PlaySpace

Challenging modes of performance research

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Voices of Women

University of Stavanger

Introduksjon

Kjære lesere

Velkommen til dette nummeret av tidsskriftet, som presenterer et svært fyldig og mangfoldig utvalg av bidrag med tematikk rundt musikk og kjønn!

Med elleve artikler som spenner fra historiske kasusstudier til analyser av samtidspraksiser, viser dette nummeret hvordan kjønn fortsatt er et sentralt perspektiv for å forstå musikkens produksjon, formidling og mottak.

Bidragene belyser både kjente og oversette musikalske aktører, fra komponister og utøvere til pedagoger og forskere, og undersøker hvordan sosiale, kulturelle og politiske strukturer former både musikalske karrierer og musikkhistorien som fortelles. Flere artikler retter også oppmerksomheten mot musikkens materialitet, som arkiverte manuskripter, sanger og lydopptak, og viser hvordan disse kildene kan kaste nytt lys over tidligere marginaliserte stemmer.

Sammen gir disse studiene et bredt, nyansert bilde av hvordan kjønn påvirker musikalsk liv og praksis, både historisk og i nåtid. De ulike bidragene viser hvordan kvinner har formet musikktradisjoner, men også hvordan deres stemmer ofte har blitt marginalisert eller glemt. Dette nummeret inviterer derfor leseren til å reflektere over hvordan musikkhistorie skrives, hvem som inkluderes, og hvilke perspektiver som har vært oversett.

Maro Haradas artikkel «Koda and Hayward: Background of Female Musicians in the Early 20th Century in Japan and in the UK - Comparing Concert Reviews» løfter frem historiske perspektiver på kvinners musikkpraksis, og hvordan kvinnelige fiolinister som Nobu Koda og Marjorie Hayward ble marginalisert til tross for betydelige musikalske bidrag. Analysen av konsertanmeldelser viser hvordan kjønnsforventninger og ulik kulturhistorisk kontekst formet både deres karrierer og ettertidens dokumentasjon, og legger grunnlaget for en bredere diskusjon om historisk marginalisering.

Victoria Hodgkinsons «Mirroring Cuzzoni: A Practitioner's Aesthetic Protest» bygger videre på dette temaet, men knytter fortiden til samtidens operascene. Ved å løfte frem Francesca Cuzzoni, en sopran som lenge sto i skyggen av mannlige komponister, viser Hodgkinson hvordan moderne utøvere kan utvikle sin kunstneriske identitet gjennom bevisst dialog med historiske kvinnelige stemmer.

Historisk kontekst og nasjonale tradisjoner utforskes videre i Per Ahlanders «'Land of Heart's Desire'– Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930) and the Songs of the Hebrides». Ahlander fremhever Kennedy-Fraser som pianist, lærer, suffragette og samler av gæliske sanger, og analyserer hvordan hennes kunstsangversjoner av folketoner bidrar til den europeiske senromantiske sangtradisjonen. Studien viser hvordan kvinnelige aktører har formet musikalsk arv på tvers av kulturelle og geografiske grenser.

Et annet eksempel på gjenoppdagelse av oversette komponister finner vi i Ana Barros' «Exploring Berta Alves de Sousa's vocal chamber works». Alves de Sousa (1906–1997) analyseres som en nesten glemt portugisisk komponist, kjent for sine vokale kammerverk fra 1930- og 40-tallet. Barros fremhever hvordan hennes musikk kombinerer portugisiske litterære tradisjoner med tyske og franske impulser, og argumenterer for hennes viktige plass i musikkhistorien.

Sammen med Ahlanders studie illustreres hvordan kvinner har vært brobyggere mellom nasjonale og internasjonale musikalske tradisjoner.

Anna Magdalena Bredenbachs «"Always a Delight for the Audience". The Songs of Josephine Lang in Munich's Musical Life, 1827–1842» setter fokus på kvinner i urbane og institusjonelle miljøer. Hun undersøker Langs konserter, mottakelse og rolle i Münchens musikkliv, og belyser hvordan Mendelssohn oppfattet hennes kunstneriske uttrykk som en helhetlig musikalsk stemme. Dette eksemplet viser hvordan individuelle karrierer kan samspille med større musikalske nettverk.

Danielle Rosters «Gender and music in Luxembourg – Looking back at 25 years of archival work and music mediation» fortsetter tråden om gjenoppdagelse og formidling. Roster dokumenterer hvordan arkivarbeid har synliggjort komponister som Lou Koster og Helen Buchholtz, og hvordan dette arbeidet har kombinert historisk musikk med nykomponert musikk i MuGi. lu-prosjektet. Studien viser hvordan forskning, arkiv og fremføring kan skape en levende dialog mellom fortid og nåtid.

Judith Kopeckys «'Higher Daughters' – Women Composers in Viennese musical life in 1928» gir et detaljert innblikk i Wiens musikkliv, med over 3400 fremførte sanger, hvorav elleve var komponert av kvinner. Kopecky analyserer bakgrunn, utdanning og nettverk hos disse komponistene, og viser hvordan deres verk ble integrert i, men ofte oversett fra, samtidens musikkliv. Sammen med Rosters og Bredenbachs bidrag fremheves hvordan kvinners

kunstneriske produksjon både har blitt synliggjort og marginalisert på tvers av tid og sted.

Marie-Anne Kohls «Multiply unheard and rendered invisible. On the intersectionality of Gerty Landesberger alias Felice Wolmut as an exiled woman in music» tar opp hvordan kvinner som opplevde flukt og eksil ofte ble marginalisert dobbelt. Med Felice Wolmut som case undersøker Kohl hvordan historiske og sosiale forhold har bidratt til historiografisk utslettelse, og hvordan hennes stemme kan rekonstrueres gjennom kritisk kildeanalyse.

Chanda VanderHart viser i «'Delia's Gone, But I'm Settling the Score': Gender, Vocal Aesthetics, and the Murder Ballad» hvordan musikalsk praksis kan fungere som motstand. Hun analyserer hvordan kjønn, vokalestetikk og performance samspiller i murder ballads, og hvordan kvinner har brukt sjangeren til å uttrykke protest, maktgjenvinning og sosial kritikk. Dette perspektivet binder historisk marginalisering til kunstnerisk handling og kreativt uttrykk.

Briony Cox-Williams' «Writing Women In» undersøker hvordan victorianske kjønnsnormer og nedvurdering av amatørmusikk har marginalisert Clara Macirone og hennes samtidige. Artikkelen viser hvordan kvinners musikkutøvelse historisk ofte har blitt oversett eller feiltolket, og resonnerer med flere av de tidligere artiklene som fokuserer på synliggjøring og gjenoppdagelse.

Kristin McGee og Oded Ben-Horins «Disturbing Jazz Compositional Canons through a Transdisciplinary Improvisational Approach» presenterer en tverrfaglig og improvisatorisk tilnærming til jazzforskning. Gjennom casestudiet av Lil Hardin Armstrong og Mae Barnes vises hvordan kvinnelige jazzmusikere kan løftes frem som sentrale aktører, og hvordan tverrfaglig improvisasjon utfordrer etablerte kanoniske perspektiver. Studien binder dermed historiske og samtidige erfaringer sammen, og understreker hvordan kjønn fortsatt former musikkpraksis, mottak og forskningsperspektiver.

Samlet sett viser dette nummeret hvordan kjønn både historisk og i nåtid har påvirket musikalske praksiser, karrierer og repertoarer. Bidragene minner oss om viktigheten av å synliggjøre oversette stemmer, undersøke strukturelle ulikheter og utfordre etablerte kanoniske perspektiver. Gjennom arkivarbeid, analyser av musikk og kontekst, og refleksjon over samtidens praksiser, gir artiklene et inspirerende og nyansert bilde av hvordan musikalsk liv og skapelse alltid er formet av både kjønn og kultur.

Lise K. Meling
Redaktør

Lise Meling, redaktør.

PlaySpace (PS!)

Challenging modes of performance research

PLAYspace (PS!) is a new international, online, Open Access and peer-reviewed journal dedicated to critical perspectives on performance research. We wish to be inclusive, and stylistically non-discriminative, and here refer to artistic research in the widest sense.

This means that we encourage submissions from all forms of artistic- and practice-related research, such as new musicology, performance research, artistic practice, arts-based research, practice as research, artistic research, practice-infused research, as well as other AR-offshoots, and interdisciplinary approaches.

PS! wants to challenge the normal modes of knowledge transfer within the field, dedicated to exploring experimental solutions to critical writing. PS! sees the development of language as an important prerequisite for knowledge transfer, and believe Artistic Research has great potential in developing its own syntax, adapted to its evolving needs. PS! therefore invites submissions based on both known and unknown forms of writing – from scientific papers to transcribed conversations and poetry – urging its writers to play with words, play with media, and play with research.

The journal accepts submissions in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, or English. Particularly welcome are contributions from Ph.D.-students, post-doc and/or young researchers.

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Redaksjon

Exploring Berta Alves de Sousa's vocal chamber works

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Abstract

Berta Alves de Sousa (1906–1997) remains a forgotten figure in the history of Portuguese music, despite her pivotal role as a composer of vocal chamber repertoire in the mid-20th century. This article explores her life and contributions, focusing on her art songs, which draw on Portuguese literary traditions while incorporating influences such as Germanic and French musical styles. Her works, mostly composed during the 1930s and 1940s, reflect both personal creativity and a connection with the nationalist cultural policies of the Estado Novo. The dispersal of her manuscripts across various collections hinders the study of her compositional chronology, but her artistic evolution—from late Romanticism to Impressionism and neo-modality—is evident. This article advocates for a renewed recognition of her critical contributions to Portuguese music.

Keywords

Berta Alves de Sousa, vocal chamber music, Portuguese art song, musical nationalism

Introduction

Although a central figure in 20th century Portuguese music, Berta Alves de Sousa (1906–1997) remains an under-recognised name in the country's musical history. Throughout her career, she maintained a unique balance between teaching and performing, working as a conductor, pianist, and composer. This interplay of multiple facets of musical practice makes her an exceptional case within the Portuguese cultural landscape of her time.

Raised in a family with strong artistic roots and a clear affinity with German culture, Berta Alves de Sousa had the opportunity to develop a musical vision that allowed her an early artistic experience. Her studies in Paris and Berlin, two cultural capitals of Central Europe, brought her into direct contact with innovative musical trends such as neo-modalism and polytonality, characteristics that marked musical creation in the post-World War I period. Furthermore, her life and study experiences allowed her to establish close ties with other Portuguese composers and musicians, such as Luís Costa (1879-1960), Croner de Vasconcelos (1910-1974), Luís de Freitas Branco (1890-1955), Frederico de Freitas (1902-1980), and Lopes-Graça (1906-1994), prominent figures in 20th century Portuguese music.

This study adopts a musicological approach that integrates documentary analysis and musical historiography. The research is grounded in primary source analysis, with particular emphasis on manuscripts and documentation related to the composer, as well as on musicolog-

ical and historical literature concerning women's participation in Portuguese music in the 20th century. Given the scarcity of in-depth studies on Berta Alves de Sousa, this investigation follows a compensatory methodological strategy (Citron, 1994), aiming to recover and reassess her role in the Portuguese musical context. This perspective is aligned with the first of three approaches outlined by Ellen Koskoff (2000), who identifies key themes addressed by feminist research, namely: i) mitigating the invisibility of women through the analysis of their contributions; ii) examining gender issues within the context of cultural dynamics; iii) critically exploring the interactions between social and musical structures from a postmodern theoretical perspective.

Her vocal chamber repertoire is the primary focus of this article. Compared to other Portuguese composers of the same period, such as Frederico de Freitas, Cláudio Carneiro (1895-1963), or Croner de Vasconcelos, Berta Alves de Sousa's output includes significantly more works in this musical format, making her vocal chamber music one of the most distinctive aspects of her work. Although she began her musical training as a pianist—from the age of 11—and participated in various chamber ensembles, the number of works for or including piano is comparatively smaller, further highlighting the significance of her vocal chamber repertoire.

The chamber song, due to its intimacy and personal character, became a privileged platform for the development, in Portugal, of an amateur artistic practice in musical salons promoted by women connected to affluent families, from the late 19th century. The Countess of Proença-a-Velha (1864–1944) was a paradigmatic example: "the first Lisbon woman amateur who managed to cross the boundaries of her own home, promoting external events before a larger audience that admitted journalists as well" (Cascudo, 2017, p. 209), but Ema Câmara Reis (1897-1968) can also be identified within this context. In addition to the concerts she organised, she published five volumes, entitled Divulgação Musical[1] (Musical Dissemination), in which she documented in detail "all the programmes of the recitals of which she was the very meticulous organiser, the respective reviews, and the programmes of the lectures which, as a rule, precede the concerts and serve, so to speak, as a valuable guide for the listeners" (Sampaio, 1935). These activities, while presented in private spaces, were attended by a significant number of persons associated with the promoters, and sometimes even mentioned in the press (Cascudo, 2017, p. 196) and were thus embedded in contexts of sociability, a characteristic socially sanctioned during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century (Simmel, 1949; Sirinelli, 2003; Chimènes, 2004). These contexts, especially in concert societies, played a fundamental role in the circulation and promotion of artists and repertoires, functioning as relevant spaces for musical interaction in Portugal during the first half of the 20th century (Deniz Silva, 2015) . Moreover, several women used these contexts for the dissemination of their musical compositions: the Countess of Proença-a-Velha, for instance, composed chamber songs, which were presented in the concerts that she organized, and published three volumes of Melodias Portuguezas, with more than 60 songs. Thus, she can be considered a prominent figure "in the construction of what could be called a Portuguese national music" (Cascudo, 2017, p. 197). Similarly, other figures such as Laura Wake Marques[2] also excelled in the field of chamber song composition, publishing four volumes of songs with poetry by António Lopes Vieira (Pinto (Sacavém), 1930, pp. 83-89).

A few publications that address the role of women in Portuguese musical life, such as those by Cascudo (2006, 2017), Marinho and Deniz Silva (2019), Lopes Braga (2013), Artiaga et al. (2017a), and Artiaga (2017b), highlight the importance of women in society and culture in the first half of the 20th century, while pointing out the lack of studies on women in Portuguese music. In addition to the Countess of Proença-a-Velha and Laura Wake Marques, these publications address other women of high social standing who were active as performers, teachers, composers, concert organisers, and musicologists (similar activities to those of Berta Alves de Sousa), particularly in the context of vocal and piano performance and composition.

Although most of these women did not register as composers or formalise their professional practice, several of them maintained relevant activities as composers, musicologists and/or performers, such as Júlia Oceana Pereira,[3] Francine Benoît,[4] Elizabeth Cintra,[5] the Countess of Almeida Araújo,[6] Sarah Motta Vieira Marques,[7] Maria Clementina Pires de Lima,[8] Maria Antonieta de Lima Cruz,[9] and Elisa de Sousa Pedroso.[10] In some cases, such as that of Laura Wake Marques, composition served as an extension of their practice as performers.

Berta Alves de Sousa, a potential inheritor of these legacies, emerges as one of the last composers to consistently produce an extensive vocal chamber repertoire, spanning the Estado Novo period and continuing into the 1980s.

Exploring vocal chamber works and their socio-political and cultural context

This article examines Berta Alves de Sousa's vocal chamber repertoire as the central element of her artistic output, highlighting its dual aesthetic and sociocultural framing. It explores how her compositions engage with nationalist and traditional themes while incorporating modernist influences from a broader European context. The analysis is grounded in concepts from historical and aesthetic musical analysis, considering her relationship with both nationalist and modernist currents, as well as the political and social context in which she worked. Furthermore, the study situates her work within the wider framework of women's musical practices in Portugal, drawing on recent research that addresses the historical invisibility of women composers and the structural barriers imposed by the patriarchal musical culture of the twentieth century.

Cultural and stylistic influences

The composer demonstrated a profound emotional and intellectual connection to artistic creation. This creative impulse, which extended to music, painting, and poetry, resonated in her approach to the relationship between words and music. In a lecture given at the Porto Conservatoire of Music in 1969, she mentioned the impact that the dramatic texts of Schiller and Shakespeare, as well as opera, had had on her young imagination, leading her,

as a teenager, to conceive an opera inspired by Schiller's Turandot, adapted according to her own understanding and using techniques influenced by Wagner.

> At the age of 13 to 14, I became fascinated about the dramatic works of Schiller and Shakespeare, which I was then reading regularly, either alone or for my mother. At that time, I attended the opera, and these two strong rhythms, of the stage, created in me a great desire to perform in the same way; so much so that, certainly impressed, my imagination leapt over all obstacles, immediately wanting to make my presence known with an "opera," whose plot I had chosen from Schiller's "Turandot" for its strange oriental flavour. I adapted the story in my own way, with the most contrasting scenes, and had already chosen some themes in the style of Wagner's "leitmotiv" and was preparing myself for this immense task.[11]

However, the composer emphasised her search for a personal style, avoiding the study of established scores in order to develop her "musical voice" independently.

Context and characteristics

The vocal chamber repertoire occupies a central position in Berta Alves de Sousa's output, both in terms of quantity and diversity, and stands out from other genres addressed by the composer, as mentioned above. In the specific case of Berta Alves de Sousa, her passion for literature seems to have played a significant role in her work. Despite her initial musical training being focused on the piano, and her involvement in chamber ensembles, such as the duo with her sister Leonor, a violinist, or their trio with Rui Lacerda, a cellist, her output for piano or for instrumental ensembles featuring this instrument is noticeably more limited. Thus, the choice of the vocal chamber format not only highlights an affinity with words but also reinforces the importance of this genre in her work.

There is a marked predominance of texts by Portuguese authors in her vocal chamber works, often linked to the valorisation of historical events, emblematic figures, and cultural traditions.[13] This repertoire focuses on themes such as the "Discoveries",[14] the explorer Vasco da Gama (1469-1524) and the poet Luís de Camões (c. 1524-1580), and addresses representations of national customs and traditions, as well as epic and exotic elements. Among the poets most frequently chosen by the composer are Luís de Camões, Sá de Miranda (1481-1558),15 Teixeira de Pascoais (1877-1952), António Nobre (1867-1900), Florbela Espanca (1894-1930), Cândido Guerreiro (1871-1953), and António Feijó (1859-1917). In addition to these Portuguese authors, Berta Alves de Sousa also worked with texts by Portuguese-language writers such as Guilherme Almeida (1890-1969) and José de Abreu Albano (1882-1923), as well as non-Portuguese authors, including Michelangelo (1475-1564), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), and Heinrich Heine (1797-1856). Interestingly, the poems for Silêncio and Dístico, works for women's choir, are believed to have been written by the composer herself.

Table 1: Works by Berta Alves de Sousa awarded in competitions

Work	Date/Competition	Notes
No tormento da saudade[22]	Honourable Mention in the 1940 Floral Games	Voice and orchestra
Saudade, alegre tormento[23]	Honourable Mention in the 1941 Floral Games	Voice and orchestra
Joguei às cartas contigo[24]	Honourable Mention in the 1943 Floral Games	Voice and piano; poem by an unidentified author
Ó virgens que passais ao sol poente[25]	Honourable Mention by the Círculo de Cultura Musical in 1944	Voice and orchestra; poem by António Nobre; the score remains missing and no performance is currently known
Canção n.º 1 para soprano[26]	Honourable Mention by the Círculo de Cultura Musical in 1944	The original of this song was awarded in the Jogos Florais in 1942

Her formative path was also shaped by prominent figures such as Luís Costa, Cláudio Carneiro, and Lucien Lambert, with whom she studied piano, orchestration, and counterpoint and fugue, respectively. Regarding compositional influences, Berta Alves de Sousa herself acknowledged the impact of French art: "French art [left] traces in my feelings [...] and so much so that certain Debussy-like[12] subtleties were later to be found in some of my works."

Berta Alves de Sousa's cosmopolitan training and her interest in literature influenced her poetic selection, which reflects a preference for themes such as romantic suffering, troubadour lyricism, bucolicism, and nature, at times placid and contemplative, at other times exuberant, tragic, or exotic.
Berta Alves de Sousa's works were presented in different contexts in Portugal, especially in Porto, for exemple, in the recital series A Música

do Canto Através dos Tempos, created in 1939 by Ofélia Diogo Costa, [16] Maria Adelaide Freitas Gonçalves,[17] and Joaquim Freitas Gonçalves.[18] The aim of this cycle was to provide Porto audiences with an opportunity to listen to romantic and contemporary art song, with Berta Alves de Sousa's songs being performed alongside works by renowned composers such as Mussorgsky, Manuel de Falla, Cláudio Carneiro, Francisco de Lacerda, and Croner de Vasconcelos.

Furthermore, Berta Alves de Sousa participated in competitions and events promoted by state institutions, which suggests that she may have sought the validation of her work within the context of the Estado Novo regime. The composer received Honourable Mentions in several competitions promoted by the Emissora Nacional[19] and the Círculo de Cultura Musical de Lisboa[20], such as the "Jogos Florais de Primavera".[21]
Some of these events contributed to the Estado Novo's cultural policy, based on the "Política do Espírito"[27] (Policy of the Spirit), idealised by António Ferro, and may have aimed to promote a repertoire that aligned with nationalist values and the exaltation of Portuguese identity (Ramos do Ó, 1999). For women composers like Berta Alves de Sousa, this meant the need to adapt to an artistic environment with dominant norms and expectations, both in terms of public recognition and within the institutions that regulated the cultural life of the time.

Two main formats can be identified in Berta Alves de Sousa's art song output: individual songs and song cycles. Analysing specific examples of her works will help to better understand the particularities and contributions of each approach to her overall musical creation.

The songs display a strong affinity with the stylistic trends prevalent in her time, reflecting the influences of neo-modalism and neo-folklorism, as well as the exploration of nationalist, folkloric, and historical themes. These stylistic elements are recurrent in various works of the period, revealing a broader trend among composers to incorporate traditional and national influences into their compositions. This phenomenon is also noticeable in the work of her contemporaries, such as Fernando Lopes-Graça, who addressed the division between art songs and those inspired by or derived from traditional music (Cascudo, 2010). Like her peers, Berta Alves de Sousa is part of this context of dialogue between the scholarly and tradition, although her specific approach and the way she uses folk and historical themes present variations and distinctive characteristics.

"The songs display a strong affinity with the stylistic trends prevalent in her time, reflecting the influences of neo-modalism and neo-folklorism, as well as the exploration of nationalist, folkloric, and historical themes"

Challenges in archival research

Research into Berta Alves de Sousa's work faces several challenges, mainly due to the dispersal of her manuscripts across different collections, including the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library—where her archive is located—, the Catholic University of Portugal Library, and private archives. This dispersal has hindered the complete compilation and organisation of her repertoire, requiring a meticulous research process to identify and gather materials scattered in various locations.

Three main types of documentation were analysed: autographs, handwritten copies, and photocopies of autographs or handwritten copies. The most significant collection is found at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library, which contains, in addition to autographs and handwritten copies of her works, newspaper cuttings, letters, photographs, and other scores from her personal library. Another notable archive is the Maestro Manuel Ivo Cruz Collection, located at the Catholic University of Portugal Library in Porto, which includes autographed scores and handwritten copies. Additionally, the family collection of the baritone José de Oliveira Lopes contains both handwritten copies and autographs, some with dedications. Other archives, such as those of the pianist and professor Jaime Mota, the collector João Pedro Mendes dos Santos, and the conductor and professor Janete Ruiz, contain material related to Berta Alves de Sousa's work, including photocopies of autograph manuscripts and handwritten copies, and are essential for locating works that, for various reasons, are no longer found in the Porto Conservatoire of Music's holdings.

In 1997, the year of the composer's death, her work was still relatively unknown and underdisseminated. From the chamber song repertoire, only three harmonised traditional songs had been published[28]—*Boa noite, ó meu Patrão!*, *Por o mar abaixo, and O vinho, licor famoso*! (Lima & Lima, 1939)—in addition to an Avé-Maria for a cappella choir (Sousa, 1948) and the song *Vós teneis mi corazón* (Sousa, 1949).[29]

Dating the composition of various works also proved to be a significant challenge in this study. When comparing dates given in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue (1980) with dates in other materials, such as newspaper articles or concert programmes, it became evident that the dates did not necessarily correspond to the year of composition. Moreover, Berta Alves de Sousa often offered manuscripts of her works to friends or potential performers and, in the case of handwritten copies, the dates indicated on the scores often corresponded not to the composition but to the date of the gift or copy.

Despite the challenges encountered, the documentary analysis revealed a particular concentration of works in the 1930s and 1940s, with production extending into the following decades.

Stylistic evolution

Throughout her career, Berta Alves de Sousa showed a remarkable stylistic evolution, reflecting a transition from late Romanticism to more modern musical styles such as neo-modalism, polytonality, and Impressionism. This stylistic path not only marks her compositional output but also positions her music within a broader cultural movement, linked to musical nationalism and the artistic transformations that characterised the early 20th century.

Harmonised melodies

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a time of intense cultural and social change, with the movement for the appreciation of cultural roots gaining considerable momentum. As Cascudo (2000) observes, this movement in Portugal, which aimed to promote popular traditions and folklore, encompassed various artistic spheres, including music. Several intellectual groups sought to promote the "Portuguesezation of culture" (Castelo-Branco & Branco, 2003, p. 24), imbuing national cultural expression with a new "social functionality" (Cascudo, 2000, p. 181). This process, which involved literature, visual arts, and music, played a crucial role in affirming national identity, especially in the context of the cultural policies of the Estado Novo regime, by advocating the preservation of national identity as a pillar of social cohesion and the promotion of a culture aligned with its ideology (Marinho, 2010). In this context, the National Propaganda Secretariat, created in 1933, played a decisive role in valorising traditional Portuguese culture, supporting folk music, and promoting festivals and traditional music and dance groups.

The songs listed in Table 2 can be associated with this context, as described below.

Table2: List of harmonised melodies by Berta Alves de Sousa

Poem Title	Poem Author	Date of Composition	Observations
Boa noite, ó meu patrão!	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	1937	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1937
Ó chulita	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	Possibly 1949	Mentioned in BAS archive; performed in 1949; no specific date in d'Ávila's catalogue
Ó do zás, trás, trás!	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	Possibly 1938	Possibly performed in 1938; no specific date in d'Ávila's catalogue
Ó vinho, licor famoso!	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	1937	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1937
Pingó	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	Possibly 1938	Possibly performed in 1938; no specific date in d'Ávila's catalogue
Por o mar abaixo	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	1937	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1937
Rosa de Alexandria	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	1946	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1946
Se fores ao rio lavar	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	Possibly 1938	Possibly performed in 1938; no specific date in d'Ávila's catalogue

In the field of music, repertoire for voice and piano based on popular or traditional melodies was particularly promoted by the regime, with the Department of Musical Studies developing initiatives such as the publication of the Cancioneiro Popular Português, a collection of folk songs harmonised by contemporary composers (Moreira, 2012). Throughout her career, Berta Alves de Sousa produced several vocal works inspired by Portuguese popular tradition, particularly nine songs based on collections by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima.[30] Three of these songs were published in O Vinho Verde na Cantiga Popular[31] (1939), a book by Maria Clementina and Fernando Pires de Lima.

Berta Alves de Sousa's songs present a fusion of traditional elements with the sophistication of Western art music, reflecting the evolution of her style. Lyrical melodies and precise text declamation, with elaborate piano accompaniment, are notable features. This contrast between traditional simplicity and harmonic complexity is evident in songs such as Rosa de Alexandria and Dobadoira, through the presence of chromaticism and rhythmic accents.

Furthermore, her vocal repertoire, especially her chamber songs, reveals meticulous attention to the creation of melodic lines and the treatment of musical words, reflecting influences of Impressionism, with a search for subtler and more evocative sonorities, and polytonality, by exploring bolder chords and harmonies.

Art song

Portuguese art song, unlike in countries such as Germany and France, was a late bloomer, marked by the lack of a deeply rooted tradition. Twentieth-century Portuguese composers faced the challenge of creating an art song style in Portuguese without a consolidated framework, which led to various compositional approaches, as exemplified by Berta Alves de Sousa's art song writing

Table 3: List of art songs by Berta Alves de Sousa

Poem Title	Poem Author	Date of Composition	Observations
A fonte dos amores	Luís de Camões	1965	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1965
Amámo-nos	—	1967	Copy dated 1967; not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
A noite	Michelangelo	1946	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1946
Ave Maria	—	(c. 1920)	Mentioned by composer in manuscript dated 10 July 1969
Canção marinha	Teixeira de Pascoaes	1949	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1949
Chanson triste	—	1933	Premiered 1 May 1933; not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
De amor escrevo	Luís de Camões	1951	Listed in d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1951
Desejos juvenis	Unknown	—	Not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
Despertar es morir	Gustavo Adolfo Becker	—	Not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
Die Spröde	Goethe	1933	Premiered 27 May 1933; not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
Falo de ti	Florbela Espanca	1982	Not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
Habanera	Augusto Gil	1967	Version for voice dated 1967, per composer's annotation

As reflected in this repertoire, these songs are characterised by rhythmic simplicity and a stable metre—often homorhythmic—resulting in homogeneous rhythms of crotchets and quavers, with no significant metric variation. This approach stands in contrast to the use of complex rhythmic figures by contemporary composers such as Fernando Lopes-Graça.

Berta Alves de Sousa's writing, while seemingly simpler, does not lack expressiveness. On the contrary, her rhythmic simplicity invites the performer to explore vocal nuances and dynamics, transferring to them the responsibility of imparting a lively and expressive interpretation to the melody. Her choice of stable metre and clear melodic structure reflects her connection to the German Lied, where precise articulation of the text is crucial to interpretation. Her songs require rigorous diction and clear enunciation, especially due to the way the melody fits the natural rhythm of the words. The vocal tessitura favours middle or low voices, allowing for a more intimate and personal interpretation.

The intrinsic relationship between the poetic text and the melody is central to the work of Berta Alves de Sousa, with each song requiring a specific sound tailored to the meaning of the text and the melodic line. The piano accompaniment plays a key role, reinforcing the emotional impact of the song and providing a solid foundation for vocal expression. In this sense, her music goes beyond a mere adaptation of popular or traditional song; it seeks emotional and interpretative depth.

"Her choice of stable metre and clear melodic structure reflects her connection to the German Lied, where precise articulation of the text is crucial to interpretation"

Her output, which began with *Ave Maria* (composed in the 1920s), exemplifies this stylistic transition. Although still influenced by late Romanticism, particularly Schubert,[32] this piece anticipates the approach that Berta Alves de Sousa would develop in the 1930s, when she began to consolidate her identity in the field of art song. During this decade, her works began to be performed regularly in concerts promoted by institutions such as the Porto Conservatoire of Music, Orpheon Portuense, and the Pró-Arte association, highlighting the growing recognition of her work in the Portuguese music scene. The songs she composed, always with a strong connection to the text, and her ability to explore new sonorities and harmonies reflect the development of a musical identity that remained faithful to earlier examples of Portuguese art song.

From the 1940s onwards, there was a significant increase in references to songs composed by Berta Alves de Sousa, reflecting the growing dissemination and appreciation of her work. In addition to the songs included in the competitions promoted by Emissora Nacional and the Círculo de Cultura Musical de Lisboa, it is possible to identify fundamental characteristics in her compositions that define her unique style. These include the predominance of ternary and durchkomponiert forms, syllabic vocal writing, the expressiveness of text declamation, and pianistic writing that often recreates or suggests the atmosphere contained in the poem.

Canção n.º 1 Perguntas: que significa saudade, although adopting the melodic style of earlier works and drawing on popularly inspired verses, reveals an evolution in the pianistic treatment. The piano takes on an

expressive role in the central section, accompanying the excitement and rapture suggested by the voice. This work also introduces a neo-modal language, which would be recurrent in her subsequent compositions, in line with the composer's quest for new sonorities and more complex harmonic structures.

The exploration of polyrhythms and polymetre began to gain prominence, especially in the song Singra o meu barco,[33] based on a poem by Heinrich Heine. Here, the chords in the lower register of the piano anticipate an expressive rhythmic treatment, a characteristic that would extend to other works, such as Há no meu peito uma porta,[34] based on a poem by José de Abreu Albano. This type of instrumental virtuosity reaches a high level of complexity in Canção Marinha,[35] based on a poem by Teixeira de Pascoais, in which the arpeggios, tremolos, and scales illustrate the outbreak of a storm at sea and the destruction of the boat and its crew.

The first incursions into polytonality appear in Mormaço[36] (a text erroneously attributed to Manuel Bandeira in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, but written by Guilherme Almeida), and are extended in works such as A Fonte dos Amores[37] and Sete anos de pastor,[38] both based on poems by Luís de Camões, and Amámo-nos,[39] based on a poem by António Feijó. True to her stylistic eclecticism, the composer also explores neo-modalism

Table 4: Promontório Sacro songs.

Song Title	Observations
Incêndio	Included in both CMP (as BAS 17) and OL sources; listed independently in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue.
Oremus	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Subvenite, Sancti Dei	Included only in OL manuscript.
O último sono (Vae victis)	Included only in OL manuscript; dated 1966.
Farol eterno	Included only in OL manuscript.
Terra sagrada	Included only in CMP copy.
Catedrais	Included in both CMP and OL; in OL titled as part of Promontório de Sagres.
De bordo	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Al-Hambras	Included in both CMP and OL sources; dated 1966.
Ressurreição	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
O Altitudo	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Oh mar imenso...	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Sol posto	Included only in CMP copy.
Batalha do Ocidente	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Despojos	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Largada	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Gil Eannes	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Meu Portugal	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Ardentia	Included only in CMP copy.
Mais além	Included only in CMP copy.
Rosas de Santa Maria (Trova)	Included in both CMP and OL sources.

Foto: Tord F Paulsen

“The cycle presents a high degree of contrast between the pieces, with initial indications that describe character more than tempo. Elements such as tremolos, arpeggios, and scales are reused throughout the pieces, creating a recurring sonic identity. ”

combined with chromaticism in Falo de Ti,[40] her last identified song, which remained unknown until the late 1990s.[41]

The Cycle Promontório Sacro as an example of stylistic maturity

The Promontório Sacro cycle of 21 songs (Table 4) stands as one of Berta Alves de Sousa’s most ambitious and significant works. Most likely composed between 1965 and 1966, the cycle uses epic poetry by Cândido Guerreiro and is partially preserved in the composer’s estate (BAS 30) at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library. However, it was only possible to complete and analyse the work through additional documents from the private collection of the family of José de Oliveira Lopes, the likely dedicatee[42] of the cycle, and from Janete Ruiz’s personal archive.[43]

The tessitura of the pieces suggests a composition for a low male voice. Although the cycle is extensive and varied, it shares general characteristics with other works by the composer. Notably dramatic, it includes a significant innovation in the song Oremus, in which a declaimed introduction precedes the sung melody, differing from the habitual use of recitative in earlier works, such as Fonte dos Amores (“as spoken”) or O Último Sono. The songs show a remarkable richness of description, with precise indications of the desired atmosphere, ranging from “feverish agitation” to “gloomy,” “poetically,” “with majesty,” among others. The pianistic writing reinforces the poetic text and the intended atmosphere, revealing meticulous detail in the dynamics and recurring motifs, which connect the different songs within a stylistic unity.

Although the full interpretation of the cycle remains uncertain, there are registers of performances of the first song, Incêndio, by José de Oliveira Lopes.

Formal and stylistic analysis

The analysis of the work can be summarised in three main dimensions: musical materials (melodic and rhythmic), textures, and dynamics.

The cycle presents a high degree of contrast between the pieces, with initial indications that describe character more than tempo. Elements such as tremolos, arpeggios, and scales are reused throughout the pieces, creating a recurring sonic identity. Certain motifs are transformed or reappear in different pieces, such as the tremolo with a bass in the sextuplets of Incêndio, which resurfaces in Oremus and O Último Sono, albeit adapted. This motif also reappears in Farol Eterno and Al-Hambras, retaining its chromatic essence, although without the tremolo. Some songs follow a ternary structure, with distinct materials featured in the central section.

Textural variety is one of the defining characteristics of the cycle, oscillating between pieces with more melodic texture and undulating accompaniments, and others with vertical blocks of homophonic chords. The song Catedrais stands out for its exploration of echo, using the pedal and contrasting registers, to evoke the majesty of a sacred space. This piece, with its spaced chords and contemplative atmosphere, can be compared to the ambience of La cathédrale engloutie by Debussy. The undulating texture is characteristic of songs that evoke the sea, in contrast to the predominantly homophonic texture found in other pieces.

The work demonstrates meticulous care in the dynamic markings, adjusting them differently between the piano and the voice. The dynamic range is impressive, varying from pianissimo (ppp) to fortissimo (fff), as exemplified in De Bordo. This attention to detail allows for the creation of specific environments, even in more delicate passages, such as in O Último Sono, where various levels of piano are indicated.

Canções de Berlim:
44 Context and characteristics

The Canções de Berlim cycle of nine songs (Table 5) reflects the influences of Berta Alves de Sousa’s cosmopolitan experiences in Berlin. These songs, in manuscript versions and photocopies of autograph manuscripts, are part of the composer’s collection at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library (CMP, no. BAS 12), with no exact date of composition. The cycle was presented on 28 June 1976 at the Porto Conservatoire of Music, during a concert in honour of the composer, where she shared her impressions of the “Informative Seminar” held in Berlin in November

Table 5: Canções de Berlim45 - Die WIener in Berlin list of songs

Song Title	Date/Competition	Observations
Das macht die Berliner Luft, luft, luft	Unknown	Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
Ich liebe dich so tief	Unknown	Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
Wir sind Berliner Bummler	Unknown	Included in Version 1 and Version 2 (marked as 7th); performed in 1976 concert.
Oh du mein Waldeman	Unknown	Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
Es war einmal ein Junge kleen	Unknown	Included in both versions; Version 2 dated 1799, inspired by O Tannen-baum; performed in 1976.
In Rixdorf ist Musike	Unknown	Included in both versions; Version 2 dated 1870, notes: “Berlin heute Neuröln”.
In Berlin, Sagt’er	Karl Hotei	Included in both versions; indicat-ed as “extra” in Version 1; Version 2 dated 1824.
Solang noch untern Linden	Unknown	Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
Ick fuhr mal mit meine Kaline	Unknown	Included in Version 1; marked as part of Berlinisches Liederbuch; per-formed in 1976 concert.
Berliner Luft is jünstig (Sehn Se, das ist Berlin)	Günther Neumann	Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
Wen die Jensen springen über Berjesjipfel	Unknown	Included only in Version 2.
Det de Spree musikal’sch is	Unknown	Only appears in the 1976 concert programme.

The texts of these songs include poems by authors such as Günther Neumann (1913-1972) and Karl von Holtei (1798-1880), as well as proverbs and traditional melodies. This collection of songs incorporates arrangements from Berlin's folk song repertoire, covering a historical period from the end of the 19th century to the early days of the Nazi regime, capturing the essence of a pre-20th century Berlin, between the post-Bismarck era and the rise of Hitler.

The repertoire consists of popular songs, operetta pieces and examples of Kabarett, a performative genre typical of the German tradition. The German Kabarett, especially in Berlin, stood out as a space for social and political criticism. Through a combination of monologues and music, the artists tackled contemporary issues with biting humour and satire, always with a marked dimension of political and social criticism (Jelavich, 1996).

Collectively, these songs encapsulate Berlin's cultural essence, social dynamics and the city's historical evolution from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. Das Macht die Berliner Luft, Luft, Luft synthesises Berlin's creative spirit, becoming a cultural symbol. Similarly, In Rixdorf ist Musike (c. 1870) portrays the vibrant and bohemian lifestyle of the Rixdorf district, mixing linguistic influences and celebrating the city's dialect. Meanwhile, songs such as Walter Kollo's Solang noch untern Linden and Berliner Luft is jünstig / Sehn Se, das ist Berlin reflect the resilience and humour intrinsic to Berlin's identity, often underlining its atmosphere and collective pride.

Other songs, such as Wir sind Berliner Bummler (1930s) and Oh du mein Waldemar (First World War era), emphasise the socio-economic circumstances of the time. Songs such as Es war einmal ein Junge kleen and In Berlin, Sagt'er (1824), part of Die Wiener in Berlin, show how folk melodies and theatrical performances were used to explore themes ranging from personal tragedy to cultural nationalism. These works illustrate the depth and diversity of Berlin's musical legacy, reflecting and celebrating its enduring character.

Berta Alves de Sousa's choice to work with the Berlin repertoire, and in particular the folk songs to which she was introduced during the Informative Seminar in Berlin, reflects a deep and thoughtful approach to the material, demonstrating a clear intention to transform and integrate it into her own musical language. The composer sought to understand this repertoire and give it new life, reflecting her desire to explore and reinterpret the material with a critical and creative perspective.

Songs for children

In addition to the cycles mentioned above, a small group of songs have titles that suggest a target audience of children and whose simple writing points to their use as educational material (Table 6). The manuscripts of A cauda do gato, O embalo da boneca, and O passarinho[46] (the latter two with lyrics by Ofélia Diogo Costa[47]) are kept in the private archive of Jaime Mota.

Song Title	Poem Author	Observations
Embalo para a boneca	Ofélia Diogo Costa	Once part of the CMP collection (Ruiz, 2004), now missing; copy held by Jaime Mota. Photocopy of autograph manuscript.
A cauda do gato	Ofélia Diogo Costa	Held in the private archive of Jaime Mota. Photocopy of autograph manuscript. Labelled on the cover as "(canção infantil)".
O passarinho	Unknown (possibly Ofélia Diogo Costa)	Previously part of the CMP collection (Ruiz, 2004), now missing; copy in Jaime Mota's archive. Photocopy of autograph manuscript dated January 1953.

Final considerations

Despite the richness of Berta Alves de Sousa's compositional corpus and her undeniable significance for music in Portugal, her work continues to receive disproportionately limited attention. This lack of recognition can be attributed to various factors, including a broader systemic marginalisation of women in music that has persisted since the late nineteenth century. Women were historically encouraged to engage with music as a domestic or formative activity, particularly within the middle and upper classes, where musical training was regarded as a marker of social refinement rather than as a pathway to a professional vocation (Lessa, 2022). Even those who aspired to professional careers found their opportunities largely confined to teaching, with few managing to establish themselves in composition or high-level performance. This divide between amateurism and professionalism was further entrenched under the Estado Novo, reinforcing the perception of female composers as exceptional figures rather than integral contributors to the national musical landscape.

Broader societal expectations, particularly surrounding marriage and domestic responsibilities, often curtailed women's professional engagement with music. Even highly trained female musicians faced considerable pressure to abandon their careers upon marriage, thereby perpetuating the notion that their artistic contributions were secondary or temporary. Although Berta Alves de Sousa remained active throughout her life, her trajectory reflects the persistent challenges that female composers encountered in securing lasting institutional recognition. In contrast to most of her female contemporaries, whose musical education was predominantly domestic, Alves de Sousa benefitted from formal academic training. Her oeuvre encompasses a wide range of genres, styles, and techniques, distinguishing her as a particularly versatile and innovative figure within the Portuguese musical landscape. When compared with earlier composers such as Maria Antonieta de Lima Cruz and Laura Wake Marques, notable similarities emerge in the use of modal[48] and polytonal harmonic languages, complex pianistic textures, and vocal writing that privileges poetic declamation. However, whereas many of her contemporaries favoured a simpler idiom often associated with salon music[49], Alves de Sousa's stylistic evolution reflects a progression from late Romanticism to various twentieth-century currents, including Impressionism, polytonality, and neo-modalism. Her later song cycles, Promontório Sacro and Canções de Berlim, exemplify this trajectory through their innovative harmonic language and engagement with modern themes.

Although her vocal chamber works were acknowledged within certain artistic circles, Berta Alves de Sousa's position as a female composer in mid-twentieth-century Portugal remained constrained by structural and institutional limitations. The rigid cultural policies of the Estado Novo regime, coupled with deeply entrenched gender norms, relegated women's artistic contributions to the periphery, shaping not only the conditions of musical production but also the parameters of reception. While her compositions occasionally aligned with the nationalist ideals promoted by the regime—particularly through her engagement with historical and literary themes drawn from canonical Portuguese poets such as Camões and Teixeira de Pascoais—this alignment did not shield her from systemic barriers to recognition. The Política do Espírito, a key ideological mechanism of the Estado Novo, reinforced such dynamics by favouring compositions aligned with nationalist and folkloric aesthetics (Ramos do Ó, 1999). For women, this policy offered a paradoxical space: it provided limited visibility within official programmes while simultaneously restricting the scope for autonomous artistic expression.

The reception of women composers during this period was shaped by gendered critical discourses that evaluated their work through reductive stereotypes. Whereas male composers were assessed in terms of technical mastery and innovation, women were often praised—or dismissed—for emotional expressiveness and so-called "feminine sensitivity" (Lopes Braga, 2013). This contributed to a cultural hierarchy in which female composers were expected to produce more intimate, lyrical, or small-scale forms, such as chamber songs, while genres such as symphony and opera remained largely inaccessible (Lessa, 2022). Within this framework, Berta Alves de Sousa's preference for vocal chamber music and solo piano repertoire cannot be disentangled from the prevailing norms that deemed such forms suitable for female study. Even within these more "acceptable" genres, however, her work was frequently interpreted as reinforcing nationalist values rather than being recognised as autonomous artistic statements.

Her compositions were praised in certain contexts, but their circulation remained largely confined to limited social networks, hindering integration into the canon of Portuguese art music. A notable example is the inclusion of some of her songs in the 1939 recital series A Música do Canto Através dos Tempos, organised by Ofélia Diogo Costa, Maria Adelaide Freitas Gonçalves, and Joaquim Freitas Gonçalves. While this initiative sought to legitimise her repertoire within the national vocal tradition, it took place within a predominantly female social environment, reflecting the gendered structuring of musical spaces and the confinement of women's creativity to certain domains.

Alves de Sousa's participation in competitions organised by Emissora Nacional and the Círculo de Cultura Musical de Lisboa afforded her a degree of institutional visibility. However, this recognition did not translate into sustained inclusion in concert programmes, nor did it lead to widespread dissemination or recording of her compositions. In comparison to her male contemporaries, such as Fernando Lopes-Graça or Luís de Freitas Branco, her work received considerably less critical attention and remained largely peripheral within the Portuguese musical canon. Despite her prominent role in the cultural life of Porto, her music has been notably absent

from contemporary repertoires. A commemorative event organised by the Porto City Council in 1989, which featured only four of her works (Há no meu peito uma porta, Sete anos de pastor, Incéndio for voice and piano, and Ave Maria for women's choir), exemplifies the limited formal acknowledgement of her legacy. This is emblematic of a broader tendency to marginalise music composed by women, often relegating their contributions to a peripheral position within both musicological research and performance programming.

A relevant comparison may be drawn with Francine Benoît (1894–1990), one of the few women of the time to intervene publicly in both musical and intellectual discourse. As a composer, critic, and conductor, Benoît was notably marginalised not only due to her gender but also because of her political radicalism. Her engagement with left-wing movements such as the Movimento de Unidade Democrática (MUD)[50] and the Associação Feminina Portuguesa para a Paz[51] brought her into direct conflict with the Estado Novo, resulting in surveillance and exclusion from dominant institutions (Lopes Braga, 2021). While Alves de Sousa faced similarly restrictive conditions, she adopted a more conciliatory strategy by engaging with state-sponsored competitions and cultural programmes. This approach granted her a limited degree of recognition, albeit still shaped by the secondary status typically assigned to women composers.

The posthumous obscurity of Alves de Sousa's output further underscores the fragility of mechanisms for the preservation and dissemination of music composed by women in Portugal. The limited publication of her works, coupled with the continued fragmentation of her manuscripts across various collections and archives, reveals the absence of a systematic initiative to recover her legacy—a situation that stands in stark contrast to the efforts dedicated to preserving the repertoire of her male contemporaries[52]. Her erasure from concert programmes and institutional narratives reflects a broader historical process of exclusion, perpetuated by the lack of critical editions, recordings, and sustained scholarly engagement.

"Berta Alves de Sousa leaves a legacy that is both deeply personal and emblematic of the broader history of resilience, creativity, and determination among women in twentieth-century art music"

Recovering the legacy of Berta Alves de Sousa thus necessitates not only a reappraisal of her repertoire but also a broader reassessment of the institutional and cultural frameworks that have shaped the reception of music composed by women in Portugal. It is therefore imperative to renew scholarly and artistic interest in her work, as well as in that of other overlooked composers who contributed to the richness of Portuguese musical heritage. This process entails the publication of critical editions, the promotion of academic and artistic events, and the inclusion of their music in educational curricula and concert programming. Furthermore, it requires the construction of a more inclusive historical narrative—one that highlights individual achievements while critically engaging with the social and cultural contexts that simultaneously enabled and constrained women's artistic development.

In this regard, it is pertinent to revisit the work of Marcia Citron (1994), particularly her call for "historical compensation" as a necessary strategy to address the systemic omissions and inequalities embedded within the musical canon. Such an approach contributes not only to a more comprehensive and equitable understanding of Portuguese music history, but also to the construction of a future in which the canon is more representative, inclusive, and aligned with the principles of historical justice.

In conclusion, Berta Alves de Sousa leaves a legacy that is both deeply personal and emblematic of the broader history of resilience, creativity, and determination among women in twentieth-century art music. Her work deserves to be rediscovered and re-evaluated—not merely as a neglected chapter of Portugal's cultural history, but as a vital expression of artistic agency within a constrained and unequal musical landscape.

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Foto: Tord F Paulsen

Notes

[1] The author has translated all the Portuguese quotations.
[2] Laura Wake Marques (1880–1957) was a prominent figure in 20th century Portuguese music, excelling as a singer, pianist, composer, and writer. She began her piano studies with her father, Joaquim José Marques, and received vocal instruction from her mother, Laura Wake Marques, Vellani, and Jane Bensaude. At the Royal Conservatoire of Lisbon, she studied piano with Alexandre Rey Colaço and harmony and composition with Rui Coelho. Her artistic output was mainly composed and published during the 1920s. Additionally, in 1924 she organised a series of concerts on the history of Portuguese music and founded "Hora da Arte," a series of events aimed at the working classes. Her literary work was published between 1929 and 1947 (Oliveira & Viana, 1967, p. 82; Paz, 2018 pp. 351-52; Pinto (Sacavém), 1930, p. 82).
[3] Only a few references in periodicals mention concerts she organised and the performance of her compositions. Alfredo Pinto (Sacavém) notes that she studied with Rey Colaço and that "her works, within the modern spirit, never leaned toward extravagant modernism, avoiding dissonances unpleasant to the ear and sentiment"; he also provides a list of works encompassing various instrumental formations (Pinto (Sacavém), 1930, p. 100).
[4] Francine Benoît (1894–1990), composer, music critic, teacher, and essayist, studied with Alexandre Rey Colaço at the National Conservatoire and with Vincent D'Indy at the Schola Cantorum. She was one of the founders of the Sonata Concert Society in 1942, alongside Fernando Lopes-Graça, Maria da Graça Amado da Cunha, Joaquim Silva Pereira, and Macário Santiago Kastner (Lopes Braga, 2013).
[5] Elizabeth Lindley Cintra Torres (1926–2019) was homeschooled until the 6th grade, after which she studied piano with Helena Sá e Costa and Maria Cristina Lino Pimentel at the National Conservatoire. She participated in the series of recitals "A Nova Geração" (1947–48) organised by the National Conservatoire. She continued her studies in composition with Croner de Vasconcelos (Marinho, 2022).
[6] Countess de Almeida Araújo, born Hermínia Augusta Ferreira de Almeida Gonçalves de Azevedo Franco in Lisbon (1865–1912), was the daughter of the 1st Viscount of Falcarreira and married Joaquim Palhares de Almeida Araújo, 1st Count of Almeida Araújo. A member of the artistic direction of the *Sociedade de Concertos de Canto* (Proença-a-Velha, 1902, p. 54), she was also a poet, publishing a book of sonnets (Cardoso, 1917, pp. 29-32).
[7] Sarah Motta Vieira was born on 2 January 1862. She began studying music at age 6, and took lessons with Daddi at age 7. She studied piano and harmony with Rey Colaço and Diezzi, respectively. At 16, she began vocal studies with Pontecchi, performing alongside prominent opera figures in Lisbon. Parallel to her career as a singer and pianist, she organised concerts at her home, showcasing repertoire rarely performed in Portugal. Laura Wake Marques referred to her as a gifted pianist with the ability to sight-read musical pieces. Throughout her life, she performed with names such as Kaschmann, De Lucca, Perello, António Arroyo, Thibaud, Casals, Rey Colaço, Guilhermina Suggia, Vianna da Motta, Francisco and António de Andrade, João and Augusto Rosa, Óscar da Silva, Goñi, Loevehnson, Nicolletti, among others. She withdrew from artistic activity in 1884, after her husband's death (Marques, 1933, pp. 42-53).
[8] Maria Clementina Pires de Lima (1909–1941), pianist, collector, and arranger, studied piano, harmony, and composition with Luís Costa and Lucian Lambert. She compiled about 200 melodies and songs, many of which she harmonised herself, and gave lectures such as "Folclore de Riba d'Ave" and "Como se Canta em Landim." She worked mainly with women singers and believed that the collected pieces did not reflect a local tradition, but the geographical diversity of their origins (Branco, 2010, pp. 702-3).
[9] Maria Antonieta Lima Cruz (1901–1957), music critic, musicologist, composer, and pianist, studied music with her mother, the painter and singer Adelaide de Lima Cruz (1878–1963), and won the National Composition Competition in 1926. From 1942 onwards, she was curator of the Instrumental Museum and Library of the National Conservatoire of Lisbon. She published several books and articles on music (Igayara-Souza & Paz, 2012, pp. 2-3).
[10] Elisa Baptista de Sousa Pedroso (1881–1958) studied piano with Alexandre Rey Colaço and Vianna da Motta. Known as a musical patron and concert organiser, she founded the Círculo de Cultura Musical in 1934, serving as its director until her death. She was responsible for presenting numerous Portuguese and international musicians at her palace in Lisbon (Fernandes, 2010, pp. 976-77).
[11] Excerpt from the lecture "1st Hearing of My Musical Works at the Porto Conservatoire," presented by the author on 10/7/1969; autograph from the Berta Alves de Sousa collection at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library.
[12] Excerpt from the lecture "1st Hearing of My Musical Works at the Porto Conservatoire," presented by the author on 10/7/1969; autograph from the Berta Alves de Sousa collection at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library.
[13] Fernando Rosas refers to the "myth of rurality" as one of the foundations of ideological indoctrination during the Estado Novo period, to which many artists were sensitive (Rosas, 2001).
[14] The Portuguese Discoveries, spanning the 15th to 17th centuries, involved maritime explorations that expanded geographic knowledge and established contact with various cultures across Africa, Brazil, India, and the Far East. In Teoria Geral dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, Jaime Cortesão argues that these explorations were driven by Portugal's cosmopolitan ambition to confront the Ottoman Empire—particularly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453—and by economic and political aims to disrupt the spice trade monopoly held by Genoese and Mamluk powers.
He further contends that Portugal's strict policy of secrecy, while initially advantageous, ultimately contributed to the nation's economic decline (Cortesão, 1940).
[15] The use of poetry by classical authors in art song dates to the early 20th century, with examples such as Os nossos poetas – Melodias Portuguezas (1904), by the Countess of Proença-a-Velha, supported by Teófilo Braga, which aimed to valorise the Portuguese literary tradition (Artiaga et al., 2017, pp. 383-84). Joaquim Teófilo Fernandes Braga (1843–1924), born in Ponta Delgada, stood out as a prolific writer and republican politician, president of the Provisional Government in 1910 and of the Republic in 1915. He produced 360 works on themes such as history, literature, and Portuguese theatre, coordinating editions of authors such as Camões and Garrett, but received criticism for the academic imprecision of some of his work (Teófilo Braga, n.d.).
[16] A disciple of Rodrigues de Freitas and Atília Cunha, she studied German and French literature, particularly poetry. She also devoted herself to painting and was a student of the masters Artur Loureiro and António Carneiro. She is believed to have been the first Portuguese singer to perform a recital entirely dedicated to the Lied. She led the Porto branch of both the Círculo de Cultura Musical and the Juventude Musical Portuguesa. She was part of the management of the Camarata Portucalense, an association founded by Guilhermina Suggia. Dedicated to the promotion and teaching of children's music education, she was honoured by the French government with the title of Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Círculo de Cultura Musical, 2017).
[17] Piano professor at the Porto Conservatoire of Music, where she also held the position of director. She was responsible for establishing the Porto branch of the Círculo de Cultura Musical, following an invitation from Elisa de Sousa Pedroso (Conservatório de Música Do Porto, n.d.).
[18] Pianist and professor of piano, as well as the author of several writings on music, including recital reviews and programme notes. He served as a professor at the Conservatory of Music of Porto, where he held the position of director during the periods 1934–1939 and 1940–1941 (Meloteca, n.d.).

[19] The Emissora Nacional de Radiodifusão was the official Portuguese state radio broadcaster during the Estado Novo regime, playing a central role in disseminating nationalist and imperial narratives, including those that glorified the maritime Discoveries and Portuguese colonial expansion (Moreira, 2012).
[20] The Círculo de Cultura Musical was an institution that promoted concerts and musical activities in Lisbon, playing a role in legitimizing composers within the Portuguese musical landscape (Almeida, 2018).
[21] The first Jogos Florais in Portugal took place in May 1936, as part of the celebrations of the "Year X of the National Revolution," promoted by the Emissora Nacional. The jury, chaired by General Óscar Carmona, included figures such as António Ferro and Henrique Galvão. This literary event gained prominence during the Estado Novo, promoted by organisations such as Mocidade Portuguesa and the Emissora Nacional. The Jogos Florais of the Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina were a platform for original productions in various literary forms (Quintal, 2021, pp. 42-7).
[22] No references to this piece were found in the catalogue of Humberto d'Ávila. The composition date of the work, located in Janete Ruiz's private collection, could not be determined. The piece received an Honourable Mention at the Jogos Florais of 1940, as indicated in the handwritten copy.
[23] No references to this piece were found in the catalogue of Humberto d'Ávila. The composition date of the work, located in Janete Ruiz's private collection, could not be determined. The piece received an Honourable Mention at the Jogos Florais of 1941, as indicated in the handwritten copy.
[24] According to the catalogue of Humberto d'Ávila, dated 1941. The work was located in Janete Ruiz's private collection. The piece received an Honourable Mention at the Jogos Florais of 1943, as indicated in the handwritten copy (Ávila, 1980).
[25] According to the catalogue of Humberto d'Ávila, dated 1941, the work Poema by António Nobre is mentioned in Cunha e Silva's inventory as part of the Porto Conservatoire of Music collection. However, the score is missing, and no performance of the work is known (Ávila, 1980).
[26] Source: Berta Alves de Sousa collection at Porto Conservatoire of Music; copy from Janete Ruiz's private collection – Perguntas que significa saudade, from the cycle on the seven musical notes.
[27] The 'Política do Espírito' was the designation of the cultural programme promoted by António Ferro during the Estado Novo, aimed at constructing a nationalist cultural identity through the arts (Moreira, 2012).
[28] Melodies collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima (pp. 66–67; 70–71; 74–75). According to Humberto d'Ávila, the harmonisations by Berta Alves de Sousa are from 1937.
[29] In 2001, the works Singra o meu barco, Canção Marinha, Há no meu peito uma porta, and De amor escrevo, de amor... were edited by Jaime Mota and published by Fermata Editora (Sousa, 2002), and in 2019, edited by Ana Barros, AvA Musical Editions published Berta Alves de Sousa - Canções sobre Poesia de Camões (Sousa, 2019).
[30] "*O S. João de Landim*": "Organised by the talented composer and orchestral conductor Berta Alves de Sousa, a musical gathering will soon take place, which will feature S. João de Landim, a popular play extensively developed and orchestrated by the distinguished Porto artist. This popular play was discovered by the learned folklorist D. Maria Clementina Pires de Lima, who, after collecting the respective melodies, uncovered the story of the play. She even conducted an interview with the elderly author of the play and the music and managed to obtain the score, which is entirely in agreement with the melodies she collected directly from the people. Based on these melodies and adding others of the same genre extracted from the *Cancioneiro* by César das Neves, Berta Alves de Sousa produced an extensive and valuable work, which will soon be presented to the public for the first time. In this work, choirs are featured, which are being rehearsed by the proficient conductor Afonso Valentim." – News from O Comércio do Porto, dated 5/6 (1939?), announces the forthcoming musical gathering (first scrapbook in Berta Alves de Sousa's estate at the Porto Conservatoire of Music).
[31] In addition to the harmonisations by Berta Alves de Sousa, the book includes the harmonisations of Cantilena dos Pedreiros de Melgaço by Lucian Lambert; Olha o Quico! by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima; O Chirinó by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima; Para os nossos copos! by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima; Ó peão! by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima; O vinho by Luís Costa; Adega de vinte pipas by Lucian Lambert; Debaixo daquela ponte by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima (Lima & Lima, 1939).
[32] "1st Hearing of My Musical Works at the Porto Conservatoire of Music."
[33] According to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, it dates from 1944 (Ávila, 1980).
[34] According to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, it dates from 1949 (Ávila, 1980).
[35] The composer made several versions of this work, including for voice and wind ensemble; voice and orchestra (according to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue – 1958); and the version indicated here (voice and piano), which, according to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, dates from 1949 (Ávila, 1980).
[36] According to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, it dates from 1950 (Ávila, 1980).
[37] Autograph dated 1965 (Portuguese National Library).
[38] According to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, it dates from 1966 (Ávila, 1980).
[39] Copy by Fernando Jorge Azevedo, dated 1967.
[40] Autograph manuscript, dated 1982.
[41] A photocopy of the manuscript at the Porto Conservatoire of Music was given to Janete Ruiz by Professor Fernanda Correia and became part of her recitals of Portuguese music starting in 1999.
[42] The reference to the dedication is only related to the first song of the cycle.
[43] In 2005, as part of the continuation of the 2004 study, the researcher photocopied some of the songs from this cycle, which are part of the composer's estate at the Porto Conservatoire of Music, and which are now missing.
[44] At the time of my presentation at EnIM 24, most of the references to this work were still unavailable. I would like to thank Professor Inês Thomas Almeida for the information she shared, which was essential for the advancement of this research. Based on this information, and after a further visit to the Porto Conservatoire of Music, it was finally possible to access the arrangements of these songs, which allowed for new approaches to the study and interpretation of this work.
[45] Despite the ten songs listed, only nine were presented as belonging to the cycle at the concert held at the Porto Conservatoire of Music: So lang noch untern Linden; Ick fuhr mal mit meine Kaline; Sehn Se, das ist Berlin; Das Macht die Berliner Luft, luft, luft; Ich liebe dich so tief; Wir sind Berliner Bummler; Oh du mein Waldemar; Es war einmal ein Junge kleen; and the song Det de Spree musikal'sch is, which is not among the collected pieces.
[46] Photocopy of autograph manuscript dated January 1953, private collection of pianist Jaime Mota.
[47] See note 16.
[48] Neo-modalism, characteristic of the early 20th century, is exemplified by several prominent Portuguese composers such as Frederico de Freitas and Luís de Freitas Branco.
[49] Exceptions to this trend include Laura Wake Marques, Maria Antonieta de Lima Cruz, and Francine Benoît.

[50] The Democratic Unity Movement (MUD) emerged as the successor to the National Antifascist Unity Movement (MUNAF), a clandestine organisation opposing Portugal's fascist regime. MUD advocated for freedom of assembly, association, and the press, as well as fair elections, proposing new voter registration, opposition oversight, and the postponement of the vote (Honório, 2014).
[51] Founded in 1935 and dissolved by the Estado Novo regime in 1952, the Portuguese Women's Association for Peace was a pacifist organisation, officially non-political and non-religious, though several of its members held antifascist views. It promoted cultural and humanitarian activities, such as support for war exiles and events advocating for peace. In its final years, the association adopted a more oppositional stance, publishing a regular bulletin and maintaining a children's choir directed by Francine Benoît (Cova, 2011).

“Always a Delight for the Audience”. The Songs of Josephine Lang in Munich’s Musical Life, 1827–1842

By Anna Magdalena Bredenbach

Foto: Tord F Paulsen

Abstract

This paper examines the life and work of Josephine Lang (1815–1880) within the context of Munich's musical culture between 1827 and 1842. Drawing on a variety of sources, including historical newspapers, city maps, travel guides, and archival materials, the study explores Lang's activities as a composer and performer, emphasising the interplay between the spaces where her music was performed and the networks of musicians, patrons, and institutions that shaped her career. Special attention is given to her reception in the Munich press, which portrayed her as a "tone-poetess" and celebrated her originality, emotional depth, and technical skill. By analysing press reports and reconstructing performances of her songs, this paper highlights how Lang's figurative voice as a composer resonated alongside her literal voice as a performer. This dual perspective not only sheds light on Lang's significance but also offers insights into the dynamics of Munich's musical culture, revealing the interdependence of spaces, actors, and cultural practices in shaping artistic life.

Keywords

Josephine Lang, 19th century, historical newspapers, art songs, music culture

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Josephine Lang, ca. 1842, drawn by Carl Müller, from Köstlin (1881)

“Have I ever written to you about the little L.? I think hardly, and yet she is one of the dearest visions I have ever seen”

Josephine Lang, a Singer and Composer in Munich

“Have I ever written to you about the little L.? I think hardly, and yet she is one of the dearest visions I have ever seen. Imagine a delicate, small, pale girl, with noble but not beautiful features, so interesting and strange that it is hard to look away from her, and all her movements, and every word full of genius. She has the gift of composing songs and singing them in a way I have never heard before; it is the most complete musical joy that I have experienced so far. For nothing is missing: when she sits at the piano and starts such a song, the tones sound different, the whole music is so strangely stirred and moved, and in every note there is the deepest, most subtle feeling; then, when she sings the first note with her delicate voice, everyone is struck with silence and reflection, and each person is deeply moved in their own way – but if only you could hear the voice!” [i] (Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to his family, November 7, 1831, in Morgenstern & Wald, 2009, p. 414)

It is Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy who, in this letter, enthusiastically tells his family about the composer, pianist, and singer Josephine Lang. The “little L.”, as he calls her, was only 15 years old at the time. Mendelssohn met her during a visit to Munich in 1830 and, as the quote shows, was deeply impressed not only by her songs but also by her voice.[ii] In his letter, he repeatedly emphasises the significance of Lang’s voice, which can be understood both literally and metaphorically: as the voice of the singer who performs her songs, and as the voice of the composer who figuratively “speaks” through her music. In Mendelssohn’s perception, the composer and the performer thus merge into one. The strength of this connection for Mendelssohn is evident in further comments he makes in his letters: “[...] your songs bring you, your personality, voice, and performance entirely back to me, whenever I sing or hear them” [iii], he wrote to Josephine Lang 10 years later (Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to Josephine Lang, April 26, 1841, in Tomkovic et al., 2013, p. 87). The fact that newly composed songs could still evoke memories of Lang’s voice and performance shows how closely her compositional style and vocal interpretation were intertwined for Mendelssohn.

This paper seeks to trace Josephine Lang’s musical activities [iv] in her hometown of Munich, where she lived from her birth in 1815 until her marriage in 1842. In the following I will focus on her voice in the broad sense that also resonates in Mendelssohn’s descriptions: As the literal voice heard in the Königliche Hofkapelle [Royal Court Chapel], in concerts, and at private gatherings; and the figurative voice of the composer whose songs were sung, heard, printed, dedicated, and promoted, and were reviewed by the press. Despite well-documented sources on her life, there has so far been little evidence of Lang’s musical performances in the Bavarian capital. The two contemporary biographies of Lang both mention only one public performance: her debut as a pianist at the age of eleven in a concert organized by the Museum Society (Hiller, 1868, p. 121; Köstlin, 1881, p. 57).[v] Although both biographies occasionally suggest that Lang performed at additional concerts and social gatherings, their descriptions of these events remain vague.[vi] In her dissertation, Roberta Werner provides insights into the Munich music scene of the time, without, however, being able to provide evidence of specific performances by Lang (Werner, 1992, p. 40-64). Sharon and Harald Krebs, who conducted pioneering research on Josephine Lang, have uncovered additional sources that shed light on some of Lang’s performances.[vii] However, significant gaps still exist regarding the musical life in the city and Lang’s integration within it.

This is the point of departure for my research. Focusing on Lang’s time in Munich, I investigate questions such as when, where, and by whom her songs were sung, when and in which

contexts she performed, how she published her works, and how her songs and performances were received in Munich. By doing so, I also explore the key locations and figures within Munich's musical landscape and their connections with Lang's voice and songs.

Central to my investigation is an in-depth analysis of the Munich daily press, a resource previously untapped in the context of Josephine Lang and Munich's musical landscape. Additionally, I have drawn upon various contemporary representations of the city and its cultural life, such as historical travel guides and travel reports, as well as city maps, address books, and documents of the Königliche Hofmusik [Royal Court Music]. This multifaceted approach complements the multitude of biographical sources on Josephine Lang, not only opening new avenues for understanding Lang's impact but also providing new insights into the city's cultural milieu.

In the following, I will outline key aspects of my project. I begin by reflecting on the characteristics of the daily press as a source for music history (section 2), followed by an overview of locations in Munich connected to Lang's songs (3). I will then explore the individuals and institutions that performed or hosted her works (4), before embarking on a brief excursus on Lang's connections to the Bavarian royal family (5). This leads into a closer analysis of press reports, focusing on how Lang is portrayed both as a performer and a composer (6) and how her songs are characterized, which allows me to offer a few brief insights into Lang's music as well (7). In conclusion (8), it will become clear that while Lang's voice as a singer and composer may seem "unheard" from today's perspective, during her time in Munich, it was in fact widely recognized and appreciated.

Munich Daily Press as a Source for Music History

The historical (daily) newspapers of Munich [viii] have become systematically accessible through "digipress", a digitisation project by the Bavarian State Library (BSB).[ix] This ambitious, ongoing project has so far digitised around 9 million pages across nearly 1,000 titles, concentrating primarily on the 19th century and the Munich/Bavaria area. In my research, I explored various newspapers that blend political and everyday narratives of Munich, including the *Münchener Tagblatt*[x] and *Bayerischer Volksfreund*, which cover political affairs and local life. I also examined the Münchener Conversationsblatt, known for its cultural critiques and anecdotes, and the *Flora and Bazar*, which feature literary works and cultural dispatches. Additionally, the *Bayerische Landbote* and *Bayerische Landbötin* offer a broad mix of content with a focus on all of Bavaria.

This broad array of source material would have been overwhelming without the aid of digital technology. Thanks to the "digipress" project I was able to engage in extensive full-text searches, initially focusing on names, places, and works cited in secondary literature and the aforementioned sources. This approach unlocked a multitude of additional, varied search terms. Moreover, I delved into reading and analysing select months in their entirety to further refine my search strategy and uncover richer insights.

All mentioned newspapers cover musical life, though their form and content differ significantly from that of music journals, as they target a general audience rather than a specialised readership. Gunter Reus has noted that factors like "newsworthiness" and "prominence" outweigh aesthetic considerations in cultural reporting of the time (Reus, 2009, p. 313). This aligns with my findings: while the Königliches Hoftheater [Royal Court Theatre] receives extensive coverage, other musical venues gain news value mainly through royal attendance. For example, the *Münchener Tagblatt* frequently reports on the Munich Liederkranz, a men's choir under royal patronage (Fogt, 2019), especially when the Royal Family attends. In contrast, concerts by other civic societies, including the Philharmonic and Museum Societies where Lang performed, are reported on less frequently and in less detail. This observation underscores the importance of approaching the source type "daily newspaper" with caution. While their richness of detail can be of great value for music historical research, one must keep in mind that newspapers always present constructed narratives and a selective view of the reality they aim to represent. Thus, it is crucial to understand that these newspapers do not offer a complete depiction of Munich's musical life. Instead, they provide merely a segment, chosen and shaped according to specific interests.

Music itself is rarely described in the newspapers; the primary focus seems to be on publicising concerts or reporting their occurrence. This confirms another of Reus's observations, regarding the "dominance of announcements and event-related journalism" (Reus, 2009, p. 313; see also Tadday, 1993). Consequently, the information I extracted from the newspapers primarily includes dates, locations and participants; information about programs, and concert reviews, appear only occasionally.

Besides reports on past events, the advertising sections have proven particularly fruitful, featuring restaurants promoting musical events, music stores advertising new releases, and organizations inviting the public to meetings, rehearsals, and concerts. Regarding the musical life of the city, historical newspapers are especially informative when considering the writing of articles and the placement of advertisements themselves as cultural practices. For instance, when the Liederkranz advertises its rehearsals through newspaper ads, both the medium and the way in which it is used become part of Munich's musical culture.

Figure 2. City Map of Munich, Baldwin & Cradock, 1832, from Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München / Mapp. XI, 448 b.

Places in Munich connected with Lang's Songs

In the following section, I provide an overview of the places in the city linked with Lang's songs and her voice. I have reconstructed these locations not just from newspaper articles, but also from the other sources outlined above.

Royal Court Music

Born into a musical family, Lang was already tied to significant music venues in Munich through her relatives, particularly those associated with the Royal Court Music. Her father served as a violinist in the Königliche Hofkapelle (Royal Court Chapel, Köstlin, 1881, p. 9), located within the Königliches Hoftheater [Royal Court Theatre] – a neoclassical landmark in the city center, rebuilt between 1823 and 1825 after a fire (Oikonomou, 2015), and designed by the renowned architect Leo von Klenze (Meiser, 1840). From 1827 onward, Lang's brother enjoyed a successful career as an actor at the same theatre (Kürschner, 1883). Their mother, a celebrated singer, had also performed there until 1811 (Reden-Esbeck, 1879).

Lang herself was appointed "Königliche Hofsängerin" [Royal Court Singer] in 1835 (Köstlin, 1881, pp. 64 - 65), primarily contributing to the liturgical music at the Frauenkirche, Munich's late Gothic cathedral, where she sang in the Hofkapelle [Court Chapel]. The singers of the Court Chapel were required to perform several times a week, with additional performances during major religious holidays (Anzeige derjenigen Kirchenfeste, 1841). Beyond their church duties, the Royal Court Musicians participated in concerts at the Odeon Concert Hall – a venue commissioned by King Ludwig I in 1828 and also designed by Klenze (Münster, 2001). The repertoire for these concerts, as reported in contemporary newspapers, focused on oratorios such as Haydn's Schöpfung (November 13, 1839), Handel's Te Deum (December 16, 1840), and Mendelssohn's Paulus (December 1, 1841).

Organizers and Promoters

Table 1 provides an overview of the performances of Lang's songs in Munich by herself or others, as documented in press reports. [17]

Date	Place	Organized by	Piece(s)	Voice	Piano	Source
1830-07-04	Odeon	Liederkranz	"Choir"	-	-	*Münchener Tagblatt*
1831-04-21 [1831-04-16]	Odeon, great hall	Liederkranz	-	-	-	*Der Bayerische Volksfreund*
1831-12-02	Philharmonic Society	Philharmonic Society / "H. Lafont"[18]	2 Songs	Josephine Lang	[Josephine Lang]	*Flora*
1832-02-09	[Odeon]	Philharmonic Society	2 Songs	Josephine Lang	[Josephine Lang]	*Flora*
1834-04-08 [1834-04-06]	[Odeon]	Philharmonic Society	2 Songs: *Sänger aus der Ferne, Liebesgrüße*	"Mad. Sigl-Vespermann"	-	*Münchener Tagblatt*
1835-04-18	Museum	Museum Society	2 Songs	"Fräul. Deisenrieder"		*Münchener Tagblatt*
1836-11-24 [1836-11-20]	[Odeon]	Philharmonic Society	2 Songs	"Mad. Heigel"	-	*Der Bayerische Landbote*
1839-06-24 [1839-06-17]	Odeon, small hall	"Brothers Moralt"	"Nocturne by Thalberg", "Scherzo à capriccio by Mendelssohn"	-	Josephine Lang	*Neues Tagblatt für München und Bayern*
1840-04-25 [1840-04-22]	Odeon, great hall	Farewell Concert for H. Chélard[19]	1 Song	"Dem. Hartmann"	-	*Der Bayerische Landbote*

Table 1: Lang's appearances and performances of her songs in Munich as documented in press reports. The dates refer to the days of the report; if the date of the performance is known, it is added in square brackets. All names and work titles are taken verbatim from the newspaper reports.

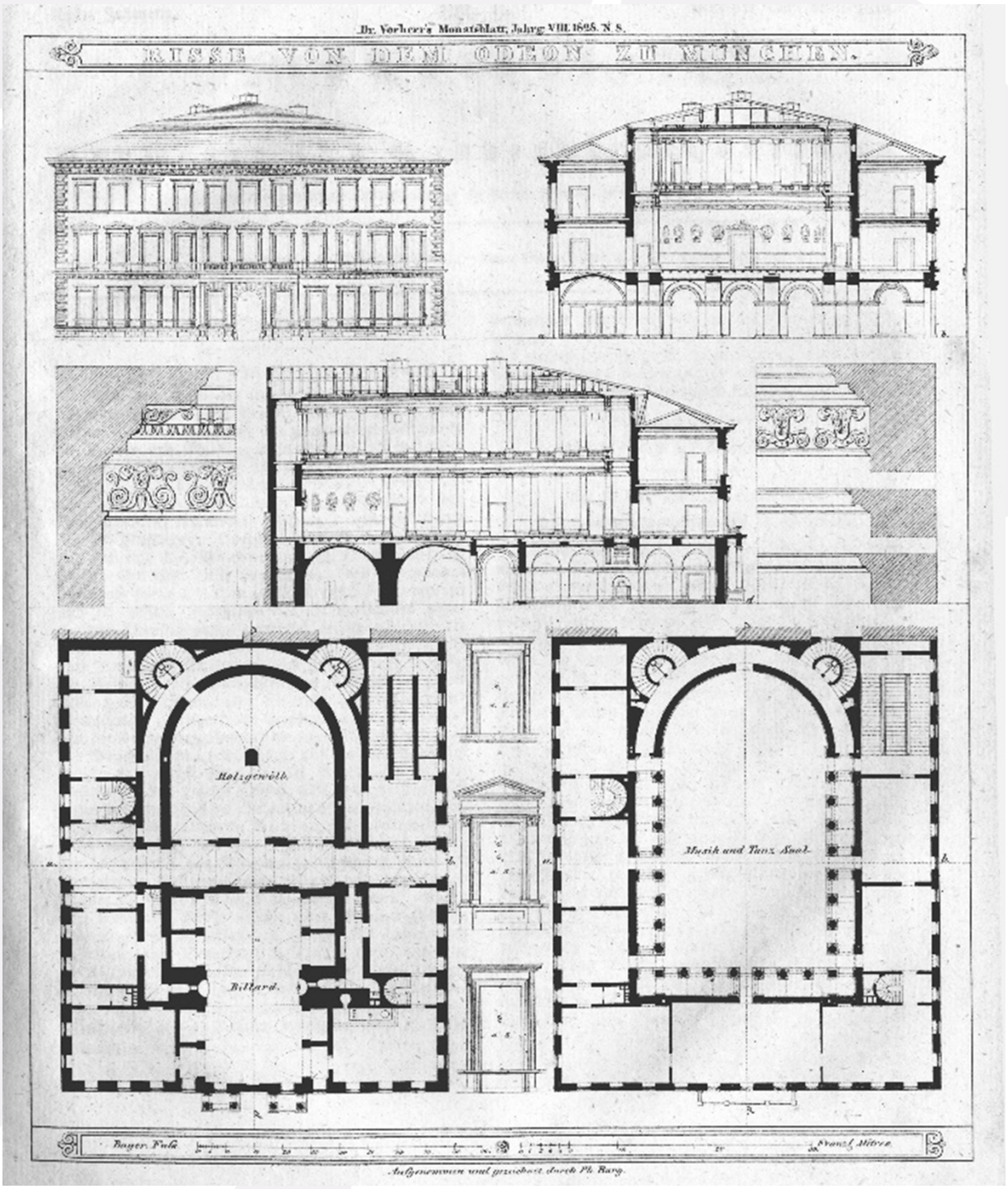


Figure 3. Risse von dem Odeon zu München“ [“Architectural Drawings of the Odeon in Munich”] from Monatsblatt für Bauwesen und Landesverschönerung [Monthly Journal for Building Construction and Landscape Beautification], 8th volume, No. 8, 1828, ©Ph. Burg/Bayerische Staatsbibliothek port-009608.

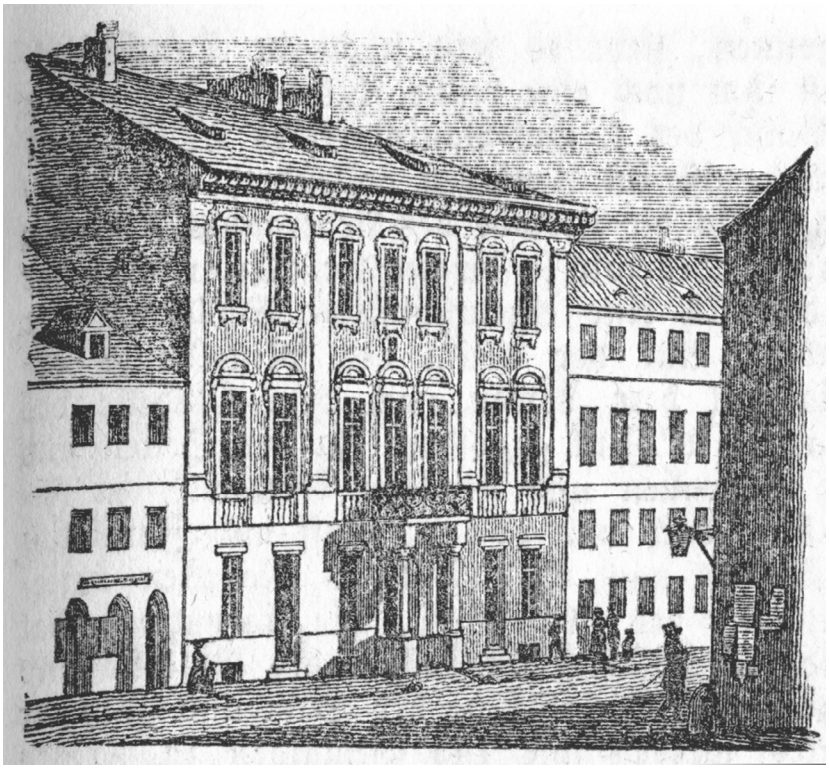


Fig. 4: Das Museum, ein Verein für gesellschaftliche Unterhaltung an der Promenadestraße Nr. 12 [The museum, an association for social entertainment on Promenade Street no.12], from Acht Tage in München (1834), ©unbekannt/Bayerische Staatsbibliothek port-003997.

Fig. 3 shows some sketches of the Odeon from the year of its construction. Concerts were usually held in the large "Music and Dance Hall," the floor plan of which is shown at the bottom right.

Civic Societies

The Odeon was not only used for Royal Court events; it also became a hub for performances organized by Munich's civic societies, which played a pivotal role in shaping the city's musical culture. Lang, closely involved with several of these organizations, also performed at their events. Some of these societies had their own dedicated venues as well, where they hosted concerts, balls, and other events. One such organization was the Museum Society where Lang, according to her biographers, had her debut as a pianist in 1827 (Köstlin, 1881, p. 57; Hiller, 1868, p. 121). Located on Promenadenstraße, the Society maintained a large hall (Fig. 4) that functioned as both a concert venue and a resource for its members, as described by a contemporary city guide:

"In the 1830s, Lang was also featured in the concerts of the Munich Liederkranz – the aforementioned men's choir not only patronized by the King but also composed of many Royal Court Musicians"

"In one of the society's rooms, one finds a very fine grand piano, and all newly published music is made available. [...] Frequently, particularly in the winter season, concerts and splendid balls are also held in the spacious and elegant hall." [xi] (Baumann, 1832, p. 145)

Another notable organization was the Philharmonic Society, founded in 1830. Although the society had its own hall at the Wittelsbacher Platz, it regularly hosted concerts in the grand hall of the royal Odeon, where Lang often performed. These midday Sunday concerts seem to have been quite popular, drawing a diverse audience. A travel guide from Lang's time notes:

"The Philharmonic Society generally offers entertainment on Sundays around midday, featuring performances by local artists and amateurs, and often even by visiting musicians. The gatherings are select and well-attended. Any visitor can join as a member at any time for a modest fee. The venue is the Royal Odeon." [xii] (Acht Tage in München, 1834, p. 102)

In the 1830s, Lang was also featured in the concerts of the Munich Liederkranz – the aforementioned men's choir not only patronized by the King but also composed of many Royal Court Musicians. The Liederkranz's performances were held at the Odeon, with rehearsals taking place at the Tambosi Café across the street (Münchener Tagblatt, 1829, September 28, p. 1220). Such cafés, restaurants, and beer gardens were central to Munich's social life, frequently advertising events like "harmony music," "dance music," or "evening festivities with singing."[xiii] Announcements like these provide valuable insights into the city's popular musical culture. However, the musical activities in those venues appear to have been predominantly male-dominated, and there is no evidence that Lang participated in them.

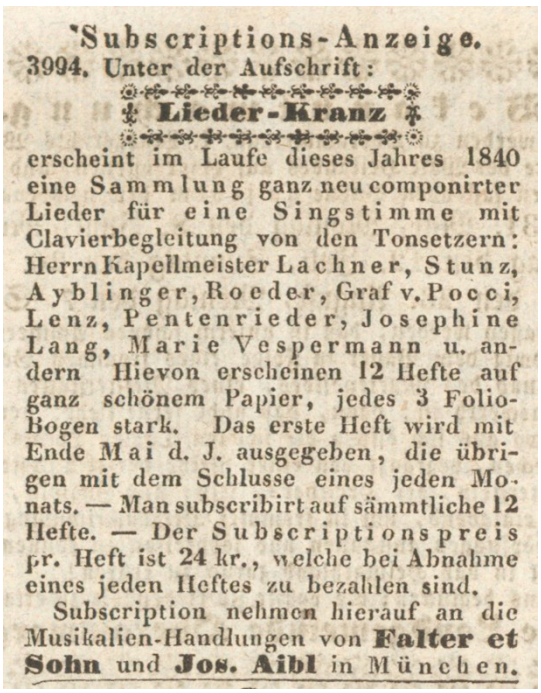
Private Homes

Lang also performed her songs at private gatherings. While these events were not covered in the press, other sources allow us to identify some of the private residences that hosted such occasions (Krebs, 2019). These gatherings were often held in the homes of influential families of Munich's bourgeoisie, such as the Eichthal, Kerstorf, or Martius families (Köstlin, 1881, p. 58; Jameson, 1835, p. 23). Alternatively, they took place in the residences of prominent musicians and artists, including the pianist Sophie Dülkenxiv and the court painter Joseph Stieler, who was also Lang's godfather (Köstlin, 1881, p. 58).

Music Stores and Publishers

Other important locations for the dissemination of Lang's songs included Munich's three music stores which also operated as music publishers. Lang published her initial seven song collections in Munich, collaborating with publishers outside Bavaria only starting in 1838. Lang's Op. 1–3 and 5 were issued by the Royal Court Music publisher, "Falter und Sohn".[xv] The publisher Joseph Aibl released two of Lang's song collections as well (Op. 4 and 7). One of those works, referred to as Op. 4, can be dated to 1833 based on contemporary newspaper advertisements that announce the collection's release that year (Der Bayerische Volksfreund, 1833, April 18, p. 511). As a result, the numbering of Lang's published works –compiled in a handwritten catalogue by Lang in 1867 and continued by Köstlin (1881) – should be interpreted cautiously with respect to chronology. The 1833 publication, known as Op. 4, is, in fact, her second published work.

Lang's songs were also featured in 9 out of the 12 issues of the prestigious Liederkranz Collection, available for subscription through Falter and Aibl, as shown by advertisements in Munich newspapers from 1840 (Fig. 5). The inclusion of Lang's songs in this collection alongside the works of several prominent Munich composers of the time not only again underscores her strong connections but also reflects the esteem in which she was held as a composer.[xvi] Finally, Lang's Op. 6 was printed by J. A. Schäffer, a retailer of art, maps, and music in Munich, confirming that her songs were published by all three of the city's music houses.



Subscriptions-Anzeige.

3994. Unter der Aufschrift:

Lieder-Kranz

erscheint im Laufe dieses Jahres 1840 eine Sammlung ganz neu componirter Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Clavierbegleitung von den Tonsetzern: Herrn Kapellmeister Lachner, Stunz, Ayblinger, Roeder, Graf v. Pocci, Lenz, Pentenrieder, Josephine Lang, Marie Vespermann u. andern Hievon erscheinen 12 Hefte auf ganz schönem Papier, jedes 3 Folio-Bogen stark. Das erste Heft wird mit Ende Mai d. J. ausgegeben, die übrigen mit dem Schlusse eines jeden Monats. — Man subscribirt auf sämmtliche 12 Hefte. — Der Subscriptionspreis pr. Heft ist 24 kr., welche bei Abnahme eines jeden Heftes zu bezahlen sind.

Subscription nehmen hierauf an die Musikalien-Handlungen von **Falter et Sohn** und **Jos. Aibl** in München.

Fig. 5: „Subscriptions-Anzeige for the Liederkranz Collection" from Die Bayerische Landbötin, 1840, May 28, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, 4 Eph. pol. 15 k-1840,1, p. 542.

Tracing the Performers and Promoters of Lang's Songs

The locations described above did not merely serve as a backdrop for Lang's musical activities but were shaped into central hubs of her work through the actions of musicians, patrons, and societies. At the same time, these spaces, with their specific characteristics and social dynamics, influenced the ways in which Lang's voice – both literally and figuratively – could be perceived and heard. To fully understand this interplay, it is essential to examine the individuals and groups who performed, promoted, and supported Lang's songs.

Organizers and Promoters

Table 1 provides an overview of the performances of Lang's songs in Munich by herself or others, as documented in press reports. [xvii]

These occasions were organized by the Liederkranz, the Philharmonic Society, the Museum Society, or by individual musicians. Lang's engagement in events such as a concert featuring the Parisian violin virtuoso Charles Lafont, a performance by the "Moralt Brothers", and a farewell concert for composer Hyppolite Chélard in 1840, underscores her close integration into the musical milieu of Munich. The Moralt family, centered around the violinist and "Director of Instrumental Music" Joseph Moralt (Anzeige derjenigen Kirchenfeste, 1841), was a pivotal musical dynasty in Munich. Their connection to Lang extended beyond professional interactions within the Royal Court Chapel, where they were colleagues of her father, to personal proximity as neighbours. This neighbourly closeness is vividly illustrated in Stephen Heller's correspondence with Robert Schumann, in which Heller humorously notes that Lang "resides in a building owned by a person named Himbsel (!!), on the 5th floor, while on the 6th, seven Moralts are engaged in vigorous fiddling, blowing, and hammering"[xx] (Kersten, 1988, p. 132). Further evidence of a deeper connection is provided by a violin sonata fragment co-composed in 1838 with Peter Moralt, Joseph's nephew and a violinist in the Royal Court Music (Anzeige derjenigen Kirchenfeste, 1841).[xxi]

Singers

Remarkably, only two reports, both in Flora, specifically acknowledge Lang performing her own compositions. On diverse occasions, various court singers brought her songs to life, the most notable being Katharina Sigl-Vespermann, a celebrated prima donna of the Munich Opera at the time (Eisenberg, 1903). A letter from the Munich clarinetist Heinrich Baermann provides an explanation for why Lang did not sing herself: she feared her voice might not fill the large hall of the Odeon (Krebs & Krebs, 2007, p. 43). Indeed, Lang's voice

is described in contemporary accounts as "delicate" ("zart", Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to his family, November 7, 1831, in Morgenstern & Wald, 2009, p. 414) or "weak, but silver-clear" ("schwach, aber silberklar", Nindorf [Niendorf], 1840, p. 1). That the renowned Sigl-Vespermann sang Lang's songs can be understood as an honour for the composer, as the famous singer had withdrawn from the stage a year earlier due to health reasons and only performed on rare occasions:

"In the 11th performance of the Philharmonic Society, which took place the day before yesterday, Madame Sigl Vespermann had the kindness to perform two songs set to music by Josephine Lang, Der Sänger aus der Ferne and Liebesgrüße. The highly esteemed artist could not have given the members of the Philharmonic Society greater pleasure, as it is so rarely that the art lovers of Munich have the privilege of hearing and admiring her." [xxii] (Münchener Tagblatt, 1834, April 8, pp. 389-390)

Moreover, Lang's music being performed by several of her Royal Court Chapel colleagues further underscores her strong network within the local music scene.

Pianists

Press coverage seldom disclosed the identity of the accompanying pianist, but other sources indicate that Lang usually accompanied herself when performing her songs (Nindorf [Niendorf], 1840; Jameson, 1835). Lang's biographers suggest that she frequently appeared in this role as well (Hiller, 1868, p. 123; Köstlin, 1881, pp. 57-58), making it likely that she provided the accompaniment herself even when she was not singing. Her reputation in this regard is notably highlighted in a report by the Münchener Tagblatt, stating that she was "only 14 years old and already renowned as a pianist" [xxiii] (Münchener Tagblatt, 1830, July 4, pp. 762). Although Lang had initially been known for her pianistic skills, there is only one explicit press report of her performing piano pieces: in June 1839, she played works by Thalberg and Mendelssohn in the aforementioned concert of the Moralt brothers (see Table 1).

Excursus: Lang and the Bavarian Royal Family

The previous sections have highlighted Lang's strong ties both to the Munich bourgeoisie and the city's musical community. Another significant connection was with the Bavarian Royal Family, a relationship which will be explored briefly below, as it is also reflected in a newspaper report.

The Dedication of Op. 1

The report in question concerns Lang's Op. 1, and illustrates the esteem in which she was held by the Bavarian Royal Family:

"A collection of songs has been published by the Hof-Musikhandlung [Court Music Shop] Falter und Sohn, composed and dedicated by Josephine Lang to Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Bavaria. The small collection consists of eight songs, which stand out favourably both in the choice of poems and in their musical interpretation as the first works of a young talent. The Hexenlied rises to a higher significance, justifying considerable expectations. Miss Lang, who is also an outstanding pianist, recently had the honour of performing before Her Majesty Queen Caroline. This gracious patroness of the arts deigned to express her utmost satisfaction with Miss Lang's performance and sent the young artist a precious gift as a token of Her Majesty's highest favour." [xxiv] (Flora, 1831, July 15, p. 248)

Op. 1 was dedicated to Princess Maria Anna Leopoldine of Bavaria, half-sister of King Ludwig I. Such dedications, when accepted by high nobility, were typically considered a significant honour for the composer. By agreeing to have their name associated with the work, the aristocratic recipients publicly affirmed the quality of the composition (Rosenthal, 2024, p. 66; see also Hammes, 2015, p. 111 and Beer, 2000, pp. 66-72). The coverage of Op. 1 as a newly published edition of sheet music – which, based on my analysis, was rare for daily newspapers at the time – further emphasizes this point. The mention of the noble dedicatee in the opening sentence seems to boost the newsworthiness of Lang's publication. After a concise positive review, the article notes that Lang had the privilege of performing before the Bavarian Queen Caroline, the mother of the dedicatee, and was rewarded with a "valuable gift". This aligns with Andrea Hammes' concept of "benefactor dedications" ("Gönnerwidmungen"): Composers benefit from these dedications by receiving money or gifts in return (Hammes, 2015, pp. 43-53). Although the gift in Lang's case was not directly linked to the dedication, its mention in connection with the publication reinforces the overall narrative. Thus, the article publicly signals that Lang had entered the ranks of musicians under royal patronage.

Lang's Settings of the King's Poems

Another connection between Lang and the Bavarian Royal Family, particularly King Ludwig I, lies in her setting and publication of several of his poems. Ludwig I, not only a prominent patron of the arts and architecture, but also an amateur poet, published his first volume of poems in 1829 (Ludwig I, 1829). This inspired several Munich composers to set his verses to music, including Joseph Hartmann Stuntz, Leopold Lenz, Ferdinand Löhle, and Georg Schinn. That same year, a concert by the Liederkranz at the Odeon featured 13 settings of Ludwig's poems, composed by Liederkranz members, most of whom also played or sang in the Royal Court Music ensemble (Der Bayerische Volksfreund, 1829, May 28, p. 344). The publisher Falter produced both a text booklet for the concert (Dreizehn Gedichte, 1829) and an elaborate edition of the choral arrangements (Flora, 1829, September 15, p. 760). This again highlights a network of Munich musicians with whom Lang was connected through her involvement with the Liederkranz, the Royal Court Music, and the publisher Falter. Lang herself composed four settings of the King's poems, two of which appear in her Op. 1, the same opus she dedicated to the King's half-sister.

Das Asyl, Op. 7, No. 5

The song Das Asyl, Op. 7, No. 5 is the only setting of King Ludwig's poetry by Lang that has been transmitted in

print. The song exemplifies a typically folk-like tone, evident in an alternating bass accompanied by offbeat chords in the piano, along with a harmonic concentration mainly on primary functions. At first glance, this renders the song stylistically simpler in comparison to most of Lang's other compositions. However, upon closer inspection, intriguing details emerge, such as a surprising shift from major to minor keys in measure 14.[xxv] These nuanced elements contribute depth, while still being well aligned with the aesthetic of the Liederkranz settings of the King's poems. Thus, this example demonstrates that Lang was not only well-connected but also very much in tune with what was current in Munich's musical landscape.

The Press's Depiction of Lang as a Performer and a Composer

The Munich press played a crucial role in shaping the early public perception of Josephine Lang both as a composer and performer in her hometown, contributing significantly to her image as a musical talent. The following section explores how the press depicted Lang at different stages of her career, portraying her as an exceptional talent and a "genius", with particular emphasis on her role as a composer.

Lang as a Prodigy

The first public performance of Lang's compositions mentioned in the press dates back to a Liederkranz concert in 1830. Notably, the work performed was not a solo song, as one might expect, but rather a choral piece for male voices. Unfortunately, the exact composition remains unknown:

> "A delightful experience for music lovers was offered in the latest production by the Liederkranz: a choral piece by Mademoiselle Josephine Lang, marking the debut of her remarkable talent. It was met with universal acclaim from all connoisseurs of the arts. May this young artist (only 14 years old and already renowned as a pianist) continue on this path to fame with the same diligence and passion." [xxvi] (Münchener Tagblatt, 1830, July 4, pp. 762)

What makes this event remarkable is that the work of a 14-year-old girl was performed by the city's most prestigious men's choir, whose concerts often drew the attendance of the Royal Family. This early recognition can be viewed as highlighting Lang's exceptional talent; however, it must be taken into account that "prodigies" were a popular phenomenon at the time who were eagerly seen on the concert stage and frequently reported on by the press (Traudes, 2018, p. 10). This probably also explains why Lang's young age is specifically mentioned here, along with the note that she is already known as a pianist. It is worth noting, however, that Lang's debut as a pianist at the Museum, as reported by her biographers, does not appear in the press. It remains an open question whether it was only her appearance as a composer that was considered newsworthy, or whether the reporting is related to the different news values attributed to the Museum Society and the Liederkranz (see above). Nonetheless, Lang's first appearance in the Munich press portrays her as a composing child prodigy, rather than as an instrumentalist or vocalist. This aligns with the fact that the press later rarely reported on her singing or playing, focusing primarily on her songs instead.

Lang as a Composer and a Performer

One striking example of the high esteem in which the press held Lang can be found in the periodical Flora, which offered high praise for her in connection with a concert at the Philharmonic Society:

> "On this occasion, we must mention the charming songs of Miss Josephine Lang. She performed two songs of her own composition. The talent of this young artist, the originality and intimacy of her compositions, the lively and very powerful lyrical surge, the unique presentation, which in its shy enthusiasm spreads the charm of improvisation over the whole, indeed form an attraction as remarkable as it is captivating." [xxvii] (Flora, 1831, December 2, p. 568)

The review praises both the originality of Lang's compositions and her ability to captivate audiences with her "unique presentation." Remarkably, this is the only review I found that explicitly describes Lang's performance. The author portrays Lang's work and her performance – much like Mendelssohn's characterization – as so deeply intertwined that they combine to form a single, unified "attraction." Furthermore, the review's observation that Lang's performance felt like an improvisation underscores the immediacy and authenticity of her musical expression. This notion resonates with Mendelssohn's depiction of Lang's music as emanating "from the deepest soul" ("aus der innersten Seele herauf", Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to his family, November 7, 1831, in Morgenstern & Wald, 2009, p. 414).

The impression of improvisation also reinforces the perception of Lang as both the creator and interpreter of her music. This dual identity of composer and performer appears to have contributed significantly to the appeal of her performances, as echoed in other contemporary accounts. For instance, Emma Niendorf wrote: "It is a great pleasure to hear her deeply poetic compositions from her own hand" [xxviii] (Nindorf [Niendorf], 1840, p. 1).

In a review of a Museum concert, the piano accompaniment of Lang's songs is explicitly praised – an uncommon occurrence in the Munich press's coverage of vocal performances. The Münchener Tagblatt writes: "The accompaniment was delightful, as consistently found in Miss Lang's songs" (Münchener Tagblatt, 1835, April 18, p. 436).[xxix] Since the reviewer explicitly mentions Lang's "songs", it appears, however, he is more likely referring to the quality of her compositions rather than the manner of execution.

Lang as a "Tondichterin" and a "Genius"

When examining how the previously cited review from Flora continues, one word stands out: Lang is described as a "Tondichterin" [literally: tone-poetess]. By using this term, the review explicitly moves beyond depicting her songs as merely "pretty and pleasing," transcending an assessment often linked to superficiality and femininity:

> "We were astonished to hear from such a young tone-poetess (for that is what she truly is) not only a lovely melody but also such surprising character,

and such accurately maintained and thoroughly executed accompaniment. Undoubtedly, what is developing here is not only a pretty and pleasing, but also a highly significant talent that cannot fail to attract the general attention of the musical public." [xxx] (Flora, 1831, December 2, p. 568)

The parenthetical remark "for that is what she truly is" underscores the reviewer's insistence on recognizing Lang not just as a gifted amateur but as a legitimate composer in her own right – an assertion that was particularly significant in a time when such recognition was rarely afforded to women. Just a few months later, Flora reaffirmed this assessment, underscoring Lang's exceptional promise and explicitly comparing her to the distinguished composers of her time: "Two new songs composed by Miss Josephine Lang and performed by her confirmed what has previously been said in these pages about Miss Lang's outstanding talent in this field. Indeed, with such progress in technical and rhythmic treatment and such original creativity, one is justified in expecting that she will eventually rank among the distinguished song composers" [xxxi] (Flora, 1832, February 9, p. 92).

Another highlight in the press's portrayal of Lang came in 1836, when a report described her as "genial" [the German adjective referring to "genius"] – a term that, in 19th-century discourse, was typically reserved for male composers (Unseld, 2010): "Two songs by the genius artist [geniale Künstlerin] Josephine Lang, whose heartfelt compositions have already been praised by several publications, were sung by the royal court singer Madame Heigel" [xxxii] (Der Bayerische Landbote, 1836, November 24, p. 1714).

Indeed, it is noteworthy that the lexical field of "genius" is recurrently employed in contemporary comments about Josephine Lang. Mendelssohn himself articulated in his previously cited letter that "all her movements and every word" were "full of genius" xxxiii (Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to his family, November 7, 1831, in Morgenstern & Wald, 2009, p. 414). Emma Niendorf depicted a performance by Lang within a private Munich circle, concluding with the wish that Lang's "genius could unfold unrestrained in full joy" [xxxiv] (Nindorf [Niendorf], 1840, p. 2). In a letter to Mendelssohn, the Munich diplomat Wilhelm von Eichthal cites Lang's godfather's (Joseph Stieler's) statement that Lang is "endowed with sufficient qualities of mind and spirit, and could indeed be considered a genius to a certain extent".[xxxv] And the correspondence between Mendelsohn and Lang's husband, Christian Reinhold Köstlin, in 1841 reveals that Lang's reputation as a "true musical genius" had already been established prior to her arrival in Tübingen ("wahres musikalisches Genie", Tomkovic et al., 2013, pp. 269-270). This observation may indicate a recognition of Lang's exceptional talents that transcended the gendered connotations of genius within her contemporary cultural context – yet this assumption warrants further investigation.

Lang as a Munich celebrity: Local Appreciation

In a report on a concert hosted in 1835 by the Museum Society, Lang is praised as "always a delight for the audience" ("stets eine erfreuliche Erscheinung für das Publikum", Münchener Tagblatt, 1835, April 18, p. 436). This serves as confirmation that, five years after her initial appearance in the press, she had become a distinguished figure within Munich's concert scene. This prominence is further confirmed by her connection with the music publisher Aibl. When the publishing house changed ownership, the press cited her song publications as evidence of the new owner's "good taste":

"The Aibl music shop has also changed its owner. The current owner [...] has already demonstrated his good taste through several new published items from the compositions of Mr. Lachner, Mr. Bonn, Miss Josephine Lang, among others." [xxxvi] (Münchener Tagblatt, 1839, January 8, p. 34)

Lang's artistic work was not only locally appreciated but also viewed with a sense of local pride. For example, in 1841, the Bayerischer Landsbote quoted a positive review of her Op. 9 from the Blätter für Literatur und Theater and added: "We are delighted by this recognition that our compatriot [Landsmännin] has received abroad." [xxxvii] (Der Bayerische Landbote, 1841, February 15, p. 199)

To conclude, the Munich press was instrumental in shaping Josephine Lang's public image, highlighting her exceptional talent both as a composer and as a performer. From her early recognition as a prodigy to her later portrayal as a gifted composer, Lang's contributions were celebrated, securing her a prominent place in Munich's musical scene.

Lang's Songs in the Munich Press

In the previous sections, I have examined Lang's musical activities within the context of her societal, spatial, and institutional environment, as well as her reception in the press. In the following, I will investigate how her music itself was described in the Munich newspapers. This also provides an opportunity to offer at least a few glimpses into her songs from this period. A detailed analysis of these complex musical works cannot be conducted in this text; however, a look at her compositions is an integral part of understanding Lang's musical voice.

General Tendencies of the Press Reports

References to Lang's songs in the Munich press place more emphasis on the audience's reaction and the vocal qualities of the singers than on compositional details. Only three times specific song titles are mentioned, including *Der Sänger aus der Ferne* – later published as Aus der Ferne, Op. 13, No. 3 – and Liebesgrüße, published as Op. 3, No. 3. However, nothing more is said about these two songs, except that they were sung by Katharina Sigl-Vespermann. The "joy" experienced by the audience is exclusively linked to the performance of the singer, not to the songs themselves (Münchener Tagblatt, 1834, April 8, pp. 389-390). The *Hexenlied*, Op. 1, No. 6, with lyrics by Ludwig Hölty, is the only one about which some content-related comment is made – albeit also remaining vague: The above-quoted review of Op. 1 attributes to the song a "higher significance" which "justifies considerable expectations" (Flora, 1831, July 15, p. 248). However, what this significance is based on remains as unclear as the

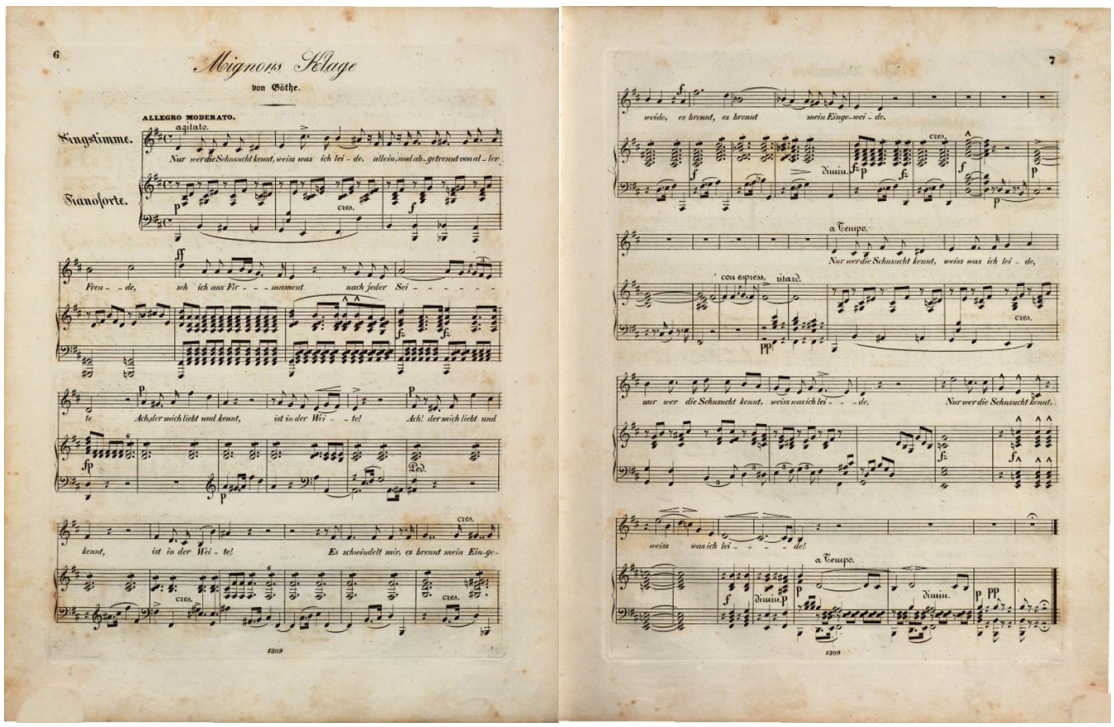


Fig. 6: Josephine Lang, Mignons Klage, op. 10, No. 2, printed 1841 by Kistner in Leipzig, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, 4 Mus.pr. 88.1683#Beibd.2.

nature of these expectations. Indeed, it is a general tendency in the reports I have gathered that music is rarely described concretely. Typically, reporting is limited to mentioning names. Occasionally, there is also a description of a beautiful singer's voice or the favourable reaction of the audience. In this regard, the following review can serve as a typical example: "[The Songs] were sung by the royal court singer Madame Heigel, who possesses a very beautiful alto voice, and were received with applause" [xxxviii] (Der Bayerische Landbote, 1836, November 24, p. 1714).

"Surprising Character"

Nevertheless, there are a few instances where the musical qualities of Lang's compositions are acknowledged. A review in the Tagblatt, for instance, highlights the emotional range that Lang's songs cover, from "serious and melancholic" to "light-hearted and joyful", which is seen as proof of Lang's strong understanding of and capability to express these emotions through music (Münchener Tagblatt, 1835, April 18, p. 436).[xxxix] Her skills as a composer also receive direct praise in Flora, with comments on her "progress in both technical and rhythmic aspects" [xl] (Flora, 1832, February 9, p. 92). However, it is the originality of Lang's songs that is most frequently emphasized, alongside with their affective quality: Her songs are described as "soulful" ("gefühlvoll", Der Bayerische Landbote, 1836, November 24, p. 1714) and possessing "ahnungsvolle Innigkeit" (difficult to translate, "auspicious ardency" may come close, Flora, 1831, December 2, p. 568). One review that emphasizes the emotional depth of Lang's songs is the above-quoted review in Flora which refers to Lang as a "tone poetess." The poetic quality implied by this term is here highlighted by the observation that her songs possessed not only a "lovely melody" but also a "surprising character" [xli] (Flora, 1831, December 2, p. 568). The review is one of the earliest accounts of Lang's songs. The "surprising" aspect, therefore, might be interpreted as an expression of astonishment that such qualities are found in the work of a sixteen-year-old girl.

An die Entfernte Op. 1, No. 1

Although we cannot determine which songs Lang performed at this particular concert, examining her early works reveals several elements that suggest a depth of character beyond mere prettiness. This, for example, is evident in Op. 1, No. 1, her musical setting of Goethe's An die Entfernte, included in an album dated 1828.[xlii] Aisling Kenny interprets this piece as a reflection of Lang's early musical maturity, evident in her sophisticated use of harmony, expressive piano figuration, and poetic quality (Kenny, 2010, pp.165-172). Lang's use of minor and major tonalities, unexpected harmonic shifts, and alignment with the poem's structure indeed reflects a sensitivity to the interplay of poetry and music. Notably, two harmonic shifts stand out: the unexpected German sixth chord in bar 10, which highlights the final verse (Krebs

& Krebs, 2007), and the shift to major in bar 7, capturing the resonance of the lost addressee's words.

"Charming accompaniment"

The Munich press only twice compliments the quality of Lang's piano accompaniment, by calling it a "properly conducted and thoroughly executed accompaniment" [xliii] (Flora, 1831, December 2, p. 568) and describing it as being "charming" ("allerliebst", Münchener Tagblatt, 1835, April 18, p. 436). Indeed, the piano parts in Lang's songs are often highly demanding and require a certain virtuosity. This applies to the songs created in the early 1830s as well. Striking examples include Feenreigen, op. 3,3 and Frühzeitiger Frühling, op. 6,3 (see also Krebs & Krebs, 2007, p. 227). These two are also good examples of the "lighthearted and joyful" mood that the above-quoted review attributes to some of Lang's songs. Sophisticated piano parts like these indeed "bear witness to the fact that the composer [Lang] is completely at home on the instrument," as Ferdinand Hiller puts it (Hiller, 1868, p. 134). The fact that Lang's compositional voice is expressed not only through the vocal but also through the piano part has been vividly described by Emma Niendorf: "These [songs] are entirely original, [...] full of fantasy that cannot be confined to the singing voice alone, and thus pours out in the accompaniment, storming and jesting, lamenting and rejoicing" [xliv] (Nindorf [Niendorf],1840, p. 1).

Mignons Klage, Op. 10, No. 2

An example of such a "storming" accompaniment appears in Mignons Klage op. 10, No. 2, another Goethe setting from the year in which the Tagblatt praised Lang's accompaniments (Fig. 6). Lang's version stands out for its restless, urgent atmosphere, beginning without an introduction, with triplet eighth notes in the piano and straight eighth notes in the vocal line. This creates an excited mood, while also posing a significant technical challenge. Harmonically, rapid dominant and diminished seventh chords reflect the unrest, with chromatic bass and melody lines enhancing the feeling of instability. The piano part, dominated by continuous triplet eighth notes, varies in different sections. In many of Lang's songs, such accompanying patterns serve formal functions. In Mignons Klage, the piano also takes on motivic significance, echoing the vocal line, which could symbolically represent the vastness ("Weite") described by the speaker. A recitativo-like interlude follows the climax, contrasting the previous tension with a calm, melancholy passage, marked "cantando" in one manuscript version, [xlv] which reinforces the impression that it is now the piano part that "sings".

In summary: While the press reviews predominantly emphasize the vocal performance and emotional impact of Lang's songs, they occasionally acknowledge her musical craftsmanship. Although they offer limited insight into the musical elements themselves, they still provide a glimpse into the qualities that made her compositions resonate with audiences of the time.

Conclusion

Through a meticulous investigation of Josephine Lang's activities and her portrayal in Munich's newspapers, this study illuminates the ways her voice – as a singer and a composer – resonated within and beyond the city's artistic circles and venues.

While her physical voice may have been described as "delicate," her figurative voice as a composer spoke with an originality that captured the attention of critics, audiences, and even royalty.

Lang's integration into Munich's cultural milieu provides not only insights into her life and career but also a deeper understanding of the city's musical culture during the first half of the 19th century. By examining Lang's performances and reception, this study highlights the cultural practices that underpinned Munich's musical culture. The city's daily newspapers prove to be both a valuable source and an active participant in musical life, as they not only documented performances but actively contributed to the creation of cultural value by framing events and artists according to broader social interests.

While Lang's achievements undoubtedly were remarkable, they also reflect the collaborative networks of Munich's musical landscape – a dynamic interplay of spaces, actors, and practices that shaped the city's artistic life. Lang's story thus becomes a lens through which we can better understand the mechanisms of musical culture in Munich, offering a valuable contribution to the city's music history from a cultural-historical perspective.

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Notes

[1] "Habe ich Euch den schon je von der kleinen L. geschrieben? Ich glaube kaum und doch ist sie eine der liebsten Erscheinungen, die ich je gesehen. Denkt Euch ein zartes, kleines, blasses Mädchen, mit edeln, aber nicht schönen Zügen, so interessant und seltsam, daß schwer von ihr wegzusehen ist und all' ihre Bewegungen und jedes Wort voll Genialität. Die hat den nun die Gabe Lieder zu componiren und sie zu singen, wie ich nie etwas gehört habe; es ist die vollkommenste musikalische Freude, die mir bis jetzt wohl zu Theil geworden ist. Denn da fehlt nichts, wenn sie sich an das Clavier setzt und solch ein Lied anfängt, klingen die Töne anders, die ganze Musik ist so sonderbar hin und her bewegt, und in jeder Note das tiefste, feinste Gefühl; wenn sie dann mit ihrer zarten Stimme den ersten Ton singt, da wird es jedem Menschen still zu Muthe und nachdenklich und wird jeder durch und durch ergriffen auf seine Weise, aber könntet ihr auch nur die Stimme hören!". All quotations appear in English translation in the main text, with the original German provided in the endnotes. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. I used OpenAI's language model ChatGPT for assistance in translating parts of this text. I am also grateful to Sharon and Harald Krebs as well as Lea Schäfer-Fuß for their proofreading support.

[2] Krebs (2015) points out that Mendelssohn was also struck by Lang's manner of playing piano, as his remarks about how she begins a song refer to the piano introductions (p. 93).

[3] "[…] wie Ihre Lieder mir Sie, Ihre Persönlichkeit, Stimme und Vortrag ganz und gar [zurückrufen], so oft ich sie singe oder höre."

[4] The term "musical activities" refers to the concept of "kulturelles Handeln" (cultural action) as defined by Susanne Rode-Breymann (2018), expanded here with practical-theoretical considerations based on Unseld and Bebermeier (2018). Although "agency" could be a promising translation, I chose to avoid it due to its theoretical baggage, even though the connotations of the term seem to fit my questions regarding Josephine Lang. In the following, I will therefore sometimes refer to "activities" and sometimes to "practices."

[5] The exact date of this first performance remains unclear, as both biographers place the event after the death of Lang's mother (1827), which contradicts the specified age of Lang (*1815), being 11 years old (see Krebs & Krebs, 2007, p. 11). Whether this is a case of retrospectively making Lang younger to fit the prodigy topos (Unseld, 2014; Amthor, 2012, p. 71) remains open to question.

[6] Hiller notes the "demands that were placed upon her as a pianist during gatherings and concerts" (Hiller, 1868, p. 123), while Köstlin reveals that "society often sought her out for evening events" (Köstlin, 1881, p. 57). There are only a handful of instances where the names of the hosts of these gatherings are given: Köstlin once references the bourgeois families of Kerstorf, Eichthal, and Stieler (p. 58); likewise, Hiller mentions "a gathering at the Ascher residence" (p. 121).

[7] Including a letter from Heinrich Baermann (Krebs & Krebs, 2007, p. 43) and travel reports (Jameson, 1835; Nindorf [Niendorf], 1840). See also Krebs (2019).

[8] The majority of newspapers I engaged with were issued 5-7 times weekly. Solely the Bayerischer Landbote and Bayerische Landbötin made their appearance a mere three times a week.

[9] digiPress - Das Zeitungsportal der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek: https://digipress.digitale-sammlungen.de/

[10] The title Münchener Tagblatt has undergone slight variations over the years (e.g., Tagsblatt or Münchner instead of Münchener). To avoid confusion and clarify that these refer to the same newspaper, I have consistently used Münchener Tagblatt. This is also the overarching title under which digiPress categorizes the publication.

[11] „In einem der Gesellschaftszimmer findet man einen sehr guten schönen Flügel, auch werden alle neu erschienenen Musikalien gehalten. […] Öfters, besonders zur Winterszeit werden auch Konzerte, und glänzende Bälle in einem schönen geräumigen Saale gegeben."

[12] „Der Philharmonische Verein giebt in der Regel Sonntags um die Mittagsstunde eine Unterhaltung, worin sich einheimische Künstler und Dilettanten, oft auch Fremde hören lassen. Die Versammlung ist gewählt und zahlreich. Jeder Fremde kann für einen geringen Beitrag sogleich und zu jeder Zeit als Mitglied eintreten. Das Lokal ist das königl. Odeon."

[13] It would be unnecessary to cite individual advertisements, as similar ones appear almost daily in the Münchener Tagblatt. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my research assistant, Lea Schäfer-Fuß, for diligently reviewing the entire 1830 volume of the Tagblatt to identify event announcements.

[14] This is evident from a letter by Josephine Lang to Ferdinand Hiller dated October 22, 1859, Historical Archives of the City of Cologne, Collection 1051, No. 28 (709). Many thanks to Sharon and Harald Krebs, who were generous enough to provide me with their transcription of the letter.

[15] The first six opus numbers did not appear on the title pages; they were retrospectively assigned by Lang in 1867 when she created a list of her published works.

[16] The complete title of this collection reads Lieder-Kranz, gewunden von den vorzüglichsten Tonsetzern [woven by the most excellent composers] für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Piano-Forte.

[17] The table only shows the performances during the time Lang lived in Munich. After Lang left Munich in 1842, her songs continued to be performed sporadically in concerts organized by civic associations. Performances of Lang's songs outside Munich can also be traced through the digitized newspapers of the BSB. I have found reports from Augsburg, Straubing, Vienna, Leipzig, Düsseldorf, and Bayreuth, dated between 1839 and 1868.

[18] The person referred to is the violinist Charles Philippe Lafont, who gave several concerts in Munich in 1831.

[19] The person referred to is André Hippolyte Jean Baptiste Chélard, who was appointed Hofkapellmeister in Weimar in 1840, succeeding Johann Nepomuk Hummel.

[20] "[…] wohnt in einem Hause, dessen Eigenthümer Himbsel (!!) heißt; u zwar im 5ten Stock, während im 6ten sieben Stück Moralt's geigen, blasen und hämmern."

[21] These fragments are part of the musical estate of Josephine Lang in the Württemberg State Library Stuttgart (WLB), Cod. Mus. Fol. 57a. A pencil-written title page (4r.) says: "First part. | The first movement of an unfinished | sonata for piano with | obbligato violin accompaniment. | Composed in the year 1838 with | Mr. P. Moralt by J. Lang | dedicated to Eugen."

[22] "In der vorgestern stattgehabten 11ten Produktion des philharmonischen Vereins hatte Mad. Sigl. Vespermann die Gefälligkeit, zwei von Josephine Lang in Musik gesetzte Lieder „der Sänger aus der Ferne" und „Liebesgrüße" vorzutragen. Die hochgeschätzte Künstlerin konnte den Mitgliedern des philharmonischen Vereins keine größere Freude gewähren, da es den Kunstfreunden Münchens so selten vergönnt ist, dieselbe zu hören und zu bewundern."

[23] "[…] erst 14 Jahre alt und schon als Klavierspielerin rühmlich bekannt […]."

[24] "In der Hof-Musikhandlung von Falter und Sohn ist eine Liedersammlung erschienen, componirt und I. K. Hoheit der Prinzessin Marie von Bayern gewidmet von Josephine Lang. Die kleine Sammlung besteht aus acht Liedern, die sich sowohl durch die Wahl der Gedichte, wie auch durch die musikalische Auffassung, als die Erstlinge eines jungen Talents, vortheilhaft auszeichnen. Das Hexenlied erhebt sich zu einer höhern Bedeutung, und berechtigt zu nicht geringen Erwartungen. Dlle. Lang, die auch eine ausgezeichnete Klavierspielerin ist, hatte vor Kurzem die Ehre, sich vor I. Maj. Der Königin Caroline hören zu lassen. Diese huldreiche Beschützerin der Künste geruhte, Ihre Allerhöchste

Zufriedenheit mit den Leistungen der Dlle. Lang zu bezeugen, und ließ der jungen Künstlerin als Beweis der Allerhöchsten Gnade ein kostbares Geschenk zustellen."

[25] For access to the score of Josephine Lang's 6 Gesänge, Op. 7, see: https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Ges%C3%A4nge,Op.7(Lang,_Josephine)

[26] "Eine angenehme Erscheinung für die Freunde der Musik wurde uns in der letzten Produktion des Liederkranzes zu Theil, nämlich ein Chor von Mademoiselle Josephine Lang, zum ersten Versuch ihres ausgezeichneten Talents. Er erhielt von allen Kunstverständigen allgemeinen Beifall. Möge diese junge Künstlerin (welche erst 14 Jahre alt und schon als Klavierspielerin rühmlich bekannt ist) diese Bahn des Ruhms noch länger mit demselben Fleiß und Eifer verfolgen."

[27] "Bei dieser Gelegenheit müssen wir der reizenden Lieder der Dlle. Jos. Lang erwähnen. Sie trug zwei Lieder von ihrer eigenen Composition vor. Das Talent dieser jungen Künstlerin, die Originalität und Innigkeit der Composition, der muntere sehr kräftige lyrische Aufschwung, der ganz eigentümliche Vortrag, der in seiner schüchternen Begeisterung den Reiz einer Improvisation über das Ganze verbreitet, bilden allerdings eine eben so anziehende als höchst bemerkenswerthe Erscheinung."

[28] "Hoher Genuß ist es, ihre tiefpoetischen Kompositionen von ihr selbst zu hören."

[29] "Das Accompagnement war allerliebst, wie dies durchgängig bei den Liedern von Fräul. Lang zu finden ist."

[30] "Wir waren erstaunt, von einer so jungen Tondichterin (das ist sie in der That) nicht bloß eine liebliche Melodie, sondern eine so überraschende Charakteristik, eine so richtig gehaltene und gründlich durch-geführte Begleitung zu hören. Unbezweifelt entwickelt sich hier nicht nur ein hübsches und angenehmes, sondern ein höchst bedeutsames Talent, das nicht verfehlen kann, die allgemeine Aufmerksamkeit des musikalischen Publicums auf sich zu ziehen."

[31] "Zwei neue Lieder, von Dlle. Josephine Lang componirt und von ihr selbst vorgetragen, bestätigten was in diesen Blättern schon früher über das ausgezeichnete Talent der Dlle. Lang in diesem Fache gesagt worden ist. In der That, bei solchen Fortschritten in der technischen und rhythmischen Behandlungsweise und bei so origineller Erfindungsgabe ist man berechtigt, zu erwarten, daß sie sich den ausgezeichneten Lieder-Componisten dereins anreihen wird."

[32] "Zwei Lieder von der genialen Künstlerin Josephine Lang, von deren gefühlvoller Komposition schon mehrere Blätter rühmlich erwähnt haben, wurden durch die k. Kapellsängerin Mad. Heigel, die eine sehr schöne Altstimme besitzt, gesungen, und mit Beifall aufgenommen."

[33] "[…] und all ihre Bewegungen und jedes Wort voll Genialität […]."

[34] "Zu wünschen wäre, daß ihr Genius sich ungehemmt in ganzer Freudigkeit entfalten könnte."

[35] "[…] als J zwar mit genugsamen Eigenschaften des Geistes und Gemüthes ausgestattet, ja gewissermaßen ein Genie zu nennen [sei]", Eichthal to Mendelssohn, Nauplia, 15 May 1833, MS. M.D.M. d. 28, no. 91, Mendelssohn MSS, Bodleian Library Oxford. See also Krebs & Krebs, 2007, p. 59.

[36] "Auch die Aibl'sche Musikhandlung hat ihren Besitzer gewechselt. Der jetzige Eigenthümer […] hat bereits durch mehrere neue Verlagsartikel von der Composition der Herrn Lachner, Hrn. Bonn, der Dem. Josephine Lang und m. A. seinen guten Geschmack bewährt."

[37] "Wir freuen uns dieser Anerkennung, die unsere Landsmännin im Auslande findet."

[38] "[Die Lieder] wurden durch die k. Kapellsängerin Mad. Heigel, die eine sehr schöne Altstimme besitzt, gesungen, und mit Beifall aufgenommen."

[39] "Eines dieser Lieder hatte einen ernsten, melancholischen Charakter […]. Das zweite Liedchen war scherzend und freudig, und bewies zur Genüge, daß die Componistin auch diese Art aufzufassen, vollkommen gewachsen ist."

[40] "[…] Fortschritte[n] in der technischen und rhythmischen Behandlungsweise […]."

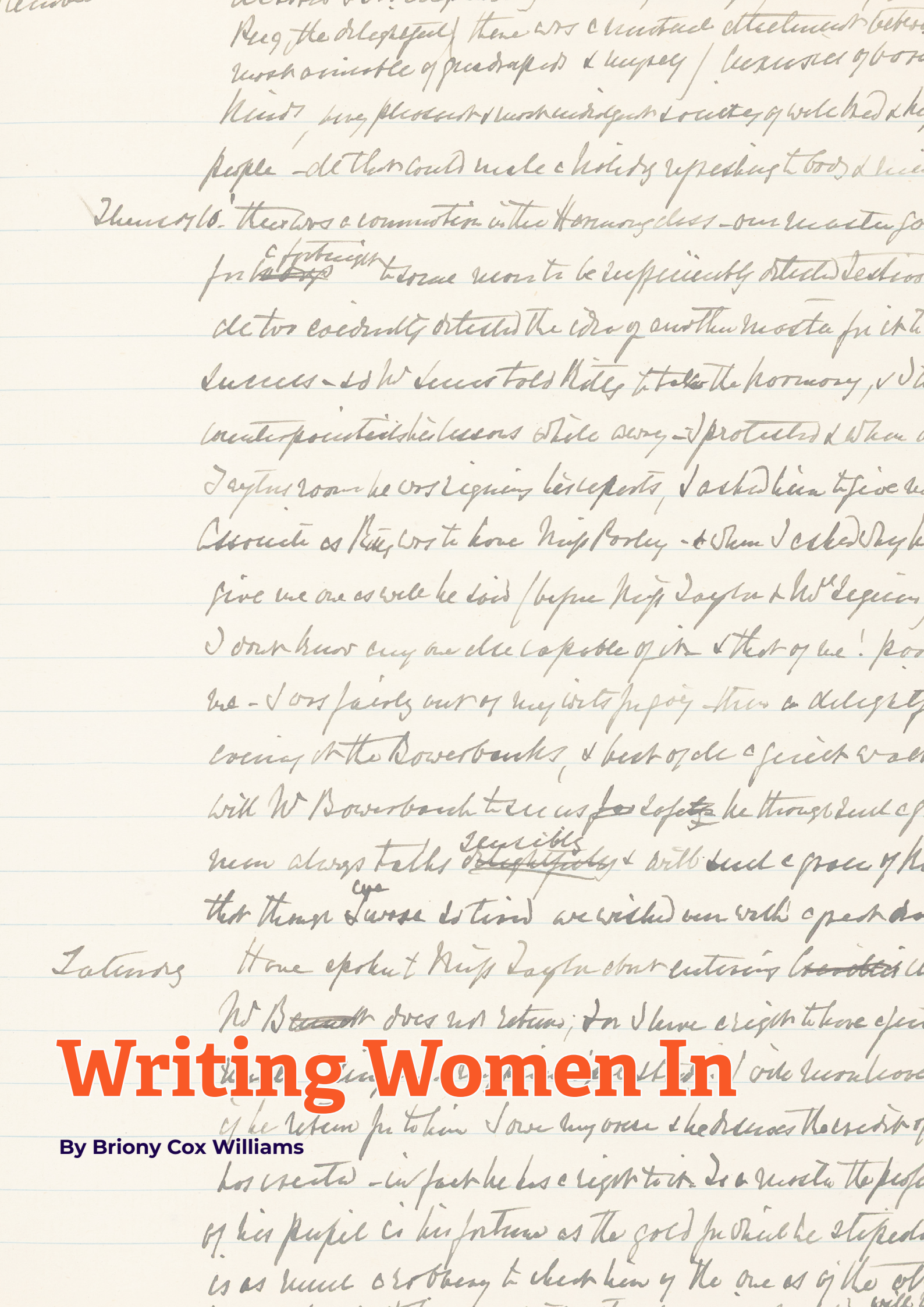
[41] "[…] nicht bloß eine liebliche Melodie, sondern eine so überraschende Charakteristik […]."

[42] Although the first edition of "Op. 1" has been lost, song autographs that, judging by the titles in Lang's list of her works, likely belong to Op. 1 can be found in a handwritten album in Lang's estate at the WLB, Cod. Mus. Fol. 53a. Transcriptions of the song can be found in Kenny (2010) and Krebs & Krebs (2007).

[43] "[…] eine so richtig gehaltene und gründlich durchgeführte Begleitung […]".

[44] "Diese [Lieder] sind ganz originell, […] voll Phantasie, die gar nicht in der Singstimme allein unterzubringen, und sich deßhalb in der Begleitung stürmend und scherzend, klagend und jubelnd ausströmt."

[45] WLB, Cod. Mus. Fol. 53o, 8v.



Writing Women In

By Briony Cox Williams

Abstract

The English composer Clara Macirone (1821-1914) and her music have often been seen as the embodiment of Victorian gendered sensibility and this, alongside the dismissive attitudes towards what has been seen as her alma mater the Royal Academy of Music's concentration on amateur music-making in the nineteenth century, has led to a misinterpretation of her place in her musical milieu. Forced from an early age to become the sole provider for her parents and siblings, Macirone's clarity of thought and understanding of the means by which she was proscribed through her gender offers us a vivid contemporary account of women's relationship with the musical world about them. This paper uses Macirone as a case study of ways that assumptions have either devalued women's music-making as both composers and performers, or written them out of music history altogether.

Keywords

Women, music, nineteenth-century, Victorian England

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ARticles' front page shows figure 2, A page from Macirone's diary,

Clara Angela Macirone (1821-1914) was an English composer, singer, pianist, writer, teacher, editor, artist and advocate for women's and girls' education who was fully immersed in British music culture for the second half of the nineteenth century. There is an unusually large amount of literature on Macirone, partly because of her own considerable written output, both published and unpublished, and partly through secondary literature in recent years.

Patricia Neate has collated much of the extensive Macirone family correspondence into one volume, All My Darlings, as well as donating a vast wealth of Macirone's personal papers to the Bodleian and Royal Academy of Music libraries. Macirone herself contributed many writings to various publications that will be explored later in this article, and musical encyclopaedias of the late nineteenth century, including Grove, included entries on her. Additionally, scholarship in recent years has begun to take more of an interest in her, from Sophie Fuller's 1984 thesis *Women composers during the British musical renaissance*, 1880-1918 to that of Kaylee Therieau's in 2024, Musical Babes: Clara Macirone and Oliveria Prescott's Role In Victorian-Era Girls' Music Education. Between completing her studies at the Royal Academy of Music in 1844 and her retirement in the 1890s, Macirone had a public profile further afield than only in Britain - an entry in the second biographical volume of The American History and Encyclopedia of Music (Green, 1908) published when she was still alive, summed up several of the British encyclopaedia entries when it wrote: 'She was made a professor of the Royal Academy of Music and an associate of the Philharmonic Society, and was for several years the head music-teacher at Aske's School for Girls, and later at the Church of England High School for Girls, and during this time she also conducted a singing society called The Village Minstrels. She has now retired. Her Te Deum and Jubilate, sung at Hanover Chapel, were the first service composed by a woman ever sung in the church. She has published an admirable suite for the violin and piano, and many part-songs' (Green, 1908, p. 6). Why, then, has she been so comprehensively written out of music history since?

It has always been the case that the vast majority of professional music-making takes place below the level of visibility, and that most musicians and their spheres of activity vanish with their retirement and/or deaths (Ehrlich, 1985, p. 142). Teachers and performers have always been particularly invisible, and this has meant that women can be especially vulnerable to being written out, given their historical concentration in these areas (Ehrlich, 1985, p. 105). Such dismissal is not only a result of a devaluation of women and women's spheres but is also a result of a musical hierarchy that has tended to privilege certain types of professional music-making and music makers over others, often those that have been male-dominated (e.g. orchestral membership in what have been considered "major", i.e. male, orchestras as a method of monitoring professional activity). This includes a changing assessment over the nineteenth century of the importance of amateur music making, as well as the related lowering of the status of private teaching. Gauging musical worth by longevity and reach – often calculated through composition and its recognition - hides an enormous hive of activity across the centuries, much of which was a necessary means of engendering income. Macirone is a model for how professionalism and musical networks operated for many female musicians in the

mid to late 19th century. Much as Macirone desired fame, her reliance was on income as a driving force for her engagement in the musical world, i.e. the here and now of musical activity. Such reliance highlights relationships between amateur music making, publishing, teaching, entrepreneurship, and the institutions that supported all of these. As a prominent female figure in these areas, Macirone demonstrates many of the ways that the landscapes of both music and of women's lives have been recast to render women invisible. This paper therefore uses her as a case study for exploring how history has been skewed for women, and the many contortions that writers have at times undergone to write them out of what could often be a vibrant and creative female environment. Attention will also be paid to the parallel and related fortune and public reputation of Macirone's alma mater, The Royal Academy of Music, for much of the nineteenth century the only institutional music education available to female students in Britain.

Many female musicians of the early nineteenth century came from musical families, which offered two advantages; a childhood that was in many ways an apprenticeship, and a respectability bestowed by the protection of the family reputation in musical circles. This is evident within the ranks of the early female students at the Academy, where girls such as Susannah Collier, Mary Chancellor, Charlotte Bromley (all students in the first two intakes of the Academy in 1823) and Kate Loder (1825-1904) seem at times to have a somewhat different pathway through the institution than those without such a background, including the kinds of opportunity on offer to these students and awards conferred upon them. A particular example of this is when Macirone's contemporary Kate Loder, a stellar student who was a member of the well-known Loder musical dynasty, was given an Associateship at the unprecedentedly young age of 15, while still a student. Associateship was supposed to be for ex-students who had excelled in the profession, so the conferral on Loder was a notable exception. As Macirone had a very similar profile to Loder, including her services as teacher within the Academy, she wrote to the Academy's Committee of Management in June 1842 to request an Associateship for herself, but the minutes of the committee recorded in the same month that the request must 'stay over until the proper time' (RAM Minutes, 24 June 1842), i.e. after she completed her studies. The family to which she had been born in 1821 was well-to-do in the first years of her life, with a deep interest in education and the arts, but there were no professional musicians within its ranks prior to Macirone.

The Macirones did not struggle financially in the first few years of her life, as they would later, meaning that Macirone would remember her first decade as one rich in resource and education, firmly embedded within British upper middle-class culture. There were 'concerts, elocution classes, and lectures by the most eminent people on almost every subject under heaven at the Literary and Scientific Institution, to which their parents belonged' (Macirone, n.d., uncatalogued personal papers, RAM Macirone archive). Music played a large part in Macirone's life from the beginning, and by the time she entered the Academy, at 18 a little older than most other students at the time, she had an extensive theoretical knowledge and a solid technical grasp of both singing and piano, both of which she would study at the institution. The early way of life that bestowed such education on the children, however, seems always to have been somewhat precarious, with ruin never far away. Clara would refer to 'gathering storm clouds' just prior to her entry to the Academy (Macirone, n.d., uncatalogued personal papers, RAM Macirone archive), although one gains the impression that the clouds had been threatening for some time. As the oldest surviving child of six children, of whom only three survived infancy, she felt a great deal of responsibility for the wellbeing of her siblings and parents. The living family would eventually consist of parents George and Mary Ann, Clara, and her two younger siblings, sister Emily and a much younger brother, George Augustus. George's father Pietro also lived with the family until his death in 1826. Macirone remembered him as 'very grand [...] Mama told me often going into a room with him was like being taken in by a King, everyone else seemed so small and insignificant when he was by' (Macirone, n.d., uncatalogued personal papers, RAM Macirone archive). Macirone can never bring herself to write negatively about anyone, and so when she treads a line precariously close to doing so, one can be sure that things were far worse than she suggests. So it is when she writes: 'Then, the year my grandfather died the Bank or rich House in which he was partner lost thirty thousand pounds and all he had saved went with it – and so all they had reckoned on to repay the heavy expense of a style of living they only kept up for my grandfather's sake was gone' (Macirone, n.d., uncatalogued personal papers, RAM Macirone archive). This financial disaster was to start an economic landslide for the family that would colour the rest of Macirone's life.

Pietro Macironi had two sons, Macirone's father George, a stockbroker, and the famed army colonel and inventor Francis. George and Francis used different spellings of the family name, and this would later give rise to some of the difficulties Clara had with recognition, both during her time at the Academy and later in her publishing career. Pietro sent Francis Maceroni (or less frequently Macerone) to Italy as a young man, where he joined the army as well as becoming a diplomat, inventor and writer. His memoirs show a fascinating life, but there is a real bitterness and sense of abandonment in how he writes about being sent away (Macerone, 1838, p. 18). This is a little disingenuous, given Francis was a bigamist who married two sisters, bringing up one family in England and one in Spain, and therefore being often absent from the lives of his daughters. Such scandal seems not to have been public, but his not infrequent run-ins with the law were reported in the papers. One example was a violent altercation with a bailiff sent to stop him from fishing in a navigable stretch of canal, a scuffle that earned him a fine. In the class-conscious Victorian society, these events had an effect on the rest of the family, and when Francis lost everything he had on his failed inventions, and died leaving his families destitute, it was left to the other branch of the Macirones to use their already stretched resources to support the widows.

Francis's brother George was rather less flamboyant, although the psychological pressures of the family affected him just as much and in just as financially ruinous a way. He succumbed to alcoholism – the 'illness' to which Clara would refer in her memoirs – and was removed to an 'asylum', where he would remain for several years. This meant that there was no income for the family, and it would fall to the practical and determined Clara to fill most of the gap. It was a responsibility that would shape her whole life, resulting in a breakup with her fiancé

and many other dashed hopes and dreams. The Academy, too, did its part in crafting a public link between Clara and her roots, and its knowledge of and disapproval of her wider family occasionally shows in its dealings with her. At times in lesson registers her name is misspelled as Macerone, i.e. one of the spellings by which Francis was known. There is also an odd little incident when the committee realises that they have failed to accord one of their best students with any tangible

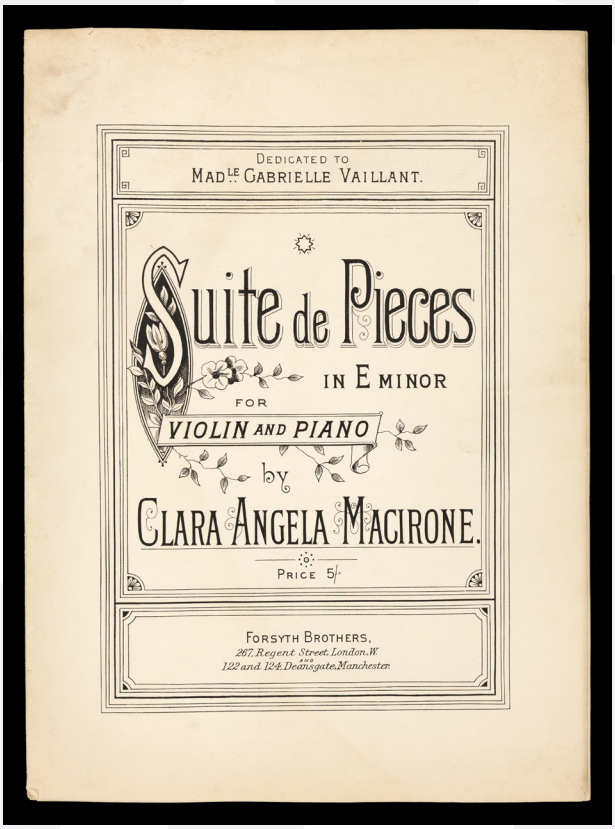

Figure 1. Title Page of Suite de Pieces for Violin and Piano, Clara Macirone, 1891. Image reproduced by permission of The Royal Academy of Music.

recognition and so decide to give her a leather-bound score of Handel's Israel in Egypt, which is handed over at the end of a vocal practice, rather than a public award ceremony. There is no other occurrence like this throughout the entire nineteenth century, and Clara's description of the 'ceremony' betrays a telling mix of gratitude and deflation:

[Mr Lucas, the conductor] went on to say that the committee wished him to express their approbation of the talents and exertions of a pupil who had shown such remarkable diligence, not in one but in all her studies, and who had made such great progress-more especially in that study which, though most important, was generally most neglected-as to draw from them special commendation.

Then the room, and the lights, and the crowd of eager, excited girls, and Mr. Lucas-whom as long as I could see I watched—smiling at the piano-grew more and more indistinct, and I caught hold of her hand, for I trembled so that I could scarcely sit, and drew back to avoid the multitude of eyes that watched me, and the crowded room seemed more brilliant than ever I had seen it. The excitement seemed very great; I felt taken so completely unprepared for such a scene (for it was a scene); and when, Mr. Hamilton mentioned my name. and came forward with the book, applause burst forth from every corner of the room. He came round the piano and up to me. I believe I bowed low as I took the book which he gave me, saying that nothing then remained for him but to present it to me as a mark of the high approbation of the committee, and he begged to add his own warm congratulations (Macirone, Art-Student Life in the Forties, pp.14-15).

Nevertheless, the Academy was Clara's domain, away from the rest of her family, and it was clearly of fundamental importance in her lifelong view of herself and her belief in her ability to be the musician she desired to be. She entered in 1839, remaining until 1844, during which time she studied singing, piano and harmony/composition. While sections of the institution may have implicitly treated her with less respect than it did students from musical or upper-class families, many of the teachers and the principal Cipriani Potter (1792-1871) clearly recognised her talents and nurtured them. Clara remained profoundly grateful to many of them for her whole life.

The carelessness with which Clara's name was treated is common to many women throughout the nineteenth century and would follow her into her extensive publishing career. In 1852, a review appeared in the Morning Chronicle in London for a 'Duet in Canon and Four Songs' by C. A. Macirone. The reviewer was positive about the new publication, writing that 'Mr Macirone is well known as an accomplished musician, and these works will support his reputation. The Canon is ingeniously treated and contains melodic passages of much beauty.' By 1852 Clara was already prolifically published, having several piano pieces, choral and solo songs to her name. She was also a busy performer, mounting concerts in which many of her compositions were heard. Not all of these appear to have gone on to be published, but they were recognised in the press with descriptions such as 'pleasing and expressive' (The Examiner, 1847) and 'strongly marked with fancy and originality' (Morning Herald, 1846). There is therefore no excuse for the reviewer of the Morning Chronicle – a reasonably well-versed paper in musical matters – to misgender Macirone in this way by assuming that the name C. A. Macirone belonged to a man. There was also perhaps an assumption that such a positive review could only be for the product of a male pen, especially when the more technical elements were involved, such as counterpoint (a requirement for all students at the Royal Academy of Music under Cipriani Potter's principalship). The fact that Clara Macirone published almost exclusively under her initials suggests that she was aware of the gendered nature of the publishing business; in many of her accounts of attempts to find paid employment, one can see her recognition of the difficulties

specific to her sex. Four decades later a review in The Aberdeen Press and Journal, this time for a concert given in 1895 in Castleton Scotland (for 'the fund for supplying village lamps'), included the popular part-song 'Sir Knight' (Macerone) in its programme list, using a spelling of the family name never associated with Macirone as a professional musician. Using names that belong to more famous male members of the family is of course common for women; we have only to think of Fanny Mendelssohn/Hensel and Clara Wieck/Schumann to see how this has worked historically.

The demand for printed music, which continued to expand in the second quarter of the century as the lower middle- and working-classes gained greater access to music, was of enormous benefit to composers like Macirone, who relied on this new appetite for printed music as an important source of income. Musical instrument ownership had increased, access to concerts had widened, and community groups such as choral societies and brass bands were now fixtures in many towns and cities. There was increased demand for cheap, popular domestic music as well as the scores required for community music-making. Market segmentation within publishing houses became a feature, even quite early in the century, as the catalogues containing publishers' complete outputs became unwieldy and gave way to more specialised lists dedicated to genres, or to works for particular instruments or composers. Novello and d'Almaine were two of the main houses that used methods of printing that allowed for cheap mass runs; both also led an entrepreneurial drive to access a consumer base with the means and desire to buy the resulting music. The increasing numbers of published women composers amongst the ranks of Academy students over the middle decades of the nineteenth century demonstrates the burgeoning demand for the type of 'feminine' genres that constituted the bulk of the amateur market. This concentration on piano and vocal music was not simply because these were seen as feminine, however, but also because they were within the reach of the amateur musician, both technically and because of instrumentation. Of the female students at the Academy during the 1820s, only three appear to have published - Susannah Collier, Ann Rivière (later Anna Bishop) and Juliet Bellchambers – all of them confining themselves mostly to songs. Collier appears to have been most successful both as a student and in her later career as a composer, although this was not yet a principal study option in the Academy, whereas Bishop and Bellchambers were singers who composed as a response to expectation. Collier would go on to produce large-scale choral works for the annual concerts of the Philanthropic Society, a charity in aid of homeless and criminal children of which her father Richard Collier was superintendent, before her early death in 1839, while the others ceased publishing soon after leaving the Academy. All three appear to have funded at least some of their own pieces by subscription, although two of Collier's songs appeared in The Harmonicon – and Bellchambers's ballad The Spell Is Broken was successful enough to run to three printings, as well as being the theme of a set of variations by popular composer Thomas Valentine in the early 1830s.

By the 1840s, the landscape was very different, and women were publishing in growing numbers. At least twelve of Macirone's contemporaries at the Academy during the 1840s had music published – Kate Lucy Ward, Annie Wybrow and Adeline Maxwell Cooper were all particularly successful with song, appearing with a range of London publishers from the smaller names to the larger houses such as Edwin Ashdown, while others such as singers Eliza Wagstaff and Emma Willis Browne had just one or two works in print. Augusta Amherst Austen found her success in writing hymn tunes for the new hymn collections being published at increasing rates, while Harriette Ward tended towards composing for piano. In publishing this kind of music, they joined the ranks of a broader cross-section of popular women songwriters such as Charlotte Alington Barnard who published under the pseudonym 'Claribel' (1830-1969), Virginia Gabriel (1825-1877), Harriet Browne (1798-1858) and the slightly earlier but still popular Harriett Abrams (c1762-1821). Besides such big names as Novello and D'Almaine, there was an explosion of smaller publishing houses, many of which appear to have had personal relationships with the composers they served – Macirone would write of dropping in on a publisher to discuss income or future projects. Further publication possibilities came with the parallel growth of journals and magazines, both musical and general, which included scores in their editions. For women, the growth of these publications for a female market led to entirely new publishing possibilities. Macirone's works appeared in The Musical Times as well as female-specific journals such as The Girl's Own Paper, as well as being published separately. She published solo songs in English, French and German (she was fluent in all three languages),

part songs including duets and trios, piano solos and duets, and two string and piano chamber works, the violin and piano suite appearing after the violin became regarded as a suitable instrument for women to play and the short piano trio after the cello joined the ranks of acceptability. The songs were often categorised into subgenres in publisher lists, specifying sacred or Sunday songs, lullabies, ballads, etc.

Macirone's attention on smaller, so-called 'domestic' genres, particularly the nineteenth-century part song, has often led to a dismissive relabelling of the composer herself and of her output, but could be seen to be accounted for in large part by entrepreneurial shrewdness.

As an alumna of the Academy, she would have been well aware of its founding assertion that its purpose was to train musicians 'to provide for themselves the means of an honourable and comfortable livelihood' (Cazalet, p. 261). While Macirone's letters and diaries show her creative ambition and desire for recognition, the more pressing and practical need for enough income to support her family had to take precedence. Songs generated income; larger forms that might demonstrate her compositional dexterity (and render her visible to later histories) would not, as highlighted by Johann Baptist Pischek's request in 1847 for an opera from her pen. Pischek was a bass-baritone well-known across the Continent for opera and song and particularly well-known in England as a ballad-singer; Macirone's songs remained in his repertoire for his whole career. Pischek wanted her to write him an opera to be sung in opera-houses across Germany, a project that excited her. Macirone's sister Emily wrote an account of the two musicians conferring on possibilities: 'He grew quite in earnest about Clara's opera, and walked up and down for half an hour talking to her about it. He wants her to write one very much and says that she is throwing herself away writing disconnected songs... So Clara intends working at her opera. She has found a libretto ... and will ask Herr Freiligrath to set it to German poetry' (Neate, 167). Eventually, however, practicality overtook proceedings, and Macirone had to give up the idea:

[Pischek] wished her to write an opera of which he would take the chief part, and see to its being brought out at the Stuttgardt Theatre; - the poet Freiligrath would have rendered the beautiful play she chose into German. But insuperable home duties made the plan impossible, though the kindness and zeal which prompted the proposal could never be forgotten (Macirone, Art-Student Life in the Forties, p. 21).

How could she earn a living while sitting at her desk tussling with the enormity of such an undertaking? There are accounts from her family of Macirone returning home from a full day of teaching, drawn and exhausted, and certainly in no state to sit down and write an opera, plus her many contracts with publishers for the smaller works were far more lucrative at least in the shorter term.

The relabelling of smaller genres and pieces suitable for the amateur market as less worthy of inclusion in canons is common in later evaluations of nineteenth-century women's composing and is another way of rendering musical endeavour invisible within solely teleological conceptualisations of music history. In an interview that appeared in the London newspaper Hampstead and Highgate Express in 1889, Macirone was clear that her choices of genre were a response to need and an outcome of her belief in the fundamental social importance of amateur music-making. When asked why she wrote so many part-songs, she responded:

I took it up because it is the most popular, the most far-reaching form of musical enjoyment. In my early days I wanted to make the lives of the many brighter to admit them to a share in the enjoyment of that art which had done so much for me, to take some share in the efforts dear friends were making to give brighter and better hours of rest and recreation to dark and dreary homes. [...] In those days there were not many part-songs written, so I tried to supply the want. (Hampstead and Highgate Express, 1989, p.3)

Macirone's views highlight the differing priorities of earlier eras, particularly around amateur music. In 1822, when the Academy was founded, the discussion around it largely centred on the employability of its students and the effect on current practitioners of the influx of trained musicians. While there was concern that the market would be flooded, resulting in starvation and penury, some writers pointed to the burgeoning amateur market and a growing need for high-quality teaching:

The love of music is certainly spreading with prodigious rapidity through all classes, and we hail this with unfeigned satisfaction, as we are practically sure it is an innocent and a never-failing recreation, which tends to

Foto: Tord F Paulsen

preclude an immoral employment of leisure hours, and to refine and purify the mind. […] To exalt the profession by the real elevation of its members in knowledge and moral and intellectual refinement, is the first object with us in promulgating these opinions – to extend the apprehension and the love of the beauties of art by making some proficiency in music a qualification demanded in our public education, is the second – because each will contribute to the value and the excellence of the other, and both to the happiness of mankind (Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review 4, pp. 399-400).

Macirone lived at a time still on the cusp of earlier functional music, and later conceptualisations of music as aesthetic, or as a 'religious experience,' as Timothy Day terms it (Day, 2000, p. 205). As Robert Philip points out, prior to the recording era composers had a duty to supply the amateur market, a duty which receded with the advancing tide of accessible performance. Composers began to disregard the amateur need, until this disregard even became a mandated aesthetic priority (Philip, 2004, p. 8). That the ability to negotiate with the amateur listener is a yardstick by which nineteenth-century composers were to be measured is demonstrated in an 1879 review of Macirone's quartet 'O Musa!' in The Musical Times: 'It is difficult, we know, to produce a work which shall equally please trained and untrained listeners-but Miss Macirone has successfully achieved this task' ('O Musa! Quartetto', The Musical Times, 1879, p. 601).

In an 1889 interview, Macirone offered the opinion that a woman composer 'will express herself more naturally in the smaller musical forms; those which come to a hearing at the fireside and in the drawing-room, and are sufficient to occupy the circle in which she lives.' On the surface, this might suggest that she believed that women should by nature confine themselves to the domestic sphere; but much of her extensive writing, and even the same interview quoted above, shows that it is not restriction that underpins her statement, but her views on the relationship between musical experience and authority. Macirone is suggesting that women were unable to compete in larger and more public circles because of their lack of aural experience in these genres, rather than because of a lack of talent or suitability, as she explains in this quotation:

Women are already members of orchestras, and their minds must inevitably expand beyond the limits of the pianoforte and song as they become accustomed to the colour and accent, the large expression and extended form of the symphony. She thinks that this will increase the range and vision of women composers. The recent success of Mddle. Holmes' dramatic symphony, 'Lutece,' at Paris, confirms this anticipation. By the way, Miss Macirone rejoices that girls are turning their attention to the violin. She wishes, however, that some of them would learn the viola or the 'cello, to say nothing of other orchestral instruments. (Hampstead and Highgate Express, 1889, p.3)

"Women are already members of orchestras, and their minds must inevitably expand beyond the limits of the pianoforte and song as they become accustomed to the colour and accent"

The sympathetic interviewer takes Macirone's suggestion even further, pointing out the advantage of being the conductor of the ensemble:

[O]ne of the most important advantages that men composers have had is in being nearly all orchestral conductors. They have been able quickly and constantly to bring their works to a hearing, to attract public attention to themselves, and to make their works stepping-stones on which to rise to higher things. (Hampstead and Highgate Express, 1889, p.3)

Recognition that visibility was fundamental to musical life is evident throughout the lengthy interview. Such public verification remains an issue beyond a lifespan, however, particularly when viewed in combination with fluctuating fashions in genre, leading to whole events or the musicians present at them going unacknowledged, and thus discounting their presence in mainstream events that are considered important in driving forward progress. The part songs for which Macirone became especially well known have become obsolete in themselves, despite their considerable prominence at the time in wider society. In the famous story of Alexander Graham Bell demonstrating the newfangled telephone to Queen Victoria and her family in January 1878, there were two demonstrations, both involving music. On the first day, Queen Victoria heard several popular songs such as 'Coming Through the Rye' and 'Kathleen Mavourneen.' On the second day, a second demonstration was held for other members of the Royal household, including two of Queen Victoria's children. Several more musical numbers were played, one of them Macirone's part-song 'Sir Knight, Sir Knight,' sung by a 'quartette of tonic sol-fa singers' (London Evening Standard, 1878) – the same song as in the village-lamp fundraiser we saw earlier. Why would it have been chosen? Because it was extremely popular, and most people present would have known it and probably have sung it in one of its iterations; given the still-imperfect transmission of a phone line, it would still be recognisable.

One already-mentioned journal that was particularly important in maintaining Macirone's status within music, particularly 'as a teacher and trainer [that] has scarcely been equalled by any of her sex' (Bristol Times and Mirror, 1889), was The Girl's Own Paper, founded in 1880 by the Religious Tract Society. One can see parallels between its insistence on a good, all-round education for girls, and Macirone's own upbringing. Her lifelong passion for championing education for girls and women found written outlet here, and far from being confined to a feminine sphere sometimes seen to be insipid and narrowing, she saw the magazine as a way of helping women accomplish more of what she realised she could not in the midst of the gender strictures by which she had been bound over the past decades. Macirone was interested in broadening knowledge and opportunity within the areas she knew well; she tended not to advocate here for wider opportunities or offer articles on anything other than traditionally 'female' genres. It should be remembered that at this point, the term 'girl' was both age and class related in Britain – it was used for those of a young age, but also those in the so-called 'lower' classes of occupation, such as servants, typists, etc. Macirone was not only advocating for the education of girls who might later become musicians, but even more, for a broadening knowledge and musical experience for the amateur market about which she cared so passionately. Macirone's name first appeared in print in the publication in 1881, in a slightly lacklustre review of her trio, 'The Cavalier' (The Girl's Own

Paper, 1881, p. 762). In 1883 several more reviews appeared of part songs, solo songs and piano pieces, this time positive, and from this point onwards, Macirone was a regular appearance in the publication, both in reviews and in contributions from her own pen, which included twenty-four pieces of music and around thirty texts, mostly in the form of extended letters to the editor. Her first offering, also in 1883, was entitled 'A Girl's Morning Hymn' and was a nine-verse poem (The Girl's Own Paper, 1881, pp. 801-802). 1884 saw the first of her multi-part 'letters' with 'A Plea for Music' (the first instalment was called 'The Power of Music' but belongs to the same set of writing), also the first time that Macirone appended her name in the paper with 'late professor of the Royal Academy of Music' (The Girl's Own Paper, 1883, pp. 163, 268, 330, 410, 457, 580, 660). It was an argument not just for music itself, but also for a proper education of women and girls, which Macirone believed should include 'a systematic and thorough instruction' in music in the same way that the best boys' schools did (Macirone, 1884, p. 330). Later articles became even more practical, such as her four-part 'On Taste in the Choice of Songs' (The Girl's Own Paper, 1885, pp. 390, 548, 634, 696). In this, she covered topics such as accompaniment, national style, language and text, ensuring that the song suits the range of one's voice, and the purpose of performing songs. Interestingly, she also commented that 'the restraints which society imposes on young girls are very heavy' (Macirone, 1885, p. 391), going on to imply that this constrained choice as much as more interpretive considerations. Macirone's contributions to The Girl's Own Paper ended in 1908 with her part-song, 'Chirp and Twitter.'

Macirone's work with amateurs was not about lowering standards, as much of her writing demonstrates. Along with other illustrious names such as Lady Benedict (Mary Fortey), Lady Lindsay (Caroline Fitzroy), Lindsay Sloper and Charles Peters, she contributed a chapter to the multi-author book How to Play the Pianoforte (Benedict et al., 1884). Her chapter, titled 'Method of Study', is briskly practical; while the preceding chapter had been Lady Benedict's reflections on the purpose of practice and warnings not to overreach one's talents, Macirone offered ways to ensure that practice time is used efficiently, even setting out a chart to be filled in daily (Benedict et al., 1884, 39). She was always clear that she believed that amateurs could reach a high level of execution, both technically and interpretatively, if they were taught correctly. These views highlight the differing priorities of earlier eras around amateur music. This dignifying of the amateur pursuit of music would become a factor in the argument that ensued from the Society of Arts' 1866 report into the state of musical education in Britain. This report included recommendations for the future, as well as attempting a summary of the current offerings. The compilation of the report was from many months of evidence and input given before the committee from critics, educators, musicians and administrators. As one of the few places offering music education that was in any way institutional, the Royal Academy of Music was well documented, both by supporters and by detractors. One of the most well-known names to give evidence was Henry Chorley, music critic of The Athenaeum and writer on music events throughout the UK and Europe. Seen as one of the leading authorities in such matters, his excoriating take-down of the Academy thus held much weight. For Chorley, the Academy simply trained young women as piano teachers of amateurs, an undertaking unworthy of the lofty ideals of its staff, and as a result, 'There has not been one commanding English artist, vocal or instrumental, turned out of the Academy during the last twenty-five years (Chorley, 1865, p. 656).' A member of the listening committee challenged this statement, leading to Chorley admitting singer Charlotte Dolby as a possible exception, but he has remained largely unchallenged in this view ever since, a view which causes the mediocrity of some of the Academy's student body at the time to dominate the discourse. It might be noted here that every witness in the Society's investigation was male. The notion of 'greatness' in music – in itself of course an indefinable concept – also being tied to male canons and male performance opportunities means that an enormous amount of musical activity goes unnoticed. This is in part due to the devaluing of amateur music, in part as a result of the rise of recorded music which allowed for the experiencing of music no longer being dependent on in-person performance, and in part due to an overlooking of female musicmaking as less progressive. Even Frederick Corder, in his centenary history of the Academy, describes it as a 'school devoted chiefly to the training of young women for music-teachers (Corder, 1922, p. 74). The idea that it therefore turned out few musicians of any calibre says much about the hierarchies the structure our reading of music history. The permanently and critically cash-strapped Academy was indeed in a precarious state for much of the nineteenth century and therefore often needed to admit students that were not of the ideal standard – principal Cipriani Potter's despairing notes on some of the auditionees make for amusing reading – but the binary nature of the amateur/professional divide of later decades does little to help unpack the complexity of the Academy's provision. It is certainly true that amateur music encompassed the facile accomplishment and marriage market ideals of which critics such as Chorley were wary, but a broader remit is evident. Chorley's rather curmudgeonly view of the music scene fails to take into account the many composers, pianists, singers, teachers and other busy musicians, particularly amongst the women graduates, who were active at the time and may be rather surprised to learn that their lives (and incomes) don't count. Indeed, John Hullah, that champion of the amateur musician, offered this to the Committee in his own deposition:

The inevitable occupation of the majority of English musicians is teaching - principally teaching one instrument - the pianoforte - and the Academy has improved the quality of English pianoforte teaching, and educated a large number of teachers. *These, for the most part, lead quiet and unnoted, but very useful lives. I think that a good deal too much is expected of academies. They cannot create genius.* (Hullah, 1866, p. 385)

Chorley was looking at possibilities and the Academy's duty to drive musical progress; Hullah was concerned with current supply and demand. George Macfarren, too, tried to defend the students in his testimony when he was called in January 1865:

[T]he success of many of its pupils, and the high position gained by them as composers, singers, players, and teachers – the last, most particularly throughout the provinces, has gained the academy a reputation, and won for it a confidence such as would cost any new foundation many years to acquire; thirdly, the regard for the Academy of those whom it has educated, and the feeling of fraternity among them [...] (Macfarren, 1865, p.118)

Macfarren's highlighting of 'fraternity' as fundamental to the success of Academy students is particularly worth noting, as study at the Academy afforded female students a sense of musical community for the first time in the UK, one which would follow many of them throughout their careers. It is always notable how many fellow alumnae were chosen by concert organisers, or who helped set up a teacher's school, or who chose to perform the repertoire of Academy composers. Macirone, whose networks were second to none, was no exception in this, for example recruiting Charlotte Dolby to sing her songs in many of Dolby's own concerts and Gabrielle Vaillant to teach violin in Macirone's supremely successful music department at the Baker Street Church of England School for Girls. In a musical world where many (male) avenues were still closed to women and would be for decades, these relationships were professionally essential. The Academy itself also was seen by many of the women as fundamental in upholding those communities, and many women were proud to have studied and taught there. Although Chorley raised concerns about the sub-professor method at the Academy, wherein advanced students taught other students for a remission in fees, this was often a route into full professorship, as for Macirone, or at least provided supervised teaching experience for those who would become 'provincial' teachers.

Figure 2, A page from Macirone's diary, outlining a teaching incident while she was a sub-professor. Image reproduced by permission of The Royal Academy of Music. (See articles' front page)

During her own studentship, Macirone was in great demand by Academy staff to teach Italian, harmony and piano (this last was a substitution for the harmony classes after some complaints about Macirone's style). Upon leaving the Academy she remained as an associate professor, becoming a full (and therefore paid) professor in 1847. This position continued until 1866, when in a particularly chaotic episode of the Academy's history, it closed for several months, reopening with male professors only. The female professors like Macirone were summarily dismissed. Not only was this a financial blow to Macirone, but it was also a betrayal by the institution she thought of as a support and a shelter. Many years later, in her obituary of her dear friend and Academy principal George Macfarren, she makes her feelings very clear:

In the drives together, to one of the schools mentioned, many subjects were discussed, in which the Professor took a keen interest. Amongst them was one which bore on the welfare of those sisters in the profession who, like myself, entered the Royal Academy at a time when women were allowed to share its honours and privileges. It is unknown how many paid those heavy fees from straitened means, with the hope that after years of hard work, they might obtain ample power of helping the homes they loved: those homes which had endured difficulties and privations to give them an education possessing such hopes of reward. (Macirone, 1888, p. 28)

"Macirone's diverse and full career lasted for over sixty years"

Nevertheless, Macirone would continue to sign herself 'late professor of the Royal Academy of Music' for the rest of her career.

The removal of the Academy income strand meant that Macirone had to look for other teaching work. In 1872 she was appointed Head of the music school at Aske's School for Girls, Hatcham, a post she resigned in 1878 to concentrate on her other job as Head of the music department of the Church of England High School for Girls at Baker Street in central London. Her success here led to an expansion in the early 1880s, including the beginning of violin teaching, under fellow RAM alumna Gabrielle Vaillant. Macirone kept this post until her retirement in the early 1890s, although she remained active in the school by continuing to adjudicate competitions and conduct examinations. Her name was an important drawcard for the school, which advertised almost monthly for pupils. The 'systematic and thorough' education that Macirone outlined in The Girl's Own Paper was on display here, in a 'system' specific to Macirone herself:

***I have been just to see about all the music for college tomorrow and shall have it home tonight, so I feel through the wood, and I think I shall very much enjoy this new system**. It will, as soon as I get it fairly in work, save me an infinity of trouble, it will give me a definite system to work on.*
I have had a capital practice of the new music and like it exceedingly, and think I shall learn the system to good purpose and get it going with all my pupils. Once I get this college scheme fully afloat and in work, I think it will work capitally. (Neate, 2018, p. 634)

It was indeed successful, as George Macfarren noted at the 1877 prizegiving at Aske's:

It is most dangerous to have bad teaching or to gain bad habits; thus these pupils are fortunate in having in the lady at the head of the music-school a distinguished musician in high esteem in our profession. The many proofs of her care and qualifications give great cause for confidence in her skill as a teacher and director of teachers. I think the institution fortunate in having secured her services, and I thank Miss Macirone, in the name of the profession, for the work she has done here in the cause of music, and for the care she has bestowed on the progress of the pupils of this school. (Macfarren, 1877, p.80)

Macirone's diverse and full career lasted for over sixty years, from the 1840s to the early 1900s, over a period that saw an enormous social and musical revolution for women. This trajectory of change was not always forward, however, but also sometimes in reverse, as Macirone herself acknowledges in Macfarren's obituary, particularly as women and their activity entered more written history. Changing ideals and priorities within music helped to consign Macirone to obscurity (although even this raises the question of what obscurity really means, given that her music remained in print and was publicised in publisher distribution lists until WWII). Macirone's teaching and her work with amateurs is a prime example of a different set of priorities that informed an earlier era and is a career choice that has relegated her to 'an ordinary life' and led to her creative output being relabelled dismissively. She was not in many ways musically 'progressive', but she was socially progressive in the ways in which she campaigned for women in music. For example, when conservatoires and

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universities began to admit women to study a wider range of subjects than was previously available to them, Macirone was paramount in allowing this to happen, having helped to educate a generation that could make use of an advanced level of education. In this she was a pioneer, although the idea of biography as requiring a certain kind of dominance in historical narratives means that the pioneer trope can become overused, clouding stories that follow, or are parallel. Pianist, teacher and composer Kate Loder has often dominated the narrative of the 1840s Academy women, right from their shared studentship. During their lives this was due to Loder's family ties both through birth and marriage, while later recognition is in large part thanks to her association with the canonic figures of Brahms and the Schumanns. It is much to the credit of both Macirone and Loder that they were such good friends for life.

This paper has examined only a few of the ways in which history has skewed Macirone's story, although many of these can be summed up in large part as a set of moral codes that are applied to women but not to men. Anna Fels (2005) highlights the difficulties in negotiating these moral codes when a woman is ambitious, pointing out ways in which men have external approbation and recognition that women must find for themselves:

It falls nearly entirely on the individual woman to carve out a life for herself with adequate meaning and satisfactions – not an easy task for anyone, let alone an impressionable young person. For each woman life must be a creation of sorts and also an assertion of values, priorities, and identity, because no role is accepted unquestioningly. (Fels, 2005, p. xvi)

The portrait of Macirone that emerges is of not only of a woman caught in the gendered strictures of her times, and enmeshed in familial responsibilities, but also of a fiercely determined, energetic and ambitious person, with a sharp eye for how structures and systems worked, and how she might make the best of her position. Macirone was well aware of the prejudices that made her life even more difficult than necessary and was not afraid to confront them. It is clear from her writing and from descriptions that Clara Macirone indeed 'carved out a life for herself' in the words of Fels, and helped other women and girls to do the same.

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Mirroring Cuzzoni: A Practitioner's Aesthetic Protest

By Victoria Hodgkinson

Foto: Tord F Paulsen

Abstract

In this paper I will explore the conceptual underpinnings and artistic processes behind two new works written for me by composer Geoffrey King; 'Little Siren of the Stage' and 'Cuzzoni's Letter'. These pieces make central the historical identity of female performer Francesca Cuzzoni, for whom Handel constructed roles well known in our contemporary operatic canon. This work forms part of my PhD research at the Royal Academy of Music in which I examine female performing identity across time, using Handel's opera seria as a case study. In this article I question what contemporary operatic practitioners can learn about their identities via mirroring and centralising the historical performer's influence over the historical, usually male, figure of the composer. At the crux of this paper is a discussion around what working with the voices of historical female performers can tell us about ourselves within the discipline of operatic performance today.

Keywords

Female performers, opera seria, artistic practice, new music

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Introduction

This paper explores the artistic processes and conceptual thinking behind two new works written for my voice and Baroque ensemble by composer Geoffrey King: 'Little Siren of the Stage' and 'Cuzzoni's Letter'. These pieces were commissioned as a part of my PhD at the Royal Academy of Music in which I analyse female operatic performing identity across time using Handel's opera seria as a case study. The two works focus on the identity of historical singer Francesca Cuzzoni, for whom Handel wrote roles notable in today's operatic canon such as Cleopatra from Giulio Cesare and the title role from Rodelinda. I explore how the act of music making itself can provide a useful tool for reframing historical narratives and thereby promoting reconsideration of female performing identities in opera.

Handel's Opera Seria as a Case Study

In my research work to date, Handel's opere serie have provided ideal material as they allow me to draw historical and contemporary connections between performing identities across time within one repertoire. This idea of shaping and reshaping historical material in the present is analogous to my own craft which involves interpreting historical repertoire, often with the artistic purpose of finding present day relevance to my depictions. Therefore, the way in which I work with Handel's opera seria in my research corresponds with the practical requirements of my artistic practice as a trained interpreter of historical music. It is my aim to bring to the forefront issues of unconscious bias in the industry associated with the aesthetic status quo and address the impact this can have on female performers today. I can then question what the future could look like if we challenge prevailing myths associated with the repertoire.

Crucial to this paper is the fact that Handel's opera seria offers me a network of historical performer identities to engage with. We know that the singers Handel worked with were vital to the composition and formation of his operatic literature. Behind every work there are pentimenti [1] impressions of historical performers whose artistic voices are no longer central in the vocal interpretation of the repertoire. Therefore, I ask: how can the original female singer, for whom Handel wrote notable roles, influence and inform our practice as operatic practitioners today? In a practice I call 'historical mirroring' I will question what it is we gain as contemporary operatic singers if we reflect the historical identities of the original, in this case female, performer over the historical, often male, composer as a starting point for our artistry.

This desire to understand more about the historical female performers who worked with Handel was led by my early reading which revealed to me how little we know about many of these women in their own words. At this preliminary stage, I wondered to what extent this lack of self-definition resulted in a stereotyping of female singers in today's industry. Therefore, at the crux of my research is a discussion around how we collectively remember and value female performers,

questioning historical composer and performer hierarchies in addition to hierarchies of how women are placed and viewed through cultures of patriarchy associated with the established musical canon.

Historical Mirroring: A Concept

My concept of 'historical mirroring' originated from reading Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (Woolf, 1929/2019) in which she writes that **"Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size"** (Woolf, 1929/2019, p. 53). This statement prompted me to question who I was reflecting in my own practice as a performer, and I wanted to find an artistic method which would enable me to better analyse the components that influence the construction of my sound and body in this repertoire, delving deeply into how my own artistry might have been formed as an extension of patriarchal aesthetics and ideals.

Anna Bull's (2019) work investigating questions of class and gender in classical music training in England observes how gender inequality can become enacted and entrenched through localised and standardised training practices. She draws on a similar descriptive metaphor in using the term 'gendered mirroring' (Bull, 2019, pp. 122-123) when discussing the impact of traditional rehearsal models on young female singers. She observes,

As a singer, watching the conductor and being 'played' by him resembles this experience of looking at an interactive mirror, and yet for the young women in the group this meant seeing in the mirror a male body which they could never hope to match perfectly. Indeed, accounts of postural corrections from a few of the young women suggested that women's bodies were, in this practice, inherently in need of correction to try to more accurately mirror the perfect humanity of the white male body of most conductors (Bull, 2019, p. 123).[ii]

Bull's work encourages a critical awareness of how the prevalence of standardised aesthetic ideals in classical music can continually reinforce inequalities. Woolf and Bull's exploration of 'mirroring' speak conceptually and practically to the binaries and hierarchies through which we can engage with and reconstruct historical classical musical content as artists today.

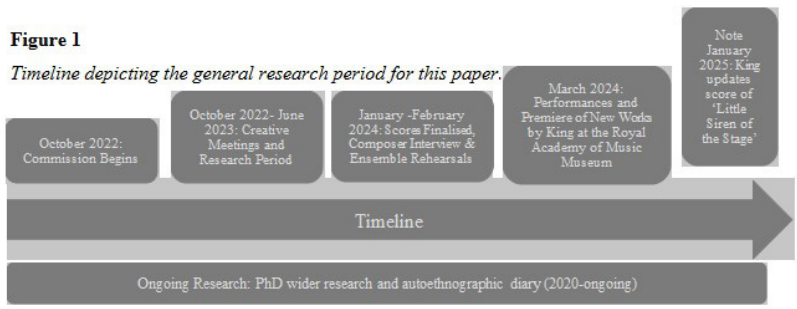
As a response to this, the two contemporary commissions by King central to this paper seek to shift this historical mirror both thematically and aesthetically. Here, we move the mirror away from the historical composer of Handel and instead choose to reflect the historical female singer, Francesca Cuzzoni. We also question throughout how the more intricate aesthetic choices we make can reflect a less standardised aesthetic 'appropriateness', asking how the performer can regain a multifaced sense of agency.[iii]

Research Methodologies and Timeline

The research period explored in this paper spans almost two years of my PhD project from late 2022 to early 2024. Below you can see a timeline:

Figure 1

Timeline depicting the general research period for this paper.



The methods used involved analysis of various sources including notes from creative meetings and a semi-structured interview with the composer, my autoethnographic diary, rehearsal recordings, and a live performance of the works at the Royal Academy of Music Museum in March 2024 with Baroque ensemble, using a historical harpsichord from the museum collection. I will reference quotations from the composer interview and sections of my autoethnographic diary to provide evidence of my artistic processes and developments in thinking throughout the research period.

[Please note that the score excerpts for King's 'Little Siren of the Stage' in this article are taken from an updated version of the score in early 2025. Although the score extracts provided in this article come from outside the research period stipulated, all the analysis and principles remain unchanged.]

Initial Proposal October 2022

Prior to meeting with the composer Geoffrey King in October 2022 I had prepared an aria commission proposal which had both practical and conceptual requests. The practical requests related to the suggested ensemble size (voice, two Baroque violins, and continuo consisting of harpsichord, archlute and cello), timing for the piece (five minutes) and pitch (A=415). My vision for the format of the new work was to respond to the layout of a da capo aria, echoing a historical musical format that 18th century Handelian singers worked with.

In addition to the practical requests, I also provided the composer with a brief outline of some of the conceptual intentions I had for the work. These related to my aims better to understand the artistic experiences of historical singers for whom Handel constructed vocal literature:

New Work Concepts, 2022: [iv]

> Reflecting the past through commissioning contemporary aria repertoire for Baroque ensemble.
>
> Echoing 18th century approaches to understanding vocal individuality through this process.
> This will be achieved via a process

which understands the voice and the performer without a contemporary Fach v label, so often applied to operatic artists today and anachronistic to Handel's repertoire. vi

Offering a contemporary musical work that would provide new insights into the past.

At this early stage of the project my main aim was to learn more about what it would feel like to embody an aria written for my voice and dramatic presence. I felt that this process would echo the experiences of the historical Handelian singers who often worked with individually crafted vocal repertoire. Evidence of this can be found in C. Steven LaRue's *Handel and his Singers: The Creation of the Royal Academy Operas* 1720-1728 in which he analyses the professional processes and dynamics within a formative period of creation for Handel's opera seria (LaRue, 1995). He writes of the singer's significance in the creative process for the composer, concluding, "For Handel, therefore, the cast provided the starting-point for the creative process, and not its end" (LaRue, 1995, p. 190).

To me, this idea that the 18th century Handelian singer was vital to the formation of an operatic work, and essentially higher up the creative 'food chain', was antithetical to my contemporary experiences in mainstream operatic training of historical repertoires to date which had been driven by an understanding that my role in the presentation of the operatic canon was not to 'create' but rather to 're-create' (Taruskin, 2009, Chapter 4). What is more, the hierarchy, or lack thereof, of the 18th century opera seria composer and performer dynamic referenced by LaRue was unfamiliar within my 21st century context as an interpreter of historical operatic literature where I find myself more accustomed to the ingrained feeling of being artistically subordinate to the overbearing weight of Handel, the historical 'genius'.vii I wanted to know more about this 18th century relationship between composer and performer and question these ideas through the act of music making itself, to assess what challenging my inherited hierarchies could release for me artistically.

An example of my own early grappling with these ideas is outlined in my autoethnographic diary. In January 2022 I sketched out my initial impressions after reading LaRue's (1995) text.

I have been thinking so much recently about our role as singers. As our agency in this repertoire [opera seria] is so very changed and shifted. What I want to ask is...what is the difference between creation and re-interpretation? How has our role in the repertoire shifted and in turn how have our identities remained unchanged with historical singers? If our role has shifted surely then too should the way in which we are perceived (author autoethnographic diary excerpt, 20 January 2022).

The extract outlines my frustrations with the practice of having typecasts applied to me in the context of interpreting historical operatic roles. I wanted to explore whether music written for my personal identity could help me to step out of the aesthetic expectations of the opera canon and to experience a greater sense of individual agency.

Jessica Walker, who is concerned with the present-day agency of singers, researches through new music collaboration to assess how a singer today might regain a sense of equality within the collaborative process (Walker, 2015). In her thesis, Walker references the ideal of the historical singer's agency in the creative process and why this power dynamic has shifted from the Baroque to the present day. She suggests this is a product of the reorganisation of the contemporary operatic industry whose primary business it is to restage canonical operatic work. She writes,

...it is not the 'voice' of the singer that is typically heard in the collaborative process of opera production today. The director as auteur, a possible outcome of the attempt constantly to breathe life into an historic canon of works, has re-calibrated the collaborative hierarchy in opera. [... T]here has been shift in focus from the performers to the director, reflecting the fact that most opera produced today is not new work (Walker, 2015, p. 2).

Here, the "voice" denotes something holistic, pertaining to the creative identity of the singer as a complex whole. Like Walker, I initially wanted to assess if the collaborative process within new music would help me understand something more about creative agency and simulate an experience which could imitate the processes experienced by Handel's singers. My hypothesis was that the original female singers for whom Handel crafted operatic roles would have experienced a heightened sense of freedom over their output. What I would find, however, is that this hypothesis failed to take into consideration the long-standing systemic inequalities associated with gender in society, enacted and entrenched in historical contexts, and represented in the resulting art that portrays them. Again, using historical mirroring as a metaphor, my initial idea for the composition presented at the proposal stage in October 2022 would only represent a shard of glass, not the full mirror through which to reflect the historical world in which Handel's opera seria were formed.

Composer/ Performer First Creative Meeting 13 October 2022

The initial proposal was shared with composer King who was the ideal collaborator for this project due to our mutual interest in working with and through historical content. King (2024) has also been influenced by camp aesthetics, commonly through forms of vocal music, thereby reflecting my concern for exploring aesthetics outside the perceived status-quo in classical music. In our first creative meeting on 13 October 2022, we discussed our shared artistic priorities, with King observing that he wished to "write music of an imaginary or even fake past" (composer paraphrased quotation, creative meeting 13 October 2022).

This early-stage statement from our conversation is worth highlighting as it represents an initial desire to peer through the historical content we inherit as classical musicians and to find stories which we feel better reflect our contemporary artistic identities. Although King and I would come to find that we were often searching for historical truths and realities rather

Figure 2. Pablo Bronstein, Molly House, 2023 . (Ink and acrylic on paper, artist's frame,120.2 x 146.2 x 6 cm / 47.3 x 57.6 x 2.4 in)
© Pablo Bronstein. Courtesy the artist and Herald St, London. Photo by Andy Keate.

than 'fake' pasts, what was certainly required of us at this early stage of artistic creation was a mutual need to 'imagine' – an imagining beyond the historical records associated with today's artistic canon, recorded primarily by a patriarchal, white and chronological mode of recording history, and bring to the forefront 'lesser-valued' and thereby 'lesser-heard' stories.

An artwork that reminds me of this exact idea of historical re-imagining, which I would later see at the Tate Britain in early 2024, is 'Molly House' by the artist Pablo Bronstein. Here, Bronstein depicts the façade of an 18th century London building and makes exterior the imagined visual interior of Molly Houses, a place for homosexual men to gather in 18th century London. viii Bronstein is imagining an alternative version of history, where the concealed is revealed, turning a received 'truth' inside out and distorting the 'historical mirror'.

Similar to Bronstein's work, it was the intention for our composition to serve as a reimagined historical reflection, making central a story that had been sidelined and reconfiguring our received relationship with history; our approach would encourage a method of engaging with historical thinking which is rhizomatic in nature, where methods of meaning-making stretch out like complex webs (White, 2012, pp. 168-173). King prompted me to provide further insight into a historical female figure who would inform the narrative and text-setting of the work. Whilst my initial proposal only outlined a need to replicate the 'processes' of historical singers, he wanted something more specific to inform the narrative, text and world-building element of the new music.

Focus: Francesca Cuzzoni May 2023

Composer responses to scholarship

After the initial period of research, the composer and I decided to focus the piece on Francesca Cuzzoni. Cuzzoni is a historical singer who has been influential within my wider PhD work as I sing and record Handelian aria repertoire written for her voice; I assess contemporary casting trends associated with influential roles written for her and I also interview contemporary performers who are commonly cast in these roles today. I respond to contemporary scholarship which addresses the singer rivalry between Faustina Bordoni and Francesca Cuzzoni and I

conceptualise the impact this history can have on a contemporary practitioner, using myself and my artistic experiences as a case study.
Here I will offer an overview of the types of materials shared with the composer which provided an artistic starting point for the two new works by King: 'Little Siren of the Stage' (2024-25) and 'Cuzzoni's Letter' (2024). These materials can be split into two main sections: insights into concepts stemming from recent scholarship and a section on primary and secondary sources from the 18th century and the 20th and 21st centuries.

Influential scholarship

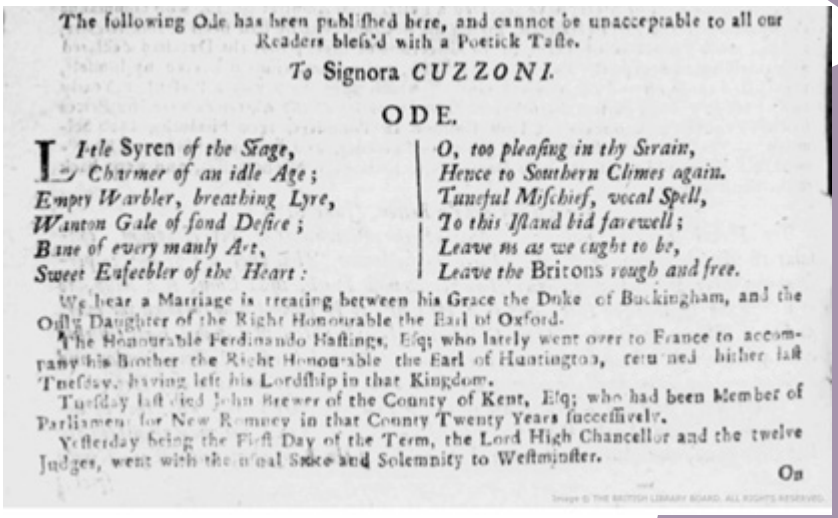
Francesca Cuzzoni is predominantly remembered for her rivalry with fellow singer Faustina Bordoni. This rivalry climaxed on the London stage in 1727 in a production of Bononcini's *Astianatte* wherein the public spurred the two women onstage to physical violence, breaking the dramatic structure of the opera (Aspden, 2013, p. 5). Here was an incident in which the women's professional roles and artistic achievements were debased by spectators. Many scholars have addressed the issue of rivalry and the impact it had on the agency of performing women (Aspden, 2013; Nussbaum, 2010; DeSimone, 2013 & 2017). In the case of Cuzzoni, Aspden (2013) looks at the rivalry between Cuzzoni and Bordoni as a phenomenon socially constructed through industry (opera companies and patron alliances) and media (18th century print culture and celebrity) and outlines female performing rivalry as part of a wider culture of mythologising women and thereby controlling their identities. Early in my artistic research, Aspden's work helped me to start to question the root of my own inherited culture in today's industry and engage with a more critical self-reflective practice.

Aspden's (2013) scholarship doesn't exist in a vacuum but is part of a series of publications around the 2010s which are all engaging in a reframing of historical female performing identities and which look at the issues of rivalry. Indeed, DeSimone's (2013) thesis *The Myth of the Diva: Female Opera Singers and Collaborative Performance in early Eighteenth-Century London and Nussbaum's* (2010) Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater both reframe the act of pitting theatrical women against each other during the period as a way of controlling and undermining the newfound reach public women had on the London stages (see also DeSimone, 2017).

Evidence of my early grappling with these concepts can be seen in an extract from my autoethnographic diary in 2021, predating the commissioning of the new work. Here I start to unravel the framework through which I comprehend my own constructed identity in opera as something pre-determined, systematic and unyielding. I wrote,

...giving voice to Cuzzoni is important to me as we don't have [adequate] existing first-hand accounts from her as a performer... I wonder if I can shed light on her experiences kinaesthetically and with[in] the umbrella of research through artistic practice ... In my mind mythic representations arise through the lack of artist led dialogues and indeed one of the factors I feel myself pushing against in this PhD is mythic representation. As myth blurs these historical singers' identities, I feel myself that I step into a practice and tradition where there is a distinct lack of importance placed on the holistic artistic identity of the female operatic singer (author autoethnographic diary excerpt, 7 October 2021).

As a contemporary practitioner, the historical reframing found in recent gender-conscious musicology has enabled me to develop critical awareness of operatic trends that can curtail women's self-determination in opera beyond the confines of often heavily gendered archetypes. This awareness



The following Ode has been publiſhed here, and cannot be unacceptable to all our Readers bleſs'd with a Poetick Taſte.

To Signora CUZZONI.

ODE.

I Itle Syren of the Stage,
Charmer of an idle Age;
Empty Warbler, breathing Lyre,
Wanton Gale of fond Deſire;
Bane of every manly Art,
Sweet Enfeebler of the Heart:

O, too pleaſing in thy Strain,
Hence to Southern Climes again.
Tuneful Miſchief, vocal Spell,
To this Iſland bid farewell;
Leave us as we ought to be,
Leave the Britons rough and free.

We hear a Marriage is treating between his Grace the Duke of Buckingham, and the Only Daughter of the Right Honourable the Earl of Oxford.

The Honourable Ferdinando Haſtings, Eſq; who lately went over to France to accompany his Brother the Right Honourable the Earl of Huntington, returned hither laſt Tueſday, having left his Lordſhip in that Kingdom.

Tueſday laſt died John Brewer of the County of Kent, Eſq; who had been Member of Parliament for New Romney in that County Twenty Years ſucceſſively.

Yeſterday being the Firſt Day of the Term, the Lord High Chancellor and the twelve Judges, went with the uſual State and Solemnity to Weſtminſter.

On

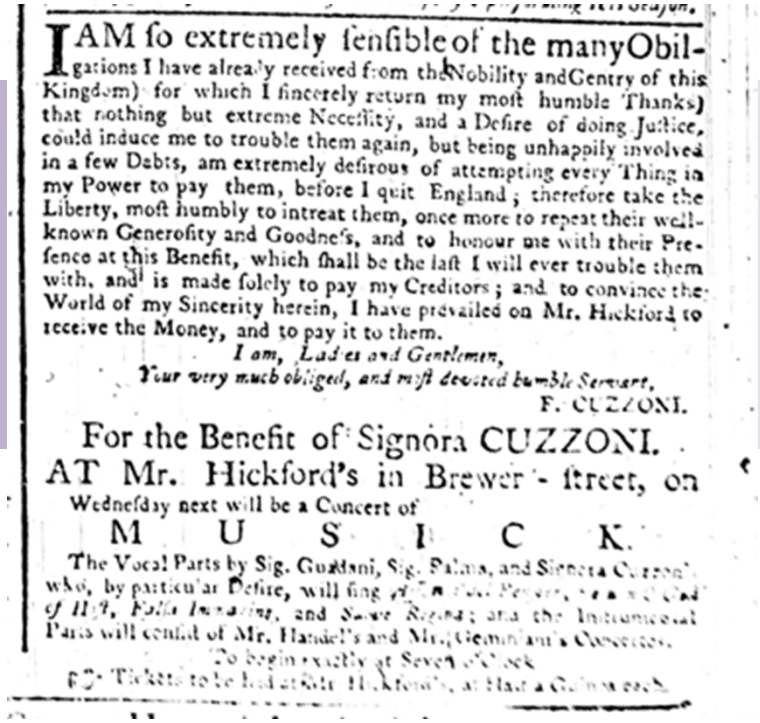
Figure 3. To Signora Cuzzoni, Ode. Stamford Mercury. 1724. A page of a newspaper
Image © THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

has impacted how I view and perceive today's industry, allowing me to assess both similarities and differences between the 18th and 21st centuries in the context of my own practice. Cuzzoni is not a forgotten woman but rather a woman whose identity requires reassessment across disciplines, both historically and artistically.

Source materials shared with composer

I sent a selection of primary and secondary sources to the composer to offer an array of options for the narrative contents and text-setting of the pieces. Spanning 18th century newspaper clippings to 21st century audio recordings, these sources were obtained through my research into Cuzzoni in The British Newspaper Archive, The British Museum online collections and on contemporary streaming platforms.

By June 2023 the composer responded with the decision to set two 18th century sources to music. The first text, set within the context of an aria with Baroque ensemble, was a poem entitled 'To Signora Cuzzoni, Ode' printed in the Stamford Mercury on 11 June 1724 (Figure 3). King then decided to compose a second piece in which Cuzzoni's own words were to be spoken over contemporary instrumental music scored for Baroque ensemble. The spoken text comes from the 1751 newspaper the General Advertiser (Figure 4) where Cuzzoni appears in a rare occurrence in her own words.



I AM ſo extremely ſenſible of the many Obligations I have already received from the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom) for which I ſincerely return my moſt humble Thanks) that nothing but extreme Neceſſity, and a Deſire of doing Juſtice, could induce me to trouble them again, but being unhappily involved in a few Debts, am extremely deſirous of attempting every Thing in my Power to pay them, before I quit England; therefore take the Liberty, moſt humbly to intreat them, once more to repeat their well-known Generoſity and Goodneſs, and to honour me with their Preſence at this Benefit, which ſhall be the laſt I will ever trouble them with, and is made ſolely to pay my Creditors; and to convince the World of my Sincerity herein, I have prevailed on Mr. Hickford to receive the Money, and to pay it to them.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your very much obliged, and moſt devoted humble Servant,

F. CUZZONI.

For the Benefit of Signora CUZZONI.

AT Mr. Hickford's in Brewer-ſtreet, on Wedneſday next will be a Concert of

M U S I C K.

The Vocal Parts by Sig. Guadani, Sig. Palma, and Signora Cuzzoni, who, by particular Deſire, will ſing [illegible]

Figure 4. Francesca Cuzzoni, General Advertiser. 1751. A newspaper with text on it. Image © the author

King elaborated on the reason for this contrast between singing and speaking, writing to me in an email that "I'm thinking that way the audience can't really help but really hear – really hear – her words and then she (you) takes ownership of the things said about her by stylising them" (composer quotation, email correspondence, 6 June 2023).

Working with the Scores

Research period:
January - March 2024

By early 2024 I had received a first draft of the scores and secured an opportunity to perform the pieces in March 2024 at the Royal Academy of Music Museum with an 18th century keyboard instrument from the collection forming part of the performing ensemble. During February 2024 I conducted a semi-structured interview with the composer to better understand his aesthetic priorities, visions and processes behind the compositions. I also recorded detailed reflections from two rehearsals with the ensemble which were audio captured. In the following section of this paper, I will analyse the symbolic elements within King's settings and use my findings from the interview and reflective material as supporting evidence. I will also include insight into the performance context for the pieces, weaving into my analysis the symbolic implications of using a (truly) historical harpsichord and my cura-

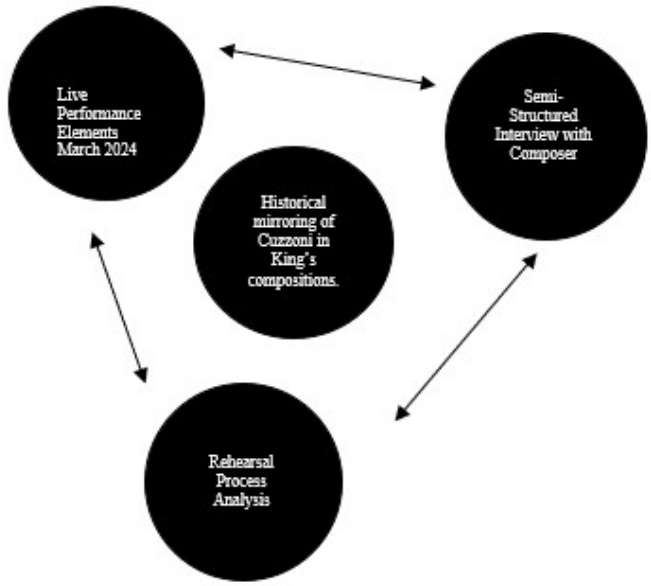


Figure 5. Methodologies and Analysis Model. Note: Interacting methodologies for the analysis of the two new works by Geoffrey King.

torial decisions to display 18th century scores for audience members to view. Above is a diagram capturing the interlinked elements which will contribute to my analysis.

Analysis: 'Little Siren of the Stage'

In the following section I analyse how features of King's compositional process and my artistic interpretative decisions set up a 'historical mirror' for Cuzzoni. I start with a textual analysis of the 'Ode' to Cuzzoni ("To Signora Cuzzoni, Ode"., 1724), bringing to the fore misogynistic tropes that I associate with the text, followed by analysis of how the composer and I work with complex and layered 'time displacements', distorting the historical mirror through smaller acts of aesthetic protest.

Figure 3 Text Transcribed:

To Signora Cuzzoni, Ode. Stamford Mercury. 1724.

Little Syren of the Stage,

Charmer of an idle Age;

Empty Warbler, breathing Lyre,

Wanton Gale of fond Desire;

Bane of every manly Art,

Sweet Enfeebler of the Heart:

O, too pleasing in thy Strain, ix

Hence to Southern Climes again.

Tuneful Mischief, vocal Spell,

To this Island bid farewell;

Leave us as we ought to be,

Leave the Britons rough and free.

("To Signora Cuzzoni, Ode"., 1724)

Inserting the 18th century 'Ode' to Cuzzoni into the structure of a contemporary musical work positions me as performer in an overlap of time, offering a performing space in which I can create new meanings. In singing the text, I hope to start to break the portrayal of women in opera across time and engage in an act of musical reclaiming. Perhaps most obviously provocative for a modern singer is that Cuzzoni is referred to as a siren, a term which positions her as something otherworldly, dangerous or even sullied. It also links Cuzzoni to her female Italian vocal predecessor, the courtesan, who were also commonly referred to in 17th century Italy as sirens (Gordon, 2006, p. 185).x Thus, as I sing the word siren within this piece, the historical mirror through which I peer extends yet further back in time.

When specifically related to female singers, the application and reapplication of the label siren entrenches hierarchical value systems in the way in which female performing identities are viewed. C.N. Lester's (2019) research into the historical female composer and performer Barbara Strozzi speaks of the effect that this type of labelling has on how we culturally value and perceive historical singing women: "This image, of the woman musician as seductive, dangerous siren, is completely at odds with the canonical figure of the genius, "pure" male composer" (Lester, 2019, p. 37). Here, the instilled binary between the "pure" figure of male composer as creator and the identity of singer as impure vessel speaks to a collective cultural trend, stemming from antiquity; such systematic thinking can be seen referenced in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where "male" is aligned with principles such as "good," "light" and "straight" and "female" is affiliated with "bad," "darkness," and "bent"

(Aristotle, 350 B.C.E./1998, p. 20).xi This type of enduring thinking associated with the gender binary places women in a de-centralised position, reinforcing a binary through which performing operatic women have come to be categorised.

Moreover, the language within the rhyming couplets of this poem seems to further entrench

Cuzzoni as a subject of what we would now call the male gaze, a term coined by Laura Mulvey during the 1970s. An example can be seen in "Bane of every manly Art, Sweet Enfeebler of the Heart" ("To Signora Cuzzoni, Ode"., 1724). This line makes the male poetic voice and perspective very clear and, coupled with the misogynous term "bane" - synonyms being "plague" and "curse" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d., Synonyms 1 & 2) - successfully silences Cuzzoni, rendering her less able to self-lead cultures of meaning-making in a way that Mulvey would recognise:

Women then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning (Mulvey, 1975/2009, p. 433).

Turning to the music, King and I both filter acts of musical reclaiming through the more intricate aspects of our craft. King encourages a holistic reflection of the historical figure of Cuzzoni through constructing a work which combines compositional elements referencing multiple historical contexts. The scoring itself is imbued with an overlay of historical references, consisting of my operatically trained voice set amongst an array of historically informed Baroque instruments. A further element was added for the premiere,xii in which we used a 1787 Burkat Shudi and John Broadwood harpsichord, linking us sonically to a remnant of sound from the 18th century.xiii The ensemble's instrumentation aims to convey to the listener prismatic references to history through which we hoped to encourage a more complex relationship with historical perception for both audiences and performers. Furthermore, the composer has included a 'time displacement' in the harmonic language of the piece. Although the aria proposal requested that the pieces reflect Italianate 18th century operatic writing, in this composition King chose to allude to the tonal landscape of an even earlier generation of composers. The following extract from our semi-structured interview gives insight into the musical era referenced:

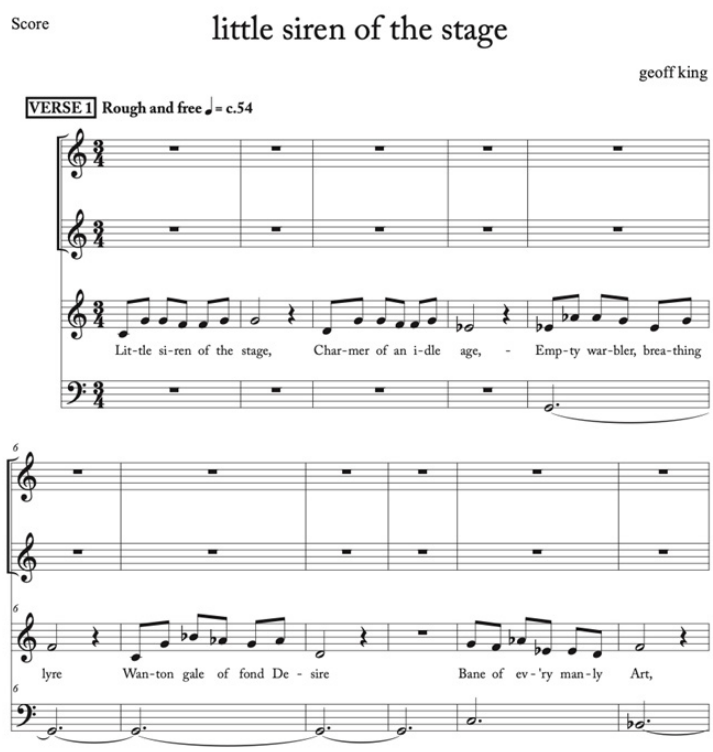
This piece references English music-making before Handel comes on the scene ... Purcell and his group... and one thing that really excites me is actually how tonally unstable things are, like the idea of tonality hadn't really crystalised yet in the way it has by the time we even see Handel, and so it's also kind of kaleidoscopic in its tone centre, but it does tend to be fairly rhythmically grid-like... (composer interview extract, 8 February 2024)

Here, King references the tonal fluidity that can be evident in the counterpoint of Purcell's epoch and which has the potential to evoke an aural message of uncertainty to listeners and performers. This places the satirical poem, which is so certain, singular and condemning of Cuzzoni, into a musical environment which is conveying nuance. King's fluid tonality transforms a satirical poem into something deeply serious and provides an artistic environment in which I grapple with Cuzzoni's mythic identity, searching for truth whilst singing.

The marking at the beginning of the piece 'Rough and free' (Figure 6) is taken from the end of the poem, "Leave us as we ought to be, leave the Britons rough and free" ("To Signora Cuzzoni, Ode"., 1724). King's statement from our February 2024 interview gives insight into the aesthetic priorities this marking encourages:

I definitely want this to be freely sung, certainly not metrical especially when you are unaccompanied at the start. The rough side of it speaks to the fact that I don't want you to worry about trimming all of the corners off of the

Figure 6. Little Siren of The Stage, Score Excerpt. King, 2025. Sheet music for a musical instrument. Image © the author



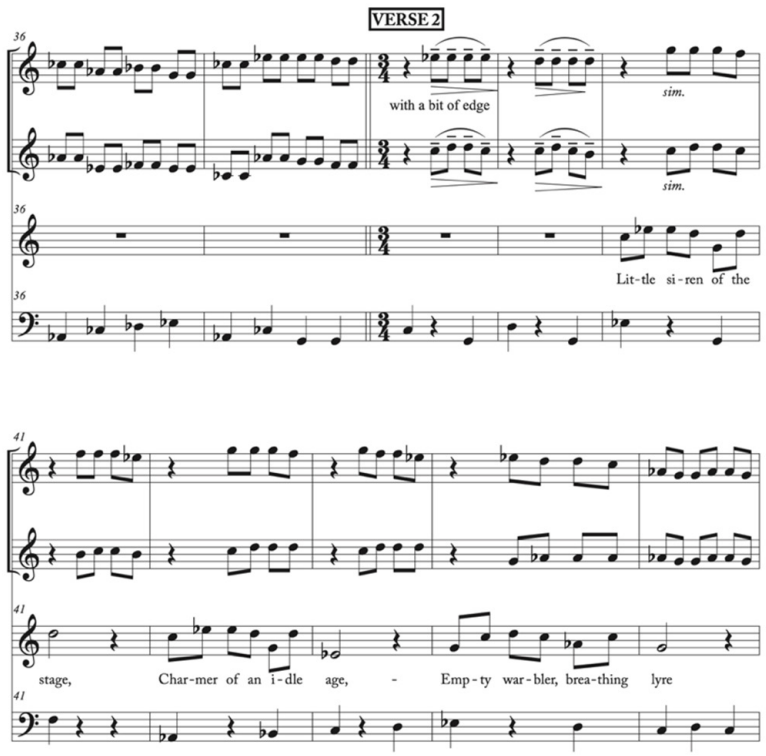


Figure 7. Little Siren of the Stage, Score Excerpt. King, 2025. Image © the author

big jumps... they should feel big and effortful I think (composer interview extract, 8 February 2024).

Here, King asks for a vocal style that is both flexible in terms of timing, particularly at the beginning of the piece when I enter alone (Figure 6), and, critically, less manicured and even in tone. The large vocal jumps King refers to in the quote above can be seen in Figure 7, specifically in the vocal movements between bars 42-43, where the voice descends in a major seventh.

Throughout the 2024 rehearsal period, I contended with the meaning behind this stylistic marking 'Rough and free'. I find it almost impossible to read this marking outside of the context of the poem. Even though here it appears fragmented and isolated at the beginning of the score (Figure 6), within the context of the poem these words reference a historical truth much more sinister, pertaining to the xenophobia experienced by Italian singers, and continental musicians at large, during the era (DeSimone, 2017, p. 76). The Bel Canto style I inherit from singers such as Cuzzoni, conditions my voice to move seamlessly and smoothly through vocal registers (Koestenbaum, 1994, p. 167). With this knowledge, I then question if by rejecting my Bel Canto vocal training in favour of a vocal style 'rough and free', am I then also rejecting Cuzzoni's artistry? I am, in truth, comfortable with my inability to fully achieve a 'rough and free' approach, as my rejection of this marking has two constructive outcomes. Firstly, in utilising my trained Bel Canto voice I bypass the composer's intention and feel I am establishing a direct line of gaze to Cuzzoni. I initiate an uninterrupted 'female' gaze between this historical woman and myself, my trained vocal quality becoming a sonic portal to the past, linking us both. Secondly, by doing this, I then elevate myself psychologically to the status of a co-creator. Breaking with hierarchies associated with how I have been conditioned to view myself as a performer (particularly as subordinate to the composer) then further mirrors a historical truth about Cuzzoni which this poem and the myths surrounding her fail to acknowledge, that she was a primary artistic force within the creation of Handel's opera seria. As I make this decision, I am faced with my own inherited bias towards myself as a performer. Who gives me the authority to make this decision? But in this small act of protest, I challenge myself to take artistic control. For me, only after reinstating historical performers as important artistic forces in my own imagination can I then reaffirm the artistic agency I have over my own body. Nothing is created in isolation, and I am linked to the historical women who came before me.

"I find it almost impossible to read this marking outside of the context of the poem "

A further 'play of time' within the work emerges from a structure found within Baroque vocal music. This is the piece's dramatic momentum and tactus which represents a use of time which is more traditionally linear. King speaks of the inspiration taken from the da capo aria format, and in doing so, transfers agency to the performer:

The repetition is my provocation to you, because in the same way that da capo arias really force you to think about what you are doing when you go back to the A section dramatically and repetition is idiomatic ... but it's [also] a tricky thing because it does sort of run contrary to a lot of the ideas about how drama progresses now (composer interview extract, 8 February 2024).

The dramatic arc of the piece uses rhetorical repetitions of the po-

em's text. This allows me to vary my rhetorical delivery and cultivate a self-led psychological transformation throughout the piece. For example, the first utterance of the poem is monodic (Figure 6), the second vocal entrance is perhaps more anxious as the texture is thicker in the ensemble and the strings are added to provide 'a bit of edge' (Figure 7), and the final and third entrance of the poem is more fragmented (Figure 8), which I take as possibly denoting an exhausted acceptance. As the composer offers a format in which I can work with an increased rhetorical agency

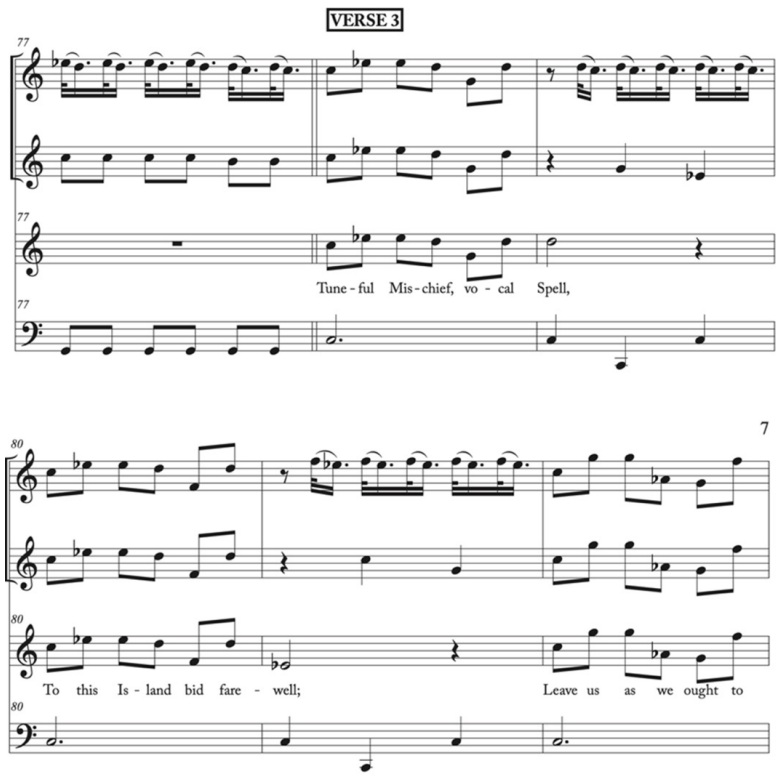


Figure 8. Little Siren of the Stage, Score Excerpt. King, 2025.
Image © the author

in performance, I too am emulating Cuzzoni, whose craft was rooted in a rhetorical delivery of the da capo aria. In mirroring historical concepts through musical structures, the composer and I re-create meaning within the framework of our inherited musical craft.

In echoing a primary function of the da capo aria, which encouraged the performer to assert rhetorical agency, King simulates the concept behind a historical musical structure to create new meaning. Haynes recognises the significance of this artistic process exactly by stating that a contemporary engagement with the conceptual application of rhetoric would allow for the erosion of the hierarchies established in Romanticism between composers and performers (Haynes, 2007, p. 166). He also suggests a possible outcome of engaging with older rhetorical devices in today's musical milieu by stating that "To recognize its former importance, and to cultivate it once more and benefit from its inspiration, would represent the discovery of something new in our culture" (Haynes, 2007, p. 183).

Engaging with historical concepts and theatrical tropes could run the risk of further entrenching a historical narrative. However, King's conscious manipulation of how contemporary and historical elements interact convey kaleidoscopic messages that take us into a more abstracted realm, leaving space for ambiguity. Here, we take a mythic, singular and flattened message about the identity of Cuzzoni and, as it filters through this aria structure, find her refracted into a more prismatic view of history.

Analysis: 'Cuzzoni's Letter'

I am so extremely sensible of the manly Obilgationsxiv I have already received from the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom (for which I sincerely return my most humble thanks) that nothing but extreme Necessity, and Desire of doing Justice, could induce me to trouble them again, but being unhappily involved in a few Debts, am extremely desirous of attempting every Thing in my Power to pay them, before I quit England; therefore take the Liberty, most humbly to intreat them, once more to repeat their well-known Generosity and Goodness, and to honour one with their Presence at this Benefit, which shall be the last I will ever trouble them with, and is made solely to pay my Creditors; and to convince the World of my Sincerity herein, I have prevailed on Mr. Hickford to receive the Money, and to pay it to them.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your very much obliged, and most devoted humble Servant,

F. Cuzzoni.

(Cuzzoni, 1751)

King's second work is a short, contrasting piece where spoken voice is heard over Baroque ensemble. The text originates from the 1751 newspaper the General Advertiser in which Cuzzoni is requesting financial support from the nobility and gentry. It was published around the time of her final performance in London and is, significantly, an extremely rare occurrence in which Cuzzoni is heard in her own words (Kettledon, 2017, p. 116). The presence of this text within our overarching perfor-

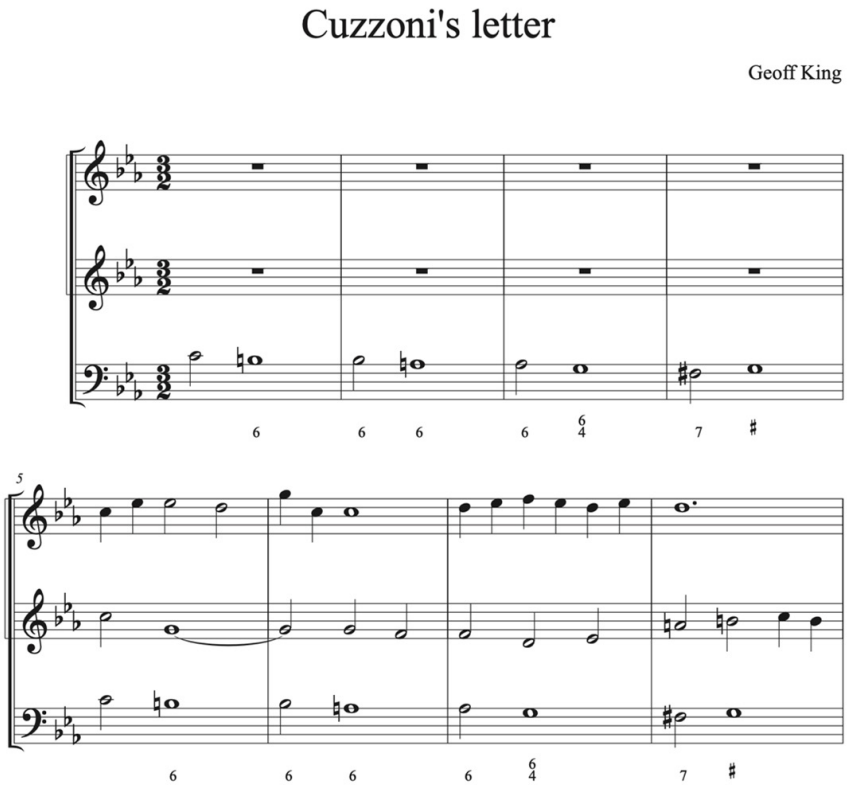


Figure 9. Cuzzoni's Letter. Score Excerpt. King, 2024. Image © the author

mance is meaningful for two reasons. Firstly, it acts as a stark contrast to the way in which Cuzzoni is mythologised in the previous piece. Instead, here we perceive a performing woman facing a very real predicament. Although we are hearing Cuzzoni in her 'own words', what this text really speaks of is the society from which she comes. It is an excerpt of text that tells me very little about the individual and more about the wider gender-biased social structures faced by professional independent female musicians during the era. David Kennerley's work sheds light on the fact that it was only in the 19th century that women were admitted as members to the Royal Society of Musicians.xv In Cuzzoni's generation there were no support structures available to independent female musicians whilst, conversely, there were funds being established for male musicians and their wives (Kennerly, 2018, p. 54). Therefore, this instance in which we see Cuzzoni pleading for financial support is not an isolated one. Kennerley writes that these social structures "...acted as a significant force mitigating against music as a career for independent, unmarried woman to pursue, thereby reinforcing male control, power and authority within the music profession" (Kennerley, 2018, p. 54). Cuzzoni is, as both female and performer, silenced and subsidiary. Although a common sign-off during the era,xvi speaking aloud Cuzzoni's last words "...most devoted humble Servant..." (Cuzzoni, 1751) feels particularly jarring as a modern performer given this historical context.

As with the former piece, this composition utilises musical and conceptual time displacements to encourage a complex consideration and reflection of Cuzzoni's identity. The ensemble begins with a descending tetrachord, evocative of sorrow or loss in Baroque vocal music such as Barbara Strozzi's 'Che si può fare' or Monteverdi's 'Lamento della Ninfa' which both begin in a similar way to King's piece (Figure 9). Here he sets a lamenting landscape in which, if one's ear is attuned to this early Baroque idiom, we are poised for the sung vocal entrance. But it doesn't appear in this piece. Indeed, there is no scoring for the voice at all, nor is the text provided and written in any place on the score. There is merely a mutual agreement made between performer and composer that the text will be recited within the act of performance. Cuzzoni and I have been extracted from the confines of the score. Have we been written out or offered the freedom to express ourselves outside the notated structure in which we usually create? If it is social structures that have made Cuzzoni paradoxically voiceless, does extracting the voice from the confines of the score mirror an alternative view of the past? Do we extract Cuzzoni from this structure, and thereby offer critical insight?

In this piece, I decide when to use my voice and which part of the text to perform. By operating outside a clear tactus, I am given a freedom of choice as a performer with which I am less familiar. As a result of the

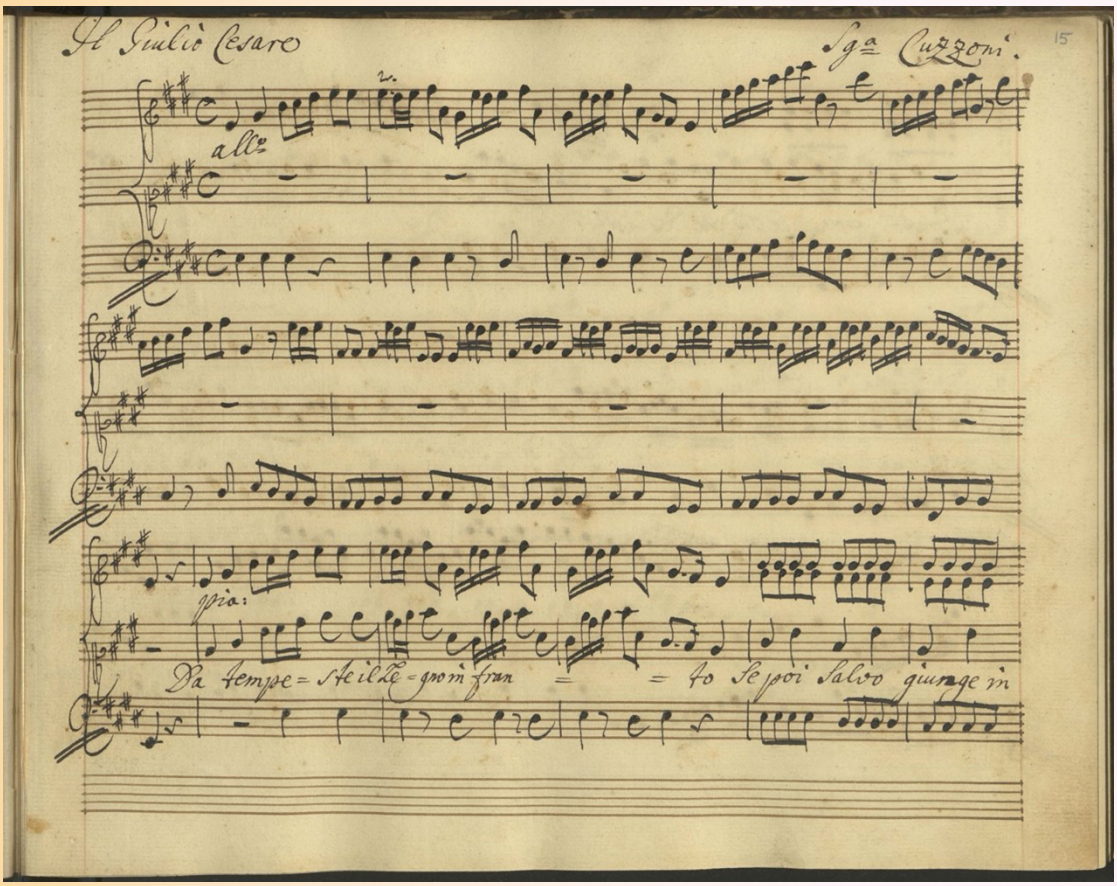


Figure 10. Handel's Da tempeste il legno infranto, Giulio Cesare (c. 1740) Image reproduced with permission from the Royal Academy of Music, London

unpredictable entrances of the text, the ensemble engages in more active listening to the vocalist, making the voice-user central within the creative act. Crucially, however, with the qualities of my aesthetically rawer spoken voice the listener is undeniably encouraged to consider me as the performer in the present. The impact of the 'untrained' voice entering at will shatters the sense of time, suggesting a moment of contemporary realisation. In the case of our premiere in March 2024, I added a further overlapping historical element for the audience by displaying two 18th century scores in which Cuzzoni's name appears in ink on the top right-hand corner and encouraging audience members to view them as they left the event. One of the scores shows her name scribbled above the notorious aria 'Da tempeste il legno infranto' sung by the character of Cleopatra in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* (Figure 10). My aim was to present a series of references to time through Baroque musical idioms, the historical words from Cuzzoni, the 18th century scores displayed in glass cabinets and the presence of my spoken voice, all interweaving to offer a blurred view of history, full of uncertainty rather than fact.

Research Conclusion

In setting up a historical mirror to Cuzzoni, I engage in a reckoning with my own inherited artistic identity as a female opera singer. This work is about taking the 'mirror' I engage with when going to sing, which as Woolf identifies is often "... reflecting the figure of man at twice it's natural size" (Woolf, 1929/2019, p. 53), and inverting the image, thereby protesting the received status quo. Through the act of mirroring Cuzzoni, what I have realised is how blurred and imperceptible she is as a recipient of my own 'female' gaze due to the inequalities associated with how history has been recorded. In truth, she isn't a role model for me, she can't be, because I know nothing about her. She is another woman I must search for as I also continually search for my own operatic identity today beyond stereotypes, beyond typecasts and beyond categorisations. In this project, I have explored new aesthetic frames, not to dismiss current industry approaches to the repertoire, but because I don't always feel that they reflect who I am as an artist. I am also curious about the artistic identities which are being excluded and/or lost. What this process has revealed to me is the urgent need to record, reassess, reframe and value the complex voices of female operatic performers, and thereby to make central our vital contributions as female vocalists to the process of musical creation.

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Figures

Figure 2
Bronstein, P. (2023). *Molly House* [Ink and acrylic on paper]. Herald St, London, United Kingdom. *https://www.heraldst.com/pablo-bronstein*

Figure 3
[Unknown author] (1724, June 11). *To Signora Cuzzoni, Ode.* [published in] Stamford Mercury, 1724. [Photograph]. The British Newspaper Archive. *https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000253/17240611/010/0006?browse=false*

Figure 4
Cuzzoni, F. (1751, May 20). [Advertisement regarding London benefit concert] General Advertiser, 1751 [Microfilm]. The Burney Collection, Vol.4 (Burney 443.BB), The British Library, London, United Kingdom. Photograph of microfilm taken by the author.

Figures 6-9: contact composer directly for scores
King, G. (2025, Jan. 29). *Geoffrey King – Composer. https://www.geoffkingmusic.com*

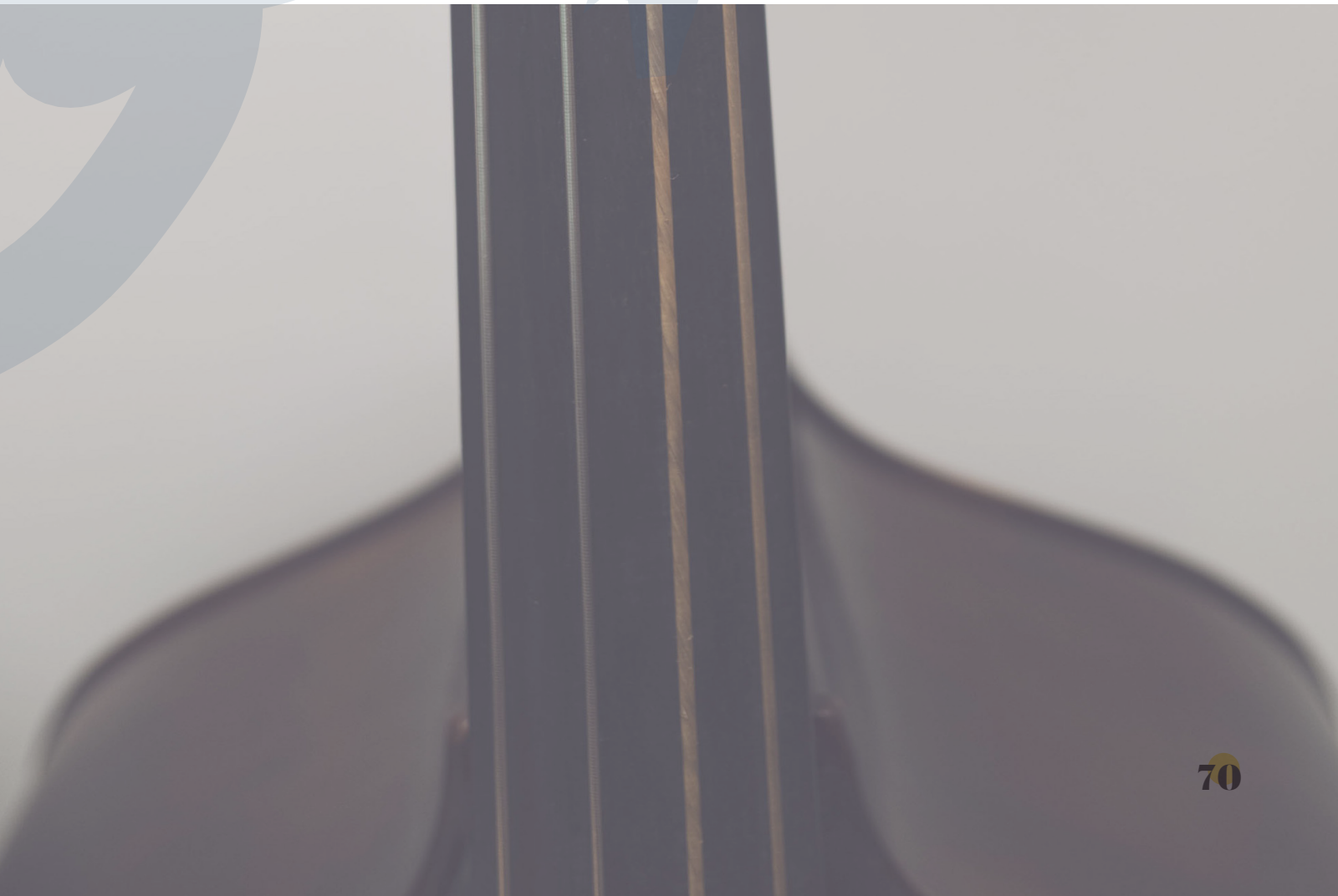
Figure 10
Unknown scribe. (c.1740). Songs in Giulio Cesare: and various songs by Handel (and Porpora and Veracini). William Savage / R.J.S Stevens Collection, (GB-Lam MS140 F15R) Royal Academy of Music Library, London. *https://lib.ram.ac.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=69490*

Endnotes

[i] In the visual arts this means figures in the painting that have been painted over at a point in history and can reveal shadowed impressions on the surface of the work.
[ii] Here Bull (2019) is also drawing on the work of Coleman (2013).
[iii] Graham outlines a multifaceted and intersectional conceptual framework for understanding the complexity of a singer's vocal identity (Graham, 2019, p. 11).
[iv] The initial wording of these concepts have been updated from the original proposal to clarify their meaning.
[v] I was concerned with the limiting aspects of the Fach system on singer identities today. For literature on this system see: (Kloiber et. al., 2019) and (Boldrey, 1994). For literature on a practitioner navigating the Fach system see: (Festeu, 2016).
[vi] Importantly, I did not list my contemporary Fach label or voice-type in this proposal, encouraging the composer to respond to me as an individual.
[vii] For feminist criticism of the gendered concept of 'genius' see: (Battersby, 1989).
[viii] For more on Molly Houses in 18th century London see: (Peakman, 2024).
[ix] In the 1724 Stamford Mercury newspaper ("To Signora Cuzzoni, Ode"., 1724) sourced on The British Newspaper Archive this line is printed "O, too pleasing in thy Strain". Wierzbicki (2001) sources this poem and here this line is printed as "O, too pleasing is thy Strain" (p. 183). He references Hogarth (1838) who also prints the same text (p.413). Both texts point to Ambrose Philips as the author of this poem written around the time Cuzzoni first leaves England after the 1727 'rivalry'. Yet, the 1724 version I have sourced predates these events and attributes no author.
[x] Not solely used to refer to courtesans, Gillet also tells us that in the 17th century Milton relates the voice of Italian singer Leonora Baroni to that of a siren (Gillet, 2000, p. 142). This descriptor, stemming from Homer, endures and is also used throughout 19th century Britan to refer to professional female singers. Gillet tells us that even by this point in history "Famous women singers were often referred to as sirens ..." (Gillet, 2000, p. 142).
[xi] Carson (2025) tells us that Aristotle is referencing The Pythagorean Table of Opposites (p. 10).
[xii] Royal Academy of Music Museum, Keyboard Gallery, 7 March 2024.
[xiii] Important to our experiences of 'time displacements' the harpsichord is not a 'revival' instrument it is an 'original' 18th century instrument; its core materiality acts as an 18th century 'passage' in performance. The restoration it has been subject to offers insight into the further time 'negotiations' that the instrument poses in working with it. This instrument received restorations in 1992 by Darryl Martin and 2012 by Miles Hellon (Cobbe & Nobbs, 2014, p. 122). Further restorations were made by Ben Marks and Christopher Nobbs in 2015 (unpublished restoration report consulted with Christopher Nobbs in person, 24, April 2025). From speaking with Nobbs in April 2025, I gained an understanding that these recent restorations were concerned with reversing the effects of earlier interventions and that it is important to approach the instrument without preconceptions. Conceptually this tells me that the history the instrument offers is complex and layered; knowledge of the restoration encourages me as a performer to engage in an informed and active listening, learning from the instrument when working with it.
[xiv] In the 1751 General Advertiser newspaper (Cuzzoni, 1751) the text is printed with the following spelling: "Obilgations". We made the decision to update the spelling and pronunciation to "Obligations" for performance purposes.
[xv] Kennerly notes that after being initially excluded from the Royal Society of Musicians (RSM), women musicians set up the Royal Society of Female Musicians (RSFM) in 1839-1840. The RSM amalgamates with the RSFM in 1866. However, Kennerly writes: "Although women could now be members, they faced restrictions not imposed on male members" (Kennerly, 2018, p. 66).
[xvi] Historical Handelian singer Anastasia Robinson's two rare letters can be seen in LaRue's text where she also uses this sign-off. (LaRue, 1995, pp. 125-126.)

Gender and music in Luxembourg – Looking back at 25 years of archival work and music mediation

By Danielle Roster



Abstract

In 1996 and 1998, I came across music of female composers thought to be lost: first, orchestral and piano music, orchestral songs and the performance material of a feminist operetta by Lou Koster (1889-1973) and two years later, the entire musical estate of Helen Buchholtz (1877-1953).

In contrast to Lou Koster, Buchholtz had been completely forgotten at the time. In 1999, the heir to Buchholtz's estate decided to make the manuscripts, which he had kept in his cellar for around 50 years, available to the public. Thanks to his decision, I was able to found and manage the Helen Buchholtz Archive at the feminist documentation center CID | Fraen an Gender. The Lou Koster Archive was opened three years later. Collections on contemporary female composers from Luxembourg were added in the following years.

The aim of these new archives was not only to make the music accessible again, but also to research it, promote it through educational projects, edit it and have it performed again in concerts, as well as recorded on CDs. Since Buchholtz's music was completely forgotten and there were no recordings of it, the history of interpretation of her music was a blank slate. To bring the works back to life, I worked together with various interpreters: pianists, singers, and orchestras. Due to these projects, the two composers have become better known and their music is now being performed again in Luxembourg as well as abroad.

An important aspect of my work with the historical music was to bring it into dialogue with contemporary music. I therefore invited female composers to write new music inspired by Buchholtz and Koster. The commissioned compositions were premiered in concerts and most of them were recorded.

In 2022, a new research project titled MuGi.lu (Music and Gender in Luxembourg) was launched at the University of Luxembourg, in collaboration with MUGI (Musik und Gender im Internet, a joint research project of the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg and the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt Weimar). Thus, the archival, research and music mediation work that has been carried out at the CID | Fraen an Gender for the last 25 years is now being continued at the University of Luxembourg in a new form: with the development of digital archives, an emphasis on oral history film interviews and the project's own homepage, which focuses on sources of different materiality (https://mugi.lu).

Keywords

Music and Gender in Luxembourg, Helen Buchholtz, Lou Koster, Tatsiana Zelianko, Catherine Kontz, Albena Petrovic, Stevie Wishart

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Music by female composers was often better known during their lifetime then in subsequent decades when it was rendered invisible, no longer played often for misogynistic reasons and gradually forgotten (Higgins, 2024; Citron, 1993). In recent years there has been renewed interest thanks to much groundwork which is presented here with regard to Luxembourg. Archival and mediation work relating to music and gender in Luxembourg was initiated by the documentation center (then CID Femmes, a feminist library and successor of the Mouvement de Libération des femmes), where I worked for thirty years.

This women's documentation centre was founded in March 1992 by a working group with the aim of steering the women's movement in Luxembourg in a new direction. A decisive factor was a crisis in the feminist movement that was not just limited to Luxemburg: From the end of the 1980s, there was a decline in membership of the militant feminist movement in many European countries, which ultimately led to a far-reaching reorganisation and repositioning (Kmec (ed.), 2012, chapter 3).

Another big challenge at the time was the apparent 'lack' of women's history. Academics who were interested in women's history found the source documents and literature on women in public archives and libraries to be extremely sparse. Since the late 1970s, women's archives and libraries had gradually been established in some cities and countries. The aims were now to expand this archival work with the help of state funding and to network internationally. The models for the CID femmes collection's focus in the field of music were already existing women's music archives and organisations at the time: Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica[1], Internationaler Arbeitskreis Frau und Musik[2], Frauen-MusikForum FMF[3], Stichting Vrouw en Muziek[4], Europäisches Frauenmusikarchiv Düsseldorf[5], Archivio Music, Libreria delle donne Firenze[6].

Music archival work at CID | Fraen an Gender began with a chance discovery in 1998: While researching the Luxembourgish composer Lou Koster, I came across the name of another female composer in a feminist Luxembourgish women's magazine entitled Die Luxemburgerin. Zeitschrift für die gesamten Fraueninteressen Luxemburgs (N.N., 1933, 1935, 1935). The name was Helen Buchholtz (1877-1953), and she had been completely forgotten over the years. I was only able to find a few of her printed songs in the Luxembourg National Library. But that was all: there was no biographical information and no information on any of her music related activity. In the few books and many articles on music in Luxembourg written in the 20th century, she was simply ignored. Only one article, an overview of the history of music in Luxembourg, mentioned her in a single sentence as a composer of orchestral works, which the author deemed praiseworthy (Meyers, 1949, p. 434).

The Helen Buchholtz Archive

That same year I was invited to appear on a television program to talk about Lou Koster and during the interview, I mentioned the name Helen Buchholtz. A few days later I was contacted by an elderly gentleman, who had seen the program. He invited me to his home promising me some new information about Buchholtz: As it turned out, it was the composer's nephew, François Ettinger, who surprised me with a suitcase filled to the brim with music manuscripts - 250 of them, I later counted. He was very eager to help and gave me the suitcase to look through and to analyse the many scores in my own time. In further long conversations with Mr. Ettinger, I obtained biographical information, as well as sources and documents relating to Buchholtz's biography and her musical activities. A first research article summarized these findings (Roster, 1999).

Evidently, a piece can only be performed, researched, or edited if scores of that piece are preserved in archives and those archives are accessible to the public. For many female composers, this is not the case and for a long time it wasn't the case for Helen Buchholtz. When Buchholtz's nephew decided that he wanted to permanently leave the estate to a public archive I had the opportunity, as music and culture representative at CID | Fraen an Gender, to set up our first manuscript archive. The archive was catalogued in 2000 and introduced with a series of well-attended concert-lectures. In the next years, further concerts, three CD recordings, research, and educational projects as well as book publications were to follow. TV coverage, radio broadcasts, newspaper and magazine articles as well as University research work have since contributed to making the composer known in Luxembourg and beyond, thereby revealing a forgotten chapter in Luxembourg's music history.

"From the end of the 1980s, there was a decline in membership of the militant feminist movement in many European countries"

Today, the Helen Buchholtz Archive contains the manuscripts of around 140 compositions, alongside further sketches, and unfinished drafts. In addition to piano sonatas, character pieces and baroque dance movements for piano as well as orchestral and wind orchestra music and a few choral pieces, the song and ballad repertoire constitutes a key area of her creation: Helen Buchholtz left behind 53 songs and ballads in German, Luxembourgish and French. She had published only 15 of them – as well as three pieces for choir. All her other compositions had been left unpublished. The archive also contains a biographical collection with original family documents.

Helen Buchholtz was born in 1877 in Esch/Alzette in the south of Luxembourg and came from a wealthy family – her father was a retailer of household goods and owner of a successful brewery – who encouraged her musical talent. As there was no music conservatory in Luxembourg at the time, she received

private music lessons and continued to study music autodidactically. Later she took occasional private lessons in composition, with Gustav Kahnt, Jean-Pierre Beicht and Fernand Mertens. Buchholtz lived in Wiesbaden, Germany from 1914 to 1924, where her compositions were played by the renowned Kurorchester Wiesbaden. During this time, she began publishing some of her own works. As heiress to a quarter of her father's brewery, she could afford the luxury of devoting herself entirely to composing. As far as we know, she neither performed in concerts nor taught music. She died in 1953, and while her works were being performed in the interwar period in Wiesbaden and Luxembourg, there was no audience for her music after the Second World War[7], a time when women were once again confined to traditional gender roles and female artists received little recognition or acclaim for their work (Wagener, 1999). When she died, her descendants packed her scores up in sacks to be burnt as they were considered worthless by them. François Ettinger, who happened to be passing by, but had little connection to music himself, saved the trashbags from destruction and kept the scores of his 'favourite aunt', as he put it, as a memento, but their musical and historical value eluded him.[8]

The Lou Koster Archive

Setting up this first archive on Helen Buchholtz highlighted the very practical consequences of what I had found before with regard to figures such as Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre, Alma Mahler-Schindler and many others (Roster,1995): the lack of preservation of music by female composer, due to condescending disinterest or simple lack of knowledge. This was also true for Lou Koster (1889-1973), who was better known in Luxembourg, at least during her lifetime. Unlike the reclusive composer Buchholtz, she had been musically active in many areas: working as silent film musician, coffee house pianist, concert pianist, song accompanist, and orchestral violinist, she became director of a salon women's orchestra and taught the piano, for 46 years, at the Luxembourg Conservatory of Music, founded in 1906. But after her death, similarly to Helen Buchholtz, only a very small part of her work was publicly accessible.

Lou Koster, thirteen years younger than Helen Buchholtz, was born in Luxembourg City in 1889 (Roster, 2019). The two composers later knew each other but had very different backgrounds. Lou Koster came from a less well-off and less conformist milieu: her father, born to a family of day labourers, was a railway manager and his political views placed him on the fringes of Luxembourg's predominantly Catholic society as he was a freethinker and committed socialist. Lou Koster shared her musical talent with her maternal grandfather, Franz Ferdinand Höbich from Silesia, who was the first bandmaster of the Luxembourg military band founded in 1842 and later also leader of the orchestra at the grand-ducal court. As there was no conservatory or music school in Luxembourg at the time, it was her grandfather and, after his death, her mother Emma, who taught her music. As a child, Lou Koster found a playful approach to composing. However, the first compositions that she recognized as such were written much later, around 1906 or 1908. As she was very shy, they were not published or performed publicly in concerts. Instead, she played them herself – almost anonymously – in places where composers were not mentioned by name: as a pianist in bars of renowned hotels and in silent film cinemas.

During and after the First World War, she gained in confidence and built herself a reputation as musician. She sought and found publishers for her piano compositions in Germany (Aurora) and Belgium (Maison Musicale Moderne). Immediately after the First World War, she joined the Luxembourgish campaign for women's suffrage, which was introduced in Luxembourg in 1919. She was also one of the first composers in her homeland to join the society SACEM France and passed an entrance exam in Paris. Her feminist operetta An der Schwemm (At the Swimming Pool) was based on a text of well-known author and feuilletonist Batty Weber (see Millim, 2017). The first and so far only operetta by a Luxembourgish composer was premiered in 1922.

In the 1930s, Koster became known primarily through Radio Luxembourg – a transmitter station with a reach far within and beyond Europe – as her music was played in no less than 108 programs between 1934 and 1939. In addition to piano, orchestral and wind band music as well as choral music, Lou Koster wrote around 140 songs and in the late 1960s, shortly before her death, a major vocal work, Der Geiger von Echternach (The fiddler of Echternach), for soloists, choir and piano or orchestra, which is well known in Luxembourg to this day. She died in November 1973, leaving behind more than 300 compositions. Most of them have not yet been published.

When I first started researching her (Roster, 1997), the greater part of her scores as well as biographical documents were scattered across attics, offices, and basements of several private persons. Her orchestral music and the performance material of her operetta An der Schwemm were even considered lost at the time. I managed to locate both in a private storage facility of a musician. Not even the owner himself knew that he had the material in his possession. I felt that it was extremely important to collect the material and to create a publicly accessible archive. I didn't know at the time that, unlike the rather straight-forward establishment of the Helen Buchholtz archive, the creation of a Lou Koster archive would entail many complications and hurdles:

Even though after initial discussions and negotiations the owners were willing to make their manuscripts and documents available to the public in one form or another – in the original or in form of a copy –, the reluctance of some of them to hand them over to a feminist archive was great and seemed insurmountable at the time. CID | Fraen an Gender therefore initiated a collaboration with the Luxembourg National Library to jointly set up archives on Lou Koster.

Lou Koster © Archiv CID | Fraen an Gender.

The National Library was able to buy a large number of manuscripts in the possession of the singer Laurent Koster (no family ties), and was delighted to receive a comprehensive donation from tenor Venant Arend, who also decided much later, in 2016, to donate further Koster music autographs to CID | Fraen an Gender. Thanks to this collaboration between libraries, it was possible to collect most, if not all, of the music autographs. Some remain privately owned as part of a family archive to this day, but thanks to the former owner, the singer Béby Kohl-Thommes, copies could be made for the Lou Koster archive at CID | Fraen an Gender. The composer's nephew, Jean-Paul Koster, who also had numerous biographical documents in his possession, made them available for digitization by CID | Fraen an Gender. The National Library's Music Documentation Centre CEDOM was however severely understaffed at that moment, meaning that the cataloguing of their new Koster collection was bound to take a long time. An Excel list with detailed descriptions was only made publicly available in 2024 in the Luxembourgish library's online catalogue a-z.lu (Cedom, 2024). Before that, to allow researchers and musicians to access the collections as soon as possible, both partners agreed to copy the entire Koster collection held by the National Library and make it available to the public at the CID | Fraen an Gender in the form of copies as a temporary solution. In 2003, this collection was catalogued at CID | Fraen an Gender. As with the archive Helen Buchholtz, the documents were catalogued in a database named Elica, specially developed for libraries by the Centre Henry Tudor (today LIST), a system that was unfortunately later discontinued. They are now catalogued in Excel lists, which are available from CID | Fraen an Gender on request. The Lou Koster Archive was officially opened in December 2003, accompanied by the launch of a CD containing songs by Lou Koster and Helen Buchholtz, every song composed by Buchholtz and a selection of those by Lou Koster, all in world premiere recordings (Buchholtz & Koster, 2003).

Around 2012, the desire arose to critically reflect on the CID Fraen a Gender's ten years of music archival work through an international collaboration. Together with the Universities of Oldenburg and Luxembourg and with other lecturers from music institutes at the Universities of Vienna, Salzburg, Cologne, Hanover and Neubrandenburg, the conference 'Women Composers in Luxembourg' was organised, focusing on four main topics: Luxembourg in Europe (national, cultural and gender identities); musical analysis and gender; the phenomenon of kitsch and, in particular, the topic 'archive - memory – gender' (see: Roster Unseld, 2014).

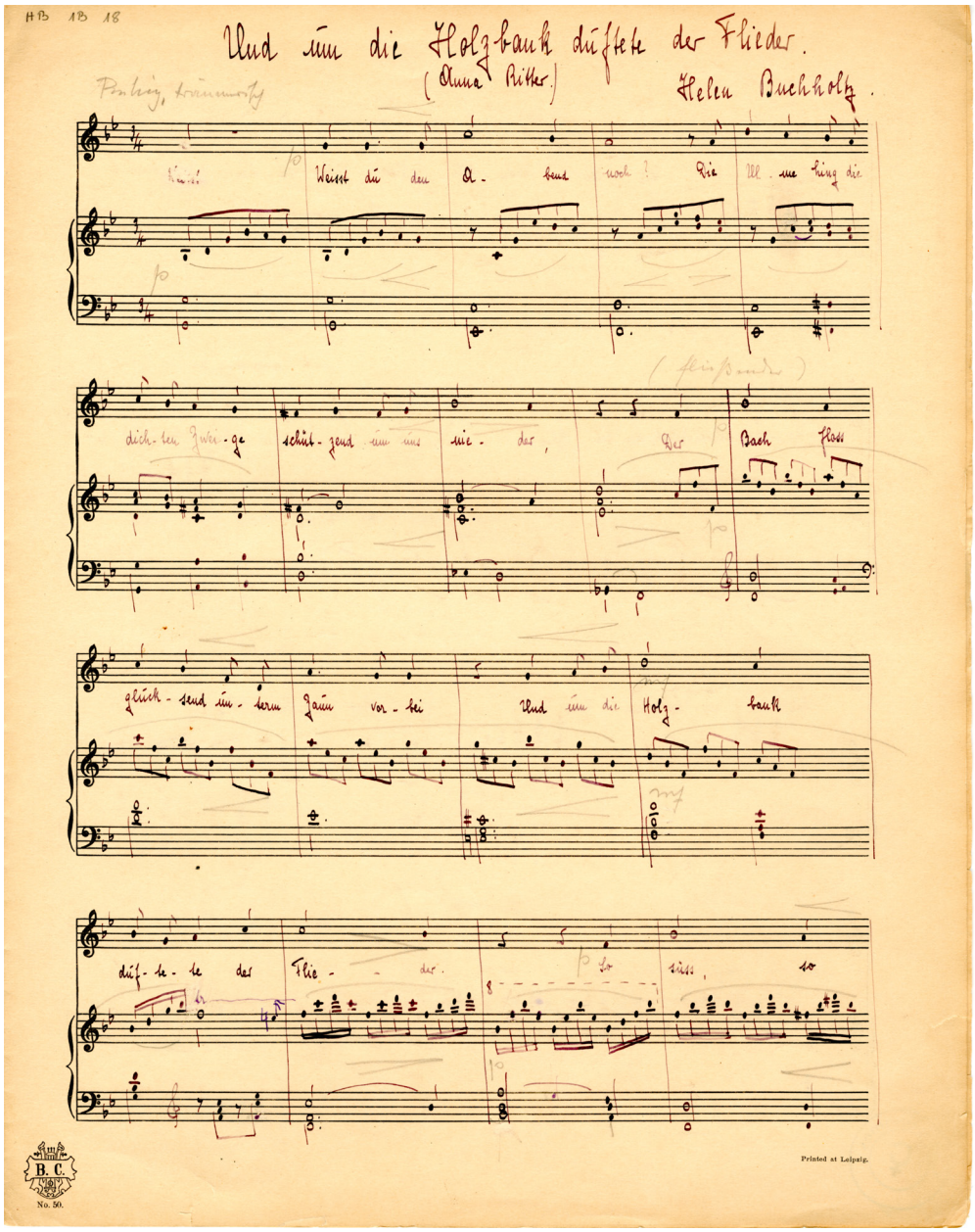
The discussions on the fourth topic were particularly inspiring for our future archival and mediation work. The fact that parts of Buchholtz's and Koster's biographical and musical estates had been preserved was more due to chance than anything else. Neither Buchholtz nor Koster endeavoured to 'prospectively' care for their own memory by giving sheet music and ego documents to public archives, either in their entirety or in specific selections, and thus, as Aleida Assmann puts it, sending themselves their 'message in a bottle' to posterity (Assmann, 2006, p. 39). Such stories of transmission as that of Koster and Buchholtz place the composer's 'rediscovery' – or according to Assmann, the 'retrospective memory', in which posterity, as the recipient of this ›message in a bottle‹, records something and saves it from being forgotten – under certain auspices and generate questions and consequences for the handling of the sources: Since the estates were not organised by Koster and Buchholtz themselves, it remains unclear how fragmentary what has been handed down should be considered and likewise which of the surviving musical manuscripts can be considered as authorized by the composer. Neither is clear how to deal with gaps in sources. Buchholtz clearly endeavoured to produce fair copies of her compositions, which make the distinction between drafts and final versions much easier for archivists and musicians. In contrast, Koster left behind several undated, and often musically slightly different versions of a work which are so similar in their handwriting that it is not possible to identify which should be selected for performances or recordings as the "final version". Producing edited scores of her compositions is much more difficult than with Buchholtz. In addition to this, the fact that so few autobiographical or performance documents have survived increases the lack of orientation for the archivists.

Another difficulty is that of (re)inscribing women in cultural memory: How and where can this succeed in a musical culture in which most prestigious concert institutions to this day continue to construct a music history of "white male heroes" ('Heroenmusikgeschichtsschreibung') by basing their programs on a musical canon generated in the 19th century (Citron, 1993)? How long will female composers continue to be performed mainly in niches, in a smaller, separate and underfunded sphere – in concerts for example presented by women's organisations?

Letting music resound again

The aim of these archive foundations was, as already indicated, not only to make the scores of Luxembourgish women composers accessible for the first time, but to develop ideas for projects that would ensure that their music was performed again. These included research projects in collaboration with the universities of Oldenburg, Luxembourg and Salzburg, music-educational projects in collaboration with the Luxembourg Ministry of Education (Roster & Höhn, 2006) as well as conservatories and music schools, concert-lectures and over the course of time a total of nine CD-productions and a series of concerts.

There were already "role models" in this area too at the time: The founding of women's music archives in different European countries mentioned above meant that from the last quarter of the 20th century, the compositions finally brought to light were performed again at women's music festivals or concerts, sometimes even for the first time, after long periods of silence. To mention just a few of these festivals



Helen Buchholz: Und um die Holzbank duftete der Flieder © Archiv CID | Fraen an Gender

held in Luxembourg's immediate neighbouring countries: the Frau und Musik Festival 1980 in Bonn and Cologne, the festival Komponistinnen gestern – heute in Heidelberg from 1985, the editions of the Internationales Komponistinnen-Festival in Kassel from 1987, the concerts of Musica Femina Munich from 1987, the concert series Komponistinnen und ihr Werk from 1990 in Kassel or the Festival Musiciennes à Ouessant in France, which has been taking place from 2001 to the present day. Additionally, women's music labels, such as Troubadisc, and music publishers, such as Furore Verlag, which is still very active today, were founded.

For concert- and CD-productions I worked with select musicians and orchestras interested in discovering this new repertoire: The sopranos Mady Bonert and later Gerlinde Sämann together with pianist Claude Weber were the first to explore the songs of Helen Buchholtz. French tenor Vincent Lièvre-Picard, together with the pianist Emmanuel Olivier, took on the repertoire of French songs by Koster. The pianist and composer Marco Kraus trawled through Buchholtz' extensive legacy of piano sonatas and piano pieces, and Jessica Chan also vigorously reinterpreted Koster's piano music. With the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg and the Choeur National du Luxembourg, Koster's ballad Der Geiger von Echternach was performed and recorded in an orchestral version by Pierre Cao. I was also especially happy to work with an excellent German A Capella Ensemble: Singer Pur, with whom we produced a world premiere recording of the original piano version of Koster's Der Geiger von Echternach. Orchestre Estro Armonico also published a CD with Koster's orchestral music. Finally, with Opera Mobile and the Orchestre de Chambre du Luxembourg Koster's operetta An der Schwemm was brought to the stage again, 78 years later after the last performance.

As a result of the CD productions in particular, performers abroad also became aware of the composers and requested digital copies of the music for their own concert projects. Every year, we receive several enquiries from various countries. To give but one example: a waltz suite by Lou Koster was performed by the Mozarteumorchester under the direction of Leslie Suganandarajah at their 2022 New Year's Eve concert 'Alles Walzer' at the Großes Festspielhaus Salzburg (see: https://events.at/event/festspielhaus-salzburg-silvesterkonzert).

The concert and CD productions entailed much prior research and close cooperation with musicians. With Buchholtz, in contrast to composers with a history of live performances, recordings and critical reception, we lacked any points of reference. No historical recordings and only very few author-authorized publications of scores existed. Music had to be rehearsed and played primarily from the manuscripts, which sometimes raised difficult questions. As Peter Hecker, the artistic director of one of our CD recordings, put it, we were the ones who 'hammered in the first peg' of a new history of interpretation and were responsible for setting the initial course. Before concerts and CD recordings, we therefore often organized a series of house concerts where we discussed our questions about the music and its interpretation. The practice of playing from music manuscripts without necessarily having heard the pieces beforehand, was common for centuries, but has largely been lost in the age of widespread music printing and reproduced recording media.

The challenging process from their first review and rehearsing of the autographs of French songs by Lou Koster to their recording in the studio is described as follows by tenor Vincent Lièvre-Picard and pianist Emmanuel Olivier:

"A large heavy kraft envelope: that was our first contact with the complete collection of Lou -Koster's French ‹mélodies›. [...] This document contained a collection of 35 songs, with ‹Ma douleur› still to be reconstructed by Nikolay Temniskov from existing records. Thirty-five pieces of music, mostly in manuscript form. The first, and not the least, task was to become familiar with the notation of the composer. [...] Once this out of the way, we could concentrate on what was essential, namely giving life to the music of Lou Koster. [...] With this in mind, we worked a lot, taking and leaving songs, coming back to songs previously disregarded, trying to not always return to those that we liked best (in my view, the ‹mélodies› to Paul Verlaine's poems should be part of the recitalist's repertoire), but also to look deeper into the songs that we did at first not like so much and which sometimes later surprised us with an almost symbolist strangeness. [...] Before going to the recording studio, we had performed in concerts, presented these melodies to an a priori reticent audience which did, however, very much like what we had brought to them, and this was for us a great encouragement. We listened to our concerts in sessions where we had to assess our own performance, an exercise which we found particularly difficult but revealing, helping us figure out how much of what we had wanted to put into these ‹mélodies› really came through. [...] And now, here it is, this long-awaited disc! If we have hereby been pioneers and thus contributed towards enhancing the repertoire of French ‹mélodies›, we have achieved our goal and that makes us very happy." (Koster 2014, CD-booklet, pp. 17-18)

In her written review of her engagement with Buchholtz's music, Gerlinde Sämann also expresses the creative inspiration that can take place in a cross-disciplinary collaboration to explore unknown repertoire:

"So, I started working with her music myself and, little by little, found my way into these occasionally mysterious compositions. After having familiarized myself with the music, the rehearsing could start. [...] *We had a great time, which involved a lot of research, getting to know the composer and her music, food and laughter. I even had a crash course in 'Lëtzebuergesch' [...] and the patience and hard work paid off with me being able to prove myself in Ro' a Fridden, which is a lovely song, of which I liked the third stanza especially. [...] We thought and spoke often about Helen Buchholtz, and I imagined her with us, silently sitting on the sofa sipping a cup of tea*

“Such a dialogue is, of course, a one-way street”

and wondering about my way of pacing her music. All in all, though, I think that she would have enjoyed our interpretation of her songs.” (Buchholtz 2019, CD-booklet, pp-30-31)

In the case of music autographs that were difficult to decipher or had to be transposed into a different voice range, editions of scores had to be created. For the concert and the CD project with Gerlinde Sämann, the scores were also set in Braille. In different teams and for different concerts or CD productions, we edited around 70 scores over the years for both composers: Around 40 songs, 10 orchestral works, 16 piano pieces and finally a practical edition, or rather, a reconstruction from fragmentary surviving performance material, of the operetta An der Schwemm by Lou Koster. Luxembourg Music Publishers participated in one of our recording projects and produced an edition of the score of Der Geiger von Echternach in two different versions. We want these scores to be available to other musicians: Almost all can be ordered free of charge via MuGi.lu. The list with the edited scores of Buchholtz is already available on the Helen Buchholtz page at mugi.lu (under the heading ‘works’), the one for Lou Koster is currently a work in progress and will be published soon.

Contemporary Music and creative musical resonances

Following the founding of historical music archives, a logical second step seemed to be the creation of collections on contemporary female composers born, living permanently in Luxembourg or having lived in Luxembourg only for a certain period. These include Elisabeth Flunger (AUT), Catherine Kontz (L), Elisabeth Naske (AUT), Albena Petrovic (BULG/L), Stevie Wishart (GB) and Tatsiana Zelianko (BYS/L). Further collections on Nigji Sanges or Núria Bonet were planned at the CID | Fraen an Gender but were not pursued when I joined the University of Luxembourg to continue to work there on MuGi.lu (see below). Here, too, it seemed important not only to archive the music, but also to help to bring it to public attention, especially as current statistics in different European countries repeatedly show that music by female composers, even in the field of contemporary music, is performed much less than that of male composers (Elles Women Composers, 2024; and for Luxembourg: Lorentz a.o., 2023). Ways to counter this tendency were the commissioning of compositions, organizing concerts and lectures, publishing articles, and developing educational materials and workshops for schools, conservatories or music schools, projects which are continued today by MuGi.lu.

During these collaborations, I came up with the idea of bringing music by female composers from Luxembourg’s musical history into dialogue with contemporary music. I did not envision to simply have works of different time periods performed at the same concert. In addition, this dialogue was to take place on a compositional level. Even if the musical forms and reference points of the individual projects differ from one another, this was and is a theme that was in the spirit of the times: in recent decades, works of New Music have increasingly reacted artistically to ‘historical’ sounds, structures or compositions through adaptation, variation, transformation, quotation and homage (see for example: Cloot & Saxer & Thorau, 2007).

At the time, I was inspired by the idea of ‘stille Botschaften’ (‘silent messages’), which I consider to be a type of communication between female composers of different times on an emotional, intellectual, and creative level. The term ‘bridge compositions’, denoting these commissions as bridges built between historical and contemporary female composers, was also an important term for me and became the working title of this project.

Such a dialogue is, of course, a one-way street: It is the contemporary composer who enters into dialogue by visiting the archive, viewing sources, listening to and reading scores of the historical composer. She enters musically “in resonance” (Rosa, 2016). The result is a new composition in her own creative language. From 2014 on, I commissioned compositions in the form of Cartes Blanches (roughly translatable with ‘blank checks’) from various composers who had an affinity for the concept. The only guideline was that the composers start the process by choosing an aspect or element of the music and/or biography of the historical composer in question as a ‘core idea or theme’ for their work.

In order to give an insight into these creative processes, using different approaches and various forms, I have described these four compositions

‘Bridge compositions’

In homage to Helen Buchholtz. For the double CD Helen Buchholtz im Dialog mit zeitgenössischen Komponistinnen (Buchholtz 2019), also documented on film (Schiltz 2018).

Catherine Kontz: … ***und um die Holzbank duftete der Flieder*** (Anna Ritter) for voice and piano.

Albena Petrovic: ***Illusions*** (Marcel Noppeney) for voice and piano.

Stevie Wishart: ***Strahlender Himmel*** (Willy Goergen) for voice and piano.

Tatsiana Zelianko: ***5 Colouristic Miniatures*** (Eva von Collani) for voice and piano

In homage to Lou Koster. For the concert Un très léger bruit d’ailes, Vincent Lièvre-Picard, tenor, Emmanuel Olivier, piano. Neimënster. Luxembourg, 21 November 2014. Recorded by CNA, documented on film (Schiltz 2014).

Catherine Kontz: ***Pantomime*** (Paul Verlaine) for voice and piano.

Tatsiana Zelianko: ***Garde to coeur encor*** (Marcel Noppeney) for voice and piano.

Albena Petrovic: ***Le piano*** (Paul Verlaine) for voice and piano.

In homage to Lou Koster. For the Festival *Musiciennes* à Ouessant, Brittany, 2-5 August 2015. Recorded by CNA and documented on film (Schiltz 2017).

Albena Petrovic: ***Postscriptum Suite dramatique*** for wind quintett.

Tatsiana Zelianko ***Postscriptum Soir d’été*** for string quartet.

Catherine Kontz: ***Postscriptum Traum*** for violin, marimba, and accordion.

Catherine Kontz: ***Le joueur de vièle*** for violin and dancers.

Robin Pharo: ***La lune blanche*** for soprano and viola da gamba.

In homage to Frieda Salomon-Ehrlich and Helen Buchholtz. For a concert to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the last deportations from Cinqfontaines to Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, Cinqfontaines, 15th April 2018.

Yvonne Timoianu: ***Zum Gedenken*** for cello solo.

Yvonne Timoiano: ***Doudeg Dierfer*** for cello solo.

In homage to Lena Toldi, a Russian immigrant in Luxembourg. For the Festival Musiciennes à Ouessant, Brittany, August 2018. Recorded by CNA and documented on film (Schiltz 2019).

Tatsiana Zelianko: ***Le Temps de la cigale*** for balalaika and piano.

In homage to Lou Koster. For the performance of the feminist operetta An der Schwemm by Lou Koster in January and February in 2024 Esch/Alzette and Ettelbruck.

Tatsiana Zelianko: ***Prologue et Epilogue An der Schwemm***.

In homage to Josephine Schmoll. For the project *Soundgardening – waltz queens and marching women*, LUGA (Luxembourg Urban Garden), 8th of June 2025. Will be recorded by CNA and filmed by Kinoshi (Eric Lamèhne & Rae Lyn Lee).

Tatsiana Zelianko: ***Rosenmär*** for string quintet (two violins, alto, violoncello, double bass).

See also: In homage to Helen Buchholtz. For installation *Casa mia* by visual artist Doris Drescher, presented at Venice Biennale in 2001, with video: Improvisations on Helen Buchholtz’ ***Ave Maria*** by Mady Bonert, Iglika Marinova and Claude Weber, *https://www.mudam.com/de/kunstsammlung/doris-drescher*

featured on the CD 'Helen Buchholtz im Dialog mit zeitgenössischen Komponistinnen as follows:

In her bridge composition ...und um die Holzbank duftet der Flieder' Catherine Kontz wanted to explore the connection between musical and olfactory imagination: She cites the songs of the birds that would be found sitting in lilac bushes. The fragrant sprigs of lilac are rendered real in the smellscape as well as the soundscape of the piece: The audience smells the fragrance of lilacs as they hear the pianist cutting the branches, this is a reference to the Japanese art of Ikebana. Kontz dedicates the piece to her mother and the 'pinkish-purple tree' in her family's garden, in which the birds that are cited in the piece are yearly guests. In the piece, Kontz wants to expand auditory perception through an exploration of space, movement, and of other cognitive forms.

Albena Petrovic decided to set Marcel Noppeney's 'Illusions' to music anew and explained this: "The text was not just an inspiration for me, it supports the entire structure, development and dramaturgy of my piece. It was only after I had selected 'Illusions' that I found out that it was the only text[9] that had previously inspired two historical composers: Lou Koster and Helen Buchholtz. Now there are three songs by female composers that are based on this impressionist, dream-like, and graceful text." [...]

In her revision of 'Einsamer Weg' Tatsiana Zelianko broke down the text and rebuilt it into a five-part, miniature-like cycle. What especially interested her was the deep sadness and melancholia of the poem by Eva von Collani. In the soprano part she combines the classical Bel Canto singing with recitative. She does this in order to portray the text's progression from a melancholic immersion towards a state of emotional disarray. Zelianko locates the defining element of her five-part cycle's structure and mood in the sentence: "Sieh, meine Seele irrt durch die Nacht, die Gärten der Vergessenheit zu finden" [Look, my soul wanders through the night to find the gardens of oblivion.] The virtuosic piano score in dialogue with the soprano voice further endows each miniature with its own sensibility and interpretation. Typical for the cycle is also the floating rhythm: by overlaying polyphonic textures in voice and piano the rhythmic pulse is lost. This floating wandering also defines the music of Buchholtz herself.

For Stevie Wishart it was not a specific text which Buchholtz had set to music that inspired her composition. In her composition 'Strahlender Himmel' she was concerned with a person close to Helen Bucholtz: the poet Willy Goergen (1867-1942), whose texts she had set to music and with whom she had a close friendship. A particularly puzzling object of Buchholtz's estate is a handwritten copy in Buchholtz's writing of a love letter, written in German and addressed to her, no mention of the sender's name. The sender could be Willy Goergen. Wishart was interested in this hypothetical, she reflects on this:

„So with this very special text [the love letter] I set about setting it to music — initially improvising on the piano looking at the words beside me. The score becomes increasingly intricate in a spontaneous spirit of heightening expressivity, something like a written-out improvisation. The performers either follow the composer's fully notated version or use it as the basis for extemporisation (as recorded by Gerlinde and Claude) while keeping to the integrity of the composed work — very much like a solo singer and accompanist might extemporise a Baroque recitative. The work is modal and uses only the white notes of the piano and looking back to pre-1800, considerations of tempo, articulation, phrasing, and dynamics are structurally determined and so depend on the performer's engagement with the work. Again harking back to earlier times the most complex aspects to the singer's part are composed using Renaissance and Baroque-like ornaments (liquescents, various trillos, rapid runs and glissandi) in order to avoid overcomplicated notation and to give expressive responsibility to the performer." (Buchholtz 2019, Booklet text, pp. 11-13, transl. from German).

Since these 'bridge compositions' are rather innovative, we sought to document the process of their creation. The filmmaker Anne Schiltz was commissioned by the Centre national de l'audiovisuel to direct a series of documentary films that bear witness to rehearsals, performances and productions (Schiltz 2014, 2015, 2018; see also: Kinoshi, 2025). To illustrate this with an example, in 2014, Anne Schiltz filmed the rehearsals and the creation of the piece 'Pantomime' by Catherine Kontz, set to a text by Paul Verlaine, which Lou Koster had used for a song composed in 1935. Catherine Kontz's new song is written for tenor voice, piano and three Dictaphones. The melody starts off as a tune reminiscent of Lou Koster's time, but then the three Dictaphones come into play, recording, and playing back the music, creating a layering of sounds that becomes more and more distorted. At the same time, the soloist undergoes a transformation on stage from singer to mime artist. Anne Schiltz says (in her part of our joint Lecture-Recital at the conference VOICES OF WOMEN on 10 October2024):

"In these films, my objective is to capture not only the musical performance itself, but also the rehearsal process that precedes it. This includes interactions and discussions between the performers and composers involved. This approach allows the viewer to gain insight into the intentions of the composers, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of their creative process and the nature of their artistic vision."

What remains to be seen after this 10-year collaboration with different composers is its impact: Has the engagement with historical music by female composers or aspects of women's history influenced their own self-image and work beyond the single commissioned composition? Have their views on women's cultural-political issues eventually been sharpened and have their positions on feminism in society changed, and has this perhaps had an impact on their composing? MuGi.lu is planning a new portal on the topic of feminisms in music, and

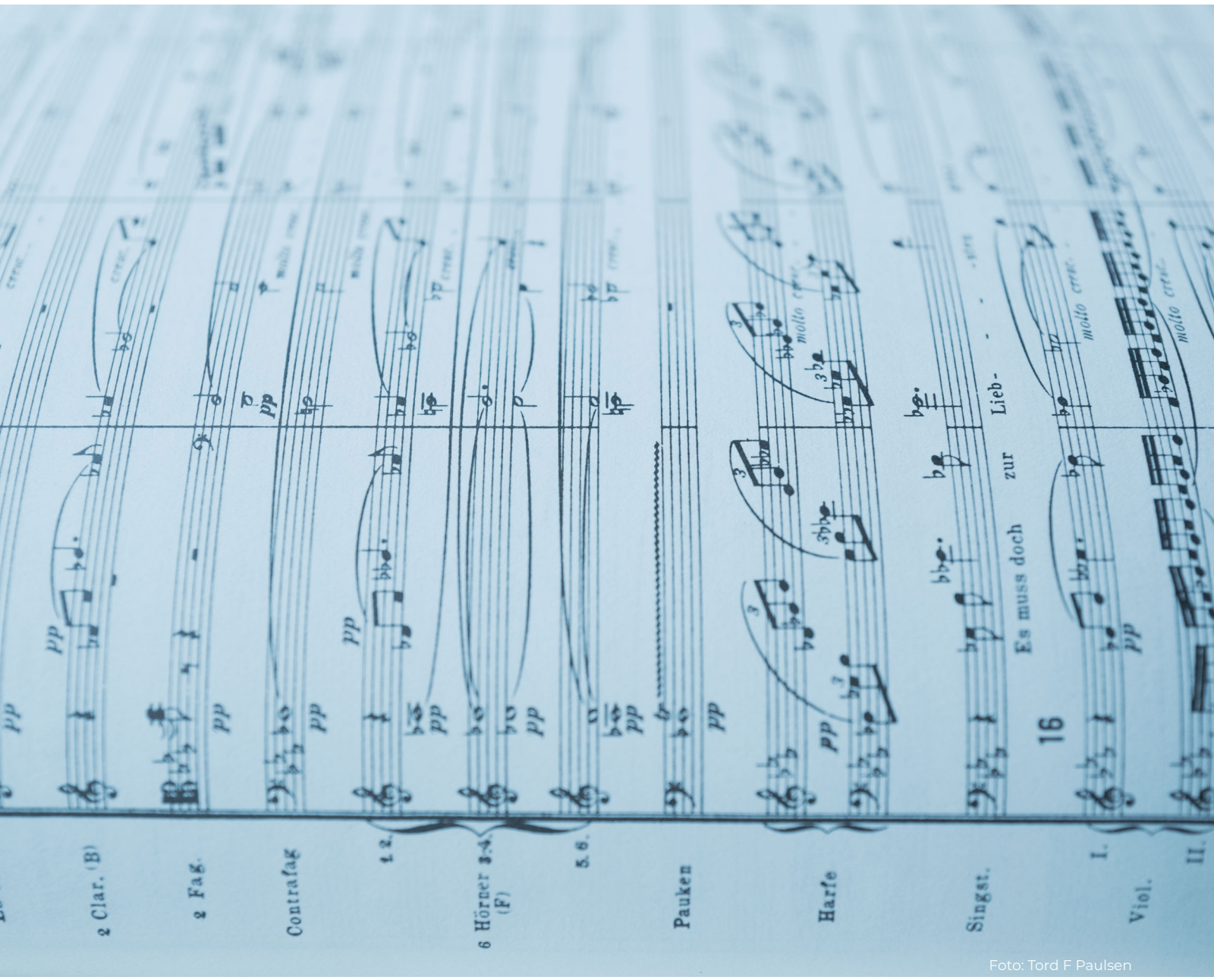


Foto: Tord F Paulsen

we wish to include this assessment via interviews in the accompanying research project.

MuGi.lu

After 30 years of existence, CID | Fraen an Gender wished to re-orient itself and to focus henceforth on cultural policy (see: Lorentz a.o., 2023) instead of on cultural productions including classical and contemporary music by female composers. In order to continue the archival, research and music mediation work that had been built up over 25 years, it was therefore necessary to find a new location and develop a new project: In January 2022, MuGi.lu – Music and Gender in Luxembourg was launched at the University of Luxembourg, Department of Humanities and hosted by the Institute of History with additional funding from private foundations (Fondation Loutsch-Weydert, Fondation Sommer), the City of Luxembourg and a generous private donor.

This change led to an important shift of perspective. Whereas previously the focus was exclusively on female composers, the perspective has now been broadened on the music-related activities looked upon from a gender perspective, even if we continue research on female musicians as one of our central topics. Documentary sources are also no longer collected and made accessible in a physical location, as it was the case at the library and archives at CID | Fraen an Gender. Instead, they are digitized at the university, but generally remain in the private possession of the person who made them available for digitization, though we do encourage these persons to deposit their archives in public libraries and archives, as the music documentation centre Cedom of the National Library in Luxembourg, to allow for their long-term preservation.

In a presentation of the project at a conference on Literature and Music in Luxembourg in March 2024, Sonja Kmec described our goal and our approach to the topic in the following words:
"Our starting point is the observation that women are not only less represented in certain fields, but that they are less visible even when they do exist, for structural reasons linked to networking but also to persistent clichés or to working and family care conditions that remain unequal for men and women. And this is true even more so for historical subjects. In that sense, it's a feminist critique, and the aim is to raise the profile of women musicians – composers, singers, pianists, and other performers. But it's not just about that. It's also about showing the impact that representations of gender, in other words the social and performative construction of gender, have had on their lives and on the image, we have of them". (Kmec/Roster/Schiltz, 2025)

The MuGi.lu interdisciplinary team comprises three editors and coordinators: a historian (Sonja Kmec), a documentary filmmaker with a background in anthropology and a focus on oral history film interviews (Anne Schiltz) and a musicologist (Danielle Roster). We like to call our project the "little sister" of the German project MUGI, with which we work closely. MUGI, in this case, stands for Musik und Gender im Internet. The project launched by renowned musicologist Beatrix Borchard in 2004 is led by the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg (Hfmt) and the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt Weimar, where Nina Noeske is responsible.

We work in collaboration with several researchers and institutions on the various pages of our website mugi.lu which was launched with a first portal on Helen Buchholtz on 24 November 2022, at the Salon de Helen Buchholtz in Esch/Alzette, on the birthday as well in the birthplace of the composer. The Salon de Helen Buchholtz is a biannual festival directed by Claude Weber where various repertoires are being performed, from baroque music to 21st century creations and where the performers are encouraged to design their programs diversely and to dedicate a part of one of them to music by female composers.

MuGi.lu's objective is to uncover topics and archives that have not yet been accessible or researched and to create digital collections. We enrich these collections by creating new content, for example by filming oral history interviews with musicians or by recording music by women composers. Additionally, MuGi.lu spearheads pedagogical projects and musical performances.

The different webpages display a carefully curated selection of documents. The complete archives, which are set up in the background of each new research topic, can also be accessed via request, via the CatDV asset management platform of the faculty, enabling musicians and researchers from around the globe to consult these documents, and fostering exchange between the academic community and musicians. To respect data protection and copyright issues, we collaborate with external partners, such as Luxorr and Sacem and received clearance from our DP Office and Ethic Review Panel.

From 2022 to 2024, we have developed nine portals, each composed of about a dozen Categories. These portals feature eight personalities from the Luxembourgish music scene, female composers and musicians, spanning from the late 19th century to the present day. In addition, one portal is dedicated to a musical work: Lou Koster's feminist operetta An der Schwemm. Most pages created to date are based at least partially on private archives belonging to the musicians themselves. In these cases, we have collaborated with the musicians to identify the most representative and pertinent documents from their archives. We have then set up a contract regarding document access and usage. However, we also reproduce a significant number of sources held by public institutions, such as the Centre national de l'audiovisuel, which has a substantial collection of historical recordings (for example a great number of studio recordings of Radio Luxembourg), the Centre national de littérature where we find for instance source material on the poets with whom 'our' composers collaborated or the already mentioned Cedom for a variety of autograph music scores and first prints, among others sources.
Pages on mugi.lu are organized by materiality, usually grouped into

14 categories. We bring together a diverse range of materials, including audio and video documents, musical scores, photographs, letters and other written documents, personal items, press reviews, TV and radio programmes and more. The main page contains a biographical or factual text. In case of contemporary musicians, the biographical text is based on a longer interview. In some cases, we add a document with a sample of direct quotations from the interview next to the text. This approach of integrating different materials from various sources is a cornerstone of the MuGi.lu project. Given the diverse nature of our subjects, the sources we utilise in the elaboration of a portal are also highly varied. Consequently, the existing categories can be tailored to suit the specific personality or topic or documents we have for each page.

One of the key elements of MuGi.lu, as mentioned, is the conducting and filming of oral history interviews whenever it is possible to do so. In those interviews, we mostly collect autobiographical accounts. We carefully prepare those interviews by conducting thorough research into the subject's life and history and arranging preliminary meetings in advance of the recording. During the filming process, we do ask questions or provide prompts, but we also allow interviewees to speak freely and determine themselves what they wish to discuss. Selected excerpts from the interviews are then published on the mugi.lu website, while the full interview can be viewed via CatDV. This whole endeavour is still a work in progress. We're planning to subtitle all our videos in three languages, but we're not quite there yet.

We try also to make collaborations between musicians visible on our pages. This allows us to showcase a part of the network of each musician while also featuring a greater number of artists. For example, in her oral history interview, we specifically asked pianist Jeannette Braun-Giampellegrini to provide details of her collaboration with composer Lou Koster and filmed her in interaction with her former student, pianist Lynn Orazi.

Finally, with regard to the VOICES OF WOMEN project, I would like to mention that MuGi.lu has a particular interest in vocal music: Historically, women composers in Luxembourg, as elsewhere, wrote greater parts of their music primarily for the private and semi-public spheres. Furthermore, given that women, especially in the 19th century, were permitted to study singing and piano, but had little or no possibility to perform in orchestras or wind bands and certainly not to conduct them, female composers frequently produced primarily vocal music. This is evident in the MuGi.lu collections, which hold a substantial number of vocal compositions.

Perspectives

Finally, I want to discuss MuGi.lu's future projects: For the next three years, during which funding at the University of Luxembourg is guaranteed, we are planning some more portals, rolling each of them out at an event combining conference and concert. One of them will be titled "Stepping outside gender roles," showcasing young singer-songwriters from Luxembourg who challenge traditional gender norms. This portal will include a documentary film by debuting director Céline Schlesser coached by an experimented team, Eric Lamhène and Rae Lyn Lee (Kinoshi). At the same time, a group of researchers from various disciplines at the university will analyse the texts and music of the portrayed musicians.

Recently, the University signed a convention with the municipality of Luxembourg for the project "Soundscapes of the City of Luxembourg". Within the framework of this project, we will develop a series of portals on topics such as: Entertainment music by 19th and 20th century female composers; gender and music education in municipal institutions in the 19th century; music patron Eugénie Pescatore-Dutreux and the creation of Luxembourg's conservatoire; gender and music during the Nazi-occupation; feminism in the music of contemporary composers. Musical events, workshops, composition commissions will accompany the creation of these pages.

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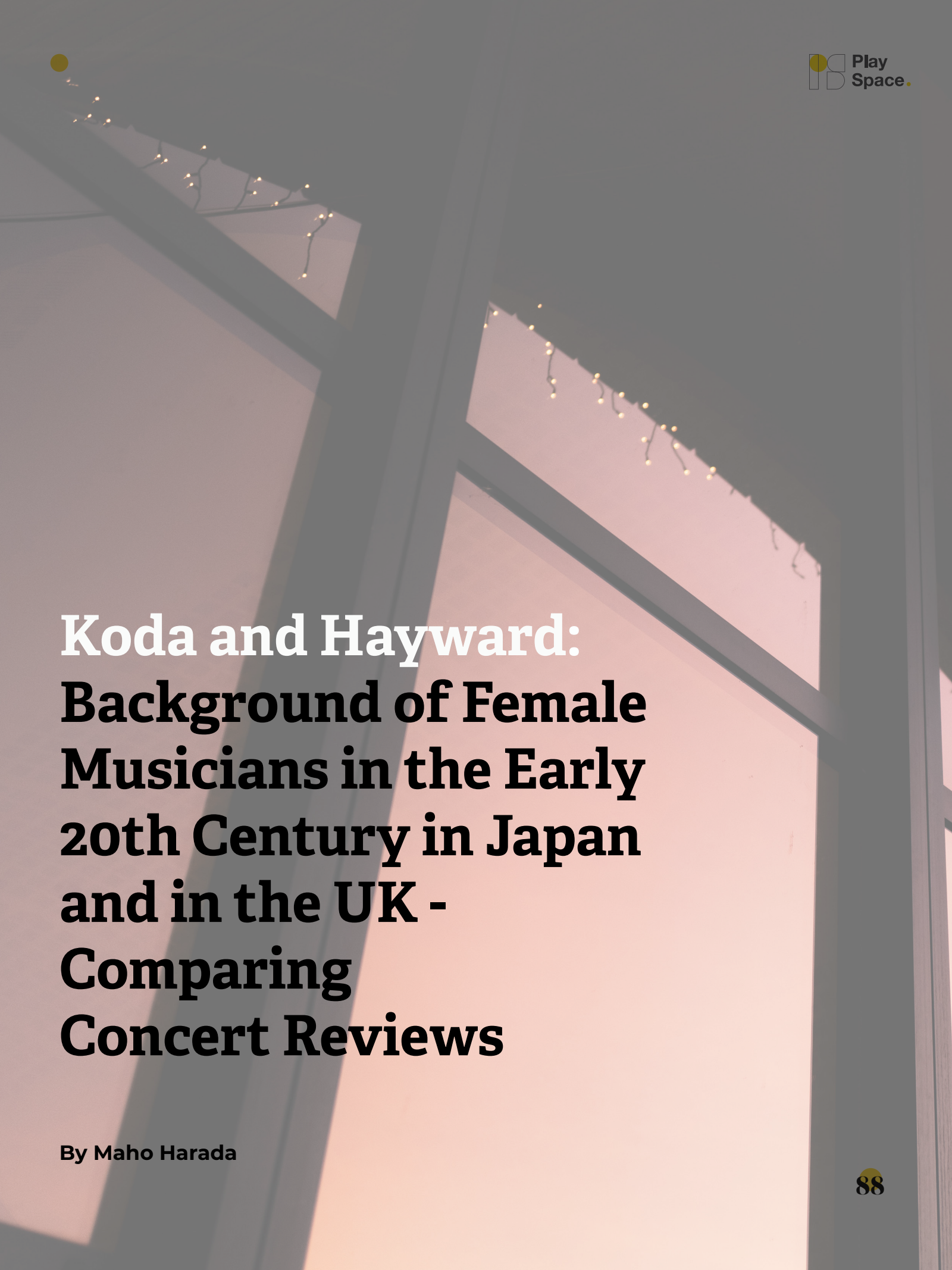
[1] Founded in 1978, https://www.donneinmusica.org/www/index_option_com_content_view_featured_Itemid_101_lang_it.html
[2] Founded in 1979, https://www.archiv-frau-musik.de/verein-iak-frau-und-musik
[3] Founded in 1982, today: ForumMusikDiversität https://www.musicdiversity.ch/
[4] 1987 gegründet https://vrouwenmuziek.nl/wordpress/en/stichting-vrouw-en-muziek-english/
[5] Founded in 1988 by Antje Olivier. The collection moved from Düsseldorf to Unna in 1992, where it was merged with the collection of conductor Elke Mascha-Blankenburg under the new name *International Women Composers' Library*, under the sponsorship of the city of Unna and the Detmold University of Music.
[6] Music archival work since 1990, https://www.libreriadelledonne.it/puntodivista/dallarete/la-libreria-delle-donne-di-firenze-quarantanni-di-una-storia/
[7] The research for press announcements and reviews was mainly carried out in the press database eluxemburgensia.lu of the Luxembourg National Library
[8] Information from personal conversations between the author and Buchholtz's nephew François Ettinger in 1998. See also: Deitz, 2024.
[9] Besides 'Illusions' by Marcel Noppeney one other text has been put to music by both Koster and Buchholtz: 'Rosenmär' by Nik Welter.



Koda and Hayward: Background of Female Musicians in the Early 20th Century in Japan and in the UK - Comparing Concert Reviews

By Maho Harada

Abstract

Throughout history, female musicians have often been expected to be charming, young, and look attractive, but not to demonstrate mastery greater than their male counterparts. One outcome of this emphasis on appearance rather than musical involvement is that after the death of female musicians, their impact is not nearly as documented as is the case for male musicians. 'She' is not recognised not only during her lifetime, but also posthumously.

This paper introduces two musicians from Japan and the UK who lived at the same time - Nobu Koda (1870-1946) and Marjorie Hayward (1885-1953). I use concert reviews to demonstrate their backgrounds, as case studies of female violinists of the time.

The first person in a community often receives an especially intense backlash - this was the case for Nobu Koda, the first composer of Western classical music in Japan. Koda was a violinist, a pianist, a teacher, and a composer, and was the first professional Japanese musician to study abroad. Despite her outstanding talent and career, she was forced to quit her job in the music institute because of a negative campaign by competitors for her position of head of the department.

Despite her 30-year contribution as an educator at the Royal Academy of Music, it is very hard to find information about the violinist Marjorie Hayward today. There are many recordings of the broadcasts she made, but further stories about her are not yet available. She started her professional career as a child prodigy, and many concert reviews in her childhood can be found, but the number of reviews decreased year by year.

Comparing these two, we can see what kinds of situations women have faced, and details of the differences in the philosophies towards music in these two countries at the dawn of Western classical music in Japan, and at the same time in the UK.

Keywords

Western classical music, violin, female musicians, Asian musicians, concert review

Introduction

In Freia Hoffmann's book Instrument und Körper: *Die musizierende Frau in der bürgerlichen Kultur* (2004), the author highlighted the depth of the historical misogyny in Western classical music. As it came to Japan in the late nineteenth century, the country might have had a chance to avoid the negative, centuries-long legacies that Western music had endured. Advantageously, the first Japanese symphony orchestra was formed with both men and women (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Editorial Committee, 1987), but the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, a professional orchestra established in the 1960s, employed only male musicians for its first few decades (Uechi, 2022, p. 232). Supposedly this was in imitation of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra or the Berlin Philharmonic (Bennett, 2016, Chapter 3). The misogyny inherent in the Japanese music industry might have been reflected by the misogyny belonging to the Western culture.

As a Japan-raised/UK-trained violinist, studying the historical background of Western classical music in the countries was necessary to understand their cultural specifics. In this research, I will feature two musicians: Nobu Koda (1870-1946), the first prominent Western classical musician in Japan; and Marjorie Hayward (1885-1953), who was a great British musician at the same time as Koda. To demonstrate the background of female violinists in the beginning of the twentieth century in two countries, I make critiques of the concert reviews about them. Comparing these, we can see the differences in the philosophies towards music in these two, at the dawn of Western music in Japan, and at the same time in the UK.

Gender norms in Western cultures have had a strong influence on music, but Asian cultures have their own gender norms, and they have also been applied to Western classical music in Asian countries. Tamagawa (2023, Chapter 1) points out that 'playing the piano' has been seen as a typical activity for 'good girls' in Japan since the Meiji era. My own experience suggests that learning the violin shares similar aspects with learning the piano. In fact, studying how to play the koto, a Japanese traditional instrument, was considered a suitable activity for ladies until early Meiji—but not as their profession—and later, either playing the piano or violin became an alternative (Tamagawa, 2023, p. 43, 57). Female artists of Western classical music in Japan are expected to be 'good girls' as Japanese women, but they also need to accept Western norms as Western music players—thus Japanese female musicians face dual sets of gender norms, both Eastern and Western.

Yoshihara points out that many instructors of the early Suzuki method were women (2007, 633), yet the names mentioned as successors of Suzuki in Yoshihara's book were all men (2007, Chapter 1). Female violinists were not rare, but those in the decision-making roles were almost all men. This overlaps with today's situation in Japan, in which the number of female violin students in the Tokyo University of the Arts from 2023 to 2027 (the number of estimated graduates) accounts for 77% of the total headcount in the major (Harada, 2024, p. 185), while 75.6% of concertmasters in Japan are men (Hyogen no Genba Chosadan, 2022). This ratio is a statistic from the 2020s, even a century after the time when Koda was a director of the Tokyo Music School (Takii & Hirataka, 2012, p. 20). Hence it is instructive to focus on Koda, who was one of the first graduates of the Institute of Music, the predecessor of the TMS and the TUA, to understand the historical context behind the gender inequality that still exists today.

At the same time as Koda founded her own piano school, in the UK a significant event happened—the Society of Women Musicians was established in 1911. Fuller explains the situation for women in the middle nineteenth century Britain: 'Basic musical skills were part of the set of accomplishments that middle- and upper-class women were expected to acquire for use within the private,' and the examples of 'graceful and ladylike' activities were singing or playing 'the harp, guitar and especially the piano' (Fuller, 1998, p. 43). This superstition overwhelmed women many decades afterwards. Because 'the middle- or upper-class woman [...] was usually assumed to be an unskilled amateur' (Fuller, 1998, p. 135), female musicians rarely found places to undertake their professional activities, even after the Royal Academy of Music or the Royal College of Music started welcoming female students in a wider range of musicmaking in the later nineteenth century. About that time, female singers were gradually accepted as professionals after their endurance (Kennerley, 2015, p. 1007), but it seems that female instrumental players and composers were less acknowledged. That is the time when the Society was formed, and when Hayward lived.

Regarding this topic, concert reviews are valuable materials to discover what female musicians at the time were expected to behave. In this article, in addition to perusing reviews of their performances, I will also look at articles in newspapers that refer to their activities other than performing, thereby uncover the gazes from both Japanese and British societies towards outstanding female musicians in the early 20th century.

1 Nobu Koda - The Pioneer

Koda's Background

Western classical music was introduced to Japan for the first time in the sixteenth century. It was spread by missionaries and believers in Christianity, thus the genre of music spreading first was sacred music (Minagawa, 2004), but the shogunate of Edo (1603-1867) gradually prohibited this religion (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007, s.v. "Kirisutokyo kinsei" [expulsion of all missionaries from Japan]) and observed an isolationist foreign policy from 1639 to 1853 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007, s.v. "Sakoku" [isolationist foreign policy]). The Dutch were given limited access to enter the island of Dejima, Nagasaki even under the isolated period (Iwai, 1995) and they played some western music (Shibata, 2014). Aside from that exception, a culture of Western classical music in Japan was not established in this era.

“it was clear from her outstanding performance that she had worked diligently to polish her skills during the time”

A new wave of foreign cultural influx happened in the Meiji era, 1868 to 1912. At this time, Japan started to form the first modern democratic government in its history, trying to take on all kinds of European custom. This movement was called civilization (or civilization and enlightenment)文明開化(Fukuzawa, 1875), an influence that extended to everything in life, philosophy, custom, studies, clothes, and culture, including music. Isawa Shuij (1851-1917), a civil servant and educator, was in charge of a project to develop the music institute in Tokyo (Hagiya, 2003, p. 43). Because there was no one in Japan who was able to teach Western classical music, he worked to invite New England Conservatory of Music’s Luther Whiting Mason (1818-1896), who gave lectures to Isawa during his training from 1875 to 1878 in Boston (Hagiya, 2003, p. 46), to be the educator at the Investigations Concerning Music (the Institute of Music) Ongaku-Torishirabegakari音楽取調掛in 1880 for a two-year term of office. Franz Eckerti (1852-1916), from the Kingdom of Prussia, was also employed by the institute from 1883 to 1886 when he was staying in Japan to supervise the Japanese navy band. After Eckert finished his assignment, Guillaume Sauvlet (1843-1902), from the Netherlands, worked from 1886 to 1888 as the successor of Eckert (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Daigakushi Shiryoshitsu [Historical records office of the history of the Tokyo University of the Arts], n.d.). Nobu Koda (1870-1946) was one of the students of the first generation who were educated by such professors from overseas.

Koda was expected by the government to introduce authentically classical music as the first governmentally despatched student, after her five-year study in Vienna (Takii & Hirataka, 2012, p. 20-21). After Mason left Japan in 1882, Rudolf Dittrich (1861-1919) was the only teacher at the professional level in the institute, therefore Nobu was the hope for the government and the institute both. Because she hated that music might be put to commercial use, she did not actively perform in public, but she often performed on the stage of the Tokyo Music School, the successor of the Institute of Music and the predecessor of the Tokyo University of the Arts (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Editorial Committee, 1990, Vol. 1). In the concert series, she played not only the violin but also the piano and the viola, as well as singing. Because the Koda family were descendants of shogunate vassals, the Koda sisters had a great deal of pride, and thought that to earn any fees from their performance was a blasphemy to the arts (Hagiya, 2003, p. 144, 167); thus the most familiar stage for them was the music hall奏楽堂in the Tokyo Music School.

The change in the tenor of the reviews of Koda throughout her life shows us that the impressions of her performances were influenced by social prejudice against women, even though the audience was impressed by her performance in the early days. There are unfortunately no recordings of her performances, but her programmes tell us that she was a great talent of music who was a multiple instrumental player, a composer and an arranger.

Reviews of Nobu Koda

The records of Koda’s concerts include the programmes from after she finished her studies in Boston and Vienna and returned to Japan. We can see an obvious change in reviewers’ attitudes. For the first, in 1896, it appears that the reviewers were simply impressed by her performance:

> Next up was the long awaited first performance by Miss Nobu Koda after her heroic return to Japan. Six or seven years had passed like a dream for the audience, but it was clear from her outstanding performance that she had worked diligently to polish her skills during the time. The “violin” solo was so wonderful that it is impossible for us, sentimentalists, to even try to judge it. The work of the hand holding the bow was amazingly skilful and beautiful, and the movement of the left fingers was precise. Everyone was struck with awe by the sound of the music powerfully running from the strings, and could even have felt a burning sensation in the ears. The piece was Mendelssohn’s Concerto 1st movement, accompanied by the great Miss Tachibana on the piano. Some people say that art is a jealous goddess. As she is young and has a long life ahead of her, I hope she inspires herself and dedicates her life to the sanctuary of this goddess of beauty.

- A review for the Doseikai Spring Concert on 18 April 1896 (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Editorial Committee, 1990, p. 29, 32)

Programme (Hagiya, 2003, p. 101):

Mendelssohn-Bartholdy,: Violin Concerto Op.64, first movement
F.J. Haydn: Quartet No. 43 in G major, Op. 54, No. 1, FHE No. 19, Hoboken No. III:58
Schubert: “Death and the Maiden” D 531; Op. 7, No. 3 (song part)
Brahms: “The May Night” Op. 43 (song part)
W.A. Mozart: Larghetto for Clarinet and Piano (piano part)
J. S. Bach: Fugue from Sonata No. 1 for Solo Violin, Arr. for four violins (arrangement)

However, in 1899 Nobu also performed the solo viola part of Mozart’s ‘Sinfonia Concertante KV. 364’ with Ko, her younger sister who was also a violinist (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Editorial Committee, 1990, p. 83), when some articles about the sisters begin to show a faint negative attitude. Because Nobu’s younger sister Ko had been selected for the opportunity to study in Europe as a national scholarship student in that year, some tabloid newspapers wrote that Ko gained the opportunity because of the over-promotion of her sister (Hagiya, 2003, p. 126). The article I quote here shows an obvious misogynistic stance while criticising the governmental decision.

> There had been a rumour for some time that the music school would be sending a student abroad, and finally Miss Ko Koda was chosen. If the purpose of sending a student abroad is to stretch the talent of a gifted person, Miss Koda is the most suitable person, but if it is to train an influential leader of the school on his/her return, then I cannot agree with the choice of Miss Koda. It is unreasonable to expect a woman to

be in charge of organising a group of people in any field of study or art. However, only in the field of music, we tend to expect more from female performers, perhaps because it is still at the early stage of development. This is partly because there are so few technically skilled male players, but in fact, the boys who are second class technically work much harder than the girls who excel them. Since Western music is still in its infancy, I would say that it is more urgent to train people who are excellent at educating musicians than to nurture an outstanding performer ("Ongaku-kai [the Music Society]," 1899).

Initially, another article had said that Rentaro Taki (composer and pianist, 1879-1903) was the best person for the scholarship rather than Ko, because Taki was a male. An author also wrote about how useless it would be if female musicians were sent to Europe.

It goes without saying that it is difficult for women to reach the highest level in all fields of study and art. Especially in the field of music, it is an undeniable fact that their performance lacks vitality. Moreover, once they get married, they cannot be expected to make it big in the art world. This is why the government has the right to prohibit female students from having a romance and getting married.

The reason why the great Miss Nobu Koda is so successful and powerful as a woman is that she is a member of the extraordinary Koda family, and a woman who is just as capable as a man - if not more - with a unique feature; what she calls 'pushiness' ("Taki Rentaro Shi to Tachibana Itoe Joshi [Mr Rentaro Taki and Ms Shige Tachibana]," 1899).

This quote mentions Nobu's personality. Her performance was also commented on as 'masculine' in a rather negative tone, and it attracts my attention as well that this article mentioned the greatness of her family. The following review talks about her piano performance:

The next up is a piano solo, the first movement of a/the concerto by Moscheles, by Professor Nobu Koda, who was once called the 'Teresina Tua of Japan' (Maddalena Maria Teresa Tua, 1866 - 1956, an Italian violinist).

The power of the 'forte,' which came at you before you had time to appreciate the tenderness of the fingers on the keys, made you forget that she was a woman.

Needless to say, her skills and knowledge of string music were unrivalled, but now she also has succeeded as a pianist. How could we not congratulate her on her success with the 'piano' and on the fact that we now have 'a musician' Nobu Koda in the strictest sense of the word?

- Review: The 8th Regular concert, 1st May 1903, I. Moscheles: Piano concerto No.1, F major, Op.45 (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Editorial Committee, 1990, p. 131-133)

The last review of her performance, which is found in the book 'Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi [History of the Tokyo University of the Arts for a hundred years]' is dated 1908 (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Editorial Committee, 1990, p. 83), and the tone of the article is not so favourable:

We could see not only the trace of her painstaking work, but also a number of mistakes. She hit two or three wrong chords on both days, which could happen to any of the greatest masters, I suppose. What I found more disappointing was that the overall impression of the piece was quite weak. There were some parts in which I admired the veteran performer, but I could not find any unified charm that should have run throughout the piece. The most important thing for performers to be aware of is to give their whole soul and spirit to the music. That is, the player's attitude towards the performance was too calm to allow her whole self to immerse into the music. In other words, she did not put her heart and soul into the piece. It will not be possible to go beyond human work when the attitude is that music is music and you are you. Nevertheless, it was a great pleasure for us that she willingly played in the concert.

- Review for the 18th Regular Concert on 7 June 1908, J.N. Hummel: Piano Concerto No. 2 in A minor, Op. 85 (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Editorial Committee, 1990, p. 243, 249)

1908 was the year in which the atmosphere of reviews changed (Hagiya, 2003, p. 163). This was a year after the new principal of the Tokyo Music School Motoishi Yuhara was appointed (Tokyo University of the Arts, n.d.). According to an article by the composer Kosaku Yamada, talking about how Yuhara worked to exclude Koda (2001, p. 40), 'the act played by Mr Yuhara and Mr Shimazaki was very awkward.' Shimazaki was an organist who studied in Leipzig, coming back to Japan in 1906 and taking up his new post in the Tokyo Music school in the same year (Takii & Hirataka, 2012, p. 18). Using various means, Yuhara and Shimazaki tried to remove Koda altogether. Koda had been a music director of the school since 1903, but Shimazaki was assigned to the same position in 1908. This personnel change was assumed to be a reflection of the journalism, which showed a negative stance towards the increasing of female music teachers in the institute (Takii & Hirataka, 2012, p. 66). Koda was targeted as a scapegoat.

After 1908, there were many criticisms of the Tokyo Music School, and each article said that Koda was the prime cause of the evils. In 1909, one of the authors wrote that 'It is incomprehensible to us that even today, in 1909, she has not made even a single composition public, which is absolutely necessary for any musician' (Muto, 1909). In fact, she performed her first composition 'Sonata for Violin and Piano in E flat major' in 1895, and it was performance in 1897 with piano by herself, and violin by Ko and their colleague Fukuko Suzuki (Hirataka, 2018). It shows us how inaccurate the comments were. But the negative campaigning showed no signs of slowing down, with some newspapers even implying scandals about relationships or bribery (Hagiya, 2003, p. 170-171, 177).

As Yamada wrote, he saw and knew that Yuhara and Shimazaki did many

things to drive Nobu Koda out of the school, and he thought that it was very disrespectful towards her. But even though Yamada 'had enough respect for Koda' (Yamada, 2001, p. 40), he also wondered 'if it was good for the school to entrust the development of the Japanese music to many females,' and he recognised that he himself sympathised with Yuhara and Shimazaki (Yamada, 2001, p. 40). Yamada's reminiscences show us that Koda's retirement was caused deliberately by that group of men (Takii & Hirataka, 2012, p. 12).

Hagiya points out that public opinion which felt unfavourable towards the success of female professors fuelled the dispute with a group of male professors (2003, p. 163). This topic was criticised concurrently with the disparagement of co-educationalism of the school. The music institute, formerly the Tokyo Music School, was first opened for everyone in 1880, including 10 men and 12 women. However, the prevailing reputation of co-educational systems, which was based on Confucianism ("Co-Education [Danjo Kyogaku]," 1994), was too robust to ignore, so from 1883 new female students were barred. But supporters of the music school advocated to the government strongly, and the school's gate opened for women again in 1887 (The Tokyo University of the Arts Archive Center, 2015, p. 53). This school was the only co-educational national school in Japan at that time, thus gaining a great deal of publicity (Tamagawa, 2023, p. 266).

Nobu Koda herself had no partner in her life, but her sister Ko married in 1908 and had five children. It seems that Ko was busy with the care of the babies at the time that Nobu was receiving severe criticism from journalists, which might have saved Ko from the barrage (Hagiya, 2003, p. 227). In the end, Ko continued to have her class in the school until 1942, when she was suddenly laid off; the reason remains a mystery. There is one article written by her son, which talks about how her dismissal was disrespectful and incomprehensible, the article's title being 'about the discourtesy' (Hagiya, 2003, p. 233).

Summary

One article on Nobu Koda pointed out that she was often said to be masculine (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Editorial Committee, 1990, p. 131-133). In fact, composer Kosaku Yamada wrote about her in his autobiography that 'she was as blunt as a man' (2016). These types of words are also found in performance reviews.

There is just one interview article of Nobu Koda, from 1931, marking the 50th anniversary of Koda's first music lesson. In the interview, Koda said 'my teaching life in the Tokyo Music School was very ordinary' (Koda, 1931). Reading the article about the event in which Koda was forced to resign from the institute, the environment around her seems to have been very hostile. She never spoke about the role of the resignation in her life (Hagiya, 2003, p. 178). We can never know Koda's intention, or how she felt about being so-described. It is, however, possible that she felt that she needed to be 'masculine' to succeed as a musician. 'Man-like behaviour' is not only consciously chosen by the person, but also unconsciously, in order to be acknowledged or to pretend to be strong.

As Hagiya has written, when we look up Nobu Koda in dictionaries, there is always a phrase such as 'Nobu is a sister of Rohan Koda, a literary master' (2003, p. 33). Although she herself was very well-known during her lifetime, today she is introduced as a sibling of the famous author, even though she was the first Japanese not only to compose chamber music in the style of Western classical music, but also to perform national premieres of works such as the Chaconne by J.S. Bach in Japan (Hagiya, 2003, p. 161). Women have often been recognised only in relation to men.

In Japan, many of the music rooms in primary and junior high schools have the same set of composers' portraits on the walls (Zen-On Music Co., Ltd., n.d.). This set includes five Japanese composers such as Taki and Yamada, but the Koda sisters are not included, although Taki and Yamada were both students of Nobu. In practice, this portrait set has 36 musicians but has never included any women. Thanks to this portrait set, which has been sold up from c. 1960 until now (NHK ENTERPRISES, INC., 2018), young Japanese students are still taught that these 36 men are the most important composers in Western classical music history in the 2020s. This creates a bias, causing female musicians to lose their chances to meet new audiences even after their deaths.

2 Marjorie Hayward - The Mystery

Hayward's Background

Marjorie Hayward (1885-1953) was a British violinist and a violin teacher (Ward, 1954). She studied in the Royal Academy of Music from 1896 to 1903,ii re-entered in 1906,iii and worked there from 1924 to 1952.
iv She also studied in Prague from 1903 to 1906 with Ševčík (Ward, 1954). There are many recordings of her, both solo and chamber music, released under the label of 'His Master 's Voice,' plus broadcasts by the BBC (Wenzel, 2008). As a chamber music player, she played in the English String Quartet, the Virtuoso Quartet, the Marjorie Hayward Quartet, the English Ensemble Piano Quartet and in the Kaman Trio (Ward, 1954).

There is currently very little historical record available on her. I do not have much information about her life; however, I would like to refer to the reviews of her performances as a comparison with Koda's.

Even though Hayward worked at the Academy for 30 years, there is no obvious information about her pupils. The only pupil whose name I have been able to find is Barbara Strudwick, and her name appeared in a newspaper in a report of a concert she played with Hayward's daughter, Marjorie Lempfert ("Music in Miniature," 1950). There is very few information on Strudwick herself, except that she played for the Bromley Symphony Orchestra (Bromley Symphony Orchestra, 2021) and the Sevenoaks Symphony Orchestra (Miles, 2020) until just before her death in around 2018.

Hayward's daughter Marjorie Lempfert was a violist. She was born in 1921 (Ancestry | Genealogy, Family Trees & Family History Records, 2019), when Hayward was turning 36 years old. Many concert reviews in the 1920s, as in other decades, are found in The Times's Archives and the British Newspaper Archives. Moreover, Hayward started teaching at the RAM two years after this. She never stopped her career because of marriage or pregnancy.

In the environment around Hayward, there were many musicians who were involved in the activities of the Society of Women Musicians (Wenzel, 2008). For example, the violist Rebecca Clarke and the cellist May Mukle, who both were composers as well and often played together with Hayward, attended the first meeting of the SWM (Fuller, n.d.). Her ex-teacher from the RAM Emilie Sauret appeared in one of the regular concerts by the SWM in 1912 (Concert programmes, n.d.). Hayward performed Ethel Smyth's concerto for violin, horn and orchestra in Smyth's portrait concert in Berlin with the hornist Aubrey Brain and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by the composer herself ("DAME ETHEL SMYTH in BERLIN," 1928), who was a suffrage activist, and an honorary vice-president of SWM from 1922 (Fuller, n.d.).

In fact, Hayward herself also performed for the SWM. Her name is found in a review of an SWM concert in The Daily Telegraph ("Recital by Mrs Stansfield Prior and Marjorie Hayward for SWM," 1932), in which she played on 9 May 1932. It is unclear whether she was a member of the SWM, but there is a high possibility that she was a member because she appeared in the concerts of the society, in which normally its members performed.

Hayward's daughter Lempfert also appeared in a concert of the SWM. One record showed that she played for one concert as a member of the English String Quartet. It had the same name as the quartet that her mother led ("English String Quartet," 1927), but restarted with different members.v The version of the quartet of which Lempfert was a member continued at least until the 1980s (Discogs, n.d.-a).vi The Independent reports that she died in 1992 at age 70 ("Obituary: Marjorie Lempfert," 1992).

Reviews of Marjorie Hayward

Using The Times's archive and the British Newspaper Archive, I have collected concert information and reviews of Marjorie Hayward.

Hayward's first concert appearance was in 1897 when she was twelve years old, one year after her entrance into the Royal Academy of Music. Here are two reviews by different newspapers about the concert that took place on 1 November 1897:

> It can hardly be said of the chamber concert given in St. James's Hall yesterday afternoon by the students of this institution that cheerfulness was its prevailing characteristic. [...] Among the students who more or less distinguished themselves as performers were Miss Marjorie Hayward a very young lady with the making of a good violinist ("ROYAL ACADEMY of MUSIC.," 1897, n.d.-a);

> The students' concert on Monday last at St. James's Hall was an interesting one, and several new compositions by the pupils were well received. [...] Some very excellent solo performances were given, none better than the execution of a portion of Rode's violin - Concerto, in B flat, No. 6, by Miss Marjorie Hayward, whose tone was pure and execution admirable. The young performer has scarcely passed childhood, but has acquired great proficiency on the violin ("ROYAL ACADEMY of MUSIC," 1897, n.d.-b).

Both reviewers were surprised by her talent and applauded her performance. It was her second year at the Academy. Both seem to emphasise that she was 'a young lady,' but her music was evaluated highly.

The next interesting reviews are for a concert on 27 March 1899. Here there are also two reviews, and the characters of these contrast with each other. Here is the first:

> The annual orchestral concert of the students of the Royal Academy of Music took place yesterday afternoon at Queen's Hall, under the direction Sir A. Mackenzie. There was, of course, large attendance, the students and their friends forming a considerable portion of the audience. In the year 1823, when the Academy had been in existence only one year, there were but twenty students. Now, and for several years past, the number has amounted to 500. [...]
>
> In the first orchestra formed of Royal Academy students there was probably not one single young woman. Yesterday afternoon at least half the strings were in the hands of girls. Instruments of the grosser kind are still, as a rule, left to men. But one young lady has already forced her way into the department of the celli; and noticed another with an oboe in her mouth. The harp, with its heavenly arpeggios for accompanying the songs of angels, is at Queen's Hall, as everywhere else, in the possession of a lady. No lady has yet played a solo in public in the character of either an oboist or a cellist. But an admirable male cellist, Mr. Dezsö Kordy, played at yesterday's concert, in finished style, Servais's interesting and even beautiful 'Morceau de Concert.' Among the prize students exhibited at yesterday's show there was certainly not one who was entitled to more favourable mention than Mr. Dezsö Kordy. [...] But the instrumental soloist who received most attention was a pretty little fair-haired girl of twelve — a pupil of Sauret's, we are told—who played the violin with much charm, and, in bravura passages, with wonderful executive power. Miss Marjorie Hayward, the child in question, is not of the 'infant phenomenon' type. She does not kiss her hands the audience, or pout like a baby, or trip on the platform like an uncontrollable schoolgirl. She is a youthful artist whose talent is already mature, and who, if she continues as she has begun, must attain great results ("ROYAL ACADEMY of MUSIC," 1899).

First, this reviewer mentions that Hayward was a 'girl of twelve,' but she was born in August 1885, and given this concert was held in March

1899, she must have been thirteen years old. Second, let us see how the reviewer mentions her looks. Three specific names are recognisable in this review besides Hayward, but the reviewer did not introduce how the others looked. Another thing restricted to how the reviewer wrote about Hayward was referring to the name of her teacher before her own name. The names of other students' teachers are not there. As the review shows, despite his positive assessment of Hayward, the reviewer seems to have had a bias against women.

In contrast, the other review is very simple. Although we should take into account the word limit of the space for that newspaper article, it is notable that this review did not talk about her looks or age, but rather only her performance:

> The orchestral concert of the Royal Academy students was given on Monday afternoon, under the direction of Sir A. C. Mackenzie, at Queen's Hall, commencing with the "In Memoriam" overture of Sir Arthur Sullivian, as a tribute to the vice-president, Sir Joseph William Chitty, and the late Lord Herschell. [...] The most successful solo of the concert was that of Miss Marjorie Hayward, who, in Wieniawski's Violin Concerto in D minor, proved herself a performer of first-rate ability. The graceful Romanza was given with expression and delicacy, and the sparkling Rondo performed with the utmost brilliancy. The talented young violinist had such an enthusiastic reception that Sir A. C. Mackenzie could hardly restrain the applause ("ROYAL ACADEMY ORCHESTRAL CONCERT," 1899).

This review was published in The Era, which had previously reported on her great performance, so her age may already have been known.

A review published several months later mentioned the increasing number of female musicians. This is the review of a concert that took place on 20 November 1899:

> A concert was given yesterday afternoon at the St. James's Hall by the students of the Royal Academy of Music. [...] The number of lady violinists is daily increasing. In Miss Marjorie Hayward we welcome a valuable recruit to the already crowded ranks of ladies who wield the bow, and one who is likely to win considerable distinction in her profession. Miss Hayward chose the difficult "Concertstück," Op. 20, of Saint-Saëns, and played it with astonishing brilliancy of execution. She was loudly and deservedly applauded, but owing to the rule which forbids the recall of a performer was unable to reappear on the platform ("CONCERTS," 1899).

It seems a positive way of writing, but it still highlighted that she was a 'lady.' The phrase 'ladies who wield the bow' is a particularly amusing way of describing violinists.

After leaving the Academy, Hayward constantly appeared in many concerts both as a soloist and as a chamber musician, and positive reviews appeared for a few decades. Even when other players in the concert were criticised negatively, Hayward was always praised.

A particularly interesting point is that she performed for the 'portrait' concert of Ethel Smyth on 19 December 1928 in Berlin. It was a few years after Smyth became an honorary vice-president of the Society of Women Musicians, and two years after Smyth became a DBE.

> Dame Ethel Smyth gave her jubilee concert at the Philharmonie Hall in Berlin this evening, and met with a demonstrative appreciation from a large audience.
>
> The programme, consisting entirely of her works, opened with the overture to The Boatswain's Mate, played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Herr Bruno Walter. Dame Ethel Smyth herself, wearing her doctor's gown of cream and red silk, conducted her Concerto for violin, horn, and orchestra, in which Miss Marjorie Hayward and Mr. Aubrey Brain played the solo parts ("DAME ETHEL SMYTH in BERLIN," 1928).

Currently I have been unable to locate any concert reviews or recordings of Hayward from the 1930s, but Hayward's name is again seen in reviews from the 1940s. Interestingly, some articles also talk about her social activities. The first one was written in 1941, talking about a meeting of 'the Nottingham Business and Professional Women's Club.'

> When members of the Nottingham Business and Professional Women's Club met for their second anniversary meeting at the County Hotel, Nottingham, yesterday, they heard provocative speech by Miss Marjorie Hayward, of London, entitled "Leaders or Laughing stocks."
>
> Miss Hayward outlined a "Fifty years' plan for living." which aroused much discussion ("Nottingham Business Women Meet," 194)

In a 1943 newspaper article, 'Miss Marjorie Hayward,' who was a vice-president of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, is quoted:

> "It is firm opinion that women have a duty in educating themselves in the problems and issues of the day to cultivate a study of economics, so that they may be able to find answers to the many difficulties which people will be confronted with after the war."

These were the words of Miss Marjorie Hayward, vice-president of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, at a meeting of the Boston and District branch at the Peacock and Royal Hotel on Saturday. Her subject was, 'Do Look New.'

> She went on to say that the clubs have quality in their membership, knowledge of all types of government, and the intention of seeking truth. All these things are the attributes required by women to enable them to take their part in the post-war reconstruction of the world.
>
> There have been many changes in our methods of employment which the war has brought about. British Restaurants and day nurseries have taken the burden off many a woman's mind. Women from remote parts of the country have gone into the most up-to-date war factories.

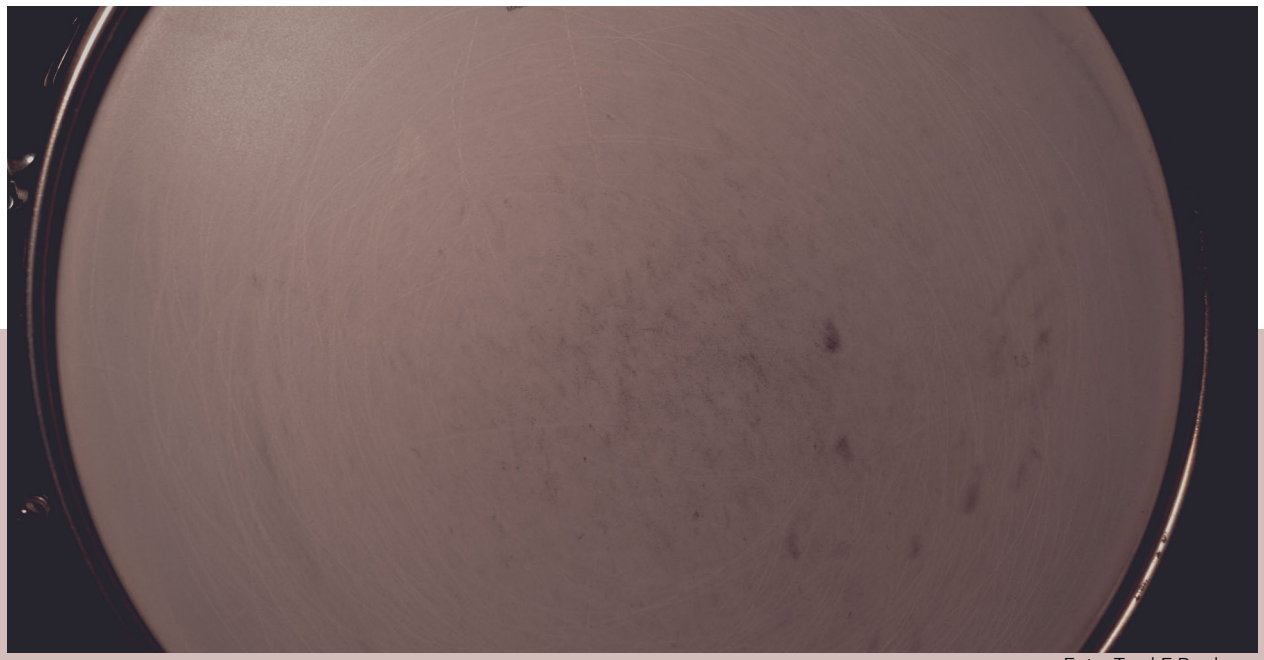


Foto: Tord F Paulsen

The only way to ensure decent reconstruction went on the speaker, was to ensure that there would be no unemployment after the war. There would be enough work in the world after the war for every man and woman.

[...] Miss Hayward was thanked by Mrs. W. Whaley. The Mayor seconded the proposal. ("POST-WAR WORK - Professional Women Meet at Boston," 1943)

There is still a small possibility that it was a different person, but when read alongside another article below, this suggests that it was the violinist. In the article on 'the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs' in 1953, a speaker called 'Marjorie Hayward' is recognisable, speaking about 'women artists.'

The fifth Congress of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, which was resumed at Central Hall, Westminster, yesterday, empowered their United Nations Committee to continue its work for the removal of discriminations which impede the contribution of women to the United Nations and relationships between nations.

In support of the continuation of the Music and Fine Arts Committee, Miss Marjorie Hayward said there would not be many very good women artists until they were given confidence to develop their place in the community and some freedom from domestic responsibility to pursue their profession ("WOMEN SHOULD HELP U.N. - Rights Upheld at Congress," 1950).

It is not natural that one would become a vice-president suddenly, so it can be assumed that 'Miss Marjorie Hayward, of London' in the article in 1941 is she as well. Hence, she worked for the International Federation of Business and Professional Women in her later years.

Summary

Despite no obvious data which shows that Hayward was a member of SWM, it seems safe to assume that she cared about political and social issues.

When I looked at the student records of the Royal Academy of Music, I found that there were notes of the names of teachers for principal studies. Perhaps this record should be deciphered more, and now I am wondering if her name was also written in someone's record as a teacher.

It can be difficult to trace women in history because many women changed their family name on marriage. In the case of Hayward, even though she had been called 'Miss Marjorie Hayward' consistently until her death ("MISS MARJORIE HAYWARD," 1953), it was still difficult to find information about her.

Conceivably, she might have been unwilling to leave public information. Even her relationship with the Society of Women Musicians was not clear, unlike that of her colleagues Clarke and Mukle. Sometimes involvement in social activism can be used as an excuse for prejudice or even dismissal, because it is inconvenient for authority. Even in the 2020s, there are many difficulties in being a confident feminist.

Hayward, who married in 1916, gave birth in 1922, and became a staff member of the Royal Academy of Music in 1924. She could have felt the physical and psychological difficulties of committing to social activities, but it is also possible to think that she was simply not as interested in such activities when she was young, and came to consider social justice later. Much more research needs to be done on this fascinating figure.

“Here are two examples of the suppression towards marginalised people appearing by every possible means even though the location or the period is different”

3 Conclusion

Nobu Koda (1870 - 1946) and Marjorie Hayward (1885 - 1953) lived at a similar time, and both worked as educators at their alma maters. Reading the concert reviews of both while considering their social backgrounds, one finds many barriers for women at that time, which still exist, even though roughly a century has passed. While the historical background of the environments where Koda or Hayward was living were different, there is still a significance to comparing their situations. As a UK-based/Japan-raised female musician, I have felt that there is a tiny gap in comprehension for people in the UK when I share any frustrations of women. To know what is behind the dissonance, I have sought the reason in the histories in two countries, and investigated the reviews of Koda and Hayward to draw a parallel. Looking at these, some differences are easily to be recognised, but at the same time, I feel sympathy, empathy, and compassion to each.

In my opinion, the biggest difference is their stance around being musicians. As detailed above, Koda thought it was dishonest to play music for a commercial purpose and earn money by performance. Koda was from the family of an ex-retainer of the shogunate, which had its own economic system rather than that of Western capitalism, so ‘labour’ did not necessarily mean economic activities. Showing loyalty towards the soul was more important than making money. In addition, there appear not to be any recordings of Koda; in contrast, Hayward performed in many concerts and was a keen recording artist and broadcaster as well.

The differences of the philosophies of musicians in Japan and the UK at the time of Koda and Hayward are also present today, for better and for worse. Each custom has its context; therefore, we must look at the historical background. In my hypothesis before researching Koda and Hayward, I thought that Japan might not imported the long history of gender bias belonging to Western classical music when it adopted the music. Because the Japanese government at that time allowed any people who were interested in learning Western classical music to do so rather than limiting the gender of participants, to improve the number of musicians in Japan, many female musicians appeared at the time of Koda. However, once the number of male musicians increased and there began to be a feeling of concern about competing for posts, discrimination against female musicians appeared. There was an opportunity in Japan to avoid sexism in this new music, but it was unfortunately missed. The misogyny that had existed in the past in Japan became entangled with the new culture, creating dual gender biases. In this article, I did not cover the aspects of hegemony, colonialism, orientalism, and religion (especially Christianity in music), but these could be explored in combination. This would need the perspective of intersectional feminism.

Being a female musician sometimes means facing unexpected reactions, including misogyny, lookism, and so on. It feels unlikely that the two musicians would not at least have noticed this gender bias. As a result, Koda gave up her academic career, and Hayward might have become involved in the activities of the Society of Women Musicians and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women. Both faced two world wars. Koda needed to diminish her teaching activities following the wartime anti-western policy of the government (otherwise she would have been arrested), while the social activities of Hayward can be seen from 1941 onwards. Living as musicians is always hard, but at least if Koda and Hayward had been male, they would have had to contend with less gender bias in their environment. And if they had been males, they would not have been forgotten as they are now. They would be widely remembered as great central figures of their times.

Throughout this research, I found that sharing the various case studies is more useful than comparing. Many readers might feel that the experiences of Koda and Hayward are not just about other people, but have echoes for themselves. Here are two examples of the suppression towards marginalised people appearing by every possible means even though the location or the period is different. After we learn many cases in history, we will find a further way to build better societies.

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Women Composers in Viennese musical life in 1928

By Judith Kopecky

Abstract

A study on the representation of art songs in Viennese musical life in 1928, the year in which both the 100th anniversary of Franz Schubert's death as well as the 25th anniversary of Hugo Wolf's death were commemorated, showed that far more than 3400 songs had been performed in concerts and on radio broadcasts. About 450 of these songs were written by 180 Austrian composers living at the time, including eleven female composers. In this paper these artists' origins, education, living and production conditions as well as their professional and private networks will be described and the article will be rounded off by an exemplary presentation of a selected song from these composers' rich song oeuvres.

Keywords

Female composers, art songs, Vienna 1928, Viennese musical life, interwar period

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"Professional competition between men and women is not only a question of economics, but also a question of power"

'Higher Daughters' – Women Composers in Viennese musical life in 1928

A study on the representation of art songs in Viennese musical life in 1928, the year in which both the 100th anniversary of Franz Schubert's death as well as the 25th anniversary of Hugo Wolf's death were commemorated, showed that far more than 3400 songs had been performed in concerts and on radio broadcasts.[1] This study was conducted by the author of this article and combined empirical and interpretative approaches. Initially, the program sheets of the Wiener Konzerthaus available in an online database were reviewed, along with the program sheets stored on microfilm by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, the program sheets of the Austrian Adult Education Archive that are loosely and still unorganized stored in boxes, as well as the issues of Radio Wien, the program magazine of RAVAG, accessible in the online portal ANNO of the Austrian National Library. Since the data collection mainly relies on printed program leaflets from the year 1928 that are available in various media forms, any short-term program changes or cancellations could not be taken into account, excluded, or confirmed. Thus, the original materials, as Beatrix Borchard put it, are "[...] extensive and incomplete at the same time, creatively preserved and accidentally transmitted, deliberately sought or found by chance." [2] That this incompleteness of the diverse sources and the varied materials runs like a common thread through the entire research project will be repeatedly highlighted and all presented findings and interpretations should always be read and understood against this background. At the same time, this very circumstance also points to the inherent research potential and can provide insights for further investigation.

About 450 of the above mentioned 3400 songs were written by 180 Austrian composers living at the time, including eleven female composers. These latter were: Irma von Haláscy (1880 Vienna — 1953 Vienna), Lio Hans respectively Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl (1882 Vienna — 1942 Vienna), Trude Kandl (1896 Vienna — ? 1942), Rosa Kiesling (? - ?), Mathilde Kralik von Meyrswalden (1857 Linz — 1944 Vienna), Lise Maria Mayer (1894 Vienna —1968 Vienna), Johanna Müller-Hermann (1868 Vienna — 1941 Vienna), Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek (1885 Mannersdorf/March — 1941 Bad Ischl), Sarolta von Rettich-Pirk (1863 Vienna — 1948 Vienna), Vilma von Webenau (1875 Constantinople — 1953 Vienna) and Grete von Zieritz (1899 Vienna — 2001 Berlin). In this paper these artists' origins, education, living and production conditions as well as their professional and private networks will be described. The article will be rounded off by an exemplary presentation of a selected song from these composers' rich song oeuvres in order to create a stimulus for the expansion of the concert and teaching art song repertoire and to make these songs, often still unknown and not published yet, known to a wider public.

"Professional competition between men and women is not only a question of economics, but also a question of power [...],"[3] wrote painter Illy Kjaër in her essay Rivals/Competitors, published in 1927. Illy Kjaër was an activist in the political women's movement and in this article she stated further that women in those professional fields "[w]hen it is not mass work, [...] usually have to use larger amounts of energy to assert themselves and then often to be faced with the result that even with equal performances, the male competition is always victorious."[4] Although girls already had better educational opportunities in 1928 as access to higher education for women had already been opened up before the turn of the century in Austria, she further complains that in the field of art, even though women have the opportunity to prove their acting talents on stage, creative aptitudes are still disadvantaged. Additionally "[...] the narrative of female inferiority and their lack of ingenious, productive talent [...]" is still perpetuated in order to justify this "[...] blatant injustice [...]".[5] Even a completed university degree would not protect women from such discrimination, but on the contrary would tempt men to be particularly competitive if their domain were penetrated.

Now it can be assumed that those eleven Viennese female composers whose songs were programmed at least once in 1928 at venues such as the Wiener Konzerthaus and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde as well on the Austrian radio also had to struggle with the challenges described by Illy Kjäer. Which factors, apart from their artistic talent, could have contributed to their success as composers nonetheless will be briefly discussed below. The following statements apply to Irma von Haláscy, Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl, Mathilde Kralik von Meyrswalden, Lise Maria Mayer, Johanna Müller-Hermann, Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek, Sarolta von Rettich-Pirk, Vilma von Webenau and Grete von Zieritz. They do not refer to Trude Kandl and Rosa Kiesling, since almost no reliable biographical details regarding these two artists could be found yet. Although concerts with compositions by Trude Kandl or performances with the artist as a pianist are documented for the 1928 season, the dates and course of her life could not yet have been retraced. If one wanted to speculate, Trude Kandl could be Gertrude (Trude) Kandl, who was born in Vienna in 1896 as the daughter of the Jewish doctor Leopold Kandl and who was deported to the Izbica ghetto in May 1942 and subsequently murdered there.[6] This tragic circumstance could also be the reason for the lost traces of her artistic as well as of her private life. In addition to the above-mentioned concert, in which the Austrian mezzosoprano Marianne Mislap-Kapper performed an unspecified number of songs by the Trude Kandl, random research in the online newspaper archive of the Austrian National Library ANNO revealed reviews of concerts with Trude Kandl's compositions for the period between 1924 and 1934.[7] However, it would be desirable to learn more about Trude Kandl's and Rosa Kiesling's lives and circumstances.

Origin and economy

Among the composers discussed the most obvious common feature is definitely their throughout well-off

origins, which is also the reason for referring to them as 'higher daughters' ('höhere Töchter'). This term has been used in German speaking societies to describe girls and young women originating from upper middle class families and or from the lower nobility in the 19th century, who were brought up for a life that was to unfold mainly in the private sphere. In this context this term also applies to the female composers to be described in this paper.

These artists came either from industrialist families such as Mathilde Kralik von Meyrswalden, Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl and Lise Maria Mayer. Mathilde Kralik von Meyrswalden's father was the owner of a glass factory in Bohemia and her mother was an offspring of the famous Lobmayr family, a Viennese glass factory that still exists today. Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl's father, on the other hand, owned a flower and decorative feather manufacture and Lise Maria Mayer's father was a wealthy merchant. Vilma von Webenau's, Johanna Müller-Hermann's, Sarolta Rettich-Pirk's and Grete von Zieritz's fathers were high-ranking diplomats, military or civil servants, whereas Irma von Halácsy and Kamilla Palffy-Waniek grew up as doctors' or chemist's daughters in an educated middle-class milieu. These families very often belonged to the lesser nobility, had sufficient financial means throughout and were able to maintain this prosperity even after the First World War. Economically, most of the female composers, at least during the period under study, were secured by their inheritances or by marriages befitting their status. When married most of the husbands also valued their wives' artistic activities or often even actively promoted them. For example both Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl's husband as well as that of Lise Maria Mayer took an active part in their wives' artistic activities – not always to their advantage though. E.g. in January 1929 a scandal arose during the performance of Lise Maria Mayer's symphony Cocaine, which she conducted herself at the Berliner Philharmonie. As it turned out later her husband had wanted to boost ticket sales without her knowledge by means of placing a marriage advertisement saying that a young widow would attend the concert and meet possible candidates there. The marriage candidates deceived in this way started a tumoil in the concert hall and this occurrence was intensively covered by the media. Conductor Franz Schalk, at that time director of the Vienna State Opera, defended his former pupil Lise Maria Mayer against the criticism that women musicians had to use such marketing methods by stating that their conducting skills were only slightly behind those of their male colleagues. Nevertheless, the scandal left its mark on Lise Maria Mayer's career.[8] In contrast, due to her familiy's as well as her husband's support Johanna Müller-Hermann was able to devote herself to extensive music studies, which enabled her later on to become the first female professor of composition in the German-speaking world (teaching from 1917 -1933 at the Neues Wiener Konservatorium).[9] Some of the other female composers with less financial support were working as teachers and received an income from this activity. For example Irma von Halácsy's economic circumstances became precarious after her father's death in 1914, which made her turn from a successful career as a violinist to intensive teaching and even to founding a music school in the early 1930ies.

Musical education

According to Rebecca Grothjahn the upper middle class regarded "[...] music making [...] as a means of social distinction and at the same time as one for the production of gender roles and identities [...]".[10] "The piano playing of the girls and young women [...] [served] the presentation of wealth and education in the 'salon' – the very space in bourgeois homes that functioned as an intersection between the families' inner and outer world."[11] Music also played a major role in the parental homes of most of the discussed female composers and all of them were stimulated as well as encouraged in this field at an early age. Furthermore this open attitude towards music and musical education could already be observed in these artists' parents' and even grandparents' generations.[12]
In some of the cases their mothers had already received singing and piano lessons or their fathers loved to play string instruments or, as in the case of Johanna Müller-Hermann, loved to have the children in "[...] Quadrill and round dances [...]". Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl and Vilma von Webenau even could refer to composers among their next relatives. Lili Hutterstrasser's cousin Carl Hutterstrasser, owner of the still renowned Bösendorfer piano factory, had appeared as a composer of vocal ensembles under the pen-name of Charles Vernay, and Vilma von Webenau's paternal grandmother, Julie von Baroni-Cavalcabò, had made a name for herself as a composer.13 Domestic music and intellectual circles contributed to mental and artistic stimulation. The majority of these composers had received private music lessons at an early age, and the more clearly their talents had become recognizable, the more renowned the girls' teachers had become. These teachers included orchestral musicians at the Viennese Court Opera or professors at the Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde or they were well-known personalities of Viennese musical life, such as:

Anton Bruckner – teacher of Mathilde Kralik von Meyrswalden

Alexander Zemlinsky – teacher of Vilma von Webenau

Arnold Schönberg – teacher of Vilma von Webenau

Josef Bohuslav Foerster – teacher of Johanna Müller-Hermann and Lise Maria Mayer

Richard Stöhr – teacher of Lise Maria Mayer

Franz Schreker – teacher of Lise Maria Mayer and Grete von Zieritz

Sarolta Rettich-Pirk, then still under the name of Karoline Krippel, was able to study voice and piano at the Neues Wiener Konservatorium in the same way as Mathilde Kralik von Meyrswalden studied composition there. Lise Maria Mayer was accepted as a student of conducting at

the Staatsakademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst.

Publication and public perception

At least four of the female composers used pseudonyms, which, however, did not conceal the fact that these artists were women. Two others among them presented their works under their premarital names:

Lili Hutterstrasser, married to the medical doctor Hans Scheidl, used the pseudonym Lio Hans

Johanna von Hermann, married to the traffic specialist Otto Müller-Martini, used the pseudonym Johanna Müller-Hermann

Irma von Halácsy used the pseudonym Maria Jerstaedt

Karoline Krippel used Sarolta Pirk as her stage name at first and changed it to Sarolta Rettich-Pirk after her marriage to the ministerial official Benno Rettich von Wildenhorst

Lise Maria Mayer, married to the merchant Josef Otto Gaberle, but always used her premarital name

Grete von Zieritz, married the writer Johannes Gigler, but used her premarital name for her artistic activities

This way these composers did not disappear as "[...] sexual beings behind their product [...]",[14] as Freia Hoffmann puts it, but they were able to protect their own privacy as well as that of their families. The fact that women published their musical or literary works under often male pseudonyms or even anonymously was a widespread phenomenon based on the bourgeois image of women in the 18th and 19th centuries.[15] At that time, both by law and for ideological-philosophical reasons, women were only assigned private space as a place of work. It was considered improper to present oneself publicly as a creator. In the gender image of the time, femininity seemed incompatible with authorship and consequently "[...] mediocrity in all areas [...]" other than the socially envisaged "[...] exclusive determination as a housewife and wife [...]" was assumed.[16] The image of women at the beginning of the 20th century was already subject to change and resulted not least in a strengthened female self-confidence, which is why female artists no longer resorted to male pseudonyms as often as they had done a hundred years earlier. Nevertheless, the use of a pseudonym may have enabled the artists to maintain the necessary distance from contemporary criticism and from "[...] inhibited reactions, false gallantry and authoritarian-simple-minded attempts at education [...]."[17]

Professional activities and networks

As mentioned above all of these eight female composers had received extensive musical training, but only Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl and Mathilde Kralik von Meyrswalden were able to devote themselves to full-time to composing. Grete von Zieritz, after initially working as a piano teacher, decided to train and later work as a composer after she had her breakthrough in 1919, at the age of twenty, with her song-cycle Japanische Lieder. All the other composers pursued artistic or artistic-pedagogical professions and regarded their compositional activities as part of their manifold possibilities of expression. Sarolta Rettich-Pirk and Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek had been trained as and consequently worked as opera and concert singers as well as vocal teachers. Between 1925 and 1931 Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek even became a member of the teaching staff at the Neues Wiener Konservatorium. In addition, both artists described themselves as writers as well, with Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek also appearing as a successful librettist from the early 1930s onwards. In 1930, six of her libretti were supposed to have been set to music, among them X-Mal Rembrandt by Eugen Zadór, Fremde Erde by Karol Rathaus or Film am Sonnenhügel by Heinz Tiessen. Vilma von Webenau, who is considered to have been Arnold Schönberg's first private student, gave private music lessons as well as theoretical lectures in Viennese adult education centres and in music schools in Graz. Irma von Halácsy's career path was similar as after her economic circumstances had become precarious after her father's death in 1914, she turned from a successful career as a violinist to intensive teaching and even to founding a music school in the early 1930ies in the then little village Mauer near Vienna. Johanna Müller-Hermann was trained as a primary school teacher and worked as such for some years before she got married to the traffic specialist Otto Müller-Martini. It was only after her marriage that she was able to devote herself to the longed-for comprehensive musical education and, after having earned serious reputation in the Viennese musical world, she was appointed professor of music theory at the Neues Wiener Konservatorium in 1918.

Professional as well as private networks were an important factor for female composers in order to have their compositions performed. However, with the currently available data on the individual artists, it is difficult to provide information that is valid for everyone. It seems though that Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl, in whose villa the leading personalities of Viennese cultural life were regular guests, would have had better connections than Irma von Halácsy, who, after the death of her father, moved with her mother to an apartment in Mauer near Vienna and there, far away from the cultural centres, had to earn her living as a music teacher. On the other hand the two singers Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek and Sarolta Rettich-Pirk had the opportunities to perform premieres of their own compositions themselves and they did so on a larger scale. For example Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek premiered her song-cycle Lieder der Technik as part of her recital at the Wiener Konzerthaus in March 1928, and Sarolta Rettich-Pirk was able to premiere four of her own compositions as part of her programme Ernst und Scherz in Wort und Lied, which took place at the Urania in Vienna in April 1928. As it was more difficult for other composers to hire the necessary musicians to have their pieces performed, they liked to participate in concerts organized by women's associations and often reached their first audience there. Johanna Müller-Hermann, Mathilde Kralik von

Meyrswalden, Lise Maria Mayer and Vilma Webenau had connections to the Neuer Wiener Frauenklub (New Viennese Women's Club). Other similar useful associations were the Club der Wiener Musikerinnen (Club of Viennese Women Musicians) or the Verein der Musiklehrerinnen (Association of Female Music Teachers), of which Vilma Webenau was a member.

With the exception of Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek and Sarolta Rettich-Pirk, between 1919 and 1929 most of the female composers were admitted to the AKM, i.e. the Austrian copyright collecting society of authors, composers and music publishers. Vilma von Webenau became a member of this interest group only in 1949, just four years before her death.

Mathilde Kralik von Meyrswalden, who, in addition to her membership in numerous women's associations, was the only one out of this group to be admitted to the Österreichischer Komponistenbund (Austrian Composers' Association) and she was able to maintain "[...] artistic public presence into old age [...]".[18]

Number of performances in 1928

A study of Viennese concert life in 1928 showed that songs by the aforementioned female composers were performed at least once in the Wiener Konzerthaus, the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, in the Viennese adult education centres or broadcast on Radio Wien. The following table shall provide an initial overview, in which the concerts are listed in order of the number of performances per composer and in chronological order in general:

Composer	Date and venue	Song title	Performers
Lio Hans pen-name for Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl	27. 2. 1928 Wiener Konzerthaus	Tanz der Geisha Am heiligen See both first performances	Rose Fuchs-Fayer, soprano Wiener Sinfonie Orchester Robert Nilius, conductor
	21. 4. 1928 Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde	Haltlos Hexenlied Am heiligen See Tanz der Geisha	Josefine Stransky, soprano Carl Lafite, piano
	5. 6. 1928 Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde	In verschwiegener Nacht Lied in der Nacht Märzensturm	Grete Popovici-Ostheym, soprano Otto Schulhof, piano
Johanna Müller-Hermann	18. 3. 1928 Wiener konzerthaus	Haltlos Am See (from: Sinfonie op. 27 for soprano, baritone, mixed choir and orchestra	Josefine Stransky, soprano Maria Dery-Spitzmüller, soprano, Wiener Sinfonie Orchester, Theodor Christof, conductor
	28. 3. 1928 Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde	Dunkle Rosen Abendstunde Es goß mein volles Leben sich	Lilly Kantor, soprano Maria Lueger-Barich, piano
Grete von Zieritz	22. 1. 1928 Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde	from Japanische Lieder: Fern von Dir Erinnerung; Am heiligen See Einsamkeit Japan	Maria Mansfeld, soprano Yella Pessl, piano
Trude Kandl	January 1928	Selected songs	Marianne Mislap-Kapper, ezzosoprano N.N., piano
Mathilde Kralik von Meyrswalden	25. 2. 1928 Festsaal des Wiedner Gemeindehauses	Songs on words by Christine Anger-Nilius	Hilde Tomecek-Hofmann, soprano N. N., piano

Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek	16. 3. 1928 Wiener Konzerthaus	First performance of her song cycle Lieder der Technik: Fabrikstadt Elektrizität Die Telegraphen-stange singt Die Kette	Kamilla Pálffy-Waniek, soprano Ernst Bachrich, piano
Vilma von Webenau	April 1928	Geisha-Lieder	Aglaja Kerschel, voice N.N., piano
Sarolta Rettich-Pirk	1. 4. 1928 Urania	So geschwind wie der Wind Das Gleichnis Henderl pi-pi Das Häschen und der Dackel	Sarolta Rettich-Pirk, soprano Rolf Bitt, piano
Rosa Kiesling	Mai 1928 47. Autorenverbands-konzert		
Lise Maria Mayer	June 1928	Befreite Stunde	Marianne Mislap-Kapper, mezzosoprano Franz Mittler, piano
Irma von Halácsy	23. 12. 1928 Urania	Zwei Gesänge Das Krönelein Der Faun Das Heim Reigenlied	Marianne Halbritter, voice Irma von Halácsy, piano

“It is very often the lack of recordings and interrupted performance traditions that make potential interested parties hesitate to deal with unknown repertoire”

If one seriously thinks about integrating the numerous forgotten or little remembered Art songs of past years into the current concert and teaching repertoire, then it probably will not be enough to just find compositions and provide access to the sheet music. It is very often the lack of recordings and interrupted performance traditions that make potential interested parties hesitate to deal with unknown repertoire. Especially the rich Austrian song production of the interwar period is strongly affected by these interruptions in tradition, as a frighteningly high number of composers and their performers became victims of National Socialism. Therefore the last section of this paper shall be dedicated to one of the female composers' songs performed in Viennese musical life in 1928, Am heiligen See by Lio Hans, i.e. Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl. This song shall be looked at from a vocal pedagogical perspective in order to provide assistance with casting and performance questions.

Lio Hans, whose real name was Amalia Caroline Anna Hutterstrasser and was called Lili, was born in Vienna in 1882 as the daughter of the flower and decorative feather manufacturer Eduard Hutterstrasser. Lili grew up without a mother in a "[...] highly culture- and art-loving family circle [...]", [19] including the owner of the Bösendorfer piano factory, Carl Hutterstrasser, who also appeared as a composer under the pseudonym Charles Vernay. As a double talent, Lili Hutterstrasser initially found it difficult to decide between painting and music, but at the time when her first songs were published by the Doblinger publishing house in 1907, she seemed to have made her final choice. She subsequently completed a comprehensive musical education on a private basis in piano and violin playing, took singing lessons and devoted herself to composition and instrumentation theory with the following reasons:

„Nachdem gerade diese Fächer von Frauen bisher nur selten gepflegt wurden und diese im Konkurrenzkampfe mit dem Manne sich nur wenig Anerkennung in der Öffentlichkeit erringen konnten, ging all mein Streben – ernst und jahrelang – dahin, mich ganz besonders darin auszubilden."[20]
(„Since these subjects in particular have so far only rarely been cultivated by women and as they have been able to gain only little public recognition in competition with men, all my efforts – seriously and for years – have been directed towards educating myself in this very special way." translation by the author).

After her marriage to the medical doctor Hans Scheidl in 1909, Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl turned their villa, located in the upscale Viennese cottage district, to "[...] a meeting place for social and cultural life in Vienna [...]". [21] Furthermore she cleverly used the professional and social contacts established there to consistently develop her artistic career. Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl published her works under a pseudonym, which was not uncommon at that time, and according to Marx and Haas she had been using the pen-name Lio Hans "[...] from 1905 at the latest[...]."[22] Vocal compositions were clearly a central part of her oeuvre, but she devoted herself to manifold other genres as well, which were ranging from piano and instrumental pieces to orchestral songs and even to operas. The world premiere of her opera Maria von Magdala at the Viennese Volksoper in December 1919 can certainly be regarded as the climax of her fame and presence in European musical life, but after that it became quieter around the artist. Her later revealed anti-Semitic attitude and her membership in the NSDAP should also be discussed critically, but a detailed treatment of this topic would go beyond the scope of this article.[23]

In 1928 songs by Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl were performed under the pen-name of Lio Hans a total of three times in the Wiener Konzerthaus and at the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. The two songs Tanz der Geisha and Am heiligen See were premiered on February 27th with orchestral accompaniment, only to be performed with piano accompaniment just a few weeks later by soprano Josefine Stransky in one of her recitals focusing on contemporary repertoire. The remarks on the musical text of Am heiligen See in the following section refer to the manuscript of the piano accompaniment version available in the music collection of the Austrian National Library.[24]

Vocal profile: Lio Hans (Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl) Am heiligen See

(words: Ohotsuno Ozi, Alfa, German adaptation by F. Angermayer)[25]

Similar to many of her composing contemporaries, Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl followed the preference for Asian and Japanese poetry that has prevailed in the German-speaking world since the turn of the century. As a result of the world exhibitions, which had taken place regularly in Europe from 1851 onwards, interest in foreign cultures had been further strengthened and this was taken into account not least by German adaptations of foreign-language poetry. Japanese art and culture enjoyed great popularity, especially after the world exhibition in Vienna in 1873, and it was to remain a popular topic for vocal compositions not only before the First World War, but also in the interwar years. In 1928 a number of songs based on Japanese texts were performed on Viennese concert stages. Some of them were Japanisches Regenlied (Japanese Rain Song) by Joseph Marx, which had already been set to music in 1909 and Julius Bittner's Japanische Lieder (Japanese Songs) for alto and orchestra. But also other Austrian composers belonging to a younger generation turned to this subject: Wilhelm Grosz, Japanischer Frühling op. 3 (Japanese Spring) from 1915, Grete Zieritz's ten-part song-cycle Japanische Lieder (Japanese Songs) from 1919, Egon Wellesz, Kirschblütenlieder op. 8 (Cherry Blossom Songs) from 1911, Anton Reichel Liebeslieder des Ostens op. 11 (Love Songs of the East) from 1924 or Maria Bach, Japanischer Frühling (Japanese Spring) from 1930.

Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl's estate, which is kept in the music collection of the Austrian National Library, contains three settings of Japanese poetry with the titles Am heiligen See, Tanz der Geisha and Die Bambusflöte. In the composer's worklist compiled by Eva Marx and Gerlinde Haas these three songs were combined under the title Drei japanische

Gesänge (Three Japanese Songs).[26] This collective title does not emerge from the manuscripts themselves though. One of the challenges of translating poetry into another language and translating it into another cultural environment is to always adequately grasp the meaning as well as the content and cultural significance of a text and to have background knowledge that goes beyond mere language mastery. Frank Lange's collection of poems Altjapanische Frühlingslieder (Old Japanese Spring Songs) from 1884 was obviously one of those translations of Japanese poetry that met these requirements and was therefore used by numerous composers. Even more popular, however, were the collections Japanische Novellen und Gedichte (Japanese novellas and poems), published in 1906 by Paul Enderling, and Japanischer Frühling (Japanese Spring) by Hans Bethge from 1911.[27]

Interestingly, Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl did not resort to one of these common and sought-after translations, but chose an adaptation by Fred (actually Alfred) Angermayer,[28] who had transformed the concise form of the original Japanese text into a four-stanza poem according to the 19th century central European tradition. The below comparison of both translations by Enderling and Angermayer is intended to illustrate this fundamental change

Am heiligen See

(Übertragung F. Angermayer)

Am heiligen See von Iware,
Da gibt es ein lustiges Schneien
Die Kirschen blüh'n,
Die Herzen glüh'n,
Die Paare lustwandeln im Freien.

Am heiligen See von Iware,
Da gibt es ein wonniges Träumen.
Im dichten Grün,
zwei Menschen drin,
erschauern in Liebesträumen.

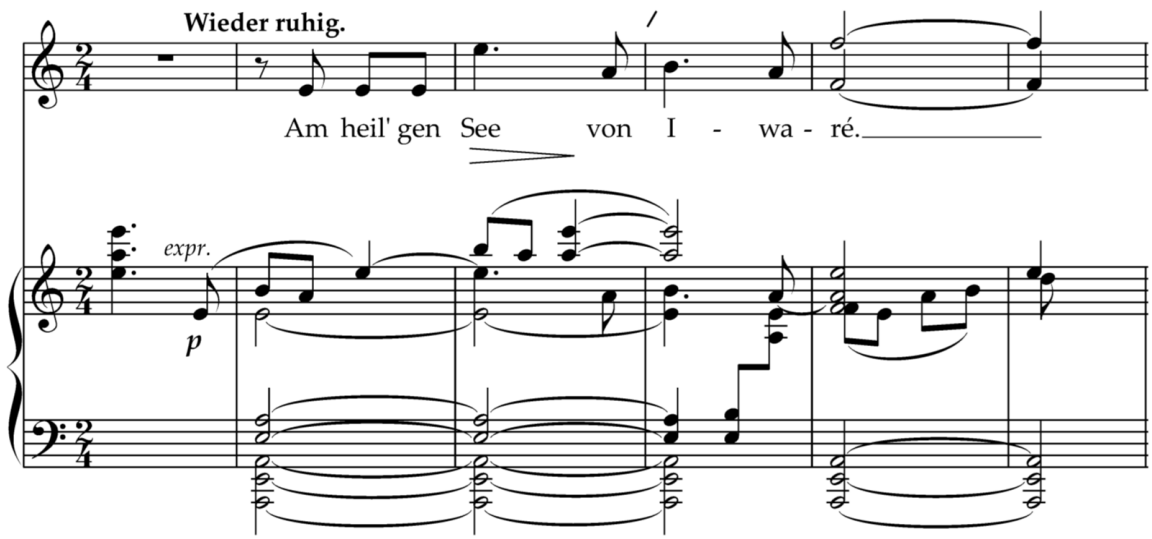
Am heiligen See von Iware,
Die Wildgänse ziehen in Scharen.
Die Lieb verglüht,
Vorbei das Lied,
Der Herbstwind kam gefahren.

Am heiligen See von Iware,
Schwimmt hin ein duftiger Schleier.
Und dichtgeballt
Der Nebel wallt
Zur Liebestotenfeier.

Am heiligen See

(Übertragung Paul Enderling)[29]

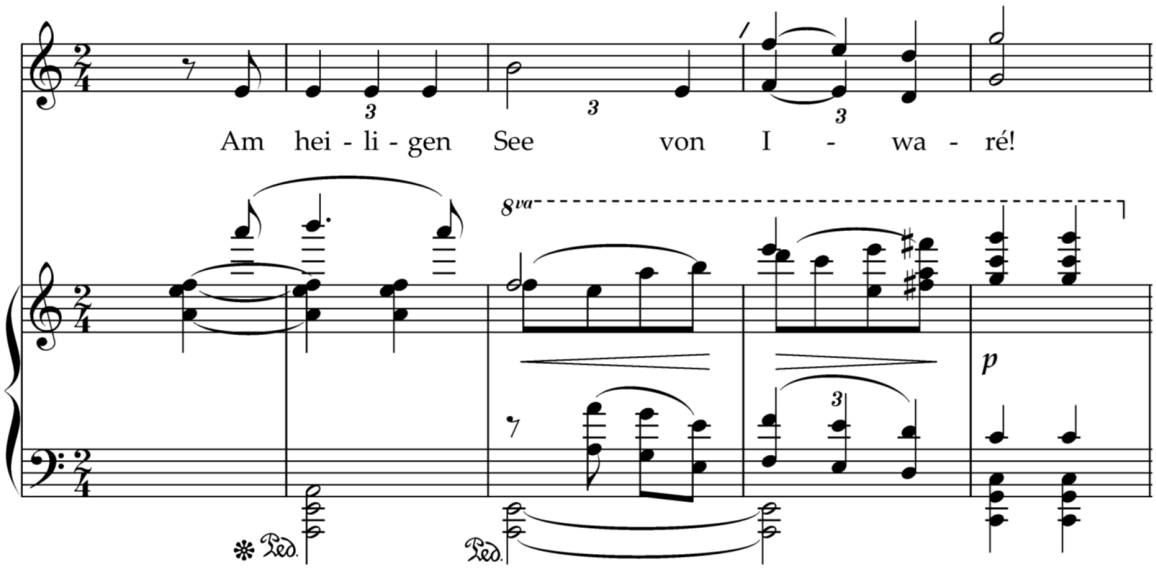
Blüten schneien....
ein Nebelschleier verhüllt den See.
Die Wildgänse schreien
am heiligen Weiher von Iware.
Dunkler Träume Schar
tanzt ihren Reihen;
mein Herz ist schwer:
wenn übers Jahr
die Wildgänse schreien,
hör' ich's nicht mehr.



Ex. 1: Lio Hans, Am heiligen See, bars 26 – 30, beginning of the second verse

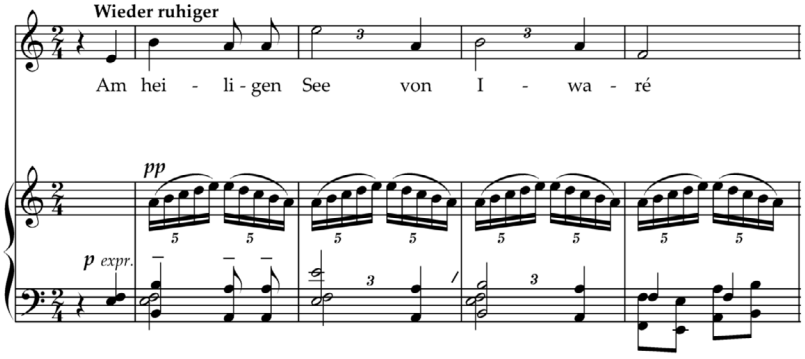
Lili Hutterstrasser-Scheidl's verbatim setting of this text was correspondingly extensive, with 26 bars each for the first and third and 23 bars each for the second and fourth verses. Whether this extensive setting is related to the compositions' design as orchestral songs cannot be proven at this time. Due to the solemn tempo, the through-composed musical form and the long vocal phrases, the song requires an already well-trained voice, which should master a lyrical legato, have good breathing ability and a sufficient vocal condition. The basic tempo is given as sehr ruhig (very calm), and in this the vocal line also opens the respective verses with the recurring text module Am heiligen See von Iware. Tempo indications such as bewegter (moving) or etwas bewegt (somewhat moving) are added as interpretational instructions for the further text passages, but indications such as wieder ruhig (calm again) lead back to the initial tempo at the end of each verse and makes the above-mentioned text module a haven of peace in terms of tempo, but also in its tonal simplicity.

The tessitura of the vocal line has its core area between e1 and e2 and only occasionally exceeds this range to g2 or a2 in notes usually held over the duration of a whole bar. This indicates with a cast with a mezzo-soprano or, taking into account the fact that the two performances in 1928 were each performed by female sopranos, for a cast with a spinto soprano.[30] Bars 59 to 73, which lead the vocal line to its lower range from f1 to b in accordance with the gloomy mood of the third verse, are also in a decidedly low register for a soprano voice. In this version, only more dramatic sopranos or mezzo-sopranos can develop their timbre, the desired sonority and penetrating power, while lighter sopranos would have difficulties at this point, especially in the orchestral version.[31] The composer seems to have been well aware of this, as she introduced an alternative way of performing the particularly low notes by octaving these passages and thus transferring them to the higher register.

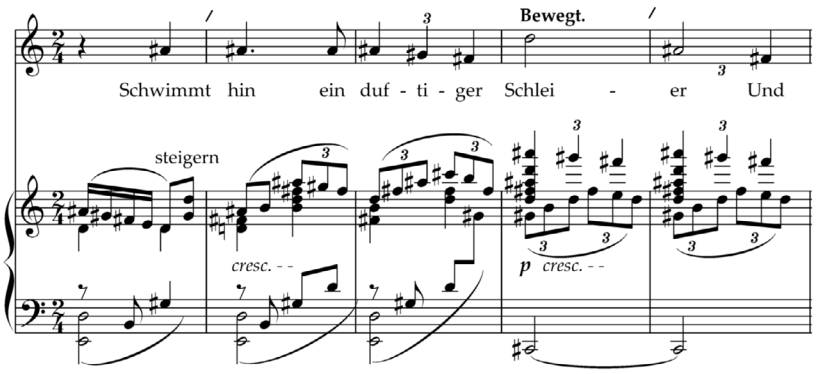


Ex. 2: Lio Hans, Am heiligen See, bars 51–54, beginning of the fourth verse

The entire range of tones therefore includes b to g2 in the original version (mezzo-soprano) and d1 to a2 in the alternative version (soprano) and thus covers more than one and a half octaves in each case. Within this range, the singing voice has to regularly cope with leaps in tone, most of which are led from bottom to top, which also entails the mastery of balancing registers as a vocal technical prerequisite. The independent execution of the vocal line in relation to the instrumental part also requires a higher level of training with the associated musical security. Laid out in 2/4 time throughout, the instrumental part begins with very quiet regular quaver movements, to which quaver triplets are added in the upper voices from bar 13 onwards. In places, the vocal line is rhythmically inserted into these triplet movements, but there are also passages, such as in bar 2, in which the singer has to perform quarter triplets versus quaver triplets in the orchestra or the piano respectively. Overall, the instrumental part becomes rhythmically denser from verse to verse. For example, quintuplets or seventhlets in the upper voices are combined with quarter triplets in the lower voices. The resulting sound fabric, which makes rhythmic focal points disappear, allows for the singer's freedom in executing the overlying vocal line, but also asks for musical as well as rhythmic autonomy and independence.



Ex. 3: Lio Hans, Am heiligen See, bars 77–81, beginning of fifth verse



Ex. 4: Lio Hans, Am heiligen See, bars 82–86.

Although the vocal line is always harmonically embedded in the instrumental part, these harmonic relations are not always clearly audible in the rhythmically and tonally particularly dense passages, so that in this respect too, independent vocal leadership and design is required.

The dynamic range of the vocal part extends from piano to mezzoforte within the first verse and from piano to forte in the second. The third stanza remains in the mezzoforte throughout, probably due to the low register, while the fourth finally develops from a beginning in pianissimo to a dynamically restrained climax in mezzoforte. This means that the ability to dynamically modulate one's voice should already have been trained and particularly fine tonal gradations in the low to medium volume range should be mastered. These requirements are usually met better by already well-trained voices than by singers with lower levels of training. Overall, this composition, in its through-composed form, in terms of content through Angermayer's traditional text transmission and in the treatment of the vocal part, follows the traditions of orchestral songs from around 1900. However, the creation of a polyrhythmic texture, the use of pentatonic sounds, the departure from a tonal center and the experimentation with timbres reveal the composer's engagement with the musical trends of her time. This positioning between tradition and modernism contains challenges for the performers, which can only be mastered by well-trained or even professional voices.

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This paper is based on the corresponding chapter of my book "*1928. Wien und das zeitgenössische österreichische Konzertlied*", which was published in German in 2023 as a printed book (Hollitzer Verlag Wien) as well as an open access version (https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.2840651), but was modified for PlayS-pace and adapted for an international audience.

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Notes

[1] See Judith Kopecky, *1928. Wien und das zeitgenössische österreichische Konzertlied.* Wien: Hollitzer 2023, p. 97.
[2] Beatrix Borchard, *Stimme und Geige. Amalie und Joseph Joachim*, Wien 20072, S. 24.
[3] Illy Kjaër,: *Konkurrentinnen, in: Die moderne Frau*, vol. 12, 15. 5. 1927, p. 4-5, here p. 4.
[4] Ibid., p. 4.
[5] Ibid., p. 4f. Recent studies on female creative inferiority include, e.g. Karol Jan Borowiecki a,|, Martin Hørlyk Kristensen a, Marc T. Law, *Where are the female composers? Human capital and gender inequality in music history*, European Economic Review 171 (2025) 104893, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2024.104893 (accessed on 30. 6. 2025), Eugene Gates, *Why Have There Been No Great Women Composers?* Psychological Theories, past and Present, The Journal of Aesthetic Education , Summer, 1994, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Summer, 1994), pp. 27-34 Published by: University of Illinois Press Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3333265 (accessed on 30. 6. 2025)Marian Wilson Kimber, *The "Suppression" of Fanny Mendelssohn: Rethinking Feminist Biography*, 19th-Century Music , Fall 2002, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2002), pp. 113-129 Published by: University of California Press Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncm.2002.26.2.113 (accessed on 30. 6. 2025)
[6] see https://www.geni.com/people/Gertrud-Kandl/6000000031623713991 (accessed on 20. 1. 2025).
[7] From the year 1928 itself comes a review from Wort der Frau of 21.2.1928, on a 'novelty evening', which had been organized on 13.2.1928 in the 'Women's Club' by the Association of Music Teachers in Vienna concluding: "Among the works performed, we would like to mention especially the very pretty compositions by Trude Kandl, Martha Linz and Maria Bach, who asserted themselves most honorably in the round dance of works by proven composers." („Unter den aufgeführten Werken wollen wir besonders die sehr hübschen Kompositionen von Trude Kandl, Martha Linz und Maria Bach erwähnen, die sich im Reigen der Arbeiten bewährter Komponisten ehrenvollst behaupteten."). *See Wort der Frau*, 21. 2. 1928, rubric Theater und Kunst. Konzerte, p. 6.
[8] Bettina Graf, art. Mayer (verh. Gaberle), Lise Maria (born Elise; E. Maria, Lisa M.)", in: *Oesterreichisches Musiklexikon* online (accessed on 1. 2. 2025) https://dx.doi.org/10.1553/0x003eb005
[9] Marx, Eva; Haas, Gerlinde (Ed.), *210 Österreichische Komponistinnen vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart. Biographie*, Werk und Bibliographie, Salzburg et.al. 2001, p. 323 f., p. 264 f. and p. 280 f. as well as H. E. Heller, Bei Lio Hans, in: Musikalischer Kurier, 2. Jg. Nr. 1, p. 6–7.
[10] Rebecca Grotjahn, Alltag im Innenraum: *Die ‚Höhere Tochter' am Klavier – Innenraum, Außenraum, Geschlechterraum*, in: Keym und Stöck (Hg.), Musik-Stadt, S .431–441, here p. 432.
[11] Ibid., p.432.
[12] See Marx and Haas, *210 Österreichische Komponistinnen*, p. 280.
[13] See Marx and Haas, *210 Österreichische Komponistinnen*, p. 323 and p. 385.
[14] Freia Hoffmann, *Instrument und Körper. Die musizierende Frau in der bürgerlichen Kultur*, Frankfurt/Main et al. 1991, p. 21
[15] Men also often published under pseudonyms, but for completely different reasons than women. A detailed description of this phenomenon can be read in Susanne Kord, for example. See Susanne Kord, Sich einen Namen machen. Anonymität und weibliche Autorschaft 1700–1900. Stuttgart et al. 1996.
[16] Ibid., p. 41
[17] Hoffmann, *Instrument und Körper*, p. 21.
[18] Marx and Haas, *210 Österreichische Komponistinnen*, p.243.
[19] Marx and Haas, *210 Österreichische Komponistinnen*, p. 323.
[20] In: *Die Theater- und Musikwoche 1919/20*, Nr. 34 quoted according to Marx and Haas, p. 323.
[21] Marx and Haas, *210 Österreichische Komponistinnen*, ibid.
[22] Ibid., p. 324.
[23] Ibid., p. 327.
[24] ONB Musiksammlung, Signatur F208.Hutterstrasser-Scheidl. 56 MUS MAG.
[25] Marx und Haas, *210 Österreichische Komponistinnen*, p. 328.
[26] Ibid.
[27] For a more detailed analysis of the translation problem see Keiko Hasegawa, Japanischer Frühling. *Untersuchungen von Vertonungen japanischer Lyrik in deutschen Nachdichtungen im 20. Jahrhundert Diplomarbeit Universität Wien*, Wien 2010, p. 22–25.
[28] Alfred Anton [Antoine] Angermayer (1889 Mauthausen – 1951 Wien). Pseudonyme: Angermayer, Fred A.; Lynx; Theodor Greif; for a detailed treatise see Uwe Baur und Karin Gradwohl-Schlacher (Hg.), *Literatur in Österreich* 1938–1945. *Handbuch eines literarischen Systems.* Bd. 3: Oberösterreich, Wien et al. 2014, p. 118–125.
[29] See *Japanische Novellen und Gedichte.* Verdeutscht und herausgegeben von Paul Enderling, Leipzig 1906.
[30] Kloiber's definition of the vocal range of a spinto soprano is: "Lyric soprano voice with greater volume, which can also create dramatic climaxes" and states the vocal range required in the vocal literature as c1 to c3, while stating a vocal range from g to b2 for mezzo-sopranos. See Rudolf Kloiber, *Handbuch der Oper*, Erweiterte Neubearbeitung von Wulf Konold, Kassel 1985, p. 1041 f.
[31] The documents listed in the music collection of the ONB under the shelfmark F208. Hutterstrasser-Scheidl57 MUS MAG The available parts for this composition show the following instrumentation: Violin 1 (4x), Violin 2 (3x), Viola (2x), Violoncello (2x), Double bass (2x), Flute 1 + 2, Piccolo flute, Oboe, Cor anglais, Clarinet 1 + 2, Bass clarinet, Bassoon 1 + 2, Horn 1 + 2 + 3, Trumpet 1 + 2, Trombones 1 + 2 + 3, Percussion, Harp 1 + 2, Celesta.

Disturbing Jazz Compositional Canons through a Transdisciplinary Improvisational Approach

By Kristin McGee with Oded Ben-Horin

Abstract

In October 2024, Oded Ben-Horin (of Western Norway University of Applied Science) and myself experimented with an improvisatory approach towards jazz research and education at the Voices of Women (VOW) Erasmus+ international training conference. Our format interrogated valorisation resources within the jazz sphere, especially given the lack of women composers represented in canonical jazz materials such as lead sheet compendia. Seeking to challenge pervasive mechanisms by which male jazz artists come to occupy spaces of agency and prestige, we developed a transdisciplinary framework which combined practice-based and historiographic methods. This approach provided space for experimentation with our in-the-moment understanding of disciplines within the VOW project, enabling a connection to the material (e.g. recordings, canons, lead sheets) and the discursive (critical evaluation of such materials) in an integral way. Specifically, we aimed to circumvent existing barriers to canonical status by drawing attention to under-recognized female jazz agents often excluded from jazz educational resources. As a case, we focused upon pianist Lil Hardin Armstrong, and the materials that evidence her many innovations, while also engaging dynamically with the material traces of her career. Our TD, improvisatory approach aimed to integrate study and practice of little referenced materials of jazz women to allow various forms of knowledge to collide; through this, we simultaneously argued that, and practiced how, knowledge and insight do not pre-exist nor mutually exclude those collisions across disciplines. This approach enabled a closer connection to under-recognized voices of women in jazz, especially Lil Hardin Armstrong and her collaborator Mae Barnes as important agents of change for women authors in jazz.

Keywords

Jazz Canons, Lil Hardin Armstrong, Mae Barnes, transdisciplinarity, improvisation, lead Sheets,
Terri Lyne Carrington

"We are asking both patrons of the music and musicians themselves, to consider or challenge themselves, to listen differently to be open to another sound aesthetic in the music, that is a really hard one to accomplish because we all grew up thinking this is the sound of jazz, and this is what good jazz is, and everything that has been described as good jazz, for the most part has been created by men...What would the infiltration of this different sound aesthetic created by women and trans gender people and people that aren't moving through the world with male privilege - what does that sound like and how does it affect the music?"

Interview with Terri Lyne Carrington of the Berklee Institute for Jazz and Gender Justice for the JazzFest Berlin 60th Year Edition, 9 September 2024

Our presentation at the Erasmus+ Voices of Women in Music (Vow) conference at the University of Stavanger in October of 2024, sought to challenge entrenched notions of ownership and authorship in jazz composition, recording, and dissemination.1 To 'disturb' (Brooks 2006) rigid boundaries surrounding processes of canonization within jazz, we enlisted a transdisciplinary approach to research, performance, and education. Our methods included creative improvisation across musical genres and disciplines; consultation of newly available resources and jazz media; and traditional historical studies of musical artists and their extant archives. This transdisciplinary approach aspired to more directly impact and excite younger musicians in their encounters with women in jazz, especially where women occupied roles as lead performers, composers, and collaborators in particular periods, yet their contributions remain under-recognized in educational and performative contexts.

This article proposes a combined historical and practice-based improvisatory approach as one well suited for impacting students of jazz in more embodied and creative ways to effectuate more durable engagement with female jazz authors in performance spaces. The goal is that this improvisatory element will defamiliarize the seeming normalcy and inevitability of existing jazz canons to inspire alternative views and insights about the jazz past for its creative reanimation in the present and future. As a case study, we have chosen Lil Hardin Armstrong as a pioneer in jazz styles and movements of the early twentieth century, but also as a performer whose improvisatory style evolved to adapt to new media and collaborations after World War II. Finally, we draw upon new resources, especially Terri Lyne Carrington's recent lead sheet edition, 101 Lead Sheets by Women Composers in Jazz, to highlight one of Hardin's under-recognized compositions ("Perdido Street Blues") during our presentation.

Central to the VOW project is the arts-based research method RESCAPE that creates a specific form of engagement with research, education, performance, and materiality. By assembling, studying, and performing historical sources in novel ways, RESCAPE initiates co-creative processes and opens new perspectives on the processes of canonization and shared knowledge about musical heritage. In aiming to contextualize this in our presentation, we relied on Karen Barad's notion of transdisciplinarity, which requires attentiveness to nuances within a given field to enable entanglements across, and a reworking of, disciplinary boundaries. Our backgrounds as performers, educators, and researchers in the humanities enabled us to combine our skills and ambitions across disciplines for greater gender parity and inclusivity, as we seek to valorize and make visible pioneering women, as well as non-binary, and gender queer authors and composers within jazz. Yet we acknowledge our positionality, especially our privilege as white, Western cis-gendered (male and female) academics, with access to financing, resources, training, and networks often denied to the prolific African American performers, band leaders, and female composers of earlier decades who tirelessly toured and performed throughout their lives, often without institutional support and backing.

For our presentation and workshop, we drew inspiration from little examined objects relevant for the life and work of Hardin Armstrong as a border-breaking jazz artist. These included a recently broadcast appearance of Hardin on American television in the 1960s. We also studied and considered the potential pedagogical advantage of the 2022 lead sheet compendium (New Standards) compiled by drummer and educator Terri Lyne Carrington, founder and director of the Berklee Institute for Jazz and Gender Justice. This source served as our point of departure for enlisting the tenants of RESCAPE to amplify, engage with, and internalize facets of compositions created by prior female pioneers of jazz in the last century. Our workshop sought to move beyond established disciplinary boundaries (e.g. musicology or jazz performance pedagogy) to offer students and performers new ways of researching and learning about the jazz past, with the goal of bringing facets of this under-recognized past (e.g. the contributions of women in jazz) more firmly alive and dynamically performed into the present (more on this later). Hoping to move beyond revisionist approaches, our transdisciplinary approach seeks to inspire young musicians to incorporate performative repertoires and gestures of prior women in jazz, whose contributions have been little recognized or under-valued, into their own performances and body of creative work.

This article offers a transdisciplinary path and multifaceted framework towards innovating research-oriented presentational formats dedicated to valorizing women in jazz, especially as band leaders, composers, and soloists. In the following, we outline this approach, as well as review recent debates in relation to artistic research and transdisciplinary approaches within research and education. Finally, our critical reflection on our process intends to expand the discussion for collaboration and improvisation as viable and critical tools for promoting the important work accomplished by women and women identifying agents in jazz. Here we expand the jazz archive to include not only the jazz recording but other documents such as music video, films, and ephemeral autobiographical materials retrieved from various archives and settings. To bring this transdisciplinary framework to life, we engaged with the work of two trailblazing woman in jazz active during the jazz age through the post-war period, Lil Hardin Armstrong and Mae Barnes. By engaging these

different approaches, and by bringing improvisation into the presentational format through study and interaction with material objects related to Armstrong and Barnes, we hoped to stimulate more embodied and visceral experiences of these women's creativity and innovation. Finally, our juxtaposition of musical media, historical documents, and interactive improvisation in situ enabled a materially oriented, embodied exposure to unique facets of Armstrong's (and Barne's) dynamic jazz pasts; and ideally this approach inspires more rigorous and frequent engagement with their work by younger jazz performers and composers today who seek to look beyond existing and predominantly masculine-oriented jazz canons and iconic jazz media, mainly the canonized instrumental jazz recording (McGinley 2014, Doktor 2020).

The article develops in three parts. In Part 1, I'll briefly review recent concepts and debates with regards transdisciplinarity and artistic research (through improvisation) as critical tools for researching and teaching about women in jazz. Then, Part 2 highlights recent performance and pedagogical sources, especially new lead sheet compendiums featuring female composers, which effectively challenge or at least complement existing jazz canons. Finally, Part 3 provides an analysis and overview of Lil Hardin Armstrong's life and brief collaboration with multi-instrumentalist Mae Barnes for a 1961 NBC televised musical revue. This section sheds light on the variety of media and collaborations undertaken by Hardin after her appearances with Louis Armstrong in the 1930s. Our TD approach towards these materials is designed to stimulate other performers/researchers to stich these women's creative legacies more fully into the present, and to motivate creative, multi-mediated, and more inclusive jazz futures through the combined experimentation of performance, composition, and improvisation.

Part 1 - Transdisciplinarity within Music Research

Many approaches to working across the disciplinary divides in music have been promoted in relation to transdisciplinarity. Transdisciplinarity (TD) resulted as part of the fluid and dynamic transformation of disciplines and institutions since the nineteenth century and responded especially to the entrenched monodisciplinarity gaining ground in the late and early twentieth century (Somson & van Lunteren 2024, p. 62). Today transdiscinplinarity represents a greater degree of integration, but only in the context of this historical ebb and flow of changing epistemes and institutionalized boundaries since the nineteenth century. TD emerged as a concept in the 1970's as critique of knowledge and institutionalization of disciplines in the twentieth century (Turner 2017). This emergence included epistemological questions about the unification of systems. In TD, divisions are unclear, and connections are magnified, enabling new complexities of design. Discipline integration becomes the purpose, not the tool.

Karen Barad reminds us that talking and writing are not the only available discursive practices available for altering the forms of agency within particular fields (e.g. science, nature, performance). She states, "Discursive practices are boundary-making practices that have no finality in the ongoing dynamics of agential intra-activity" (Barad 2003, p. 821). For our presentation, this meant that what was traditionally perceived as music could not exist without the words with which that music is intra-acting, and vice versa. Further Barad advocates for drawing insights and approaches from various disciplines through the concept of diffraction: "Diffractively reading the insights of feminist and queer theory and science studies approaches through one another entails thinking the 'social' and the 'scientific' together in an illuminating way" (Barad 2003, p. 803). What often appear as separate entities (and separate sets of concerns) with sharp edges don't necessarily entail a relation of absolute exteriority. Like the diffraction patterns illuminating the indefinite nature of boundaries—displaying shadows in 'light' regions and bright spots in 'dark' regions—the relation of the social and the scientific is a relation of 'exteriority within'. Barad posits, "This is not a static relationality but a doing—the enactment of boundaries—that always entails constitutive exclusions and therefore requisite questions of accountability" (Barad 2003, p. 803). Our approach thinks through the social, the scientific, the historical, and the performative as ways of drawing new insights while activating the body through improvisation to highlight the VOW project's context in relation to women in jazz. Our collaborative improvisations and collective examination of the insights from gender and feminist studies (employing concepts such as intersectionality and bias) as well as historiographic study of how archives come into being enabled a critically engaged discursive interaction between these fields.

Since the 1990s, TD has been applied to complex, global challenges ranging from sustainable development and climate change to social problems such as racism and homophobia, and educational systems' design (Ross 1991). In this century, TD is seen as having potential in solving problems which require creative working methods, stake-holder involvement outside of the academic community, and a socially responsible science (Nowotny et al., 2001). The reliance on monodisciplinary paradigms as a basis for organizing research, development, innovation, and teaching limits the impact of our endeavors, especially as we seek to stimulate greater equity and parity within the music world. Part of the VOW guidelines afforded inspiration for combining approaches from various fields and practices, including jazz historiography, practice-based research through improvisation, and multi-media presentational formats flourishing on digital platforms like YouTube and TikTok. In our proposal, we claimed, "monodisciplinary approaches are not going to achieve any of the sustainable development goals or solve the grand challenges of contemporary society", with sustainability relating to gender and cultural inclusion within the jazz sphere. The old models of separately teaching jazz performance, history and composition betray traces of such a monodisciplinary approach. By combining these approaches in a workshop setting, we offered students and jazz scholars ways to engage with different and changing aesthetics and ideologies in relation to jazz composition and performance practice. During this supportive setting of the VOW international meeting, we took advantage of this open atmosphere as well as transcended the once necessary

ameliorative impulse of prior 'women in jazz' histories (Placksin 1982, Handy 1998), to stimulate greater and more sustainable affective, corporeal, and cultural connections with prior and future jazz women's cultural worlds and their artistic output.

But what did our TD presentational approach actually entail? First of all, we corresponded for several weeks prior to the conference, sharing resources, study notes, and drafts of presentation scripts. We debated the format and considered how much improvisation and free-play should occupy our twenty minutes. Then we agreed upon specific moments where each of us as performers would respond to the textual analysis presented in our pre-designed script. For example, after an acknowledgement of Hardin's long battle to receive the composer credit for her song "Perdido Street Blues" (away from Louis Armstrong), Odin improvised around various words from our script and from the song lyrics ("Perdido, Goodnight Perdido, I lost Perdido") upon which I interjected short motives on my soprano saxophone within the blues structure of the piece. Then we alternated taking turns interrupting each other's text while cueing up the vital jazz-media showcasing Hardin Armstrong and Barnes in a televised duet as the closing segment of our presentation. Finally, we engaged students in questions about the presentation and shared links to resources relating to Hardin Armstrong and Barnes as well as other media highlighting compositions by women in jazz.

Embodied and Practice-based Approaches to Jazz Research and Pedagogy

One key TD approach towards valorizing women and female-identifying agents in jazz was to adapt elements of artistic practice-led research, especially improvisation and stylistic imitation, to the disciplines of musicology, media studies, and gender and feminist studies. During our presentation, we chose to interrogate processes which elevate forms of musical ownership related to performance practices within jazz such as short form improvisation, the jam session, and the blues form as documented in jazz media. Our aim was to stimulate our students and peers to interrogate systems of canonization while also adopting some of these techniques to become 'agents of change' within jazz education and performance contexts. We were driven by the notion that knowledge (in jazz) is only a rumor until it lives in the body.

A final motivation for our transdisciplinary presentational approach is a desire to work towards greater integration in the music academy and conservatory for research models will valorize and utilize combinations of contextual, sociological, and embodied research especially practice-based research. Michael Kahr defines artistic research in music as "a multifaceted endeavor which involves practice-based, practice-led and practice-driven approaches" and as "research in and through art, usually conducted by artist-scholars" and differentiated from "more traditional research on the arts" (Kahr xvi). Since the 1990s and following the Bologna Accords (1999), growing calls for artistic research has betrayed the precarious ground upon which many performance programs within music schools and conservatories currently stand (Born 2021). In his historical overview and analysis of jazz education programs, Ken Prouty further contextualizes these trends, revealing how, despite recent debates which suggest the ongoing separation of jazz practice and performance from jazz criticism and discourse, written studies and discourses of jazz culture have always existed parallel with the creative object and performance cultures of jazz (Prouty 2011, p. 71). Georgina Born identified some of the tensions surrounding the emergence of new terminology and frameworks during the last three decades leading to further stratified hierarchies within universities in relation to 'scientific' versus 'artistic' or 'practice based' research. She states: "as a result of this partnering with scientific and technological development, the epistemological status of MR (music research) appears clearer and less in doubt than that of AR [artistic research]. Music, it seems, can get caught up in orthodox forms of technoscientific research in ways that make it relatively obvious and easy to make claims about MR's scientific status leading to a 'subordination-service' mode of interdisciplinarity between scientists and composers and musicians" (Born 2021, p. 39). To prevent this subordination-service relation, while advocating for more sustainable forms of transdisciplinarity, Petter Frost Fadnes advocates for the merging of theory and practice (MR) and performance and improvisation (AR) within early instructional encounters for students and professionals "to embrace attitudes of inclusiveness and transdiscipinlarity" (Frost Fadnes 2021, p. 74).

Our transdisciplinary approach for this presentation necessarily entailed forms of traditional music research, yet we integrated practice-based research throughout the process, inspired by calls by scholar-performers such as Ellen Rowe and Tracy McMullen who advocate for greater inclusivity, gender parity, and space for improvisation for under-represented groups in jazz. Rowe, a long-time jazz educator, composer and performer, highlights how a lack of representative works by women in jazz ultimately offers the impression that jazz composition and leadership is a skill better under-taken by male-musicians (Rowe 2021, pp. 461-462). McMullen addresses this concern, by interrogating the overall value systems of many jazz training programs, which focus upon the "how" of jazz techniques rather than the "why" and "what it's for." She advocates for a more thorough inculcation of African American values in the process of mentorship and education in contemporary programs (McMullen 2021, p. 86). Our workshop for the Voices of Women in Jazz, takes on Rowe's and McMullen's implied critiques and follows their lead within jazz education in promoting advocacy and mentorship as well as creative artistic approaches as avenues for advocating works by women. We see this approach as one equipped to simultaneously motivate and stimulate young women and women identifying musicians to occupy these roles. This integrated approach will prove more successful as a vehicle for manifesting a different and more inclusive present and future in jazz. As identified by the Berklee Institute for Jazz and Gender Studies in their mission statement, new approaches are needed to do "corrective work and modify the way jazz is perceived and presented, so the future of jazz looks different than its past without rendering invisible many

of the art form's creative contributions" (Berklee, 2021).

Part 2 - Adopting New Resources and Practices for Amplifying Women's Authorial Voices in Jazz

As performers and researchers, we seek to transform the archive, cognizant of the performing body's role in challenging entrenched hierarchies. Our presentation format challenged the conventions in which this archive has been assembled and passed down to us, redirecting the masculinist phonographic filter from which it was collected. Students, performers, and educators alike may be attached to well-circulated versions of this history, of Ken Burns and Gunther Schuller, which relay the story of Jazz Heroes, of virtuosic soloists, and of new technologies engraved with traces of modernist evolutions (Whyton 20, Katz 2010, Tucker 2000). Jazz's official narratives uphold these recordings as emblems of musical genius; of a resilience against racism and an exploitative recording industry in the early twentieth century. This is an important story, yet we chose to consider artistic worlds as more than their technological reproduction as material objects. If we broaden our lens to consider alternative contexts and other materialities, many collaborative or undocumented, we unsettle the glue which cemented linear frames of this jazz past.

Our presentation recognized music's immediate and material impact upon the body, and especially upon the performatively gendered, raced, and sexed bodies of particular performance cultures. Through time, performances and their documentation congeal into proscriptive maps for future performances, and lived experiences can be mapped from one performer to the next through encounters with this documented jazz past (Rasula 1995). Yet heavy reliance upon jazz recordings of a canonical body of largely, male geniuses (predominantly instrumental) soloists (Gennari 2006, Rustin 2005), has diminished access to myriad resources which could have invigorated knowledge of a different and more feminine jazz past, and especially the visual, biographical, and more intimate ephemera of jazz women's lives.

As jazz scholar Ted Rasula asks, in contemplating the epistemological status of jazz recordings, is the recording a "conduit, an acoustic window giving access to how the music really sounded, or is it an obstacle?" (Rasula 1995, p. 135). Jazz recordings have provided undo resources for researchers and scholars to immerse themselves in particular jazz moments, as well as provided objects for dissection, imitation, and technical refinement. When considering women active in past jazz cultures, the paucity of recordings poses an obstacle for establishing evidence of the vitality of early jazz women's authorial contributions. The reliance upon jazz recordings betrays their role as 'media of inscriptions' (Rasula 1995, p. 135). But if we limit ourselves to a canonical body of celebrated and revered jazz recordings, we risk obscuring the various intersections and unorthodox acts within jazz culture, especially those not documented in such recordings.

Jazz and intersectionality researchers have long lamented the lack of historical evidence from which to fill archives and stich together historical narratives (Tucker 2000, Griffin 2001, Brooks 2021). And the respective prominence of audio(visual) media for women in jazz (McGee 2009), such as films, videos, and photographs would suggest that another historical account and theorization is (still) necessary. Stephanie Doktor, in her study of Florence Mills as star vocalist and Black Feminist leader of the 1920s, undertakes an alternative approach to the jazz archive by positioning non-recording related resources such as interviews and compositions written for Mills (such as by Edmund Thornton Jenkins and William Grant Still) as traces of her perceived cultural and artistic power within the New Negro Renaissance. Prompted by Daphne Brooks, Doktor endeavors to "disturb" enduring stereotypes contained within particular canons; in her rewriting of Mills, she "read[s] against the gendered limits of the archive, locating the alternative ways Black women made their voices audible" (Doktor 2020, p. 455). Paige McGinley too embraces myriad women-centered and often ephemeral archival materials for her study of actress-blues performers within theatrical blues shows in the early twentieth century. Ranging from the study of costumes and photographs to scenic designs, song lyrics and choreographies, McGinley's history (2014) offers greater understanding of women's connections (especially Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey) to early blues cultures which more fully acknowledge their unique material and artistic contributions as well as critical impact of the emergence of a performative and theatrical blues network for the shaping of a Black public. Each of these examples aligns with VOW's RESCAPE broader conceptualization of the archive, which acknowledges the many ephemeral materials and entanglements reflecting women's authorial voices and forms of creativity. Armed with these more porous and dynamic versions of the jazz archive, we discovered compelling 'new' collaborations and transdisciplinary paths such as those between dancers, vocalists, producers, and comics within vaudeville productions which impacted artists like Lil Hardin Armstrong in her early career. These under-recognized connections reveal the more expansive roles that musicians and performers have played in twentieth century jazz cultures (McGee 2009, McGinley 2014, Brown 2008).

The visual representation of canonical jazz has led to undertheorized assumptions about the makers and dispositions of jazz performers. Ramsey Castaneda and Amanda Quinlan uncover how the prominence of images decorating the covers of prominent jazz records as well as populating the most revered jazz history textbooks can lead to essentializing assumptions about jazz culture. They insist "Just as audio recordings hide many of the physical and social elements of music making that are representative of crucial dynamics of jazz, photographs too, by their careful selection of photographers and textbook editors (and lack of aural and temporal qualities) contribute to how learners and professionals conceptualize this music and its community and history (Castaneda and Quinlan p. 270)." By relying predominantly upon a well-circulated body of recordings and accompanying iconic jazz images on male-authored recordings, we delimit the possible sources of inspiration available to students of jazz. As Rasula reveals, recordings have featured as the media of memory for jazz history, yet their 'seductive menace' precludes archeological curiosity

regarding other types and potentially more culturally and disciplinary diverse documentary sources.

For our practice-based presentation at the VOW training activity in Stavanger, we chose to integrate a wide body of historical jazz sources including the jazz recording, as well as other critical media. Seeking to draw attention to female authors and performers of the jazz past, we took advantage of relatively new resources which have documented compositions penned by under-represented women in jazz, especially Terri Lyne Carrington's New Standards: 101 Jazz Lead Sheets by Women Composers published in 2022. Next to these lead sheets, we consulted recorded interviews, photographs, music recordings from the 1920s, and music videos recently broadcast on YouTube of jazz pioneers Lil Hardin Armstrong and Mae Barns excerpted from film and television performances during the 1950s and 1960s.

Lead Sheets by Women Composers

In preparation for our TD workshop in Stavanger, we studied the New Standards 2022 publication compiled by Carrington and others as part of the Berklee Institute for Jazz and Gender Justice. As founder and director of the Institute, Carrington admitted the challenges experienced when searching for works composed by women to incorporate into the Institute's teaching curriculum especially since the so-named Real Book, a compendium of some 400 tunes in lead sheet format utilized in jazz education programs throughout the world, contains only a few pieces by women. As Carrington acknowledged, "today, most jazz musicians learn the standards - Thelonious Monk's 'Ruby, My Dear,' for example, or Duke Ellington's 'Five O'clock Drag' - via lead sheets, many of which have been collected into what were once colloquially known as 'fake books' (Carrington in Contreras 2022)." Until the late 1960s, these books circulated informally and were drawn from a relatively small collection of celebrated recordings of 'star' soloists and band leaders. These tunes came to constitute a new performative jazz canon through a long and complex process of circulation, performance, and improvisation in jazz performance and mentoring settings including jam sessions, night club gigs, university jazz programs, and jazz festivals and their programs. As jazz departments emerged in the US and within Europe beginning in the late 1960s, fake books were formalized into an officially published Real Book in the 1970s, but this book contained tunes composed predominantly by male composers, beyond a few by Billie Holiday and Carla Bley. As noted by jazz journalist Ayana Contreras, "as jazz found a home in formal programs at universities across the country, fake books (and their descendants, the legally issued 'Real Books') became ubiquitous in classrooms, and have served as more than merely teaching tools: The inclusions (and exclusions) of various composers' work essentially codified a de facto jazz canon" (Contreras, 2022).

Jazz and Black music scholar Tammy Kernodle reflected upon the dynamic and sometimes exclusionary role of jazz canons, claiming that how they came about was continually subject to change and impacted by intergenerational discourse: "Jazz musicians were always having intergenerational and intercultural conversations with each other" (Kernodle in Contreras, 2022). She reminds us how bebop was initially considered outside an accepted jazz canon, "but its inclusion in early mid-20th century fake books helped solidify the style's standing in the narrative of jazz" (Kernodle in Contrerars, 2022). Given the lack of representation of female composers from the twentieth and twenty first century, Carrington, with the help of jazz pianist and composer Kris Davis and others, began compiling a list of prominent and varied tunes from female composers ranging from Lil Hardin Armstrong's work in the 1920s to recent works by contemporary stars including Melissa Aldana and Nicole Mitchell.

The publication features 101 compositions from "acknowledged titans, young visionaries and unsung heroes in jazz" including Mary Lou Williams, Alice Coltrane, esperanza spalding, Geri Allen, Maria Schneider, Cecile McLorin Salvant, Cassandra Wilson, Dianne Reeves, Dorothy Ashby, Nubya Garcia, Nicole Mitchell and many others…".2 During my interview with Carrington and Davis in 2024 for the 60th Anniversary of the JazzFest Berlin, Carrington considered the New Standards book and subsequent recordings as tools to provide new performance options, as well as sources for new aesthetic inspiration for younger jazz players. Criteria included material which was musically diverse; material spanning a broad time-period (of nearly 100 years), and a selection which represented international artists. When I asked how they selected this list, she stated, "I started with people I knew, and people whose music I played and people I liked." From the New Standards publication, Carrington organized a series of performances and recordings in 2023 and 2024 to feature tunes from the book at prestigious festivals such as the North Sea Jazz festival. Davis, who assisted in the compilation of the publication, also drew inspiration from it and choose to highlight women composers in her recent work and recordings, especially her recent album Run the Gauntlet (2024 Pyroclastic Records) featuring the works of six female pianists, Geri Allen, Renee Rosnes, Angelica Sanchez, Sylvie Courvousier, Marlijn Crispell, and Carla Bley. New lead sheet compendia provide sources for greater inclusivity, but other approaches are also desired to establish greater equity, especially through mentorship and performance opportunities. In this comprehensive framework, Carrington also directs programs to mentor young female and non-binary artists such as the New Jazz Legacy program, which matches young artists with successful jazz musicians and composers, giving them onstage experience as well as artistic and business mentorship opportunities.

During my interview with Carrington and Davis in 2024, Davis identified the critical role of 'thinking differently' about the relationship between improvisation and composition, inspired by musicians including Angelica Sanchez, Tony Malaby, and Ben Molder (Interview: "Dr Kristin McGee with Terri Lyne Carrington and Kris Davis 2024").3 For Davis, these two facets of jazz culture would benefit from better integration and demystification for younger jazz performers seeking to contribute as both performers and composers. Carrington and others reflected upon how the institute and its equity goals impacted the male and gender expansive students who too were seeking a more inclusive and multifaceted form of music making. Today, Carrington as-

pires towards 50/50 male/female ratios. Part of the impact of this ratio at the school was the cultivation of a space where people can 'be their authentic selves,' in a safe space, and be nurtured and develop into better musicians and researchers.

During the launching of the institute, Davis reflected on the notion of unconscious bias in the jazz education and performance world; the idea that men would hire their male students or buddies (who were often men) for gigs and so the cycle would continue, leading to further exclusion of women and non-binary artists and educators. Davis reinforced how this unique dynamic persists: "In Jazz we don't have an HR department, so it is really these grassroots things that are so important." To eradicate this dynamic, Carrington encourages students and patrons to learn to listen differently, to be open to a new aesthetic,

"We are asking both patrons of the music and musicians themselves, to consider or challenge themselves, to listen differently to be open to another sound aesthetic in the music, that is a really hard one to accomplish because we all grew up thinking this is sound of jazz, and this is what good jazz is, and everything that has been described as good jazz, for the most part has been created by men...What would the infiltration of this different sound aesthetic created by women and trans gender people and people that aren't moving through the world with male privilege. - what does that sound like and how does it affect the music? And I, on my own, have been part of the problem and reinforcing a certain kind of masculine sound to my students, so now I am trying to really think about that and trying to listen differently is difficult, but it is happening. And I'm also wondering what may have been lacking in my own artistly because I had been listening to men my whole life" (Interview with Terri Lyne Carrington, 9 September 2024).

Drawing inspiration from the transdisciplinarity of Carrington and Davis' inclusive approach towards jazz teaching, mentoring, composition, and performance, we chose one composition from the New Standards 101 Lead Sheet compendium for our transdisciplinary, practice-based approach. We then studied recently released videotaped performances of Armstrong and Barnes performing together in 1961 on national American television (NBC) as complimentary sources to draw attention to the material contexts from which prior pathbreaking, ingenious women labored, while also reinvigorating their works in new research-oriented, improvisatory contexts consistent with the values and aims of VOW.

Part 3 - Lil Hardin Armstrong as an Agent of Change in Jazz

A young pathbreaker who greatly expanded jazz culture and reflected the range of women's authorial voices and especially for Black women in the United States was Lil Hardin Armstrong (1898-1971), who performed, recorded, and contributed prolifically to the burgeoning blues, jazz, and popular music styles of Chicago in the 1920s through the 1960s. Yet like many early women in jazz, her musical life and contributions have been largely relegated to footnotes. The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz simply writes: "As a leader Lil Hardin Armstrong (1961, Fantasy OJCCD); As a sideman with Louis Armstrong Hot Fives and Sevens (1925, JSP)" and critics of the time mostly dismissed her talents as simplistic and secondary to the other musicians (especially Armstrong). It is this repetition of her relation to the great man, Louis Armstrong and her role in (his) groups, which for some solidified her small connection to jazz history.

Raised in Memphis, Tennessee, only decades after the emancipation proclamation, Hardin honed her skills in church, experimenting with new styles during services, much to her pastor's chagrin. Like her near contemporary pianist and composer Lovie Austin (1887-1972), she earned her degree in classical music, studying piano performance at the historically Black college Fisk University. With this, she joined a cast of "classically trained pianists that stretched back to the nineteenth century" (Taylor 2009, p. 51).

In the early 1920s, she moved to Chicago, broadcasting her talents within the South Side's Black metropolis and acquiring well-paid gigs for white-owned picture houses and recording companies downtown. She performed with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band and later famously with Louis Armstrong after encouraging him to move to Chicago in 1924. Before this reunion, she led her own groups including a mixed-gendered group during the 1930s. Indicative of her role as an exceptional accompanist for leading soloists, listen to Hardin's musicality and unfailing rhythmic drive on the 1926 Decca recording, "Perdido Street Blues" performed by the New Orleans Wanderers (an alternative name for the Hot Five) (Dickerson 2002). Many discographers incorrectly attributed Louis Armstrong as the composer of this song and Hardin fiercely battled for many decades to finally gain the rights to her tune (Dickerson 2002). As Jeffrey Taylor argues, Hardin's unique ability to support instrumental soloists was rarely noticed by jazz critics, and she was often excessively critiqued by early critics such as Gunther Schuller. Yet her open style stimulated superb articulations from the many (now) revered blues vocalists and instrumentalists she accompanied. In this tune, Hardin adapted the heavy left-hand stride of the time, especially inspired by Jelly Roll Morton (Taylor 2009).

"In Satchmo and Me" (a series of interviews from the 1950s), Hardin relays how she met Morten while working as a song plugger in a Chicago department store. She vividly recalled this meeting stating: "So, one day Jelly Roll Morton came in. He sat down and he started playing. Ooh, gee, he had such long fingers. And, oh, in no time at all he had the piano rockin' and he played so heavy and oh, goose pimples are sticking out all over me. I said, "whoo, gee! What piano playing, and I attribute it to hearing Jelly Roll play" (Armstrong 1956). This recollection places Hardin in the center of critical jazz networks for the burgeoning new musical styles of Chicago and New York during the 1920s. Yet despite her many collaborations, leadership roles, and compositions, her talents were most often reduced to bolstering Armstrong's career and confidence. Jazz historians rarely mentioned her non-Armstrong performances, yet her name appears frequently in the press, especially with an expanded interest in transforming gender roles embodied by the so-called "new woman" (McGee, 2009). In our presentation, we attempted to redress this lacuna, tak-

ing the head of Hardin's tune "Perdido Street Blues" published in Carrington's New Standards: 101 Lead Sheets by Women Composers. Through embodied engagement with these two sources (recordings and lead sheets), we attempted to create a new, in the moment version for voice and soprano saxophone. We held no pretense that our impromptu performance would match the vitality, technical versatility, and musicality of Hardin's, but by bringing her work into the international classroom, we engaged discussions and delivered corporeal gestures connecting her musical lineage to the jazz past and now present within the academy.

Our TD preparatory research led us to a surprising, filmed performance of Hardin Armstrong with other prominent jazz musicians from the 1920s, including vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Mae Barnes as well as established Chicago artists including Red Allen, Pee Wee Russel, Gene Krupa, and Buster Bailey. The variety of media and recordings documenting Hardin's career legitimized the notion that established jazz women not only composed jazz tunes, but as musicians, they performed and recorded tunes covered by other women, a practice typically attributed exclusively to men in citational practices (Kernodle 2022). Hardin Armstrong penned several eclectic jazz tunes including some performed by other 'all-girl' bands especially the participatory dance tune "Doin' the Suzie Q" (Decca 1936) which was popularized by Chicago-native, tap dancer and bandleader Ina Ray Hutton with her Melodears for the Paramount film The Big Broadcast of 1936.

Despite Hardin's prolific contributions to Chicago's jazz culture and her many recordings, her role was often side-lined as one facilitating the rise of Armstrong as one of jazz's great soloists in the New Orleans style. Hardin also promoted this image throughout her life, indicated by this oft-repeated statement from the 1950 interview: "I was holdin' the ladder and watchin' you climb. After a while I couldn't reach you anymore." Given the prominence of this narrative, it was tragic that she collapsed performing on stage in a memorial tribute to Armstrong at age 74. Her autobiography which she had been writing for many years was never published.

Lil Hardin Armstrong and Mae Barnes personify Black Female Camaraderie in Jazz

While Hardin was instrumental in launching Louis Armstrong's career in Chicago, she actively performed with many musicians relevant for the early jazz networks including for King Oliver's Jazz Band and for various musical theatrical outfits. She also collaborated with female musicians such as those in her mixed-gendered ensemble in the 1930s, women who were equally multi-faceted in a variety of genres and performance styles such as vocalist, dancer, and multi-instrumentalist Mae Barnes. As a rising entertainer and highly innovative (tap) dancer, Barnes was reported to have invented the Charleston in the 1920s and presented the dance within Black musical shows including the Plantation Revue at the reputable Plantation Club in Harlem, and later for the nationally touring Runnin Wild (1924) Revue (Dr. Jazz Magazine 2010, p. 38). Her first national vaudeville tour was the famous Shuffle Along (1921), during which she was touted at the 'the greatest female tap dancer' by Bo Bojangles Robinson (Dr. Jazz Magazine 2010, p. 38). In 1938, her dancing career came to a halt after a car accident fractured her hip. Barnes, undeterred by this tragedy, pivoted her talents towards jazz, blues, and comedy as a multi-instrumentalist and vocalist, playing drums, piano, and singing various popular jazz and blues renditions of the 1920s, 30s and 40s. In the 1950s, as an established entertainer, she embarked upon a European tour with appearances at the Colony and Astor theatres in London. Barnes began performing with a trio, the Three Flames, which garnered the attention of Atlantic Records for whom she recorded fourteen songs, ten of which were released in 1953 as Fun with Mae Barnes. In 1958, Barnes was invited by John Hammond to record for Vanguard with Buck Clayton (trumpet), Aaron Bell (bass), Joe Jones (drums), and Ray Bryant and Ray Tunia, both on piano (Dr. Jazz p. 40). In the mid-1950s, Barnes began appearing on television programs along with many established and mature stars of jazz and musical revue, making special appearances with Lil Hardin Armstrong and others for the 1961 NBC Dupont Show of the Week entitled Chicago and All that Jazz. She also appeared in 1959 with Kid Ory's Band on Dr. Jazz TV with Lil Hardin Armstrong and Red Allen and several revered early jazz stars.

For this 1961 "America's Music: Chicago and All the Jazz" television revue, Hardin and Barnes perform two tunes together, "The Pearls" (1926) and "Heebie Jeebies" (1926) as part of the program's finale. Hardin delivers a kind of ragtime style for "The Pearls" during which she sings various riffs and melodies in vocalize, accompanied by Barnes playing snare, with breaks and fills in response to Hardin's riffing, laughing, and short improvisations. Barnes eventually segues to the first verse of "Hebbie Jeebies," then takes two-bar breaks with trumpeter Red Allen and clarinetist Buster Bailey, while Hardin continues to deliver a steady stride left hand with intermittent blues licks interspaced between the three other improvisers. Hardin's stop-time and driving rhythmic pulse effortlessly propel the momentum of the quartet while Hardin and Barnes share a rarely documented comradery between two middle-aged jazz women in a mainstream media outlet (NBC) in the 1960s.

The critical role of collaborating Black women musicians have been under-represented in jazz histories, yet musicians like Barnes, Hardin-Armstrong and later Melba Liston and Mary Lou Williams often strove to secure more performance opportunities for each other and their female peers (Brooks 2021). Black female musicians also forged relationships with other Black women professionals to transform expectations related to women musicians in the jazz world. Tammy Kernodle revisits the 'exceptional woman' thesis to foreground instances where Black women resisted engaging in intense competition with each other and instead developed collaborative relationships such as those between Melba Liston and Mary Lou Williams as they performed and composed together first for the Newport Jazz Festival in 1957 and later as they collaborated to inaugurate the first Pittsburgh Jazz Festival in 1964 in Williams' hometown (Kernodle 2022:

“Musicians, critics, and fans created a spectrum of readings that defined the woman’s role in this culture. The use of the term “woman” was a reference to females who inhabited this space as wives, girlfriends, patrons, or groupies”

Figure 1: Lil Hardin Armstrong accompanied by Mae Barnes on snare for “the Pearls” during the NBC Chicago and All the Jazz retrospective in 1961.

87, 107-09). In relation to Liston and Williams’ long-standing partnership, Kernodle describes how their spirit not of rivalry or exceptionalism, but of friendship and mutual respect lifted each other up, while helping to sustain their careers. Their collaboration provided a model of jazz friendship not often illuminated in histories of women in jazz. For Kernodle, “The professional trajectory of Liston uncovers how the homosocial networks created by black women musicians stimulated knowledge acquisition and the development of wisdom.” Kernodle argues for a renewed understanding of the term women in Black jazz contexts claiming:

“Musicians, critics, and fans created a spectrum of readings that defined the woman’s role in this culture. The use of the term “woman” was a reference to females who inhabited this space as wives, girlfriends, patrons, or groupies. All of these roles positioned women as being diametrically “outside” of the culture, on the periphery, but comprising central networks that supported the creative activities of men. Most importantly, these “women” did not disrupt the work or camaraderie of the men, but enabled it” (Kernodle 2022: 90-93).

Given the intersectional complexity of the various roles proscribed for the supporting agents of jazz spaces and careers, acknowledging how those few women who did manifest performance opportunities for others in a spirit of creativity and comradery reveals a radical departure from the gendered and cultural scripts of the highly competitive and egotistical white male or even many Black male band musicians or bandleaders.

During our presentation, we showed part of this documentary, especially the riveting duet between Hardin Armstrong and Barnes on the tune “The Pearls.” Before this screening, we began our own joyful yet admittedly tentative (daunted by these women’s immense skills) improvisatory interactions. Our interjections were inspired by the melodic trading, laughter, and blues riffs of the duo’s second tune, “Heebe Jeebies” (composed by Joe Atkinsin 1926 and performed famously by Louis Armstrong). We aimed not to overshadow the technical mastery (how could we!), but rather to allow for more embodied discursive engagement with this historical document, promoting it into the present as a source for study and reverence as well as new inspiration and training within jazz, unbound by masculine expectations and exclusionary mechanisms prohibiting collaboration and impromptu improvisation for gender diverse and inclusive jazz.

After interweaving historical, multi-mediated, and improvisatory elements meant to draw attention to the musical legacy and compositional artistry of Hardin Armstrong and Barnes, we played out the last bit of the 1961 duet, giving these 'legendary' female artists the proverbial last word before opening the room to questions, impressions, and comments from the students and peers.

Coda (and hopefully an encore)
Given that transdisciplinarity, practice-based research, and open-ended improvisation currently feature as key practices and perspectives relevant for more inclusive and equitable forms of jazz pedagogy and valorization; our presentation/workshop "Challenging Boundaries of Musical Ownership through Improvised Performance Practice" in Stavanger for the Unheard Voices of Women international training activity on October 10th, 2024, sought to adapt these approaches for our study of key agents of change within jazz, namely Lil Hardin Armstrong and Mae Barnes, as multifaceted pioneers within early jazz cultures. Through a process of diffraction and embodied connection the material and ephemeral objects documenting Hardin's enduring jazz career, we sought to bring her ingenious and vigorous musical creativity as a multifaceted author/composer/accompanist/soloist and collaborator dynamically into the present. We understand the racial ideologies and privileges which enabled us to access these archival materials and to experiment with them in this educational and research context. Yet our improvisatory approach was intended to honor the innovation, verve, and collaboration of Armstrong and Barnes, as groundbreaking African American women, and as inclusive collaborators who supported myriad musicians (black and white and of various genders) within myriad jazz and popular music contexts (dance, musical theatre, jazz clubs, and musical revues). Fortunately, some of these have been documented in a variety of media (recordings, interviews, television, photographs) throughout the twentieth century.

We hope that our modest interweaving of various methods and disciplines stimulated the desire to engage with their work in ways which disturb and challenge the entrenched boundaries of jazz canons for more inclusive and representative jazz futures. In this future, women of color feature as "legends" and "geniuses", but also critically as collaborators and supporters of other women's careers. Further, through a process of diffraction and in the moment improvisation and corporeal gesturing elicited by study of these materials, we attempted to elevate these little examined objects as viable sources for study beyond the 'menace' of the jazz recording as the only acceptable historical artefact. Our historical approach led us to unexpected but compelling and productive materials which shed new light on the musical verve and comradery of early jazz women and illuminated the unconventional ways in which they forged exciting jazz careers, through dance, comedy and multi-instrumentalism. As we studied, played with, and improvised around one prodigious and well-known tune, Hardin Armstrong's "Perdido Street Blues," a tune often mistakenly attributed to Louis Armstrong, but since rectified and reclaimed within Carrington's New Standards: 101 Lead Sheet by Women Composers, we became aware of how such a process of rewriting entailed more than words and historical narratives, but a dynamic flow of imitation, riffs, and unfinished musical conversations. The study and apprenticeship with these materials culminated in our TD presentation and workshop and hopefully inspired younger jazz musicians to engage collaboratively with the fascinating and ever dynamic materials documenting the ingenuity and creativity of these pioneering women in jazz.

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Multiply unheard and rendered invisible

On the intersectionality of Gerty Landesberger alias Felice Wolmut as an exiled woman in music

By Marie-Anne Kohl

Abstract

As both gender and exile music research deal with ruptures in biographies and the scatteredness of remaining sources, women musicians affected by escape and exile are often confronted with a double erasure from music history. An example is Felice Wolmut—singer, composer, music therapist and pedagogue—whose estate lies scattered across various archives and whose story and musical creations remain unpublished to this day. Her ego documents draw a fascinating image of an intellectual musician, born in the Vienna of the Fin de siècle, socialised in Red Vienna, who escaped Nazi Vienna and started a completely new life in exile in the USA. The sources offer insights into Wolmut's views on the artistic and political developments of the time and on the violent, patriarchal societies she was part of. Her autobiography, written in the late 1970s, reveals just as much about the 80-year-old narrating Wolmut as it does about the younger, narrated Wolmut. This article is based on a critical assessment of the sources, asking how they can help construct the historical figure 'Felice Wolmut', a woman and a musician whose voice has historiographically been (made) forgotten.

Keywords: Exile, displacement, gender-based violence, C20 music culture, autobiographical narration

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Felice Wolmut—also known by other names—was a singer, composer, accompanist, music therapist and pedagogue—born in the Vienna of the Fin de siècle into a wealthy family of Jewish converts, socialised impoverished in Red Vienna, who escaped Nazi Vienna and spent the second half of her life in US American exile. To this day, her name(s) and her achievements are virtually unknown. This article suggests that this historiographical neglect is due to the intersectionality of her identity as a woman and an exile. It critically assesses the few scattered sources that provide information about her life in the light of exile and autobiographical writing. Who is the historical figure 'Felice Wolmut' whom these sources allow to (re-)construct? What can we learn from her accounts about her different contexts and times, especially in terms of living an artist identity as a woman in a patriarchal society, facing displacement, and reconsidering one's own life experiences in the light of changes in history?

Exile music research has for a long time focused almost exclusively on the biographies of male composers (Stahrenberg 2024, p. 524). Perspectives on the work of women remained marginal, partly due to a perpetuated focus on discourses of genius, corresponding to a general bias in music historiography. Lisa Fischer (2016) remarks in her study of female composers in exile that even when women were co-producers of men's work, which happened often enough, the female part was frequently ignored and disappeared behind a male copyright (p. 7). By and large, "[the erasure of female creation] already happens during [a woman's] lifetime through spouses, teachers, critics, publishers, directors and, posthumously, through historiography." (Fischer, p. 11f., own translation)i Nils Grosch (2024) points out that exile music research, which started to take shape in the late 1970s, has only in recent decades started to look at other professional musicians besides composers, or at musicologists or "musical agency" in general (p. 59).

This is a timeframe corresponding to musicological gender research that has long shown that a long-denied acknowledgement of women's musical agency not only calls for the field of research to be expanded, but that this very field itself needs to be contoured differently through alternative perspectives. A general readjustment is required in what is considered historically relevant. In this broader view, elements like performance, patronage, space, and networks gain significance alongside composition and interpretation. Taking this point of view, it becomes very clear that, in music research, all musical activity must be embedded in a wider socio-cultural and political framework. Furthermore, as Philipp Ewell (2023) has emphasised in his analyses of the racism immanent to music theory, it is not enough to bring the figures into light that had structurally been disregarded and erased, more urgently it needs light to be shed on the very activities that let and continue to lead to marginalisation and erasure (3). This paper adopts this expanded framework to address the exclusions and biases shaping music history, questioning the ways in which certain figures and activities were (and continue to be) marginalised or erased. Particularly within exile music research, understanding ruptures in biographies and archives—often inflicted violently—reveals gaps that make it challenging to ask who and what remains absent but necessitates questions on how these erasures occurred and why they should never recur. Women affected by exile and migration often face an intersectional erasure, in which 'making disappear through omission', as Ilse Korotin (2005, p. 6) describes in the context of the remigration of female academics after the Second World War, remains only the surface of deeper historical neglect.

The archive of the Viennese Exilarte Centre for Banned Music, based at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, "operates as a centre for the reception [and] preservation of [musicians] who were branded as 'degenerate' during the years of the 'Third Reich'" (Exilarte Center, 2025, Mission Statement of the Exilarte Center). It continually expands its "broad range of musical exile-material" (Exilarte Center, 2025, Estates) on the basis of various estates. It thus performs important work in terms of memory politics. Among these estates are only a few women. As previously elaborated, this circumstance is not so much surprising as it is paradigmatic. On the one hand, women's estates are less likely to have been collected,[ii] on the other hand, women's life circumstances of that era simply did not give them much of a chance to prosper as public and creative figures who were deemed memorable. Susanne Thomasberger (2016, p. 5) notes that even before the horrors of the Third Reich, it was not expected by women to declare creative expression a self-determined profession. Women were often denied the capacity for artistic creation. Thomasberger describes that an incipient change in society's perception of the image of women, which went hand in hand with the active struggle for women's rights and freely chosen self-definition, including a professional one, was brought to stagnancy by a radical anti-feminism under National Socialism. As she puts it, "Women's emancipation was defined as an expression of 'absolute degeneration'" (p. 5, own translation)iii. These contexts are also relevant for Gerty Felice Wohlmuth. Under this name, the Exilarte Center holds an estate which consists of a handful of compositions (manuscripts and photocopies): a sonata for violin and piano in G minor and eight songs from 1917 signed Gerty Landesberger, among them "Der junge Dichter denkt an die Geliebte" ("The young poet thinks of his beloved") [Figure 1] and "Ich weiß nicht, was es ist …" ("I don't know, what it is …") [Figure 2].

"It becomes very clear that, in music research, all musical activity must be embedded in a wider socio-cultural and political framework"

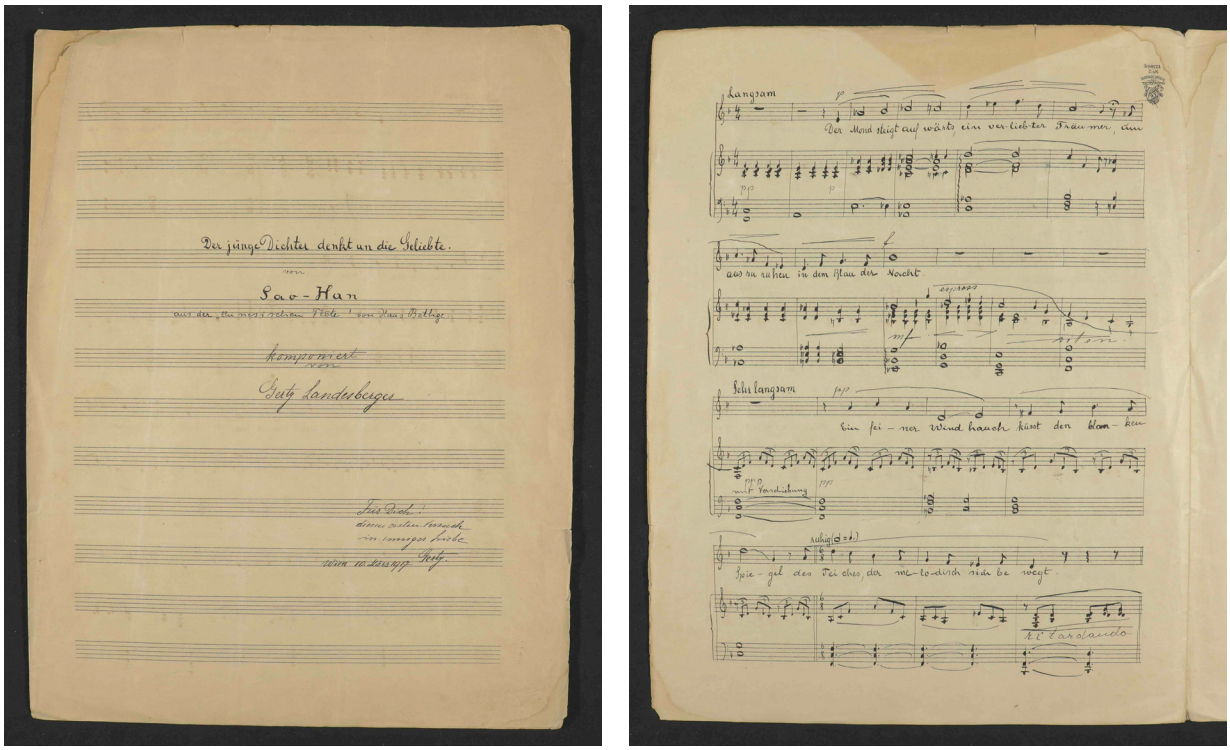

Figure 1. Gerty Landesberger, "Der junge Dichter denkt an die Geliebte" [sheet music], 1917, title page and first page of score, Exilarte Center, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Archive, Estate „Gerty Felice Wohlmuth".

For me, as a music historian, it was the first time I had come across a composer by that name. At the outset, I didn't know how to contextualise these compositions. Thanks to the Biographical Dictionary of Persecuted Musicians 1933-1945 (Maurer Zenck et al., since 2005) and the online Austrian Music Encyclopedia (Kornberger, 2023), which identifies Felice Wolmut as a singer, a singing teacher, a music therapist, and a translator (note: not as a composer!), I was able to gather further information, including, most importantly, the names this person had assumed throughout her life.[iv] She was born "Gertrud Natalia Stefania Felicia Landesberger" in Vienna on January 14th, 1897—later to include "von Antburg" after her father was ennobled by Emperor Franz Joseph in 1916—although she was known by the name Gerty Landesberger. Upon her first marriage in 1920 to the author Emil Alphons Rheinhardt (which ended in 1924), she became "Gerty Rheinhardt". From 1929, when she started her career as an opera singer, she called herself "Gerty Stoerk"[v] using her mother's maiden name. From around 1933, she assumed the stage name "Felice (von) Antburg", adapted to "Mme Felice d'Antbourg" for her appearances in Luxembourg in the 1930s. She maintained this pseudonym after her emigration to the USA in 1938. Upon her second marriage to the opera director Hans Wohlmuth in 1935, she became known as "Felice Wohlmuth", which later became anglicised to Wolmut, a name she kept until her death in Portland, USA, on August 17th, 1989.[vi]

Beyond this quite detailed information, there is hardly any literature published on Felice Wolmut. In a diploma thesis submitted at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw), music therapy student Mira Hüser (2021) focuses on Wolmut's career as a pioneering music therapist in the USA, where in the 1960s (and now in her 60s) she gained two BAs, one in sociology and one in psychology. She worked in this field until 1980, aged 83. Parts of Hüser's thesis are published in an article in a music therapist journal (2024). Further, there is half an article on Wolmut as a music therapist in a self-published book by US-American music therapist Ted Ficken from 2020. Beyond that, there are, as far as my research goes so far, only a few mentions of Wolmut in other publications, such as her first husband Rheinhardt's published diaries (2013) covering the years 1943-45, the published diaries of the author Arthur Schnitzler (as of January 20, 2025) covering the years 1879-1931, or in Veigl & Fink (2012) a collection of names of persecuted and expelled

Austrian cabaret artists (which, however, incorrectly ascribes her profession as "Diseuse"). Historiographically, Wolmut has been forgotten. Any documents that can reveal more about this fascinating figure of the 20th century remain in the depths of the archives.

Hüser's thesis is based on the most important source, a typewritten and manually corrected unpublished autobiography of Wolmut, which is held by the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW) in Vienna. In addition to Wolmut's autobiography, the DÖW collection includes poems written by her and by her first husband Rheinhardt, as well as a short biography of him, written by Wolmut, and Rheinhardt's "Tagebuch aus den Jahren 1943/44. Geschrieben in den Gefängnissen der Gestapo in Menton, Nizza und Les Baumettes (Marseille)" ("Diary from the years 1943/44: written in the Gestapo prisons in Menton, Nice and Les Baumettes (Marseille)"), which was given to the DÖW by Wolmut, edited and published in 2002 by Martin Krist (Krist & Rheinhardt, 2003) [vii]. The collection holds a few short stories written bei Wolmut, several photographs and a great many letters, mainly between Wolmut and Rheinhardt from the 1930s and early 1940s, as well as letters between Wolmut and representatives of DÖW (Selma Steinmetz, Herbert Steiner), dated between 1976 and 1987. There are further sources, such as letters from Wolmut to Erich Korngold, as well as a book Wolmut wrote about the composer Luise Reichhardt held by the Austrian National Library, and Wolmut's diaries, which are held by the University of Vienna.viii There is also an obituary written by Wolmut's daughter-in-law, Betty (Elisabeth) Wolmut, in 1989, which is reprinted in Hüser's thesis (Betty Wolmut in Hüsers, 2021, pp. 34-41).[ix] Until now, I have been unable to find any further compositions than those held at Exilarte Center, although Wolmut must have composed around 70 songs (Betty Wolmut in Hüsers, 2021, pp. 37f.; Kornberger, 2023).

Wolmut's autobiography is the only document that gives us sufficiently detailed information about her life and her perspective on the societies and cultures that she was a part of. As Siglinde Bolbecher (2005) points out in an article on female perspectives on exile, it is the autobiographies of women that are especially valuable in this regard as they often provide a fuller account of the unspectacular and the everyday (p. 3). Autobiographies as sources of history, however, are to be handled with caution. As Melanie Unseld (2014) has pointed out, an artist's self-representation must not be misunderstood as historical reality or biographical truth, but rather as a remembering re-creation (pp. 439, 441f.)[x]

Wolmut's autobiography, running into several hundreds of pages,[xi] has, on the one hand, a strictly chronological structure—at some point, she goes so far as to frame her memoires as exact transcriptions of the diaries that she had started to write as a nine-year-old girl. On the other hand, it features scatteredness and volatility. There are frequent verbatim repetitions, many anticipations and retrospections that disintegrate the chronology, and very often there are commentaries that make Wolmut visible not only as subject matter but as narrator.[xii] This observation resonates with Unseld's (2014, p. 300) tracing of a paradoxical simultaneousness in narration: non-coherent representations of individual biographies following the experience of the Second World War and the Shoaxiii alongside an adherence to coherent narrative structures and heroic, male biographical models of the 19th century. Unseld understands this as a homogenising re-action responding to this form of distress (ibid.), which is something that echoes Horst Weber's (2008) observations of autobiographical writing among exiles: as a way to process the exile situation, an attempt to restore an "intact personality" (p. 10).

Wolmut's autobiography is a fascinating document in regard to a (gendered) culture of remembrance and to the (gendered) question of historical relevance, especially when contextualised with the existing correspondence. My theory is that she had a very clear agenda of writing herself into music history, which I will substantiate by means of several statements and documents. For instance, Wolmut started contact with DÖW in 1976 by sending them material of her late ex-husband Rheinhardt, who died at the Dachau concentration camp as a Viennese member of the French Resistance. Soon, she also offered the DÖW material on her late second husband Hans Wolmut, who, as a Jew, had to escape Nazi Austria. In 1978, Wolmut started asking DÖW representatives for support to find a publisher for her own autobiography, bit by bit, then also sending her own poems and memoires, as well as letters. Looking at the short biography that she wrote about Rheinhardt,[xiv] it is conspicuous that this narration is primarily about herself. Obviously, however, her attempt to be remembered as part of the 20th century music history failed. Has she simply been overlooked due to an intersectional negation of her historical relevance?

Keeping in mind the constructed-ness of (auto)biographical narration, I will now turn to Wolmut's own narration of her fascinating life. I do not try to reconstruct a coherent narration. My intention is rather to share some spotlights on this narrated life, with a focus on Wolmut's musical self, her gendered self, and her exiled self. These insights will, hopefully, show her as an outstanding intellectual, musical, independent, hard-working woman of the 20th century who played an active part in the cultural and societal transformation of traditional female roles of her time. A summarising overview of her life is provided by a letter from 1978, in which she tries to win a publisher for her autobiography:

> These are my memoirs from my early childhood in Vienna to the present day, my successes and failures as a female musician at the beginning of the century up to my present age of 82, where I am a respected musician and music therapist here. [...] The friendship with the great authors of Austria, my studies with Schoenberg may interest your audience; so too may the youthful conflicts of being brought up strictly Catholic, unaware before adolescence of my Jewish ancestry [...] All this may be of interest to Austrian and German readers. – The following 40 years in America, first enchanted, then disappointed, but always learning, may interest you as a true testimony of a soul 'torn apart' but united by music. (d'Antbourg Wolmut, n. d., own translation.) [xv]

"Obviously, however, her attempt to be remembered as part of the 20th century music history failed"

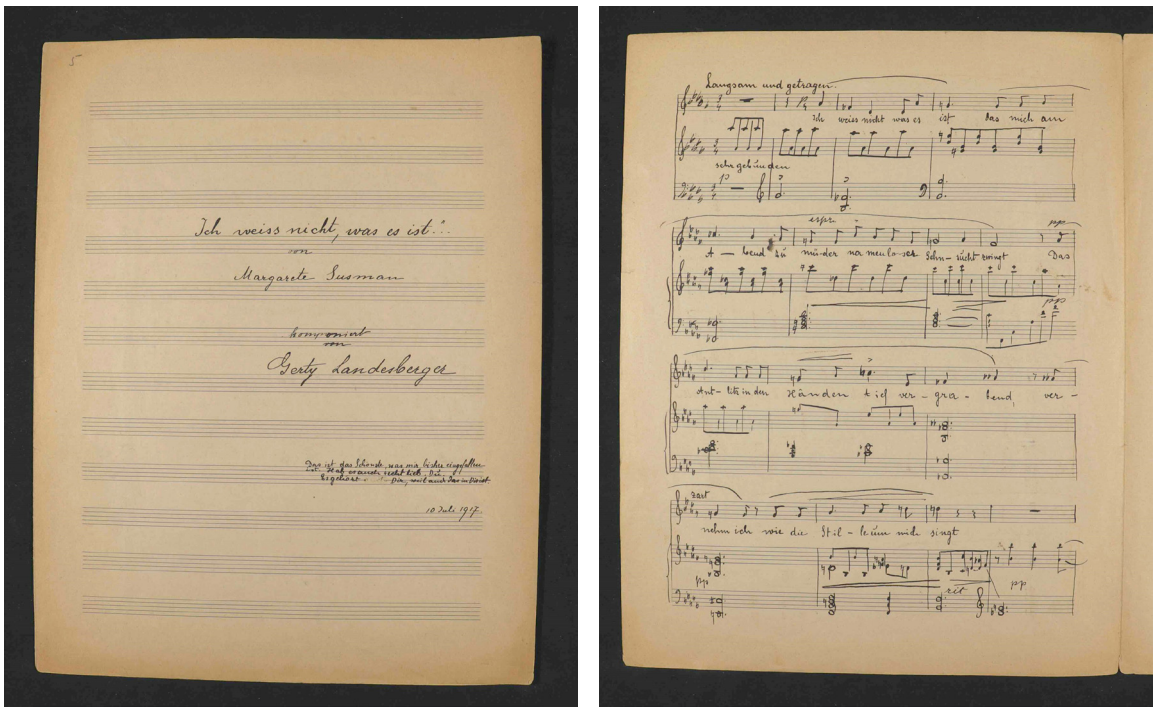

Figure 2. Gerty Landesberger, "Ich weiß nicht, was es ist ..." [sheet music], 1917, title page and first page of score, Exilarte Center, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Archive, Estate „Gerty Felice Wohlmuth".

Already in this pitch, one can detect a fine sense of dramaturgy. It is telling that of all the names she could have dropped here—and there were many—she picked Arnold Schoenbergxvi – writing this in the 1970s, she surely knew well about his cultural capital as a composer and as a teacher. It is quite entertaining to read about her acquaintance with the maestro from her manuscript:

> The best thing that happened to me in 1917 was that I started to compose. [...] While reading [Bethge's Chinese poetry translations], a melody awoke in me that could not be suppressed, and hesitantly, I wrote down my first song – and dedicated it—how else — to my sister Lili. It was a tremendous emotional experience for me; I had never learnt harmony or counterpoint, and I could hardly believe that it began to compose— in me, this 'It' to which one has so little mental access. I wrote more; the melodies were beautiful, the harmonies good; but I didn't know how to write a proper accompaniment. I was sent to Arnold Schoenberg to learn (Wolmut, n. d., 3/19, own translation.) [xvii]

It is notable, this quite romanticised narration of the genius ("It") that overcomes her. She strikes a similar tone repeatedly at other points of her memoirs, for example, when she describes her first writing of poetry as something that just hit her. These narratives are obviously inspired by male heroic narrations of genius. [xviii] And since her memoir had been pinned down retrospectivley by Wolmut decades after the recounted experience, her mentioning of a powerful "It" (in original German: "Es") might also want to suggest a psychoanalytical reading of her state of creativity, as Sigmund Freud had published his seminal concept of the psychodynamics of the id, ego and super-ego "The Ego and the Id" (German: "Das Ich und das Es") only a few years later, in 1922.

Wolmut's encounter with Schoenberg continues:

> I have little and no joyful memories of this time. He must have been very poor back then to take on a very young girl who knew nothing about the craft as a student. I remember him at his not-very-big desk, cold and reasoned, just like he was at the piano. He taught me the theory of harmony from his own book, which was quite conservative; there were no parallel fifths and octaves in my exercises. 'First, you have to do it according to the rules; only then can you give them up' or something similar, he said. I [...] brought him my few songs for correction. One began, 'I don't know what it is...' (a poem by Margarete Susman, whom I came to know and admire years later). 'I don't know what it is either', said Schoenberg. 'What's wrong with it?' I asked fearfully. 'You haven't repeated a single melisma but go from one to the other,' he replied. 'That's nothing. Saying something once is nothing. You have to repeat it at least once.' (I kept that in mind for later.) (Wolmut, n. d., 3/19, own translation) [xix]

Their teacher-student relationship [xx] ended after only a year. Wolmut adds somewhat pointedly: "But I went [...] to all the concerts that performed his works – each performed twice in the same concert – for a better understanding." (Wolmut, n. d., 3/20, own translation)[xxi]

The two songs mentioned—the one dedicated to her sister Lili and the one based on the poem by Susman, "I don't know, what it is…"—are amongst the compositions held by the Exilarte Center. (See Figures 1 and 2). And now I know how to contextualise them. Obviously, they were Wolmut's very first steps in composition—but not her last. In 1919, Rheinhardt had arranged a concert for me of my own compositions in a small, newly opened reading room with a podium. A young singer first sang four of my early songs, then Aranyi and I played my recently completed violin sonata, and afterwards, Hofmannsthal's 'Terzinen' with obbligato were sung, and Rheinhardt's 'Oh Mensch, ich habe Sehnsucht nach dir' with obbligato, accompanied by me. Tout Vienne was there; there had not been a composition concert by a woman in Vienna in living memory, and all the critics came […] After the concert, even the old opera composer Bittner […]xxii came over; he took my hand, squeezed it and said: 'A bit of Debussy is still haunting you; but stick to it, little lady [kleines Fräulein], composing is your way already' (Wolmut, n. d., 3/46, own translation) [xxiii]

Obviously, women composers were still regarded as unfamiliar to the public at the time. However, this paragraph also reveals that although she was extremely well connected in Vienna's art and music scene, Wolmut lacked a network with other female composers in Vienna, such as Johanna Müller-Hermann, Mathilde Kralik (von Meyrswalden) or Vilma (von) Webenau. Nor was she part of the relevant feminist circles, such as the "Club of Viennese Women Musicians". Certainly, her claiming to be the only female composer in Vienna who showed her work publicly, thus staging herself as a sensation, can also be read as a marketing strategy. The mere talent for a career as a composer would probably have been there, based on the following statement in her memoirs from around 1920:

A really wonderful friend […] was Alfred Einstein […]; he was a music historian, edited a new edition of the Riemann Musiklexikon at the time […] He had listened to my compositions, found them interesting and talented, and when I told him about the unfinished trio, he said […] that if I wrote the last missing movement, he would give me a whole paragraph in the Riemann. [… And he gave me] the commission to publish Louise Reichardt's songs and to write her biography […][xxiv] This work made me happy; I was so glad to have something to do with music—because, as I had anticipated, I had stopped composing when I got married. […][xxv] Utis didn't push me towards music because he needed me as a secretary. (Wolmut, n. d., 4/11, own translation) [xxvi]

The Riemann paragraph never came to be, nor did the career as a composer.[xxvi] Wolmut understands this non-fulfilment throughout her autobiography as a gendered problem. Despite this unrealised career as a composer, she manages to tell a rather coherent development of herself as a musician.[xxviii] That starts classically with her education: a rather violent upbringing in a wealthy, intellectual yet cold bourgeois household, including physical disciplining at the piano, not untypical for bourgeois girls in the 19th century (see Ballstaedt & Widmaier, 1989):

"'Tanti' started to teach us piano; every wrong note was rewarded with a slap on the knuckles with a ruler. […] Many, many years later […] I asked her why she had beaten me so much. 'Otherwise, you wouldn't have become the good person you are now,' she replied. What a way to awaken compassion and love for others. (Wolmut, n. d., p. 18, own translation)[xxix]

Already at an early age, Gerty Landesberger became a versed and demanded répétiteur, adept at sight-reading and improvising. Throughout her life, she was an extremely diligent, well-read, intellectual musician, constantly reading, transcribing, translating, reading more, improvising, and writing, plus extensive musical practice as a performer and teacher into her 90s.[xxxi] She owed her extensive education and much of her artistic skills to her high-class status, which provided her with the necessary time and financial resources. Top performance was taken for granted, without praise or recognition, in her father's strict household, with whom she and her sister grew up after his divorce from their mother. However, the excellent education of the Landesberger's daughters was, as was still customary for bourgeoise women at the time, only accessory or a way out as plan B, as an abasing comment of the father on her younger sister reveals: "The newborn daughter […] was a disappointment for Papa; he thought she was so ugly that he predicted her only a future as a Doctor of Philosophy."[xxxii] The lack of affection, attention and appreciation of her achievements, the rather outright demeaning emotional abuse she experienced while growing up, made Gerty Landesberger suicidal at the age of 12. (Wolmut, n. d., 29) The cruel reality of the ubiquitous presence of gender-based violence runs through the first half of her autobiography as an omnipresent companion to all her struggles and achievements.

When, at a young age, it turned out she could neither be a composer nor a conductor—because she could not become a boy (Wolmut, n.d., 31A)—Wolmut became an opera singer, gave her debut as Konstanze in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Die Entführung aus dem Serail" at the theatre in Osnabrück in 1929 (see Figure 3) followed by many prominent parts and engagements in Essen, in Luxembourg, as a freelancer in Berlin, where she also performed as an improvising jazz singer, and later in Hans Wolmut's young opera company in Vienna, until finally, at the age of around 37:

At last, I had the feeling that I was up to every part that came my way […] [I] had become a good, singing actress, I could […] be myself in many forms. What an indescribably happy feeling it was to be at one with myself! (Wolmut, n. d., 7/46)[xxxiii]

Figure 3. Gerty Stoerk as Konstanze [Photograph], 1929, DÖW, Photo archive, DÖW-photo 08933-001

Parallel to that coherent narrative of becoming a professional musician, which extends over roughly seven chapters, goes a coherent story of her sexual development, which is, next to her musical development, the most important issue in the first half of her autobiography. Her many affairs became a recurrent theme in her writing, as did how she turned from an innocent girl to a mature woman in the time between her two marriages. Hans Wolmut's marriage proposal, initially, came as an imposition: "I feared having to see a man again day in day out in all situations; I feared having to give up my beloved loneliness, no, my beloved being alone, in which I did whatever I wanted" (Wolmut, n. d., 8/10, own translation) Up to that point, she had led the life of a rather modern woman of the 1920s and 30s, sexually and financially independent.[xxxiv] In this way, she also embodied the incipient transitions in traditional female roles of the time, as earlier indicated in a quote from Thomasberger. Throughout her text, Wolmut proves to be quite sensitive about gender issues, with repeated critical remarks towards the stark patriarchal society of her parental generation or disgusted observations in her own circles about how men could do things that were impossible for women. What I find very striking are her open reports of gender-based and sexual violence. The several rapes and sexual assaults which she survived in the 1920s and 30s, but also their contextualisation and the casualness in her writing, paint a disturbing picture of a culture of normalisation of sexual violence against women. I am afraid that this issue is, to date, mostly neglected in music historiography, although the impact it has on women—their freedom to move safely in private and in professional contexts, to thrive—is massive. Thus, these contexts of Wolmut's biography deserve a more detailed analysis in future studies. Wolmut penned her autobiography in the 1970s, during Second-wave feminism which focused on women's right to their own bodies. I think Wolmut's openness about her own sexuality and about sexual violence, as well as her gender-critical observations, also reflect the time of the origin of this text. It is likely that this also made her reevaluate her experiences.

In stark contrast to her lived independence in the 1920s and 30s and to her aforementioned announcement at the age of about 37 that she only now felt prepared for her artistic future, comes the following quote about her decision to marry Hans Wolmut:

> I started this marriage with the safe knowledge that I would be helping a musical genius to become a man. I had to relinquish my own further growth—which I thought had reached its peak—and devote myself completely to what God had planned for me—to turn a highly gifted boy into a mature man and to help him through the difficulties of his future life. I had to learn to put aside my own intellectual needs and my needs for true friendship or to make more of myself in order to help him reach his goal of manhood. (Wolmut, n. d., 8/11, own translation)[xxxvi]

This is a surprising announcement of subordination! The quote occurs in the manuscript at a point where she started more frequently to reflect on what was happening politically. Thus, narratively, I also perceive this quote as in anticipation of forthcoming radical changes, with several decades between the experiences and their record in this autobiography, a retrospective attempt of self-assurance of agency, that such an imminent radical rupture in her life, including the end of a promising career, came as a self-determined decision.

In the eighth chapter of the manuscript, there are first mentions of Nazi presence in Germany and of fascists during Wolmut's time in Italy in the late 1920s. In the early 1930s, during her time in Essen, she became aware of the involvement of industrialists with the national socialists and—astonished and shocked—heard for the first time about preparations for a potential war. She was living in Berlin during the Reichstag fire in 1933, which she writes about extensively, especially with respect to the effects on the Jewish population and the first refugee movements, which affected her entire maternal family living in Berlin as well as her lover at the time, Hardy Baer. Returning to Vienna in the same year, she was acutely aware of the many German and Austrian refugees, especially in her own métier. She repeatedly emphasises how early and clearly she foresaw the catastrophe that was coming, too, for Austria, how she knew as early as 1935 that the threat was very real and growing, and that Hans and she had no future there, with her husband being Jewish. In 1937, when she became pregnant, she began to actively prepare their escape so that she had all their papers ready by February 1938, one month prior to the Anschluss. They were still in Vienna at the time, and she writes about the events, the terror and the riots, the many suicides of Jews, including those in her own circles, and the mass exodus. She then writes about their own escape, about the many farewells, and how they had to leave Hans' sick mother behind, knowing very well they would never see her again. She reflects on her doubts and fears for the future. She also writes about the things they had to leave behind, such as the manuscript of her translation of a novel by her friend, the anti-fascist Italian author Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, in fear that it might be considered a subversive script, or her mother's "beautiful Blüthner grand piano with the warm tone" (8/30, own translation) —noting she never owned a grand piano again in her life.[xxxviii] She describes their journey to Switzerland, the terrifying moments at the border, how they reached France, and the ship that would eventually bring them to America. The following sentences—describing the moments after they had moved into their ship's cabin—stand paradigmatically for her resilience, her absolute will to survive, and her refusal to look back:

> We saw our part of the world vanish in the port's smoke and steam. [...] Then I took up my new life with what I thought was necessary: I went to the ship's library and borrowed a history of the United States. (Wolmut, n. d., 8/33/4, own translation)[xxxix]

Beyond being a simple narrative device, this passage truly marks the end of an old era in Wolmut's life and the beginning of a new one. In her autobiography, she only looks back very sporadically, as if she had finished with her past once and for all. The letters she exchanged in the following years between 1938 and 1942 with her ex-husband Rheinhardt speak a different language. It is an intensive, detailed, highly politicised exchange in which both their growing concern, disgust

and despair (about Austria, France, Europe, and also about the beginnings of the Shoa) are openly expressed. Having corresponded in German, their shared mother tongue, all their lives, they at some point turn to writing in English: "I really cant [sic] imagine how one can write in german [sic] now. [...] But when I open a dictionary and see german [sic] gothic print, I litterally [sic] get seasick, so pretentious it looks" (Wolmut, March 6th, 1942). Wolmut's letters also manifest her anguish and reveal how many details of Nazi crimes were already known in the USA in 1942:

> I should be so happy, but I cant [sic]; every piece of bread becomes ashes in my mouth when I think of Europe. And after having seen the pictures, smuggled out, of the starving children, not starving, starved to death in Poland, bundles of poor bones, I sometimes think I must go mad. Then I look at my little child, my only one, and fear grips my heart, that he must suffer that too, starvation, or bombing, being crippled—why not he, if so many, millions had this fate—and I simply get lost with hate and terror. (Wolmut, March 6th, 1942)

Her final letter to Rheinhardt from 1942 remained unanswered; their correspondence ended roughly at the time when he was detained in France in 1943. He was killed in Dachau in 1945. Wolmut learned about his death in the same year.

In her autobiography, Wolmut hardly looks back, instead focusing completely on her new life in the USA.[xl] **And in this new life, she also seems to have kept her past to herself. Remigration never seemed to have been an issue for her.** Decades later,[xli] however, in 1978, now aged 81, she wrote in a letter to Selma Steinmetz at the DÖW: "I wished I could return to Vienna, but almost all of my friends have died; I would be a foreigner there, and above all, an old woman" (Wolmut, August 12th, 1978, own translation). And again, only one month later, now quite urgently trying to find a publisher for her autobiography:[xlii]

> Please write to me soon and advise me. I might as well live in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, not in the USA, not in Austria—I don't belong anywhere. And since I am going to die soon, I would like to see it described in black and white. (Wolmut, September 13th, 1978, own translation)[xliii]

So, there it is, towards the end of her life, her letters reveal the confession of a lack of belonging—very typical for exile existence—standing in contrast to a rather coherent narrative in her autobiography, like a desire to create wholeness through writing, almost like an attempt to find closure.

Landesberger-von Antburg-Rheinhardt-Stoerk-Wolmut saw her own life in the bigger picture. Rightfully, I might add, she realised that her life had something to contribute to the general body of music history of the 20th century, and she tried actively to write herself into it. This didn't happen. But I think her case can tell us a few things about a biased culture of remembering. Introduced to us through her autobiography and further sources which frame, relativise or confirm that narration, the historical figure Felice Wolmut starts to take shape as an outstanding, rather independent woman, musician and intellectual. This article focuses more on the first half of her life up to her flight into exile, in which Wolmut's sharp observations and insight of her contemporary cultural, social and political contexts not only reveal details of her artistic environment, but also offer new and specific perspectives on the patriarchal, sexist and violent structures of her time. As reflected in this paper, confronted with historical autobiographies historiographers are though not necessarily asking for a ‚truth' in the writings, but rather for the writer's self-presentations and ways of remembering and communicating. Wolmut's chosen thematic focal points–education, art, personal sensitivities and emotions, gender issues including gender-based violence–are therefore significant, as are her omissions, such as an in-depth examination of her exile situation or only the mentioning of Austrofascism, both of which do not occur. These speak volumes about her self-perception and attitude, and say a lot about the significance of the temporal context of the 1970s in which she wrote down the recollections of her life. As shown in this paper, the time of her writing and thus re-remembering falls at a time when, on the one hand, Second-wave feminism is in full swing, and on the other hand music-related exile research is only just beginning to take shape–albeit with a focus on male composers and well-known personalities, so that Wolmut, as a woman with a rather incoherent artistic vita (substantially due to gender and exile), hardly had a chance to attract the attention she deserved, despite the generally awakening interest in the stories and achievements of women. However, it is obvious that the attitude of 70s feminism influenced her own mind set in terms of reconsidering her own life experiences as a younger woman in the light of changes in history, and thus the way and content of her writing. This makes her autobiography a fascinating document for today's readers. Especially her explicit recounts of an abusive patriarchal environment–today's terminology coined the term rape culture–are of great relevance for current discourses in light of the #metoo movement and call for further in-depth studies of this aspect in relation to the everyday and professional life of female musicians. Hence, a third historical period is tackled in this article and related to the other two (the decades of Wolmut's narrated life and the time of writing it down): the current time frame of the 2020s, in which topics such as intersectionality, exile and migration, and gender-based violence are met with growing interest also in musicological research. They do inform this article's outline of questioning.

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Gerty Landesberger, „Der junge Dichter denkt an die Geliebte" [sheet music], 1917
Exilarte Center, Archive, Estate „Gerty Felice Wohlmuth"
Gerty Landesberger, „Ich weiß nicht, was es ist ..." [sheet music], 1917
Exilarte Center, Archive, Estate „Gerty Felice Wohlmuth"

Figures

Figure 1
Gerty Landesberger, "Der junge Dichter denkt an die Geliebte" [sheet music], 1917, title page and first page of score, Exilarte Center, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Archive, Estate „Gerty Felice Wohlmuth"

Figure 2
Gerty Landesberger, "Ich weiß nicht, was es ist ..." [sheet music], 1917, title page and first page of score, Exilarte Center, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Archive, Estate „Gerty Felice Wohlmuth"

Figure 3
Gerty Stoerk as Konstanze [Photograph], 1929, DÖW, Photo archive, DÖW-photo 08933-001

i Original quote in German: "[Die Auslöschung weiblichen Schaffens] geschieht bereits zu Lebzeiten durch Ehepartner, Lehrer, Kritiker, Verlage, Intendanten und posthum durch die Historiographie." (Fischer, 2016, p. 11f.)

ii Gerold Gruber, founder and head of Exilarte Center, who is regularly in contact with descendants of artists who had been persecuted by the Nazi regime, noted in a personal conversation that even relatives often act almost indifferently concerning the residues of their female ancestors.

iii Original quote in German: "Frauenemanzipation wurde als Ausdruck ‚absoluter Entartung' definiert[.]" (Thomasberger, 2016, p. 5)

iv Following information is drawn from these above mentioned sources, unless mentioned otherwise.

v Wolmut's use of this name is, for the time being, only documented in her autobiography. However, I was able to find evidence of that name (although misspelled "Stoerck") in the German Stage Yearbook of 1931 (Genossenschaft Deutscher Bühnen-Angehöriger, 1931, p. 402), and also the photograph of her debut as Kostanze holds that name (see Figure 3, DÖW-photo 08933-001)

vi In this article, I use the name and spelling Felice Wolmut, unless I need to emphasise something specific or I directly refer to sources which use a different name or spelling.

vii Krist's edition is based on the typoscript that he found at DÖW. In the same year, the original manuscripts of Rheinhardt's diaries were detected, as Krist himself points out in his epilogue to the edition. (Krist, 2003) In parts, the typoscript differs considerably from the manuscripts (Schwarz, 2013), which were then edited and published in 2013 (Rheinhardt).

viii So far, I have not been able to check the diaries.

ix This list of sources is by no means complete, but is intended to provide a rough overview. For further currently known sources, please consult (Kornberger, 2023).

x However, Unseld (2014, p. 298) also understands the inclusion of individual stories, for example in the form of autobiographies, as an integral part of history, especially in a complex, historically difficult time like that of National Socialism.

xi The typoscript is divided into 17 chapters. Pagination starts anew with each chapter, chapter 2-17 are also numbered. I will quote true to the typoscript as follows: 32 meaning page 32 in chapter 1; 2/17 meaning page 17 in chapter 2 etc.

xii In the 1950s, during a creative writing course in evening classes, she wrote down adventures from her life as short stories (Wolmut, n. d., 11/19), which she later incorporated one-to-one into her autobiography (Cf. enclosed manuscripts in DÖW EX 9761). This circumstance points to potential literary ambitions.

xiii Elsewhere, she describes that incoherence in (auto)biographical writing is often particularly a feature of women's (auto)biographies, while coherence is more of a phenomenon in the narratives of male (auto)biographies (Unseld, 2010).

xiv DÖW archive 11601a .

xv Original quote in German: „[Dies] sind meine Memoiren von frueher Kindheit in Wien an – bis zum heutigen Tag, meine Erfolge und Misserfolge als weiblicher Musiker im Anfang des Jahrhunderts bis zu meinem jetzigen Alter von 82, da ich ein hier angesehner [sic!] Musiker und Musik Therapeut bin. [...] Die Freundschaft mit den grossen Autoren Oesterreichs, mein Studium mit Schoenberg mag Ihr Publikum interessieren; ebenso aber auch die Jugendkonflikte, streng katholisch erzogen zu sein, ohne vor der Adoleszenz zu wissen, von meiner Abstammung von Juden; [...] – all dies mag die Oesterreicher und die Deutschen [sic!] Leser interessieren. Die darauf folgenden 40 Jahre in America [sic], erst hingerissen, dann enttaeuscht, aber immer lernend mag Sie als wahres Zeugnis einer ‚zerrissnen' aber durch Musik geeinten Seele interessieren." (Wolmut, n. d.)

xvi It is also striking yet comprehensible that, although in her autobiography women play a more important role as reliable, loveable, supportive or even admirable figures than men, Wolmut refers exclusively to men in her promoting a publication of her autobiography: Besides the teacher Schoenberg, in this letter she mentions her father, her maternal grandfather and her first husband, all public figures of interest.

xvii Original quote in German: „Das Schoenste aber was mir in 1917 geschah, war das [sic] ich zu komponieren anfing. [...] Beim Lesen [in Bethge's Chinesischen Gedichtuebertragungen] wachte eine Melodie in mir auf, die nicht verdraengt werden konnte, und zagend schrieb ich mein erstes Lied nieder – und widmete es – wie denn anders' – meiner Schwester Lili. Es war ein ungeheures seelisches Ereignis fuer mich; ich hatte ja nie Harmonie noch Kontrapunkt gelernt, und ich konnte es kaum glauben, dass es – in mir – zu komponieren anfing, dies „Es" zu dem man gedanklich so wenig Zugang hat. Ich schrieb noch mehrere andere; die Melodieen [sic] waren schoen, die Harmonien gut, aber ich wusste nicht, wie eine richtige Begleitung zu schreiben. Ich wurde zu Arnold Schoenberg in die Lehre geschickt." (Wolmut, n. d., 3/19)

xix For the normative character of the heroic, male (auto)biographical model see Unseld, 2014.

Original quote in German: „Ich habe wenige und keine freudigen Erinnerungen an die Zeit. Er muss damals wohl sehr arm gewesen sein, dass er ein

ganz junges Maedchen, die nichts von dem Handwerk wusste, als Studentin annahm. Ich erinnre mich seiner an seinem nicht sehr grossen Schreibtisch, kuehl und sachlich, wie er auch am Klavier war. Er lehrte mich Harmonielehre aus seinem eigenen Buch das ganz konservativ war; es gab keine parallelen Quinten und Oktaven in meinen Aufgaben. ‚Erst muss man es nach den Regeln machen, dann erst kann man sie aufgeben.' oder aehnlich drueckte er sich aus. Ich brachte ihm auch meine paar Lieder zur Korrektur. Eins begann ‚Ich weiss nicht, was es ist...' (ein Gedicht von Margarete Sussman [sic], die ich Jahre spaeter kennen und verehren lernte) ‚Ich weiss auch nicht was es ist' sagte Schoenberg. ‚Was ist schlecht daran' fragte ich angstvoll. ‚Sie haben kein einziges Melisma wiederholt, sondern gehen von einem zum andern' erwiderte er. ‚Das ist Nichts. Einmal etwas sagen ist nichts. Man muss es zumindest einmal wiederholen.' (Ich habe mir das fuer spaeter gemerkt.)" (Wolmut, n. d., 3/20)

While her narration of her acquaintance to Schoenberg reads very convincingly, her status as a student of his is not yet substantiated by sources other than her autobiography and her own letters. Also in Elisabeth Kappel's (2019) recent study on Schoenberg's female students and her documentation of all his students—newly found, confirmed and questionable—, Felice Wolmut's (at the time Gerty Landesberger) name does not appear in the lists.

xix Original quote in German: „Doch ging ich [...] in alle Konzerte, die seine Sachen – zweimal hintereinander im selben Konzert – zum bessern Verstaendnis – auffuehrten." (Wolmut, n. d., 3/20)

xx While I was not able to find any of the critiques so far, there is evidence of the concert with Gerty Landerberger's compositions in Arbeiterzeitung, Vienna, November 14th, 1919, p. 7, and Der Neue Tag, Vienna, November 14th, 1919, p. 5.

xxi Original quote in German: „Rheinhardt hatte in einem kleinen, neu eroeffneten Lesesaal mit Podium ein Konzert fuer mich arrangiert – von meinen eigenen Kompositionen. Eine junge Saengerin sang erst vier meiner fruehen Lieder, dann spielten Aranyi und ich meine eben erst fertig gestellte Violinsonate, und nachher wurden die „Terzinen" von Hofmannsthal mit obligato und Rheinhardts „Oh Mensch, ich habe Sehnsucht nach dir" mit Obligato, von mir begleitet, gesungen. Tout Vienne war dort; es hatte seit Menschengedenken kein Kompositionskonzert eines weiblichen Wesens in Wien stattgefunden, und die ganze Kritik kam[...] Nach dem Konzert war sogar der alte Opernkomponist Bittner zu mir gekommen [...]; er nahm meine Hand, drueckte sie, und sagte: „A bisserl viel Debussy spukt da noch immer herum; aber bleiben's dabei, kleines Frauelein, Komponieren ist schon Ihr Weg." (Wolmut, n. d., 3/46)

xxiv A copy of the edition is held by the National Library of Austria music collection (Reichardt & Rheinhardt, 1922).

xxv Utis was one of Wolmut's nicknames for Rheinhardt.

xxvi Original quote in German: „Ein wirklich wundervoller Freund [...] war Alfred Einstein [...]; er war ein Musikhistoriker, gab damals eine Neuausgabe des Riemann Musiklexikons heraus [...] Er hatte sich meine Kompositionen vorspielen lassen, fand sie interessant und begabt, und da ich ihm von dem unvollendeten Trio erzaehlte [sic], sagte er, [...] wenn ich den letzten fehlenden Satz schriebe, wuerde er mir einen ganzen Paragraphen im Riemann einraeumen. [...Und er gab mir] den Auftrag, die Lieder Louise Reichardt's herauszugeben, und ihre Biographie [...] zu schreiben. [...] – Diese Arbeit freute mich, ich war so froh, etwas mit Musik zu tun zu haben – denn wie ich vorausgeahnt hatte, mit der Ehe hatte mein Komponieren aufgehoert. [...] Utis trieb mich nicht zur Musik, da er mich als Sekretaerin brauchte." (Wolmut, n. d., 4/10f.)

xxvii For details on Alfred Einstein's own situation as a Jewish music writer in National Socialist Germany and later in exile, as well as on the music historiographical significance of his writings before and after his escape see Grosch (2018).

xxviii Accordingly, the Austrian Music Encyclopedia (Kornberger, 2023), in spite of listing many of Wolmut's professions and even also her song compositions, does not list "composer" as an occupation. However, at least for her early years, Wolmut emphasises how composing and becoming a professional composer had been her central desire – and she can identify rather clearly, why she failed: It were the patriarchal circumstances that prevented her from prospering. Also her later husband, Hans Wolmut, would not encourage her to continue composing. And Betty Wolmut wrote: „Felice was also a composer in her own right. [...] In her own words: 'Realising that it was difficult for a woman in Europe to become a conductor or gain recognition as a composer, I turned to singing.'" (Betty Wolmut in Hüsers, 2021, pp. 37f.)

xxix Original quote in German: „'Tanti' begann uns Klavier zu unterrichten, jede falsche Note wurde mit einem Schlag auf die Knoechel mit einem Lineal belohnt. [...] Viele viele Jahre spaeter [...] fragte ich sie warum sie mich soviel geschlagen habe. ‚Sonst waerst du nicht der gute Mensch geworden, der du jetzt bist', antwortete sie mir. Was fuer ein Mittel, Mitgefuehl und Liebe fuer andre zu erwecken." (Wolmut, n. d., p. 18)

xxx In addition to her own recollections, the author Arthur Schnitzler repeatedly mentions her versed (private) performances in his diaries (see Schnitzler, as of January 20st, 2025).

xxxi Her daughter-in-law called Wolmut a "walking encyclopedia of the art, music and history of Austria for the first 40 years of [the 20th] century." She laments that "when she died, a piece of history died with her". (Betty Wolmut in Hüsers, 2021, p. 36.)

xxxii Original quote in German: "Die neugeborne Tochter [...] war eine Enttäuschung fuer Papa; er fand sie so haesslich, dass er ihr nur eine Zukunft als Dr. Phil. prophezeite. " (Wolmut, n. d., 27. Emphasis mine.)

xxxiii Original quote in German: "Endlich hatte ich das Gefühl, jeder Partie gewachsen zu sein, die meines Weges kam[...] [I]ch war eine gute, singende Schauspielerin geworden, ich konnte [...] in vielen Formen Ich selber sein. Was fuer ein unbeschreibliches gluecklliches sich Finden, eins mit sich selbst zu sein!" (Wolmut, n. d., 7/46)

xxxiv Original quote in German: "Ich fuerchtete einen Mann wiederum tagaus tagein sehen zu muessen in allen Situationen; ich fuerchtete meine geliebte Einsamkeit, nein, mein geliebtes Alleinsein aufgeben zu muessen, in dem ich tat, was ich wollte[...]" (Wolmut, n. d., 8/10)

xxxv For a contextualised overview of the art scene and Second-wave feminism in the USA see e.g. Kohl (2015), especially chapter 1.3 on Performance Art as feminist awareness.

xxxvii Original quote in German: „Ich ging in diese Ehe mit dem sichern Wissen, dass ich einem musikalischen Genie helfen wuerde ein Mann zu werden. Ich hatte auf mein eignes weiteres Wachstum zu verzichten – das, wie ich dachte, auf seinem Hoehepunkt angelangt war, und mich ganz und voellig dem zu widmen, was Gott mit mir vorhatte – aus einem hochbegabten Knaben einen reifen Mann zu machen und ihm beizustehen in seinen kommenden Lebens-Schwierigkeiten. Ich musste lernen meine eigensten Beduerfnisse geistiger Art und nach wahrer Freundschaft hintanzustellen, oder mehr aus mir selbst zu machen, um ihm zu seinem Mannesziel zu helfen." (Wolmut, n. d., 8/11)

xxxvii Interestingly, she never mentions her own Jewish ancestry in the context of a potential persecution by the Nazis, which would alas have been an issue would they have remained in Europe. Obviously, this is due to the fact that she was brought up Catholic and, after turning away from her faith for some time, reaffirmed it at a later stage of her life. She never perceived herself as a Jew. As history has shown, her self-definition and self-perception would, however, in all probability not have played a crucial role for the Nazis.

xxxix Original quote in German: „schoene Blüthner Fluegel von meiner Mutter mit dem warmen Ton" (Wolmut, n.d., 8/30)

xlii Original quote in German: „Wir sahen unsern Weltteil im Rauch und Dampf des Hafens verschwinden. [...] Dann nahm ich mein neues Leben damit auf, dass ich tat, was ich fuer noetig hielt. Ich ging in die Schiffsbibliothek und borgte mir eine Geschichte der Vereinigten Staaten aus." (Wolmut, n. d., 8/33/4)

xl As Betty Wolmut wrote in her obituary:

"Some of you may not be aware that her first husband, the Austrian poet and artist Emile Alphonse Rheinhardt, died in Dachau in 1944, or that she and her second husband Hans (Peter's father) barely escaped with the clothes on their backs and Peter in her body, just after Hitler had invaded Vienna: and then it was only because the Nazi soldier in charge of stamping exit visas recognized them as the stage director and singer he had recently seen in an opera production." (Betty Wolmut in Hüsers, 2021, p. 35) [Betty Wolmut obviously remembers the year of Rheinhardts death incorrectly. The main sources date his death to 1945.]

This paragraph illustrates that Wolmut, after her emigration, hardly spoke about her past in Europe.

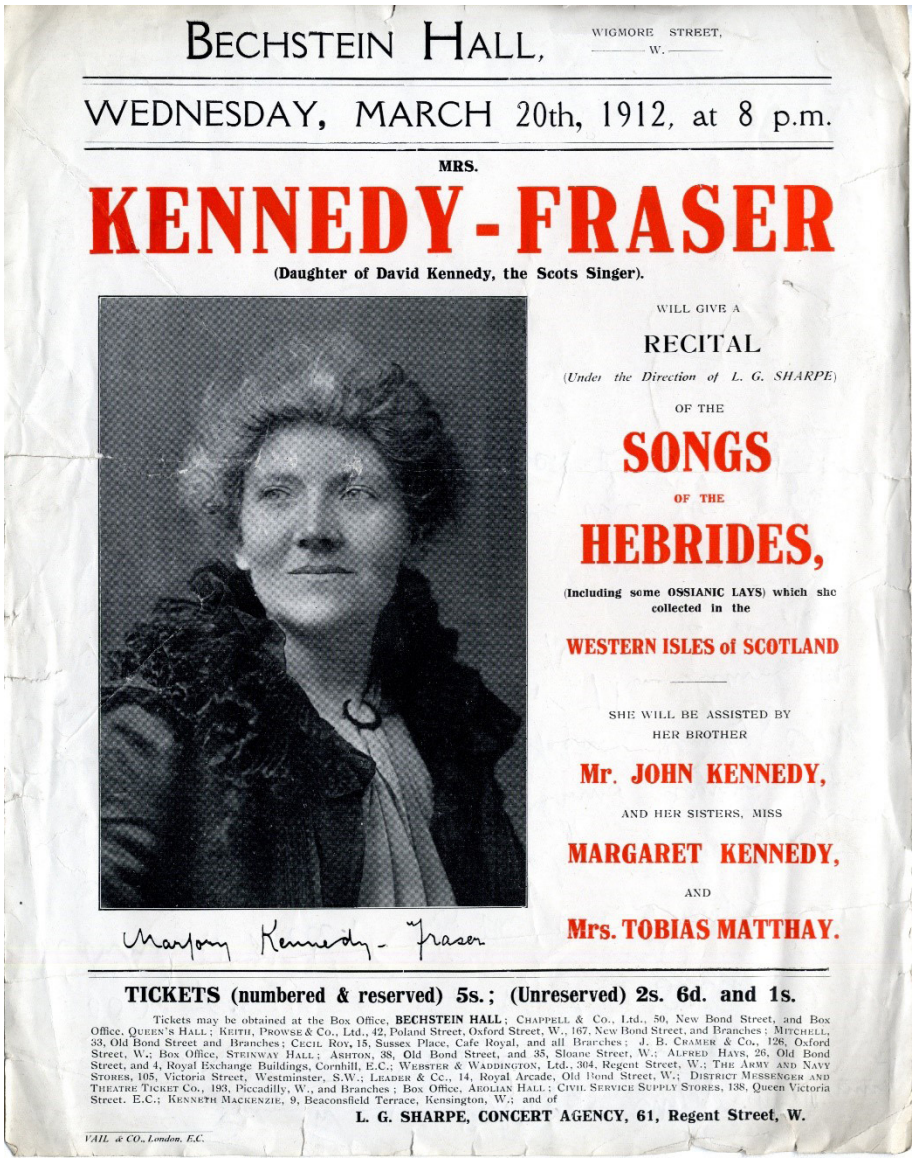
xli However, she returned to Europe, to Vienna especially, in the 1970s for (work) trips.

Original quote in German: „Ich wuenscht ich koennte nach Wien zurueck, aber fast alle Freunde sind gestorben; ich waer dort eine Fremde, und dazu eine alte Frau." (Wolmut, August 12th, 1978)

xlii Original quote in German: „Schreiben sie mir bitte bald, und raten Sie mir. Ich sollte mitten im Atlantic Ocean wohnen, nicht in USA nicht in Oesterreich – ich gehoere nirgends hin. Und da ich bald sterben werde, moechte ich es eben schwarz auf weiss geschildert haben." (Wolmut, September 13th, 1978)

’Land of Heart’s Desire’ – Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930) and the *Songs of the Hebrides*

By Per G L Ahlander



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RECITAL

(Under the Direction of L. G. SHARPE)

OF THE

SONGS

OF THE

HEBRIDES,

(Including some OSSIANIC LAYS) which she collected in the

WESTERN ISLES of SCOTLAND

SHE WILL BE ASSISTED BY HER BROTHER

Mr. JOHN KENNEDY,

AND HER SISTERS, MISS

MARGARET KENNEDY,

AND

Mrs. TOBIAS MATTHAY.

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser

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L. G. SHARPE, CONCERT AGENCY, 61, Regent Street, W.

VAIL & CO., London, E.C.

Abstract

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857 – 1930), daughter of famous Scots tenor David Kennedy, was a Scottish pianist, music teacher, suffragette, and collector of Gaelic songs. She toured the world as her father's accompanist, studied singing in Milan and Paris, and read music at the University of Edinburgh. Widowed with two children to support, she taught piano and singing in Edinburgh, becoming part of the city's avant-garde Celtic Revival circles. After visiting Eriskay in 1905, she collected, arranged, and published the *Songs of the Hebrides*, in collaboration with Gaelic editor Kenneth Macleod. With English composer Granville Bantock, she created *The Seal-Woman: A Celtic Folk Opera*, premiered in Birmingham in 1924. Maligned after her death, accused of having exploited and misinterpreted Gaelic culture, her oeuvre vanished from recital programmes, but her consummate art song versions of Gaelic traditional songs would merit their place in the standard art song repertoire, giving presence both to Gaelic Scotland among the Late-Romantic voices from all corners of Europe and to a remarkable Scotswoman among British composers.

Keywords

Gaelic songs, celtic revival, art songs, folksong collecting, suffragette

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'Land of Heart's Desire' [1] – Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930) and the *Songs of the Hebrides*

The Late- and Post-Romantic art song repertoire, from the late nineteenth century up to the first decades of the twentieth century, is a musical treasure trove. There is so much to choose from and there is such a variation when it comes to languages and national influences. The growing nationalism all round Europe that came to influence both visual and applied art in this period was also present in music, very much so in the art song realm. Ethnomusicologists and composers went out looking for folk music in their different countries, folk music that at the time was thought of as a threatened cultural heritage, about to vanish for ever due to rapid changes in demography in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution. Influences from the different geographical areas' folk music found their way into the oeuvre of the art song composers in varyingly obvious ways, not least in the Nordic countries, with Edvard Grieg in Norway, Jean Sibelius in Finland and Wilhelm Peterson-Berger in Sweden, and in regions of the Austro-Hungarian empire, with Leoš Janáček in Czech-speaking Moravia and Béla Bartók in Hungary. In Germany, Richard Wagner sought his inspiration not only in his homeland, but in a wider North European past of folk tales and sagas[2]. In England, there is Ralph Vaughan Williams and Granville Bantock, among many others. This is where Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's *Songs of the Hebrides* fit in so beautifully, bringing the rich musical heritage of Gaelic Scotland into the world of art song.

Born in Perth on 1 October 1857, Marjory Kennedy was the fifth child in the family, her mother Elizabeth Fraser's second child. Her father was the famous Scots tenor David Kennedy (1825–86), also born in Perth (Figure 1), who made a successful London début at the Hanover Square Rooms in September 1862, accompanied by the then well-known pianist Edward Land. During the season that followed, he would give over one hundred recitals in London, giving up his financially secure precentor position in Edinburgh for the risky life of a freelance singer. A career in opera and oratorio seemed to lay wide open for him, but, instead, he would focus on Scottish songs, with a predilection for the works of Robert Burns, performed with piano accompaniments in the classical setting of the concert platform. Moving with her family to London at the age of five, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's strong links to the British capital were thus forged at an early formative age, and although living in Edinburgh for most of her adult life, she would always feel at home in London. [3]

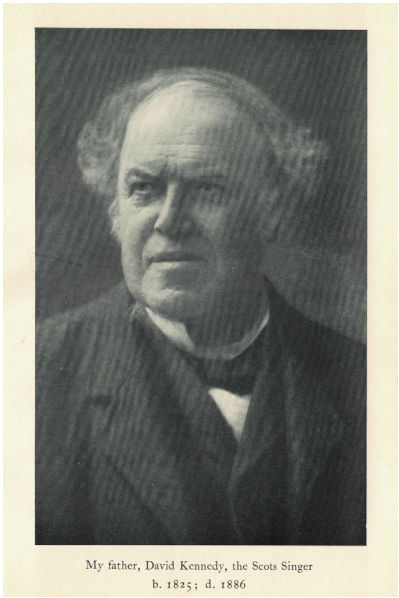

Figure 1. David Kennedy 1857–86 (Kennedy-Fraser, 1929a).

Ever since David Kennedy's successful London concerts in 1862–63, Edward Land had remained his accompanist, but when planning what was to become his first American tour, he managed to turn the whole endeavour into a family concern, training his oldest daughter Helen to become his accompanist. 'He never afterwards required professional aid outside the family circle, and this gave a freedom and domestic atmosphere to his life that was its chief charm', Marjory wrote in her biography of her father (Kennedy, 1887, p. 42). Apart from the touch of charm it may have added, keeping the tours entirely within the family circle ought to have facilitated the practical arrangements considerably and, in particular, alleviated the financial burden of the undertaking. While her parents left for North America, Marjory and her three younger sisters were temporarily lodged in Perth with Mrs Henderson, their step-grandmother. She was enthralled by all the fascinating old stories Mr Henderson told them, and she was also influenced by her strong-minded and independent maternal grand-mother, Marjory Robertson. So far, however, she had not had the opportunity to experience much Gaelic culture, Perth being on the very periphery of the Gàidhealtachd. It is true that both her parents' families did have Gaelic roots, but the old language had been long lost, and even her maternal grand-father, Charles Fraser, who had grown up a monoglot Gaelic-speaker, shunned his mother tongue in favour of English ever since his early teens.

When Elizabeth Fraser returned home from America after a year, she brought her daughters down to Edinburgh, where Marjory rapidly learnt to play the piano, making her first public appearance at the age of twelve. From the summer of 1870, thirteen-year-old Marjory Kennedy was fully established as her father's accompanist, a position she took over from her older sister Helen and which she would hold on to for the next seventeen years, until David Kennedy's sudden death in Canada in 1886. All singers know how important the accompanist is for the success of a recital, and Marjory's share in her father's hugely successful singing career ought not to be overlooked. In addition to playing for her father, she would regularly perform as a singer in the family concerts, both in ensembles and as a soloist, thus gaining an exceptionally in-depth and hands-on knowledge of the Kennedys' repertoire of vocal and instrumental Scottish Lowland music. [4]

The years that followed were a whirl of travelling and performing for Marjory Kennedy, dominated by their extensive world tour, beginning in Australia and New Zealand, continuing via Honolulu to the United States of America and Canada. In the autumn of 1879, when the family embarked on their tour of the Indian subcontinent, Marjory, instead, travelled to Milan, where her two older brothers were studying singing with Francesco Lamperti. [5] She spent about eighteen months in Italy, mainly studying with Signora Gambardella,[6] and this period came to mean a lot to

her, as it gave her a unique insight into the world of Italian opera and a familiarity with the international top-level singing tuition of the period. Her brief spell in Paris, where she and her sister Helen studied singing at Mathilde Marchesi's private school in the spring of 1882, [7] added further to her overview of advanced continental vocal training methods and trends. Later in life, she would make frequent references to both her musical training in Italy and her studies with Madame Marchesi in Paris.

In 1883–84, the Kennedys embarked on a second tour of Australia and New Zealand, and when her brother Robert left the company and settled permanently in Australia, Marjory was entrusted with the important position as business manager. The entertainment industry was one of the few professions where women could aspire to an independent professional career and be on fairly equal terms with men, but many of the companies the Kennedys did business with were nevertheless surprised when she arrived to sign the contracts – '*Mais nous avons changé tout cela*', [8] she commented herself in her autobiography (Kennedy-Fraser, 1929a, p. 86). By then, women's role in society had certainly changed drastically, and together with many other women of her generation, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser had been deeply involved in the battle for equality of opportunity between men and women.

Having herself had the good fortune of growing up in an environment where both men and women could develop their respective talents and skills, Marjory Kennedy must soon have realised that that was the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, her paternal and maternal grandfathers being respectively a weaver and a farm servant, she was undoubtedly also aware of her family's humble social background, in a society where class and wealth were paramount. When her father embarked on a professional singing career, the Kennedys came to belong to the classless stratum of artists. Although popularity and fame could often open doors that would otherwise have remained barred, it was a world whose inhabitants were, in a curious way, both admired and despised, and, although society had changed considerably during the long nineteenth century, many people still held strong views on the respectability of music and musicians. The several years spent in the colonial outposts of the British Empire and in the United States – apart from being a financial necessity – did give them an opportunity to escape the more rigid social structures at home in Britain, and Marjory Kennedy thus grew up in a far more egalitarian milieu than many of her contemporaries. Seemingly at liberty, she could devote herself entirely to her career as a performer. Not that it was problematic per se for a woman to study music in the Victorian era, and the musical skills usually acquired by young women of the middle- and upper-classes in mid-nineteenth century Britain 'were seen to add to their personal decorative charm and marriageability' (Fuller, 1998, p. 43). However, these skills were clearly meant 'for use within the private, domestic sphere of the home', and '[f]or these women, to appear on the public, professional stage as musicians was as shocking and unorthodox as it was for their contemporaries who wanted to work as actresses'. Even in the artistic professions, however, marriage was still seen as the end of a woman's career, and since both Marjory and her sister Helen were about to get married at the time of their father's death, they both decided to give up their professional work, which meant the demise of the Kennedys' 'Songs of Scotland' touring company.

Sadly, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's married bliss lasted less than four years, until her mathematician husband Alec Fraser's untimely death from pulmonary tuberculosis in November 1890. Living thenceforth with her mother must have eased the situation, as, at that time, a woman who had to earn her own living, let alone provide for her children, would have found herself in a difficult position. '[B]y cadging odd jobs from newspapers, by reporting a donkey show here or a wedding there', Virginia Woolf's alter ego in *A Room of One's Own* sarcastically recalled having survived, prior to coming into some money (Woolf, 1929/1977, p. 37). 'I had earned a few pounds by addressing envelopes, reading to old ladies, making artificial flowers, teaching the alphabet to small children in a kindergarten. Such were the chief occupations that were open to women before 1918.' Different to Mrs Woolf's protagonist, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser, being the qualified musician she was, could fall back on music tuition, a profession where women did have a fair chance of making a decent living, and over the years, she would manage both to build a professionally successful career within teaching, performing, lecturing and writing, and to raise a family.

Ahead of her time, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, although born in mid-Victorian years, was in essence a typical Edwardian woman – one of the 'New Women' that were beginning to appear towards the end of the nineteenth century. A multi-talented and self-supporting professional, she was always eager to develop and broaden her skills and to further her career. From her years as a touring musician, she was accustomed to interacting with a wide range of people and to feeling comfortable in the limelight – talents and skills not too common among the women of her generation.

In the 1890s, while establishing herself as a teacher of piano and singing in Edinburgh, she studied music at the University of Edinburgh under Professor Frederick Niecks, as one of the revered institution's first women students, appearing twice in the Class Prize Lists in 1893. She soon became part of the city's artistic avant-garde circles, meeting with Alexander Carmichael, John Duncan, Patrick Geddes and Phoebe Traquair – all leading lights of the Arts & Crafts movement in Scotland. Possibly through her friendship with Patrick Geddes' wife Anna Geddes, a trained pianist like herself, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser became involved in Geddes' pioneering sociological projects in the Scottish capital, and for several years, she was an active member of the Edinburgh Social Union. Moreover, as a staff member of the Edinburgh Summer Meetings, she produced annual series of themed lecture-recitals, where she not only lectured, but also accompa-

“The secret of her success is not difficult to fathom”

nied the soloists she had engaged to provide the musical illustrations.

In March 1903, she launched her own series of public lecture-recitals on ‘Songs and Song-writers’, introducing and explaining the world of art song to Scottish audiences. Over the four seasons the series lasted, she covered important parts of the recitalists’ repertoire, and her performances were most cordially received. ‘Mrs Fraser has the happy knack of keeping her hearers spell-bound throughout these recitals’, the *Edinburgh Magazine* commented in January 1907 (“A Visit to Bayreuth”, 1907, p. 1465). ‘The secret of her success is not difficult to fathom. It lies in her innate love and comprehensive knowledge of her subject, and being gifted with a graphic choice of artistic phraseology, she at once brings listeners and lecturer into complete *rapport*.’

Politics was frequently discussed around the Kennedy family table and Marjory’s lifelong passion for social justice and equality of opportunity between men and women was founded at an early age. Nowadays, she is mainly known for her *Songs of the Hebrides* collections, but when looking at her life from a different perspective, the social dimension stands out markedly against her multifarious undertakings. While teaching music, giving lecture-recital series, and working as music critic for the *Edinburgh Evening News*, she was drawn to the women’s suffrage movement, which was gaining momentum at the time. Although vigilantly eschewing any illegal or violent activities, she was to become deeply involved in the proceedings, and many of the women she acquainted herself with while a suffragette would remain her friends for the rest of her life. Despite her own position as one of the few professional women in Scotland, she may not have been a feminist in a stricter sense; instead, her main concern was equality of opportunity more generally – for both women and men. To make music and music education more easily accessible to those with interest and talent – irrespective of social and financial background – was another heartfelt ambition of hers. ‘Music is not produced by the privileged classes, and should not be so almost exclusively the luxury of the well-to-do as it is in Scotland to-day’, she asserted in her contribution to the *Blue Blanket* in 1912 (Kennedy-Fraser, 1912, pp. 34–35). What public issues to focus on primarily, however, considering the blatantly disadvantaged position of women and children in the society in which she lived and worked, was clearly not too difficult a decision for her, and in 1910, when returned as parish councillor in Edinburgh, she came to concern herself mainly with relief matters. During the Great War, similarly, the beneficiaries of the innumerable charity recitals she gave were usually either needy women and children directly, or projects initiated by women’s organisations, like Elsie Inglis’ Scottish Women’s Hospitals. Furthermore, having by then formed close links to the Western Isles through her song-collecting work, she also supported projects aimed specifically at providing relief for Hebridean women and children.

Mrs Kennedy-Fraser had befriended Scottish painter John Duncan (1866–1945) back in 1891, through Patrick Geddes and her involvement in the Edinburgh Summer Meetings. [11] After some years spent in the United States, Duncan was, in Kennedy-Fraser’s own words, ‘fired with the ambition to master Gaelic and to steep himself in the atmosphere of Celticism’ (Kennedy-Fraser, 1929a, p. 107), and in 1904, he settled on the isolated island of Eriskay for the summer (Figure 2), where he met with Fr Allan McDonald, Catholic priest, Celtic scholar and an authority on Celtic folklore – well-known far beyond the Hebrides. From the collector Alexander Carmichael he already knew that ‘all the verses in his *Carmina Gadelica* had tunes, but, having no knowledge of musical notation, he [Alexander Carmichael] was unable to note them’ (Hosking, 1950, p. 39). When John Duncan then ‘heard one of the islanders singing some of Carmichael’s verses, and also discovered that Father Alan Macdonald had other songs which Dr. Carmichael had not noted’, he felt that the tunes needed to be documented by a competent musician. Knowing that Marjory Kennedy-Fraser both had the necessary musical knowledge and dreamt of doing original research work in Celtic music, he tried to persuade her to join him and his artist friends there for the summer.

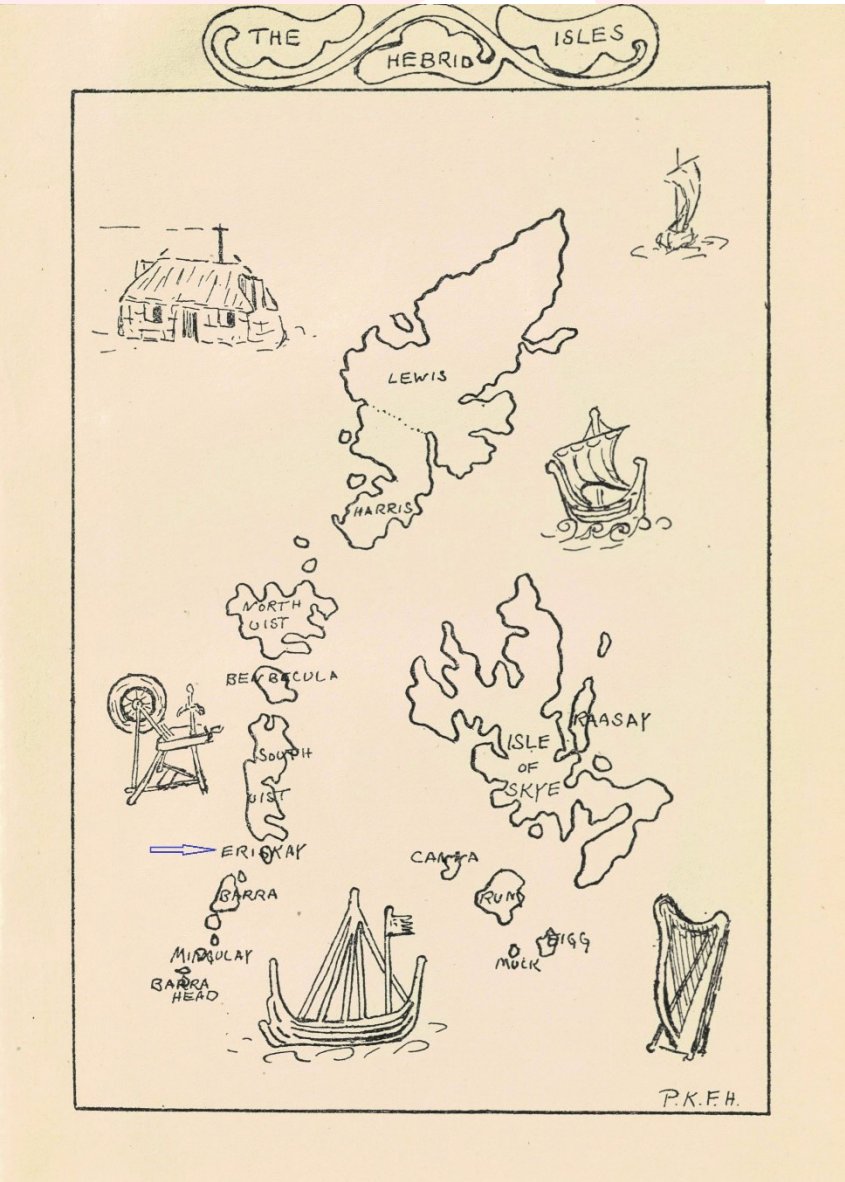

Figure 2. *The Hebrid Isles*, drawing by Patuffa Kennedy-Fraser Hood [the blue arrow pointing at the island of Eriskay is my insertion] (Kennedy-Fraser, 1929a).

Kennedy-Fraser had other commitments that summer, but the following year, at the beginning of August 1905, she was finally ready to embark on her first trip to the Western Isles. Her somewhat hasty decision to leave at that very moment was possibly also a result of a telegram from John Duncan, who had returned to paint in Eriskay for a second period of six months that summer. American musician and song collector Amy Murray was likewise spending time there in the summer of 1905, and one day she told Duncan that 'she had collected over one hundred folk-tunes on Eriskay which she intended to publish in America'. In his speedy telegram to Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, he appealed to her sense of patriotism and asked her 'to come forthwith to Eriskay to collect some of the songs and publish them in Great Britain before Amy Murray could publish hers in America' (Hosking, 1950, p. 40). '[T]his! is the place you've been looking for. The songs are here', Patuffa Kennedy-Fraser recollected John Duncan writing to her mother (Kennedy-Fraser Hood, 1965, p. 7), and the telegram evidently had the desired effect.

Music teaching may not have been Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's true passion in life, but it was a reliable source of income, crucially important for a single breadwinner, with two children to maintain. But when she landed in Eriskay at the age of forty-eight, a new phase of her life was about to begin. For many years, she had taken an interest in the songs of the Gaels and, after some language coaching sessions with the renowned Scottish poet Mary Mackellar, she had both arranged and performed several Gaelic songs as part of the Kennedys' 'Songs of Scotland' concerts. As a musician, she was thrilled by the melodic and modal richness of the musical material, and with her professional knowledge of art songs, she realised the possibilities offered by what she heard on the island. Moreover, as a champion of social equality, she saw a way of rehabilitating the reputation of the Gaels, who at the time – if noticed at all – were usually thought of as backward, uneducated and devoid of any cultural heritage worth preserving; 'a time when the cultural inheritance of the Gael was slighted, abused and set at naught every minute of the day and in every place from Highland schoolrooms up through churches and courts to Parliament itself' (Black, 2008, p. 62).

An increased interest in national heritage in general, and in the origins of the individual European nations in particular, had been brought about by the waves of nationalism that swept over Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century, and Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's wish to speak for the Gaels was thus by no means unique, being, instead, fully in line with the Zeitgeist of the era. The Gael problem – the specifically Scottish project of 'present[ing] the Gaels as a distinct *Kulturvolk*' – was epitomised by Carmina Gadelica, the monumental life-time achievement of Alexander Carmichael, with whom Kennedy-Fraser was well acquainted (Meek, 2007, pp. 84, 104). Although a seminal work in itself, it did appear against a backdrop of the Celtic Revival movement, by then in its heyday; a movement which sought its inspiration in a remote, idealised past of Celtic art, literature, and chivalry. In this context, the *Songs of the Hebrides* volumes undoubtedly fitted in perfectly, both visually and content wise.

Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's very first Hebridean recital, drawing on what she had collected in the summer of 1905, took place in Edinburgh on Saturday 9 February 1907. With the assistance of her sister, contralto Margaret Kennedy, fourteen Hebridean songs were presented, all with piano accompaniments composed by Kennedy-Fraser, in the style of Claude Debussy. But not having noted down more than snippets of the Gaelic verses while on Eriskay, she wrote her own English words to some of the songs, something she was to regret later in life. The recital was an immediate success and, as she later remembered, 'aroused such interest that I felt justified in confining myself in the future to Hebridean research and song' (Kennedy-Fraser, 1929a, p. 103). Some of her arrangements appeared in print shortly afterwards, published privately at her own risk, and that summer, together with her daughter Patuffa, she made her second trip to Eriskay. Back in the summer of 1905, Marjory had noted down the songs entirely in paper and pencil, but this time, she brought along her newly acquired Edison Bell graphophone, which would save her much time and, more importantly, increase the accuracy of her collecting work. Although small and easily portable, the graphophone and the wax cylinders were nevertheless both fragile and sensitive to changes in humidity, and Marjory and her daughter tended not to carry their equipment around too much. Therefore, most of the recordings were made either in the Post Office, a popular venue for ceilidhs, in young fisher Gillespie Macinnes' home, or in the presbytery, where Fr Allan McDonald's successor, the Rev. John Macneill, was now in residence. Patuffa wrote in a letter that 'in the first three weeks that we were there [in Eriskay] we got a hundred different songs' (Kennedy-Fraser Hood, 1965, p. 1).

Having devoted her first Hebridean visit entirely to the small island of Eriskay, in 1907, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and her daughter Patuffa continued their journey southwards to the Barra Isles, which over the years were to become of vital importance to her song collecting work.

Although not the first in Britain to make use of recording equipment when collecting folk songs, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser was indeed one of the pioneers – Percy Grainger had made recordings in North Lincolnshire in July and August 1906, Lucy Broadwood used a phonograph in Arisaig, Scotland, in July 1907, and Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams made a few cylinder recordings in 1907–09. On the Continent, however, such recordings were being made already by the end of the nineteenth century; by Yevgeniya Linyova, who began recording polyphonic folk songs in the European part of Russia in 1897, and by Béla Bartók, who used the phonograph to collect folk music in Central Europe from 1906.

Following the successful Hebridean recital in Edinburgh, a similar

performance was given in Glasgow on 1 November 1907, under the auspices of Feill a' Chomuinn Ghaidhealaich. Public interest remained high, and Marjory and her sister Margaret began to receive invitations to perform both around Scotland and beyond. English composer Rutland Boughton, who heard a selection of the songs at a private gathering, was mesmerised by their beauty and their atmospheric accompaniments, and Irish poet and folk song collector Alfred Perceval Graves told Arthur Boosey, the well-known music publisher in London, about Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's work and the fascinating Celtic songs she had brought to the concert platform. After performing at a Pan-Celtic gathering in London early in 1908, she was approached by Mr Boosey, who undertook to publish a collection of Hebridean songs.

Until the spring of 1908, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser had worked entirely on her own with the Hebridean material. She felt perfectly capable of dealing with the musical side of the project herself, but she did worry about the Gaelic words. She did have some basic Gaelic after her studies with Mary Mackellar back in the 1880s, and she had frequently performed Gaelic songs in the Kennedys' 'Songs of Scotland' recitals around the world, but she knew that her knowledge of the language was far from adequate and that she needed a reliable Gaelic editor. After her deal with Boosey & Co. regarding the publication of what was to become the first *Songs of the Hebrides* volume, the matter became urgent. On the advice of Professor Donald MacKinnon, the first professor of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh, she contacted Kenneth Macleod, a native Gaelic speaker and, at the time, a full-time lay missionary of the Church of Scotland. Mr Macleod accepted the invitation, and after a period of intense work, the first volume of *Songs of the Hebrides*, containing forty-five songs and dedicated 'To the Women of the Hebrides', came on the market in May 1909 (Kennedy-Fraser & Macleod, 1909).

The second volume, dedicated 'To Scots and other Celts', followed in 1917 and contained fifty-three songs (Kennedy-Fraser & Macleod, 1917), five of which were set by Granville Bantock, with whom Mrs Kennedy-Fraser was collaborating at the time. The third and final volume in the trilogy reached the public in 1921; dedicated 'To my Sister Margaret Kennedy' it comprised a total of fifty-one songs (Kennedy-Fraser & Macleod, 1921). The completion of the trilogy did not mark the end of publishing though; further trips to Barra and the Isle of Skye resulted in a fourth collection of forty-one more songs, named *From the Hebrides: Further Gleanings of Tale and Song* and published in 1925 by Paterson's Publications in Glasgow (Kennedy-Fraser & Macleod, 1925). Like the three *Songs of the Hebrides* volumes, the fourth collection was the result of a collaboration between Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and Kenneth Macleod, but when *More Songs of the Hebrides*, the fifth and final volume of eighteen new songs, was published in London by Boosey & Co. in 1929, their twenty years of working together had sadly come to an end, leaving Kennedy-Fraser the sole editor (Kennedy-Fraser, 1929b). There is no dedication in this volume, neither any introduction; instead, it opens with a musicological section entitled 'Some Tunes from my Note Books of 1926–27 in the Outer Isles', written at the specific request of French musicologist and Breton nationalist Maurice Duhamel. [13]

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser met with English composer Granville Bantock (1868–1946) for the first time in 1913, but Bantock had written to her the year before, asking her permission to arrange one of her Hebridean songs for a chorus of unaccompanied voices. Permission was duly given, and several other arrangements of her songs followed and were published and performed, including some settings for solo voice and full orchestra at the request of dramatic tenor Frank Mullings, who preferred to sing with orchestra. In their correspondence, the idea of a Gaelic folk opera surfaces for the first time in 1917, and from then on, for the next seven years, this is a project that intermittently occupies them both. Somewhere along the way, they decided on the story of the Seal-Woman, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser was to write the libretto and decide which of her Hebridean songs were to be included, and Granville Bantock would turn it all into an opera, basing his orchestration on Kennedy-Fraser's already published piano accompaniments. The seal-woman story, possibly of Scandinavian origin (Craigie, 1896, pp. 231–233), is a well-known example of a water-being legend, which are legion in European folklore. Depending on their habitat, the creatures may differ in appearance, but the general theme is usually the same, and there is thus an obvious link between Kennedy-Fraser and Bantock's Seal-Woman character and Rusalka, the water sprite in Antonín Dvořák's much-loved opera *Rusalka* from 1900. The vocal score of *The Seal-Woman* was published by Boosey & Co. in 1924 (Kennedy-Fraser & Bantock, 1924). Marjory Kennedy-Fraser is referred to as the librettist and Granville Bantock as the composer of the opera, but it was a true collaboration, which is clearly indicated in the vocal score, stating that '[i]n all announcements and programmes [...] the names of both composers must be printed M. Kennedy-Fraser and Granville Bantock'. Although Kennedy-Fraser was responsible for the text, Bantock contributed many ideas and suggested several modifications. The orchestration was Bantock's work, but it does range from near note-for-note transcriptions of several of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's song accompaniments to typically Bantockian orchestral interludes.

On 27 September 1924, *The Seal-Woman*, produced by Barry Jackson, opened at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Stage design and costumes were by Paul Shelving and the conductor Adrian Boult, with Marjory Kennedy-Fraser singing the Cailleach – An old Crone (contralto), one of the leading parts. If the music was well received, the libretto was not, and the plot was considered dramaturgically deficient, but nonetheless, the fourteen consecutive performances – 'to packed houses' (Forbes, 1990, p. 97) – went well. The original cast came together once again in 1927 for a direct radio broadcast of the opera from Daventry, but since then,

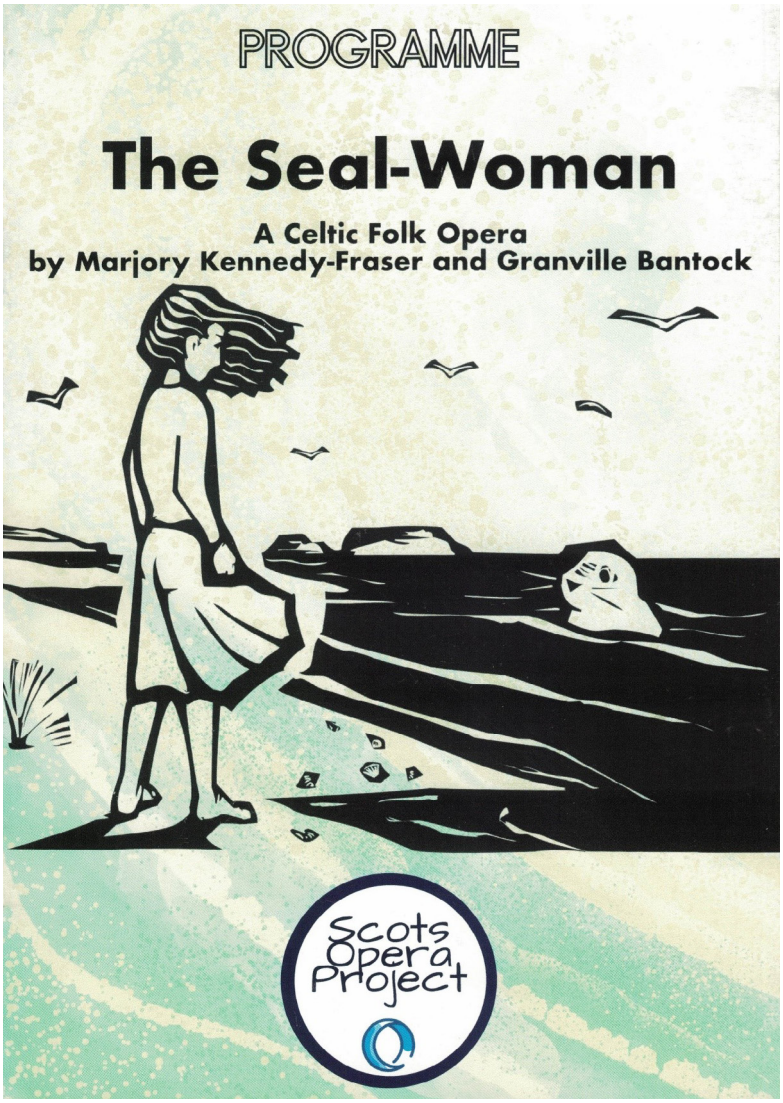

Figure 3. Opera programme for Scots Opera Project's production of *The Seal-Woman* in 2024.

there have only been a few amateur productions, and until recently, there was no commercial recording of the opera available. Over the last fifteen odd years, I have returned to this fascinating opera on several occasions in conference papers and lectures, and in 2020, Musica Scotica Trust in Glasgow published my essay on the subject (Ahlander, 2020). In 2024, the Scots Opera Project, a small professional opera company in the west of Scotland, staged the opera at venues across the country (Figure 3), and I was delighted to be asked to contribute a text to their opera programme (Scots Opera Project, 2024). The production was nominated for the International Opera Award 2024, in the category of Rediscovered Work (International Opera Award, 2024). In the meantime, Retrospect Opera in England had decided to produce a full recording of the opera, having painstakingly recreated the orchestral material that Boosey & Hawkes managed to lose when clearing out their archives some years earlier. The complete recording, with Scottish Opera's orchestra and a fully professional cast, was released in June 2025 (Retrospect Opera, n.d.).

In her ambition to show Gaelic culture as one of the many, equally valuable and important components of Europe's cultural heritage, Kennedy-Fraser was successful indeed. Influential individuals of the period were fascinated by the many songs and tales she published together with Kenneth Macleod, and they both 'did a lot to popularise a more positive view of Gaeldom and boost the self-confidence of a people who had been taught for generations that their culture was worthless' (Dressler, 1998, p. 107). Her *Songs of the Hebrides* recitals became regular features of the prestigious London music scene (Figure 4), and her recitals in North America and in continental Europe, as well as her contacts with Maurice Duhamel and other international authorities on folk music, made Hebridean music known far beyond Scotland.

*On front page of the article: Figure 4. Publicity leaflet for a *Songs of the Hebrides* recital at Bechstein Hall (now Wigmore Hall) in London, on 20 March 1912.

If Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's observations relating to sociological and demographic matters were concordant with those of at least her more enlightened Scottish contemporaries, her approach to the music she came to hear in Eriskay was clearly more European than British, which is not surprising, considering how deeply influenced she was by the musical development on the Continent, in particular within the areas of opera and art song. Apart from her more theoretical academic work of analysing and systematising the musical components of the songs she collected, results of which can be found both in her extensive introductions to the published volumes of Hebridean songs and in her many articles and lectures, she saw the possibility 'of a new development in the direction of a *national Scoto-Celtic* song – an art-song that should incorporate faithfully within itself our Scoto-Celtic melodic heritage' (Kennedy-Fraser, 1929a, p. 121).

From the end of the nineteenth century, the editing of folk songs had become an everyday activity among many of her continental contemporaries. 'Folk-songs of every country play an important part in the development of music – choral (both church and lay), operatic and symphonic – to all of which they supply strikingly rich material', Russian singer and musicologist Yevgeniya Linyova once commented (Lineff, 1905, p. ii). '[A] time will come when all art music will spring from a common folk source, when we shall embrace each other in these created works by the shared experience of folk-song', Czech composer Leoš Janáček maintained in 1926, speaking at a London concert of English folk song (Stuckenschmidt, 1969, p. 158). 'Folk-song binds together all mankind in *one* spirit, *one* happiness, *one* salvation.' So far, however, Scottish Gaelic songs were not part of the European art song repertoire. Schubert, Weber, Grieg and Dvořák, M. N. Munro wrote in the *Celtic Review* in 1908: 'These great musicians were too wise to think the songs of their own country unworthy of their notice'. 'Let us cherish our native music as a valuable possession not only for ourselves, but for the enrichment of the treasures of European Folk-Song' (Munro, 1908, pp. 134, 146). 'Folk-song was the foundation of all national music, and if we Scots desired to be considered a musical nation, we could not afford to ignore our national heritage', Scottish baritone Robert Burnett told his audience in a lecture in 1912 ("Scottish baritone Robert Burnett", 1912, p. 53).

In Britain, attitudes changed far more slowly than on the Continent, and seemingly unaware of the surge in folk music related art songs around Europe, William Saunders averred in 1927 that '[w]hen Mr. Cecil Sharp and Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser respectively make a collection of Somerset and Hebridean Folk-Songs to-day, they are compelled to supply pianoforte accompaniments to the songs and to round them off in the conventional manner of the modern art-song in order to bring them sufficiently into line with the assumed culture of the age, and even then they are accepted only as curiosities, or as works of an entirely exotic character' (Saunders, 1927, p. 80).

Considered in the context of the extensive art song repertoire, it is striking how well the *Songs of the Hebrides* fit in among the many contemporary contributions to the genre. In a Gaelic context, however, her work was indeed a new phenomenon, a fact which was clearly pointed out by An Comunn Gaidhealach in its tribute to her in 1930: 'She created art song which was a new creation. [...] They developed a new form, and the new form which arose out of the beautiful Gaelic melodies was the art song.' ("An Comunn Gaidhealach", 1930). 'Never before had the world outside Gaeldom been so impressively and entrancingly made aware of the quantity and quality of Hebridean music', Thomas M. Murchison noted in 1988, writing about Kenneth Macleod (Murchison, 1988, pp. xxxiv –xxxv); that both Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and her collaborator 'had "processed" the "raw material" they used' was never concealed by either of them.

Both the *Songs of the Hebrides* and many of Kennedy-Fraser's other song arrangements and piano pieces remained popular and were regularly performed throughout the 1930s, but with changes in taste and preference, during and after the Second World War, they gradually began to sink into oblivion and slowly vanished from recital programmes. Some of her songs, however, having found their way into school song collections, lived on for many more years, albeit in much simplified and rather uninspired arrangements. But at about the time of her passing in 1930, both art song recitals and opera performances were beginning to be scorned for being 'high culture', dusty symbols of a bourgeois past, and large chunks of the repertoire – the Late-Romantic in particular – were relegated to the attics.
In Scotland, there were additional issues that stirred up fierce controversies, and influential Scottish poet Sorley MacLean and his trendsetting entourage were particularly scornful in their comments on Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's Hebridean song arrangements. In February 1940, in a letter to Douglas Young, Scottish author George Campbell Hay praised MacLean for not having 'wandered off into a drawingroom Tìr Nan Òg [15] at the heels of the Clàrsach Society and the Kennedy Frasers' (Hay, 2003, p. 503). Equally venomous were the attacks on Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's collaborator Kenneth Macleod, the Gaelic editor of the *Songs of the Hebrides*. Ethel Bassin's more temperate comments from the 1970s nevertheless clearly express what was often being said at the time: 'No doubt the versions of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and Kenneth MacLeod were very charming, even exciting, but it is a period charm. The two collaborators had translated their material, whether from Frances Tolmie or from other sources, into drawing-room songs that made too facile, too voguish an appeal to last.' (Bassin, 1977, p. 143).

There were other voices heard though, even in those years; in 1957, Maurice Lindsay questioned the 'artistic value [of a song recording], lying sealed in a tin can on a University library shelf', appreciating, however, that '[t]he crack-voiced crooning of an old crone into a tape-machine may result in the discovery of new facts about the Gaelic way of life in past ages' (Lindsay, 1957, p. 44).

'Whatever critical views may have been politely expressed while the enterprise was still underway', Virginia Blankenhorn points out in her essay '*Songs of the Hebrides* and the Critics' (Blankenhorn, 2018, pp. 10–11); 'in the 1930s the gloves came off, and it became clear that a number of Gaels were happy neither with the contents of *Songs of the Hebrides*, nor with the praise that the work had received'. My own impression is that such disapproving views are still prevalent within certain circles in Scotland, where even today, the mere mentioning of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser can stir up strong emotions. Blankenhorn continues: 'The emergence of Modernism in the years following the Great War had a peculiar intensity for Scotland, and especially for Gaels: not just the carnage of the war itself, which robbed so many communities of their young men; [...] but also the unkept promises made to those who had fought, the Gaels' ongoing demand for rights to the land upon which they had lived for centuries, the continu-

ing erosion of the Gaelic language, and the mass emigration of Gaels to Canada and elsewhere – anger about all of these things energized the response of a new generation of university-educated Gaelic-speakers to what they rightly saw as the exploitation of their native arts by the same dominant culture that seemed hell-bent on destroying their way of life.'

In the eyes of some particularly influential Scots, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser ended up as the scapegoat for all of this, and her oeuvre was criticised for being enveloped in the 'the aesthetic consciousness of the Celtic Twilight' and it was argued that her 'arrangements of Gaelic songs caused actual harm to native Gaelic tradition, as well as "pain and humiliation" to Gaels', but, concludes Blankenhorn, '[t]hese two criticisms reflect less upon Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's methods and motivation than upon the aesthetic values of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. The idea that [she] should be held personally responsible for the aesthetic excesses of the Celtic Revival is, plainly, ludicrous' (Blankenhorn, 2018, p. 28). For these critics though, Mrs Kennedy-Fraser represented an ideal target, both because she was commercially successful and because she was a woman.

When forming an opinion on Kennedy-Fraser's *Songs of the Hebrides*, they ought to be considered in their proper context, as part of the European Late-Romantic art song repertoire. But having to decide whether we prefer an art song recital, or a more traditional rendering of Gaelic songs seems to me an unnecessary exercise, since nothing hinders the same listener from appreciating both styles.

With hardly any existing recordings, an assessment of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser as a performer needs to be based solely on opinions documented by her contemporaries. From the vast number of press reviews available, as well as from several other sources, she emerges as an outstanding performer and a most proficient pianist. Both her excellent musicianship and her artistry were always praised, but as a singer, she appears to have been less successful. Repeatedly given credit for her perfect intonation and unfaltering sense of rhythm, her voice never gave rise to any particular acclaim. But was she a composer – perhaps even an orchestral composer *manquée*? This is difficult to know. Her vast output of song arrangements, as well as her many lectures and publications dealing with the Hebridean scales and modes, clearly show that she had the necessary technical knowledge of music theory, and her several albums of piano pieces as well as her suite for violoncello and piano move in the borderland between arrangements and original compositions. However, both her song arrangements and her piano works drew on her training and experience as a pianist and singer, and as she did not have either any formal training in orchestration or any practical experience of orchestral work, she might have felt any such undertakings beyond her capacity. Being constrained to earn a living, presumably, she did not have the necessary time to spend either. She might also have been a realist, knowing very well that the few women composers of her era were, like herself, concentrating on art songs, the exception being Ethel Smyth, who had private means at her disposal. 'The woman composer stands where the actress stood in the time of Shakespeare', Virginia Woolf wrote in *A Room of One's Own*, exasperated by what Cecil Gray had written, 'in this year of grace, 1928, of women who try to write music' (Woolf, 1929/1977, p. 53). 'Of Mlle Germaine Tailleferre one can only repeat Dr. Johnson's dictum concerning a woman preacher, transposed into terms of music: "Sir, a woman's composing is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all." Considered apart from her sex, her music is wholly negligible.' (Gray, 1927, pp. 245–246).

But things do change over time – even in Scotland – and new generations grow up, without the biases of their elders. 'One of the great delights of Gaelic song is the way in which the traditional material can be used in many forms from solo singing to rock music to orchestral arrangements', Christopher MacLeod maintained in 2002 (MacLeod, 2002, p. 77). These days, several items from the *Songs of the Hebrides* do turn up in the repertoires of modern Gaelic singers, without the piano arrangements that Marjory Kennedy-Fraser once provided for them. It thus seems that Kennedy-Fraser may be having the last laugh on her critics, with her own songs becoming 'standards' among modern performers, who, unaware of their origins, apparently regard them as 'traditional'. [16]

In 1930, Professor Tovey wrote about the *Songs of the Hebrides* that 'the work [...] will surely be continued as to the use of these Hebridean songs by concert singers' (Tovey, 1930). There are some recent *Songs of the Hebrides* recordings by distinguished classical performers available,[17] but Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's consummate art song versions of Gaelic traditional songs would undoubtedly merit their permanent place in vocal recitalists' standard art song repertoire, thereby giving presence both to Gaelic Scotland among the Late-Romantic voices from all corners of Europe and beyond and to a remarkable Scotswoman among distinguished British composers.

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Notes

[1] 'Land of Heart's Desire' is one among the best-known songs of the *Songs of the Hebrides*, named after William B. Yeats' play *The Land of Heart's Desire*, first performed in 1894. For Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's encounter with the Irish author, when invited to one of his regular gatherings at his flat in London in 1909, see her autobiography (Kennedy-Fraser, 1929a, pp. 158–59).
[2] For Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's thoughts about potential links between Hebridean songs and Wagnerian leitmotifs and airs – particularly Senta's ballad – see 'Richard Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* – A Flying Hebridean in Disguise?' (Ahlander, 2013b).
[3] The biographical information on the Kennedys and Marjory Kennedy(-Fraser) draws on my unpublished doctoral dissertation *Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930) and Her Time*: A Contextual Study (Ahlander, 2009). For a summary, published in Swedish, see 'Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930) och Hebridernas sånger: Ett porträtt av en skotsk musiker, kulturentreprenör, suffragett och musikforskare' (Ahlander, 2010).
[4] For a detailed description of the Kennedys' overseas tours from 1866 to 1886, together with a listing of their concert repertoire, see 'Taking 'Twa Hours at Hame' to the New World: The Overseas Tours of David Kennedy's Family Music Troupe in 1866–86' (Ahlander, 2013c).
[5] Francesco Lamperti (1811/3–92) was an Italian singing teacher and opera director, professor of singing at the Milan Conservatory 1850–75.
[6] Elisa/Annetta] Gambardella (fl. 1840–81), pupil of Gioachino Rossini in Bologna, was an Italian soprano and singing teacher.
[7] Mathilde Marchesi (1821–1913), pupil of Manuel Garcia Jr, was a German mezzo-soprano and singing teacher, with her own singing academy in Paris, the École Marchesi.
[8] '*But we have changed all that*'.
[9] For an overview of the avant-garde cultural circles in Edinburgh around 1900, see 'Celtic Revival and Arts and Crafts around 1900: Edinburgh and Dublin Connected by a Circle of Trendsetting Individuals' (Ahlander, 2013a).
[10] For information about Dr Elsie Inglis' Scottish Women's Hospitals, see Elsie Inglis: *Founder of battlefront hospitals run entirely by women* (Leneman, 1998).
[11] John Duncan's portrait of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser from c.1922 is in the collections of the National Galleries of Scotland and on display at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh, https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/2482/marjory-kennedy-fraser-1857-1930-musician-and-collector-hebridean-songs
[12] The three *Songs of the Hebrides* volumes are available online: https://archive.org/details/songsofhebridesf00unse/mode/2up
[13] For a discussion on Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's interest in the links between Gaelic Scotland and Brittany, see 'Musical Pan-Celticism: How Breton musicologists inspired Scottish Marjory Kennedy-Fraser to collect, arrange and publish Gaelic traditional songs' (Ahlander, 2017).
[14] It is worth noting that it was on Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's explicit request to Boosey & Co. that her name was printed 'M. Kennedy-Fraser' and not 'Marjory Kennedy-Fraser'.
[15] 'The Land of the Young', the Scottish Gaelic name for the Celtic Otherworld.
[16] I am indebted to Dr Virginia Blankenhorn for kindly sharing with me her thoughts on present-day traditional Gaelic singers' repertoires.
[17] Two recommended recordings: *Land of Heart's Desire: Songs of the Hebrides* from the Collection by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1997), with Lisa Milne, soprano, and Sioned Williams, harp (Hyperion Records CDA66988) and *Songs of Scotland* (2000), with Marie McLaughlin, soprano, Malcolm Martineau, piano, and Isobel Frayling-Cork, clarsach (Hyperion Records CDA67106).

'Delia's Gone, but I'm Settling the Score': Gender, Vocal Aesthetics, and the Murder Ballad

By Chanda VanderHart

Abstract

This article explores the intersection of vocal aesthetics, gender, and performance in the tradition of murder ballads, a genre rooted in historical narratives of femicide and gendered violence. Once serving as a blend of journalism, entertainment, and (moralizing) cautionary tales, these ballads evolved from impersonal storytelling to largely centering the interiority of male perpetrators, further reinforcing implicit misogyny and stereotypical portrayals of women, yet have also been continuously appropriated by female performers for their own, varied purposes. Following a personal reflection on this author's relationship to an admittedly problematic genre, the issue of vocal aesthetics and performance is centered. Thereafter the genre's more recent developments vis-à-vis gender and performance are traced, noting trends within the 20th century. Finally, 21st century reinterpretations by female artists who use the ballad both to reclaim power, adopting male-coded violence, and/or as a form of protest, are examined more closely. By foregrounding marginalized voices and addressing intersections of race, class, and gender, contemporary murder ballads may sometimes transcend their origins, becoming vehicles for social critique and resistance.

Keywords

Murder ballad, gender, aesthetics, Voice, ballad, performance

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Introduction:
Murder Ballads in the Classroom

I first encountered murder ballads in a roundabout way. As a burgeoning pianist, my childhood teacher assigned me Johannes Brahms' 'Edward' Ballad op. 10 no. 1, and I was captivated by its D-minor, somber melancholy. I sensed an epic story behind the composition, even without Brahms' subtitle, 'Nach der schottischen Ballade, "Edward" aus Herder's Stimmen der Völker'. The faded, regal, declamatory style of the opening, and the simmering drama and aching despair which then unfold through relentless triplets and open-chord voicings gripped my angsty preteen soul, providing me an outlet to feel all my feelings from the safety of an upright piano tucked inside a suburban duplex in the American Midwest.

Brahms's 'Edward' ballade is more accurately known as Child ballad 13B, based on the categorization created by 19th-century scholar Francis James Child in his publication of over 300 Scottish, English and American ballads which he gleaned both from broadsides and oral sources. Brahms came to this tale in translation, through the widely circulated collections by 18th-century German historian, philosopher, and cultural theorist Johann Gottfried Herder. Like most murder ballads, it has undergone numerous iterations—parts appear in other ballads, with roots traced to Scottish, Irish and Swedish origins over 250 years old. Its narrative details, musical settings and styles, and textual languages are fluid—and in Brahms' case, the text has been rendered entirely instrumental. This, too, is typical for the ballad, which Adrian Daub calls 'the most itinerant of forms'; the genre is fluid, easily spanning mediums and languages and resists fixed origins or forms (Daub 2023: 24).

Brahms likely used a German translation of a version reworked by Bishop Thomas Percy, which Percy presented as authentically Scottish in his 1765 *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.1 The ballad is a dialogue between mother and son, told in simple, strophic verse. The mother confronts her son about blood on his sword; he hedges, admits to killing his father, then reveals that she orchestrated the murder (Hastings 2008). It features a sensational crime of passion—a classic example of the murder ballad subgenre.

Most murder ballads are performed as popular or folk music, not romantic instrumental 'art' music, making my first encounter via Brahms unusual. But what makes Child Ballad 13 interesting is also the gender of the victim. To be clear, plenty of murder ballads feature children being murdered, men killing men, or even occasionally violent women (Gammon 2000; Kane 1996). Yet the most common trope features a woman as victim—and a specific type of woman. She is young, violently murdered by her lover, then buried or dumped into a river. Often the reason is illegitimate pregnancy or infidelity, generally only implied. Enduring examples include 'Omie/Naomi Wise' (Roud Folk Song Index No. 447), 'Pearl Bryan' (Slade n.d.), 'Little Sadie', 'Tom Dooley', and 'Delia's Gone'.

Many well-known murder ballads originated in Europe. While some are supernatural or fictional, many were created and distributed around public hangings. English balladeers visited jailed murderers, wrote and performed their stories in the streets, and distributed broadsides, (or broadsheets), at courthouses and executions (Skeaping 2005). These cheap prints, known elsewhere as *Flugblätter*, *skillingtryck*, or *pliego suelto*, revolutionized ballad distribution. They travelled to North America with immigrants, were adapted to local events, and took on new moralizing ideologies (Hastie 2011). Murder ballads remain central to many North American music traditions—folk, bluegrass, country, jazz, soul, and rock—becoming staples of major 20th-century singer-songwriters, which is where I fell in love with them a second time, via Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, and Dolly Parton.

While I am hardly morbid, something about a simple, minor-key melody, or a casually recounted horrific tale haunts me, like *Black Mirror's* unveiling casual horror in idyllic settings. Others may love murder ballads like they love true crime, drawn to dissecting and ruminating on actions seen as beyond conceivable human behavior, but I prefer the band-aid ripped away quickly, and murder ballads are famously unflinching.

Murder ballads often exhibit a fatalistic melancholy, and in my favorite 'sad-ass songs', to quote Dolly Parton (Oliaee & Abumrad n.d.), brutal details are related with a clinical detachment. The facts are not sugar-coated, the tune is simple, and the underpinning music varies—whatever your preferred style, there is a murder ballad for you. They are easy to internalize thanks to short, rhymed refrains which repeat after each verse—choruses everyone can sing along with (Friedman 2024)2. This helps explain why Welsh football fans happily chant Tom Jones' catchy power ballad, 'Delilah,' at matches without registering that it is about a jealous lover stabbing a woman to death, then implicitly blaming her: 'forgive me, Delilah, I just couldn't take any more', the chorus concludes (Sizer & Dadlez 2024).3

To explore my complex fascination with the genre, I taught seminars combining artistic practice with musicological / cultural studies approaches at music universities in both Graz and Vienna, Austria. Students first critically engaged with the genre from historical and gender studies perspectives and then created and contextualized their own murder ballads, or designed performances centering the theme of violence within song, highlighting the role of vocal aesthetics and gender. This experience led me to examine intersections between gender, vocality, aesthetics and power in murder ballads, which are generally considered in light of its textual aesthetics, sociological and/or legal significance, or gendered politics more broadly (Atkinson 1999; Hastie 2011; Kane 1996). While prior work (Mehring 2021, Newman 2020) has compellingly traced the murder ballad's cultural evolution, my analysis centers vocal embodiment as a critical vector for considering gendered violence in song.

I asked my love to take a walk / Just a little ways with me / And as we walked and we would talk / All about our wedding day

Darling say that you'll be mine / In our home we'll happy be / Down beside where the waters flow / On the banks of the Ohio I took her by her pretty white hand /

I let her down that bank of sand / I pushed her in where she would drown / Lord, I saw her as she floated down

To illustrate, my Austrian students wrote and performed murder ballads as social commentary often drawing on current events, including modern-day femicide. One male student wrote and performed a chilling song, 'Nadine, Gasoline', recounting the 2021 murder of a 35-year-old tobacconist in Vienna. After months of stalking, Nadine's ex assaulted her at work—he strangled her, doused her in gasoline, set her ablaze, and locked the shop, tossing the key in a nearby bin. She died of severe burns weeks later, her killer unapologetically telling police that he had 'wanted to teach her a lesson' (Reibenwein 2021).

Horrified, the student wanted to avoid sensationalization, but admitted discomfort repeatedly, both concerning the compositional process and performance. Songs and stories are admittedly more aesthetically effective—more gripping—when musically set and performed more dramatically, and he felt torn between condemning the horror, and his instinct to heighten its drama. At the core was his own role as the male narrator of violence. He worried performing it risked condoning or even voyeuristically reveling in the very horror he meant to critique. This was heightened by a sensation of feeling instinctively drawn to make the recounting more dramatically gripping from his position as a popular music singer-songwriter. Ultimately, he felt unable to protect his honest intentions from being misunderstood.

These tensions, I argue, are deeply gendered. Especially when femicide is the focus, the murder ballad is a storied medium which has commemorated and perhaps condoned, but also protested gendered violence. The duality of the genre—as both an artifact of cultural fascination with murder and a potential medium for intervention—is therefore central to this analysis, as is the powerful and gendered role vocal aesthetics of the ballad performer play, and how performers have engaged with murder ballads in unique ways.

Gendered Interiorities & the Lyrical She

First disseminated orally, murder ballads gained new popularity with the invention of the printing press in the 15th century as broadsheets, blending journalistic and voyeuristic functions (Amable 2021). These songs often recounted real crimes in vivid detail, and by the 17th and 18th centuries, they were performed at public hangings, with singers sensationalizing the most gruesome details to heighten effect (Nebeker 2011; Wiltenburg 2004). Since most hanged criminals were male, this sensationalized the murder, while also codifying a gendered, binary trope: helpless, young, white female victims, and male murderers.

Cheap printing gave broadsheet ballads unprecedented reach across social strata, and it was after these ballads that most of what scholar Albert Friedman terms literary ballads were fashioned, not traditional or folk ballads (Friedman, Ibid.). They subsequently travelled to North America with English, Irish, Scottish, and German immigrants (Bayard 1955). There, murder ballads flourished, particularly in the religious south, where their moralizing intensified (Donalson 2020). As music became a public industry, not only did male singers dominate, but narratives became increasingly focused on the interiority of male perpetrators, who were portrayed more fully,

and sometimes even sympathetically, while female victims were largely victim-blamed or objectified (Newman 2017). One example is 'Banks of the Ohio', recorded by folk legends including Bill Monroe, Clarence Ashley and Doc Watson:4 (*as seen on the front page*).

Notably, the tale here is told exclusively from the perpetrator's view. His thoughts, intent, remorse, and punishment are all detailed. The female victim is voiceless, textually reduced to a 'pretty white hand.' This echoes older traditional ballads, where figures were often flatly characterized: victims reduced to symbols such as 'lily-white hands' and male suitors to 'gay gold rings,' devices that universalized characters and aided memory in performance (Friedman 2024). In this early 20th century version, however, only one character remains flat. The perpetrator is fully fleshed out, but although the victim talked at some point, ostensibly to reject the perpetrator's marriage proposal, her rejection, reasoning, and emotional state are entirely absent. The only other bodily or mental action afforded her textually is passively floating down the river after being pushed in.

This recalls Edgar Allan Poe's 'beautiful corpse' concept, popularized in his contention in The Philosophy of Composition that the death of a beautiful woman is 'the most poetical subject in the world'. The trope pervades art and literature (*Pretty Girls Make Graves – Beautiful Corpses in Art*: Part I 2020) —young, beautiful women immobilized through death, the idealized, dehumanized objects to feed the male gaze (Chambers 2009; Martens 2013).

Johnny Cash's relationship with the murder ballad 'Delia's Gone' indicates that this trope remained alive and culturally accepted throughout the 20th century. Used as a vehicle for his career resurgence, Cash' pivotal re-recording of 'Delia's Gone' for his 1994 American Recordings album blended violence and masculinity (Streissguth 2006). The last version of a ballad he had already recorded three times was reimagined as a haunting tale that underscored Cash's 'Man in Black' persona. The stripped-down, voice-and-guitar production, amplified the raw narrative, where the protagonist coldly recounts murdering his lover, Delia. Overseen by producer Rick Rubin, this ballad recording allowed Cash's voice to dominate, reinforcing his hypermasculine image—a figure of authority and moral complexity (Delia's Gone 2023). Cash even added a new verse to the ballad, making it yet a degree darker: *'She was lowdown and trifling / And she was cold and mean / Kind of evil, make me want to / Grab my submachine / Delia's gone, one more round / Delia's gone.'*

The accompanying music video, directed by Anton Corbijn, further cements this dynamic. In it, supermodel Kate Moss plays the lifeless corpse of Delia, rendered visually passive as well as voiceless (Alexander 2016). Moss's embodiment as a beautiful, immobilized, white, young woman perpetuates the gaze, reducing Delia to an aestheticized object of male agency and violence. This visual representation of Delia as an object of male control aligns with Cash's broader narrative of reclaiming his place in the cultural zeitgeist. By juxtaposing his commanding presence with Moss's silent, lifeless form, the video reinforces themes of male dominance and the commodification of female suffering, all while positioning Cash as a timeless, near-mythic figure of American music (Eaton 2024).

The actual history of Delia Greene, the 14-year-old African-American girl whose murder inspired the ballad, adds a further layer of historical, gendered context. In 1900, Delia was shot and killed by Moses 'Cooney' Houston, a young man with whom she had a sexual relationship, after a public argument at a Christmas Eve party in Savannah, Georgia (Cohen 2000). The tragedy, itself rooted in themes of male pride, sexual mores and violence, reflects broader cultural dynamics of women's lives being overshadowed by male narratives of honor, ownership, and retribution. This portrayal raises questions about the ethics of reimagining real-life tragedies in art, particularly when the focus shifts from the victim's actual story to the perpetrator's perspective, in this case both reinforcing patriarchal narratives and whitewashing history.

What makes Cash's reinterpretation particularly disturbing is the merging of vocal authority with lyrical brutality. His weathered baritone—imbued with cultural associations of authenticity and moral gravity—becomes a vehicle not for reflection or remorse, but for domination. The lyrical addition of 'she was lowdown and trifling' converts the song from a melancholy narrative into a defense, positioning the speaker's violence as not just justified, but inevitable. The contrast between the stark, stripped-back musical arrangement and the lyrical content mirrors the dynamic of intimate partner violence itself: the seemingly calm exterior masking brutality. By choosing to lean into this cold violence, Cash not only embodies the murderer, but he also reinforces a cultural script in which male rage is both aestheticized and excused. This becomes especially potent considering Delia Greene's age, race, and circumstances; Cash's version, stripped of these historical specifics, not only silences Delia further but participates in the erasure of the social conditions that made her vulnerable to violence in the first place.

How the texts of murder ballads are constructed also arguably change along gendered lines, and in various ways. Revisiting 'Banks of the Ohio', it is notable that the women who have recorded it have tended to alter the text.5 Joan Baez, who first recorded the ballad in 1959 for her album Folksingers 'Round Harvard Square uses the following text:

I asked my love to take a walk / To take a walk, just a little walk / Down beside where the waters flow / Down by the banks of the Ohio.

And only say that you'll be mine / In no other's arms entwine / Down beside where the waters flow / Down by the banks of the Ohio.

I held a knife against her breast / As into my arms she pressed / She cried, 'oh, Willie, don't murder me, I'm not prepared for eternity.'

I started home 'tween twelve and one / I cried, 'my god, what have I done? / I killed the only woman I loved / Because she would not be my bride.'

And only say that you'll be mine / In no other's arms entwine / Down beside where the waters flow / Down by the banks of the Ohio.

Notably, not only is the victim here killed by a knife instead of simply pushed into the river, but in the third verse she both moves—pressing herself against her lover—and speaks, begging Willie not to kill her, because she is 'not prepared' to die. Even the introduction of the phrase 'in no other's arms entwine' indicates two interlocking sets of limbs, implying a great deal more reciprocal, physical agency than in the Monroe / Ashley / Watson: version where the perpetrator '*took her by her pretty white hand*'.

Olivia Newton John, in her 1971 recording built on these lyrics, but went a step further, switching the gender to make the perpetrator female by further adjusting the text and swapping pronouns:

I held a knife against his breast / As into my arms he pressed / He cried, 'My love, don't you murder me' / I'm not prepared for eternity.

I wandered home 'tween 12 and one / I cried, 'My God, what have I done?'/ I've killed the only man I love / He would not take me for his bride.

Gendered, Classed Performances and Marginalized Voices

The performance and circulation of murder ballads have always been shaped by the intertwined dynamics of gender, class, and race. Many of the women who sang ballads in public spaces during the 18th and 19th centuries were not simply morally judged—they were economically and socially marginalized. Often poor, unmarried, and supporting dependents, these women used street balladry as one of the few viable survival strategies within societies that policed both their gender and class status; ballad performance was one of few options, along with selling matchsticks, thievery, and prostitution, which allowed them to feed themselves and their dependents. As Fulford (2006) notes, female street singers were routinely perceived as transgressive, yet they played a vital role in sustaining oral and printed ballad culture. The cheap broadsides they sold catered largely to working-class audiences, reinforcing the genre's association with the underclasses, even as the content often moralized against the very people who consumed it.

Simultaneously, racialized voices and subjects were often erased from dominant versions of these ballads or filtered through white narrators and performers, as in the case of Delia Green. This erasure underscores how racial dynamics have long shaped which stories are told, who gets to tell them, and how they are remembered. In both historical and contemporary contexts, the murder ballad has reflected the violence of the social order: where class and race both intersect with gender to determine who is deemed disposable, who is centered, and whose voice is amplified or silenced. Domestically, where it was not morally suspect, primarily women sang ballads, and did so extensively (Duggan 2023). This was an activity conducted while working or relaxing, creating spaces where (self-)entertainment intersected with autobiography, collective mourning, and acts of cultural remembrance, and many of these texts prioritized women's concerns and perspectives (Clark 2002). Moreover, while the songs that women sang overlapped largely with their male contemporaries, there are gendered differences which have been noted between which ballads were performed most frequently (Wollstadt 2002).

Ballads sung in public are characteristically performed by a single narrator or duo who reportedly employed a stoic, impersonal storytelling style, one of the consistently defining tenets of a genre that has stubbornly defied neat categorization (Porter 1980; Sams n.d.; Trenery 1915). Yet despite the central claim of impersonality or impartiality within the context of this narration, there are consistent admissions that performers—minstrels, or street ballad singers—inserted their own 'voice', in the sense of their own, embodied perspectives and attitudes, actively into performance long before Johnny Cash came along. Friedman is quite clear: while strongly delineating folk or traditional balladry, a practice which he sees as the purview of the common people in small, private groups, from public, popular performance in the form of minstrelsy, he notes that performers regularly imbued their personal perspectives into ballads within performance, taking creative license including retexting, arranging, and commenting (Friedman, Ibid.):

In violation of the strict impersonality of the folk ballads, minstrels constantly intrude into their narratives with moralizing comments and fervent assurances that they are not lying at the very moment when they are most fabulous. The minstrels manipulate the story with coarse explicitness, begging for attention in a servile way, predicting future events in the story and promising that it will be interesting and instructive, shifting scenes obtrusively, reflecting on the characters' motives with partisan prejudice.

This is part and parcel of the role of expressive vocal performance in popular music, an embodied and interpersonal act (Juntunen et al. 2023), which demonstrably communicates both ideas (through text) and emotions to the audience (Juslin & Laukka 2004). While the common conflation of vocal performance with the performer's own, personal expression is highly problematic (Kobel 2020), there is undoubtedly overlap; singers performing what is perceived as—at least to a degree—as their own personal story or 'truth' is understood as particularly authentic in 20th century popular music (Peterson 1997).

This returns us to my student's concern that men singing murder ballads may be inherently problematic due to the gendered nature of vocal aesthetics and the role of the performer within them. While the genre's historical textual misogyny, reinforced by male perspectives and stereotypical portrayals, poses

significant ethical and aesthetic challenges, in addition, the implicit blurring in the mind of the audience between the singer and the lyrical I of the text further complicates the matter. In other words: if the ballad text is about committing a murder, centers the perspective of the murderer, and is performed by a man, his role—as soon as any emotion is imbued—quickly slips from that of an impersonal narrator to embodying the voice of the perpetrator (Groom 2013).

When a woman performs a murder ballad it is therefore disruptive in numerous ways. First, a woman is speaking and becoming the storyteller, a centuries-old role ascribed cultural authority. More significantly, due to the tendency to conflate the voice of the performer with both the lyrical I while working within the clearly gendered narratives laid out in the text, the female voice is a mismatch and causes a perturbation for the listener. A woman taking the place of an implicitly male lyrical I—by singing a song about a woman being murdered by a man—is therefore a shift that changes the song fundamentally (Blackman 2014). They may be implicitly understood as giving voice to the victim, and, through singing, infusing victimized characters with humanity by embodying them, another aspect I hear in Joan Baez's version of 'Banks of the Ohio'.

This act offers those literary murder ballad victims a degree of agency, thereby challenging the gendered conflation of passivity and femininity. Alternatively, a woman taking the position of the lyrical I in these songs could be understood as flipping the script entirely, making women either implicitly or explicitly the violent perpetrators in these songs (Schemmer 2020). While in Olivia Newton John's rendition of 'Banks of the Ohio' the pronouns and text were adjusted, artists including Shirley Collins, and Molly O'Day also intervened in standard murder ballads simply by singing from the perpetrator's perspective, unsettling audiences and subverting traditional gender roles. The lyrical and performative differences between male and female versions of 'Banks of the Ohio' illustrate how even subtle shifts in text and tone can radically reframe a narrative. While male renditions emphasize the killer's remorse—or lack thereof—female performers like Joan Baez complicate this structure by infusing the victim with both voice and personhood. A woman's voice pleading, 'Oh Willie, don't murder me, I'm not prepared for eternity,' interrupts the murderer's control of the narrative and offers a glimpse of the victim's interiority. Not only does this rehumanize her, but it also restores a fragment of agency in a genre known for its aestheticization of passive, silent women. Moreover, Baez's vocal tone—at once plaintive and composed—serves to dramatize the imbalance of power without resorting to melodrama.

Olivia Newton-John's gender inversion takes this further, flipping the narrative so that the woman becomes both subject and agent. Yet even here, the act of violence is tinged with ambiguity: it is not celebratory but mournful, and the killer's regret— 'He would not take me for his bride' —complicates a straightforwardly feminist reading. These variations highlight how murder ballads can be effectively reframed as counter-narratives, but also how easily those reinterpretations can drift into more murky territory.

Explicitly Female Murder Ballads in the 20th century

Besides performing well-known murder ballads generally sung by men and written from a male point of view, women also introduced novel murder ballads to the world in other ways in the 20th century. One method involved singing novel murder ballads written from the perspective of a female aggressor. Often employing wit, such songs allowed women to invert the genre's typical gender dynamics, using humor to shield their transgressions. Two examples include Hank Fort's 'I Didn't Know the Gun Was Loaded,' and Rogers and Hart's 'To Keep My Love Alive'.

'I Didn't Know the Gun Was Loaded,' was composed by Hank Fort, born Eleanor Hankins, and Herb Leventhal in 1948. It subverts traditional gender roles through its portrayal of a gun-toting Miss Effie, who repeatedly shoots people, excusing her actions with the refrain, 'I didn't know the gun was loaded.' This statement, when paired with a chirpy voice, both underscores female helplessness while still allowing the protagonist to casually disregard the consequences for committing murder while challenging the demure archetype ascribed to women in mid-20th-century culture.

Fort, a prolific songwriter with over 400 compositions, had a knack for writing songs from a humorous Southern viewpoint, which became a hallmark of her work. The song's popularity, bolstered by recordings from Betsy Gay, The Andrews Sisters, Patsy Montana, and others, largely in 1949 and 1950, reflects its resonance with audiences navigating shifting gender dynamics in post-war America (Peterson 1997). Fort's 'I Didn't Know the Gun Was Loaded', notably, both uses female stereotypes to challenge them, while its humorous caricature simultaneously risks reinforcing the 'irrational woman' trope.

'To Keep My Love Alive' is a darkly comedic murder ballad composed by Richard Rodgers with lyrics by Lorenz Hart in 1943. It was written for the revival of the 1927 musical A Connecticut Yankee and first introduced by Vivienne Segal, but was sung by a host of stars, including Ella Fitzgerald, Nancy Walker, Blossom Dearie, Sophia Loren, and Anita O'Day. This song holds the distinction of being the last Hart wrote before his death from pneumonia. The ballad is sung from the perspective of a serial bride who has 'bumped off' her fifteen husbands—ostensibly to avoid being unfaithful. The protagonist describes various methods she used to dispatch her spouses, including poisoning, stabbing, crowning with a harp, tossing from a balcony, and performing an appendectomy. 'To Keep My Love Alive' is particularly intriguing due to the extreme juxtaposition between its gruesome subject matter and Richard Rodgers' sprightly melody.
This contrast creates a cognitive dissonance for listeners (Sizer & Dadlez 2024). While exaggerated for comedic effect, this is a key feature of many murder ballads which force listeners to reconcile upbeat music

with morally reprehensible lyrics (Wollen 2024).

On the other end of the aesthetic spectrum, in the 1960s we can also mark the emergence of female singer-songwriters including Dolly Parton and Wanda Jackson who engaged with the murder ballad in novel ways. Instead of employing humor, they instead wrote and sang songs which not only centered the victim's perspective, imbuing their characters with agency and interiority, but also telling new types of stories from a particularly female point of view. Dolly Parton's 'The Bridge' (1968) and Wanda Jackson's 'The Box it Came In' (1966) both depict women grappling with abandonment, betrayal, and revenge.

'The Box It Came In' was written by Vic McAlpin and recorded on September 24, 1965 at the Columbia Recording Studio in Nashville, Tennessee by Jackson. It was released as a single in 1966 and reached number 18 on the Billboard Magazine Hot Country Singles chart, marking Jackson's first major hit on the country songs chart since 1961 and initiating a series of charting country songs for her between 1966 and 1971. The song is sung from the perspective of a destitute woman abandoned by her husband, and ends with a murderous threat:

He took everything with him that wasn't nailed down / Bet he's got a new sweetheart to fill my wedding gown / But somewhere I'll find him then I'll have peace of mind / And the box he comes home in will be all satin lined.

'The Bridge' is a very different tale, a haunting ballad written by Dolly Parton in 1967. The song recounts the story of a young woman who becomes pregnant after a romantic encounter with a man under a bridge. When the man abandons her, the woman returns to the bridge and ultimately commits suicide, at which point the song abruptly ends:

Tonight, while standing on the bridge / My heart is beating wild / To think that you could leave me here / With our unborn child / My feet are moving slowly / Closer to the edge / Here is where it started / And here is where I'll end it.

From an Appalachian background, Parton was not only steeped in classic murder ballads, but soon began to create them herself (Schemmer 2020). 'The Bridge', touching on taboo subjects such as unwed motherhood, abandonment, and suicide, was considered too strong for radio airplay at the time (Lynskey 2020). The plaintive, clear vocal aesthetic imbues the lyrical I, who serves as both victim and (self-harm) perpetrator here with a great deal of humanity, and Parton has spoken publicly about her interest in telling personal stories about the real-life suffering of actual women (Goeres 2021).

'The Bridge' diverges sharply from Jackson's revenge ballad or comic murder ballad models by denying the listener any easy resolution or catharsis. Here, the woman's suffering is not redirected outward but is internalized, culminating in her own self-destruction. Parton's understated vocal delivery—delicate, mournful, and crystalline—imbues the song with devastating intimacy, transforming it into a lament rather than a spectacle. Importantly, this ballad stands out for how it centers female shame, abandonment, and the crushing weight of social expectation, particularly around unwed motherhood in a conservative, rural setting. Unlike traditional murder ballads in which female characters are flattened into victims or warnings, Parton's protagonist is given emotional and psychological depth, and the song's refusal to sensationalize her death reads as an implicit critique of the very murder ballad genre from which it draws. Its exclusion from radio play at the time of release underscores how deeply transgressive its emotional realism was—perhaps more so than its violent content.

Another watershed moment for the genre appears in the 1990s, likely prompted by legal and cultural shifts, such as the recognition of marital rape and the passage of the Violence Against Women Act, which brought domestic violence into public discourse. This decade, while producing Johnny Cash's fourth recording of 'Delia', ended with The Chicks' 'Goodbye Earl', the third single from their 1999 album Fly which was released early in 2000. The ballad celebrates female solidarity and justice through a narrative of vigilante violence against an abusive husband. While controversial, the song's popularity indicates a growing appetite for feminist reinterpretations of the murder ballad (Lewis 2000).

Written by Dennis Linde, the song follows the story of Mary Ann and Wanda, two high school friends who conspire to murder Wanda's abusive husband, Earl, after legal interventions fail to protect her. Their method—poisoning his black-eyed peas—adds a macabre but humorous twist to the song's dark subject. The ballad's upbeat melody and playful delivery contrast sharply with the grim narrative, complicating its reception within country music and broader discussions on gender, violence, and justice.

The Chicks' vocal delivery plays a crucial role in shaping the song's tone with lead singer Natalie Maines employing an edgily bright quality. The harmonized choruses and bright instrumentation, complete with a singalong-style refrain, contribute to an atmosphere of camaraderie rather than despair. This playful aesthetic contrasts sharply with the severity of the song's themes, further challenging conventional narratives of domestic violence by refusing to frame Wanda as a passive victim. Instead, she and Mary Ann reclaim agency through both their actions and the song's buoyant musical presentation.

'Goodbye Earl' sparked significant debate upon its release. While some critics objected to the song's perceived endorsement of vigilante justice and a number of radio stations refused to play it, many praised the song for shedding light on the issue of domestic violence (Sawyer 2021; Smurthwaite 2000). Notably, several media outlets used the song as an opportunity to promote domestic violence hotlines, underscoring its potential as a tool for

advocacy. The comedy risks trivializing violence—yet its mass appeal forces mainstream audiences to confront domestic abuse, leveraging entertainment to bypass ideological resistance.

The song's music video, directed by Evan Bernard, reinforces its dark comedy. Featuring recognizable actors including Dennis Franz as Earl, Jane Krakowski as Wanda, and Lauren Holly as Mary Ann, the video presents the murder and subsequent cover-up as slapstick, with the corpse of Earl joining along and dancing within the colorful, closing scene (Scott 2020). The video's success—earning awards such as the Academy of Country Music and Country Music Association Video of the Year—helped solidify it as one of The Chicks' most recognizable songs. It continues to resonate with audiences and ranked among Rolling Stone's Top 500 Best Songs of All Time in 2024 (Rolling Stone 2024).

While 'Goodbye Earl' is often lauded as a feminist anthem of female solidarity and justice, it is worth noting the calculated use of camp and dark humor to mask the severity of the violence depicted. Rather than aiming for catharsis or mourning, the song reframes the act of murder as an act of necessity carried out with confidence and levity. This tongue-in-cheek tone functions as a form of subversive protest, particularly powerful within the constraints of the conservative country music industry of the late 1990s. However, this aesthetic decision also raises important questions about the limits of irony—does humor allow listeners to comfortably sidestep the deeper trauma of domestic abuse? Or does it provide an empowering outlet for rage? The Chicks' decision to turn Earl into an almost cartoonish villain simplifies the moral calculus, allowing for a form of revenge fantasy that is emotionally satisfying but ethically complicated. These tensions demonstrate the layered strategies employed in reclaiming the murder ballad form for feminist purposes.

Contemporary Reimaginings: Self-Awareness, Subversion, and Inclusion

In the 21st century, murder ballads in 'classic' styles have continued to be taken on by women, with increasing self-awareness and with the addition of a strong visual aesthetic. Examples include Britain's Sarah Vista, who writes her own murder ballads with a throwback, twangy country/western style and sports an aesthetic that nods to Johnny Cash, but with vintage blond Marilyn Monroe locks (Rock 2022).

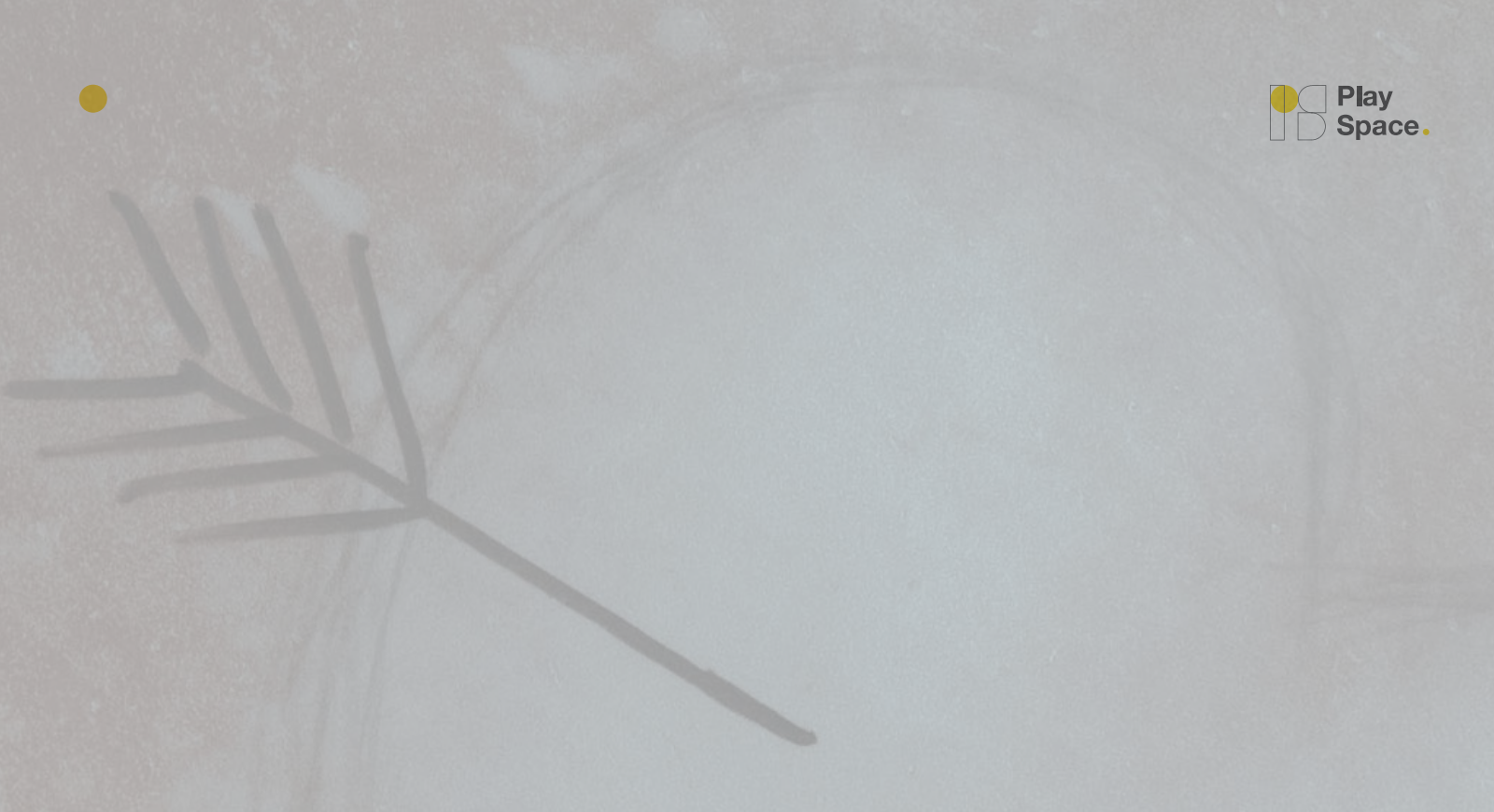
Jennifer Lawrence's rendition of 'The Hanging Tree' within the film The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1 likewise comes to mind. The song was composed in the style of an old folk tune, but was created for the franchise, with author Susan Collins providing the text to a melody by James Newton Howard in collaboration with Jeremiah Fraites and Wesley Schultz of the Colorado-based indie folk band 'The Lumineers' (Sasaguay 2023). Director Francis Lawrence instructed the composers to create a melody that could be sung either by an individual or a large group, emphasizing simplicity and emotional resonance (Bennett 2024).

The song serves as a revolutionary flashpoint throughout the The Hunger Games film franchise, but also became a commercial hit after its release, with Jennifer Lawrence's raw vocals cited as one of its strengths. It peaked at number 12 on the Billboard Hot 100 in the United States and reached high positions internationally, including number 12 on Australia's ARIA chart and number 14 on the UK Official Singles Chart (Annie Martin 2014). The song also topped charts in Germany, Austria, and Hungary. It was eventually certified double platinum in the United States and platinum in Canada and Germany, drawing comparisons to other iconic protest anthems, including Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit' (Mendez 2023).

SZA's '*Kill Bill* (I might kill my ex)', blends the murder ballad with pop / R&B in a revenge fantasy which, combined with the music video, might be the most vocally relaxed yet visually gruesome example listed here. The song reached number 1 on the Billboard Global 200, amassed hundreds of millions of streams, and went viral on TikTok (A. Hopper 2023). From her 2022 album SOS, the song reimagines the modern murder ballad within the framework of contemporary pop and R&B. Themes of toxic obsession, jealousy, and emotional volatility are presented by a narrator who fantasizes about enacting revenge on an ex-lover and his new partner, while oscillating between heartbreak, rage, and self-awareness (Records 2024).

Rawly emotional, somewhat contradictory lyrics are juxtaposed with a vocal style that emulates detached self-reflection, culminating in the narrator's final declaration that she would 'rather be in hell than alone.' This dynamic interplay between romantic fixation and destruction aligns 'Kill Bill' with the broader tradition of murder ballads, which historically have blurred the lines between passion, loss, and violence, but also between horrifying content and pleasant, upbeat musical stylings. The song's accompanying music video, directed by Christian Breslauer, is a stylized homage to the film Kill Bill (Allen 2023). In it, SZA portrays a scorned lover turned vengeful assassin, mirroring Uma Thurman's character in Tarantino's narrative. The video incorporates high-octane action sequences, anime-inspired animation, and a climactic twist, heightening the song's dramatic arc. A cameo by Vivica A. Fox further cements the connection between the song and its filmic reference point.

'Kill Bill' encapsulates the paradox of contemporary murder ballads in the pop sphere: its minimal, almost dreamy vocal aesthetic belies a brutal, emotionally charged storyline. SZA's delivery—detached yet emotionally transparent—creates a sense of suspended reality, where fantasy and confession become indistinguishable. The narrator's murderous intentions are expressed with a melodic calm that contrasts sharply with the violence of the lyrics, evoking a dissociative state emblematic, perhaps, of trauma responses,



or simply a slightly unreliable narrator. Regardless, this tonal contradiction heightens the listener's discomfort rather than resolving it.

Furthermore, the song resists clear moral closure: the protagonist is neither vindicated nor villainized, but portrayed in full emotional volatility—jealous, heartbroken, and self-aware. The accompanying video amplifies this blend of rage and spectacle, positioning the protagonist as a powerful, morally ambiguous, avenger. Unlike many classic murder ballads where women are silenced in life and glorified in death, SZA's 'Kill Bill' presents a living woman who is both subject and agent—even if her power comes at a cost. In doing so, it aligns with the tradition of subversion while raising new questions about glamorization, genre fluidity, and the aestheticization of violence in the streaming era.

Murder ballads are found today in genres as diverse as country, pop, R & B, blues, goth, rap, and a variety of folk music (Jimenez, 2020). This is significant and heralds a further shift: although generally thought of as a fairly white genre, and most strongly associated with Appalachian bluegrass or white-European Irish and British street singer traditions (Hamessley 2005; D. Hopper 2020), many of the most well-known classic ballads actually have much more colorful, marginalized backgrounds that long remained obscured (Smith 2021). This has extended not only to the actual stories of the murdered women in murdered ballads, who were, like Delia Green, often minorities and largely from disenfranchised populations, but also to those performers who became most well-known (and best-compensated) for singing them.

A shift towards inclusion of marginalized stories, voices and perspectives is evident in the numerous interventions which have prioritized explicitly a socially conscious and inclusive approach. If 20th-century performers used humor to soften subversion, 21st-century artists often weaponize rawness to indict systemic oppression. Artists like Alynda Lee Segarra of *Hurray for the Riff Raff* and Rhiannon Giddens of *Our Native Daughters* have both used the genre to address intersections of gendered and racialized violence to great acclaim.

Segarra's 'The Body Electric' from the 2014 album Small Town Heroes critiques the normalization of violence against women in popular music, and has been praised for its radical reimagining of the murder ballad tradition, with influential critic Ann Powers naming it the political folk song of the year (Powers 2014).

Segarra, the band's frontperson and songwriter, has openly discussed transforming the murder ballad into a vehicle for feminist critique: interrogating the cultural normalization of such violence instead of romanticizing or sensationalizing the deaths of women (Bigger 2015). Not only is there a reference to Delia Green 'Delia's gone but I'm settling the score', but lyrics like '*Tell me what's a man with a rifle in his hand gonna do for a world that's just dying slow / Tell me what's a man with a rifle in his hand gonna do for his daughter when it's her turn to go*' reframe the narrative, shifting the focus from victimhood to accountability (Berlatsky 2018). This subversion is not merely lyrical but also deeply performative, with Segarra's softly raw, yet earthy vocal delivery becoming a site of self-aware resistance (Garcia 2017).

Rhiannon Giddens wrote '*Mama's Cryin' Long*' for the album Songs of Our Native Daughters based on historical slave narratives (McNally 2019). The song centers the perspective of an enslaved woman, highlighting the historical erasure of Black women's experiences in the genre and the intersection of gender, race, and systemic oppression. It narrates the harrowing experience of an enslaved woman who, after enduring repeated abuse from an overseer, kills him.

Her act is inadvertently revealed when her child notices blood on her dress, which leads to her lynching.

The song's deliberate austerity serves to foreground the vocal minimalist arrangement—sparse percussion and handclaps—accompanied by strong, unison call-and-response singing, which highlights both the resilience of those women-based communities and the communal nature of their narrative, and the naked trauma inflicted by systemic oppression (Willis 2019). By centering the text on the interiority and agency of the enslaved woman, the song challenges patriarchal and Eurocentric paradigms that have historically marginalized those perspectives.

These contemporary reimaginings reflect a broader cultural shift toward recognizing the systemic roots of gendered violence and amplifying marginalized voices. By centering the perspectives of women, particularly women of color, these artists challenge the genre's historical complicity in reinforcing patriarchal norms and instead use it as a platform for protest and advocacy. Their reimaginings subvert traditional tropes, foregrounding the interiority of marginalized women and drawing attention to intersections of race, class, and gender.

Conclusion

The murder ballad has simultaneously been a genre that implicitly condoned—or at minimum normalized—gendered violence and one which also serves as a vehicle for feminist critique and social protest. While there is an argument to be made that performance of these songs by male performers can easily become problematic due to the intersection of gender, vocal aesthetics, narrative voice, and pervasive social hegemonies and patriarchal power structures, women's engagement with these songs, whether through traditional performance or contemporary reinterpretation, also underscores the complexity of music in performance and the power of both art as embodied performance and as a means to challenge systemic injustices, while also raising difficult new questions.

Contemporary murder ballads represent a powerful vehicle for critique and intervention, allowing women to carry, but also to subvert, humanize and reclaim narratives of violence and sometimes transform them into acts of resistance. By centering the voices and experiences of marginalized individuals, this complex and evolving tradition both sheds light on enduring social inequalities and reimagines a genre long complicit in their perpetuation. Within the web of broader societal conversations about how to manage cultural creations created within highly problematic systems which we may be loath to implicitly perpetuate today, the murder ballad is exemplary, yet perhaps not unique.

Studying its complex history and examining the power dynamics embedded in the narrative voice through the lyrical I of the text but also the embodied storytelling of the performer(s) reveals much about how power can be communicated and subverted through music. In addition, the shift toward self-aware, inclusive, and political iterations of the genre is a welcome development, demonstrating the layered dynamics at work in the performance of even the most problematic cultural artifacts.

Endnotes

1 In the Scottish version, better known as 'My Son Davey', the protagonist has a different name, the victim is often a brother instead of the father, and the narrative focuses primarily on the son's permanent departure from home.

2 This strophic, rhymed structure is a mainstay of ballads from the British-American tradition, while Russian, Danish, Balkan and Spanish ballads have alternate organizational patterns.

3 While I do not condone banning murder ballads, I am not the only one who feels uneasy about the mass sing-along practice, see (BBC News 2023; Andy Martin 2023).

4 This includes Ashley and Watson's 1961 rendition of Banks of the Ohio, recorded by Alan Lomax and released under the title Ballads, Blues, and Bluegrass. Watson used the same version in his later performances, and it is commemorated in 4 CD anthology titled 'Doc Watson – Life's Work: A Retrospective' released by Craft Recordings, Catalogue No: 8 88072 08483 4, released in 2021.

5 Dolly Parton likewise covered 'The Banks of the Ohio' in 2013 and released it on her album Blue Smoke the following February. In her version, she sets up the story as if she is a journalist interviewing the murderer in jail, recounting his story second hand.

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Kjønn versus Skjønn

En petit/ Per'spektiv av Per Dahl

"Nei, dette skal ikke handle om den språklige forflatningen hvor kj-lyden overkjøres av skj-lyden"

Nei, dette skal ikke handle om den språklige forflatningen hvor kj-lyden overkjøres av skj-lyden. En illustrerende historie handler om bestefaren som tar med sitt barnebarn på en fin restaurant og hvor de blir servert av en livrékledd kelner. Etter å ha servert fisken til bestemoren og biffen til bestefaren kommer kelneren med en hageslange og spyler på barnebarnet med begrunnelsen «Han bestilte skylling!». I min tekst her, vil skillelinjene mellom kjønn og skjønn forholde seg til deres skriftlige fremtoninger.

I utgangspunktet skulle det være enkelt å kunne skille mellom kjønn og skjønn. Kjønn er et substantiv som er knyttet til mulig observasjon av et fenomen i den objektive verden, dvs. et begrep knyttet til ontologi; beskrivelsen av det som er/det værende. Skjønn kan opptre i tre ordgrupper, som substantiv 'et skjønn' i betydningen en vurdering, som adjektiv 'en skjønn dame', men her vil jeg bruke den adverbiale formen hvor 'skjønn' er knyttet til et agerende verb, å utøve skjønn, hvilket gjør dette til et utsagn knyttet til epistemologi; beskrivelser av hvordan vi, gjennom vår praksis, får kunnskap om verden. Her vil den objektive enighet mangle både om hva som er skjønt og hva som er kriteriene for at noe skal betraktes som skjønt.

Jeg vil starte med et pers-pektiv på kjønn. I den siste tiden har det oppstått behov for å tydeliggjøre ordets tilknytning til det biologiske fundamentet slik at lovforsamlinger har vedtatt formuleringer som begrenser og knytter det juridiske grunnlaget til de to biologiske kjønn. Lover utformes jo når det oppstår uklarheter i hva noe er eller skal oppfattes som, og i dette tilfelle er det spørsmålene og holdningene omkring kjønnsidentitet som har skapt uroen. Diskusjonen om et tredje juridisk kjønn i Norge (og andre land) har i liten grad vokst frem av det faktum at vi har tre kjønn i det norske språk, selv om det for noen argumenteres med denne del av virkeligheten når det diskuteres hva som er normalt. Et annet bilde som har nådd langt inn i departementskorridorene er den forskyvning som blant annet psykolog Pirelli Benestad så treffende beskriver: Kjønn er ikke noe som sitter mellom bena, det sitter i hodet! Problemet med en slik forskyvning er å fjerne kjønn fra dets ontologiske fundament til å bli et epistemologisk fenomen. Dermed individualiseres kjønnsidentiteten og det skaper problemer for et samfunn som har behov for kjønnsdelte arenaer som toaletter, sykehusavdelinger, hospitser, fengsler og institusjoner av ulike slag. Den engelske høyesterett slo nylig fast at den juridiske definisjonen av kvinne i Equality Act 2010 ikke inkluderte trans-kjønnede kvinner med GRCs gender recognition certificates. (Slike sertifikater er personlige og dermed er det et brudd å spørre om slikt sertifikat i de offentlige tjenester.) Høyesteretts beslutning medfører at (menn som er) transkvinner ikke har tilgang til singel-sex spaces som er basert på biologisk kjønn. Det er selvsagt ikke forbudt å være trans, men GRC gir ikke adgang til singel-sex spaces.

Når kjønnsidentiteten fristilles fra det biologiske grunnlaget oppstår et mangfold av kjønnsidentiteter som vårt kapitalistiske forbrukersamfunn hyller. Jo flere varianter av en vare; jo større omsetning! Særlig innen den visuelle verden fokuseres(!) det på nye kjønnsidentiteter som for eksempel når en 'ikke-binær' person vinner MGP. Når både redaktørstyrte medier, og ikke minst alle sosiale plattformer sprøytes over med bilder og anbefalinger som trigger ungdommenes jakt på sin kjønnsidentitet, oppstår den uklarhet i forståelsen av 'kjønn' som avstedkommer at enkelte (ofte konservative) land trekker i nødbremsen og vil sette skapet (skaperverket) på plass.

Å utøve skjønn har alltid vært forbundet med en epistemologisk prosess, en personlig vurdering av et fenomen som også andre kan observere, og dermed utøve sitt skjønn, noe som gjerne resulterer i ulike oppfatninger om samme fenomen. Diskusjonen omkring hvilke kriterier og kvaliteter som ligger til grunn for den skjønnsmessige vurderingen gir grunnlag for etableringen av et meningshierarki. I utgangspunktet kan derfor skjønn utøves helt uten tilknytning til kjønn. Historien viser likevel at i etableringen av vår historie dvs. vår overtakelse av fortidens meningshierarkier, har det vært mange eksempler som viser at kjønn er blitt tillagt vekt i skjønnsvurderinger hvor fenomenet i utgangspunktet er kjønnsnøytralt. Det er ofte et interessant bakteppe når en vurdering som i utgangspunktet burde være objektiv, blir karakterisert som en skjønnsmessig vurdering. Det som da ligger bak den skjønnsmessige vurderingen er gjerne et meningshierarki med et bestemt syn på forholdet mellom de to kjønn, uten noen tilknytning til det fenomen som vurderes.

Jeg vil trekke frem noen tilfeldige eksempler fra musikkhistorien som kan vise hvordan kjønnsidentiteten/oppfatninger av karakteristika ved de to kjønn, har påvirket vår forståelse av historien.

Det første eksempelet er den franske barokk-komponisten Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1666-1729). Hun ble i ung alder berømt for sitt cembalospill og engasjert ved det franske hoffet inntil hun giftet seg. Da kunne hun ikke lenger være ansatt ved hoffet, men startet en egen salong som ble meget godt besøkt og særlig hennes improvisasjons-kunst ble høyt skattet. Hun fikk også utgitt en rekke komposisjoner og fikk en lengre omtale i Johann Gottfried Walthers "Musikalisches Lexikon" fra 1732 og vesentlig lengre enn sin samtidige Francois Couperin (1668-1733). Går vi imidlertid et par hundre år frem i tid så ser vi at i musikkleksikon fra romantikken så er lengden på omtalene byttet om. Couperin fremstår som den fremste musiker fra den tiden, mens de la Guerre avspises med en kort omtale. Romantikkens forherligelse av det mannlige geniet har nok vært en av bakgrunnsvariablene som synes kjønnsbestemt i disse skjønnsmessige vurderingene.

Klassisismens dyrking av likevekt hadde et potensial for likestilling mellom kjønnene, og det finnes en rekke eksempler på sterke kvinnepersonligheter særlig innen adel og kongemakt. Det finnes også eksempler på at kvinnelige utøvere ble svært høyt skattet. Da den berømte fiolinisten Regina Strinasacchi kom til Wien fikk Mozart i oppdrag å skrive en fiolinsonte til henne for fremføring ved Kärntnerthor Theater. Mozart komponerte sonate nr.32 KV 454, men til fremføringen 29.4.1784 rakk bare å skrive ut fiolinstemmen og de første partitursidene. Ved urfremføringen ønsket keiser Josef II å være bladlus (for vise sin musikalske kompetanse) og han ble derfor nokså overrasket da det på de etterfølgende sidene ikke var notert en eneste note. Mozart derimot akkompagnerte videre og nikket til keiseren ved de neste (imaginære) stedene for bladvending, noe som kanskje viser at Mozart hadde komponert hele sonaten ferdig (i hodet) og viste full respekt for Strinasacchis kunstneriske nivå.

Med fremveksten av det nye borgerskapets på begynnelsen av 1800-tallet ble det større aksept for å la et talent, uansett dets sosiale bakgrunn, få muligheter til å utvikle seg. Det skulle gjøre det enda mer mulig for kvinnelige musikere å nå en internasjonal anerkjennelse. Imidlertid kanaliseres romantikken og det nye borgerskapets kunst- og familieideal inn i segregerende kjønnsroller som styrer både kvalitet- og uttrykkskriteriene i musikken. Med etableringen av verkanalysen og musikkritikken som disiplin er det typisk at nå blir karakteristikker av musikalske elementer kjønnsforsterket ved at det maskuline ble knyttet til hovedtemaet, mens det feminine ble avgrenset til sidetemaer.

I tillegg skjer det en enorm utbredelse av pianoet som hus-instrument, og hvor opplæring i pianospill ble et must for piker i ethvert møblert hjem. Ved å gi så mange piker pianoundervisning utviklet det seg et marked for pianoarrangementer, pianoskoler og klavermusikk som i hovedsak ble besørget av mannlige komponister og pianolærere. Det å stå frem som særlig talentfull for unge kvinner ble vanskeligere nå, ettersom markedet av dyktige kvinnelige pianister eksploderte. Dermed ble også omtalene av offentlige opptredener gjerne farget av en videreføring av kjønnssegregerte karakteristikker. Kvinnelige solister spilte gjerne med 'ynde' mens får mannlige solister fikk en slik karakteristikk.

Dermed er vi fremme ved mitt siste moment om kjønn versus skjønn. I musikkhistorien og ikke minst innen musikk-kritikken er det den skrivende personen som definerer historien, og dermed også vurderer kvaliteten ved en fremføring. En slik posisjon er en maktposisjon. Både i musikkhistorien og innen musikk-kritikken finner vi ofte at det skjønn som er utøvd overfor de ontologiske (objektive) hendelsene (selve musikkfremføringen) blir infisert av kriterier som bidrar til å opprettholde en bevisst eller ubevisst kjønnsidentitet i formidlingen av noe som i utgangspunktet ikke er kjønnet. Dette kan sees på som en form for kolonisering. Det er en prosess for å etablere (verbal) kontroll over ulike musikalske uttrykksformer med det formål å vedlikeholde det etablerte hierarkiet i forståelsen av den musikalske praksis. Resultatet er at skjønnet er blitt kjønnet.