of her time in the Middle Ages. The church provided her refuge and allowed her to pursue music. Higdon, on the other hand, had musical education to pursue a career, and she was able to do so freely. Even though they belong to two very times and places these two seemingly different composers have connections—first in their passion for music, but also they in their desire to describe the spiritual world through music, as seen in Higdon's *blue cathedral* and Bingen's *O Spiritu Sancto*.

Though they are only now being recognized, women throughout history have had a great impact on music and have been involved with it for centuries. There are still many women who have yet to gain recognition for their accomplishments or to be discovered. The women that have been discovered are pivotal and important. It is clear that their accomplishments have furthered the cause of women who wish to pursue music in the future.

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