Music History Timeline

The Middle Ages (500-1400)
representative male composer: Mauchau

The Renaissance (1400-1600)
representative male composers: Josquin, Palestrina, Tallis

The Baroque Era (1600-1750)
representative male composers: Bach, Handel, Vivaldi

The Classical Era (1730-1820)
representative male composers: Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart

The Romantic Era (1815-1910)
representative male composers: Berlioz, Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Wagner

The Modern Era (1900-1945)
representative male composers: Berg, Debussy, Ives, Prokofiev, Ravel, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Hindemith, Webern

The Postmodern (1945 to the present)
representative male composers: John Adams, John Luther Adams, John Cage, Peter Maxwell Davies, Phillip Glass, Arvo Pärt, György Ligeti, Max Richter, John Tavener
Introduction

1. Women’s history requires historians to guard against limiting the narrative to stories of women who merely contributed to the lives of men who were “making” history.

2. Women’s history is sometimes difficult to document because women’s lives may not have been as public as men’s lives.

3. Women composers left much documentation—the music they composed.

4. Due to a long-held prejudice against music composed by women, some great women composers are just now being discovered.

Women and Classical Music – Overview

1. Limited Opportunities
   a. Before the 1800s, women musicians were found primarily in convents and aristocratic families.
   b. During the late 1700s and early 1800s, middle-class families began requiring children—both male and female—to learn music. As musicians, women were expected to remain amateurs.

2. Pauline Injunction
   A claim made by the Catholic Church that Paul the Apostle set restrictions limiting what women could do in the church (Mulier taceat in ecclesia — “Let the women be silent in church.”)

   Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.
   – 1 Corinthian 14:34

3. Castrati
   a. Early 1500s: Women began working as professional singers of secular music in Italy.
   b. 1588: Pope Sixtus V banned women from singing on stage.
   c. Early 1600s: Young boys performed women’s roles in opera until they were eventually replaced by castrati.
   d. Late 1700s: Women were again allowed to perform on stage, primarily singing Italian opera as soloists and members of a choir.

4. Restrictions on Women Performing as Instrumentalists
   a. Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance (c. 1300-1500): Women instrumentalists performed as minstrels.
   b. Late Renaissance and Baroque era (c. 1500-1750): Women faced restrictions based on the stereotyping of instruments. “Feminine” instruments included the harpsichord, harp, lute, and sometimes the violin.
   c. By the late 1700s: Women gained some acceptance as concert pianists.
   d. By the late 1800s and early 1900s: Women began playing a variety of instruments and performing publicly in all-female chamber groups and orchestras.
e. Until the late 1900s: Women instrumentalists generally had no opportunities to perform in major orchestras.

I just don’t think women should be in an orchestra. They become men.

5. Restrictions on Composing
a. The convents of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were centers of learning for women and contained many women composers.
b. From the early 1600s until the late 1900s, composing was generally considered an activity for men. Women faced a deep-seated cultural barrier that associated musical creativity with masculinity, and women were limited in their opportunities to receive an education in musical composition.

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?
– Clara Schumann

6. Increased Opportunities for Women
a. The women’s rights movement of the late 1800s and early 1900s led to the creation of conservatories for women musicians.
b. Throughout the twentieth century the number of highly-trained women musicians increased dramatically. By the end of the 1800s, some woman had gained international recognition as solo artists (primarily as singers and pianists).
c. By the late 1800s, conservatories began allowing women to take classes in music theory and composition.
d. An increase in the number of women wanting to pursue careers in composition led to the “women composer question.” (Will encouraging women to compose lead to the “feminization” of music and a decline in the quality of music?)
5. From the late 1800s through the mid-1900s, the number of women composers kept increasing. Over the last fifty years, the number of women composing music has exploded.
Middle Ages (500-1400)

1. Early Christians allowed women to sing in the congregations of some churches.

2. In 313 CE, the Edict of Milan legalized Christianity throughout the Roman Empire and standardized church practices.
   a. According to the Edict of Milan instruments were banned in church, congregational singing was forbidden, and women were not allowed to sing in church.
   b. The restriction on women singing in church did not apply to convents.

3. In medieval convents women performed music on their own terms.
   a. Nuns were trained in singing and met eight times a day at three hour intervals to sing their prayers.
   b. Some nuns wrote music for convent choirs. Women composers, like their male counterparts, wrote music anonymously, passing the music orally from generation to generation as part of a standard repertoire.

4. Saint Kassiani (c.805 - c.865)
   a. Kassiani was an abbess at a convent in Constantinople.
   b. As a poet and musician, Kassiani ranks as one of the first composers on record—male or female.
   c. Kassiani composed monophonic music with text based on church liturgy.

   ⚫ Hymn of Kassiani (Hymn of the Fallen Woman)

5. Medieval Troubadours
   a. Women of noble birth governed fiefdoms while their husbands were away from home during the Crusades (1096-1271). The absence of husbands freed women to pursue normally restricted activities, including composing and performing music on fiddles, lyres, and harps.
   b. Lyrics have survived from secular love songs written by more than twenty women troubadours living in southern France. The music has been lost.

6. Saint Hildegard of Bingen (c.1098-1179)
   a. Hildegard was a nun, writer, scientist, philosopher, artist, architect, teacher, visionary, prophet, and political adviser.
   b. Hildegard is the first composer—male or female—with an extensive biography and the only woman composer from the Middle Ages whose body of plainchant is known today.
   c. At age 80, Hildegard wrote a document describing her beliefs on music. She believed music was the noblest of all human activities, revealing the sound of the angels and the inner life of the soul. She also believed that all music, whether instrumental or vocal, functioned as a bridge to life before the Fall. The breath of life that God breathed into the

   Of things I'd rather keep in silence I must sing / so bitter do I feel toward him / whom I love more than anything. / With him my mercy and fine manners are in vain, / my beauty, virtue and intelligence. / For I've been tricked and cheated / as if I were completely loathsome.
   – Song by Countess of Dia, c. 1140
body of the first human was the same breath that was used to sing in praise of God. She believed that humans are taken to the divine through music.

Greetings, greenest branch / Who came forth on a spirit-filled / Quest for knowledge of all that is holy.
– Hildegard, “About the Blessed Virgin Mary”

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{O virtus sapientiae} & \\
O \text{ virtus Sapientiae,} & \text{oh strength of wisdom} \\
\text{quae circuiens circuisti} & \text{who, circling, circled,} \\
\text{comprehendendo omnia} & \text{enclosing all} \\
in \text{ una via, quae habet vitam,} & \text{in one life giving path,} \\
tres alas habens, & \text{three wings you have:} \\
quarum una in altum volat, & \text{one soars to the heights,} \\
et altera de terra sudat, & \text{one distills its essence upon the earth,} \\
et tertia undique volat. & \text{and the third is everywhere.} \\
\text{Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet,} & \text{Praise to you, as is fitting,} \\
O \text{ Sapientia.} & \text{O Wisdom}
\end{align*} \]

Don’t let yourself forget that God’s grace rewards not only those who never slip, but also those who bend and fall. So sing! The song of rejoicing softens hard hearts. It makes tears of godly sorrow flow from them. Singing summons the Holy Spirit. Happy praises offered in simplicity and love lead the faithful to complete harmony, without discord. Don’t stop singing.
– Hildegard

The marvels of God are not brought forth from one’s self. Rather, it is more like a chord, a sound that is played. The tone does not come out of the chord itself, but rather, through the touch of the musician. I am, of course, the lyre and harp of God’s kindness.
– Hildegard
Renaissance (1400–1600)

1. In 1528, Baldesar Castiglione wrote *The Book of the Courtier*, a handbook of social rules for the courts of Venice. The book was widely read and the rules became adopted throughout Europe. Social rules described in the book included the following:
   a. A woman must possess the same education as a man. For men, the purpose of education is to develop character, identity, and opportunities. For women, the goal of education is to charm others.
   b. A women’s chief purpose in life is decorative, entertaining men with gracious conversation and modesty. A nobleman’s chief task is hunting and engaging in sport.
   c. Music is an exalted accomplishment for both men and women. A women, however, should sing or choose an instrument based on the ideal of feminine gracefulness.

   *She should choose instruments suited to her purpose. Imagine what an ungainly sight it would be to have a woman playing drums, fifes, trumpets, or other instruments of that sort; and this is simply because their stridency buries and destroys the sweet gentleness which embellishes everything a woman does. So when she is about to dance or make music of any kind, she should first have to be coaxed a little, and should begin with a certain shyness, suggesting the dignified modesty that brazen women cannot understand.*

   – *The Book of the Courtier*

2. Many convents of the Renaissance became first-rate musical establishments.
   a. Convents were populated by women from wealthy families who had musical training.
   b. Although convents originally contained much instrumental music, by the late 1500s, the Counter-Reformation had ended the use of instruments in music.

3. **Eleanor of Naples, the Duchess Ferrara (1450-1493)**
   a. Eleanor established her own group of private musicians at the Ferrara court in Italy. Eleanor’s musicians performed secular music heard only at the Ferrara Court.
   b. In the 1580s, a trio of virtuoso singers from the Ferrara court became the first women working as professional singers in Europe. They became the best-known singers in Italy and performed songs that served as a predecessor to opera.

4. **Francesca Caccini (1587-1640)**
   a. Caccini was a talented singer and lute player who made her debut in 1600 at age thirteen in the premier of the world’s first opera — *Euridice* by Jacopo Peri.
   b. As a member of the court of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Caccini became one of the most influential women composers the Renaissance, creating the most extensive collection of original music of her time by any composer.
   c. Caccini’s career in music spanned the late Renaissance and early Baroque eras. Her music can be categorized as a product of both eras.
   d. Caccini’s comic opera *La liberazione di Ruggiero* is considered the first opera composed by a woman.

   ♫ *La liberazione di Ruggiero*
   ♫ *Chi desia*
Baroque Era (1600–1750)

1. During the 1600s and 1700s, music flourished in Venice, making it a city described as the “Republic of Music.” Numerous music conservatories were established, including four just for women.
   a. Musicians at the women’s conservatories achieved such a level of excellence that they attracted students from all over Europe.
   b. The conservatories of Venice provided women with extensive opportunities to perform, entertaining aristocrats and giving public concerts. Women were allowed to perform in orchestras which were often used at state occasions to honor distinguished visitors.

   In every home someone is playing a musical instrument or singing. There is music everywhere.
   – Anonymous Frenchman of the 17th century describing Venice

2. Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677)
   A celebrated poet from Venice who was the most prolific composer—man or woman—of secular vocal music during mid-1600s.

   ♩ Che si può fare

   I reverently consecrate this first work, which I, as a woman, all too ardently send forth into the light, the august name of Your Highness, so that under your oak of gold it may rest secure from the lightning bolts of slander prepared for it.
   – Barbara Strozzi

3. Elisabeth Jacquet (1664-1727)
   A virtuoso harpsichordist who became a prolific composer of instrumental music. Jacquet composed chamber music, operas, cantatas, and much solo music for the harpsichord.

   ♩ Sonata No. 2 in B-flat

4. Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)
   A nun in northwest Italy who composed over 200 pieces of music. Leonarda lived an isolated life in a convent in a remote part of Italy and had little or no opportunity to hear anything but sacred vocal music. Even so, the collection of sonatas she published in 1693 are considered the first ever composed by a woman. The reason she composed instrumental music remains a mystery to musicologists.

   ♩ Sonata duodecima
Classical Era (1730–1820)

1. **The Theory of Accomplishments**
   a. During the late eighteenth century, music was considered a social accomplishment that allowed women to demonstrate the gentility and good manners necessary to find a husband. Although other accomplishments included drawing, painting, needlework, and embroidery, music was the loftiest achievement.
   b. The “theory of accomplishments” for women lasted well into the 1800s, creating many gifted amateur musicians.

   *Her performance was pleasing, though by no means capital. After a song or two, and before she could reply to the entreaties of several that she would sing again, she was eagerly succeeded at the instrument by her sister Mary, who having, in consequence of being the only plain one in the family, worked hard for knowledge and accomplishments, was always impatient for display.*
   
   – Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

2. **Music as Leisure Time Activity**
   a. With music serving as the primary leisure-time activity for the middle class in Europe, the number of women—and men—making music at home increased significantly.
   b. The expansion of public concerts in the late 1700s made concertizing and touring financially attractive, and women were given many opportunities to perform in public, primarily as pianists and singers.

3. **Maria Theresia von Paradis (1759-1824)**
   a. Paradis, who was one of Vienna’s most celebrated pianists, was held in such high esteem that she enjoyed the patronage of Empress Maria Theresa, and she could commission composers such as Haydn and Mozart to write music for her.
   b. Paradis lost her sight in an accident in early childhood and developed an exceptional memory, giving her the ability to perform almost any piece of music on request. As a result of her blindness, she developed an alphabet that allowed her to read and write with her fingers. The alphabet’s success led to the first school for the blind in Europe, opening in Paris in 1784.
   c. Paradis founded and headed a music school in Vienna, expressly for educating women.
   d. Paradis composed operas, songs, and chamber music, of which very little survives.

   *Sicilienne*

   *A certain feeling towards propriety and morality is stamped upon our sex, which does not allow us to appear alone in public, and without an escort: Thus, how can I otherwise present this, my musical work to the public, than with timidity.*
   
   – Corona Schröter (1751-1802), Classical era composer
Romantic Era (1815–1910)

1. During the 1800s and early 1900s an increasing number of women became amateur musicians with a large number of women learning musical instruments other than piano or voice. With the exception of the women who worked as singers or concert pianists, women were generally not allowed to work as professional musicians or composers.

2. Women as Teachers
   With most avenues of employment closed to women, a large number of women became music teachers. Although some women taught music in public or private schools, the majority of women teaching music were private piano or voice teachers.

3. Women as Patrons in the Club Movement
   a. During the late 1800s and early 1900s the club movement for women gained momentum, providing middle- and upper-class women an opportunity to work for the betterment of their communities. Women's clubs engaged in a variety of philanthropic projects with many clubs involved in promoting the arts.
   b. Women's clubs became significant patrons of music. Women's clubs organized music festivals, sponsored local talent, supported music programs in public schools, and organized courses of self-study in music for club members.

4. Women as Composers
   a. The increasing number of women involved in music as performers, teachers, and patrons was accompanied by an increasing number of women wanting to compose music. A large number of women composed parlor songs and music for piano, remaining within the boundaries of what was socially acceptable.
   b. The issue of whether women should compose large-scale works such as symphonies, concertos, and operas set off an argument that raged for decades. Critics of women wanting to compose large-scale works believed women were intellectually inferior and the “feminization” of music would lead to a deterioration in the quality or music. These critics believed music composed by men would always be more intellectually rigorous, containing more emotional and spiritual depth.
   c. Both Europeans and Americans expressed a widespread belief that women should limit themselves to serving as muses for male composers. As singers or pianists, women might be able to interpret music composed by men, but women were not equipped to handle the abstract demands of musical form and would never be able to compose great music.
   d. Those who defended the idea of women becoming composers pointed out that women had been held back by the ban on women taking theory and composition class at music conservatories.
   e. As women such as Luise Adolpha Le Beau, Ethel Smyth, and Amy Beach began to compose large-scale works, they were attacked for betraying the traditional role for women in music.

If nobody ever offers an opinion or takes the slightest interest in one’s production, one loses not only all pleasure in them, but all power of judging their value.

– Fanny Mendelssohn
5. **Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)**
   a. Fanny Mendelssohn was a sensationally gifted musician, a prodigy, who grew up in a privileged home and was taught by the best private tutors in Berlin. Her brother Felix, who was four years younger, received the same education as Fanny in both performance and composition.
   b. When Fanny turned fifteen her parents told her she must abandon music and prepare for marriage and motherhood.
   c. Fanny composed 450 pieces of music, mostly miniatures, with a few of her pieces published under her brother’s name. In 1846, a small publisher in Berlin released a book of songs she had written for her choral group. The recognition she received from these songs encouraged her to compose a larger work, the *Piano Trio in D minor*, which was first performed at a family musicale in April 1847.
   d. Fanny’s last diary entry reflected her happiness as a composer with an opportunity to publish her work. On May 14, 1847, she suffered a stroke that killed her at age forty-one.

   ♦ *String Quartet in E-flat major, First Movement*
   ♦ *6 Mélodies, No. 3 in E-flat major, Op 5*

   My inmost heart is full of thankfulness, and when in the morning after breakfasting with Wilhelm we each go to our own work, with a pleasant day to look back upon and another to look forward to, I am quite overcome with my own happiness.

   – Fanny Mendelssohn’s last diary entry

6. **Clara Schumann (1819-1896)**
   a. Clara Schumann was the leading woman musical performer of her time. As an exceptionally skilled pianist, she was as accomplished as Franz Liszt, and there was nothing she could not play. She was constantly on tour performing solo recitals that introduced audiences to new music by composers such as Chopin and Liszt.
   b. In 1828, shortly before her twenty-first birthday, she married Robert Schumann, one of the greatest and most well-known composers of the time.
   c. Clara was pregnant with her eighth child when Robert Schumann died. To provide financially for her children she went on tour. Clara spent the next thirty years on tour.
   d. Clara was a gifted a composer who had to publish her music under a male pseudonym.

   ♦ *Scherzo No. 2 in C minor, Op. 14*
7. **Louise Farrenc (1804-75)**  
   French composer who worked for thirty years as a Professor of Piano at the Paris Conservatory of Music. Farrenc composed chamber music, works for solo piano, two overtures, and three symphonies.

   ♫ Piano Quintet No. 1 in A minor, Op. 30, First Movement

8. **Maria Malibran (1808-1836)**  
   Spanish soprano who was one of the most celebrated divas of her day. Malibran composed about 40 works for voice before she died at age twenty-eight in a horse-riding accident.

   ♫ Rataplan

9. **Luise Adolpha Le Beau (1850-1927)**  
   German composer who was regarded in her time as the first woman to compose large-scale vocal and orchestral works.

   ♫ String Quintet in C minor, Op. 54, First Movement  
   ♫ Piano Concerto in D minor, Op. 37, First Movement

10. **Augusta Holmes (1847-1903)**  
    French composer of Irish descent who wrote four operas, a symphony, twelve symphonic poems, and over 120 songs based on her own poetry. Unlike most women composers who felt constrained by social mores to write songs and chamber music, Holmes composed dramatic music with epic themes.

    ♫ La Nuit et l’amour

11. **Francisca Edwiges Neves “Chiquinha” Gonzaga (1847-1935)**  
    Pianist and composer who became Brazil’s first woman conductor. She spent several years touring Europe, where she was particularly famous in Portugal. Chiquinha was a prolific composer of songs, piano works and large-scale works such as operas.

    ♫ O Gaúcho (Corta-jaca)

12. **Teresa Carreño (1853-1917)**  
    A Venezuelan piano virtuoso who moved to New York when she was nine and became an international sensation touring Europe at age fourteen. Carreño was highly regarded as a composer, writing forty works for piano, as well as chamber music, orchestral works, and numerous songs.

    ♫ Mi Teresita

13. **Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)**  
    French pianist and composer who wrote over 350 works including an opera, a choral symphony, ballets, chamber music, and over a hundred songs.

    ♫ Six Études de Concert, Op. 35, #2 “Autumn”
14. Mélanie Bonis (1858-1937)
French pianist and composer of over 300 pieces of music. Bonis published music under the name “Mel” to obscure the fact that she was a woman.

♪ Fantaisie en septuor (piano, 2 flutes, 2 violins, viola, cello)
♪ Sonata in F major

15. Dora Pejačević (1885-1923)
Croatian pianist who composed over 100 pieces in the late-Romantic style, including songs, chamber music, and large orchestral works.

♪ Impromptu in B-flat major, Op. 32b

16. Cosima Wagner (1837-1930)
Supportive wife of Richard Wagner who found great purpose in serving her husband’s creative genius. After Wagner died in 1883, she kept the Bayreuth Festival operating and oversaw the performance rights for all Wagner’s music.

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The work that their sex and conditions impose upon them has not been so adjusted as to give them scope for the development of their best self. They have been handicapped, and only a few, through force of circumstances or inherent strength, have been able to get the better of that handicap.
– Cécile Chaminade on women living the “best life”

There is nothing greater than the joy of composing something oneself, and then listening to it. There are some pretty passages in my trio, and I think it is fairly successful as far as form goes. Of course, it is only a woman’s work, which is always lacking in force, and here and there in invention.
– Clara Schumann
Modern Era (1900–1945)
1. During the early 1900s, women were increasingly able to find careers in classical music as performers, composers, educators, and administrators. In most cases, however, women worked as members of all-female organizations.

2. Women’s Symphony Orchestras
   a. During the 1920s over thirty professional full-sized orchestras for women musicians were operating in the United States. Each orchestra had a woman conductor and performed the traditional all-male symphonic repertoire, as well as music composed by women.
   b. During the late 1930s, American women increasingly demanded that major orchestras in the US began hiring women musicians.
   c. World War II depleted the number of male musicians, and women instrumentalists were allowed to perform with major symphony orchestras. After the war, the orchestras returned to their traditional state as all-male institutions.

3. Society of American Women Composers
   a. An organization founded in 1924 to sponsor and promote performances of music composed by women.
   b. The society’s first president was Amy Beach.

4. Women as Conductors
   a. Women conducted all-woman orchestras during the 1920s and 1930s but were excluded from conducting all-male or mixed orchestras.
   b. The ban on women conductors was based on a belief that women were by nature too passive to lead large numbers of people and lacked the intellectual rigor to interpret great works of art at the highest level.
   c. Orchestra administrators were also confronted with musicians and touring soloists refusing to perform for women conductors.

5. Ethel Smyth (1858–1944)
   British composer and suffragette who wrote six operas, large orchestral works, choral works, and chamber music.

   ♦ Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello, First Movement
   ♦ “March of the Women”

   I feel I must fight for [my music] because I want women to turn their minds to big and difficult jobs, not just to go on hugging the shore, afraid to put out to sea.
   – Ethel Smyth

6. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (1864–1953)
   Wealthy heiress who played a crucial role in establishing chamber music in the US, earning her the title of “Patron Saint of American Chamber Music.”
7. **Amy Beach (1867-1944)**  
The first notable woman composer from the United States. Beach composed miniatures, as well as large-scale orchestral and vocal works.

♫*Romance for Violin and Piano, Op. 23*

8. **Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979)**  
Pianist, organist, and teacher at the Paris Conservatory for almost seventy years. Boulanger taught many of the leading musicians of the twentieth century, including John Adams, Burt Bacharach, Leonard Bernstein, Elliott Carter, William Sloan Coffin, Aaron Copland, John Elliott Gardiner, Philip Glass, Roy Harris, Quincy Jones, Charlie Parker, and Walter Piston.

♫*Three Pieces for Cello and Piano, No. 1 “Modéré”*

9. **Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)**  
French composer who became the first woman to win the Prix de Rome, France’s top prize for composition. After winning the competition, she was awarded a lucrative financial contract with Ricordi, a leading musical publisher. She died at age twenty-five before she had composed enough music to fulfill the terms of the contract.

♫*Nocturne for Violin and Piano*

10. **Florence Price (1887-1953)**  
American composer of more than 300 works, including symphonies, organ works, piano concertos, violin concertos, arrangements of spirituals, arts songs, and chamber works. In 1933, Price became the first African-American woman to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed her First Symphony.

♫*Fantasie nègre*
♫*Symphony No. 1 in E minor, First Movement*
♫*Mississippi Suite*

11. **Marian Anderson (1897-1993)**  
American contralto who sang everything from opera to spirituals. In 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) refused to let her perform at Constitution Hall because of their strict "white’s only" policy. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the DAR and sponsored a concert for Anderson at the Lincoln Memorial attended by 75,000 people.

♫*“My Soul’s Been Anchored in the Lord”*

When I sing, I don’t want them to see that my face is black. I don’t want them to see that my face is white. I want them to see my soul. And that is colorless.

– Marian Anderson
One of the leaders of modernism in American music.

* String Quartet 1931, Third and Fourth Movements

13. **Elisabeth Lutyens (1906-1983)**  
English composer who wrote modernist music in all genres. In the 1930s, Lutyens, a radical and prolific composer, developed her own twelve-tone procedures before she had any exposure to the works of Schoenberg and Webern.

* The Valley of Hatsu-Se

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Women have been too much taken up with helping and encouraging men to place a proper value on their own talent, which they are too prone to underestimate and to think not worth making the most of. Their whole training, from time immemorial, has tended to make them take an intense interest in the work of men and to stimulate them to their best efforts. [John] Ruskin was quite right when he so patronizingly said that “Woman’s chief function is praise.” She has praised and praised, and kept herself in abeyance.

But now, all this is changed. Women are beginning to realize that they, too, have brains, and even musical ones. They are, at last, studying compositions seriously, and will, ere long, feel out a path for themselves, instead of being “mere imitators of men.”

For the matter of that, men have been imitators of each other at first. We all know that Mozart began to write like Haydn, and Beethoven began to write like Mozart, before each developed his own originality of style, and as for Wagner, he has furnished inspiration and ideas for all the composers who have succeeded him. Why, then, should we expect of women what men could not do (although Minerva was said to have sprung fully armed from the brain of Jove)? If it has required 50,000 years to produce a male Beethoven, surely one little century ought to be vouchsafed to create a female one!

It is now a very shallow way of looking at the matter to say that “women have not been handicapped in music, because more girls than boys have been taught to play the piano or the harpsichord.” What does such teaching amount to? Really very little. To be a great creator in art, one must be trained to it from one’s earliest years by a gifted parent or teacher. Mozart and Beethoven had fathers who fully realized the capacity of their sons, and they made them study early and late, “every day i’ the hour,” as Shakespeare says. No doubt, an hour of such work as these composers did in their youth, would be worth many days of the kind of musical preparation demanded of girls of this or any other period.

— Amy Fay, “Women and Music” (1900)
Postmodern (1945 to the Present)

1. From the 1980s to the present, women have made substantial progress in finding careers in classical music. Audiences have seen a significant increase in the amount of music composed by women composers. Women have also joined major orchestras as performers and found work as conductors. No woman, however, has yet been selected to lead one of the world’s top orchestras.

   A full-sized all-female orchestra created in San Francisco in 1981. The orchestra was founded with the mission of providing opportunities for women musicians and promoting the works of women composers.

   Many women prior to the twentieth century wrote pieces in the so-called smaller genres for performance in small domestic spaces, as opposed to large-scale genres like symphonies and operas that are performed in large, public places. Most women did not have access to the public world. To be sure, some women may not have wished to have access, but the fact remains that there were many societal prescriptions against it. And yet there has been a great deal of bias in favor of larger genres, while the smaller genres performed in the home have been debased.
   
   – Marcia J. Citron, musicologist

3. Elizabeth Poston (1905-1987)
   English composer who was best known for her small-scale pieces of music (miniatures).

   ♩ Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

   British composer who wrote music primarily for theater, radio, and television.

   ♩ Danza gaya
   ♩ Trio for Flute, Oboe and Piano

5. Emahoy Tsequé-Maryam Guèbrou (b. 1923)
   Ethiopian nun whose compositions are sometimes classified as “Ethio-jazz.” Maryam’s music contains elements of Chopin and Liszt, although it ultimately sounds like the music of no other composer.

   ♩ Presentiment
   ♩ Homeless Wanderer

6. Joan Tower (b. 1938)
   American composer who gained recognition during the 1980s as one of the world’s greatest composers of orchestral music.

   ♩ Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman #1
7. **Wendy Carlos (b. 1939)**
American composer who was a pioneer in creating electronic music with a Moog synthesizer.

♫ *Theme from A Clockwork Orange*

8. **Ellen Taafe Zwilich (b. 1939)**
American composer who became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1983 for *Three Movements for Orchestra (Symphony No. 1)*.

♫ *Three Movements for Orchestra (Symphony No. 1)*

9. **Meredith Monk (b. 1942)**
American composer who is best known for composing works that are combined with other art forms such as film, theater, dance, and visual art.

♫ *Ellis Island*
♫ *Songs of Ascension*

10. **Eleanor Alberga (b. 1949)**
Jamaican conductor and composer. Alberga’s music shows some Caribbean influence, as well as the influence of twentieth century European music.

♫ *Ride Through*
♫ *Market of the Dead*

11. **Shulamit Ran (b. 1949)**
Israeli-American concert pianist and composer of operas, solo works, chamber music, vocal works, and orchestral works. Ran won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1991 for *Symphony*.

♫ *Lyre of Orpheus*

12. **Judith Weir (b. 1954)**
British composer who was the first woman appointed “Master of the Queen’s Music,” a position that is equivalent to poet laureate in the UK. Weir has composed numerous operas, small-scale vocal pieces, and large orchestral works with chorus,

♫ *Love Bade Me Farewell*

13. **Sally Beamish (b. 1956)**
British composer of chamber, choral, and orchestral music. Beamish was an accomplished violist who became a composer in 1989 after her viola was stolen.

♫ *Gala Water*

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*I made a conscious decision that something positive had to come out of [the theft of my viola]. What I wanted most of all was to become a full-time composer.*

– Sally Beamish
14. Elena Kats-Chernin (b. 1957)  
Australian composer of operas, ballets, vocal music, orchestral works, and film scores. Best known for a suite of twenty-six piano miniatures that describe unsent love letters found in Erik Satie’s apartment after his death.

◊ unsent love letters: Meditations on Erik Satie, “Absynthe Cocktail”

15. Melinda Wagner (b. 1957)  
American composer of chamber and orchestral music who won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1999 for Concerto for Flute, Strings, and Percussion.

◊ Romanze with Faux Variations, Piano Trio No 2

16. Julia Wolfe (b. 1958)  
American composer who won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2015 for Anthracite Fields. Wolfe is best known for a minimalist style of music that has been influenced by rock music.

◊ Anthracite Fields

17. Karen Tanaka (b. 1961)  
Japanese-French composer known for an eclectic style of composing that crosses multiple cultures. Her work is unified by her love of nature and concern for the environment.

◊ Lavender Field

18. Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)  
American composer who has been a professor at the Curtis School of Music for over thirty years. Higdon won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2010 for Violin Concerto.

Violin Concerto

We’re living in a time when pretty much anything can happen in music. There are a lot musical languages in which people work. When I think of common practice I think back to the time I was studying the flute, where I learned that in the Baroque period many things were not notated, since they were understood — that was because of common practice.

– Jennifer Higdon

19. Du Yun (b. 1977)  
Chinese-born American composer who won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2017 for an opera titled Angel’s Bone.

◊ Angel’s Bone (excerpt from the film Spa Theory)
20. **Anna Meredith (b. 1978)**
British composer who writes in a variety of genres, including opera, vocal, orchestral, chamber, pop, and film.

♫ Concerto for Beatboxer and Orchestra
♫ Hands Free
♫ Tiny Desk Concert for NPR

21. **Anna Clyne (b. 1980)**
British composer of orchestral, chamber, choral, solo, and electronic works.

♫ Cello Concerto, First Movement ("When You’re Broken Open")
♫ Prince of Clouds

22. **Cheryl Frances-Hoad (b. 1980)**
British composer whose music is influenced by literature, poetry, painting, dance, and popular music.

♫ Beyond the Night Sky

23. **Carolyn Shaw (b. 1982)**
American violinist, singer, and composer. Shaw won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2012 for Partita for 8 Voices.

♫ Partita for 8 Voices

24. **Ellen Reid (b. 1983)**
American composer of a variety of genres, including music for film and television. Reid won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2019 for prisms, an opera about PTSD after sexual assault.

♫ prisms, Act I, “Lost in the Blue”

25. **Alissa Firsova (b. 1986)**
Russian-born English pianist and composer who writes music about paradise, attempting to create sounds of “otherworldly beauty.”

♫ Stabat Mater
♫ Bride of the Wind

To study music we must learn the rules. To create music, we must break them.

— Nadia Boulanger
Resources