

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

School of Music

Sharing the Spotlight: Perspectives on Programming Choral Music by Women Composers

A Master's Paper

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Music

July 2020

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Introduction

For generations, women composers and their music have existed in relative obscurity. Compared to their male counterparts, female composers often faced cultural and societal obstacles such as family duty and motherhood. In addition, religious establishments imposed beliefs or ideas about what women were capable of and expected to do. Although a very small number of women composers found prolificacy and popularity during their life, over time their music was more often forgotten and, if mentioned, appeared as passing footnotes in history. While some “matriarchs” such as Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179), Fanny Hensel (1805-1847), and Clara Schumann (1819-1856) garner attention in general music history texts, their lives and music are frequently compared to their male counterparts- husbands, brothers, fathers, and teachers. Despite these three women having received widespread recognition, many other women’s music has been overlooked, or forgotten, often to the detriment of the Western canon.

The history of performing organizations in the United States also demonstrates a significant lack of representation for women composers. Founded in 1883, the Metropolitan Opera has performed two operas by women composers, Ethel Smyth (1903) and Kaija Saariaho (2016). It was only in 2018 that the famed opera company announced their first commissions for women composers Jeanine Tesori and Missy Mazzoli. According to the Institute for Composer Diversity, based at the State University of New York in Fredonia, the 2019-2020 Orchestral Season contained 4,047 compositions performed by 120 professional, American orchestras. The study concluded 309, or 8.0% of the total works performed were written by women composers.¹

In most educational institutions in the United States, the Western canon sets the foundation for much of the music performed and studied today. Citron suggests, “As in

¹ <https://www.composerdiversity.com/orchestra-seasons>

literature, the many canons in music fall into two main categories: disciplinary and repertorial.”² Bearing those divisions in mind, one must consider curricular materials that influence pedagogical disciplines and research habits as well as current sources for procuring music such as publishing companies’ promotional materials.

According to Baker, “The inclusion of women composers in college music history textbooks might be said to be a key element in equipping music educators to teach their students about the role of women in music history.”³ Until studying at Pennsylvania State University, I scarcely experienced undergraduate discussions about women composers. While musicology courses certainly, albeit briefly, addressed composers such as Hildegard von Bingen and Clara Schumann, women composers were disproportionately represented in the standard curricula. Certainly, my experiences are not singular to one particular program but stand as a testament of the current reality. Laura Artesani elaborates, “Many music educators complete their degrees with little or no knowledge of women composers and performers. As educators, we naturally tend to teach the same material we have been taught; rethinking traditional curricula and searching for new resources can be a daunting and time-consuming task.”⁴

A study conducted by Vicki Baker observed the contents of three textbooks focused on Western music, often used in college curricula: *Music in Europe and the United States: A History* by Edith Borroff; *A History of Western Tonal Music* by Donald Grout and Claude Palisca; and *Music in Western Civilization* by Paul Henry Lang⁵. The study reviewed multiple

² Citron, Marcia. *Gender and the Musical Canon*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

³ Baker, Vicki D. “Inclusion of Women Composers in College Music History Textbooks.” *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 25, no. 1 (2003): 5-19.

⁴ Artesi, Laura. “Beyond Clara Schumann: Integrating Women Composers and Performers Into General Music Classes.” *General Music Today* 25, no. 3 (2012): 23-30.

⁵ Borroff, Edith. *Music in Europe and the United States*. Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice Hall, 1971, 1990.
Grout, Donald and Claude Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1960, 1973, 1980, 1988, 1996, 2001.

Lang, Paul. *Music in Western Civilization*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1941, 1997.

editions of each text published between 1941 to 2001 and observed whether the number of women (composers, performers, and relatives) mentioned increased over time. From the 1971 publication to the 1990 editions, the sum of women included in Borroff's editions more than doubled from 18 to 37. The study included multiple editions of *A History of Western Music* (1960, 1973, 1980, 1988, 1996, 2001), and over the forty-year timespan, the presence of women in the text increased from 2 to 27. While the number of women mentioned increased in both Borroff's and Grout/Palisca's texts, the number in Lang remained stagnant and showed no improvement upon the 4 women (2 performers, 2 relatives) named in the 1941 and 1997 editions. Baker suggests the lack of inclusivity in *Music in Western Civilization* "reflected the small amount of information available and lack of importance placed on women's contributions to music."⁶

In an informal study, this author reviewed *Choral Repertoire* by Dennis Shrock, a text commonly used in collegiate choral literature courses.⁷ Published in 2009, Shrock offers an overview of choral literature from the Medieval Era to Modern Eras ending in 2009. Each era is sectioned according to geographical area (England, Italy, Austria, Germany, etc.), and composers within those nationalities are organized chronologically. The majority of entries include a composer's biography, full name, birth and death dates, and a list of notable compositions. The text surveys a total of 587 composers of which, only sixteen, a mere 2.7% are women. Three of the women composers do not appear as standalone entries but are mentioned in passing: Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979), Eleanor Daley (b. 1955), Alice Parker (b. 1925). Clearly there is a paucity of women composers mentioned in significant textbooks, thereby making it difficult for

⁶ Baker, Vicki D. "Inclusion of Women Composers in College Music History Textbooks." *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 25, no. 1 (2003): 5-19.

⁷ Shrock, Dennis. *Choral Repertoire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

students, future educators, and performers to gain knowledge of women composers throughout history.

When searching for new repertoire, many conductors rely on ‘one-stop-shop’ music retailers. J.W.Pepper has a significant website which includes a searchable section titled, “Editor’s Choice,” a category that suggests some degree of predetermined quality. On May 30, 2020, I conducted a survey of this list in an effort to discover the number of women composers represented by one of the most well-known music retailers. In order to maintain relevance to this paper, “collegiate ensembles” was used as a search-criteria, yielding a total of 792 pieces. Only 72, or 9% of the compositions were composed, arranged, or co-arranged by a woman composer. Only 57 women were the sole composers. Eight pieces were co-written with one or more male composers, and seven were originally composed by a woman but the arrangement was by a man. While discussing on how to prepare future women composers, Baker and Biggers state, “Gender imbalance in ensemble programming will continue to be a problem until there are more female composers adding their music to the publishers’ catalogs.”⁸

Recent discussions about composer diversity have challenged long-held conventions. At professional conferences of organizations such as the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), a variety of issues pertaining to sexuality and gender are being more widely discussed, including the need to program more music by women composers. In March 2020, a panel discussion was held at the ACDA 2020 Eastern Region Conference and signified a turning point for the direction of this paper. Research was presented by the moderator Andrea Maas; the panel comprised six women conductors: Felicia Barber, Aimee Bushey, Shoshana Hershkowitz, Lauren Torres Lambert, Rebecca Martinez, and Dawn Willis. The premise of the conversation

⁸ Baker, Vicki, Carter Biggers. “Research-to-Resource: Programming Ensemble Literature Composed by Women,” *National Association for Music Education* 36, no. 3 (2018): 51-54.

focused on how women conductors program music by women composers. While there was unanimous agreement that women composers are indeed overshadowed, the discussion lacked forward momentum. The group never arrived at nor answered the question, “Now what? What do we do from here?” In light of this, the final three chapters of this paper address questions intended to help provide action ideas for the future.

Furthermore, the title of the workshop was *Women Giving Voice to Women: Experiences of Women Choral Conductors Programming and Performing Works by Women*, which possibly communicated a feminine ‘call to arms’ rather than an inclusive invitation to examine how all conductors can best support women composers. While, of course, discussions that explore how to promote women in the arts should occur in multiple venues, such titles might deter men from participating, somewhat evident by the modest number of male attendees. Responsibility to redress the imbalance of women composers in classical music should fall on all musicians.

The emphasis of this study is to examine the current practices and philosophies of collegiate choral conductors pertaining to programming compositions by women composers. Data was collected via personal interviews with highly regarded conductors, either by the online platform Zoom, telephone, or email. All verbal interviews were transcribed by the author of this paper and later edited and approved by the participants. David Fryling, Amanda Quist, and Sandra Snow submitted their responses via email. Both men and women conductors were invited to participate, with a final result of six female and five male participants. This inclusive approach provided an opportunity to determine whether there might be any notable differences in approach to the subject matter between the genders.

Chapter 1: What criteria do you use when choosing repertoire and how important a consideration is the gender of the composer?

Jerry Blackstone:

Well, I'm retired now but when I was working a lot, [choosing repertoire] was the part of the career I hated the most. It was always difficult to choose the right repertoire for the right situation, for the right choir, and there is just so much to choose from. A consideration that I had when I was choosing a lot of repertoire was its place in the program. Is it the first piece, the last piece, the second piece? Is it at the end of a section? Also, what is the text? Do I find the text compelling? Is it a wordy text? Sometimes I get more than a little tired of agenda texts or texts that preach. I will look at the musical language. What is the style? What are the challenges? Where does it fit in? Where does it fit in having a goal of a balanced year and having a balanced program and having a balanced three- or four-year cycle for an academic setting? Have the students experienced Renaissance polyphony, something that is truly *avant garde*, the height of Romanticism? Have we tasted Bach and Brahms and so on?

I am looking for a variety of emotions and a variety of vocal demands. If I had my druthers every concert would be filled with slow, beautiful music, and it would almost be entirely Brahms. So, I have to always balance that so that it is not all slow beautiful music and not all Brahms.

I would say the gender of the composer is something that I seldom think of unless I am specifically thinking of if I would like to do a concert that is built around that or focusing on that. Having said that, I program music by women frequently and have given compositional awards to women composers on a frequent basis. I would say it is not something I think about a great deal, but it is also something that I don't ignore.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

I try to think about criteria as a yearlong concept. At the University of Akron, I keep in mind a couple of things. One, I believe I have a responsibility to give a full scope of

history. The hope is to get a scope from the Renaissance (perhaps the Medieval) all the way through to commissions. I do like to commission works, but I want to give a full scope throughout the year so that every student is able to get all different styles.

Also, topics- I do believe that things should be contextual and relatable to both the vocalist and the audience member. I do like themed concerts. Some people think that's cachet or "gichi". There needs to be some kind of cohesiveness so that the audience member and the vocalist can walk away saying, "Okay, there was some kind of comprehensive message that happened."

I do take in mind diversity, though not necessarily just about gender, but diversity in composers that are not as represented such as sexual orientation (like transgender) and ethnic background. I do try to think of diversity in that way, although it's not necessarily diversity for diversity's sake. That actually bothers me in a very controversial way, being someone who is 'diverse'. I try to think of diversity in terms of access. The student should have access to certain composers. I give them access by programming them.

As far as gender, I would lump it into diversity. I have a friend who visited me and saw my wall of composers and said, "Wow, those are all dead, white guys." They were right but I am a history buff and I do have that myopic, tunnel vision of music history that has been presented to me throughout my education. So, I may have a bunch of dead, white men on my wall, but I do try to keep diversity in mind [while programming].

Caron Daley:

When I am choosing vocal music, I look first and foremost at text and decide whether or not that text is something I want to have performed or sung. I consider whether or not the text is timeless, whether it's appropriate, whether it's suitable, whether it's interesting, and how the composer uses the text. I look at the compositional style to make decisions about the musical value as well as the textual value. I think about auxiliary things like instrumentation and the performance space. There are so many things that go into that particular discussion.

Simultaneously, I am constantly sourcing and looking for music by women. I do not evaluate the quality of a piece because it is written by a woman, but I am evaluating the quality of that music the same way I would evaluate any piece. I do not look at a piece and say, “This piece is by a woman, so therefore I should consider that in evaluating its worth.”

Peggy Dettwiler:

First of all, I want to say that I love programming and I take it very seriously. I definitely have considerations in mind when I program. Sometimes if it is a general program, I will focus on having a variety of pieces. I try to balance sacred and secular, tempi, style, historical importance, and also how it will apply to the specific group that will be singing. I very much believe in the resulting flow of the concert. I like to program so that there is a ‘full course meal’, so that you have the feeling of a start and a closure. Most of us close with something joyous, happy, fast, and sometimes showy but I always remember a concert at an ACDA conference, when the choir closed with *Danny Boy*. It was just jaw dropping because it was such a different feel at the end and was really impactful.

I will look at gender at some point, but it will not be what I look at first unless that is the theme. A few of my programs that I did had gender as a theme, and we wanted to focus on women composers or women poets.

Patrick Freer:

The number one criterion is based on what skills and experiences do I need to provide to the choir through the repertoire that I am proposing that they sing. Secondly comes the particulars of the repertoire that is in question. I view repertoire as teaching material, not as concert material. If they can be the same- super. Regardless, I want to choose teaching materials that teach what I need to have taught, that brings up the concepts and skills that I want to have the choir engage with, and secondarily produces a musical experience at the end that is both satisfying for the choir and the audience.

The tertiary consideration contains a lot of factors such as text, language, theme, and the composers that are represented. Just as I would probably not want to have repertoire chosen from a five-year period (unless that was the design), I would not want to limit the composers to a specific country, idiom, or personal characteristic such as gender or biological sex. That said, when I have chosen the entire program, I am going to go back and look to see if I overlooked something or if I could have chosen a piece by a woman composer and if that would affect the balance of the repertoire.

David Fryling:

My criteria probably mirror most anyone's: ensemble skill, perceived quality of music, perceived quality/importance/relevance of text, overall program story arc, etc.

In all honesty gender has only relatively recently become one of the more important criteria of my concert planning. This conscious shift on my part comes from an awareness and investment in broader issues of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (DEIB).

Kristina MacMullen:

When I am programming I have essentially two different realms in which I program. I have my ensembles at the University, and honor choir events where I am guest conductor. So, each one of those has a different sort of end in terms of requirements.

I have the Music major ensemble at UNT [University of North Texas], which has a certain amount of considerations. Then I have a non-Music major ensemble that is kind of blended; it's a treble choir. In my mind when I am programming, I think, "What are the educational goals of the ensemble?" Beyond that, I develop a spreadsheet on which I write down several different characteristics of the music: genre, composer, meter, tempo, mode, language, etc. Regardless of an ensemble, I try to bring as much variety as I can.

With regards to whether I am including women composers, I am not able to do it on every single program because there is such an imbalance in repertoire. What I have

started to do is look at the entire year as my body of repertoire, rather than singular concerts. Personally, I strive to have at least one piece of music by a woman [composer] on each concert. Definitely when I am leading treble choirs, in particular honor choirs, I aim for two or three pieces. If that is the population I am working with, I am going to program more because I think it is really important for those young women (the people in the ensemble who identify as women) to have examples.

Amanda Quist:

I think first of designing a program with an emotional arc that will provide the choir, audience, and all involved a journey that is meaningful and says something. I work to find pieces that are from several time periods and genres in an effort to teach style, performance practice, and deepen our musical skills. For example, in programming for the Texas All-State, I wanted something that incorporated style from the Baroque period, so I chose a double choir piece written by a woman. In choosing specific pieces, I try to incorporate non-male and/or non-white composers on every concert, unless it is genre specific (Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, for example). It's important to acknowledge underrepresented voices for students and the audience.

Philip Silvey:

I pick music for the Eastman Women's Chorus (and have for the last 10 years) and occasionally for guest conducting engagements, which of course could be treble choruses, children's choruses, or mixed choruses. What I try to do is think of the learner or the participant in the chorus. We are an academic ensemble and early on in my time with the Women's Chorus, I thought out loud to myself, "What is in this for them?" Many students only participate for a single semester, so what do they get if they spent fifteen weeks in this ensemble? That drove me to think more about designing programs around what the student can benefit or learn from.

Lately, I have been thinking in terms of what some people call a 'theme'. I think of it as an essential question or sort of a central focus that will drive the rehearsal cycle which, for me, is generally six weeks. We only meet once a week for two hours so that is only

twelve hours total. We usually do five pieces, sometimes a multi movement piece, and then a couple other pieces. I am always looking for variety and a mix of sort of upbeat and more slow, lyrical pieces. I account for the keys sometimes and try to have varied tonalities.

Considering the gender [of a composer] has evolved for me. There was a window of time during 2011-2014, where there was a festival that the Eastman School hosted which featured only works by women composers. It was one week long; they would often bring in well-known women composers. When the festival ended, I wanted to continue that, which evolved slowly into me choosing to include works by women composers in every concert. I came to the realization that it should not necessarily be a once-a-year practice, but a part of every concert. Now, gender definitely factors into my choices.

Sandra Snow:

The way I choose repertoire largely depends on the context. For my university groups, I have a responsibility to explore with them a wide range of historical and contemporary music. I do endeavor to represent music by women when possible (and it nearly always is possible). My professional choir, *mirabai*, is generally a project-based ensemble so those programs are thematically conceived and often around topics meaningful to women and women's experiences.

Brandon Williams:

I consider the time I have in rehearsal. How many performances do we have within the semester or performance cycle? What is the ability of the ensemble? I consider the balance between challenging them but not overwhelming them. I think about language or the amount of text. I work to have variety, and try to avoid a concert of all slow, lugubrious music or of all Baroque music, unless that was the theme.

With respect to women composers, it is all about mindfulness and awareness. I strive to make sure that women and people of color are represented.

Chapter 2: Knowing that quality of composition plays into repertoire selection and since the gender imbalance has been so strong through history, should we simply program as much music by women as possible and later determine what is good music and what is not?

Jerry Blackstone:

I would start with what is good and what is not. Personally, the bar has to be high. That doesn't mean it is all one style. I think you can have a high bar in every single style even arrangements of folk songs, arrangements of hymns, and new or old music. So, if you say, "I really would like to program music by women composers" then I would say who are the best? What is the best music by the women that I know of? I don't think we have to program substandard music by anybody.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

For me, music is not delineated between bad and good but, rather, less expressive and more expressive. Whether something is less expressive or more expressive is all toward whether it aligns with your taste. For instance, I could really enjoy a piece by Fanny Mendelssohn by finding it very expressive because it aligns to my taste. However, it might not align to somebody else's tastes. Regardless, it is still written by a woman or someone who identifies as a woman. Expressivity is all determined by the access we give to the vocalists and the audience members.

However, I don't think we should be programming concerts of just women [composers], because it shouldn't be a novelty anymore. Just like when Marin Alsop was the first female conductor at the BBC Proms she said, "I am so honored to be the first female conductor at the BBC Proms, but I think it is a tragedy that into the 2000s, I am the first female conductor." Are there enough women composers that are being performed? Probably not. However, there are more [composers] coming out like Dale Trumbore and Abbie Betinis. There is also Caroline Shaw getting the Pulitzer.⁹ There are more and

⁹ Female Pulitzer Prize Winners include Ellen Reid (2019), Du Yun (2017), Julia Wolfe (2015), Caroline Shaw (2013), Jennifer Higdon (2010), Melinda Wagner (1999), Schulamit Ran (1991), Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (1983) <https://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-category/225>

more composers that are in the now and a lot of composers in the past that I admittedly don't know about. However, I think that it would be a disservice to the gender if concerts by just women [composers] continued to be a thing.

Caron Daley:

We should program as much music by women as possible, AND we should evaluate its quality before we program it. Again, I do not think we can conflate the issue here by saying, "I need to program as much music by women," because there is enough music by women out there in order to choose quality compositions. So, even though women are underrepresented on concert programs, there is a vast [amount of] repertoire out there.

I decided last summer that I am going to just focus on choral music by women for a couple of months. I took a particular composer and listened to everything she wrote and immersed myself in it. Like a lot of us have been doing, I had done a concert of all women composers in 2019. I found a lot of stuff I did not know about that was really rich. I think people are underestimating how much material is here. So, it was a really useful exercise because looking for choral repertoire can be overwhelming.

Peggy Dettwiler:

That is a good question, but I would say no. I want the quality of the music to be high. There is so much music to choose from, and I have about 4,000 pieces of music in my library. I will never get to perform them all in my lifetime. I am cognizant and aware of women composers. We know that we do not have as [much music] on record historically by women. So, if we want to program historical music, the choices are much less.

Patrick Freer:

My answer is pretty simple: no. Our job is primarily to teach music and find the best repertoire that teaches the skills that you need to teach in that moment. Now, you are only going to be teaching six or so pieces at any given time, so out of the thousands and thousands of pieces out there, these should be the best six pieces you could find. To the extent we can, we are going to have a lot of choices of pieces that fit any particular

category. That is when we start looking for diversity of all different types, including the gender of the composer.

David Fryling:

I'm confused by this question. When does one determine "what is good music and what is not" if not when they are programming a piece? I personally can't imagine programming something that I believed to be "not good." I think this line of thinking is used as an excuse not to do the work of finding diverse voices who have been—traditionally and frustratingly—more difficult to uncover because of their non-representation in the larger publisher's catalogues. (It has changed significantly in the past few years, but that doesn't erase centuries of obfuscation).

Kristina MacMullen:

Absolutely not. We need to be programming music that is worthwhile. There is a lot of junk out there, no matter what the gender of the composer. We have to be really careful because the music we choose determines so much about our curriculum. I think it is harder to find repertoire by women simply because there are fewer pieces. For instance, if you go to a grocery store looking for sardines, and they only carry a certain amount, then you have to really hunt in the store to find them as opposed to if you were looking for something like bread. The question of quality is paramount. If you cannot find a piece of music that is composed by a woman that is to your standard of quality, then keep looking. They exist; you just have to hunt.

Amanda Quist:

This is a great question! I like to program music by women, but only if I feel strongly about the piece's quality. If I don't, I'm not a very convincing teacher/conductor. I think it's important to incorporate women whenever we can, and usually, there isn't a reason not to.

Philip Silvey:

The two words in your question I will highlight are ‘quality’ and ‘good’, which are hard to define. A word I tend to use is ‘well-crafted’. It is not the creativity part but the nuts and bolts of what makes a choral composition successful when performed. For me, the purpose of the piece is important. Someone might say, “This is a quality piece, and this is not.” I would say, “Well, it depends on what the purpose is. Who is performing it and for what purpose?” That affects what I would consider a good choice, depending on what I as the conductor/educator am hoping to achieve.

To answer your question: yes, I attempt to aim for 50% women composers. There is a bigger picture of diversity, which I am certainly interested in, but I have a very specific interest in gender, because it seems so inequitable. I know that is true for other ethnical and cultural backgrounds of composers, but the absence of women composers especially bothers me because I conduct a women’s group. The small percentage of representation is just mind boggling to me.

A few years ago, I committed to never conduct a program that did not have at least one woman composer on it. I said that in a presentation I gave at the University of Toronto and one of the graduate students present said, “Why just one?” I took that to heart, so I actually do aim for more than one per concert. It is a big factor for me right now and that is my choice. I recognize the power that I have and the message in the choices I am making. [Choosing repertoire] can be influenced by a lot of considerations, but conductors can always both meet their criteria, whatever those are, AND select works by women composers, if they are willing do the work.

Sandra Snow:

No, our singer’s relationship with the music is too important to program music that is not well-crafted. It is our responsibility to do our homework and to be mindful, when programming, of looking for music by women.

Brandon Williams:

So, I think the idea of 'quality' is a slippery slope. Whenever we use the word 'quality', we tend to make tricky value judgements that drip of elitism. A more helpful context for describing music might be 'craftsmanship.' Does the composer choose the best materials for the job, and do they manipulate those materials in a way that make sense?

As far as choosing music and deciding later, I think it is really about leveling the playing field. We should not think of it in terms of programming music by women just to do it. Rather, it is more the intent and an acknowledgement that there is unequal representation and systematic oppression that has kept and keeps women from having a seat at the table. I trust that the majority of conductors will choose well-crafted music.

Chapter 3: In today's world of accessibility via the internet, why do you think music by women is performed less frequently than music by male composers?

Jerry Blackstone:

Well I think there have been several hundred years of only male composers that we know. I'm overstating my case because certainly if you peel back a few layers you can find the Fanny Hensels and the Amy Beaches and so on. But by and large until we get to about 1880 or 1890, it has been only male composers. So that's 130 years that we have had women composers becoming more obvious and being published more often. I think that is one of the logistical reasons why if you are looking for something from the classical period, it is really hard to find anything by a woman. If you are looking for something from the Renaissance, it is really hard to find something by one. If you are looking for 1950s to now you can find a ton of good stuff by women composers. For me, choosing repertoire that has a period of style and harmonic/musical language and so on, there are probably going to be more options from male composers than there are for women composers, but that does not take the onus off finding the best.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

There is a lot of time to catch up on. We have had years of exposure to all male-dominated music, so that is what we know. Perhaps women composers are on the rise, but that is centuries of being inundated with music by male composers to compete with. There has been a norm that has been set, and I think it is going to be that way for a long time unless we start to unearth more female composers. For example, I particularly love Felix Mendelssohn but I don't really love a lot of Fanny Mendelssohn's music. It doesn't grip me, and I don't think that has anything to do with the fact she is female. Her music doesn't grip me and nor does Clara Schumann's. Maybe it is years of male bias, but it might be we aren't exposed to enough of it.

Caron Daley:

That has to do with history. If we look at female conductors, for example, we have a 200-year history of men in conducting. Until we have a 200-year history of women in

conducting, it is just not going to feel like we are at parity. And so, our incredible canon in choral music is over 1000 years old and men are privileged in that canon. We come through our training as choral conductors and we take choral literature. We learn about 95-98% music by men. That is just an inherent imbalance that we have to recognize. You are right about the internet: women's music is just as accessible as men's music today. But people have to take a lot of time to familiarize themselves with what is available.

Historically, we know a lot of women did compose music, but it was not published. We are going to get more and more [music by women] as musicology kicks in on this topic by finding and discovering music by women that we did not know about before. I expect that historical aspect will catch up a little bit as well over time.

Peggy Dettwiler:

There is so much repertoire available, particularly historically. My husband is a musicologist and I run things by him sometimes. He had done some work with Fanny Hensel, and it has been documented where Felix's name might have been put on a Fanny Hensel work because of the times. Of course, Clara Schumann was in the shadow of her husband, but he encouraged her to compose, although she never did again after he died. I am a real fan of Hildegard; she must have been just an amazing woman. So, because there is so much repertoire to choose from, particularly in the historical Canon, it is hard to create a balance at this point.

Patrick Freer:

This question is a little bit confusing to me, because we have to specify the context. Are we speaking about middle school choir? Are we speaking about the Minnesota Orchestra? I do think that the internet provides accessibility to different genres and to more repertoire than we might have had, but we still have to buy it. You still have to have a budget. Most schools and colleges I know rely heavily on their choral library. For instance, last season I was given a budget of zero at my university.

To address the second part of your question, I think that a part of this is inertia and if a preponderance of the music we have programmed and continue to program is in our choral libraries, it is going to take time to catch up. I do not think it is good or bad, black or white. I think it is one that gradually moves forward.

David Fryling:

The legacy of having their names/pieces omitted in choral repertoire classes and the legacy of having their names/pieces omitted in publisher's catalogues. The fragmentation of the publication industry coupled with the sudden glut of individual new voices online (along with their individual websites/storefronts) has, ironically, removed our ability to do our proverbial "one-stop-shopping." (The loss of quasi-monopolistic control by a few publishers is not to be bemoaned, but the editorial function these publishers serve(d) is not something most of us have the time set aside to recreate in our own hectic job flows; I can personally attest that it's getting more and more time-consuming for me to not only uncover "all" the voices I possibly can but also to vet them according to whatever standard of "good music" I hold to be true).

Kristina MacMullen:

There is still a huge imbalance in the amount of music written by women. If you look at any reading sessions that somebody might hold at a convention, how many of those pieces are composed by women? It's simple math. If there are one hundred choices and ninety of them are by men, the odds suggest fewer available selections composed by women. Fewer offerings lead to fewer performances. I think it is just an imbalance of what is available to us.

Amanda Quist:

I think there is a lack of awareness of what is available. Also, people tend to program music they have experienced as a singer or as an audience member, so until we program more and more music by women, that won't change.

There is also the fact that there is simply less music published by women than by men, so you have to make an effort to incorporate their music- some conductors may not want to take the time.

Philip Silvey:

I think it's a precedent and the assumptions that people operate on. The more difficult question is, "Why do people program one piece over another? How important is that name of the composer?" The trick of the internet is that you have to use it wisely. It has everything and is bottomless, so you would really have to intentionally use it. Although there is the ability to find and hear infinitely more performances of compositions, I do not think it is enough that it is available. Works by women and diverse composers need to be put into a position of visibility. The issue is representation.

Sandra Snow:

Because we remain a patriarchal and largely white community led by the academy. We perpetuate the old tropes and sometimes do not see the gender bias. The intersection of race and class complicate things further. Until our schools of music self-identify as part of the problem, we will continue to struggle to be adequately represented. At the base of the problem is university's audition policies that privilege those who study music of white European men. It also doesn't help that women are still greatly underrepresented in positions of leadership such as conducting or leading top graduate programs.

Interestingly, top women composers I know have left the academy and are forging their own paths. There is something about their experience there worth researching.

Brandon Williams:

Ease of internet access does not address the underlying systems of oppression; it only reflects the void that already exists. There is some intentional work that has to be done concerning systems of oppression.

Chapter 4: What resources have you found helpful in finding music by women composers?

Jerry Blackstone:

When I was working a lot, composers would frequently send me scores, which was a real resource. One time I wanted to do music by Roxanna Panufnik, who is a fantastic British composer. I contacted her and said, “I am thinking about doing some of your music because I have heard wonderful things about it. I don’t know it and I don’t have any scores. Would you suggest a couple of pieces? I would be happy to purchase the scores.” She sent a box of scores! She said, “Just take this and look through it.” It was wonderful and we did some pieces and her music was wonderful.

Reading sessions and getting your music on reading sessions is truly important for any composer, not necessarily just women. They are the part of a conference that I hate the most because I would rather just do it on my own on a piano instead of sitting around and going slowly through each piece. I usually know if I want to do a piece after about a minute.

I also look to my colleagues for repertoire. Those recommendations are really important.

Publishers still send me everything new that they published the last year. I will look at that if I am looking to program something specific.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

Well, I went to a really awesome session at NCCO (National Collegiate Choral Organization) in Maryland [in November 2019], where the speaker talked about all female composers of the 18th century that no one knows about. I was excited to go [to the session] because I thought, “This is a hole in my education and my own exposure.” The speaker made a Google Drive that everyone had access to.¹⁰

¹⁰ See “Suggested Resources” Appendix, pg. 75

Aside from that presentation I do not have very many resources for just female composers. I don't have a one-stop place to go, and it's not really something I have searched for.

Caron Daley:

Two resources that come to mind are the Elektra Women's Choir in Vancouver and the Orange County Women's Chorus. Both have outstanding websites. The Elektra Choir have annotated everything they have performed and have a giant list. As a conductor, those two lists are essential to me.

The Choral Public Domain Library (CPDL) is developing its historical footprint. More and more, we are seeing scores on CPDL by women from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical eras. That has been really useful. If you really want to do the historical digging, you probably have to look to dissertations, because, again, publications have not really caught up. If you want to progress to 20th or 21st century composers, the internet is full of it. This is where I think a lot of smaller publishers can contribute and help us out. You can go to MusicSpoke or to Graphite Publishing or perhaps lesser-known publishers like Cypress Choral Music if you to find want female composers from Canada.

One thing I found really useful is talking to other conductors or asking other conductors for their programs. I think we need to "crowd share" right now because we realize there is a backlog and a real need. And maybe we don't have the exact amount of time that we need to do this research. The more we can "crowd share" with our colleagues who care about this, the better. In some instances, I think women are really on the forefront here. Female conductors are really pushing this agenda in a lot of ways. The more we can collaborate, the more we are going to be able to share what is out there.

Peggy Dettwiler:

Well, certainly conferences. I went to the NCCO (National Collegiate Choral Organization) in the Fall and they had several sessions by women composers. Melissa Dunphy is one [composer] I met there, and I was really quite intrigued by her work.

Conferences like ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) and NCCO do performances and reading sessions. I also use some CDs but more and more I might find a composer I like and go on YouTube. We are blessed now with the internet, so we can find things pretty easily.

Patrick Freer:

For me, programming music by women composers is not my driving force in what I do every day. As with other conductors, I find we tend to program composers who we trust and who we value to do the right thing by the kids and the ensembles that we sing with. We tend to go back to them over and over again. Usually I will be in contact with that composer via email or phone call and I will say, “What do you have that fits this? I need this type of piece for this spot in the curriculum or program? What can you recommend?”

I almost never listen to CDs anymore, because I do not have a CD player. I no longer listen to whatever comes from publishers either. I go to YouTube and look at concerts by ensembles that I trust. I look at performances of repertoire by composers that I trust. I would say more often than not, they tend to be women composers. I have found that women composers are much more willing to share ideas and offer suggestions, even if I never take them. That has been a good thing for me to learn. I have to initiate personal connections with the composers because the composer does not know I am looking for them.

David Fryling:

ACDA R&R sites, following social media voices/groups centered around issues of DEIB, and ensemble program archives (websites).

Kristina MacMullen:

First of all, I love YouTube because it is so easy to take a rabbit trail and discover a new composer’s voice. Also, we have many avenues with which we can connect with composers. Composers are increasingly savvy in regard to social media and connecting to their audiences. It’s good to be active on social media with other conductors that you

respect. I have a small group of five friends, and it is not uncommon for us to send a text saying, “I am looking for a piece that does this or has this capacity, etc.” That’s a place where I get a lot of repertoire. They are people I implicitly trust, are seasoned pedagogues, and also creative risk takers.

Amanda Quist:

ACDA, NCCO, friends, conferences, recordings, and there are online sources such as Oxford Music Online, Choralnet, etc.

Philip Silvey:

I have some resources, but I don’t know if I use them all that much. The Orange County Women’s Chorus has a women composer database; it has 421 entries. There is a recent *Choral Journal* article¹¹ that has a history of works by women composers. It is brief but it lists a lot of names. There is also the Institute for Composer Diversity at composerdiversity.com.

These all provide names, and having a name is a good starting point for me. The problem with the Institute for Composer Diversity, for example, is if you search for ‘women choral’ it gives you a long list and then links to [the composers’] websites. So, I have a composer I have never heard of, I click on the link, and then I navigate her website. They probably compose more than choral works, so I have to figure out where the choral works are. If I am lucky, they have been separated. Then I go to a page and it is a list and maybe there are links to recordings and sample scores. If I am looking just for treble, it’s great if they have it narrowed down. Let’s say they have twenty pieces listed and they are alphabetized. In order to be fair to that composer, I have to listen to twenty pieces which could be three to five minutes a piece. I honestly sample them, listening to only the first minute or so to decide if I am interested or not. I fatigue after about three pieces but can do that for a little while, maybe three composers. I have not really done that consistently where I sit down and make myself do that. I think it is just unrealistic.

¹¹ Issue May 2019, See “Suggested Resource” Appendix, pg. 74

I would like to see a curated, searchable database similar to what the Orange County Women's Choir has, but is regularly updated. That may be something in development with composerdiversity.com. Rob Deemer is the person who has spearheaded it out of SUNY Fredonia. They are working on developing more searchable web sources, so that is in the works. I think what needs to be matched is the criteria we use to decide: level of difficulty, accompanied/unaccompanied, text, etc. I would like to see that for women composers, where you can narrow it down to get to three pieces that fit some pretty specific criteria and I can listen to those pieces.

Sandra Snow:

It is a network approach. Seek out choirs you admire and begin tagging/tracking their repertoire. Many women's choirs, for example, have rich websites with lists of their past music. For example, the Elektra website, or Lorelei. The GALA choruses of women have embedded in their mission to do music by women so there is a high percentage of music they do by women composers. Seek out women composers you admire and commit to doing one of their pieces a year until you know their catalog well. Go to conventions. Use internet resources. For historical music by women, learn choirs that are recording those music, Candace Smith, for example, and her group Artemis.

Brandon Williams:

Suggestions from friends and colleagues are a vital resource. Databases of music by women composers are increasing in number. My training at Michigan State really shaped my orientation and thinking about programming. Sandra Snow in particular is a major force of female empowerment and promoting music by women and music for women's ensembles. I also have a network of friends and colleagues whose scholarship is deeply rooted in this work.

Chapter 5: Specifically, regarding gender choirs, what has been your experience finding music by women composers?

Jerry Blackstone:

Except for a brief time in the early 1980's, I have not conducted an SSA (A) choir. My gender specific work was primarily with the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club (1988-2002). I know of Nancy Cox's pieces for TTBB, but have, unfortunately, performed few works for TTBB by other women composers.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

I would surmise that there is more SSAA music by women than there is TTBB music written by women. I can only think of one or two composers who have written TTBB music, but I can think of a multitude of composers both those who identify as male or female who have written for SSAA. I feel as though if one were to lean in one way or the other, I would lean that there is more music by female composers written for SSAA.

Caron Daley:

Well, historically there is a lot written for treble choirs by women, and I am not 100% sure why that it is. I come from working for years with youth and children's choirs and I never had trouble finding female composers. When you get into the professional-grade choral repertoire, I think sometimes there is less music by women composers. In Tenor and Bass music, there seems to be even fewer female composers represented, and I am really not sure why that is. I don't really want to make a statement about it, except to say that it seems to exist. I heard a wonderful program at NCCO (National Collegiate Choral Organization) by a TTBB choir and they performed all music by female composers.

Peggy Dettwiler:

Well certainly there is more available for SSAA choirs and less for TTBB. I mean, there is still that stigma that women do not conduct TTBB choirs and do not write for them. Sometimes there might be a work that was originally written for SATB but is transcribed

for TTBB. We did an Eleanor Daley TTBB piece *Love Came Down at Christmas* at the last concert. TTBB pieces are there but there is an imbalance between the two.

Patrick Freer:

I think this question is a bit problematic, since our profession is moving away from “gender choirs” and toward “voice-part” choirs. This opens up all kinds of possibilities, including considerations of programming pieces by transgender composers. Gender-based choirs will largely disappear within the next few years, I think, in favor of choirs determined by voice-part. This will occur more slowly in conservative regions of the country, such as in the South where I am located.

David Fryling:

Very much easier to find women’s voices represented in repertoire for SSAA voiced choirs. More challenging to uncover them in mixed ensemble repertoire. I don’t work with TTBB ensembles.

Kristina MacMullen:

It is far more common for me to work with treble choirs than to work with a TTBB choir. For treble choir, it is pretty easy. I would attribute that to the recent development of women who sing. We see in the Romantic period that there are singing societies comprised of women. Prior to that, there was not really a constituency, except for convents of women who were singing. Today, we have a lot of exciting composers who are writing really great music for treble choruses. I would say in the last thirty years the content has changed dramatically. If you look in the 1970s and 1980s, there are common tropes that are explored, often dealing with love or flowers, etc. But that has changed, and I think the internet has given people who may not have had a voice (because they were confined by the big publishers) a way to promote their music and share it.

Amanda Quist:

There are far more female composers for treble and children's choirs than there are for tenor/bass choirs. There aren't many women who have written specifically for male or tenor-bass chorus, but there are a few.

Philip Silvey:

I am generally able to find [music], but it takes effort. There might need to be some statistical research to see if women composers are being commissioned to write for treble choruses more frequently. I went to some sessions at the [2020] ACDA Eastern conference, and there was one with a panel of women composers. They talked about how people say there is not enough SATB works by women composers or even TTBB. That is hard for me to say because I do not often look at SATB music because I am not regularly programming for that. My experience is, if I want to find it, I can.

Sandra Snow:

I answered this above.¹²

Brandon Williams:

I do not think it is difficult. When you are trying to find something for a specific theme then it might take some digging. If you are intentional and mindful and you do your homework, you are going to find a lot of music.

¹² See Chapter 4, pg. 25

Chapter 6: Who are some of your favorite female composers and pieces you admire? Why do you feel drawn to this composer/music?

Jerry Blackstone:

I have a lot of respect for Chen Yi. I have done a piece by Elaine Hagenberg; her music tends to be a little saccharine at times but still very beautiful. I think her *O Love* is very beautiful. Abbie Betinis is terrific. Jennifer Higdon, of course, is a major composer. Gabriela Lena Frank is a composer whom I respect. I don't think she has written much choral music, but everybody is playing her orchestral music. Augusta Read Thomas has fantastic work; I have not done any of her music though. I am a fan of Caroline Shaw's *To the Hands*. Cecilia McDowell is a British composer for whom I have a lot of respect; I have not done any of her music, but I would love to look more at it. I think Gwyneth Walker's music is terrific; it's a little uneven but I am a fan and I have done a lot of her pieces. Jocelyn Hagen is another composer who is terrific. I have commissioned and done several pieces by Kristin Kuster. I have a lot of respect for Kristin; she is a terrific composer.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

Caroline Shaw is amazing. Watching her perform with Roomful of Teeth was phenomenal. We staged *To the Hands*, and it is really gripping music. I love what Abbie Betinis is doing for the Justice Choir and she has the mind to wrap around rounds. She talks about it like a puzzle and her story of writing them with her parents is just really inspiring and personal. She creates these amazing harmonies that are not just major chords but minor sixth jumps both horizontally and melodically as well as stunning chords like major seventh or minor seventh chords. I feel bad saying this, and perhaps this is because I have a different perspective of the idea of being a female or perhaps my own idea of being a female conductor, but I don't necessarily think I am drawn to these composers because they are women but because I like their music.

Caron Daley:

I am very interested in composers that are writing in more of an instrumental vein. One composer I studied last summer and listened to everything she has written is Jocelyn Hagen. She is really popular right now. She is writing music that is complex rhythmically and I am always looking for rhythmic interest in choral music. Jocelyn's music is just striking and not sentimental in any way. Unfortunately, some of the things we run into in this conversation related to how music for treble choirs has sometimes been more sentimental. We don't want to conflate whether or not it has been written by women, but sometimes music for women has been softer and sweeter. I am interested in programming music for my treble choir that is as complex as anything else and is off the wall and courageous. I find Jocelyn Hagen's music pushes us musically.

Another composer I enjoy is Sarah Quartel. She is a Canadian composer and writes a lot of things for youth choirs. Her music is also not sentimental, but thoughtful and curious. It is not formulaic in any way.

Another composer that I love and cannot stop programming is Ruth Watson Henderson. She is also Canadian. She is in her late 80s now, but she has a really significant output of mixed choir and treble choir music. Again, it is complex and has a lot of rhythmic polyphony with use of fourths and fifths.

Peggy Dettwiler:

Gwyneth Walker is probably one that I have done the most. Her arrangements are very sing-able, and she uses interesting and captivating texts. I programmed a suffragette song in the Fall, because she wrote it in honor of the hundredth anniversary of the women's right to vote. It's called *Two Suffrage Songs*. At Carnegie Hall we did her *How Can I Keep from Singing?* and *Every Life Shall Be a Song*. I know her personally and we are friends. She is a real strong woman, kind of an athlete. She is fun and often shares her music with me before she publishes it. So, she is one of my heroes.

Sarah Hopkins, an Australian composer, wrote *Past Life Melodies* with overtone singing. I have done that at a number of festivals and have been really engaging with it. Her overtone singing is not so hard that the kids cannot pick it up.

I also have programmed Melissa Dunphy's *Wild Embers* which talks about strong women and how a fire can start with a single spark. I also have an SSA piece *S'vivon*, which is a Hanukkah piece, by Betty Bertaux. I have an arrangement of *When You Wish Upon a Star* by Nancy Wertsch.

I should mention Ysaye Barnwell. I am hoping to do a concert in Carnegie Hall in January, and she is going to be our guest speaker and do some readings of inspiring people. We are going to perform *Would you Harbor Me* and another choir is going to sing *Wanting Memories*. I have not worked with her individually before, but I have done her pieces and am looking forward to that.

Patrick Freer:

I will give one example and that would be Gwyneth Walker. I find that she is super helpful. If you ask her for one piece, she will give you 45 which is sometimes too much. I think she is genuinely interested in working with amateur choirs and writing for amateur choirs in a way that is interesting. She has her stylistic tendencies that are immediately appealing and accessible to singers. When I am often asked to conduct the highest-level honor choirs, I more frequently find myself dealing with singers who are at the lower end of the achievement spectrum, which is what I am drawn to. Walker writes so well for that type of singer. She chooses really interesting texts that are age appropriate and sets them in an interesting way and has something to engage the singer. I am drawn to her repertoire because it is quality repertoire that just happens to be written by a woman, so I am going to highlight that whenever I can.

In my experience- and I can only speak to that- female composers tend to write for the ensemble, not their ego. I don't want to do a psychological analysis of this, but I think that many female composers have had to struggle to have their music sold and be seen as

acceptable. So, if they do not reach out to specific ensembles, if they don't write the music for the church choir in town, it is not going to get heard. The way it gets heard is when it is performed and then spreads.

David Fryling:

My favorites are the composers/pieces I'm currently working on, whatever they happen to be. I am drawn to any composer that chooses text carefully, illuminates it uniquely, and brings something fresh and compelling. It's as hard to describe why I'm drawn to music as it is to define what "good" music is.

Kristina MacMullen:

As I said, there are fewer historical composers. I think Fanny Hensel and Amy Beach have written some really beautiful music. Chiara Cozzolani was a convent composer. 75% of patrician women in mid-18th century Italy went to a convent and they made great music. You can find a body of convent composers, many of which are women. The music is not well-known because there were men composing at the time (Vivaldi, Pergolesi, etc) who were/are more commonly known. Then of course there is Hildegard von Bingen.

In terms of contemporary composers, I just love Jocelyn Hagen's work. I think it is so compositionally sound. She writes killer piano parts which is something not all composers do. I find her music interesting structurally and lyrically. It is just so satisfying to sing; I feel like she really gets the voice.

Andrea Ramsey is someone I greatly admire for her capacity to take text and set that text in a really compelling way. She does more with a lyrical line than many people. I think she also understands the young person's development. Most of my work is with school-aged people; I include anyone under thirty in that. I feel like she has a good finger on the pulse of the questions and experiences you face in Middle School, High School, University, Graduate School, etc. Her piece *Truth* is very simple; she wrote it in only four days. But in all my experiences in working with treble choirs throughout the United States, that piece is extraordinary and special. It resonates with young people in a way

that is very profound. It is not very complicated but that might be why it works the way it does.

Caroline Shaw is an exciting composer. She writes things that are so complex that they are not always accessible to developing voices. I performed *Its Motion Keeps* with a professional level ensemble, and it was so exciting and exhilarating when it was accomplished. It was such a task, though, to get it there even with professionals.

There is a Vancouver based composer, Katerina Gimon. I think she has a really exciting future. I really like Andrea Clearfield's music.

Amanda Quist:

Hildegard von Bingen- I am completely fascinated by who she was, her writings, her mysticism, and her music. I believe she is one of the great minds in world history, and her writings reflect on the concept of light and angels quite often, two elements that I am drawn to.

Caroline Shaw- *To the Hands*. Caroline's reworking of Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri Ad Manus* movement is breathtaking and relevant. She is a brilliant composer, capturing the essence of the emotional weight of the original, but turning it into a piece that reflects our needs today.

Raffaella/Vittoria Aleotti- one of the first women to be a published composer, my wonderful graduate student introduced me to her *Surge, propera amica mea* written in the 17th century, and it's brilliant and expresses the text well.

Gwyneth Walker- *I Will Be Earth, Every Night When the Sun Goes Down*- there is something just inherently beautiful about Gwyneth's melodic writing, and her attention to harmony. She has certain gestures that appear in several pieces that create a sonic palate that is at once emotionally heavy and filled with light.

Abbie Betinis- wonderful carols, rounds

Jocelyn Hagen- brilliant mind, I'm fascinated by her approach to *The Notebooks of Leonardo DaVinci*.

Andrea Ramsey- another strong voice, she wrote a piece called *Truth* that gets right to the heart of what many young women go through in adolescence.

Rosephanye Powell- *Sorida, The Word Was God*, several others. Vibrant composer and musician.

Ysaye Barnwell- I love Sweet Honey in the Rock, and she has done several arrangements and pieces that are very relevant and heartfelt. *Wanting Memories* is probably her most famous piece.

Philip Silvey:

I have programmed two or more pieces by a few women composers whose work I especially admire. Chris Lastovicka is a composer who self-publishes and is lesser known. She was commissioned to write a piece for a chorus in NYC called Melodia. The piece is called *Notes Upon the Breeze*. It is in three movements and is a setting of Kay Ryan poems for piano and strings. It is a really great piece- one of my favorites.

Gwyneth Walker is a well-known composer that has been around for a while. I have programmed her piece *I Will Be Earth* many times. I have also programmed her piece *Sisters* multiple times.

I have programmed *Moon Goddess* by Jocelyn Hagen twice. I am interested in her work. We did another piece by her called *Joy*.

I will mention Rosephanye Powell, who we arranged to come and guest conduct a concert of her compositions and arrangements this past Fall. The theme was her and what

can we learn from her perspective. It was one of the most meaningful concert experiences the students have had. She has an arrangement of *Keep Yo' Lamps* that I have programmed three times over the years.

The last composer I will mention is Joan Szymko. I have programmed three of her pieces, although I have not repeated a piece. She has an SATB piece called *It Takes a Village* that I have used in guest conducting settings multiple times.

Sandra Snow:

Well, there are many. I admire the music of Andrea Clearfield (andreaclearfield.com) because her music is deeply rooted in research before she takes on progress and it shows in the inventiveness of her composition. Fanny Hansel is at least as wonderful as Felix Mendelssohn, her brother, so why not do her music? Andrea Ramsey writes from her heart and as a former public-school music teacher, also writes music that connects with students. Abbie Betinis has a distinctive voice and is socially conscious. Emerging composers like Laura Hawley from Canada blends classical and other genres in interesting ways. We have far fewer women of color writing and this is an area we need more advocacy and actionable support for. You can be sure they are writing, but they are writing for different contexts or not for choirs, or for singing experiences that do not look like our choir structures.

Brandon Williams:

Jocelyn Hagen writes compelling [music] that my ensembles have enjoyed interpreting and performing.

Chapter 7: Since the 2018-2019 academic year, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance, London has ensured all concert programs represent an equal number of compositions by male and female composers. What are your thoughts on this approach? What are the benefits or disadvantages to this policy?

Jerry Blackstone:

In a one-year cycle- why not? If it was a forever cycle, I would rebel a little against it. In one year, you are only talking four or so concerts. And then, in that amount of time, you can put the constraints on to say, “This year we are going to focus on this.” I think that is interesting and fascinating. If it was long term, I would find that pretty restricting. What music from the beginning of time to 1880 am I not going to do? To do something that is only in the last 120 years or so? I would rather be more catholic in my approach and have a lot of styles and time periods represented. I would have no qualms with finding great music from the last 120 years, but I just would not want to do that for half the time. I would not want someone saying to me I have to do 50% of the music in the last 120 years, whether it was male or female does not make any difference to me. I would not like to have the option of doing a B-minor Mass for a concert then having to say, “Well that was 120 minutes of music so now for the rest of the year I can only do music in the last 100 years.” I would just feel a little restricted.

I think it would cause me to learn from repertoire that I probably did not know before and to be proactive. It might also cause a conductor to reach out and say, “I should commission some things by some really good women composers.”

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

A benefit is access. It is an answer to letting people decide whether or not female composers’ music aligns with their taste of what is expressive, because that is part of the issue. So, that is really great that they are presenting music in that way. As far as a disadvantage, I feel as though you could be grasping at straws if you don’t have enough music off the top of your head that fits with whatever is going on with the concert. You might be tempted to just randomly pick a female composer just because you have to. The

more restraints you put on something, the more difficult you make your life as an artist and programming is part of our artistry. So, this could be good because we are giving more access, but you can't just do it to fill up a ratio. That puts a qualifier on the female composer by saying, "Well I have to program you because you are female not because of the music." Doing it for ratio's sake seems to focus on the issue rather than on the music.

Caron Daley:

Firstly, this is a pipeline issue; the pipeline has been too narrow and gendered male, which has created a backlog. In my opinion, in order to break through that backlog, we need to take extraordinary measures. For example, Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, decided to make his cabinet half male and half female when he was elected in 2015 and people asked him why and he answered, "Because it is 2015." So, if we are to counteract what has been such an inequality, we have to take time and push this agenda forward. It's the same with female conductors. Symphonic orchestras need to say to themselves, "Look, it is not good enough for us to only program one female conductor per season. We need to program as many as we possibly can." For example, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra 2019 season was comprised of half female conductors. We need to take strides and strategies like what Trinity Laban has done.

A disadvantage is that we will not program as many male composers. In a certain sense, male composers will not have the same exposure. That could be a real disadvantage for male composers that are working today.

Peggy Dettwiler:

My short answer is it seemed artificial to me and something I would not want to hold myself to. Yes, it is a way to make it equal but then you are probably limiting your historical works from the Medieval, Renaissance, Classical, and so on. I think there are individual considerations I have outlined before that would feel constrained. Now, I do try to have a balance between sacred and secular music. That is another issue to consider when you are programming, particularly in a public university. I would like to see the programs [Trinity Laban] put together because I am intrigued and impressed by it, but it

would be hard for me to do. They are still discovering music historically written by women and I love it. I try to include women composers and have focused entire concerts on women composers. However, in my general repertoire I would feel constrained if I had to do 50/50.

Certainly, it would make people aware of women composers. This whole thing is a process. I mean, we just got the right to vote 100 years ago and we have not even gotten equal pay yet.

Patrick Freer:

I will echo an answer that I gave earlier, which is that I would not support this. That is not to say there should not be concert programs with equal numbers [of male and female composers] or concerts of only female composers. It depends on what your goal is. If my goal is to teach knowledge and skills through choral music, I cannot guarantee I am going to be able to find repertoire by anyone of a specific skin color, nationality, or gender that does that thing. So, it seems to me like an artificial framework that has very little to do with music and more to do with a social construct. There are benefits to ensuring women composers are represented. I would rather see that representation occur because we are investigating and finding quality repertoire rather than an artificial quota system.

David Fryling:

I see only benefits, no disadvantages. I think it's a legitimate way to deal with centuries of bad-faith, bad habits, and bad decisions. I would encourage them to broaden the scope to fully represent DEIB concerns.

Kristina MacMullen:

First of all, I applaud them for creating this sort of standard. Half of our music makers are women, so it is a really vital to honor that. I admire what is probably a Herculean task in terms of continuing to have fresh repertoire. Creating a demand is one way to create more music. It will be quite a challenge for those people who are programming due to the

existing legacy of inequality. That said, many new composers will receive airplay- a very exciting turn!

Amanda Quist:

I think there are many benefits to this approach, as it ensures women will be included, and our exposure to their music will be deepened. The only disadvantage is if one wants to do a major work which happens to be by a male, that is troublesome, but as women write more major works, these can and will be included.

Philip Silvey:

I don't really see a problem with it. As I have expressed, I aspire to that kind of balance in my programming. I could see some conductors might resent having to give up full control, because there is a certain autonomy conductors feel in their programming. I think a better tactic might be to have conversations that express why this is important and to encourage it. Ideally, it would be voluntary, but I think for an institution to aim for something like that is really wise.

A former graduate student did a study at another institution, looking at all the repertoire and music that was being used in the Department of Music, including theory books and classes. She analyzed everything and came up with a percentage of women composers that were represented. Her results showed a 0.2% representation. Institutionally, that is common. To make a clear decision, I think, shows a good leadership. The disadvantage, again, is that you are requiring people to do this against their will.

Sandra Snow:

I appreciate the focus and leadership. It brings into clear relief the issues of silencing women composers have experienced. It would not suit my own way of programming—counting beans would not necessarily a satisfying program make. I'd personally find a different approach to come to a similar way of raising awareness.

Brandon Williams:

It forces mindfulness and awareness and I do not see a problem with that at all. An issue in academia is the canon. There is a pressure to perform the canon in order to prove yourself, and there are not many, if any, women in the canon. Therefore, we just keep seeing more of the same [music], because in order to get tenure or a degree you have to check those boxes. I am not implying we should not study that music, but I think it is a part of the system that perpetuates the status quo. This policy is misguided if they are doing it one time and then going back to business as usual. That is a problem. But if it is going to challenge your thinking and the status quo, then I applaud the effort. I think it is a small step in the right direction.

Chapter 8: As the discussion of composer diversities has gained traction, concerts featuring works solely by women composers have become more common. Is this a positive way to go about sharing music by female composers?

Jerry Blackstone:

I think concerts with a single focus are always interesting. For me, there is nothing pandering about it. As long as the focus is not to ‘pay dues’ and finally do have some women composers. To no longer do that the rest of the time, I mean, that’s ridiculous.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

I think it is a good thing to do and could be done regularly in the sense that it could be an annual festival or a biannual festival. At the University of Akron, we have a Men in Song. I have not intended it to have only male composers, but it just so happens that it does. Women in Song is something I am thinking about staging to go back and forth with every other year. There is something to be said about unifying and saying, “Yes, we identify as female and so do these composers so let’s share this music.” I think that is a great thing to celebrate, so it is a positive way to go. However, I don’t think it should happen for more than a decade from now. We would always be stuck in the fact that female composers are different and have to be given that championship.

Caron Daley:

Yes, absolutely insofar as it affects those in your ensemble and the audience. There is a really important population to this question and that is choral conductors. I went to a session at the [2020] Regional Eastern ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) with a panel of women conductors. One of the most important issues that came out was accessibility. Not so much the internet, because largely everybody has access to the internet, but more the economics. Going forward, the Coronavirus has particularly highlighted economic instabilities. If you think, “How do I make my library more representative of gender?”, you may have an economic problem. Are you going to buy music by women? What if you cannot afford to do that? You might be limited to borrowing music or using music on CPDL. So, in as much as the concert is an excellent

way to move this agenda forward, we have to think about it more organically and how practitioners are going to have the necessary tools in order to move this agenda forward.

Peggy Dettwiler:

Yes, I have done it and you can make a strong point by that. I had proposed a concert for ACDA called “Reflections from a Woman’s Voice.” It started with Hildegard and then Ysaye Barnwell. Next was Fanny Hensel, which was the historical piece, followed by *Jenny Rebecca* by Carol Hall. The next piece was by Ēriks Ešenvalds, but the poem *Only in Sleep* was written by Sara Teasdale. I just love her work. Next was Rosephanye Powell’s *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*. I was really tickled to find *The Promise Land* by Matilda Durham, which is a sacred piece written in 1835. I was very excited to find the historical piece by a woman in that style.

Patrick Freer:

Sure, I think that is fine if that is the particular theme of the semester or the concert. It would be interesting to have a concert by female composers where every composition is around the same theme or maybe the same texts at different points through history. That is different than saying in every concert we must have an equal number. I think that is too artificial.

David Fryling:

Sure! Why not? We have had centuries of concerts featuring works solely by male composers.

Kristina MacMullen:

Absolutely! I think as long as people are making a practice of regularly programming repertoire beyond that. If you have an event where you are highlighting the works of female composers, it should not be a ‘one and done’ approach where you go back to business as usual. I think it is a wonderful way to highlight the perspective of women which is unique. So, I think it is good as long as it is in the context of a discipline rather than a singular instance.

Amanda Quist:

I think bringing attention to it helps the focus to shift and raise awareness, but I also like to incorporate pieces by women composers into the whole concert so that they feel as though they are there on their own merit, not just because they are female.

Philip Silvey:

According to an opinion piece by a woman composer, she is troubled when people are proud of that or they sort of expect recognition or congratulations for having programmed a full concert of music by women composers. At Eastman we had the Women in Music festival for 10 years. There was a musicology professor who was not in favor of that event because of what Rob Deemer calls ‘othering’. ‘Ghettoize’ is another word some people use.

You ask if it is a positive way to go. I would say it is *one way* to have more works by women composers performed and heard. I do think ultimately programming choices are influenced by things we hear and see in concerts.

Sandra Snow:

Yes, absolutely. In 2019, I conducted the SSAA Treble Honor Choir at ACDA national. The program was entirely by women composers and the most satisfying part about that for me was that I did not have to draw attention to this—the music was so strong, the flow of the program so coherent that I believe many listeners may not have been aware of that choice—or it dawned on them when looking at the program.

Brandon Williams:

Yes, because representation matters. However, doing it as a one-off concert keeps us moving at the same pace and does not force us to make structural changes that would include the voices of women and other underrepresented groups.

Chapter 9: In rehearsals and concerts, when you program music by women composers, do you feel it necessary to draw attention to the gender of the composer? If so, how do you address the issue?

Jerry Blackstone:

I personally don't speak very much at concerts- almost never. Perhaps a little bit, especially if it is a new piece but I really don't talk much. We always have written program notes. In the program notes, there will probably be some background and have a little biography of the composer and also some information about the music. If it is a new piece or a piece by a composer people didn't know very much, or if you have focused attention on a specific gender or nationality, that would probably be in the program. But I probably would not say much about it. I am really interested in the audience discovering these things on their own.

In rehearsals, I would draw attention to the composer no matter the gender. We performed Elaine Hagenberg's *O Love* with the Queen College Choir this year. I made a point of the fact she is a living composer, that she is quite active and how much I love the music and how beautifully she set the text. I am hoping, and this is the case with anything I program, that people who like the piece will wonder what else she has written.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

So, I might be in the minority in this, but no, I just say, "Caroline Shaw is awesome." It is for the same reason I don't say, "Eric Whitacre is a wonderful male composer," or "Johannes Brahms was a leading 19th century male composer." I don't do that because he would do it for himself by walking in a room, just like I would hope that Caroline Shaw would if she walked into a room. I probably feel so passionate about the issue, being a female conductor. I controversially wear my hair down and wear gowns to say, "Yes! I am a female conductor and I don't think I should have to dress like a man." But I also don't want someone to come up to me and go, "She is a female conductor." By not saying anything in the concert or the rehearsal, I am subconsciously doing what I would want done for me by just treating her like the musician she is.

Caron Daley:

I programmed a concert in the Fall that was all female composers. Recently, every concert I program has female composers represented. For me, it is a bit of a statement, but I think everybody understands and it makes sense. However, when I programmed that all-female concert, there was no obvious title like, “She Said,” or “Songs by Women.” It was tacit and some people recognized that every composer on the program was a woman.

Your conversation with your students also needs to be holistic. Maybe we are thinking about underrepresented composers in general or about poets. We need to discuss topics and perform repertoires that give our students diverse experiences. There is a very important pedagogical piece to what we are discussing. For example, the connection between treble choirs and female composers is strong because women often feel a strong kinship to women. The students in my treble choir really enjoy doing music by women. We celebrate that and we also discuss topics related to women, such as women’s suffrage.

I conducted the PMEA (Pennsylvania Music Educators Association) District Four in January [2020], and I programmed another program all by women. I did not say anything about it, but several people came up to me afterwards and said, “Oh, I noticed they are all female composers. I have not heard of any of these composers before.” I think the students took notice too. For me, this is a really important advocacy tool and one that I am pretty unashamed about. I run an all-women’s conducting institute¹³. Do I think we need to be here forever? No, this is a period of time where we have to be cognizant and conscious of our choices with regard to gender equality.

Peggy Dettwiler:

No, I do not always but I sometimes do. When I introduce a piece to the audience, I try to talk about the piece. If it was written by a woman in whose culture women weren’t composers, I would mention that. For instance, I would say, “Clara Schumann was wife of Robert Schumann. She was a performer, raised by a pretty elite family. She was touted

¹³ Halifax Choral Conducting Institute: <http://halifaxsummerchoral.com/>

as a great pianist for years.” I would not make [her gender] a big deal by saying, “This is a woman composer.”

In rehearsals I will certainly point it out because that is part of getting into the piece and understanding what the composer is trying to say. This Fall with the *Wild Embers* piece by Dunphy, we will discuss the inspiration of women speaking out and the one hundred years of the women’s right to vote and how brave those women were. I would take advantage of the opportunity to make a political statement about some of the bravery women had to show in order to do what they were doing.

In the 80s I was involved with church music a lot, and I would change text to make them more inclusive. In other words, if the word was ‘man’ I might change it to ‘one’ or ‘folk’ to try to make it more inclusive. During that time, sometimes people actually thought only men were being referred to and sometimes they would just use it as a generic term. Even in some pieces we work on now, I make changes and have gotten pushback, including from some women. I have some conservative students and one said to me, “God is the Father and God is male.” One time I changed a word in the Chamber Singers to something more inclusive and the guys just laughed and one of the gals said, “Well, I don’t care. I bake cookies,” which is a phrase people use to defend such wording or approaches.

Patrick Freer:

I do not draw attention to it, but I do mention it like I mention all composers. I try to get the students to be singers who understand that this was created by a human being who existed in a certain time and place and had these characteristics. Unless there was a compelling reason, I would not necessarily go beyond that.

David Fryling:

I do not, unless it is the concert’s specific theme.

Kristina MacMullen:

I talk about it with the musicians and suggest it in a way to make them aware of it. Sometimes students look at a name and they don't know the gender of the composer. For example, a student could assume the name Dale Trumbore indicates a man. We have a responsibility to explore the unique perspective of the person who is writing, and this often includes the lens of gender.

In terms of the audience, I generally do not draw attention to it. I want it to be more and more normal and not anomalous. I don't want to tokenize them by saying, "Oh, I have done my duty! Here is my piece by a woman! Look, look everybody!" I feel like that reinforces that women have a role as 'one and done' composers rather than simply 'composers'. My hope is that young women and really women of any age can say, "I'm a composer" rather than say, "I'm a female composer."

Amanda Quist:

It depends on the piece and the situation. I think it's always good for students to be informed about who the composer is or was, and their story, as it impacts our approach to the piece. We have conversations about the composers and their approach, and we discuss aspects about them as they are relevant. When we worked on Caroline Shaw's piece, we spent more time discussing her treatment of the text and musical gestures, but certainly the students were aware that she is a female.

Philip Silvey:

I would like to ask women composers if they would rather we cite composer names as they do in the American Psychological Association citations, using last names and first initials. The assumption is that when I see a citation I see in a body of text, I do not know whether it is a man or woman. We have spent many centuries reinforcing this idea that certain composers (and they are all men) deserve to have their works performed. The mentality is that there are certain composers you just 'can't go wrong with,' that it is a foregone conclusion. To counterbalance that, I do talk about the composer, sometimes using she/her gender pronouns. I think we have to call attention to it so there is a change

in perception of who composes. I think we need to highlight the contributions of women composers as long as implicit bias against them persists.

When we are rehearsing, I do try to do that regularly: what did *she* do here? What was *her* decision? I am not focusing on the fact she is a woman but the interesting choices she made in the composition. We will discuss the craft of the composition and I will note the powerful choice [she made] and highlight her skill as a composer.

Sandra Snow:

See above.¹⁴ No, I generally don't address it, I just highlight really fine composition

Brandon Williams:

No, I only highlight that if it is necessary. Conductor-teachers who create a culture of representing women in their programs do not need to "draw attention to the gender of the composer" because it is what they do on a regular basis.

¹⁴ See Chapter 8, pg. 43

Chapter 10: What are the best ways we can continue to support women composers and their music?

Jerry Blackstone:

Certainly by getting to know them and doing some research. But I also think the onus in many ways is on the composers. Nobody owes any composer anything. It is just like being a conductor: nobody owes you an audition until you earn it. Nobody owes you the opportunity to stand in front of a choir and conduct the Brahms' *Requiem* until you have earned it. And the same is true with composers; they need to put themselves in situations where they get to know conductors. They need to hang out with great players if they are writing chamber music. They need to make sure people have access to their scores. If they are self-published, which a lot of composers are these days, they need to get the word out by going to conferences. ACDA has been pretty good recently about doing sessions for composers with conductors. Get in there; be very proactive. Pass out scores.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

Like I have said: access. I do not claim to be a champion of female composers' music. I feel as though I am in the minority because I know a lot of my colleagues have done all female composer concerts. I don't disagree with them; I just haven't done them myself because it just has not been a priority for me. There is a benefit to it by doing it every now and then and programming their music would be a really great way to continue to support composers.

Caron Daley:

I am going to come back to the pipeline. I am talking about it from a conducting standpoint because that is my field. How are we going to get more women into the pipeline? We need to go back to the basics and say: how many women are in our conducting classes? How many women are in our conducting programs? How many women are getting conducting jobs and take a ground up approach. It is the same for composers. It is very important for us to celebrate the ones who are on the internet or getting published. But it's equally important for us to help our student composers or our

female students in general to consider composition or conducting. That is really where the paradigm shift occurs because we do not have enough female role models. I know I did not have enough female role models. It may be different for someone in their 20s today; I hope it is. It needs to be a grassroots approach.

Secondly, how do we support those who are already getting published? We support them by programming their music. We support them by commissioning them and say, “I think you are really good, and I want you to write something special for my choir.” And so, we make decisions that affect how this field moves forward. They may be small decisions, but little by little, these decisions shape the field.

Peggy Dettwiler:

We support them by programming their music and going to sessions where their music is being introduced like at ACDA and NCCO.

Patrick Freer:

By having your ensemble deal specifically with music by women composers and women conductors. Maybe allow the students to choose some repertoire and one of the pieces they might be required to choose is one by a woman composer. You might have a student who is a woman composer who can write for the choir. The best way to support women composers is to make it a regular part of what we do. I might need to think about it in a special way because our history and our resources are skewed away from women composers because of the preponderance of the repertoire we have in our libraries (I am always working within extreme budget constraints). For the students, the best way we can do this is for them to see we sing music by women composers. It’s just what we do.

David Fryling:

By programming their music.

Kristina MacMullen:

Program and commission it when you have the opportunity. Be intentional about programming. Be intentional with your funding. There are composers that I admire that have pieces of music published in multiple venues. One piece might be at a big publishing house where (I know personally), the composer only gets a 10% cut. Then there might be a piece self-published where the composer gets 70% of the cut. Program self-published music by these composers. Keep them in business. We can choose the self-published piece because we know it is beneficial to them.

Amanda Quist:

Commission women to write for our choirs, program their music, and help identify holes in which we need more pieces. I wrote an article for the *Choral Journal* about choral/orchestral music written for treble choruses, and how there aren't many of these pieces, but even better if more are written by women.

I am the guest conductor for a concert in New York in November [2020] celebrating the 100th anniversary of Women's Suffrage, and I've selected several works by women- this concert, run through Concept Tours, is an example of a way that I as a conductor can bring support and awareness to women in choral music, and I'm grateful that companies like this are supportive of these types of events.

Philip Silvey:

Ask women composers what they want us to do.

Sandra Snow:

Outside of programming, paying them fairly for their work. Joining commissioning consortiums that feature their composition projects. When possible, bring them in to work with singers on their music so that young women can "see themselves" into the possibility of composing. Doing composition projects with choirs for the same reason.

Brandon Williams

Mindfulness and awareness are the two things that can change a mindset one at a time.

Make sure you are pushing yourself to see what music is out there so you can bring depth and breadth of music to your singers and audiences.

Chapter 11: Composer Thea Musgrave said, “Yes I am a woman, and yes I am a composer, but rarely at the same time.” Do you think there will ever be a day when a composer is defined by their music rather than society’s perception?

Jerry Blackstone:

Personally, I think that is already the case. I do not look at the gender of the composer unless I am looking specifically for the concert. Overall, I look at the quality of the music.

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

I don’t know. I hope there is a day when there is a concert when there is an equal ratio of female and male composers. I think that can happen as long as we really start focusing on the music and not necessarily the identifier of gender. I have a hard time with the issue of diversity for diversity’s sake because I am not male; I identify as a woman. I am not white; I identify as Filipino, Chinese, and Spanish. I am not old yet, so right now I am in the minority of what a conductor is. I would rather people take me for what I am, so I take the music for what it is and that, in my opinion, is my way of contributing to diversity. I look back at history in the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th century, and women didn’t compose. So, of course, we are not going to look at that woman’s music. If someone earlier did not care what gender, age, or ethnic background a composer was and just looked at their music for what it was, then I feel like this issue would not be an issue today in 2020. If we program music based on the composer being a woman, not white, or some other identifier, it actually magnifies the identifier.

Perhaps that doesn’t make me sensitive enough to the issue, and that is not my intention. I always want to be respectful to the musicians, the music, and the audience. I want to make sure we put spotlights on things that we need spotlights.

Caron Daley:

It is hard to say. I have always felt that I should celebrate my body as a conductor and to celebrate my gender. Composers may be less physically visible to us because we are

looking at their printed score and maybe they have a name that is not recognized as male or female. However, I disagree with Thea Musgrave. I mean, I am always a conductor and a female at the same time, always those two things. I would hope a person can always be themselves and the dichotomy and separation no longer have to be present. I think the trajectory is towards an integration of these things, so that you can be who you are and do the work you do, and we don't see that inequality as much as we see it today.

Peggy Dettwiler:

Well, I understand this and maybe that is why I resist the artificial imposition of making concerts 50/50. I think some women are insulted by being included just because they are a woman. You would want it to be for the value of the music, so I think that is what she is saying. She does not want to be a symbol or an icon or an artificial reason for having her music performed. I do think we will get there, but it is not going to happen overnight. It is a process.

Patrick Freer:

I don't know. I think it might be different if you are dealing with repertoire done by elite choirs. I do not think this is an issue in elementary, middle school, and some early high school choirs, because it is a different genre of choral music, we might call academic music. However, nearly all are composers who no one ever hears of outside of high school or middle school concert stages. That's problematic, but if K-12 schooling is the venue, I do not think we have an issue. I think there may be even more music composed by women composers at certain levels of choir, so I think we have to contextualize it a bit.

If we are talking about professional choirs or orchestras, we might have a different conversation. Does anyone think of Jennifer Higdon and not think 'woman'? But I do not think I have ever thought of Leonard Bernstein as a 'man'. That's interesting to me. However, there is so much we can't do anything about, and I would put this in that category. I cannot change the world, but I can change my world and the world I promote in my classroom.

David Fryling:

I don't (can't) know. I hope so.

Kristina MacMullen:

I wonder if this sentiment is contextual to a generation where women felt the need to discard or eschew their femininity in order to be taken seriously. For her, it must have been accurate and absolutely true. I am not a composer, but I would be interested to hear a response from the most prolific women who are composing today. When they compose, do they feel that they are no longer a woman? Do they embrace the aspects of their femininity and allow that to inform their work? Or do you feel the need to separate them?

I think, as programming becomes more balanced and more women compose, we will see perceptions shift and evolve. Do I think there will be a day when composers will be defined just by their music? I honestly don't think so, and I am not sure that that would be best. There is much to be said about the female experience through composition, and I believe that many composers are embracing and relishing the opportunity to address the feminine experience in addition to many other topics.

Amanda Quist:

I certainly hope so, but I think we are pretty far away from that point now. I don't think of myself as a female conductor, just a conductor, but certainly the fact that I am female is something people notice.

Philip Silvey:

I think it is complicated. I think some women composers would argue, "Let music speak for itself." But artists and their work are linked; that has always been true. I think the artist's work is an extension and expression of who they are. For me, the need for women composers' music to be programmed is not just about representation but perspective. This is my belief for politics too. I don't think we need women in politics because we need to be able to say its 50/50. I think we need skill sets and abilities and perspectives that can only come by including a diverse group of voices that reflect the full range of the human

experience. I believe that varying voices brings differences. What can we learn from composers we've historically excluded? Are we giving them the opportunity to teach us?

Sandra Snow:

I hope so. It has improved over the course of my own lifetime. But we have a long way to go, especially in creating a space for women of color to write.

Brandon Williams:

Yes, if we can successfully challenge the system of oppression for long enough. I do not think it is enough to do it once. It is not enough to have one good idea or one good push. You have to do it systematically and challenge the status quo. I am an optimistic person, so I am inclined to say yes, but only if we chip away at the system that has kept women's creativity suppressed.

Chapter 12: To help broaden the discussion, what other questions should we be asking about this topic?

Jerry Blackstone:

I think a question that would be an interesting add-on and would be almost unanswerable is: what is worthy music and how does that play itself out no matter who the composer is? How does that play itself out in regard to women and men? Should there be a different standard for the two? Should we have a certain standard for women composers until they are equally represented and equally respected as men composers?

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

I think back to the presentation at NCCO and I wonder why some of that choral music has not been performed. Is it because that music has not been championed or because it has not been widely accepted as heightened music that must be performed on a repetitive basis? Is it because those females were oppressed or because it was not as highlighted as Brahms or at that quality?

I really enjoy blind tastings, and I think it would be really cool to have blind tastings of pieces of obscure female and male composers from the same periods. If we take away the identifier, what would music from that time be like? We already know of great female composers coming out with great music right now. I would be curious about a blind tasting of female composers' music because so much of it was oppressed because they were female.

Caron Daley:

We should be asking how we can better support the development of women in composition. That is going to be a question for music educators and university administrators. We need to be thinking about this holistically. All-female programs have been started in order to better support women in their craft, and I think that is a direction and is important right now. Will it be important forever? Who knows? But it is important right now.

Peggy Dettwiler:

What [women] composers can you name from the historical periods like the Medieval and Renaissance? I kind of want to gather their names. I know Isabella Leonarda from the Baroque Era. If we are going to collect music we want to consider, those are the repertoire areas where we are weak on the number of available compositions. So, who are the names of composers from historical periods that we should consider?

Patrick Freer:

What can I do in the community that I am in and with the ensembles I have to normalize the idea that composers are composers regardless of gender or biological sex? How can I encourage all my students, including those who identify as girls, be musicians who eventually see themselves as making a career out of that, some of whom will choose composing? I am always more focused on how we can influence the next generation rather than change what might be an intractable problem in the present. I see this in all sorts of conversations in our profession. If we only deal with the biggest problems, we never actually make a lot of progress because all we do is chip away at the big problem without much success. Let us instead focus on something that we can have direct influence on, and that tends to be with positioning younger people to make the change we desire in the world we envision.

Kristina MacMullen:

My thought is to address the composers directly. In terms of the conversation with women composers, we might (as the consumers) ask ourselves some questions like: what are the biggest biases I might be bringing to the table that I am not even aware of? Some people might not bat an eyelash when we ask a composer, “How do you balance family life?” We never ask men that. Fortunately, I have seen in different kinds of leadership women starting to say things like, “As soon as you ask my male colleagues that question, I will give you my answer.” That’s just one example of addressing the biases we hold.

Everyone has a different opinion about a quota system. It’s important to ask ourselves, “How many pieces by a woman have I conducted this year? How intentional am I about

this? What kind of example am I setting for my students?” It doesn’t matter whether or not you teach Middle School, High School, or University, your students will go out and be consumers in one way, shape, or form. Are we teaching them to consume in an ethical way?

Amanda Quist:

I think it’s good to look into society and discover ways in which women may still be marginalized, especially in ways that are subtle. An example of this might be how we treat marriage, and last names. It is still considered quite normal, for example, with a heterosexual couple, for the woman to take the man’s last name. So how do we feel about that? Does that concept reflect a society where men and women are viewed equally? If not, why do so many of us continue to perpetuate it?

Another question might be how do women treat other women? Do we lift one another up, tear one another down? How can we help support one another’s voices?

Philip Silvey:

What I want to better understand is what are the driving forces behind people’s [repertoire] choices. Not what they think they are doing but what they actually do. I think if we collect data about that or do some survey research, we might get a better picture of where the holes are and why people tend to favor male composers.

Sandra Snow:

Why are the majority of women choral composers in North America white?
Where in the system of education do girls relinquish their sense of power to boys and men? How are girls silenced in terms of creativity?

Brandon Williams:

It would be good to look at how and why women have been shut out of these spaces and then dismantle those assumptions and those structures that have silenced women, particularly in music.

Conclusion

All conductors agreed that more can and should be done to include more women composers on concert programs. Some participants expressed their longstanding interest in including women composers in regular programming, as well as habitually programming concerts of music solely by women. While this study is by no means comprehensive, I was intrigued by the variety of views concerning the place of women composers in standard programs. For the most part, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the female participants expressed a stronger commitment to the subject, often identifying with and comparing their personal experiences to those of women composers as well as frequently offering creative solutions. I was particularly interested in Dr. Daley's methodical approach to diversifying her own knowledge of music by women. By purposefully designating time during the summer to immerse herself in the music by women composers, she discovered not only rich material but realized how much music remains untouched by modern ensembles. She said, "I think people are underestimating how much material is here. So, it was a really useful exercise because looking for choral repertoire can be overwhelming."

When discussing repertoire selection, all participants agreed the importance of choosing quality compositions, regardless of the gender of the composer. Some conductors questioned applying the term "quality" when describing compositions, some preferring "well-crafted" and others considering a work's expressiveness as criteria for selection. Other priorities for determining which repertoire to perform included the amount and quality of the text, the student/audience experience, and compositional variety. Most conductors include composer diversity at some stage in their planning, although not all prioritize gender specifically. I agree musicians should never compromise the quality of their art for the sake of inclusion, but to some

degree the student experience also rests in representation. Dr. Kristina MacMullen makes a point to program two to three pieces by women when guest conducting honors choirs, believing young women should have examples of women composers with whom to identify as possible role models. I would argue that programming music by women composers should not be reserved for young women, but embraced in all choral repertoire, including TTBB and SATB ensembles, and all levels of difficulty. Regardless of a conductor's personal investment in women composers, the effect of diverse representation on the individual student, no matter their gender, should not be deemphasized. Just as conductors prioritize programs with music from diverse periods and musical styles, there is much to be gained by including texts and music that represent many different human experiences.

Most participants agreed that despite the vast number of resources available on the internet, women composers have been long overlooked by a history that has favored white, male composers. Unfortunately, the Western canon has been constructed with a very narrow concept of race and gender. While the internet provides access to a large number of women composers, particularly websites of living composers, several conductors commented that responsibility for expanding representation of women composers rests in the conductor's personal action and curiosity. Obstacles to finding music by women, such as lack of awareness, limited financial resources, and lack of time caused by the demands of jobs in academia were also mentioned. A couple of conductors pointed out the poor navigability or search engines of composer websites as well as the lack of a singular, reliable database for women composers and their music. While one might argue women composers ought to improve their marketability and networking skills, conductors can be more proactive in seeking out music by women. Because conductors depend on one-stop-shop websites such as J. W. Pepper for popular compositions, it is understandable

that having to search innumerable personal websites for quality music is time-consuming.

However, until there is a larger demand for music by women composers, publishing companies may have little motivation to elevate the visibility of their music.

Many interviewees valued personal connections with friends and colleagues as a dependable resource for suggested repertoire. In-person experiences such as conferences, performances and reading sessions were mentioned by multiple participants. A few conductors suggested particular performance ensembles who offer excellent recordings or databases on their websites. The Elektra Women's Chorus and the Orange County Women's Chorus provide extensive repertoire lists of music by women composers for SSAA ensembles by women composers. Internet resources including YouTube and database websites such as the Choral Public Domain Library (CPDL), the Institute for Composer Diversity, and Oxford Music Online were also cited.

Responses pertaining to gender or voice specific choirs were affected by how frequently the conductors interact with such ensembles. The majority of the participants agree that a larger body of music by women composers exists for SSAA, children, and youth ensembles. Dr. Kristina MacMullen points out the rise of women singing societies has created a need for concert music for SSAA ensembles, possibly contributing to the number of women composers writing for treble voices. Why then is there more music for developing ensembles such as elementary and middle school? Baker and Biggers explain, "Research has indicated that the reason women tend to focus on less complex genres appropriate for beginning ensembles is both economic (i.e., marketability of compositions) and cultural (i.e., lower expectations of female composers)."¹⁵ It appears that the profession accepts women composers writing for young and developing voices

¹⁵ Baker, Vicki, Carter Biggers. "Research-to-Resource: Programming Ensemble Literature Composed by Women," *National Association for Music Education* 36, no. 3 (2018): 51-54.

but are not given the same recognition for writing more substantial compositions. Despite the supposedly large amount of materials for elementary and middle school ensembles, women composers are disproportionately underrepresented in high school curricula and above.

Prioritizing the inclusion of women in collegiate music history classes and undergraduate and graduate choral literature classes may be an essential component in obtaining significant progress in this issue, providing future conductors and teachers with a greater awareness of music by women.

Across the interviews, a total of 36 women composers were mentioned by participants. Three composers, Jocelyn Hagen, Caroline Shaw, and Gwyneth Walker were most frequently mentioned and were among the composers with multiple pieces listed. Two other composers, Abbie Betinis and Andrea Ramsey were also favored. Including historical figures such as Hensel, Schumann, and Hildegard, only 9 composers from previous historical periods were listed. Of those women, only 4 predated the 18th century.¹⁶ Given the extensive research resources most institutions provide, I was surprised to observe that the vast majority of women named are living composers. Several participants voiced the overwhelming lack of recognized music by women in the Medieval era up until the Romantic era, offering this as a deterrent to pursuing a stringent approach to programming older music by women. While researching repertoire is a critical part of a conductor's daily routine, it would be helpful if more music by women was included in collegiate theory and history classes, and that more research in this area is carried out by graduate student and faculty musicologists.

When considering the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance policy regarding equal representation on concert programs, many conductors were in favor of attempting to create

¹⁶ Hildegard (1098-1179), Aleotti (1575-1620), Cozzolani (1602-1676), Leonarda (1620-1704)

equality in gender representation. However, some participants viewed the policy as overly restrictive, particularly when considering historical compositions or large-scale major works. Change is never comfortable, so being required to embrace alternate programming methods can naturally create concern. To some, Trinity Laban's strategy may initially seem drastic or extreme, but the mindset behind such a policy may be a positive step in progressing this issue.

All conductors were in favor of concerts featuring music solely by women composers. However, some interviewees voiced reservations that including women composers on a temporary basis or programming concerts with music solely by women, might simply be pandering to the cause; Dr. Philip Silvey mentioned frequently used terms such as "othering" and "ghettoizing", which then suggests particular groups of composers existing outside the accepted norms in classical music. Some believe that by addressing composers as "women composers" they will never be labeled simply as "composers" and will always be defined by their gender identity. Certainly, the ultimate goal should be for women composers to be well represented in concerts and music texts, with far more research, inclusion and acknowledgement of historical women composers. However, if women are only now acknowledged for being "the first woman to ____", it seems improbable they will play more than a bit-part anytime soon. In the meantime, concerts featuring works by women composers should be used as a means to celebrate the accomplishments of women and the feminine experience. However, women's music should not be included solely based on gender inclusivity; that approach not only tokenizes women but also devalues the accomplishments of other composers. Rather, concerts featuring music solely by women ought to be coupled with open discussions with students and colleagues about how best to support composers. Some would still argue that such an approach "ghettoizes" women. While

understandable, I would respond by stating our profession has to start somewhere and raising awareness is the first step to actual change.

When programming works by women, all conductors did not feel it necessary to draw special attention to the gender of the composer. Rather, in rehearsal and program discussions, they adopt similar approaches to discussing works by men. Several participants suggested including historical elements such as women's suffrage in their rehearsals. This overt approach is perhaps a healthy step in 'normalizing' women composers in musical discussions.

According to a majority of the conductors, the most direct way to support women composers rests in programming and commissioning their music. Dr. Kristina MacMullen went further by impressing the need to support self-published composers who can often make more money from self-sales. One disadvantage to this approach is that by purchasing music directly from the composer, conductors limit the opportunity composers might have in being presented by larger publishing and retail companies who can provide much needed promotional exposure.

When determining whether a day will come when a composer is defined by their music rather than their gender, most conductors were unsure of the future prospects of women composers, although hopeful their music would no longer be associated with their gender. It was notable that even those participants who remained positive, admitted that such a day may not appear anytime soon! Dr. Daley and Dr. MacMullen disagreed with Thea Musgrave's sentiment, interpreting it as an older, if not outdated view of feminism when women felt the need to embrace masculinity in order to be credible. However, when comparing Thea Musgrave's world to that of Clara Schumann, the views of women's capabilities drastically developed over 100 years. In 1839, Schumann wrote in her diary, "I once believed that I had creative talent, but I have given up this idea: a woman must not wish to compose- there never was one able to do it.

Am I intended to be the one? I would be arrogant to believe that.”¹⁷ While I certainly agree the human experience will surely influence a composer’s compositional choices, regardless of gender, perhaps for now we should do more to celebrate the feminine experience and, as Dr. Silvey suggests, appreciate women composers because of their unique perspective that their gender provides.

Two common threads appeared when discussing the future for women composers: how to best support women composers both today and in future generations, and what are societal obstacles that women face such as implicit biases and environmental pressures that appear at critical developmental ages? Perhaps these topics should permeate discussion related to women in music, since both are directly linked to the feminine experience and are only a handful of the hurdles women regularly encounter.

Based on the research conducted, the omission of women in the Western canon has resulted in a chasmic divide between male and female composers. Other issues such as historical prejudices, a scarcity in musicological research of women composers, and lack of publishing opportunities are significant. Such longstanding deeply rooted issues can by no means be resolved in a single day or even a lifetime. However, I suggest raising awareness is one of the first steps in progressing this movement. One of the most straightforward methods is offering open discussions in classroom and rehearsal spaces about women in music. With 2020 marking the centennial anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, women’s rights are an important topic to discuss with students, regardless of their gender. Pre-concert discussions are an opportunity for audience members to become acquainted with new composers, whether historical or still living. If funding allows, guest composers could be invited to attend both

¹⁷ Reich, Nancy. *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.

rehearsals and concert discussions, giving voice to their personal experiences, compositional processes, and allowing students to speak directly to women in the music field.

One of the glaring obstacles in this issue rests in the lack of women composers in large publishing companies' promotional materials. As multiple participants mentioned, a large number of working composers are self-published. Because conductors rely heavily upon publishing and retail company websites for discovering new repertoire, a positive development would be for publishers and retailers to include composer gender in their search engines. This proposition could certainly be viewed as "othering" as it has the potential to further separate women. However, by allowing conductors to act upon their curiosity and search for "women composers" women's music may in fact begin to gain more attention, resulting in a higher demand for their music. Over time, the positive result may outweigh the possibility of "othering".

Another apparent obstacle is the lack of women composers in standard curricula. By rarely including women alongside composers such as Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms in college music history courses, future music educators are not properly equipped to teach the future music consumers about the important role women have and do play in music. While some professors may set a portion of their semester aside to address women in music, I suggest we begin interweaving women into current curricula. Not only will this place equal importance on women composers but also give students context for the composers' time, and noticeable differences in social expectations between the women composers and their male counterparts. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, young girls and teenagers may feel encouraged to explore composition as a result of experiencing successful role models.

In order for progress to continue, in a constructive manner, conductors could probably do more to hold themselves their colleagues accountable. While not all participants were drawn to Trinity Laban's approach of equal representation, I noted Sandra Snow's comment, "I'd personally find a different approach to come to a similar way of raising awareness." As with any multifaceted issue, there is no single approach that will dissolve barriers and guarantee equal representation. However, if conductors utilize their valued networking resources, conversations surrounding the inclusion of women composers could be "crowd shared" as Dr. Daley suggested. A similar form of "crowd sharing" can be found at regional and national conferences. Currently, conference programs focusing on social issues are becoming more the norm. I suggest that organizations such as ACDA begin insisting on equal representation of male and female composers on all concert programs. While some conductors may find repertoire requirements limiting, a positive outcome, as mentioned by multiple interviewees, is conductors being forced to explore a new body of repertoire otherwise largely left untouched. Exposure by way of conference performances and reading sessions is invaluable to composers and would help demonstrate that for hundreds of years, women have been writing compelling music.

Moving forward, I aim to consciously explore music by women composers and incorporate their music in my own programming. Similar to other choirs nationwide, my small church choir has limited financial resources. However, I will focus on integrating music by women by utilizing free public domain databases such as the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP) and Choral Public Domain Library (CPDL). While CPDL does not offer a gender specific search engine (perhaps this could change?), the IMSLP website has incorporated a substantial list of nearly 1,000 women composers.¹⁸ In addition, I hope to begin including

¹⁸ https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:Female_people#

regular composer biographical information to the weekly bulletin in order to give context to both the congregation and my choral ensemble. Hopefully conductors, music educators, and the music publishing business will make a more concerted effort in giving voice to women's music.

Composers Mentioned

Composer	Composition	Available Voicing
Raffaella/Vittoria Aleotti	<i>Surge, propera amica mea</i>	SSAATTBB
Ysaye Barnwell	<i>Would You Harbor</i>	SSATB
	<i>Wanting Memories</i>	SATB
Amy Beach		
Betty Bertaux	<i>S'vivon</i>	SATB, SSAA
Abbie Betinis		
Hildegard von Bingen		
Andrea Clearfield		
Chiara Cozzolani		
Eleanor Daley	<i>Love Came Down at Christmas</i>	TTBB
Melissa Dunphy	<i>Wild Embers</i>	SSAA
Matilda Durham	<i>The Promised Land</i>	
Gabriela Lena Frank		
Katerina Gimon		
Jocelyn Hagen	<i>Moon Goddess</i>	SSA
	<i>Joy</i>	SSA
	<i>The Notebooks of Leonardo DaVinci</i>	SATB & orchestra
Elaine Hagenberg	<i>O Love</i>	SATB, SSAA, TTBB
Carol Hall	<i>Jenny Rebecca</i>	SATB
Laura Hawley		
Ruth Watson Henderson		
Fanny Hensel		
Jennifer Higdon		
Sarah Hopkins	<i>Past Life Melodies</i>	SATB, SSAA
Kristin Kuster		
Chris Lastovicka	<i>Notes Upon the Breeze</i>	SSA
Isabella Leonarda		
Cecilia McDowell		
Roxanna Panufnik		
Rosephanye Powell	<i>Keep Yo' Lamps</i>	SSAA
	<i>Sorida</i>	SATB
	<i>The Word Was God</i>	SSAATTBB, SATB, SSAA, TTBB
	<i>Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child</i>	SATB, SSAA
Sarah Quartel		
Andrea Ramsey	<i>Truth</i>	SSA
Clara Schumann		
Caroline Shaw	<i>To the Hands</i>	SATB & strings
	<i>Its Motion Keeps</i>	SSSSAA
Joan Szymko	<i>It Takes a Village</i>	SATB, SSAA, TTBB
Augusta Read Thomas		

Gwyneth Walker	<i>I Will Be Earth</i>	SSATB, SSA, TTBB
	<i>Sisters</i>	SSA
	<i>Two Suffrage Songs</i>	SATB
	<i>How Can I Keep from Singing?</i>	SATB, SSAA, TTBB
	<i>Every Life Shall Be a Song</i>	SATB, TTBB
	<i>Every Night When the Sun Goes Down</i>	SATB
Nancy Wertsch	<i>When You Wish Upon a Star</i>	
Chen Yi		

Suggested Resources

Ensembles:

1. Orange County Women's Chorus – Eliza Rubenstein, director

<https://ocwomenschorus.org/>

The Orange County Women's Chorus has performed at venues including the Orange County Performing Arts Center, the Irvine Barclay Theatre, Walt Disney Concert Hall's REDCAT Theater, the 2004 and 2012 western regional conferences of the American Choral Directors' Association, and most recently, Carnegie Hall. The chorus was named a 2014 Outstanding Arts Organization by Arts Orange County and won a prize at the 2015 International Musical Eisteddfod in Llangollen, Wales.

2. Elektra Women's Choir – Morna Edmonson, director

<https://elektra.ca/>

The Elektra Women's Choir is based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. From 2016-2019, it undertook Celebrating Women Composers, a project to create opportunities for and raise the profile of women composers. The choir has become a valued resource for conductors the world over, looking to program the best of Canadian and international repertoire for treble voices. On its website, Elektra houses a permanent Repertoire Resources section, in which one can find all pieces programmed by Elektra since its inception.

3. Mirabai – Sandra Snow, director

<https://www.singmirabai.org/>

Mirabai is a resident ensemble in the College of Music at Michigan State University. Singers in mirabai are professionals in a variety of music-related careers including music educators in schools, universities and professional singers, many of whom sang as undergraduate or graduate students in the Michigan State University Women's Chamber Ensemble. Inspired by the spirit of our namesake, the 16th century mystic singer and poet who created her own destiny amid societal expectations to the contrary, each performer values the opportunity to share not only singing but mentorship and connectivity with

women engaged in their own communities as agents of change for young women and the arts. As passionate advocates for music as a form of peace making, mirabai seeks to engage audiences in meaningful explorations of musics, texts, and conversation around contemporary issues of our time.

4. Lorelei Ensemble – Beth Willer, director

<https://www.loreleiensemble.com/>

The Lorelei Ensemble maintains a robust national touring schedule, including recent collaborations with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, A Far Cry, and Cantus, and performances at celebrated venues across the country, including Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tanglewood Music Center, Boston's Symphony Hall, Trinity Wall Street, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. Education is an important and integral part of Lorelei's work, including residencies with young artists at Harvard University, Yale University, Duke University, Bucknell University, University of Iowa, Cornell University, Luther College, Vassar College, Macalester College, Mount Holyoke College, Connecticut College, Hillsdale College, Keene State College, Gordon College, the Pennsylvania Girlchoir, and the Connecticut Children's Chorus.

5. Cappella Artemisia – Candace Smith, director

<http://cappella-artemisia.com/>

Cappella Artemisia is an ensemble of female singers and instrumentalists that attempts to provide some answers to this question. Dedicated to performing the music from Italian convents in the 16th and 17th centuries, its repertoire includes both forgotten works composed by the nuns themselves, as well as music intended for performance in the convents by better-known male composers, but presented here for the first time as it would originally have been heard, i.e., without male voices.

American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) *Choral Journal*:

1. *Choral Music Composed by Women: A Brief History* written by Matthew Hoch and Linda Lister, May 2019, vol. 59, no. 10
2. *Works by Women for Lower Voices* written by Christopher Kiver, June/July 2020, vol. 60, no. 11

Publishers:

1. Hildegard Publishing Company
<http://www.hildegard.com/>
2. MusicSpoke
<https://musicspoke.com/>
3. Graphite Publishing
<https://graphitepublishing.com/>
4. Cypress Choral Music
<https://cypresschoral.com/>

Online Resources:

1. Oxford Music Library
Women Composers by Time Period:
<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/page/women-composers-by-time-period>
Women Composers A-Z:
<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/page/women-composers-a-to-z>
2. Institute for Composer Diversity
<https://www.composerdiversity.com/>
The Institute for composer Diversity operates within the School of Music at the State University of New York at Fredonia. The Institute is committed to the celebration, education, and advocacy of music created by composers from historically

underrepresented genders, racial, ethnic, and cultural heritages, and sexual orientations as well as disabled composers.

Conference Presentation:

1. *Maestras of Masterworks*, NCCO8, November 2019

Presenter: Ms. Jami Lercher

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Vw9X4U5qtChTE0RV_-JWzA4H25hXDQfR-jvJS-urJsM/edit?ts=5f053279#gid=0

Interviewee Biographies

Jerry Blackstone:

GRAMMY Award winner Jerry Blackstone is a leading conductor and highly respected conducting pedagogue. Now emeritus professor of conducting, he served on the faculty of the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance for thirty years where as director of choirs he led the graduate program in choral conducting and oversaw the University's eleven choirs. In February 2006, he received two GRAMMY Awards ("Best Choral Performance" and "Best Classical Album") as chorusmaster for the critically acclaimed Naxos recording of William Bolcom's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. The Naxos recording of Milhaud's monumental *L'Orestie d'Eschyle*, on which Blackstone served as chorusmaster, was nominated for a 2015 GRAMMY Award ("Best Opera Recording"). *Opera Magazine* reviewer Tim Ashley wrote: "the real stars, though, are the University of Michigan's multiple Choirs, who are faced with what must be some of the most taxing choral writing in the entire operatic repertory. Their singing has tremendous authority and beauty, while the shouts and screams of *Choéphores* are unnerving in the extreme. Their diction is good too: the occasions when we don't hear the words are Milhaud's responsibility, rather than theirs. It's an extraordinary achievement, and utterly mesmerizing."

The University of Michigan Chamber Choir, conducted by Blackstone, performed by special invitation at the inaugural conference in San Antonio of the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO) and presented three enthusiastically received performances in New York City at the National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). As conductor of the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club from 1988-2002, Professor Blackstone led the ensemble in performances at ACDA national and division conventions and on extensive concert tours throughout Australia, Eastern and Central Europe, Asia, South America, and the United States.

In 2017, NCCO presented him with its prestigious Lifetime Achievement Membership Award and, in 2006, for "significant contributions to choral music," he received the ACDA-Michigan chapter's Maynard Klein Lifetime Achievement Award. From 2003-2015, Dr. Blackstone served as conductor and music director of the University Musical Society (UMS) Choral Union,

a large community/university chorus that frequently appears with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) and the Ann Arbor Symphony and presents yearly performances of Handel's *Messiah* and other major works for chorus and orchestra. Choirs prepared by Blackstone have appeared under the batons of Valery Gergiev, Neeme Järvi, Leonard Slatkin, Hans Graf, Michael Tilson Thomas, John Adams, Helmuth Rilling, James Conlon, Nicholas McGegan, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Peter Oundjian, and Yitzak Perlman.

Professor Blackstone is considered one of the country's leading conducting teachers, and his students have been first place award winners and finalists in both the graduate and undergraduate divisions of ACDA's biennial National Choral Conducting competition. His 2016 rehearsal techniques DVD, *Did You Hear That?* (GIA Publications) deals with the conductor's decision-making process during rehearsal. Santa Barbara Music Publishing distributes Blackstone's acclaimed educational DVD, *Working with Male Voices* and also publishes the *Jerry Blackstone Choral Series*.

Blackstone is an active guest conductor and workshop presenter and has appeared in forty-two states as well as New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Sicily. In the summer, he leads the Adult Choir Camp and the Choral Conducting Institute at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

Prior to coming to the University of Michigan in 1988, Dr. Blackstone served on the music faculties of Phillips University in Oklahoma, Westmont College in California, and Huntington University in Indiana.¹⁹

Maria Bucoy-Calavan:

Marie Bucoy-Calavan has conducted a diverse range of ensembles, from primary and secondary level choirs, to community, collegiate, and professional choruses and opera productions.

Bucoy-Calavan finished her Bachelor of Arts in Music and Master of Music in Choral Conducting at California State University, Fullerton, serving as the Graduate Assistant Conductor of both the University Singers and Chamber Choir, under the direction and

¹⁹ <https://smt.d.umich.edu/about/faculty-profiles/jerry-blackstone/>

mentorship of Dr. Robert Istad. She completed her Doctorate of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting at University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, where she directed the University of Cincinnati Men's Chorus and taught introductory courses and private lessons in conducting for undergraduate students.

She has prepared and performed with symphonic choruses under the batons of Carl St. Clair, Bramwell Tovey, John Williams, Eric Whitacre, Keith Lockhart, John Mauceri, Steven Mercurio, Louis Langrée, John Nelson, and John Alexander in distinguished venues, including Walt Disney Concert Hall, Hollywood Bowl, and the Liszt Academy in Budapest, Hungary. Bucoy-Calavan has continued her conducting training with Robert Porco, Mark Gibson, Craig Hella-Johnson, Patrick Dupré Quigley, Ragnar Bohlin, Jerry Blackstone, Paul Rardin, Jacques Lacombe, David Hayes, Arthur Fagan, William Dehning, and Elmer Thomas.

Bucoy-Calavan has conducted various opera performances, including California State University, Fullerton's full production of Gaetano Donizetti's *Elixir of Love* and University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory's Undergraduate Opera production of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

In addition, Bucoy-Calavan placed second in the 2013 American Choral Directors Association National Choral Conducting Competition, held in Dallas, Texas.

Bucoy-Calavan also appears as a guest clinician and conductor for honor choirs and masterclasses, both regionally and nationally. Most recently, she was invited to serve a residency teaching conducting and American choral music at the Hochschule für Musik und Theatre in Munich, Germany. She served as the Assistant Conductor of the May Festival Chorus, the symphonic chorus for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

Currently, in addition to her position as Director of Choral Studies at The University of Akron, Bucoy-Calavan is both Director of Akron Symphony Chorus and Artistic Director of Summit Choral Society, a choral organization that consists of the Masterworks Chorale and the four-choir Children's Choir Program.

She serves on the National Board of Directors for Chorus America and as University Repertoire and Resources Chair for the state organization, Ohio Choral Directors Association.²⁰

Caron Daley:

Caron Daley is Director of Choral Activities and Ensembles Coordinator at the Mary Pappert School of Music at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, where she conducts the Voices of Spirit and Pappert Chorale and teaches undergraduate and graduate conducting. Choirs under her direction have performed across the Northeast, including an invited performance at the 2019 National Collegiate Choral Organization Conference and performances with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 2015 and upcoming in 2021. A native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, she has held past conducting appointments with the University of Toronto, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, National Youth Choir of Canada, Salem Academy and College, and St. Michael's Choir School. She regularly guest-conducts festival choirs in Canada and the United States.

Caron is a certified Dalcroze Eurhythmics teacher and frequently lectures on the sound-gesture relationship in choral conducting. She is published in *Anacrusis*, *Canadian Music Educator*, *Research Memorandum Series of Chorus America*, *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir Vol. 4 and Vol. 5*, *Choral Journal*, and upcoming in *Journal of Singing*. Passionate about conductor education, Caron founded the Halifax Choral Conducting Institute (HCCI) in 2013, a summer training program that attracts conductors from across North America. In 2019, the HCCI inaugurated a Women's Conducting Intensive, the first of its kind in Canada. Her current cross-disciplinary research with Dr. Heather Leavy-Rusiewicz (Speech-Language Pathology) investigates the use of manual mimicry gestures (hand gestures that mimic the spatiotemporal configurations of the vocal apparatus) in the teaching and learning of non-native speech sounds for singing. She also collaborates with Dr. Greg Marchetti (Physical Therapy and Ergonomics) to explore injury prevention for conductors.

A third-generation music educator, Caron holds a D.M.A. (Choral Conducting) from the University of Toronto, an M.M. (Choral Conducting) and M.A. (Vocal Pedagogy) from The

²⁰ <https://uakron.edu/music/faculty/bio-detail.dot?u=mbucoycalavan>

Ohio State University, an Artist Diploma (Voice) and B.M. (Music Education) from Western University, and an A.R.C.T (Voice) from the Royal Conservatory of Canada. She currently serves as President of the American Choral Directors Association of Pennsylvania.²¹

Peggy Dettwiler:

Peggy Dettwiler is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Mansfield University, where she conducts the Concert Choir, Festival Chorus, and Chamber Singers, and teaches choral conducting and methods. She holds the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. She also has a Master of Music Degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Texas at San Antonio and a Master of Music Degree in Music Education from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. For twenty-three consecutive years, the Mansfield University Concert Choir has been invited to perform at state, regional, national, or international choral conventions and has won eleven gold medals and numerous prizes in international competitions. In 2010, Dr. Dettwiler received the Elaine Brown Award for Choral Excellence from the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association, and she placed second in 2011 and 2013 for the American Prize for Choral Conductors at the College/University level. Dettwiler has served as a guest conductor and lecturer throughout the country and has given presentations at numerous NAFME and ACDA Conventions. She has produced two DVDs, one entitled, “Developing a Vocal Color Palette for Various Choral Styles” and the second, “Sing in Style.” Dettwiler made her conducting debut in Carnegie Hall in January of 2014 and presented an interest session at the World Choral Symposium in Seoul, Korea, in August of 2014. Dettwiler received the Presidential Coin for Excellence from General Francis Hendricks, President of Mansfield University, and was designated “Honored Artist of the American Prize.” In 2016, she served on the jury for the World Choir Games in Sochi, Russia. Most recently, she prepared 80 singers from Mansfield University to sing the choruses for Carnegie Hall’s Gala Benefit Celebration of Bernstein’s *Candide*, garnering a mention in the New York Times. She is currently President of the Eastern Region of the American Choral Directors Association.

²¹ <https://www.duq.edu/academics/faculty/dr-caron-daley>

Patrick Freer:

Patrick K. Freer is Professor of Music at Georgia State University where he currently conducts the 130-voice Choral Union and directs the doctoral programs in music education. He is former Visiting Professor at the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg (Austria). His degrees are from Westminster Choir College and Teachers College-Columbia University. Dr. Freer has conducted or presented in 39 states and 29 countries, including recent guest conducting for multiple All-State and Division/Region ACDA Honor Choirs, and more than 75 professional and/or honor choirs in the USA and abroad. Dr. Freer is Editor of the *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing*, past editor of *Music Educators Journal*, and member of the ACDA National Standing Committee for Research & Publications. He chairs the philosophy sub-group within the task force responding to COVID-19 concerns for the National Collegiate Choral Organization.

David Fryling:

David Fryling is director of choral activities at Hofstra University, where he conducts both the select Hofstra Chorale and Hofstra Chamber Choir and teaches beginning and advanced studies in choral conducting, as well as graduate-level studies in choral conducting and choral literature. In addition, he serves as an adjunct professor for the Hofstra School of Education, where he supervises choral music education student teachers during their field placements. In fall 2014 David was inducted into the Long Island Music Hall of Fame as the “Educator of Note” in recognition of his years of leadership in the Long Island music education community, and in the spring of 2017 David was named the winner of The American Prize in Conducting in two categories: community chorus and college & university.

An energetic and engaging conductor, clinician, and adjudicator of professional, community, and high school choirs, David’s recent invitations include various all-state and regional honor choirs, master classes, workshops, and adjudications throughout New York and in Alaska, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia.

From 2007 to 2013, David spent his summers as coordinator of the Vocal Artists program at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan, where he was conductor and music director of the

World Youth Honors Choir and Festival Choir & Orchestra. He has since been a frequent guest artist on the conducting faculty of the New York State Summer School of the Arts (NYSSSA) School of Choral Studies and has served on the faculty at the Sitka Fine Arts Camp in Sitka, AK.

In the fall of 2013 David founded the eVoco Voice Collective, a nonprofit organization of singers of the highest musical, technical, and expressive abilities. The group comprises two main ensembles, the Mixed Ensemble and the Women's Ensemble, presents a yearly concert series and a recital, and awards young artist scholarships to outstanding high school singers.

For seven summers, Dr. Fryling served as Coordinator of the Vocal Artists program at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan, where he was conductor and music director of the World Youth Honors Choir and Festival Choir & Orchestra. These two choirs formed the core of the high school choral experience at this intensive six-week arts camp, and under his direction they performed such large-scale works as Brahms' *Nänie*, Pärt's *Credo*, Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, Poulenc's *Gloria*, and Mozart's "*Coronation*" *Mass in C*.

Before coming to Long Island, David served as music director and conductor of the University of Michigan Arts Chorale and assistant conductor of the Michigan Chamber Singers, University Choir, and the internationally acclaimed Michigan Men's Glee Club. While in Ann Arbor, he was also the music director and conductor of the Michigan Youth Women's Chorus, a year-round all-state honors choir composed of select high school sopranos and altos from across Michigan. In addition to his professional teaching and conducting responsibilities, David is a past president of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Eastern Region, and currently serves as ACDA national president-elect.²²

Kristina MacMullen:

Conductor-teacher Kristina Caswell MacMullen has devoted her career to sharing music and inspiration with students and audiences. Her collaborations with fellow musicians continue to confirm her abiding hope for the future and an unflagging belief in the power of choral music.

²² <http://www.davidfryling.org/>

Currently, MacMullen serves as an Associate Professor of Choral Conducting at the University of North Texas where she conducts the University Singers, Kalandra, and instructs both undergraduate and graduate students in the areas of conducting and rehearsal pedagogy. Prior to her appointment at UNT, MacMullen spent eight years on the faculty of The Ohio State University. While at OSU, her interdisciplinary work earned her the Sir William Osler Award for Humanism in Medicine.

MacMullen believes that great potential lies in choral performance and creative communication. She strives to guide her students, as they desire to impact the world they will inherit for the better. Creative projects include interdisciplinary performances addressing human trafficking, the Kubler-Ross stages of grief, play theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, female archetype exploration, American song, civic engagement, and the nature of tears.

As an active adjudicator and clinician, Dr. MacMullen has conducted All-State and honors choirs throughout the United States. She has presented and co-presented interest sessions at state, regional, national and international conferences. Recent and upcoming engagements involve students in New Mexico, Michigan, South Carolina, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, and Texas. Her teaching and conducting is featured on the DVD *Conducting-Teaching: Real World Strategies for Success* published by GIA (2009). Her editions for treble choir are published by Boosey & Hawkes, Musicatus Press, and MusicSpoke.

Dr. MacMullen earned both the Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music degrees from Michigan State University. She completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Texas Tech University. Dr. MacMullen has enjoyed a diverse career as a public-school teacher, interacting with students in rural, suburban, and urban settings, elementary through high school. She also sings with the professional ensemble *mirabai*.

Amanda Quist:

Dr. Amanda Quist is the Director of Choral Activities for the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. Dr. Quist was previously Chair of the Conducting, Organ, and Sacred Music Department, and Associate Professor of Conducting at Westminster Choir College. Dr.

Quist is the recipient of Westminster Choir College of Rider University's 2014 Distinguished Teaching Award, the 2018 Mazzotti Award for Women's Leadership, and she is the Carol F. Spinelli Conducting Fellow. Dr. Quist was recently invited to be a conductor for the ACDA International Exchange Program, clinician for the 2019 ASPIRE International Youth Music Festival in Australia, juror for the Penabur International Choir Festival in Indonesia, and clinician for the Interkultur International Choral Festival. Westminster Kantorei, winner of the 2018 American Prize in College & University Choral Performance, has performed at the American Choral Directors Association's (ACDA) Eastern Division Conference, Boston Early Music Festival, American Handel Festival, and Interkultur. The choir recently released its first commercial recording, *Lumina*, distributed by Naxos, which was hailed by infodad.com as a recording "sung with great beauty of sound and excellent articulation ... a CD to cherish" and by National Medal of Arts recipient Morten Lauridsen as "superb, a splendid recording, highly recommended." During her work with the Westminster Symphonic Choir, Dr. Quist collaborated with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Dresden Staatskapelle. She also serves as Chorus Master for the Philadelphia Orchestra Chorus. Dr. Quist's role as Chorus Master for the premiere of Toshio Hosokawa's opera *Matsukaze* at the Spoleto Festival USA and the Lincoln Center Festival garnered praise from *The New York Times* and *Charleston City Paper*, who described the chorus' performance as "beautifully prepared, gripping," a "gossamer web of voices" and "bridging the vocal and instrumental textures with perfect intonation." Dr. Quist was Director of the Westminster Vocal Institute, a highly regarded summer program for talented high school students, and Director of Choral Activities at San José State University. Her other honors include the James Mulholland National Choral Award and the Audrey Davidson Early Music Award. An active guest conductor and clinician, her recent and upcoming appearances include the NAFME All National Honor Choir, All State High School & Collegiate Honor Choirs throughout the country, and serving as a headliner for music conferences in the US and abroad. Dr. Quist is the National ACDA Repertoire & Resources Coordinator for Collegiate Activities, and her choral series is published through Walton Music.²³

²³ <https://people.miami.edu/profile/axq105@miami.edu>

Philip Silvey:

Philip Silvey is Associate Professor of Music Teaching and Learning at the Eastman School of Music where he directs the Women's Chorus and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in music education. Previously he served as Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education at the University of Maryland where he directed the Women's Chorus, the Maryland Boy Choir, and the College Park Youth Choir. He has been invited to serve as guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator in numerous states and directed state honors choruses in Maryland, Virginia, New York and New Jersey. He has served as president of the Maryland-DC chapter of the American Choral Director's Association (ACDA) and as Repertoire and Standards Chair for Women's Choirs for the New York state chapter of ACDA. He has presented interest sessions at national, regional, and state ACDA and NAFME (National Association for Music Education) conventions. He has contributed to two textbook series, *Experiencing Choral Music* and *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir, Volumes II and III*. His scholarly writings have appeared in the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *Music Educators Journal*, *Choral Journal*, and the *Arts and Learning Research Journal*. His original choral compositions and arrangements, published by Santa Barbara Music, Carl Fischer, and Boosey & Hawkes, have been performed by all-state and national honors choruses.²⁴

Sandra Snow:

As conductor, pedagogue, and scholar, Sandra Snow is widely acknowledged as one who brings singers of all ages and abilities to artful performance through an understanding of the music and its context in the world around them. As Professor of Choral Conducting and Music education at the Michigan State University College of Music, the MSU Women's Chamber Ensemble has appeared as featured performers at American Choral Directors Association conventions at state, regional, and national levels. As guest conductor, she travels extensively in North America and abroad.

In 2017 Snow created *mirabai*, a project-based professional women's chorus. *Mirabai* features alumna associated with the MSU Women's Chamber Ensemble. *Mirabai* was a featured ensemble at the Texas Choral Director's Association conference in 2018. The inaugural

²⁴ https://www.esm.rochester.edu/faculty/silvey_philip/

recording, *Ecstatic Songs*, was released in 2018. Mirabai will open the 2020 conference of the Southwest Division of the American Choral Director's Association.

Snow is the Chair of the MSU Music Education Area and the Artistic Director of the CME Institute for Choral Teacher Education produced annually at MSU. Snow is author of the DVD "Conducting-Teaching: Real World Strategies for Success" published by GIA (2009), a resource for conductor-teachers at all levels of teaching. She edits the choral music series *In High Voice* published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Snow is a recipient of the Michigan State University William J. Beal Award for Outstanding Faculty, the MSU Teacher-Scholar Award, and the Dortha J. and John D. Withrow award for Excellence in Teaching.²⁵

Brandon Williams:

Dr. Brandon Williams is an Assistant Professor of Choral Music and Choral Music Education at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. He conducts the Rutgers Voorhees Choir (Carnegie Hall 2019, Eastern ACDA 2020) and teaches a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses related to choral music education. As a secondary vocal music educator, Dr. Williams amassed a decade of middle and high school teaching experience in St. Louis, Missouri, where he also served as a conductor with the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus, the St. Louis Children's Choirs, and as a voice faculty member at Maryville University. He holds degrees from Western Illinois University, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Michigan State University, and an Artist Teacher Diploma from the Choral Music Experience-Institute for Choral Teacher Education. Dr. Williams has numerous compositions and arrangements published with Hal Leonard and multiple articles published in the *Choral Journal*.

²⁵ <https://www.music.msu.edu/faculty/profile/sandra>

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