

Where are the women conductors and composers in classical music?

Why are their voices silent?*

Abstract

This essay is looking at a particular field, classical music, where for centuries, there has been gender stereotyping and discrimination for women conductors and composers. Currently, classical music in different cultures, is still a man's world. However, in most recent times, there has been some positive movement, but still this artistic practice has lagged other artistic areas where women are more represented. This is a powerful place of gender discrimination, but it is under discussed. It is sticking but somewhat invisible. This project is my attempt to understand the disparity of women's representation in conducting and composing classical music compared to men. I want to understand why it is taking so long for equality, when in other cultural areas there is more a rapid change. There must be something different in this artistic field compared to others. What has happened and not happened in classical music is different from what is happening in other creative arts.

Introduction

From the time we are born we are indoctrinated into gender roles. The two genders are not treated the same, and they are very sharply defined. Traditions were established millennia ago, and those traditions have been largely universal in structure but also culture specific across most regions where humans live. When we first meet someone, gender is generally the first thing we notice, which is mainly the result of biology but also of cultural differences. Gender is a complex category based on culture, body and mind. If we cannot identify the gender of the other, it brings anxiety. We are taught to associate many stereotypes as we assess gender, and this is where the problem starts (Wilkerson, 2020). In 2017, the Women's march and the Me-Too Movement began to combat more forcefully the idea that women should be treated equally to men. Gender studies have a long history. In many places, like politics, visual arts, literature, there has been transformations and developments, but not in classical music.

This essay is looking at a particular field, classical music, where there has been gender stereotyping and discrimination powerfully in place. Currently, classical music

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in different cultures, is still a man's world. Women performers, conductors, and composers had learned this for centuries.

In the "Women in Music Report" (de Niese, 2018) reported that across Europe, 97.6% of classical and contemporary classical music performed in the last three seasons was written by men, leaving a 2.3% written by women. In USA only 1.8 percent of music programmed by major orchestras was written by women. Women performers are also poorly represented in some orchestras. But this is slowly changing as of American orchestras do slightly better than European orchestras. The Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Boston Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony and the LA Philharmonic all come in at just over 40 per cent women musicians in the orchestra (Kiek, 2012). The only genre that women are more visible as performers is in Opera, singing music composed by men. This positive movement, still has lagged over other artistic areas where women are more represented. This is a powerful place of gender discrimination that is under discussed and invisible.

At least from the 20's, when feminism begun, and with the 19th amendment, it guaranteed all American women the right to vote. Achieving this was a milestone that required a lengthy and difficult struggle; victory took decades of agitation and protest. The women's rights movement, also called women's liberation movement, largely based in the United States, that in the 1960s and '70s sought equal rights and opportunities, and greater personal freedom for women. Today the gains of the feminist movement, women's equal access to education, their increased participation in politics, and the workplace, their access to abortion and birth control, the existence of resources to aid domestic violence and rape victims, and the legal protection of women's rights, has been a great accomplishment in many fields.

I started this process as a curiosity and thought I was going to get an answer. However, there is a paradox and mystery, and I cannot find a solution. The mystery is that this area has not advanced in terms of gender equality as in other art forms and other disciplines. This project is an attempt to understand the disparity of women's representation in conducting and composing classical music compared to men. Why it is taking so long for equality, when in other areas there is more a rapid change? Using our understanding of gender may help us think about what has happened and not happening for women in classical music throughout history.

In this paper I will explore the history of the neglect and prejudice of the significant contribution of women in classical music, as composers and conductors, and some of the few gains in the last century to now. Starting with a few historical vignettes, some are well known, others are not. They show the history of discrimination of women conductors and composers who were subjugated by their partners/spouses or the culture. Next section is a personal research, interview data and information from other sources that will be provided to get more details on the state of this issue. The approach will be analyzing this material, first from a non-psychoanalytic perspective, and then from a psychoanalytic perspective. Finally, some of the news in this article is depressing since it shows how difficult it is for women composers, conductors and orchestra members. At the same time changes are beginning to happen. This essay will look at what is changing now and what women musicians are doing to obtain more visibility at this moment.

Historical Vignettes

In the popular descriptions of classical music, there are some vignettes that have appeared over time that tell an interesting story about gender discrimination. This section will include examples including women performers.

1) When Robert Schumann married Clara Josephine Wieck, one of the most talented musicians and pianist of her generation, what did he give her as a wedding present?: a cookbook. As if this weren't enough of a message, he also composed the music for *Frauen-Liebe und Leben (A Woman's Love and Life)* based on a cycle of poems, describing the course of a woman's love for her man, from her point of view, from first meeting through marriage to his death, and after. It is a manifesto for a dutiful marriage. Clara concluded later: "I once believed that I possessed creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not desire to compose – there has never yet been one able to do it. Should I expect to be the one?" She knew that she had the talent she had, after all, been famous as a pianist in her own right by the age of 16. Yet she became utterly eclipsed by her penniless, unknown husband, Robert. Knowing that the necessary systems of support and education, along with opportunity and the possibility of critical review were not there for her, she instead performed her husband's works on

stage endlessly, and dedicated her life, even after his had ended in madness and premature death, to his elevation. Clara Schumann's behavior was typical of that stage in society, women were supposed to be dependent on men. But why this has not changed?

2) Gustav Mahler made it a condition of marriage to his young bride, Alma, that she give up composing. She said after she agreed: "I have been firmly taken by the arm and led away from myself".

3) An example of men domination was the idea that for women, one of the very few alternatives was to take the veil, a direction which, through chance, the 12th-century writer, singer, and mystic Hildegard von Bingen took. Through this vocation she found a support system and platform for her prodigious creative intellect. Even so, moves were made to mute her. At one point, Hildegard rebuked an archbishop, and as punishment was forbidden to sing (References for 1); 2); and 3) in de Niese, 2018).

4) In 1913, The Queen's Hall Orchestra in London, led by Sir Henry Wood, took on six women violinists. By 1918, the orchestra had 14 women musicians but that was because there was a loss of men musicians during 1914-1918 war. However, there was still a stigma around women musicians – particularly around the instruments they played. Sir Henry Wood, after taking on several women violinists, said: "I do not like ladies playing the trombone or double bass, but they can play the violin, and they do." (Roberts, 2018)

This is an example of the impact of WWI showing the increase of number of women playing in the orchestras since there were less men, many who died at war. I did not hear of maintaining these changes when many men came back. It seemed that we went back to the asymmetry of the power of men.

5) In 1982, the Berlin Philharmonic hired its first woman, Madeleine Carruzzo, violinist (Berliner Philharmonic, no date).

6) In 1997, the Vienna Philharmonic appointed its first woman musician after 161 years of operating without women, the harpist Anne Lelkes, and she was allowed to become a full member. Today, there are six women members – a pathetic, unjustifiable statistic (Wikipedia, Women in Classical Music, 2018). 7) At the New York Philharmonic, harpist Stephanie "Steffy" Goldner (1896-1962) was the first woman musician from

1932 to 1962. (New York Sun, 1931, reprinted New York Philharmonic Archives, February 5–22, 2020). Orin O'Brien (born 1935) is an American double bassist that has been a member of the New York Philharmonic since joining in 1966 under the direction of Leonard Bernstein (Tindall, 2005).

8) One of our most innovative Irish-British composers was Elizabeth Maconchy (1907–1994). She was a great talent. She was told that as a student at the Royal College of Music she had been passed over for a valuable scholarship because she would “only get married and never write another note!” She did get married, and had two children, but continued to compose. In 1942, a Royal Albert Hall concert featured her work alongside that of Mendelssohn, Brahms, Dvorak and Tchaikovsky, and in 1952 she won a competition for her piece "Proud Thames" to critical acclaim. She was the first woman to chair the Composers' Guild of Great Britain, and she carried on composing until she was nearly 80. And yet her work is almost never heard today, and she is little known (De Niese, 2018; and Wikipedia: Women in Classical Music)

The New Yorker's article (2013) by Alex Ross revealed a translation of an interview conducted in Russian the previous September with conductor Yuri Temirkanov (b. 1938) in which he announced that: "The essence of the conductor's profession is strength. The essence of a woman is weakness." I was wondering if the older generation of men musicians/conductors/ composers are entrenched in the old traditional women roles and are unable to be conscious of the changes that are happening in all other areas. And the list goes on. Why? What has stalled?

Danielle de Niese (2018) a living soprano stated that classical music is still a man's world. Women performers in the entertainment industry learn this early. As a soprano, her career has been defined by playing muses – roles such as Susanna, (in Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro) that were clearly adored by the men composers who created them. Performing them came naturally – after all this is what she had been trained to do. But where was *her* voice, where was the women perspective? The answer was simple, by and large there's isn't one. Almost every portrayal of a woman in the entire regularly performed opera repertoire is constructed through men eyes. The dominance of men composers is, today especially, staggering. Why it is still the case?

The examples given above, are not just a story about the husbands or mens as decision-makers in music. These are untouched stories as well as unrecognized persons. Overall, these examples show the powerful role of patriarchy. Is the patriarchy of the classical music business, the crushing influence of their husbands, or society at large being to blame for such a skewed situation?

Society at large also stifled women. Being a women composer or performer was seen as a highly questionable profession – often implying, in earlier centuries, sexual availability. As a woman, your options were limited, so marriage was a critical economic decision for most, and disregarded as peril (dangerous). I want to emphasize again, that I would like the reader to consider with me the need to understand this bias and disparity throughout time. Particularly, because other art forms were and are making more space for women. But classical music is doing a very slow movement towards equality which seems more intractable. Pentreath, R. (2021) stated that 81 percent of women say it's harder for women artists in music, with sexual harassment as a key challenge. We need to understand the gender disparity that is so tenacious in classical music.

Contemporary research of women in classical music covering the period up to 9-30-21.

I started this research by looking for sources to respond to my question of lack of representation of women in composing and conducting classical music. I developed a short introduction to send by e-mail to composers and conductors explaining my research. The title of my message was; "Gender disparities in women as composers and conductors in classical music". My introduction was: " I am a psychologist-psychoanalyst starting to do research on the reasons why in the classical music industry, women as conductors and composers are still lagging recognition compared to the sciences and other visual arts". When I left a message in addition to introducing me, I explained the purpose of the communication. If I received responses to my mails, I asked the following questions: 1) Do you feel there is a different treatment of mens and

women in the conducting/composing career? 2) What was your experience developing your career as a woman? Did you experience any discrimination or unfair situations because of your gender? 3) What do you think is the reason why women are not as recognized and known in composing and conducting classical music world compared to a) men and b) compared to other fields (in art, business, etc.) that is so slow in classical music? This is confidential. I do not need to put your name in my paper.

Describing research data that I tried to collect but many of my requests to talk about this were ignored and not acknowledged.

As of 9-30-21, I contacted, 15 conductors and 14 composers and 3 organizations: International Alliance of Women in Music; League of American Orchestras and The Catalyst Fund. Those organizations gave me lists of possible contacts. Most of the time I could not be in touch with the conductor/composer directly but through their agents. From my contacts, I received few responses. Some indicated that they were busy and could not talk to me. A few said they were interested but did not follow through. The striking thing is that I did not get many responses. This leads me to believe how difficult it is for people to think about this phenomenon. There is resistance to talk about this topic, whether they think that they do not have to talk about this, or are afraid to bring this up. This fact of resistance of real exploration is quite striking. This was not an easy topic to research.

From 14 contacts to composers, I received three personal responses. One was through an e-mail by Anna Clyne on 9-2-21. She sent me the following e-mail:

“I ACTUALLY DON’T THINK (capital letters are hers) about gender that much. I think of myself more as a composer than as a women composer. But I do feel very fortunate because I’m in that situation because of the groundwork that’s been made by previous generations. The subject of the opera is Eva Hesse, who was an artist in New York during the ’60s. Her being a women artist was really a challenge at that time, and by nature that’s going to be part of the narrative of this opera. I just finished reading her diaries a couple days ago, which give some glimpse into her experiences of being a women artist. One thing that she said that resonates today is that the way to beat discrimination in art is by art, and that excellence has no sex. When I read that, I

thought, Yeah. That's not always easy, but sometimes just actually doing the work speaks volumes." In addition to the above, she said that "I have been fortunate to have strong women mentors Marina Adamia (at Edinburgh University) and Julia Wolfe (at Manhattan School of Music)". Talking about gender may not be a topic of interest for woman to discuss. Clyne, and perhaps others, think of being a composer, they do not think of gender. Even women in classical music, are not inclined to be in an troubled relationship with this topic. Is the climate of domination within the whole discipline what does not make it a topic of interest?

I was able to interview on the phone the resident conductor of the New York City Ballet on 7/5/21. She told me that she was the only woman in the MA program at Michigan University. She was treated well and respected during her PhD at Yale but she was the only woman in the Conducting student department. During 1987 to 1994 there were very few women conductors. As a training conductor she learned that woman had to work very hard to prove herself that there was no time for socializing with other conductors or doing more networking. Her experience was that most conductors are men and foreigners and are the ones who dominate the field.

Speaking on the phone with Tania Leon (b, 1943), a Black Cuban born women known as a composer, conductor, educator and advisor to arts organizations. Commissioned by the New York Philharmonic in celebration of the centennial of the 19th Amendment her orchestral work "Stride", was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2021. She left Cuba in 1967. Because of her skin color, she suffered discrimination, but her determination helped her develop a shield against it, made her grow to the level she is today. She believes that rules are done by men: men tell woman how to dress, particularly when conducting. Ms. Leon said that when she conducts, the orchestra does not know what to do with her: "I am short, and women, and Black". However, her perfect pitch helps her hear the mistakes of the musicians and that is when they respect her. Now, that she is older, she does not care so much about the power of men and their influence. However, she still feels that in this field, woman is at a disadvantage because they are women. An important influence in her development as an artist was the dancer

Arthur Mitchell, the first Black principal of the New York City Ballet. Not only did he encourage her in her career, but she also found a connection with movement. Among other accomplishments she co-founded the American Composers Orchestra's Sonidos de las Américas festivals. From 1993 to 1997, she was New Music Advisor to Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic. In 1969, Tania León became a founding member and first Music Director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, establishing the Dance Theatre's Music Department, Music School and Orchestra. With all these achievements, she is still not a household name.

Interviewing Wang Jie, on Zoom, on 9/29/21, a Chinese American composer, was born in China in 1980. Due to the single child policy in China, growing up she felt she had all the advantages of the best musical education as if she were a boy. Her father was an administrator, composer and conductor in China. One of her men professors, who became her first mentor at the Shanghai Conservatory, told her not to be a composer since she was a good-looking girl, and she could have other options. Despite of his comment, he became her hero particularly when she won a scholarship to study composition at the Manhattan School of Music. In New York she got a men mentor that supported her and had a 17-year relationship. She believes that in playing instruments, practice is the lifeline. For a composer it is revisions. In her Blog (4-16-2018) she said: "From the debut of a music idea, the rigor of labor to the final push of birth, completing a composition is a maternal process, a force of mother nature. Becoming a composer is only possible through resilience and grit. If the fruits from our creative tree are indeed food for the Muses, I doubt they care whether you are men or women, gay or straight, young or old, or a bedridden invalid with one blinking eyelid." Jain felt discriminated for being Chinese, particularly in the last 2 years. However, being a woman was also difficult in that other women composers are jealous of each other's progress, and there are many stories of bullying and verbal abuse, instead of emotional support. She believes that in this field more than in others is men dominated and most men are paid more than women. She believes that still a man's world and that women should stand up more for recognition. Most women composers do not have children because of the demands of the work.

Speaking with the previous high rank administrator of American Orchestras Association on 7-7-21, he stated that leading an orchestra has not been the role of women because it is believed that it is a men career. Gender roles in European orchestras conceived of the conductor as an authoritarian figure That role was passed to American orchestras and conductors in the late 19th and 20th Century. He can see now more equalitarian partnership even in the men conductors, supporting individual expression at the same time putting the ensemble together. He commented on how women conductors tend to establish more personal relationships and are more empathic. There are changes but they are slow. Programming now involves 4-5 years in anticipation and now organizers are trying to include 1/2 and 1/2 men and women composers in their concerts. It is difficult to shift this trend. However, women are having more positions of power particularly in administration and management in the classical music industry. Many women are "support" conductors but still very few principal conductors. Summarizing his comments, the causes of this slow recognition of women as composers and conductors are:

- 1) Program organizers can be like "gate keepers" deciding the music program by race, gender and ethnicity. Particularly now they must be more flexible due to the amounts of ethnic different musicians. The social category of ethnicity seems to be more important than gender in programming concerts. "Black Lives Matters" movement had increased the representation of Black people in the arts and in classical music too. However, still more men than women. This tells us that race and ethnicity are more easily represented while gender is more abstract. The question again is why gender is absent.
- 2) Mediocracy. You may not be good enough
- 3) Machismo. Quality may come down if woman conducts music
- 4) Still this field is a white, exclusive club and the public support this status quo.

What follows is a report on other sources and two doctoral music dissertations.

Andrew (2012) from The Guardian, stated that "...for some reason, it's taking a lot longer than in literature and the visual arts to reach equilibrium. It was deemed (just about) acceptable by the 19th century for women writers to be published, yet it's only in the last couple of decades that women composers have really emerged, blinking, out of

their garrets and into publishing houses and record label offices; so, without a little helping hand, there might be a long way to go yet". Andrew believes that we need to address the inequality starting with those writing the curriculum, the National Music Plan, and teachers at all levels should try to use examples of music by women in the classroom; to promote composition as a living, breathing, utterly unisex profession. but it's down to educators, programmers and organizations to help.

Somerford (2018) quotes cellist Rachel Watson who said: " ...there are many voices, both women and men, from all different backgrounds, that deserve to be heard. We have to change the culture where we only listen to things that we already know."

Watson accepts that small ensembles can find it easier than large orchestras to find music by women composers of the past and program it but says: "I don't think that should be an excuse. We should all be excited about the opportunity to research and listen to more voices". She points to resources such as the Women Composers Database that in 2017, features more than 3,000 women composers, and is now part of a wider-reaching Composer Diversity Database.

Two Doctoral Dissertations

Shayne Stahl (2019) wrote her doctoral dissertation of Musical Arts entitled: "Wind Chamber Music by Women Composers- The Biographies. Compositional Techniques, and Perspectives of Jocelyn Morlock (Canadian), Elizabeth Arum (German), Marilyn Crude, (USA) and Augusta Read Thomas (USA)". After interviewing the above-named musicians, three themes emerged: 1) Preference of the term "composer" over "women composer"; 2) the importance of having an online presence, and 3) work ethic. (p. 95). She found out that what the composers desire is to be known for the quality of their music and not their gender. They all three, indicated as a best advice to other women composers, to never give up, and work as hard as possible, to stay true to themselves and make their voices heard in the field of composition. For women composers to succeed in a men-dominated society, they must work together and support one another's accomplishments (p. 98; 99). Historically, women were seen as a person who gives birth and care for children, putting their carriers on pause. It is common perception that

women composers' music sounds different than the ones written by men counterparts. Some traits as gentleness, self-sacrifice, vulnerability, dependence on others is seen as hindering women's compositional skills based on these gender stereotypes. Women were/are considered emotional rather than cerebral, softer and less aggressive that is reflected in their music (p. 100). Women were not given the same opportunities as men to study and create music. Due to insufficient support, women composers have lacked in resources and encouragement throughout music history. Later in this monograph, Stahl stated that the #MeToo movement had given women support to stand together and given them a voice (p. 103).

Marcho's (2020) doctoral dissertation was called: "Socially Responsible Music Repertoire: Composer Gender Diversity in Instrumental Ensembles." One of the considerations he made was that music programming choices, "*inadvertently*" (the italics are mine) reinforced old-age stereotypes about gender in the music profession and in the culture (p. 2). He talked about issues about representation that intersect with gender in a myriad of ways; leadership, traditional gender roles, feminism, social progressiveness, market forces and patriarchy are just a few of the factors that converge to embody this multi-faceted problem (p.178). He described how orchestras program conservatively – the same 18th, 19th and early 20th century (usually men) composers are programmed frequently while the music of living composers is programmed infrequently (O'Bannon, 2016 b). Yet, the pervasive gender bias favoring the music created by men is noticeable. Additionally, Patriarchal attitudes and traditions persist, such as the Western musical tradition of the top-down models and structures in which an artistic director, teacher or mentor imparts knowledge and understanding to musicians and students (Gould, 2011; p. 179). It seems that orchestra administrators and artistic directors are somewhat constrained by the imperative to sell as many tickets as possible in order to financially maintain their orchestras. Research suggests that higher ticket sales may lead to more innovative programming, relying less on the standard repertoire (Pome et al., 2011). It could be possible that only the largest orchestras, with the highest levels of funding from ticket sales have the flexibility to program more unfamiliar music composed by underrepresented groups such as women.

Smaller orchestras, which may have smaller audiences and fewer patrons, may feel the pressures of programming familiar music that appeals to a wider audience in order to fill more seats in the concert hall (p. 181). This finding, the programming of future concerts, makes me think of the lack of curiosity people have about this phenomenon as well as curiosity for innovation.

Marcho gave a survey to 200 participants. The 163 responded to the open-ended question: "Music composed by women is performed less frequently than music composed by men. Why do you think this is so?" Analysis of the responses to this question item resulted in the emergence of major themes (p. 100): 1) Fewer women; 2) Lack of recognition; 3) Programming tradition; 4) Lack of familiarity; 5) Sexism/bias; 6) Patriarchy/gender roles; 7) Opportunities. 8) Intrinsic musical value; 9) Gender characteristics; 10) The contemporary music problem; 11) Importance of mentors whether men or women can stimulate a tremendous power in women's music career. You read a survey like this and what is striking is that things that will never be acceptable in other domains, is presented here as if there is something that "is as it is". What I discovered in my research is that gender is not taken seriously. Even though things are changing in so many areas, the assumption about how people are writing about music, they do not write as if gender is something to worry about. What I found out about my research is that it does not appear as problematic within the discipline. There is a resistance within the field, even in people within it, to take gender critically. These findings are like the ones the administrator of American Orchestras Association gave me (See p. 10 in my 7-21 interview) This is being said consistently. Even though things are changing in so many areas, the assumption about how people are writing about music, they do not write as if gender is something to worry about. What I found out about my research is that gender does not appear as problematic within the discipline.

As Alexander (2017) put it, for women entering the field of classical music, there's some good news and some bad news. The good news is that professional orchestras are filled with women today. This is now a viable career for the most talented women instrumentalists. The bad news is that the picture is not nearly as rosy for women

composers, who are not well represented on orchestral programs. And women conductors are no better off than composers.

The growing numbers of women in professional orchestras can be traced to a single innovation that began around 1970: “blind auditions” where competing candidates for open orchestral jobs play behind a screen. The selection committee does not know if it is hearing a man or a woman. The rapid change in the makeup of orchestras — casually visible and backed up by the numbers — is compelling evidence of the opposition women orchestral players faced before blind auditions. These blind auditions swiftly equalized the gender makeup of orchestra players. But you can’t have blind auditions for conductors and composers (Woolf, 2021). For one thing, composers and conductors do not have the advantage of auditioning anonymously. Music directors and board committees know whose music they are choosing.

Missy Mazzoli, a 2016 composer in residence with the Boulder Philharmonic, points out that women composers may not know when discrimination occurs. “It operates on different levels, a lot of which I would be the last person to be aware of,” she says. “I’m not behind closed doors where people are making decisions, but I think the numbers speak for themselves.” (Alexander, 2017). In an interview at the Kauffman Center (Reid, No date), Mazola, was asked: “Do you feel like your experience as a woman composer has been different than that of your men peers?” Her response was: “Absolutely - I feel that a woman’s experience in any field is, in big or small ways, different from that of her men peers. The world treats women very differently, and they are often socialized in very different ways. There’s also a lot of good old fashioned sexism that is still, unfortunately, alive and well in the music world. I feel that men are more often given opportunities based on potential, whereas women are given opportunities based on their past achievements. So a young woman has to prove herself again and again before getting a big opportunity. If the ratio was a little more equal, this double standard would be harder to perpetuate”. Statistics show that only 1.8 percent of all works performed by major orchestras in 2014–15 was by women. In 2018, of the 2,891 contemporary orchestral works performed in 2018, women wrote 12.8 percent of them (de Niece 2018; Fairouz, 2017).

Joann Valletta, conductor, said that the reason so few orchestral works are of women is that: "Probably the greatest factor is that [symphony] boards are run by people who believe very strongly in the status quo. And that means board members trusted generally in an older man, and I think that has lasted for decades." For Valletta, this tracks with stereotypes: an upset men conductor inspires an orchestra to practice more, to work harder, to be better, while an upset woman on the podium can somehow, some way, inspire something different. "It almost conveys the impression that the person is out of control, because of how we [as a society] view women's anger," she says. In other words, women must step outside the "traditional" social role to exert leadership, but if they are too assertive or too passionate, they run the risk of being perceived as angry (Alexander, 2017). In a more recent interview done by Stephanie Skittle on 2019, she asked the conductor "How do you feel about the fact that your gender is such a prominent part of the way people know you as a conductor? Is it still important in 2019 to talk about "women conductors," and to refer to you as a "women conductor?" Valletta's response was: "When I started in the '80s, it was always mentioned. Because there weren't that many of us! So it was an unusual thing, and wasn't something everyone was even comfortable with. But I was sure then that within 10 years, 15 years, that we wouldn't be calling someone a "woman conductor." But I was wrong. It's taken much longer to get over that sort of men stereotype of a conductor. It may be starting to happen now. I don't know. There are more women on the podium. But even then, they talk more about the fact that they're a woman than they talk about their interpretation of the Brahms symphony. It still hasn't gotten to the point where it's not the first thing people think about" (Skittle, 2019).

La Grave (2019) interviewed Marin Alsop who was the music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, a role she's held since 2007, when she became the first woman to reach such a position with a major American orchestra. In the interview, she said: "When I started [conducting], I assumed there were going to be a lot of women doing it pretty soon," says Alsop, the first-ever conductor to receive a MacArthur Fellowship. "Five years went by, and then ten, and I was like, 'Where is everybody? The numbers hadn't increased in the way I assumed they would.'" In the US., women helm roughly

four percent of the two-dozen big-budget orchestras. Of the world's 50 busiest conductors in 2018, just three were women: Marin Alsop, Mira Gražinytė-Tyla, and JoAnn Falletta. "We're not a different breed," says Alondra de la Parra, music director of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. "Conducting has to do with brain, ear, imagination, experience and personality. And all those are equal in women or men...." (La Grave, 2019).

Following the comments above, it can be concluded that fewer women are recognized as composers and conductors because: 1) Institutionalized sexism, particularly phallogocentric and those women have been dismissed, denigrated, not taken seriously, and not educated, across the board over the centuries. 2) Social attitude: not acceptable for a woman to compose; 3) Women's abilities not acknowledged.; 4) Big musical competitions were usually won by men because they were able to devote their lives to composition; 5) Women's role in music was accepted as an educator, not as a composer or conductor; 6) Stereotypes of women being weak and too emotional compared to men; 7) Program organizers can be like "gate keepers" deciding by race, gender and ethnicity whose works are played. 8) Mediocrity. You may not be good enough; 9) Machismo. Quality may come down if woman conducts music; 10) Still this field is a white, exclusive club and the public support this status quo; 11) Importance of men and women's mentors; 12) Small orchestras are more open to women composers and conductors. Their reputation is not at stake. These conclusions are not so different from the ones described on page 10 and 13.

Woolfe (2013) said that the pace is agonizing, but things are improving. Recent conversations he had with conductors at various stages of their careers, as well as administrators, artist managers and teachers, suggests that what's preventing equity is now less overt sexism, and incremental societal shifts in attitudes about the face of leadership. For real change, there must be visibility, and there has to be conversation, even though it can be frustrating for women conductors to get asked about equality. But does bringing up gender help or hurt women conductors, if women just want to be seen as equal?

In France, conductor and composer Bruno Mantovani (Age 42) lit a firestorm when Radio France posted an interview with him in which he ran through a veritable laundry list of alleged reasons why women couldn't succeed as conductors, ranging from infant-bearing to child-rearing to women's innate lack of strength and stamina (Tsioulcas, 2013).

Duchen (2012) stated that classical music is a meritocracy, theoretically. The best musician wins. But this is not true, there is an appallingly sexist attitude. This sexism is so ingrained that it is taken for granted beyond the point of fight-back. Duchen said that this role differential has been in denial about it for too long, and the problem is growing worse in today's climate of retrenchment. She is concerned about how women solo musicians and conductors are judged first by their appearance: How to be dressed to conduct that will not be seen as a sexually stimulating outfit? In other areas, there is not such a demand of micromanagement of gender arrangements like clothing. Men do not have to go through that. A young woman soloist can be the finest pianist on Earth but will get nowhere unless she also looks good – and if she puts on weight, she sinks. A man of equivalent skill can reach the top if he resembles a bear. Why? The reader can think of the patronizing judgments that attend young women stars in their twenties and thirties and the furor over pianist Yuja Wang's short skirts eclipsed the fact that on artistic merit alone she is a fabulous performer. Tindall (2005), a musician who played as an oboist part time for the New York Philharmonic, in her book "Mozart in the Jungle" reminded us that during the late 1970's to the 90's the "Philharmonic's dress code required floor-length skirts with long-sleeved, high neck blouses and simple jewelry. Anyone wearing pants was sent back to the locker room to change" (p. 90). This is another example of men dominance in this field.

Danielle Molan, Director of Music at the Mount, points out that sexism in music has been around for a long time, going all the way back to classical music in western history. She comments that people know men composers of classical music, but next to none know any women composers. Molan remarks, "If they know their music will never be performed because of their gender, why try"? While looking at modern reasons for the absence of women composers in history, Molan wonders, "Who decides

what young musicians learn about in school? Is that decision made predominantly by men?" (Yaegel, 2020).

Amongst the reasons for historical under-representation of women composers, historians adduced problems of access to musical education and to the men hierarchy of the musical establishment (performers, conductors, impresarios etc.); condescending attitudes of men reviewers, and their association of women composers. However, this is not fully true. Learning an instrument was part of a women's world. Performing in public and composing is another story (Yaegel, 2020). The question is why this has been so tenacious in classical music when in other art forms women felt freer to participate.

In conclusion, based on the statements mentioned above, from a non- psychoanalytic viewpoint, women composers and musicians of classical music are less represented because: 1) they have to work harder than men; 2) women are still viewed as sexual objects and judged depending on their looks not their talents, placing more emphasis on women's bodies instead of their abilities; 3) women are seen from a traditional role as wives and mothers to raise their children with little time for serious music; 4) in an orchestra, women are more represented by small strings (violin and viola) and small wind instruments (flute and French horn; not tuba). 5) The instrument only played by women is the Harp. There are no men playing that instrument. 6) Less prestigious regional orchestras included more women players than did the big 5 in the US --New York Philharmonic (This orchestra is an exception), Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland and Chicago (Sergeant & Himonides, 2019).

Psychoanalytic explanations: On Women, Feminism and the #MeToo movement

How can we understand this situation from a psychoanalytic lens? In this section I will use some ideas that may help us conceptualize what is the feminist take on this issue. Culture has a profound impact on what women are allowed, and what they allow themselves to become. It strikes me that a parallel process still exists wherein we hold onto some aspects of a vision of the world as seen through the eyes of a members of the

patriarchy. It is interesting thinking of the history that plays a role in the construction of the culture, such as the unresolved trauma of the returning veterans of the Second World War who created the gendered childrearing practices of the 1950s and laid the foundations of modern corporate battlefields where they could bond with other men in peacetime. Equally interesting is the threat of the women's movement and the gay rights movement on their sons who carried the burden of their forced separation. When the psychological becomes cultural, the culture does indeed become psychological. (Reciniello 2011). This power differential is also present in finances, academia and other areas of society. However, in these areas the movement towards equality moved faster than in conducting and composing classical music.

How is the patriarchy maintained and how can it be dismantled? Gilligan (2004, in Reciniello, 2011) thinks that patriarchy is an order of domination elevating some men over others and subordinating women. But in separating some men from other men and all men from women, in dividing fathers from mothers and daughters and sons. Patriarchy creates a rift within the psyche, dividing everyone from parts of themselves (Gilligan, p. 141). Layton (1998, in Reciniello, 2011) refers to Derrida who 'contends that the wish to avoid uncertainty ... is a wish that produces rigid binaries in hierarchic relations' (p. 20). This uncertainty is called the 'not knowing'. This concept is picked up by Heifetz (2007, in Reciniello, 2011) who states: "Women have a lot to teach men about getting comfortable with a feeling of "not knowing" (p. 321). Women's very biology entails times of waiting and the waiting requires not knowing, being patient, and being able to tolerate frustration. This capacity has been enhanced by centuries of not being in control of their lives, for example, the inability to own their bodies, to own property, to vote, to earn equal pay, to be recognized as a musician and so on, and that has cultivated in women what Bion (1970, in Reciniello, 2011) called 'the negative capability' of not knowing. It is in the not knowing that men are most threatened. It violates their need to appear sure of themselves and confident, and therefore, not weak. It feels passive because they do not understand that receptivity can be active and empowering. But what is hopeful is that men and women can learn and do learn from each other. However, many women still see themselves through a glass darkly. But

once a woman clears her vision, nothing is ever the same again. That is the moment when Nora slammed the door at the end of "A Doll's House" (Ibsen, 1879).

Something has stalled. A natural evolution happened in many other disciplines like education, economics, politics, and other artistic practices. But it is very striking that it has not happened in classical music. What happened here that there is so little movement? How can we better understand ways to help women find moments of success and fight the legacy of losing themselves and their voices?

The fact that psychoanalytic theory is obviously not an equal-opportunity theory has meant for some that it should be rejected or radically cleansed of its bias against women. On the other hand, the psychoanalytic portrait of the women as a failed men has been accepted as the deepest analysis available of the effects of patriarchy...on men's attitudes toward women and women's attitudes toward themselves. Here it is not the view that is objected to, but the reality which the view reflects, the reality that must be addressed by any truly radical social reform (Young-Bruehl, 1990, p. 41, in Movahedi, 2009).

Trying to define the meaning of patriarchy Crastnopol (2004), suggests that patriarchy is, first and last, a system of domination ... [it] attacks desire, the unconscious longing that animates all human action, by reducing it to sex and then defining sex in the politicized terms of gender. Paradoxically, however, sexuality, thus organized by gender, becomes reciprocally desire's sculptor, while gender simultaneously organizes part of desire into the self ... thus, the roots of desire, itself the source of personal experience, are steeped in hierarchy (Dimen, 2003, in Crasnopol, 2004, p. 207).

The use of the once common, implicitly critical idea 'patriarchy' narrows a complex societal structure into a unidimensional entity. And it is anthropomorphized into having malign intent—patriarchy is said to be designed to be 'a system of domination' that 'reduces desire into sex'.

a) Women's fears

Zuckerman (2014, p. 267) wrote about women's fears about public speaking. Women seem to be afraid to go public, bringing up conflicts around assertion, ambition, and power. Public speaking requires women to stand alone and compete. Because women are taught to think of others before themselves, speaking up can feel like a transgressive violation that shakes up one's sense of who she is.

What is our analytic understanding of this predicament around women self-expression? This dead end is mandated by a variety of disquieting dynamics. These include the fear of making a humiliating public mistake (Benjamin, 2005; Krueger, 1989, 1990; Smith, 2005), the dread of certain relational environments, including groups of men or perceived superiors (Person, 1982), the dissociation of positive appraisals to maintain attachments (Person, 1982), and/or the belief that one is a fraud (Auletta, 2011; Elise, 2008; Grundy, 1993; Harris, 1997; Person, 1982, all references in Zuckerman, 2014).

From a socio-cultural perspective, powerful social taboos can crush a woman's belief that she can assert herself with safety. Subtly imbued templates of femininity privilege passivity, appearance, dependency, and emotional expressiveness over qualities such as assertion and anger. Women learn early on that openly expressing anger is unfeminine and sexually unattractive and that aggression, ambition, and assertion of needs are essentially wrong (Harris, 1997; Moulton, 1975; Turkel, 2000). Ambition, competition, destructiveness, and anger thus become off-limits (Gilligan, 1990; Harris, 1997), often leaving only self-destructive pathways for the expression of intense feelings; these include self-harm, eating disorders, somatic complaints, sexual problems, and depression. Where success does occur, it can trigger a woman's extreme anxiety, self-attack, destruction of enjoyment, retreat from opportunity, and self-defeating behavior in that it embodies assertion and competition (Applegarth, 1976; Harris, 1997; Horner, 1972; Moulton, 1985; Person, 1982; Zuckerman, 1989). In the end, the inability to smoothly integrate aggression into her emotional repertoire damages a woman's healthy drive to stand out, speak up, and be noticed (Kolod, 2002; Smith, 2005) (All references in this section in Zuckerman, 2014)

Layton (2004) linked the emergence of these different developmental trajectories to the “damage done by capitalism to the capacities for relatedness and autonomy” (p. 29). She suggests that women are ingrained by culture with a “normative unconscious” that leaves them silenced and filled both with longing for and anxiety about finding and using their own voices. If one accepts Layton’s analysis, then clinical work around finding a voice must extend to examination of the conscious and unconscious influence of cultural and economic forces in addition to family dynamics, as they emerge both in the transference and in daily life and as they nourish a woman’s anxiety about speaking.

b) Women and the #MeToo movement

The #MeToo movement attempts to dislodge events that occur on the sex/gender/power line from the “obviousness” of malignant supremacist patriarchy. It exposes the systemic and pervasive coercive sexual conduct against women. The movement’s impact comes from its injunction that we take a second look at the meaning of an event: Its not just a series of incidents - bad date, bad sex, a bad boss - but the taken for granted character of sexual coercion. In its cumulative effect #MeToo invites us to counter the master truth - hetero-patriarchal-symbolic order - according to which *nothing happened* - with collective Feminist alternatives (Guralnik 2020)

Gilligan (2018) talks about a sense of surprise in that: "Women have found their voices," In truth, women have always had their voices. What changed, in part spurred by Trump's election, was women's willingness to put up with the status quo. What's more, women were encouraged by other women to speak about what they knew on the basis of their experience, notably about sex and men's abuses of power, knowing that if they spoke they would be joined and affirmed by others who knew what they were talking about. By saying #Me Too and #Times-Up, women were leaving the confines of patriarchy. Rather than finding their voices, they, along with the men who joined them, were breaking the silence.

Patriarchy persists not only because those in positions of power hold onto their privilege and enforce it, but also because it serves a psychological function. Connection between attachment, loss, mourning (Bowly, 1969,1973,1980, in Gilligan & Snider,

2017) and power. Patriarchy acts as a shield protecting from loss. Pathological responses to loss parallel the gender codes of patriarchal masculinity and femininity, which are internalized through an initiation that forces ruptures in relationship and subverts the capacity for repair. This parallel suggests that the gender roles, which uphold a patriarchal order, simultaneously defend against the loss of connection inherent in that order.

Current on-going changes of women's roles in classical music

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra announced that it had chosen Nathalie Stutzmann (French, 56 years old), as conductor. She will be only the second woman in history to lead a top-tier American orchestra when she takes the podium. Stutzmann said she hoped her selection would inspire other orchestras to appoint women (Hernandez, 2021)

American women gained the right to vote with the ratification of the 19th Amendment. In 2020, the New York Philharmonic introduced *Project 19* — a multi-season initiative to commission and premiere 19 new works by 19 women composers, the largest women-only commissioning initiative in history. *Project 19* gives women composers a platform and catalyzing representation in classical music and beyond. *Project 19* launched in February 2020 with the first six World Premieres.

Women composers have enjoyed some notable success recently. In December 2018 the Metropolitan Opera produced *L'Amour de Loin* by Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho to great acclaim conducted by Finnish conductor Susanna Malkki who had made her debut in the 2016-17 season. It was the first opera by a woman at the Met in 113 years. On 11-9-21 the MET Opera had the debut of conductor Eun Sun Kim in "La Boheme" with raving reviews (Tommasini, 2021). She is also the first woman to become the Music Director of the San Francisco Opera.

The Santa Fe Opera premiered Jennifer Higdon's *Cold Mountain* in 2015, and Opera Colorado premiered Lori Laitman's *Scarlet Letter* in 2016. On July 3, 2021, the opera "Innocence" at the Aix-en-Provence Festival composed by Kaija Saariaho, was presented despite the limitation of

Covid. Woolff, (2021), the director of the conducting program at the New England Conservatory, evaluated applications for the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, in 2011, he reviewed 46 applicants, and eight were women: still far from parity, but an improvement on the current percentages among the top-tier orchestras (Woolfe, 2013). Deborah Borda, previous president of the Los Angeles Philharmonic but now president of the New York Philharmonic, said: "Things have really changed radically. In the old days, even 10 years ago, you might have one woman who would come for an assistant conductor audition, and now it might be half." (Woolfe, 2013). On October 21, 2021, The New York Philharmonic presented a program of three of America's composers, one of them is Missy Mazzoli, and Dalia Stasevska, a rising star (who conducted the 2018 Nobel Prize Ceremony) leads the program. The One of Anna Clyne' work: "*Within her arms*" was performed at the opening night of the New York Philharmonic on September 17, 2021. Hannah Kendall "*Kanashibari*" (New York Premiere) on September 23, 2021. The New York Philharmonic presented the work of Ruth Crawford (Seeger) (1901-1953), her "*Andante for Strings*" on November 4, 2021. In the program notes it said: "It appears that Charles Seeger, her husband, supported her emotionally and intellectually at important moments of her career, yet one gets the feeling that as the one hand was giving, the other may have been taking away"... "all her most significant works date from the miniscule span of 1930-33, effectively ending her marriage" (J.M.K program notes). Again, the New York Philharmonic on 11/12/21, presented Simone Young as conductor of their subscription series. Jeanette Sorrell in her New York Philharmonic debut conducted Handel's Messiah starting 12/14/21 for 4 performances. On 2/8/22, The Philadelphia Orchestra performed at Carnegie Hall, two works written by Black women: Valerie Coleman (b. 1970) and Florence Price (1887-1953). On 5/19/22 Julia Wolfe's (b. 1958) Anthracite will be performed at Carnegie Hall.

As I was working in this paper, I was able to go to some concerts to listen to women composers and conductors. Women conductors were loved by the audiences. Composers' pieces were too short compared to men's except for the Florence Price piece played at Carnegie Hall.

All these examples show how things are improving. But till why this development is so much slower in this field than in others? The industry still needs to do more to encourage women who study conducting and composing to remain in this daunting career.

What women conductors, composers and organizations are doing to give women more visibility?

Many women composers and conductors are trying to organize institutions to support women's effort to be more visible and help other women succeed. Even though I am giving only a few examples, the list is becoming longer.

The soprano Gabriella Di Laccio (2018) created the "Donne project" to champion women composers and highlight women whose music often went unrecognized in their lifetime. She said the project had convinced her that there were more than enough women composers in history to get a fairer gender balance at concerts. She thought part of the solution could come from audiences being more questioning about the music orchestras presented and to raise awareness. However, Di Laccio said she had heard of orchestras praising themselves for including music written by a woman. "But then it is a three-minute piece, while everything else is 20 or 40 [minutes] – and they only do it to cover themselves."

The Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance announced a commitment to women composers, entitled "Venus Blazing", which it said it hoped would abolish all-men composer programs. It said music by women, past and present and across genres, would make up more than half of its concert programs in 2018/19 (Covid unable this to happen)

Another example is Rachel Watson, who in 2017 founded Scordatura, a UK-based mixed chamber ensemble dedicated to performing music by women from the past and present

Conclusions and the enigma

We are living in an amazing time of possibilities that are erupting from the present chaos, and the only thing that can stop us is the fear of letting go of what we hold onto

in our psyches about men and women. The forced separation of the sexes that brought us here will consume us. Without the equal contribution of women, half of all knowledge will be lost. The original and primal difference among human beings is not only based on race, culture, national, or religious affiliation, but also on gender, and gender reconciliation will go a long way toward assisting in the integration of the other human differences that are inherent in a globalised society. What has been missing in corporate thought, behavior, and responsibility is the contribution of the other half of the partnership.

All institutions that want to thrive today must acknowledge and reflect what the world looks like today. If we are to survive, we need to start by reversing policies that silence the voices of half of humanity, women (Fairouz, 2017).

As a culture, we have granted sexual license to powerful men and valued guns more than children. Women's silence and men's violence are the mainstays of this patriarchal order. By breaking silence, women, along with the men who have joined them, are leaving the confines of patriarchy. By interrogating the voice that says *shut up*, they are contesting those invested in perpetuating a culture that values honor over love and life. The gender binary with the gender hierarchy are the building blocks of a patriarchal order, a set of power arrangements that privilege fathers, elevating some men over other men and all men over women. "Patriarchy is not only unjust and undemocratic, but it also hinges on our accepting or internalizing what through experience we know to be a false story, false in its representation of women, men, and of humans" (Gilligan, 2018, p. 735-740).

Thinking of Ferenczi's (1949) idea of the child being blamed for the adult's seduction and their power over the child, made me think of the patriarchal society and the power of men over women. I wonder, continuing with Ferenczi, if women's need and hope for "tenderness" and acceptance, has led them to submit to men's dominance.

This paper tried to document the many sources and types of sharp prejudices against women in classical music particularly in the arenas of composing and conducting. It has been a difficult endeavor since there was resistance from women conductors and

composers to talk to me about this topic. What is not clear is why there is a resistance of the women as such to look at this and why the changes that are happening now had been so slow, when in fact, there has been dramatic changes in so many other spheres. Still there is an enigma with no specific answer to my original question. However, after writing this paper and doing my research, my conclusion is that women are not encouraged enough to pursue their talents in the field of conducting and composing. Thinking that there is still a lot of men dominance based in the European tradition, men composers and conductors are the norm. There is also the belief that the cost of organizing a concert and making money from it, the programmers, who are mostly men, want to sell tickets to be able to support their organization. Therefore, since women composers are less known than men, particularly in music of the last century, women composers work if included in concerts, their pieces are short.

The #MeToo movement has brought forward abusive power, tackling sexual harassment, objectification, ageism, and the "burden of motherhood". It made easier for women to come forward and tell their stories, or talk more openly making the industry more aware of their assets. However, when I reflect back on this research, there were people who talked to me and I am grateful for that. But, what is equally striking is the number of people who declined to talk about this. Again, it is noticeable how much resistance there is for real exploration within the field of classical music in women composers and conductors as well as people in the music world.

My quest for answers and exploration of this enigma, is not finished yet. I am planning to go forward and continue delving into this topic to hopefully get more answers in the future. I expect to have stimulated the readers enough to get some answers to this mystery making this issue open for discussion.

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