

RETHINKING REPRESENTATION: INCLUSION OF WOMEN COMPOSERS IN
STANDARD CLASSICAL REPERTOIRE

by

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STANDARD CLASSICAL REPERTOIRE

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ABSTRACT

Women composers are severely underrepresented in classical performance around the world. This is due partly to oppressive historical circumstances and prejudiced attitudes towards women in society and in music. Subsequently, the common misconception that women were not typically serious composers until the twentieth century leads to the idea that they simply cannot be represented equitably in modern performance. Women have always been composers, though, and for centuries have written music which was often unpublished or unknown. Today, an abundant amount of their music is accessible to musicians and must be included in standard classical repertoire through the intentional inclusion of their works into performance and study. This is the focus of the first portion of this essay.

I began brainstorming about representation and inclusion when I programmed my junior recital and realized that standard repertoire included almost no women composers. I thought it fitting, then, to develop another recital for this project with music composed exclusively by women. The recital, titled *In Her Shoes*, explores different experiences and emotions in a woman's life through the music of women composers. Performed on April 15, 2023, it was both a challenge and a joy to create and in the second portion of this essay I will share the research and reasoning which went into it.

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Introduction

Classical concert programs made up entirely of male composers typically warrant no dispute; in fact, they are the norm. Furthermore, the inclusion of just one woman composer on a program is typically notable and praiseworthy for its diversity. Yet, it is still not standard practice to regularly feature women composers. A 2021 study by Donne, *Women in Music*, of 100 orchestras across the globe revealed that of the concerts in the 2020/2021 season, an overwhelming eighty-eight point fifty-five percent included compositions written exclusively by men and only five percent of the season's total repertoire was written by women.¹ Far too often, women composers are either tokenized in concert programs to falsely advertise diversity or simply left out altogether. Moreover, a chosen woman composer will most often come from a handful of better-known composers, many of whom are white, wealthy, and straight. This dilemma stems from a lack of understanding of the historical causes behind barriers to women composing professionally and the subsequent obscurity of their music. The resulting expectations of acceptable repertoire choices are limited and exclusionary, an inaccurate representation of the true breadth of the repertoire available to current musicians. This is not how it has to be, though. Musicians can and should craft more equitable programs - from recitals and concerts to opera seasons and more.

It is possible and necessary to include music composed by women in today's musical repertoire. Furthermore, this inclusion must occur without the use of tokenism to be impactful and non-performative. In order to accomplish this, musicians must commit to actively and

¹ Donne, *Women in Music, Equality & Diversity in Concert Halls: 100 Orchestras Worldwide*. (Donne, *Women in Music*, 2021) 7.

intentionally including women in their studies and performances to integrate them into the larger musical canon. Though much of their work can be obscure, the music of women composers is worth the initial effort to incorporate their work into the repertoire. Eventually, as these practices become the norm, no additional effort will be needed to make the works of these women part of the canon.

A Brief Overview of the History of Women Composers

Women have written a multitude of works throughout history, although men have indeed been more prolific and published composers. Taken at face value, this results in narrow-minded arguments such as that women are too feminine or lack the creative agency to compose. These arguments justify the discrepancy in output between men and women, even supporting it at times, rather than criticizing and disapproving of it. From this lens, it makes perfect sense that women composed and published much less music than men and therefore have works performed infrequently. However, many historical circumstances resulted in one or more of these barriers to their inclusion in modern repertoire: their exclusion from educational and professional music spaces, the obscurity of their works after their initial publishing, and the loss of a great and unknown number of their unpublished works. Make no mistake, however; women have always been composers and their near total exclusion from the musical canon is a barrier to equitable representation which must be torn down.

For much of Western history, society clung to the belief in separate spheres. This Victorian ideology has roots extending as far back as Ancient Greece and has guided Western society for centuries.² Men were to exist in the public sphere while women occupied the private one. Extended the ideology to music as well, society has historically relegated women's roles as musicians to the domestic private sphere, limiting both their educational and professional opportunities.³ Until around the end of the Romantic period in the nineteenth century, musical

² Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (1988): 18, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1889653>.

³ Megan Lam, "Female Representation in the Traditional Music Classroom." *General Music Today* 32, no. 1 (2018): 18. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371318793148>.

education for women was typically only available to those who belonged to the upper-class because they were expected to entertain their family and other guests with music.⁴ Even then, education was frequently limited to private tutoring, often by other family members. Its purpose was to create amateur performers, not professional musicians.

Already at a disadvantage, and with the exceptions of perhaps opera singers and pianists, it was almost never socially acceptable for women to pursue careers as musicians until the beginning of the twentieth century. To be a composer was almost entirely out of reach.⁵ Upper and middle class women were expected to work primarily in their homes while working class women seldom had access to the resources and financial support necessary to succeed as a composer. Even today, when women have made such strides towards equality, they are underrepresented in professional positions such as university faculty members, conductors, and composers.⁶ Barriers throughout history have lasting implications and equitable representation has real-world consequences, making it even more vital to achieve.

Many women during and before the Romantic period thrived as composers in their homes, writing music which was never published or played in public. For this private performance space, they typically composed short, small-scale songs which would come to be

⁴ Edith Borroff, “Women Composers: Reminiscence and History,” *College Music Symposium* 15 (1975): 29–31, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40375087>.

⁵ Borroff, 31-33

⁶ Barbara Payne, “The Gender Gap: Women on Music Faculties in American Colleges and Universities 1993-1994.” *College Music Symposium* 36 (1996): 94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40374286>.

Javier C. Hernández, “Top Orchestras Have No Female Conductors. Is Change Coming?” *New York Times*, September 10, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/10/arts/music/female-conductors.html>

known as “salon music.” As women gradually began to publish their work, much of their output comprised of salon music. Yet, because it was associated with women, it would forever be looked down on as overly-feminine.⁷ In a similar vein, until the twentieth century, large-scale works such as operas and symphonies were predominantly composed by men. These forms require “time, money, and some assurance of professional support,” none of which women regularly possessed until the twentieth century.⁸ Unfortunately, this added to arguments that women were not serious, legitimate composers.

To circumvent societal opposition to publication, it was a relatively widespread practice in the nineteenth century for women composers to publish their music anonymously or under a pseudonym,⁹ especially under the supposed identity of a male relative. Clara and Robert Schumann’s joint lieder collection, *Zwölf Lieder aus F. Rückerts Liebesfrühling*, was originally published without revealing who composed each individual piece, concealing Clara’s work.¹⁰ Felix Mendelssohn’s Opuses 8 and 9 include six of his sister Fanny Hensel Mendelssohn’s songs.¹¹ Oddly, Mendelssohn had no qualms admitting that these publications were, in fact,

⁷ Marcia J. Citron, “Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon.” *The Journal of Musicology* 8, no. 1 (1990): 110-11. <https://doi.org/10.2307/763525>.

⁸ Elizabeth Wood, “Women in Music.” *Signs* 6, no. 2 (1980): 291. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173927>.

⁹ Jeannie G. Pool, “America’s Women Composers: Up from the Footnotes.” *Music Educators Journal* 65, no. 5 (1979): 30. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3395571>.

¹⁰ Rufus Hallmark, “The Rückert Lieder of Robert and Clara Schumann.” *19th-Century Music* 14, no. 1 (1990): 4. <https://doi.org/10.2307/746673>.

¹¹ Angela Mace Christian, "Hensel [née Mendelssohn (-Bartholdy)], Fanny Cäcilie." *Grove Music Online* (November 2018), 12, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-3000000159>.

written by Hensel - even to the Queen of England! Not every anonymous composer was so lucky to be able to claim their work, though.

Because it was so seldom published prior to the end of the nineteenth century, a large amount of music written by women has been lost overtime. This lack of public record has contributed to the idea that before the eighteenth century, and to some extent still even today, women simply did not compose. If this was true, though, there would be no reason to fight for their representation. Thankfully, discoveries and research over the course of the last century or so have easily disproved this idea.¹² Many musicologists are actively and often successfully searching for this music. For instance, in 2009, dozens of scores composed by Florence Price were discovered in an abandoned house in St. Anne Illinois which have since been published and performed.¹³ Women have always been composers. One of the first known composers, Hildegard von Bingen, was a woman! Nonetheless, the historical oppression of women composers clearly has lasting effects upon the music performed and studied today.

Over the past century or so, women have fought for their places in society and in music, making considerable progress towards equality. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, they entered and were increasingly accepted in academic and professional music spaces. Today, forty percent of living composers are women and the gap is closing.¹⁴ They are

¹² Pool, 28.

¹³ Alex Ross, "The Rediscovery of Florence Price," *The New Yorker Magazine*, February 5, 2018. Accessed February 7, 2018. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/02/05/the-rediscovery-of-florence-price>.

¹⁴ Sara Mohr-Pietsch, "Women Composers: Genius Is Gender Blind – and so Should We Be," *The Guardian*, March 5, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2015/mar/05/women-composers-genius-radio-3-international-womens-day>.

writing highly-acclaimed music and their works are being performed on prestigious stages. Yet, they are still underrepresented compared to their men contemporaries. In 2016, the Metropolitan Opera premiered Kaija Saariaho's *L'Amour de Loin*, the first time an opera written by a woman was programmed there in over a century.¹⁵ There have been no operas by women composers performed since, living or not, though in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 seasons alone five works by living men were premiered. Thankfully, under new leadership, the Metropolitan Opera has committed itself to more thorough representation and has even commissioned two new works by composers Missy Mazzoli and Jeanine Tesori.¹⁶ This is a sizable step in the right direction. However, while society is much closer to equitable representation, treatment, and opportunity today than a century ago, there is still a long road ahead. We must fight for the many past, present, and future women composers to have their voices and music heard.

¹⁵ Michael Cooper, "Met to Stage Its First Opera by a Woman Since 1903," *The New York Times*, February 17, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/18/arts/music/met-to-stage-its-first-operaby-a-womansince-1903.html>.

¹⁶ Michael Cooper, "The Met is Creating New Operas (Including its First by Women)," *The New York Times*, September 23, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/23/arts/music/metropolitan-opera-bam-public-theater-women.html>

Historical and Contemporary Attitudes Regarding Women Composers

Historical attitudes towards the exclusion of women composers are well documented and give insight into why, well into the twentieth century, they were not treated as men's equals. The leading musical critics and scholars, almost exclusively men, wrote often about their inferiority as composers and creatives. George Upton was one of the first to write about women's influence on music, but he spends the beginning of his 1880 book, *Woman in Music*, explaining their "[failure] to create important and enduring works in music."¹⁷ He comes to the conclusion that "having had equal advantages with men, [women] have failed as creators," adding that they are too emotional to be anything more than receptive to men's creativity.¹⁸

It seems that this was a common belief at the end of the nineteenth century and it appears again in an 1888 article about Fanny Hensel in *The Musical Times*: "Under these circumstances the remarkable unanimity which women have exhibited in adhering to the role of interpreters, rather than creators, argues a lack of the special gifts which are summed up in the word genius. Otherwise, why should it have been that in the Mozart and Mendelssohn family the creative faculty should have in both cases manifested itself in the boy and not the girl?"¹⁹ The anonymous author claims that women have always had equal opportunities as artists but proceeds to explain why that is not true using Hensel as a case study. He notes her father's staunch opposition to her pursuing a career as well as the societal pressures behind his opposition. He notes her family's

¹⁷ George Upton, *Woman in Music*. 1880. third ed. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1890), 18, archive.org/details/womaninmusic90upto/page/n7/mode/2up.

¹⁸ Upton, 22.

¹⁹ "Fanny Mendelssohn." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 29, no. 544 (1888): 339, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3359518>.

Jewish ancestry and their experiences with harsh anti-semitism, another reason to force Fanny to conform. He notes that she passed away early in life while she was still actively composing, though he makes no mention that she had only just begun to publish her compositions at the time of her passing and was doing so successfully. Still, though he acknowledges all of these hurdles to her success as a professional composer, he argues that women such as Fanny Hensel simply lack the creative faculty required for genius.

Well into the twentieth century, society continued to treat the notion that women were less capable as creatives and professionals as legitimate. In his 1940 piece “Why No Women Composers,” psychologist Carl E. Seashore writes: “Woman’s fundamental urge is to be beautiful, loved and adored as a person; man’s urge is to provide and achieve in a career.”²⁰ He again claims that women have had equal opportunities and still fallen short as creatives and professionals. He does, however, accurately explain that there are no scientific grounds for differences in intelligence, talent, or creative power between the binary sexes. Nonetheless, because of the persistent belief that no true barriers to success ever existed for women, he disregards this evidence, searching for yet another ‘psychological’ and ‘scientific’ explanation for their inferiority. He comes to the conclusion that the cause of the lack of known women composers lies in the selfish, vain, and lazy fundamental nature of women. I must emphasize that this was written less than a century ago and these ideas still hold a great deal of influence over society. Additionally, it marks a dangerous turn towards the use of pseudoscience to rationalize the discrimination of women.

²⁰ Carl E. Seashore, “Why No Great Women Composers?” *Music Educators Journal* 26, no. 5 (1940): 88, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3385588>.

Society has also historically regarded successful women composers as exceptions to the norm, dismissing their achievements as a result of aid by outside sources. Richard Crawford, in his 2001 text *America's Musical Life: A History*, includes a chapter written about Amy Beach which succumbs to this idea.²¹ After recounting the beginning of her career, the chapter takes a turn, insinuating that she flourished largely due to her privilege and thus that her success is somewhat illegitimate, noting that “these glimpses of [her] works from the 1890s suggests that Beach’s musicianship and practicality enabled her to tailor her music for a variety of situations. It is worth remembering here that despite the prejudice she faced as a female, compared with most other American musicians (male or female), Beach lived a privileged life.” Citing her mother’s early recognition of her musical talent, the stability of her marriage, and her upper-class status, Crawford attempts to illustrate how this was not the situation of most women in America at the dawn of the twentieth century, preventing them from achieving careers as successful as Beach’s. Instead, he singles Beach out, undermining her talent and accomplishments.

It is true that Beach did hold a great deal of privilege as a wealthy, white, and Christian person, an identity shared by hundreds of composers, both men and women. It is also true that discussing the privilege of famous composers should be normalized. In fact, it is vital to creating equity in music and society as a whole. Unfortunately, these discussions currently seem to occur mostly in regards to minority composers. We seldom call out famous male composers as privileged although they generally enjoy more advantages than their women contemporaries.

²¹ Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History*, (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2001), 351-371.

Additionally, many of the alleged privileges held by some women composers were not truly privileges but byproducts of patriarchal oppression. One such privilege was the presence of men, typically a husband, in their lives who were able and willing to support them, advocating for their careers and creative endeavors.²² Critics cite examples such as Fanny Hensel, Pauline Viardot, and Amy Beach to defend their argument. Feminist scholar Peggy McIntosh condemns these so-called privileges, writing of two different kinds of privilege: “positive advantages which we can work to spread [and] negative types of advantages which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies.”²³ This privilege is clearly the latter. For a woman to require a man’s aid to compose professionally is oppression resulting from patriarchy. To marry a man that is willing to offer such aid is itself more of an obstacle than a privilege.

Each of these critiques attacking women’s lack of agency and creative power are rooted in biases and prejudice which continue to be reflected in contemporary attitudes towards women composers. They are still not taken seriously as composers and receive backhanded compliments about their sweetness and charm.²⁴ Researchers continue to search for biological explanations for the shortage of women composers, despite plentiful evidence disproving such theories. Adding to these arguments of men’s biological supremacy, the social circumstances leading to their historical oppression is consistently left out of music history along with most

²² Eugene Gates, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Composers? Psychological Theories, Past and Present,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 28, no. 2 (1994): 28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3333265>.

²³ Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” 1989, psychology.umbc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2016/10/White-Privilege_McIntosh-1989.pdf.

²⁴ Melissa J. De Graaf, “‘Never Call Us Lady Composers’: Gendered Reception in the New York Composers’ Forum, 1935-1940,” *American Music* 26, no. 3 (2008): 285. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40071709>.

women musicians altogether. Most grievously, many musicians today seem to have simply accepted the underrepresentation of women composers as an unfortunate fact of life.

As a result of these prejudiced practices and attitudes, women have largely been written out of music history. With the emergence of women's studies as a discipline, this is now fortunately beginning to change.²⁵ However, mainstream music history today tends to rely on tokenism in regards to teaching about women and other underrepresented groups. Judith Long Laws defines tokenism as: "the means by which the dominant group advertises a promise of mobility between the dominant and excluded classes. By definition, however, tokenism involves mobility which is severely restricted in quantity, and the quality of mobility is severely restricted as well. The Token does not become assimilated into the dominant group but is destined for permanent marginality."²⁶ In music history, this takes form as a method of teaching which often focuses on a limited number of the most extraordinary women composers who held lasting influence and defied societal expectations to lead professional or semi-professional careers as performers and composers.²⁷ This method lacks nuance, though, failing to delve beyond the surface and ask why such limiting societal expectations existed in the first place. Furthermore, it does not accurately depict the true number of women composers or women's other numerous

²⁵ Vicki D. Baker, "Inclusion of Women Composers in College Music History Textbooks," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 25, no. 1 (2003): 7-9, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40215274>.

²⁶ Judith Long Laws, "The Psychology of Tokenism: An Analysis," *Sex Roles* 1, no. 1 (March 1975): 51, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00287213>

²⁷ Cynthia J. Cyrus and Olivia Carter Mather, "Rereading Absence: Women in Medieval and Renaissance Music," *College Music Symposium* 38 (1998): 102, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40374322>.

contributions to music history.²⁸ In bypassing the history of their exclusion from classical music it continues to erase women from both the historical narrative and modern repertoire. When scholars prioritize only those composers whose works and influence have survived the biased test of time, of course women are left out. They receive only a passing mention as token members of their community.

²⁸ Lam, 19.

Equitable Representation and Intentional Inclusion

Due to both the original historical barriers to women's professional musicianship and the ensuing scholarly and professional responses to their lack of compositional output, I believe a reexamination and consequent expansion of the current classical repertoire must occur. With an understanding of the workings behind women's historical exclusion from professional musicianship, musicians must approach gender representation in the works they program with more nuance than, for example, simply selecting one of the relatively few well-known pieces by famous women composers to show that they care about representation. This well-meaning but blasé and surface-level approach only reinforces the status quo. Women deserve the same meticulous critique, analysis, and research as men have historically been granted.

To achieve this change, musicians must intentionally include women composers in performances. What does this mean? Inclusion is a vehicle for diverse, equitable representation. Many definitions of inclusion exist and it can generally be defined as the practice of including and providing equal opportunities to those who have historically been excluded. Although some of these definitions even contain the word intentional, few make it clear what that intent is, falling short of a clear and concrete definition. In order to make equitable representation a reality, this has to change. With intentional inclusion, this can be done. I define it as the active inclusion of those with diverse, underrepresented identities in order to challenge and change the status quo and achieve equitable representation and opportunity. In regards to women composers in performance, this means the intentional programming of their works in order to challenge current notions of what repertoire should look like, eventually achieving equitable representation of women composers.

Inclusion requires a significant amount of work, namely, research and reflection. Mary-Frances Winters writes that “achieving an inclusive culture is a complex endeavor,” significantly more-so than achieving diversity alone, and “[requires] deliberate examination of all aspects of the organization and a willingness to make changes to reduce the potential for bias that favors the dominant group.”²⁹ Essentially, true inclusion is an active process which must extend beyond surface-level representation. Based on this principle and my earlier research, I have created a set of loose guidelines for the intentional inclusion of women composers in classical repertoire. Inclusive pieces should serve as meaningful parts of a program. They should often promote little-known pieces and composers. They should represent diverse perspectives, not just those of wealthy white women. Most importantly, and perhaps most controversially, they cannot be allowed to fade into the background. They should be thoroughly researched and written about, frequently discussed and championed, lest they be forgotten. Each of these guidelines are pieces of a larger puzzle: the integration of women composers and their work into the standard classical repertoire. The goal is to normalize the performance of works by women composers so that eventually it will be standard practice to perform their music in equal proportion to men’s.

It is easy to lose sight of this goal. Therefore, many musicians are opposed to ‘forced’ inclusion and choosing music based on external social factors such as gender or race. Composer Miriam Gideon has expressed this view, explaining that though she believes women composers should “band together and assert themselves,” she does not believe they should do so “by

²⁹ Mary-Frances Winters, “From Diversity to Inclusion: An Inclusion Equation” In *Diversity at Work: The Practice of Inclusion*, (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 207.

designing programs of all women's music."³⁰ She and many others see this kind of representation as unequal and even demeaning. I understand these feelings; why should women continue to be othered? Why should it be such an endeavor to showcase their music? Yet, while these ideas and feelings are compelling, after taking into account the persisting oppression of women composers, the argument that musicians should not deliberately program their music simply does not hold up.

Today, many musicians agree. For example, in 2018, the BBC held a concert titled *Forgotten Female Composers* which featured five mostly unknown women composers and explicitly stated that its goals included "expanding the canon of classical music, but also actually helping to redress its historic imbalance when it comes to gender and diversity."³¹ Though controversial, this is an effective means of achieving these goals. Dr. Carola Darwin of the Royal College of Music argues, in reference to the concert, that "until very recently, music history had erased many women from the record, but projects like this show they have always been there. It's really important that young musicians, like those I teach, know it's possible for women to be composers — and to be great composers."³² Change is uncomfortable and today's musicians must embrace the discomfort rather than shy away from it.

Essentially, sometimes inclusion for inclusion's sake is a necessary tool for progress. Because there is currently such a small presence of diverse repertoire, a more active and

³⁰ Linda Ardito, "Miriam Gideon: A Memorial Tribute," *Perspectives of New Music* 34, no. 2 (1996): 213, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/833476>.

³¹ Kate Langrish and Carola Darwin "Forgotten Female Composers," Broadcast. BBC Radio 3, March 8, 2018.

³² Darwin, "Forgotten Female Composers."

intentional effort must be made. *This* is why I do not agree with the idea that deliberately programming women's music and even crafting programs consisting only of their music should be avoided. In principle, yes, women composers should be judged solely on their compositional ability without consideration of gender. However, when gender has historically been a barrier to equitable judgment, it absolutely must be considered until we can say with certainty that women composers are treated as equals to their male counterparts. This is clearly not currently the case when so many prolific women are ignored for the established greats. This under-representation is then justified by the misconception that due to historical gender oppression, women composers simply did not exist until the twentieth century. These attitudes and techniques erase them from both history and modern performance, and thus a more radical approach is necessary to achieve gender equality in Classical Western repertoire.

Deliberately programming the work of women does toe the line between intentional inclusion and tokenism, a danger which musicians must remain conscious of. The motivation behind repertoire choices plays a vital role in maintaining the integrity of the program. Tokenism is self-serving, nothing more than a method of proving one's open-mindedness and, dare I say, wokeness (essentially, their consciousness of social issues). However, intentional inclusion actively challenges expectations, intending to change the current approach to repertoire choices. Furthermore, part of the goal of this inclusion is to eventually render itself obsolete, unlike tokenism. Once gender equality has been achieved, it will no longer be needed. This, of course, is no small task and will not be achieved overnight. Yet, it is possible, and one of the greatest forces of change will be making women composers' music more accessible to encourage and increase its use.

The role of teachers in enacting change in the repertoire cannot be understated. James D. Rodriguez and Gwendolyn Alfred argue that it is a responsibility of instructors to guide students by developing their knowledge of repertoire.³³ From the beginning of a young musician's career, they should be exposed to a diverse group of composers. Introducing pieces composed by women early on cements them in the core of the standard repertoire. Sue Fay Allen and Kathleen Keenan-Takagi even go as far as to claim that "if your students have never sung serious works by women, you may be [perpetuating prejudicial attitudes]."³⁴ Music educators, whether or not they are performers themselves, are clearly essential to achieving equitable representation of women composers in classical repertoire.

In the study of women composers, care must also be taken to highlight those who are members of other marginalized communities such as queer women and women of color. Approaching representation with intersectionality in mind, those with multiple marginalized identities face additional obstacles to equitable representation. Additionally, while my focus is primarily on women, non-binary composers should also be highlighted, as they have been marginalized to an even further degree and still face many barriers to inclusion in classical music. Even male composers who are members of minority communities are often left out of music history, so women composers with these intersectional minority identities have certainly not been prioritized. Now, we have the opportunity to change that.

³³ James D. Rodriguez and Gwendolyn Alfred, "A Brief Overview of Selected Art Songs by Black Female Composers for Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Students," *Journal of Singing* 77, no. No. 5 (2021): 605.

³⁴ Sue Fay Allen and Kathleen Keenan-Takagi, "Sing the Songs of Women Composers," *Music Educators Journal* 78, no. 7 (1992): 48, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3398360>.

In Her Shoes

In conjunction with the ideas presented here, I have programmed and performed a recital made up entirely of works composed by women. Though this goes further than the practice of intentional inclusion, I thought it was a fitting expression of my desire for true change. I wanted to showcase the composers and musical works that are so often forgotten and ignored. As I developed my program, I dove into the repertoire that I am passionate about and it has been an invigorating and exciting experience. Now, as I explain each step of its creation, I hope that it will be the same for you.

Before I began choosing music, I knew that the recital needed a theme that related to but went beyond just women composers. It needed a cohesive idea to guide it, giving it depth and meaning. Furthermore, to avoid tokenism, I needed to use more intentional inclusion than selecting songs only because they were written by a woman. With these two principles in mind, I landed on an idea: *In Her Shoes*. The pieces I chose not only represent a diverse group of women composers but a diverse group of women's experiences. This program recognizes and honors a woman's walk through life.

I used several methods to choose music. First, there is a plethora of new research available on women composers' music to learn from. This research has promoted the creation of databases, such as the Kassia Database of Art Songs by Women Composers, and anthologies, which are helpful. I also used recordings and music platforms such as Spotify to find music, though this is not a perfect method because many songs are unrecorded or not present on all platforms. However, many musicians have recorded albums of music written by women composers, such as *Ah! Love, But a Day* by Louise Toppin and Jay A. Pierson and *Songs From*

the Heart by Jenni Frost, which are valuable resources.³⁵ Others have compiled lengthy playlists of recordings. I often turned to The Art Song Project, which dedicates a sizable portion of its work to women composers, as an additional source for recordings. The last vital resource I used is simply lists of a composer's works, found through sources such as the International Music Score Library Project and The Oxford Dictionary of Music. Other possible resources include recital programs, textbooks, teachers, and word-of-mouth communication.

I faced an unexpected obstacle in the difficulties in obtaining sheet music for some of the pieces I hoped to program. These difficulties deter many performers, especially younger performers with less repertoire knowledge, making accessibility a vital step in diversifying repertoire choices. Though there are increasingly more anthologies devoted to music composed by women, a majority of the most popular, accessible anthologies exclude them almost entirely.³⁶ Beyond this, I have found that many works which are not included in anthologies, despite being published, recorded, and even researched about, are not easily located. I struggled especially to locate and purchase the music of Florence Price and Margaret Bonds, two African American women who composed in the early twentieth century. This is not a coincidence, as African American women were among the most affected by the combination of systemic racism and sexism in the early twentieth century, revealing just how vital intersectionality is to true and equitable representation.

³⁵ Louise Toppin, Jay A. Pierson, and John O'Brien., *Ah! Love but a Day! Songs and Spirituals by American Women*, Recorded 2000, Albany Records, CD.

Jenni Frost and Julie Frost, *Songs From the Heart*, Recorded 1994-95, Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, Albany Records, 1995, CD

³⁶ Citron, "Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon," 102-03.

Many other obstacles arise from the inaccessibility of music composed by women, but none greater than this: if you are not looking specifically for it, if you do not already know it exists, you might never find it. This is why it is so vital that musicians now take the time to uncover these women and their works. With each performance, they will grow in popularity and demand. Since beginning this project, I cannot tell you how many times colleagues and teachers have shared that though they are unfamiliar with much of the repertoire, they are eager to learn more of it. Upon looking at a score or listening to a recording, they realize just how incredible these pieces are. Promoting works by women composers through active, intentional inclusion works! I am presenting this recital so that my audience might go on to organically program these songs in their own recitals or assign them in their voice studios, not because they were written by women but because they are worthy pieces of music.

Despite a few challenges, programming this recital was an an insightful and rewarding experience. I explored many different works and ultimately chose the ones which most authentically represented women's perspectives and experiences. I prioritized women librettists as well to find this authenticity. Some songs depict experiences which I personally relate to and others depict experiences far different than my own. Each depicts complex, multifaceted characters and stories, which was the key to making *In Her Shoes* impactful.

I wrote a set of comprehensive program notes for the recital to give the audience an understanding of each piece and composer. It is my hope that audience members can learn something new from these notes as well - whether that be learning about a new composer or learning more about a piece they are already familiar with. These notes include program order, texts and translations, and background information. They are included below. After the program

notes, there will be a more in-depth explanation of my reasoning behind choosing these pieces.



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Aubrey Bosse, mezzo-soprano

William Taylor, collaborative pianist

Saturday, April 15, 2023 3:30 PM PepsiCo Recital Hall

Program

Hero und Leander	Fanny Hensel (1805-1847)
Lorelei	Clara Schumann (1819-1896)
To My Little Son Sympathy	Florence B. Price (1887-1953)
Six Méloides VI. Les Filles de Cadix	Pauline Viardot (1821-1910)
Mignonne Ma Première Lettre L'été	Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)

Intermission

She Used to Be Mine from <i>Waitress</i>	Sara Bareilles (b. 1979)
The Driftwood Fire Phillis	Marion Bauer (1882-1955)
Hyacinth Women Have Loved Before As I Love Now	Margaret Bonds (1913-1972)

Four Dickinson Songs

I. Will There Really Be A Morning?

II. I'm Nobody

IV. If I...

Lori Laitman

(b. 1955)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance. Ms. Bosse is a student of Dr. Corey Trahan. The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited. Please silence all electronic devices.

Notes

Hero und Leander (1831)

Still ruht das Meer und hat den
weiten Farbenbogen
Vom fernen Blau bis zu des Ufers Gold
Als liebliche Verkündigung gezogen
Dass es den Wünschen
meiner Liebe hold.
Wasserfrische, Abendgluten,
Lustiger Delphinen Scherz.
Ach! Bringet bald, ihr hellen kühlen Fluten,
Mir den geliebten Freund ans treue Herz.

Heißes Sehnen
Löst in liebeseligen Tränen
Mir den Blick.
Bald in diesen Armen
Wird er erwärmen.
Nach kalten Fluten
Der liebe Glutten,
O kehrt nimmer dann der Morgen zurück.

Hinab ihr Sonnenrosse!
Herauf stille Nacht!
Willkommen dem Herzen,
Das liebend wacht,
Leih deinen Schleier
Gegen Verrat dem Liebenden
Auf dem gewohnten Pfad.
O Dank, schon naht das Dunkel,
Der Fackel Gefunkel
Sei ihm, dem Teuren,
Ein leitender Stern.

Aber wehe! Von fern
Hör ich Donnerrollen,
Die Wogen grollen
Bäumend herauf.
Alle meergewohnten Vögel
Fliehen fern,

Hero and Leander

The sea rests still and has the wide range
Of colors
From the distant blue to the gold shore.
Drawn as a sweet proclamation,
That it may hold the wishes
Of my love.
Water freshness, evening glow,
Funny dolphins joke.
Oh! Bring my beloved to my true heart
Soon, you bright, cool floods.

Hot longing
Triggers my eyes
In tears of love.
Soon in these arms
He will warm.
After cool floods
Of love glow,
Oh, the morning never returned.

Down you sun horses!
Up quiet night!
Welcome to the heart
That keeps watch in love,
Lend your veil against treachery
To the lover
On the accustomed path.
Oh thanks, the darkness approaches,
The sparkling torch
Be a guiding light for him
The dear one.

But woe! From afar
I hear thunder rolling,
The waves growing, booming.

All sea-dwelling birds
Flee far away,

Nirgend mehr ein Segel,
 Es blinkt kein Stern,
 Die Fackel erlischt,
 Nur der Blitz zischt
 Über die schäumende Fläche,
 Und Wetterbäche
 Stürzen in des Meeres schoß.

No more sails,
 No star twinkles,
 The torch goes out,
 Only lightning hisses
 Over the foaming surface,
 And stormy brooks plunge
 Into the bosom of the sea.

Weh mir! Alle Schrecken sind los,
 Fassen mit tausend Armen
 Nach meinem Haupte.
 Ach! Dass isch glaubte
 Der trügenden Flut.
 Dräuender rollt es
 Rings um mich her.
 Schreckender grollt es
 Drunten im Meer.

Woe is me! All terrors are loose,
 Grab my head
 With a thousand arms.
 Oh! That I believed
 The deceptive tide.
 It rolls more threateningly
 Around me.
 It rumbles more frighteningly
 Down in the sea.

Himmel, dort naht er
 Und kämpft, das ist er!
 Leander! Leander!
 Leuchtet ihr Blitze!
 Dass isch ihn sehe!
 Weh! Er sinkt.
 Die Woge verschlingt
 Unerrettbar den Armen
 Miteinander hinab,
 Dann ins Grab.
 Ich komme!

Heaven, there he approaches
 And fights, that's him!
 Leander! Leander!
 Shine you lightening!
 That I may see him!
 Alas! He sinks.
 The wave
 irredeemably swallows
 Down the poor together,
 Then into the grave.
 I'm coming!

Fanny Hensel (née Mendelssohn) (1805-1847) was an early Romantic German composer.³⁷ She was a piano prodigy born into a musical family and was thus well-educated musically, studying piano under Ludwig Berger in Berlin as a girl. Her compositions include over 125 piano pieces and over 250 lieder, as well as several large-scale works. Stylistically, she was influenced by the work of Handel, Bach, and Beethoven.

³⁷ Christian, "Hensel [née Mendelssohn (-Bartholdy)], Fanny Cäcilie."

The elder sister of Felix Mendelssohn, Hensel was also greatly influenced by her brother and vice versa. They often consulted each other when writing music and each praised the other's compositional abilities. However, Mendelssohn, along with Hensel's father, Abraham Mendelssohn, were unsupportive of the publishing of her music, and Hensel consequently did not begin to publish her works until 1946. The Mendelssohn's reservations towards Hensel's publishing stemmed in part from their upper class status. As an upper class woman, she was expected to work in the domestic sphere as a mother and wife, not pursue a career. Additionally speculated to factor into these reservations, the Mendelssohn family was Jewish, but took care to integrate into German upper class culture to protect themselves from discrimination. Hensel's parents, Lea and Abraham Mendelssohn, ultimately converted to Christianity and raised her and her brothers as Lutherans, though they continued to face anti-semitism due to their ancestry. Thus, almost the entirety of her performing and compositional career took place within her household.

Hensel did organize a series of wildly popular private concerts called *Sonntagmusiken*, or Sunday Music in English, which overtime became a cultural fixture in Berlin. Invitations to the *Sonntagmusiken* were highly sought after and the series was a source of great pride and satisfaction for Hensel, blending her domestic life with professional musicianship. Much of Hensel's work has been published posthumously, thanks to her brother taking great care to compile and promote her music in her honor, and it is increasingly popular today.

Written in 1832, *Hero und Leander* is a dramatic scene originally scored for a singer and orchestra, split into two recitatives and two arias.³⁸ The piece was written for a friend, Ulrike

³⁸ Fanny Hensel, *Hero und Leander*, 1831, ed. Annegret Huber, (Kassel: Furore Verlag, 2015), 4.

Peters. Hensel composed this piano score herself, and her husband, Wilhelm Hensel, wrote the text, based on the ancient Greek myth of Hero and Leander. Though not a musician, Wilhelm was an artist and author, and the couple often collaborated on works. Wilhelm was a steadfast supporter of his wife's composing and encouraged her to continue writing even after they married and had their son. The tragedy of Hero and Leander tells the story of two lovers separated by a sea. Hero, a priestess of Aphrodite, lives in a tower in Sestos while Hero lives in Abydos, the pair separated by the Hellespont sea. Desperate to see each other, Leander swims across the strait each night, guided by a light in Hero's tower. One night, however, the light goes out during a storm and Leander drowns. In the Hensels' version of the story, Hero witnesses Leander's death from up in her tower, unable to save him, and throws herself from the tower to join her lover in death.

Lorelei (1843)

Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten,
Daß ich so traurig bin;
Ein Märchen aus alten Zeiten,
Das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn.

I do not know what it means
That I should feel so sad;
There is a tale from olden times
I cannot get out of my mind.

Die Luft ist kühl und es dunkelt,
Und ruhig fließt der Rhein;
Der Gipfel des Berges funkelt
Im Abendsonnenschein.
Die schönste Jungfrau sitzet
Dort oben wunderbar,
Ihr goldnes Geschmeide blitzet,
Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar.

The air is cool, and twilight falls,
And the Rhine flows quietly by;
The summit of the mountains glitters
In the evening sun.
The fairest maiden is sitting
In wondrous beauty up there,
Her golden jewels are sparkling,
She combs her golden hair.

Sie kämmt es mit goldenem Kamme
Und singt ein Lied dabei,
Das hat eine wundersame,

She combs it with a golden comb
And sings a song the while;
It has an awe-inspiring,

Gewaltige Melodei.

Powerful melody.

Den Schiffer im kleinen Schiffe
Ergreift es mit wildem Weh;
Er schaut nicht die Felsenriffe,
Er schaut nur hinauf in die Höh'.

It seizes the boatman in his skiff
With wildly aching pain;
He does not see the rocky reefs,
He only looks up to the heights.

Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen
Am Ende Schiffer und Kahn;
Und das hat mit ihrem Singen
Die Lorelei getan.

I think at last the waves swallow
The boatman and his boat;
And that, with her singing,
The Loreley has done.

Translation by Richard Stokes, author of *The Book of Lieder*.³⁹

Clara Schumann (née Wieck) (1819-1896) was a German composer, pianist and teacher from the Romantic period.⁴⁰ A child prodigy, she was raised in a musical family, taking piano lessons from her father, Friedrich Wieck. Schumann performed extensively as a young woman, and often showcased her own compositions in these performances.

She married fellow composer Robert Schumann, who studied with her father as well. The two worked extensively with each other, composing music as gifts for one another and offering feedback on various works. As a composer's wife, her own career as a composer was limited but she refused to be totally financially dependent on her husband. Not only did she earn income for her family as a performer, often premiering Robert's compositions, but she took on the majority of the family's household duties, caring for their eight children. Throughout their marriage, she continued to compose and was encouraged to do so by her husband.

³⁹ Richard Stokes, "Lorelei: Song Texts, Lyrics & Translations," Oxford Lieder, 2005, <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/652>.

⁴⁰ Nancy B. Reich and Natasha Loges, "Schumann [née Wieck], Clara," *Grove Music Online* (March 2021), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-90000380188>.

However, Robert's career, and later his mental health, ultimately took precedence over her own. After his untimely death in 1856, she gave up composition for the most part in favor of touring Europe to perform. She worked extensively to bring awareness to Robert's works after his death, promoting them through publication and performance. She also taught piano, and in 1878, she would become the first woman to teach at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt. She was passionate about students, especially encouraging women to lead careers as musicians. Through her work as a performer and teacher, she was able to support herself and her children. Much of her own music was not published or widely performed during her own lifetime but has reemerged since the late twentieth century. Today, her compositions are popular and performed across the globe.

“Lorelei” was composed in 1843 and tells the story of a siren who lures a boatman to his death in the Rhine River.⁴¹ The text was written by Henirich Heine, a German poet, based on folklore surrounding the Lorely cliffs in the Rhine, where many ships have been sunk by the rocks and currents. The poet Clemens Brentano connected the cliffs to sirens with his 1801 poem “Lore Ley.” Heine elaborated on the poem with his 1823 “Lorelei” which has been set by many composers, including Liszt and Silcher. Schumann's setting was a birthday gift for Robert, one of many instances in which the Schumanns gifted compositions to each other.

⁴¹ Graham Johnson, “Lorelei,” Hyperion Records, 2001, https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W3123_GBAJY0110512.

To My Little Son

In your face I sometimes see
 Shadowings of the man to be,
 And, eager,
 Dream of what my son shall be,
 Dream of what my son will be,
 In twenty years and one.

When you are to manhood grown,
 And all your manhood ways are known,
 Then shall I, blissful, try to trace
 The child you once were in your face.

Sympathy

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
 When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
 When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
 And the river flows like a stream of glass;
 When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
 And the faint perfume from its chalice steals —
 I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing
 Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
 For he must fly back to his perch and cling
 When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
 And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
 And they pulse again with a keener sting —
 I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
 When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
 When he beats his bars and he would be free;
 It is not a carol of joy or glee,
 But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
 But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings —
 I know why the caged bird sings!

Florence B. Price (née Smith) (1887-1953) was a twentieth century American composer especially known for her art songs, spiritual arrangements, and symphonic works.⁴² Her musical style is highly influenced by African American music, often incorporating African dance forms and traditional spiritual melodies and techniques. She was also influenced by the Harlem Renaissance which occurred in the 1920s and 1930s.

Price studied composition at the New England Conservatory with George Chadwick from 1903 to 1906. A pianist, she also earned an Artist's Diploma in organ and a piano teacher's diploma. She went on to teach at the Cotton Plant Arkadelphia Academy and Shorter College, eventually becoming the head of the music department at Clark College from 1910 to 1912. She then taught and composed in Little Rock, Arkansas until 1927, when her family moved to Chicago to escape racial discrimination and violence.

In Chicago, her career flourished. She was an active member of the city's chapter of the National Association of Negro Musicians. In 1933, her Symphony in E Minor became the first orchestral work by an African American woman to be performed by a major American orchestra. The Symphony in E Minor also won the Wanamaker Award in 1932, bringing Price national recognition. Her art songs and spirituals were as successful as her symphonic works, featured on the programs of singers such as Marian Anderson and Leontyne Price. Price's music remains popular and widely performed today, although much of it remains unpublished or lost. Her work

⁴² Rae Linda Brown, "Price [née Smith], Florence Bea(trice)," *Grove Music Online* (March 2020), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-90000367402>.

Christine Jobson, "Florence Price: An Analysis of Select Art Songs with Text by Female Poets," (doctoral essay, University of Miami, 2019).

is featured in several modern anthologies, including *44 Art Songs and Spirituals by Florence B. Price*.

“To My Little Son” is an undated song set to a 1920 poem by Julia Johnson Davies, an American author.⁴³ It is a touching text from a mother’s point of view imagining watching her son grow up. Price had a son in 1913, Thomas Jr., who died as an infant, making this song even more poignant. She never witnessed her son grow up, so all she had were her dreams of what might have been. This context gives the song two distinct moods: the bittersweet feeling of watching your little child become an adult but also the heartbreak of the possibility that they might never get to do so. It shows both the strength and the vulnerability of motherhood, an experience and identity that many women hold.

“Sympathy” is a setting of Paul Lawrence Dunbar’s 1899 poem, also undated.⁴⁴ Dunbar, a celebrated African American poet, wrote the piece in response to an experience working in the Library of Congress, but many scholars have pointed out the broader implications of the imagery of a caged bird representing African Americans during the Jim Crow era. I think the song especially represents the experiences of African American women, desperate to escape the cages of both racism and sexism.

⁴³ Stephen Rodgers, “Florence Price Remembers Her Son,” Women's Song Forum, March 7, 2021, <https://www.womensongforum.org/2021/03/06/florence-price-remembers-her-son/>.

⁴⁴ Carol Rumens, “Poem of the Week: Sympathy by Paul Laurence Dunbar,” The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, September 28, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2009/sep/28/paul-laurence-dunbar-sympathy>.

Les Filles de Cadix (1884)

Nous venions de voir le taureau,
Trois garçons, trois fillettes.
Sur la pelouse il faisait beau,
Et nous dansions un boléro
Au son des castagnettes :
“Dites-moi, voisin,
Si j'ai bonne mine,
Et si ma basquine
Va bien, ce matin.
Vous me trouvez la taille fine ?...
Ah ! ah !
Les filles de Cadix aiment assez cela.”

Et nous dansions un boléro
Un soir, c'était dimanche.
Vers nous s'en vint un hidalgo
Cousu d'or, la plume au chapeau,
Et le poing sur la hanche:
“Si tu veux de moi,
Brune au doux sourire,
Tu n'as qu'à le dire,
Cet or est à toi.
Passez votre chemin, beau sire...
Ah ! Ah !
Les filles de Cadix n'entendent pas cela.”

The Girls of Cadiz

We'd just left the bullfight,
Three boys, three girls,
The sun shone on the grass
And we danced a bolero
To the sound of castanets.
“Tell me, neighbour,
Am I looking good,
And does my skirt
Suit me, this morning?
Have I a slender waist? . . .
Ah! Ah!
The girls of Cadiz are fond of that.”

And we were dancing a bolero
One sunday evening.
A hidalgo came towards us,
Glittering in gold, feather in cap,
And hand on hip:
“If you want me,
Dark beauty with the sweet smile,
You've only to say so,
And these riches are yours.”
“Go on your way, fine sir.
Ah! ah!
The girls of Cadiz don't take to that.”

Translation by Richard Stokes.⁴⁵

Pauline Viardot (née Garcia) (1821-1910) was a French singer and composer whose Spanish roots greatly influenced her work.⁴⁶ An intelligent musician, she was known to perform

⁴⁵ Richard Stokes, “Les Filles de Cadix: Song Texts, Lyrics & Translations” Oxford Lieder, 2000, <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/4996>

⁴⁶ Beatrix Borchard, "Viardot [née García], (Michelle Ferdinande) Pauline," *Grove Music Online* (2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029283>.

Hilary Poriss, “Pauline Viardot, Travelling Virtuosa,” *Music & Letters* 96, no. 2 (2015): 185–208, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24549935>.

her own works while accompanying herself on the piano. Viardot spoke six languages fluently and was well regarded for her ability to compose authentically in the styles and languages of many nations.

Viardot was born into a family of musicians, so as a girl, she studied primarily with her mother, María Joaquina Sitches. Viardot then led a successful international opera career as a mezzo-soprano. After her debut in London in 1839, she went on extensive singing tours all across Europe. She was renowned for her portrayals of Fidès in Meyerbeer's *Le prophète* and Orpheus in *Gluck's Orfeo ed Euridice*.

In 1840, she married Louis Viardot, who left his position as the director of the Théâtre Italien to support her career. This is intriguing, as more often than not, women musicians at this time were expected to give up their careers in favor of their husband's if they married. Louis Viardot, however, was unwavering in his support of his wife's career, often caring for the couple's children while she was away or accompanying her on her trips. He also managed Viardot's career, handling financial matters and scheduling amongst other duties. In 1843, Viardot met writer Ivan Turgenev, who fell in love with her and spent the rest of his life in close proximity to the Viardot family. Their relationship played an extensive and complex role in Viardot's life and career. Turgenev and Viardot often collaborated on creative works and, like her husband, he tirelessly supported her career. Viardot retired from the stage in 1963 in favor of teaching and composing. She wrote several texts and books on singing techniques, including *Une heure d'étude: exercices pour voix de femmes* in 1880.

“Les Filles de Cadix,” the final song of Viardot’s song cycle, *Six Mélodies*, was published in 1884.⁴⁷ The poem was written by the French author Alfred de Musset, also in 1844. It offers a joyful and lighthearted glimpse of the friendship enjoyed by the young girls of Cadiz, Spain. Joy is an essential part of womanhood and Viardot’s depiction of these young women accurately captures the feeling.

Mignonne

Mignonn', allon voir si la rose
 Qui ce matin avoit declose
 Sa robe de pourpr' au soleil,
 A point perdu, cette vesprée,
 Le plis de sa robe pourprée,
 Et son teint au vostre pareil.

Las, voyés comm' en peu d'espace,
 Mignonn', ell' a dessus la place,
 Las, las, ses beautés laissé cheoir!
 Ô vraiment maratre nature,
 Puis qu'une telle fleur ne dure,
 Que du matin jusques au soir!

Donc, si vous me croiés, mignonne:
 Tandis que vostr' age fleuronne
 En sa plus verte nouveauté,
 Cueillés, cueillés vostre jeunesse,
 Comm' à cette fleur, la viellesse
 Fera ternir vostre beauté.

Sweetheart

Sweetheart, let us see if the rose
 That only this morning unfolded
 Its scarlet dress in the sun
 Has lost, at vesper-time,
 the folds of its scarlet dress
 And its colour, so like yours.

Alas! See how rapidly,
 Sweetheart, she has let
 Her beauty fall all over the place!
 Nature is truly a cruel stepmother
 When such a flower only lasts
 From dawn to dusk!

So if you hear me, Sweetheart,
 While your age flowers
 In its greenest newness,
 Gather, gather your youth.
 Age will tarnish your beauty
 As it has faded this flower.

Translation from French to English by Faith J. Cormier.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Korin Kormick, “The Girls of Cadix,” LiederNet Archive, 2003, https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=23288.

⁴⁸ Faith J. Cormier, “Mignonne,” Mignonne, 2000, https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=13861.

Ma Première Lettre

Hélas! que nous oublions vite ...
 J'y songeais hier en trouvant
 Une petite lettre écrite
 Lorsque je n'étais qu'une enfant.

Je lus jusqu'à la signature
 Sans ressentir le moindre émoi,
 Sans reconnaître l'écriture,
 Et sans voir qu'elle était de moi.

En vain je voulus la relire,
 Me rappeler, faire un effort . . .
 J'ai pu penser cela, l'écrire,

Mais le souvenir en est mort!

Ô la pauvre naïve lettre,
 Ecrite encor si gauchement . . .
 Mais j'y songe, c'était peut-être
 Ma première, un événement!

Jadis à ma mère ravie
 Je l'ai montrée en triomphant.
 Est-il possible qu'on oublie
 Sa première lettre d'enfant!

Et puis le temps vient où l'on aime,
 Et l'on écrit . . . et puis un jour,
 Un jour on l'oubliera de même,
 Sa première lettre d'amour!

Translation by Richard Stokes, author of *A French Song Companion*.⁴⁹

L'Été

Ah! chantez, chantez,
 Folle fauvette,

My First Letter

Alas! How quickly we forget . . .
 That struck me yesterday, finding
 A short letter written
 When I was just a little girl.

I read as far as the signature
 Without feeling the slightest commotion,
 Without recognizing the hand
 And without seeing that I had penned it.

In vain I tried to re-read it,
 To remember, to rack my brains . . .
 I had been able to think and write those
 thoughts,
 But the memory of them had died!

Oh the poor, naïve letter,
 So clumsily written . . .
 Yet, when I think of it, it was perhaps
 My first, an important event!

Years ago I showed it triumphantly
 To my delighted mother.
 Can it be one forgets
 The first letter one wrote as a child!

And then you fall in love
 And you write . . . and then one day,
 One day you will forget that too,
 Your first love letter!

Summer

Ah, sing, sing,
 Wild warbler,

⁴⁹ Richard Stokes, "Ma Première Lettre: Song Texts, Lyrics & Translations," *Oxford Lieder*, 2000, <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/4020>.

Gaie alouette,
 Joyeux pinson, chantez, aimez!
 Parfum des roses,
 Fraîches écloses,
 Rendez nos bois, nos bois plus embaumés!
 Ah! chantez, aimez!

Happy lark,
 Joyous finch, sing, love!
 Scent of roses,
 Freshly released,
 Make our woods more fragrant!
 Ah! Sing, love!

Soleil qui dore
 Les sycomores
 Remplis d'essains tout bruisants,
 Verse la joie,
 Que tout se noie
 Dans tes rayons resplendissants.
 Ah! chantez, aimez ...

Sun that gilds
 The sycamores
 Filled with swarms of buzzing bees,
 Pour forth joy,
 Let all drown
 In your resplendent Rays!
 Ah! Sing, love!

Souffle, qui passes
 Dans les espaces
 Semant l'espoir d'un jour d'été.
 Que ton haleine
 Donne à la plaine
 Plus d'éclat et plus de beauté.
 Ah! chantez, chantez!

Breeze that passes
 Through the air
 Sowing the hope of a summer day:
 Let your breath
 Give to the meadow
 More brightness and more beauty
 Ah! Sing, sing!

Dans la prairie
 Calme et fleurie,
 Entendez-vous ces mots si doux.
 L'âme charmée,
 L'épouse aimée
 Bénit le ciel près de l'époux!
 Ah! chantez, aimez!

In the prairie
 Calm and flourishing,
 Do you hear such sweet words?
 The charmed soul,
 The beloved wife
 The heavens bless next to her husband!
 Ah! Sing, love!

Translation from French to English by Emily Ezust.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Emily Ezust, "L'été," Liedernet Archive, 2023, https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=152372.

Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944) was a French Romantic composer and pianist.⁵¹ Best known for her piano character pieces and mélodies, she was one of the most commercially successful woman composers of her time.

Denied a musical education at the Paris Conservatoire by her father, Chaminade studied composition privately with Félix Le Couppey, A.F. Marmontel, M.G.A. Savard, and Benjamin Godard. In her career, she faced harsh double standards for women composers. Her shorter pieces, especially the songs and character pieces she was known for, were often criticized for being too feminine whereas her lengthier thematic pieces were deemed too masculine. Because a vast majority of her compositional output was made up of short piano and vocal works, she struggled to gain a serious reputation as a composer. Additionally, she continued to write in the Romantic style well into the twentieth century when Modernism was the dominant style, leading to further disapproval from critics.

Nonetheless, her music was popular and well-known during her life. She toured extensively in England to promote her music and was a frequent guest of Queen Victoria. In 1908 she undertook a tour to the United States, where her music was particularly popular and several Chaminade clubs had been formed. In fact, due to her success and popularity, nearly all of her almost four hundred works are published, a rather uncommon accomplishment for Romantic women composers. And, in 1913, she became the first woman composer to be

⁵¹ Marcia J. Citron, "Chaminade, Cécile," *Grove Music Online* (2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000005388>.

Richard Langham Smith, "Sister of Perpetual Indulgence. On the 50th Anniversary of Her Death, Richard Langham Smith Makes the Case for the Sweetly-Scented Music of Cécile Chaminade," *The Musical Times* 135, no. 1822 (1994), <https://doi.org/10.2307/1003350>.

admitted to the Legion d'Honneur, the highest French order of merit. However, after her death, her work and reputation were nearly forgotten, only recently seeing a rediscovery and resurgence.

“L'été” was published in 1894 to a text written by Édouard Guinand, a French author. The speaker sings of love in the summertime. She sings to nature, to the birds and to the sun, about her joy as she finds beauty in the world around her.

Based on a text by French poet Pierre de Ronsard, Chaminade's 1892 work, “Mignonne,” begins by telling the story of an aging rose.⁵² However, the tone shifts when the speaker begins to compare the dying rose to a young woman, telling her that while she is young now, age will take her beauty from her. Aging is such a stigmatized process for women, yet all will go through it, and de Ronsard's poem reflects society's view on women's aging. Nevertheless, though a rose wrinkles and loses its bright color, these superficial characteristics of beauty do not truly define it - nor do they define women.

Chaminade wrote “Ma Première Lettre” in 1893. The poem was written by French poet and playwright, Louise-Rose Gérard, under the pseudonym, Rosemonde Gérard and is part of the collection *Les Pipeaux*, or *The Reed Pipes*.⁵³ In this lighthearted but touching piece, a woman finds the first letter she wrote as a child. Reading it, she can hardly recall composing the letter and finds that it is awkward and unrecognizable. Yet, through the years her writing skills have

⁵² Emily Ezust, “Mignonne,” Liedernet Archive, 1995-2003, https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=13861

⁵³ John Versmoren, “Ma Première Lettre,” Liedernet Archive, 1995-2003, https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=94353

developed, leading her now to write letters to the person she loves. These, too, she will someday forget writing, but they are an important part of her life story nevertheless.

She Used To Be Mine

It's not simple to say
Most days I don't recognize me
That these shoes and this apron
That place and its patrons
Have taken more than I gave them
It's not easy to know
I'm not anything like I used to be
Although it's true
I was never attention's sweet center
I still remember that girl

She's imperfect but she tries
She is good but she lies
She is hard on herself
She is broken and won't ask for help
She is messy but she's kind
She is lonely most of the time
She is all of this mixed up
And baked in a beautiful pie
She is gone but she used to be mine

It's not what I asked for
Sometimes life just slips in through a back door
And carves out a person
And makes you believe it's all true
And now I've got you
And you're not what I asked for
If I'm honest I know I would give it all back
For a chance to start over
And rewrite an ending or two
For the girl that I knew

Who'll be reckless just enough
Who'll get hurt
But who learns how to toughen up when she's bruised

And gets used by a man who can't love
 And then she'll get stuck
 And be scared of the life that's inside her
 Growing stronger each day
 'Til it finally reminds her
 To fight just a little
 To bring back the fire in her eyes
 That's been gone
 But used to be mine

Used to be mine
 She is messy but she's kind
 She is lonely most of the time
 She is all of this mixed up and baked in a beautiful pie
 She is gone but she used to be mine

Sara Bareilles is a Grammy Award-winning American singer and songwriter.⁵⁴ In recent years, she has also become well-known for her involvement in musical theatre, both as a composer and an actress.

Bareilles learned to play the piano in college at UCLA and started her musical career playing at local open-mic nights. Since then, she has led a successful career as a pop artist. After her 2007 single “Love Song” reached the Billboard Top Ten, her sophomore album, *Kaleidoscope Heart*, debuted at number one in 2010. In 2013, she began working on the musical *Waitress*, an adaptation of Adrienne Shelly’s movie of the same name. Bareilles wrote the music and lyrics for the show, going on to play the lead character, Jenna, in several productions. *Waitress* premiered in 2015 and was nominated for both the Best Musical and Best Original Score Emmy Awards. Also in 2015, Bareilles published a memoir, *Sounds Like Me: My Life (So Far) in Song*, giving insight into her life and career. In 2020, Bareilles’s song “Saint Honesty”

⁵⁴ Jason Lymanrover, “Sara Bareilles Biography” AllMusic, accessed March 2, 2023, <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/sara-bareilles-mn0000370326/biography>.

from the album *Amidst the Chaos* won the Grammy Award for Best American Roots Performance. Bareilles is an outspoken activist for many social issues, including feminism and LGBTQ+ rights. In a 2015 interview, she spoke specifically about women musicians and “being a woman who wants to feel that my opinion and my creative ideas are accepted as equally as any man or any other human in the room.”⁵⁵

“She Used to Be Mine” is from *Waitress*, which tells the story of a small-town waitress and baker, Jenna, as she navigates an unplanned pregnancy, escaping an abusive marriage, her advancing career, and healing. In the ballad, Jenna laments the loss of the woman she once was. Her husband, Earl, has discovered and stolen money she put aside to help her leave and she feels truly lost. Coming to terms with the reality of her situation is a terrifying, heartbreaking moment. Yet, through this realization, she finds strength to not only fight for her child but for herself.

The Driftwood Fire

We made a driftwood fire
 You and I
 Where forest birds were dreaming
 And a bad brown owl was scheming
 As a baby star was gleaming
 Soft and shy

The gray mist smoke grew gold
 Gold and blue
 And the thrilling shadows creeping
 Where the jeweled flames were leaping
 Carried dreams of woodbirds sleeping
 Close to you

⁵⁵ Chris Azzopardi, “Q&A: Sara Bareilles Talks Gay 'Brothers and Sisters,' Whether Closeted Celebs Are 'Brave' & Why She Thinks Taylor Swift Stands for ‘Sisterhood’,,” *Pride Source*, July 12, 2019, <https://pridesource.com/article/73598-2/>.

We heard a nightlark call
 Far and clear
 And the answer's deep confessing
 Soothed by silence sweet, caressing
 Brought the wonder of God's blessing
 Very near

Phillis

Phillis somewhat hard by nature,
 Would not an advantage miss;
 She asked Damon, greedy creature,
 Thirty sheep for one small kiss, for a kiss.

Lovely Phillis, on the morrow,
 Cannot her advantage keep:
 She gives Damon to her sorrow,
 Thirty kisses for one sheep, for one sheep.

On the morrow, grown more tender,
 Phillis, ah! Has come to this:
 Thirty sheep she will surrender
 For a single loving kiss, loving kiss.
 Now another day is over,
 Damon sheep and dog might get,
 For the kiss that he, the rover!
 Gave for nothing to Lizette!

Marion Bauer (1882-1955) was a twentieth century American composer, teacher and author.⁵⁶ Although she experimented with serialism in the 1940s, she mostly wrote tonal music embellished with dissonance, and favored impressionism as a style. Her early works consist

⁵⁶ J. Michele Edwards, "Bauer, Marion Eugénie," *Grove Music Online* (2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000002353>.

mostly of songs and works for piano, but beginning in the 1930s she wrote increasingly for chamber ensembles and orchestras.

Bauer studied under Nadia Boulanger in Paris, the first American to do so. Bauer was a great proponent of modern American music, and helped to found the American Music Guild in 1921. She was also a member of the American Woman Composers, the American Composer's Alliance, and the American Music Center. She took on several leadership positions on executive boards at a time when women had only just begun to be accepted into the classical music community. A frequent visitor to the MacDowell Colony, where she devoted time to composing and writing, she developed friendships with many other women composers during her summer stays.

Although she had no college degree herself, Bauer was also devoted to musical scholarship. She taught at New York University from 1926 to 1951 and, beginning in 1940, lectured at Julliard. She wrote extensively about music history and how it relates to modern music as well as composition. It should be noted, however, that several of her writings make use of outdated and harmful racial stereotypes. She rightly faced criticism for racist language and ideas expressed in her work, and many later editions have been updated and amended. Though Bauer's compositions, well-known during her life, have become rather obscure to today's audiences, her legacy as a teacher and scholar is strong and particularly evident in the career of her student, Milton Babbitt, who referred to her as an "authentic American phenomenon."⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Stephen Peles,, Stephen Dembski, Andrew Mead, and Joseph N. Straus, "Introduction to Marion Bauer's Twentieth Century Music 1978," In *The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 368, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rfx5.35>.

Bauer's personal life and sexuality have puzzled scholars for many years, and deserves discussion here, especially with diverse representation in mind. Though there is no explicit evidence, documentation from colleagues and friends including Ruth Crawford Seeger, Milton Babbitt, and Martin Bernstein suggest that Bauer was likely a lesbian. Crawford, a close friend of Bauer, wrote about the early days of their relationship and its romantic and sexual nature. Babbitt and Bernstein, in separate interviews, both gave statements which carefully dance around the words lesbian or gay but make clear that Bauer had little to no interest in men as partners. The composer never married, and there will likely never be a definitive answer to the question of her sexuality.

"The Driftwood Fire" was composed in 1921 with text written by Katherine Adams. In it, the speaker recalls a night on the beach with a loved one. I do not think this loved one is necessarily a romantic partner; it could be a family member or perhaps a friend. No matter who you imagine this person is, the fellowship the speaker finds with them remains the same. The piece represents a moment of peace in an otherwise hectic life.

Bauer composed the satirical "Phillis" in 1914. French playwright Charles Rivière Defresny wrote the text, which follows a coy young girl, Philis, who attempts to con a local boy, Damon, by offering him a kiss. At the beginning of the song, she aims to get thirty sheep for one kiss. Damon outsmarts her, giving her one sheep for thirty kisses. Unknown to Phillis, Damon has an advantage because he has no need for her kisses; he loves Lizette who kisses him for free. By the song's conclusion, Phillis realizes that she would in fact give up thirty sheep for one truly loving kiss. This cheeky little story offers a glimpse into the romantic aspirations of this young woman.

Hyacinth

I am in love with him
 To whom a hyacinth is dearer
 A hyacinth is dearer
 Than I shall ever be dear.

At night when the field mice are abroad
 He cannot sleep:
 He hears their narrow teeth
 At the bulbs of his hyacinths.

But the gnawing at my heart
 He does not hear.

Women Have Loved Before As I Love Now

Women have lov'd before as I love now;
 At least, in lively chronicles of the past-

Of Irish water by a Cornish prow
 Or Trojan waters by a Spartan mast
 Must to their cost invaded-
 Here and there,
 Hunting the amorous line,
 Skimming the rest,
 I find some woman bearing as I bear
 Love like a burning city in the breast.

I think however that of all alive
 I only in such utter, ancient way do suffer love;
 In me alone survive
 The unregenerate passions of a day
 When treacherous queens,
 With death upon the tread,
 Heedless and willful,
 Took their knights to bed.

Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) was a twentieth century American composer and pianist whose style was highly influenced by African American music, including jazz and spirituals.⁵⁸ She wrote a great deal of vocal music, especially spiritual arrangements and musical theater.

Bonds studied piano and composition with Florence Price as a teenager in Chicago. She then studied at Northwestern, graduating with a Bachelor of Music in 1933 and a Master of Music in 1934. Bonds faced harsh racism there, describing Northwestern as a “terribly prejudiced place,” but noted that she took comfort in the words of Langston Hughes, a poet who would go on to have an immense impact on her life.⁵⁹ Back in Chicago, she found great success as a composer. Bonds won the Wanamaker prize in 1932 for her song *Sea Ghost*, earning her public recognition. A year later, in 1933, she became the first African American soloist to appear with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 1936, Bonds finally met Langston Hughes in person and the two developed a strong friendship. They collaborated on many works throughout the years, including the cantata, *The Ballad of The Brown King*, and the musical, *Tropics After Dark*.

In 1939, she moved to New York and began studying at Juilliard. Here, she was heavily involved in musical theater. She also organized the Margaret Bonds Chamber Society, which promoted the works of black musicians. Hughes’ death in 1967 affected her greatly and she subsequently left New York for Los Angeles. There, she worked with the Los Angeles Inner City Cultural Center and Repertory Theater until her death.

⁵⁸ Barbara Garvey Jackson and Dominique-René de Lerma, "Bonds [Richardson], Margaret Allison," *Grove Music Online* (September 2020), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-90000318953>.

⁵⁹ Anna Celenza, “Margaret Bonds and Langston Hughes: A Musical Friendship,” Georgetown University Library, August 30, 2016, <https://library.georgetown.edu/exhibition/margaret-bonds-and-langston-hughes-musical-friendship>.

“Women Have Loved Before As I Love Now” and “Hyacinth” are both settings of poetry by Edna St. Vincent Millay, an iconic twentieth century poet.⁶⁰ Millay, the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and second person ever to do so, imbued her work with feminist themes and was known for her authentic depictions of women’s sexuality. She often used imagery of nature in her work to represent the speaker’s emotional state and, in these settings, Bonds expands upon this imagery with her music. From the waves of the Irish waters in “Women Have Loved Before As I Love Now” to the field-mice nipping at the flower’s bulbs in “Hyacinth,” Bonds uses the piano accompaniment and text to illustrate the speaker’s feelings. “Women Have Loved Before As I Love Now” and “Hyacinth” both share stories of women navigating tough romantic feelings and relationships. “Women Have Loved” is a grand love story, spoken from the perspective of a woman who knows it will end in disaster but chooses to love anyway. The speaker in “Hyacinth” is eerily similar although her situation is drastically different. She loves a man who is indifferent to her and cares more about the hyacinths in his garden than his partner. Both stay, though the consequences could be disastrous.

Four Dickinson Songs

I. Will There Really Be A Morning?

Will there really be a “Morning”?
 Is there such a thing as “Day”?
 Could I see it from the mountains
 If I were as tall as they?

⁶⁰ Margaret Bonds, *Six Songs on Poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay*, ed. John Michael Cooper (Hildegard Publishing Company, 2020), ii-iii.

Has it feet like Water lilies?
 Has it feathers like a Bird?
 Is it brought from famous countries
 Of which I have never heard?

Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!
 Oh some Wise Man from the skies!
 Please to tell a little Pilgrim
 Where the place called "Morning" lies!

II. I'm Nobody

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
 Are you — Nobody — Too?
 Then there's a pair of us!
 Don't tell! they'd advertise — you know!

How dreary — to be — Somebody!
 How public — like a Frog —
 To tell one's name — the livelong June —
 To an admiring Bog!

IV. If I...

If I can stop one Heart from breaking
 I shall not live in vain
 If I can ease one Life the Aching
 Or cool one Pain

Or help one fainting Robin
 Unto his Nest again
 I shall not live in Vain.

Lori Laitman (b.1955) is an American composer.⁶¹ Originally trained as a flutist, she is widely celebrated and has won many awards for her vocal music, especially her art songs.

Laitman studied at Yale School of Music, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1975 and a Master of Music degree in 1976. She won the Boston Art Song Competition in 2000, as well as the Best American Art Song Competition in 2004. In 2018, she received the Ian Mininberg Alumni Award for Distinguished Service from Yale School of Music. Though she is best known for her art songs, she has recently composed several acclaimed operas. *The Scarlet Letter* was named a critic's choice by Opera News in 2015. In 2018, her one-act opera, *Uncovered*, was a finalist for the Pellicciotti Opera Prize. Laitman often writes about socially relevant and important topics such as women's rights and sexuality. In particular, she has devoted a great portion of her work to remembering the Holocaust and its victims in order "to increase empathy and to honor those who are no longer with us." She has worked closely with Music of Remembrance, an organization dedicated to remembering the Holocaust through music.

Laitman composed *Four Dickinson Songs* in 1996, setting four texts by the beloved poet Emily Dickinson. She writes of the cycle:

The combination of these poems allows for dramatic musical contrasts within the cycle. The wistful "Will There Really Be A Morning?" Give way to the humorous and bouncy "I'm Nobody"... "If I..." was written as a gift for my father's 80th birthday. Its simple, accessible melody passes from voice to piano and back again before ending with the singer humming. My father lived to be almost 100 - and this song always reminds me of him.⁶²

⁶¹ Paul André Bempéchat, "Laitman, Lori." *Grove Music Online* (September 2015), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-1002285094>.

"Lori Laitman, Composer," Lori Laitman, Accessed March 23, 2023. <http://artsongs.com/>.

⁶² Lori Laitman, *Four Dickinson Songs*, (Enchanted Knickers Music, 1996).

For me, this cycle offers windows into several unique human experiences from a woman's perspective. The three pieces I have chosen to include - "Will There Really Be A Morning?" "I'm Nobody" and "If I..." - resonate especially with my own experiences, beliefs, and struggles. In "Will There Really Be A Morning?" the speaker struggles to believe in something she cannot yet see or feel. In "I'm Nobody," she celebrates the ordinary and mundane in her life. Lastly, in "If I..." she declares that if she can help even just one person, her life will have been worth it. Each song has a different tone and topic, but they still mesh together, showcasing the complexity and beauty found in women's lives.

Repertoire Choices

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's dramatic scene *Hero und Leander* is one of the most extraordinary pieces of music I have ever studied. I found the love story heartbreaking and deeply emotional. I also found that the Hensels' choice to tell the story from Hero's perspective was particularly moving. Ancient Greek myth was a beloved subject in early opera but the stories often focuses on the male protagonists, with women playing secondary roles as love interests or even villains. How many operas have been written about Orpheus, again? In Hensel's dramatic scene, she focuses on Hero's experience, and though the story does not end happily for her, it is nonetheless empowering. It is also enthralling, because as both a performer and an audience member, Hero's growing helplessness and despair is palpable throughout the scene. The audience watches her lose her will to live as she loses the love of her life.

Hensel's music expresses and heightens the intensity of Hero's emotions as the night progresses. It begins in a consonant state of serenity and eager anticipation of Leander's arrival. The piano, which represents the sea, does not remain serene for long, but rather becomes violent and wild with the incoming storm. Increasingly disjunct melodies and large leaps in the vocal line represent Hero's unstable, deteriorating mental state. Hensel's use of the extremes of the vocal range demonstrates the extreme emotions that Hero experiences. The end of the piece finally returns to the consonant, major sonorities of the beginning, almost as if to say that the lovers are happily reunited, together even in death. I felt that such a complex portrayal of a woman's emotions surrounding tragic loss was a clear choice for this program.

Clara Schumann's music and career were groundbreaking for women musicians and I wanted her work to be represented in the recital. When I discovered *Lorelei*, I knew I needed to

include it. Since the time of Greek Antiquity, sirens and other seductive monsters have traditionally been used to demonize women's sexuality.⁶³ However, these feminine monsters have become a source of empowerment for women today. By subverting the siren myth's vilification of women and instead embracing its autonomy, the siren has transformed into a feminist icon. Especially in the face of rampant sexual violence against women, a feminine character flipping the narrative and taking her life back into her own hands is compelling. Additionally, it is a siren's singing, a metaphor for women's autonomy and expression, which lures men to their deaths, giving a song about a siren a fitting paradoxical twist.

Florence Price is another quintessential woman composer whose work I endeavored to program. She included a great deal of her own life experiences in her music, and they enhance the messages of womanhood and women's perspective in the recital. "To My Little Son" offers a vital representation of motherhood, an integral part of many women's lives. In opera, mothers are typically treated one of two ways: as comic supporting characters or as nonexistent and abusive. I knew that I had to avoid these portrayals at all costs. "To My Little Son" is the authentic musing of a mother about her son's future. Wondering who your tiny child will be as a fully grown person is simultaneously one of the most exciting and most terrifying parts of motherhood. This is not the simple, stock character portrayal of motherhood that is so commonly found in opera. Mothers deserve the same complexity and development that is afforded to other characters and speakers and Price achieves that in "To My Little Son."

⁶³ Nina Triaridou, "Lamia, Sirens, and Female Monsters: Feminist Reframings of Classical Myth in 19th-Century Literature," *Antigone* (2022), 1, <https://antigonejournal.com/2022/03/lamia-sirens-keats-andersen/>.

The message of Price's song "Sympathy" is at the foundation of this project. The metaphor of the caged bird perfectly represents women composers, who hold so much potential but have been caged by society, fighting desperately to be free but only making slow, painful progress. The caged bird also represents Price's identity as an African-American woman. In the early twentieth century, the intersectionality of her identity led to great hardship. She and her family fled Jim Crow laws and racial violence in Arkansas. As a composer, she worked ten times harder than her white male colleagues to be taken seriously. "Sympathy" represents these experiences, and the experiences of many others with minority identities. Price's music amplifies the text, communicating the experience of oppression and the desire for freedom. Music has been used as a form of activist expression for centuries, from the social commentary found in opera buffa to the protest songs of the 1960s. "Sympathy" is one piece of this legacy which I was proud to include in *In Her Shoes*.

Pauline Viardot's "Les Filles de Cadix" is a celebration of the friendship and youth of girls. As the playful text follows the girls of Cadix, audiences witness the camaraderie they share. Neither neighbors nor hidalgos are safe from their teasing and troublemaking as the girls wander through the town. Viardot depicts the fun, flirty nature of the girls of Cadiz through quick triplet turns and sighing gestures - the music exudes happiness. This is the first of several lighthearted pieces programmed which focus on joyful, positive experiences in a woman's life. It would have been easy to choose pieces which focused solely on women's pain or trauma because there is such a large amount of material to choose from. Pain makes for a dramatic, captivating story. But there is much more to women than pain. Women, especially as young girls, experience so much joy. These are stories which I am proud to tell.

I selected three pieces composed by Cecile Chaminade to perform, each with a distinct tone. Though she was criticized for her so-called ‘unserious’ work, I have found that the opposite is true. She chose thoughtful texts for her art songs and composed sensitive, emotional music which clearly expresses the meaning of the work. The perspective of the first piece, “Mignonne,” is a rather unique approach to the topic of women’s aging. I interpreted it almost as if the speaker’s jaded words are a result of her own experience with aging and the resulting shame and cruelty from society. They seem less like an insult and more like a misguided warning from one woman to another, especially considering the sweetness of the music juxtaposed with the pessimistic nature of the text. There is no malicious intent here. The speaker is a woman who has been hurt by the stigma associated with aging and she wants to prepare younger women so that perhaps they can protect themselves in a way she could not. Ironically, she perpetuates the same stigma that wounded her so horribly through her words, making this piece even more distressing. “Mignonne” captures the pain caused by agism and how it affects different generations of women.

“L’été” is another piece that, like “Les Filles de Cadix,” showcases women’s thirst for life. In a departure from the original text, Chaminade’s speaker exclaims to sing and to love not just once per stanza, but devotes nearly three pages of music to those sentiments alone. I especially enjoy Chaminade’s use of vivid nature imagery as a metaphor for the speaker’s cheerful emotions. She feels the happiness of singing birds, the excitement of buzzing bees, the bright hope of the sun. Furthermore, as the text describes each piece of nature she witnesses, the animated, dynamic piano accompaniment further represents them. You hear the birds singing in

the ascending scales and the bees and other insects are in the tremolos. A summer day is the perfect feminine expression of the speaker's feelings.

“Ma Premiere Lettre” is the final Chaminade piece I chose, and I found its premise touching. Not only does the speaker tenderly recall a lost childhood memory, but she realizes how much she has grown and changed in the years since. My mom keeps a bin of my most treasured schoolwork and art projects from my own childhood, and I could not help but be reminded of the experience of going through the bin together, laughing at my silly stick-figure drawings or the misspelled words in a poem I wrote in elementary school. I do not remember making the drawing or writing those words, but I fondly remember the days spent learning at school during my childhood. Subjects that are now simple seemed impossible to understand back then and though my work seems so minuscule and silly now, each carefully preserved paper holds a snapshot of the person I was at that moment in time. It tells the story of how I became who I am today. I am sure that ten years from now, I will look back on the work I am doing currently and find it lacking. But I will remember how much I enjoyed it and how important it was to me. I will remember how it pushed me to grow. It is a special thing to reflect on the woman I was, am, and eventually will be, and this piece encourages it. It encourages listeners not to take time or memories for granted, because they can so easily be forgotten.

Women composers are just as severely underrepresented in musical theatre as they are in more classical spaces and including Sara Bareilles’s musical *Waitress* in this recital was an easy decision. Women are at the center of *Waitress*’s story from beginning to end, dealing with real life issues such as unplanned pregnancy, abuse, and love. Jenna’s story of resilience and strength is especially moving because it is so real. She is flawed and not even close to perfect, but she

fighters for herself and those she loves. Jenna sings “She Used to Be Mine” when she is at her lowest, an expression of her complete hopelessness. Unable to see a way out of her situation, she has lost sight of who she is. Throughout the piece, though, she slowly remembers the parts of herself that she had thought to be lost. These memories fuel her and by the end of the song, there is a sense that perhaps she can keep fighting a little while longer. For me, “She Used to Be Mine” is a reminder to fight for myself. It is a reminder that no matter how lost I feel, I can always find my way home. It is a reminder that though I am not the same woman I once was, though I am imperfect and broken and messy, I am worthy of love and happiness all the same. If this song can mean all these things to me, I know it can be equally as meaningful for others. It is one story of many that I needed to tell in *In Her Shoes*.

I discovered Marion Bauer’s work several years ago and could not help but fall in love. Her melodies, impressionist style, and fondness for natural imagery give her music a charming quality, but her life is just as impressive as her compositions. Learning about Marion Bauer and her work is part of what inspired me to begin this project and research. The first Bauer song that I ever discovered is “The Driftwood Fire” and it has deep personal connections in my life. The text is most often interpreted as a love poem, describing a night spent in lush nature with a partner, the speaker realizing how in love they are. For me, however, it summons memories of evenings spent by the fire pit with my family, roasting marshmallows and listening to the cicadas. Those evenings are some of my happiest, and I remember them each time I sing this piece. Regardless of who you imagine building a fire with, the underlying message is the same: when you are with the people you love, life is more vivid. Katharine Adams provides intricate descriptions of the speaker’s surroundings and Bauer’s music gives them character. It is as if the

speaker is picking up on every detail, committing them all to memory to remember this near-perfect night, just like I did with nights spent with my family by our own fire. Family does not have to include a romantic partner or even biological relatives, but the joy that comes from spending time with them is one of life's greatest blessings.

“Phillis” is like a romantic comedy contained in a short art song. Wrapped up in the humor of the quirky love triangle is a message: love is a greater reward than any material thing and, even better, it is free. Or, perhaps more literally, youthful tricks typically yield no reward at all. I thought this lighthearted depiction of flirty romance was fitting for the recital in juxtaposition with some of its heavier themes. It also touches on a young girl growing up and maturing through a life lesson. A great amount of thought-provoking detail is packed into this minute-long piece if you listen closely!

In the library doing some research, I stumbled upon a collection of pieces by Margaret Bonds called *Six Songs on Poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay*. Both Millay, a steadfast Feminist, and Bonds, who was highly involved with the Civil Rights Movement, heavily incorporated their activism into their art, which is evident in this collection. Many of the pieces depict rather grim feminine experiences, exposing hardships that women go through. They also show the determination and strength of women enduring adversity. Two songs in particular stood out to me: “Hyacinth” and “Women Have Loved Before As I Love Now.” Bonds’ depiction of a toxic relationship in “Hyacinth” illustrates its devastating effects on a woman’s mental health. Based on the text, this relationship is unhealthy and the speaker’s partner totally ignores her loneliness. The music symbolizes these feelings, the chromaticism and repetition evoking the frustration that the speaker feels as a result of her partner’s emotional absence. Still, she loves him and chooses

to stay. Women remain in unfulfilling relationships for many reasons: societal pressure, desire for stability, hopefulness, even fear of further loneliness. Far too often though, the decision to stay has harmful consequences, which Bonds demonstrates in “Hyacinth” through its text and music.

The love depicted in “Women Have Loved Before...” is just as tragic as that in “Hyacinth,” though it is more grand and passionate. Millay alludes to the mythological love stories of Helen of Troy and Paris, whose love sparked the Trojan War, and of Queen Guinevere and the knight Lancelot, whose affair led to the downfall of the Round Table. Perhaps in this piece, the love is toxic as well; the speaker seems to aspire to have this same kind of legendary love with little regard to the violent consequences not only to the lovers themselves but to countless innocents.⁶⁴ Or, perhaps the speaker truly loves her partner so much that she genuinely understands the motivations of these mythological couples who risked everything for each other. Both directions of thinking are applicable because these famed tragic love stories are not black and white. The couples fought and sacrificed for the people they loved, a selfless and romantic notion. However, they selfishly ignored the effects of their actions on others, proving just how far they were willing to go for love. Ultimately, this is a complex interpretation of the love of a woman, metaphorically compared to the great love stories of fiction to illustrate its intensity and power.

It is just as vital to represent modern, living women composers as it is to represent their historical counterparts. Lori Laitman is one of today’s most successful composers, writing music that is both beautiful as well as socially conscious. I was initially drawn to her song cycle, *Four*

⁶⁴ Judith P. Saunders, “Female Sexual Strategies in the Poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay,” In *American Classics: Evolutionary Perspectives* (Academic Studies Press, 2018), 192-93, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv4v3226.14>.

Dickinson Songs, because its text was written by a woman, poet Emily Dickinson. Like Amy Beach and the Second New England School, Dickinson has historically been regarded as “one of the boys” of nineteenth century poets, but lacked the same opportunity and privilege of men in her field. Her work was praised for being universal as opposed to feminine, and while it is true that feminine themes were not a focus of her work, her unique experiences as a woman still shine through in her work.⁶⁵ My selections from *Four Dickinson Songs* present three different but equally important experiences of womanhood, all of which I personally relate to.

“Will There Really Be A Morning” is, on the surface, a philosophical reflection on mornings. It is meant to be light and wistful. To me, it is also a confession of hopelessness. Morning represents the light at the end of the tunnel and the speaker, unable to see or feel the light, worries that it is not real. The song ends on a hopeful note, though, because morning *will* come - it always does.

“I’m Nobody” is much more joyful than “Will There Really Be A Morning?” but it is no less thoughtful. Joy can be an equally engaging emotion when it is depicted realistically, as Laitman does in this piece. The text is silly but also reflects a complex speaker who understands that their true desire in life is not to be a glamorous star but to live modestly as a nobody. The upbeat, playful music adds another layer to the piece, acting as if it were in conversation with the speaker, agreeing that it is much better to be nobody.

I resonated most with the message of the last piece in the cycle, “If I...” As a woman and as a young person, so much is expected of me. I remember hearing constantly as a child that my

⁶⁵ Elsa Greene, “Emily Dickinson Was a Poetess,” *College English* 34, no. 1 (1972): 66, <https://doi.org/10.2307/375219>.

generation would change the world. Feminist author Courtney Martin explains the weight of these expectations for women perfectly: “We are the daughters of feminists who said ‘You can be anything’ and we heard ‘You have to be everything.’”⁶⁶ We do not have to be everything, though. Even a tiny act of kindness, like helping a single robin back into its nest, is meaningful. It is enough. We are enough.

⁶⁶ Courtney E. Martin, *Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters : The Frighteningly New Normalcy of Hating Your Body* (Simon & Schuster, 2007), 18.

Conclusion

Women have, for centuries, been restricted from careers as professional composers and further excluded from music history as a whole. Consequently, the vast majority of their compositional output has been ignored, forgotten, or even lost. For many years and still today, scholars have sought to explain the ensuing scarcity of women composers and their music through biological means, disparaging women and their creative abilities and disregarding the oppression they have historically faced and continue to face. Nevertheless, they have written an enormous amount of music which is available to current musicians that can and should be performed. The way musicians approach representation today must change and we must more actively strive to represent women composers. Through intentional inclusion without tokenism, equitable representation can be achieved. We owe it not only to the women of the past but to those of the present and future to ensure that women composers' music becomes an integral part of classical repertoire.

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