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Advancing the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion of the Musicological Canon

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ABSTRACT

The lack of equity and diversity reflected in the contemporary classical canon is a hot topic for musicologists, historians, and performers alike. Imbued within the model of the classical canon is a structure predominantly upholding white, cisgender, and heterosexual men, thus not only participating in but furthering sociopolitical agendas committed to patriarchal standards which disproportionately affect marginalized communities by comparison. This thesis unravels these processes in which the canon engages and analyzes the power dynamics reinforced by the precedent set by the canon's history, as well as its modern applications to the realm of contemporary classical music. Reflections, analysis, and discussions of potential avenues for expansion of this canon are further explored with regards to a myriad of marginalized communities and their intersections, such that a more equitable canon, and thus a more inclusive artistic environment in the field of classical music, can be reached.

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Chapter 1

Prelude

As a queer, trans nonbinary, Hispanic music student who was raised socially as a female, my identity lies at the intersection of multiple marginalized communities; like many others, each with their own complex stories, I have been impacted by the classical canon in more ways than one. The aim of this project is to illuminate issues specific to these intersections and others as a means of unraveling the framework of the canon, as they represent the bulk of my experience and thus what issues I have the authority to speak on – but not *for* others, as I am not a poster child, I am just an individual. This thesis is also meant to highlight the power dynamics established by the canon's current function, which might be understood as the representation, and therefore, protection and validation of particular members of society – largely, white, cisgender, heterosexual men. In addressing the intersections of my identity and anecdotes of others' identities, I also hope to convey the importance of listening to communities for their suggestions regarding reparations; not only in the context of the canon, but in all walks of life in our inequitable society, it is crucial that we understand that for equity to be truly realized, we must take into account the unique needs of each community in response to the ways in which these communities have been negatively impacted. Resolution is not as simple as fulfilling a quota or listening to one person and making them a spokesperson or poster child for all within the community.

My interest lies in establishing an analysis of the power dynamics of the canon as it manifests in music history and theory practices, pedagogical practices, and academia; establishing a framework for this analysis requires discussions on various aspects of diversity,

equity, and inclusion (DEI). This includes, but is not limited to, intersectionality, transphobia, racism, sexism, etc. The effects of hierarchies present in classical music are not mutually exclusive. One can be doubly marginalized and, for example, experience the intersections of racism, sexism, and classism; any of these monocategorical labels do not identify these intersections on their own, thus excluding individuals whose experiences involve complexities not fully included in any of these singular categories (i.e. white feminism versus intersectionality, which considers the experiences of black women and the intersection between sexism and racism more directly). One can see how an individual can experience any combination of these factors and thus be even more than doubly marginalized, which (necessarily) complicates the deconstruction process of the power dynamics inherent to any field, not just classical music. To appropriately set up a structure to address what I am able, I have adopted the guidelines set by William Weber's analysis of canonicity (discussed in chapter 2) to serve as the general framework for this thesis, adapting this model to better reflect current-day practices. This enables a more effective synthesis of analysis and anecdotes while allowing for natural intersections between aforementioned factors to play out.

In formulating this thesis, I have drawn inspiration from Xavia A. Publius' analysis of the lack of transgender representation and inclusion in Western classical music. Her work will be referenced throughout this project, not only for her subject's relevance to my own, but also for her brilliant attention to the significance of nuance; in one of her primary sections entitled "A Bill of Rights," she declares, "I deserve training that recognizes my specific realities as a trans woman. . .I deserve musical depictions of my identity that are accurate, or at the very least respectful and nuanced."¹ As will be discussed throughout this paper, the human experience is

¹ Xavia Publius, "Suggestions for Transgender Inclusion in Classical Music: A Mini-Cycle" (University of Northern Iowa, 2015) 8-9.

not “one size fits all.” To be a woman is not one experience, nor is it one experience to be Hispanic, queer, transgender, or any ethnicity, class, race, biological sex, etc. I will return to this idea of nuance many times. The intersections of identity are vast, and even more vast are the intersections between these identities and the power dynamics that the musicological canon upholds. These communities largely experience erasure or, at best, generalizations lacking nuance – thus (in part) why we see certain women composers not wanting to be on “female only” concert programs, for example. While I commend the ongoing initiatives to increase representation (which are necessary and serve an important function for expanding repertoire in particular), I urge us to keep in mind the longevity of this endeavor. While expanding the canon to include a greater number of underrepresented composers is a worthy effort, the canon itself remains problematically entangled with the institutions, history, and culture of classical music. In this way, the analysis of this topic requires ongoing conversation from many angles, many disciplines, and many communities. It is thus important to realize that while this thesis addresses certain issues, these are but a few pieces of the puzzle.

My hope is that this project may contribute to these ongoing and complex discussions about the classical canon. Like Publius, I echo the notion that the conventions used for a traditional thesis have the capacity to be restrictive; that is, the scholarly jargon one might use for a traditionally academic paper are too vague. For a topic so broad and interdisciplinary while simultaneously interpersonal and political, I must be able to speak plainly at times. My aim is for this topic to be widely accessible, not just to scholars and academics but also to parents and students, to those who are privileged and to those who are less so. Thus, my language will reflect the nature of the topic as appropriate, what I like to call socially (or approachably) academic.

You may notice that my chapters are associated with traditional dance movements of a Baroque-style suite; this is intended to juxtapose the traditionalism of the canon (with its roots in

the most favored of white-centric, male-composed music) and the advancements we seek. The road map for this project is as follows: I establish what defines the classical canon, focusing on a literary review of some of the more foundational works regarding historical canonical analysis (Chapter 2). With insights extrapolated from these sources, I begin the framework of my analysis of canonical power dynamics with the impact of the pedagogical canon on gender and race and discuss the role of intersectionality studies as an example of nuance that is largely left out of equity conversations (Chapter 3). I then explore the range of diversity within the performing canon (Chapter 4) and seek to collect anecdotes and experiences from people in the industry of classical music today (Chapter 5). Finally, we dive into the concept of “New Music” with arguments for and against the concept (Chapter 6). Embedded in all these chapters are multiple sections pertaining to canon's direct impact on specific communities.

Finally, it is my hope that by the end of this thesis you will be at least a little more dissatisfied with the state of our circumstances than you were before. That said, it is also my hope that the anecdotes and perspectives I present in this thesis take root in you, such that you find encouragement, and perhaps newfound dedication, to strive not merely for a more diverse canon but rather for a radically expansive and inclusion vision of music's place in our society.

Chapter 2

An Allemande: Establishing Canonicity

To adequately discuss expansions upon the classical canon, we must first delve into a definition of the canon itself. William Weber's *The History of Musical Canon* is helpful in this regard; Weber skillfully breaks down the canon into historical subsections, detailing the mechanisms by which it has functioned. His analysis, with some adaptations, will serve as the overarching framework of the following chapters.

First, Weber distinguishes between what are considered the 'classics' and the 'canon': "If classics are individual works deemed great, 'canon' is the framework that supports their identification in critical and ideological terms."² Naturally, classics and the canon frequently interact despite this ideological separation, and thus will be considered in tandem throughout this project. Weber goes on to define the major types of canon by dividing it into three subsections: the scholarly canon, the pedagogical canon, and the performance canon; he further defines the major aspects of the unified canon as craft, repertory, criticism, and ideology. The scholarly canon, which phased out early in antiquity, is of less significance to his discussion due to its short-lived nature, though it laid the foundation upon which the modern canon evolved by applying the theoretical (that is, the philosophical and scientific) to the study of music. Thus, the scholarly canon originated as a primarily academic pursuit associated with the medieval quadrivium, though not particularly associated with performing musicians.

As the scholarly canon began phasing out, a pedagogical canon emerged around the year 1520. As studies focusing on harmony and early music were evolving, performers became more

² William Weber, "History of the Musical Canon", in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, (Oxford, 1999), 338.

interested in emulating the style of previous composers, and potentially even integrated new and old styles – but the actual works of said composers were not performed. The pedagogical canon would coexist with the performing canon when it emerged at the beginning of the eighteenth century, though both are independent of each other. As the pedagogical canon evolved, it also brought together the fields of composition and pedagogy, as performers were taught to play in the styles of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms, but allowed for more freedom and experimentation of ideas upon the recovery of Renaissance and Middle Age works.

In contrast to the pedagogical, the performing canon is typically thought of as the standardized repertory for classical musicians, thus involving the actual performance of works which had gained enough respect to be considered ‘classics’. This repertoire is presented as an absolute source of authority, reinforced by the public rendition of these works as the height of classical taste. Weber notes that the performing canon “is also a critical and ideological force”; in later sections, the intersection between the performing canon as a source of authority and as an ideological force are explored.

Weber expands upon the canon’s definitional dilemmas further by breaking it down into four intellectual models which encompass its entirety. The first, known as musical craft, is mostly rooted in polyphonic traditions, thus upholding the models set by composers such as Palestrina, J. S. Bach, Mozart, Brahms, and Schoenberg. Mastery of craft is often a reflection and homage to these models. The second aspect, repertory, has been in constant disunity among schools throughout history – thus in the context of being an ideological force, this aspect of the canon is generally more malleable. Involved in this aspect is the historical focus of a particular composer to be the centric authority to canonic traditions, but this is known to have shifted over time in various musical settings. Palestrina, for instance, was considered the major musical figure of the canonic repertory post-1560 in the Sistine Chapel in Rome; this role is similar to the ones

performed by William Byrd, Handel, and Beethoven in their respective eras. Beyond 1870, the need for a figure to structure the canon and its repertoire was over, as the canon had been developed by this point. Repertory is not just the performance of works by these composers; in order for certain works to become embedded within the canon, the musical culture must also define and assert them as appropriate beyond just public rendition. The next aspect of the canon, criticism, serves to empower the framework of the canon set by the repertory in this way, though it is noted that other factors can contribute to the longevity of musical works within the canon, such as convenience for players, the length of the work, and/or the inspirations behind the piece.

Finally we approach Weber's fourth aspect of the canon: ideology. He describes the musical canon in this section as "a moral, a spiritual, and a civic force". As a moral one, those deemed master-works were also considered to be "morally and socially purifying as a force for the good on the highest plane," and to "stand above the money-making side of musical life, they could help society transcend commercial culture and thereby regenerate musical life."³ The canon's impact as a spiritual force is rather intuitive, considering the prominence of sacred polyphony and its application to the more secular avenues for concert life throughout the ages.

The intertwining of these forces laid the foundations for the canon's public authority, and thus the canon became a civic force in and of itself. Musical news became more integrated and within the public eye, which also led to the emergence of "connoisseurs" – who were noted to be referred to only as men – whose authority guarded the canonic traditions and created the hierarchical structure (and attitude) towards particular genres. With this framework in mind, Weber points out, "The ideology of musical canon was manipulated to social and political ends from its very start: the classical music tradition never had social autonomy".⁴ While certainly not

³ Ibid, 352.

⁴ Ibid, 354.

as monolithic as one might have assumed, the canon still serves sociopolitical functions which can and will be addressed throughout this paper.

Having gained a deeper understanding of the canon from Weber's historical approach, we can move on to other literature for further expansions. In Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman's piece, *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*, the authors discuss the concept of canonic reflexivity – "challenging a canon while being challenged by it."⁵ Similar themes are brought up by other authors as well, such as Marcia J. Citron in her foundational work *Gender, Professionalism, and the Musical Canon*; her exploration of canon formation and the sociopolitical perspectives which unintentionally cultivated the canon's processes of exclusion highlights the challenges involved in modern attempts to reconcile women composers with the standards of the canon.⁶ Citron, Bergeron, and Bohlman all describe the lack of female representation in western musical anthologies. In *Disciplining Music*, the authors note,

But even a cursory glance at these musical activities reveals that works by women are absent from the canon. One is hard-pressed to find them in concert programs and in the standard music histories and anthologies. With regard to anthologies, for example, the new edition of *The Norton Anthology of Western Music*, issued in 1988, includes only one piece by a woman, a monophonic "canso" by the Countess of Dia, in its two-volume compendium, of 163 works . . . Another anthology, Leon Plantinga's *Romantic Music*, from 1984, excludes any representation by women, although the accompanying textbook

⁵ Philip V. Bohlman, "Ethnomusicology's Challenge to the Canon; the Canon's Challenge to Ethnomusicology", in *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*, ed. Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman (The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 118.

⁶ Marcia J. Citron, "Gender, Professionalism, and the Musical Canon" *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1990): 104.

cites Corona Schröter as composer of the first setting of *Der Erlkönig*, and later provides a brief discussion of Fanny Hensel and Clara Schumann.⁷

They continue to extrapolate the effects of this on the classical canon – unsurprisingly, the canon itself is unscathed, with reparations made in the form of an emerging “counter-canon” as coined by feminist Lillian Robinson⁸, referring to an alternative repertoire composed entirely of works written by women. One must question if this counter-canon is truly inclusive. Citron argues that the functions of such a counter canon are still embedded within the “problematic convention of diversity as a service to the hierarchies imposed by male supremacy.” Thus, the othering of women composers is only furthered by the production of a counter canon, for it places women as unequal to the men who are valued within the classical canon’s model. For, as Citron states, the goal is not separation, but “integration into the mainstream of Western musical history.”⁹

Naturally, it is imperative to have discussions regarding how the traditional canon may undervalue certain communities to make adequate adaptations. It is worth noting that deconstructing and implementing new institutionalized musical practices may always be a work in progress, but progress can still be made incrementally, and in fact, we are witnessing changes from small to large scales already. The *Norton Anthology of Western Music* is a very widely used collection of scores for music history educational purposes; they have gone through eight editions, and in their most recent, their three-volume set has seen an increase in composers beyond the standard list. Volume One, following the Antiquity through the Baroque eras, highlights female composers including Hildegard von Bingen, Comtessa de Dia, and Barbara

⁷ Ibid, 102.

⁸ Lillian Robinson, “Treason Our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon”, *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1983): 87.

⁹ Marcia J. Citron, “Gender, Professionalism, and the Musical Canon” *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1990): 104.

Strozzi, while Volume Two, covering the Classical and Romantic periods, includes works by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Clara Schumann, and Amy Beach. Volume Three highlights female composers Bessie Smith, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Sofia Gubaidulina, Kaija Saariaho, Caroline Shaw, and Jennifer Higdon. This is a dramatic increase in female representation across just the *Norton Anthology's* latest editions. In later sections I will explore multiple other means through which musicologists, theorists, historians, and musicians have contributed to movements to bring about this change.

Chapter 3

A Courante: The Pedagogical Canon

In accordance with Weber's model of the canon, I will begin with the effects of the pedagogical canon, though as we will see, the lines can become blurry as the pedagogical and performing canons intersect. Historically, the scholarly canon predates the pedagogical, however in a modern adaptation of Weber's analysis, the pedagogical canon reasonably equates to more academic aspects of the music such as theory and composition – craft, as Weber calls it - which this chapter explores.

The pedagogical canon was cultivated by composers and their influence on musicians. However, rather than publicly performing collections of works specific to these composers, it was the composers' style which musicians strived to replicate. The shift between the pedagogical and the performing canon represents a shift in values, from that of the mastery of craft to the mastery of repertoires. For example, the early tradition *stile antico* was considered compositional, but not inherent to models within particular works. Learned polyphony became the main mechanism for ancient music to flourish, and the works incorporated into quasi-public programs were performed with minimal stylistic changes, if any. Interestingly, a parallel in evolution was evident between the pedagogical canon and the literary classics; in Weber's work, *The Intellectual Origins of Musical Canon in Eighteenth-Century England*, he notes, "Parallel, and in large part independent, processes of canonization took place in music and literature, each made possible by the changing nature of the classical tradition. . .if the canonization of Shakespeare came from an expansion and reordering of literary models, that of Corelli and

Handel marked the introduction of classics within musical taste.”¹⁰ Despite these parallels, processes of evolution were not the same for both literature and music. Weber describes the intimidating and seemingly unsurpassable power of the literary classics, which “weighted heavily upon men of letters” - yet “music was free of such binding tradition and overpowering models. . . Creative interplay between new works and the emerging canon gave musical life a fresh, untroubled mood, allowing past and present to work closely together.”¹¹ This intermingling of past and present musical elements would perhaps seem freeing in comparison to the struggle of poets and other literary artists of the time, but I was intrigued by this concept of compositional freedom – for who was truly freed by this canonical rebirth?

The Counter-Canon

In most mainstream historical literature, we do not see female composers adequately represented, let alone taught with the same level of importance given to white male composers. As feminist scholar Lillian Robinson says in her work, *Treason Our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon*,

A gentleman is inescapably – that is, by definition – a member of a privileged class and of the male sex. From this perspective, it is probably quite accurate to think of the canon as an entirely gentlemanly artifact, considering how few works by non-members of that class and sex make it into the informal agglomeration of course syllabi, anthologies, and

¹⁰ William Weber, “The Intellectual Origins of Musical Canon”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (1994): 501-502.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 502.

widely-commented upon “standard authors” that constitutes the canon as it is generally understood.¹²

Moreover, as Robinson illustrates, the effect of what she coins to be the “counter-canon” - representing all women composers who were not already secured in the canon by historical authority - in response to this gentlemanly canon is less than productive. To create a separate canon, isolated from the already established values and ideals inherent to the traditional canon, only continues to perpetuate the system in place by placing women in a secondary category. As we continue to rediscover the works of women composers throughout history, it is of course still vital that we present their works, but the question is then raised, how? As Robinson asks, “if this polarity is not, in fact, applicable to the process, what *are* the grounds for presenting a large number of new female candidates for (as it were) canonization?”¹³ In other words, in order to address how to increase representation and effectively promote inclusion for women in the canon, we need to understand claims regarding the current state of canonization for women composer: for women composers to be included within the canon, must their work meet pre-existing standards which currently work in favor of the men composers represented, or are such criteria inherently exclusive and thus requires modification so that the canon is not exclusive to only men and the counter-canon is not exclusive to only women?

This problem is highlighted within Anna Beer’s “*Sounds and Sweet Airs: The Forgotten Women of Classical Music*,” which explores the narratives of eight women composers from Francesca Caccini in the 17th century to Elizabeth Maconchy in the 20th, exposing how they overcame the restraints and creative barriers of their respective eras to become successful composers. A central theme that runs through Beer’s book is the quality and dedication to the

¹² Lillian Robinson, “Treason Our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon”, *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1983): 84.

¹³ *Ibid*, 88.

pedagogical canon required of a woman composer in order to be deemed successful. A female composer's mastery of the craft of composition was rare enough; she must have had a lot of luck as well, particularly for aspects an up-and-coming composer could not control, such as being born in the right place at the right time or having a female ruler to support her ambitions. In the case of 18th-century composer Marianna Martines, one can see how her traditionalist training provided her with the lines in which she should color:

Martines' need for decorum and respectability infuses her compositions. . . they reveal not only her tutelage at the hands of an elderly man who was proudly traditionalist. . .but also Martines' own preference for an aesthetic that privileged refinement and balance between ancient and modern practices, her desire to create a music 'neither common' nor 'unnaturally new'.¹⁴

Respectability, for women, came from fitting the mold almost perfectly. Should Martines have wanted to venture into new forms like Haydn and Mozart, would her compositions have gained the same level of respect as she ultimately found in her career? With the help of a female ruler, she was already supported in some form, but her access to the freedom expressed within Haydn and Mozart's compositions would have been limited, if not restricted altogether, as we see in the cases of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and other women composers.

Evolving Pedagogy

To advance pedagogical practices requires an understanding of the power education and

¹⁴ Anna Beer, *Sounds and Sweet Airs: The Forgotten Women of Classical Music* (Publisher, year):

composition both hold. In the words of cultural critic Henry A. Giroux, “Education is not just a struggle over knowledge, but also a struggle about how pedagogy is related to the power of self-definition and the acquisition of individual and social forms of agency. More specifically, education is a moral and political practice, not merely an instrumentalized practice for the production of pre-specified skills.”¹⁵ Modifying the pedagogical canon does not serve just to improve the inclusivity of underrepresented composers for the sake of knowledge. The pedagogical canon, as it currently exists and as it continues to evolve, will always be a moral practice and political statement. This is perhaps especially true in relation to composition, for “musical composition,” as author and music scholar Freya Jarman-Ivens notes, “can be understood as a technology of power. . .like other art forms, [music] is not simply a product of culture, but instead a site for the negotiation – the representation and propagation – of cultural politics.”¹⁶

Efforts have been made to make music history and music theory more equitable through directly inclusive and anti-racist means. One of these examples is the Philomel Project, a free online database which collects solo and chamber works by women composers; it was formed in response to the lack of women composers taught in music history courses, even at major music conservatories, and was designed to help normalize the works of women composers in an accessible database for student usage. Another online initiative, known as the Institute for Composer Diversity, is a collection of multiple databases, specific to art song, choral works, orchestral works, wind band works, and composer diversity, all dedicated to advocating and celebrating music written by composers from historically underrepresented groups.

¹⁵ Henry A. Giroux, “Resistance is Not Futile, Fighting Back in an Age of Manufactured Ignorance”, *CounterPunch.org*. July 8, 2021, <https://www.counterpunch.org/2021/07/08/resistance-is-not-futile-fighting-back-in-an-age-of-manufactured-ignorance/>.

¹⁶ Freya Jarman-Ivens, “Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flaw” (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 112.

We have seen the effects of the pedagogical canon on women as a primary example of the erasure produced by so called freedoms. Naturally there is much nuance to this conversation – the experience of white women, compared to BIPOC men, compared to BIPOC women, for example, are not all the same. This quickly leads to detailed parallels in the world of the performing canon, which is why we shall continue this nuanced discussion in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

A Sarabande: The Performing Canon

While the pedagogical canon favored style, the performing canon favored composition. This evolution was sparked by the onset of empiricism, which, as Weber points out, was an intellectual force, as well as a “philosophical discipline, an epistemology, a manner of approaching reality, of organizing knowledge and experience; it provided intellectual tools more than specific ideas, and ultimately was a kind of intellectual temperament.”¹⁷ This was relevant not only to musical discourse but especially to books – it became a “central linguistic vehicle” for the book market, thus paralleling similarly to the evolution of the pedagogical canon alongside literature.

Empiricism brought about a new line of thinking regarding the musical experience: “[Empiricism] helped establish two principles – that the ear rather than the eye should be the main instrument of musical learning, and that the highest respect should be bestowed upon the composer rather than the theorist.”¹⁸ Thus, theorists who favored replicating style were no longer at the forefront when it came to musical authority. The public became more involved instead; as the public rendition of specific works increased, a core canon emerged, which would become the most directly influential to modern notions of the traditional classical canon.

¹⁷ William Weber, “The Intellectual Origins of Musical Canon”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (1994): 506.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Repertory

This particular aspect of Weber's model is most applicable to the performing canon. As witnessed in Chapter 3, the pedagogical canon was less about the teaching of repertoire and more about the teachings of style and theory. Musicians who were taught, as well as theorists and composers whose stylistic content was being taught, were not inclusive to all people. Once a core performing canon emerged, teachings became centric around these particular figures who had been established as *the* sources of musical authority and taste – we see a trend of diversity lacking within this repertory.

While in recent years we have seen small but positive changes to the institutional recognition of underrepresented composers in history books (such as the *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, as discussed in Chapter 2), on larger scales, similar changes are slow moving, and in many cases just beginning. As mentioned in chapter two, scholars across interdisciplinary fields within music are working together to bring about change and appropriate representation and respect to various communities that have historically been marginalized. We have already discussed the impact of the pedagogical canon on women, but the counter-canon produces more nuanced and complicated power dynamics. The exploration of these power dynamics yields insight into the ways in which other kinds of communities have been impacted, and indeed harmed, by the socially and politically alienating regimes associated with the canon.

Defining Intersectionality

The counter-canon is generally approached from a lens of white feminism, in response to the prevalence of white men represented in historical literature. As such, it is imperative to properly contextualize intersectionality in order to appropriately reflect on its role in the power

dynamics set by the classical canon. This section largely references the work of leading scholar and creator of the field of intersectional studies, Kimberlé Crenshaw, due to her foundational critiques on both white feminism, sexism, and the intersectional experiences of black women whose experience is doubly marginalized. Other scholars, such as Dr. Patricia Hill Collins, have followed up on Crenshaw's work; Collins' article "Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas" contextualizes the multifaceted nature of intersectionality by discussing the dilemmas involved in trying to assert its definition.

Collins opens her discussion on intersectionality by stating, "The term intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities."¹⁹ While the possible intersections one can have with these identity markers are numerous, intersectionality emerged from racial formation theory, and is most directly associated with the experiences of black women who are doubly marginalized by racism and sexism. There has been debate surrounding the definition of the term, particularly if it should be inclusive to other intersections between identity markers, even if the individual is not black and/or a woman. This debate, and the overall discussion of the definitional dilemmas involved with intersectionality, can provide insight into how redefinitions within the canon can be formed by paying proper attention to the marginalized communities deserving better treatment from canonical practices while simultaneously recognizing the specific needs for each community. Investing in this debate also provides insight into the experience of doubly marginalized folk and thus enhances our discussions on reconfiguring the canon.

¹⁹ Patricia Hill Collins, "Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 41:1-20 (2015).

This debate is largely addressed in a work by Kimberlé Crenshaw along with scholars Sumi Cho and Leslie McCall called “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis.” They explore the multifaceted nature of an intersectional framework for one’s engagement in the field of intersectionality and analyze how the field has focused, expanded, and adapted since its emergence:

Intersectionality is inextricably linked to an analysis of power, yet one challenge to intersectionality is its alleged emphasis of identity versus structures of inequality. . . For example, some critiques of intersectionality are premised on the assumption that the failure to give all intersectional subjects their day in the sun is a fundamental shortcoming of the field, a critique frequently delivered through the “what about white men?” question. Others defend the absence of intersectionality in, for example, whiteness studies as a logical extension of intersectionality’s exclusive focus on subordinated subjects. Both critiques are premised on understanding identity as the playing field of intersectionality and difference as its perpetual dynamic. As [Barbara] Tomlinson notes, however, “If critics think intersectionality is a matter of identity rather than power, they cannot see which differences make a difference. Yet it is exactly our analyses of power that reveal which differences carry significance (2013, 1012).²⁰

The authors emphasize that intersectionality is a matter of power dynamics and not difference in identity markers. This difference is critical to understand – as they mention, power hierarchies are what determine the societal “value” to different identity markers (and the cultures and experiences inherently associated with them). This translates into an analysis of the power dynamics disproportionately affecting BIPOC women within classical music as well. One must

²⁰ Kimberlé Crenshaw, Sumi Cho, & Leslie McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis”, *Signs*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (2013).

ask, specifically regarding Weber's analysis of musical craft, whose models are being upheld? In this process, whose voices are being silenced? If we wish to continue to learn from the examples set by the figures most taught – predominantly cisgender, heterosexual white men – how can we modify educational practices such that hierarchies are not assumed regarding the place of BIPOC women in the world of composition?

The roots of intersectionality in black feminism must be honored, as must the uniqueness of black feminist issues in comparison to white feminist ones. The concern of many intersectional scholars, including Collins, is that theories like intersectionality, when traveling fast, can lose their originality as their complexity becomes distilled “in ways that often misrepresent its initial intent.”²¹ In this way, scholars like Sirma Bilge (2013) have pointed out that the field of intersectionality may need to be saved from itself, as white scholars continue to adopt the framework of intersectionality to non-BIPOC issues. While understanding the framework behind intersectionality - which allows for nuance and context to be at the forefront for critiques of subordination – enables scholars to understand the significance of context and nuance, it is crucial to understand that the context is dependent on the experiences of black women. In other words, nuance and intersectionality are not the same. The idea of white scholars claiming the framework as a useful tool are – intentionally or not – erasing the need for intersectionality to serve the community of BIPOC women specifically for their experiences with double marginalization at this specific crossroads of identity and power dynamics. As Tomlinson (2013) puts it, “Critics assume that their task is to critique intersectionality, not to foster intersectionality's ability to critique subordination.”²²

²¹ Patricia Hill Collins, “Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 41:1-20 (2015).

²² Barbara Tomlinson, “To Tell the Truth and Not Get Trapped: Desire, Distance, and Intersectionality at the Scene of Argument”, *Signs* Vol. 38, No. 4 (2013).

As inherently exclusionist practices are produced by the musicological canon, understanding intersectionality becomes crucial in identifying the blind spots in music theory, history, and performance practices. The prevalence of white Western serious music has institutional roots; being the “default,” white and male-composed music is often at the forefront of educational initiatives in theory and history. In Chapter 5, anecdotes from professional musicians such as Alice Jones and Danielle Brown convey the lack of diversity represented in music festivals and concert programming; such events, which do not participate in inclusive and actively anti-racist, anti-sexist practices continue to fund the means of racism and sexism which the musical canon is still entangled in today. It is vital that repertoire selections be expanded, not only for the sake of recovering and cataloguing lost works, but to also reform the canon’s prioritization of white Western serious music, dominated by men.

Educational Advancements

In the realm of music theory, there is an initiative known as Diverse Music Theory Examples, whose mission is to “provide resources to teaching faculty and other curious people to produce a more inclusive curriculum by including works of composers who have worked within the common practice who are not normally encountered in music theory courses. These composers include women composers, LGBTQ composers, composers of color, and non-Western European composers.”²³ Initiatives such as these are indeed helpful to the expansion of

²³ David Dean Mendoza, “Diverse Music Theory Examples”, <https://diversemusictheoryexamples.com/>.

DEI practices within music, particularly when institutionalized objectives tend to prioritize education on predominantly white male composers and theorists, but in the next chapter anecdotes from professionals in the field expose the reasoning why these initiatives are far from enough. For, as diversity expert Verna Myers has said, “Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.”²⁴

²⁴ Janet H. Cho, ” ‘Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance’ Verna Myers tells Cleveland bar.” https://www.cleveland.com/business/2016/05/diversity_is_being_invited_to.html

Chapter 5

The Minuets: Industry and Institutionalizations

I sought to expand Weber's analysis of the canon by combining the understandings attained from the pedagogical and performing canon and extrapolating its effect on the modern classical music industry; I am interested in how performers, scholars, and music educators are impacted by the evolution of the canon and its impact on power dynamics thus far.

Expanding Beyond Gender Binarism

As discussed in Chapter 2, women are not properly represented throughout the canon. While discussions on this are imperative, discussions tend to centralize around the experiences of white, cisgender women, excluding BIPOC women as well as any transgender or gender nonconforming (GNC) individuals. Understanding the context behind these identity markers is crucial to properly identifying how power dynamics serve to marginalize these communities and how we can do better to support them. As such, a brief overview on gender as well as transgender issues and terminology is presented before diving in on its relevance to music and the canon.

Western societal attitudes towards gender ideology are ruled by biological essentialism. For centuries, the dichotomy in the idea of dimorphic gender differences has enforced binary stereotypes of women and men in society and become rooted in our minds through our

upbringings and exposure to manifestations of said stereotypes, especially through media. As a result, true gender equity has yet to be realized in Western society where the gender hierarchy is justified by these binary stereotypes. This impacts cisgender men and cisgender women negatively alongside the transgender and gender nonconforming (GNC) communities, though the impact upon the transgender/GNC communities is much more severe. In 2021, legislators from 34 states introduced a record-shattering 147 anti-transgender bills. Of these 147 bills, 35 have attempted to prohibit trans youth from gender-affirming medical care, 43 enable religious beliefs to be valid justification for active denial of service to people that do not align with their belief structures, and 15 ban transgender individuals from access to the restrooms and locker rooms aligning with their gender. At least 17 anti-LGBTQ bills were officially enacted into law. A press release in the Human Rights Campaign called 2021 the “worst year in recent history for LGBTQ state legislative attacks,” noting that states enacted more LGBT discriminatory bills in 2021 than in the last three years combined.²⁵ Now in 2023, we are grieving those lost in the devastating Colorado Springs shooting at the queer club, Club Q, on Trans Day of Remembrance, while navigating the collectively frightening onset of even more state legislative attacks against trans youth and lifesaving, gender-affirming care. It is thus vital to address the concept of gender and how our collective perception of the term needs to change, so that all can better empathize and support the transgender community in this distressing time.

²⁵ Wyatt Ronan, “2021 Officially Becomes Worst Year in Recent History for LGBTQ State Legislative Attacks as Unprecedented Number of States Enact Record-Shattering Number of Anti-LGBTQ Measures into Law.” *Human Rights Campaign*, May 7, 2021, <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/2021-officially-becomes-worst-year-in-recent-history-for-lgbtq-state-legislative-attacks-as-unprecedented-number-of-states-enact-record-shattering-number-of-anti-lgbtq-measures-into-law>.

Most often, we hear gender and biological sex used interchangeably. This is similarly seen in other languages, such as German or Dutch, and is derived from the Latin *genus*, meaning “kind”, “type”, or “sort”. Though originally more commonplace to use the two terms interchangeably, our sense of gender has been evolving since the 1950s, developing a connotation more related to social role and personal identity as opposed to biological sex. The gender binary references the belief in distinctive attributes based on biological sex, and the consequent belief that the biological makeup of an individual is what should determine their gender – e.g. women should behave, look, and/or present a certain way, while men should be different. While this ideology is constantly reinforced by societal standards, this does not accurately represent the alignment of many individuals, namely those who identify as transgender. The transgender experience does not exist in one unified, objective state – it can be exceedingly vast, which has implications on how the concept of gender should be defined.

The imposed binary system of gender based upon biological sex enforces a social system in which the roles, appearance, and internalized identities of all “men and women” are expected to fully align with the “roles, possibilities, and constraints” attributed to their biological sex based on what societal expectations dictate. However, for transgender individuals, these aspects are not aligned. The term “transgender” is an umbrella term for all people who experience this sense of significant discomfort and misalignment between how they view themselves and how society views them, based on their biological sex. There are a myriad of ways this sense of misalignment, otherwise known as gender dysphoria, can be experienced; physical gender dysphoria relates to the discomfort and incongruence one experiences towards one’s anatomy, while social gender dysphoria relates to social conventions such as pronoun usage and other peoples’ assumptions of femininity or masculinity onto one’s gender. Naturally, as humans are

incredibly diverse individuals, the intensities and manifestations of dysphoria are not always the exact same experience for every transgender individual.

Those who do not identify as the other “binary” gender, yet still experience gender dysphoria (which cisgender people do not experience) may identify as nonbinary, or perhaps trans-nonbinary. As the name implies, “nonbinary” is also an umbrella term referring to the spectrum which exists beyond the binary due to the incredibly vast ways people can experience gender dysphoria. As a result, many within the community have coined terms that reflect their experiences with gender, including (but not limited to) genderfluid, agender, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming. For some, they may not experience such strong physical dysphoria with regards to one of their sex characteristics, but experience it very heavily towards one or more other physical characteristics. Others may experience extremely strong social dysphoria, and with that people were able to perceive them as more masculine or feminine regardless of the clothing or physical appearance they have.

The vastness of the transgender experience bears great significance for how we as a society should adjust our perceptions of gender; specifically, gaining insight into the “transgender experience” reveals that gender is indeed much more complex than the stereotypical, heteronormative gender binary. As a result of the dominance of this gender binary, many transgender, nonbinary, and otherwise gender-nonconforming people face erasure, discrimination, bigotry, and violence, as their narratives are not properly reflected in medical documentation and media representation.

Xavia A. Publius published a thesis for her master’s degree on this very issue. Titled “Suggestions for transgender inclusion in classical music: a mini-cycle,” it is an endeavor to bring about transgender inclusion in Western classical music through the realm of opera. Publius implies an existence of music that is “not neutral;” transness, and therefore what we know to be

institutionalized cisnormativity, can be imbued into music by the practices that shape it. But rather than a spectrum of experiences, transness is often considered in a more monolithic sense, as if there is a singular “essential trans subjectivity.”²⁶ This monolithic treatment of identity is a trend we see not just with transgender communities but with race and binary gender as well; the example of the counter-canon exemplifies this. In response to this, Publius states, “I do not intend to articulate the Transgender Method of Composition™. I do, however, intend to point the way to trans possibilities and to open spaces for trans creators, performers, and characters who are otherwise hard to find in Western classical music. . . .As such, I seek to place classical, popular, and non-Western musics in conversation so that trans possibilities may emerge out of the silences and contradictions.”²⁷ Publius provides a perfect example of how broad generalizations have often been avoided by the production of further mechanisms for othering (such as the counter-canon). As she implies, rather than sustaining such mechanisms, what is required is arguably the breakdown of the canon itself.

While we do not seek to generalize in our reparations for communities, it is vital to hear anecdotes from members of communities to attain an appropriate understanding of the issues at hand. In Sara Davis Buechner’s *A Transgender Note*, the classical music industry’s treatment of her throughout and after her transition illuminates the type of power dynamics used to undermine trans musicians. Buechner was treated with much more respect in her career prior to her transition compared to after her public transition; she even says her transition was “a choice long deferred from fear of professional ramifications and discrimination. . . .The classical music business likes to pretend that it is gender- and color- blind regarding the concert stage, and that

²⁶ Xavia Publius, “Suggestions for Transgender Inclusion in Classical Music: A Mini-Cycle” (University of Northern Iowa, 2015) 12.

²⁷ Ibid, 13.

the high-minded pursuit of Mozartian Truth is all that is professionally considered in the evaluation of performing musicians. My own experience tells me otherwise.”²⁸

Racial Politics

Narratives from BIPOC professionals shed light on how little racial politics are taken seriously within the context of ethnomusicology. Dr. Danielle Brown, previously an Assistant Professor of Music History and Cultures at Syracuse University, resigned her position due to the disappointment she experienced not only with academia, but specifically ethnomusicology practices. She describes her first Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) Conference as “a strange and uncomfortable experience,” noting that it wasn’t because she was one of the only BIPOC attending the conference; rather, it was

the ways that predominantly white scholars in attendance presumed that they understood BIPOC and were authorities on cultures to which they did not belong. . .white members of the society and in the field at large need to come to terms with how they contribute to systemic racism and do something about it. I can assure you that statements, lists of resources, curriculum guides, roundtables, panel discussions and so forth will not put a dent in the system. They might change individual minds and hearts and make people feel better, but. . .all they will do is redesign the system and create another economy within the system that benefits white people.

This is why online initiatives, while important for providing access to composers who are otherwise not even taught, are far from enough. It is the bare minimum – and while this does not pertain to the specific initiatives I mentioned, Brown discusses how she and other BIPOC have

²⁸ Sara Davis Buechner, “I am Transgender”, <http://saradavisbuechner.com/transgender-issues/>.

witnessed these initiatives getting taken advantage of by white scholars. This is not dissimilar to how intersectionality studies became fast-travelling and, on large scales, adopted by white scholars for the wrong reasons. Brown discusses her concern for these initiatives, which she says capitalize on the “diversity market,” which has resulted in the widespread treatment of diversity, equity, and inclusion as buzz words. She states,

This moment cannot be a trend. It cannot be a phase where educators spend their time learning new jargon - “systemic racism”, “white privilege”, “implicit bias”, etc. - and fail to grasp it beyond an intellectual understanding. This is not about the regurgitation of words to show that you are educated or “woke” for personal and professional gain. . . . Again, this is an example of the system replicating itself. The system replicates itself by telling white people that they can “learn diversity” and then teach it to others with merely the appearance that BIPOC voices are included.²⁹

Brown is far from the only woman to recognize the prominence of this issue. Alice Jones is a professional flutist who attended the Resonant Bodies Festival at Merkin Hall and noticed the homogeneity among not only the audience, but also the performers and the composers represented. In her piece, “Intersectionality and Contemporary Classical Music,” Jones comments on the “quota of otherness” placed upon what was a single representative of a marginalized community in the program to promote diversity, which is not organic. On the other hand, though, having “too much” of a marginalized community represented has the capacity to be perceived as a “minority event” and thus still perpetuates the “normalcy” of white male elitism in the field. Jones discusses a problem which I have also heard from colleagues and professionals in my own music studies, which is the issue of having one’s identity reduced to

²⁹ Danielle Brown, “An Open Letter on Racism in Music Studies”, June 12, 2022, <https://www.mypeopletellstories.com/blog/open-letter>

that single identity marker. In Jones's case, she discusses the struggles of the responsibility to initiate more diversity inclusion as a black woman, and how she does not want to be reduced the "black musician cliché":

Reducing my value as a musician into that of a minority cliché (that too-easily dismissed "angry black woman" who receives eye rolls in meetings because she's talking about "black issues" again), or preventing me from having legitimacy in the "normal" (ahem) classical world, or pigeon-holing my repertoire for the foreseeable future.³⁰

What both anecdotes tell us is that action means putting the marginalized communities at the front of the conversation. White initiatives on BIPOC and ethnic issues should not be intentionally or unintentionally diminishing BIPOC voices in the process; the same can be said for cisgender initiatives on LGBT+ - particularly trans – issues.

Beyond the homogeneity often reflected and supported in similar settings to that described above, racial politics are also involved in the standards within undergraduate music programs. The materialization of whiteness, as Dr. Julia Eklund Koza writes, is perpetuated by the creation of racial and ethnic separation musically, and not equally. Koza describes this as a process of "sorting and ordering" these categories, which directly contributes to the reinforcement of materialized whiteness and thus what critical race theorists such as Gloria Ladson-Billings call the "full social funding of race." In these programs, where whiteness is made to be the standard via instruction of repertoire and performers experience with techniques upheld by whiteness alike, Koza says, "Extending Ruth Gustafson's assertion that the "good" ear is a White ear, I add that the "good ear is discriminatory on multiple levels." (152).

³⁰ Alice Jones, "Intersectionality and Contemporary Classical Music", September 25, 2015, <https://www.alicejones.com/thoughts/intersectionality-and-contemporary-classical-music>.

Invisibly Disabled

We have discussed the impacts of the canon on primarily gender and race, but an additional and vital part of this discussion moving forward, in my mind, is increasing our discussion on mental health and disability accommodations within contemporary classical music. Alex Lubet remarks, “Schools of music are full of faculty and students with concealed performance injuries and invisible impairments such as depression, learning disabilities, and autistic-spectrum conditions. Academic and professional music folk mostly and understandably insist on protecting their careers by pretending to be ablebodied.”³¹ I, like many of my colleagues, have experience with several of these “invisible impairments”, whether that includes physical injury (in my case, chronic tendonitis in both hands, as well as visual displacement from bilateral cataract surgery), mental conditions (depression, anxiety disorders, gender dysphoria, etc.), or learning conditions (dyslexia, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), etc.). These may seem trivial to one without any such conditions; therein lies the point. Disability and physical injury are often considered to be an afterthought in the industry and in education. Naturally, this experience is varied depending on several factors, whether social, economic, or geographical; anecdotes still provide context regarding how current standards within the industry are inclusive to a specific standard of individual, and those who do not meet these standards are considered less than. This is the case in considerations of race and gender as well, however, the cases of disabled conditionality are largely considered to be deficits - in other words, problems to be fixed, rather than experiences to be accepted and accommodated for individual comfort and inclusion. I echo the argument of Bell: “I maintain that music education must focus on moving toward conceptualizing disability as an experience rather than a fixed individual deficit. Thus,

³¹ Bell, Adam Patrick. “(PDF) (Dis)Ability and Music Education: Paralympian Patrick Anderson ...” *ERIC*

music educators need to consider the socio-cultural norms of the musicmaking cultures in which teachers and learners dwell, and examine if and how they contribute to individuals' experiences of disability in music."³²

As with initiatives discussed in relation to other marginalized communities, empathy and accommodations have been identified for performers with a variety of conditions, but the stigma for requiring some form of accommodation remains. Percussionist Melissa Martin relayed her experience with muscle spasms and stigma in her piece, "Crippling Musicianship: Reflections on Compulsory Non-Disability in Classical Music and the Orchestra":

We were rehearsing Shostakovich *Symphony No. 10*. . . as a percussionist, I was not due to play for some time, until a more upbeat and triumphant section of the work. A muscle spasm ensued and the triangle fell to the floor, sounding a spectacular series of clattering 'tings' as it bounced to its resting place. This abrupt interruption to the serenity of the orchestra did not go unnoticed. The entire orchestra stopped and turned to look at me, the conductor quipping that my intervention was 'perhaps a bit premature'. . . In this moment, as in many others, I was cast as a faulty cog in a refined orchestral machine, destroying a stringently controlled silence that required each musician to have complete discipline over their body.³³

Martin continues by expressing how the sarcasm from her conductor's comment was reflected in the unsettling looks of obvious disapproval from her orchestral colleagues, and ties this experience to what she and her colleagues were taught about musical skill – that true mastery was dependent on the movement of the body functioning as an extension of the body. Naturally,

³² Ibid, 112.

³³ Melissa Martin, "Crippling Musicianship: Reflections on Compulsory Non-Disability in Classical Music and the Orchestra" *The Sociological Review*, July, 2020, <https://thesociologicalreview.org/magazine/july-2020/music-and-sound/crippling-musicianship-reflections-on-compulsory-non-disability-in-classical-music-and-the-orchestra/>.

this becomes more challenging when chronic health problems arise (something I can confirm, as well). Martin articulates that after the onset of her chronic conditions, “By the standards of classical musicianship, my skill was much diminished and my potential depleted, a loss that I mourned with much frustration. I came to feel that classical music was a world within which my body doesn’t belong; a world that I don’t belong in.”

The normalcy of ableism in performance spaces often goes unnoticed, as disability is often cast as an afterthought, a deficit, a burden, or all of the above. It is once again vital that we consider that the term disability does not represent just one form of condition. Like the umbrella term “transgender”, “disability” and “disabled” are terms which can be used to describe a variety of conditions similar or dissimilar to Martin’s experience, whether physical or psychological. While disability, when considered is generally associated with the physical (relating to “able-bodied”), able-mindedness is just as important for consideration. As Martin explains, “Compulsory able-mindedness can be shown to be equally pervasive. Consider, for example, the hostility of public places to those with sensory processing issues, the lack of content warnings in mainstream media, and our reliance on written text or speech for communication.” Martin coins the term “compulsory non-disability” to inclusive towards not just the “bodily” disabled, but also those facing mental health struggles and neurodiversity in a world which expects conformity to operational expectations which do not take their needs into account. Knowing many neurodivergent individuals, I do not reject this term, but for the continuation of this paper will separate disability and neurotype to respect those who do not identify with both. Regarding solutions to ableist practices, similarities exist between initiatives discussed in Chapter 3, such as the Philomel Project or the Institute for Composer Diversity, compared to new anti-ableist practices. While important as a start, similarly to those pedagogical initiatives, these efforts are still separatist in nature, and thus it requires further recognition that true equity

requires more deep unraveling of practices that actively harm and exclude entire communities of people from sustainable and/or enjoyable musical practice. Martin mentions, “There are some specific orchestras for disabled people. . . While this is a step towards making classical music more accessible, there is evidently much more to be done, particularly since the distinction between ‘disabled’ and ‘non-disabled’ orchestras ultimately reinforces the notion of a disability binary. Disabled musicianship is cast as ‘other’, not as something to be incorporated into the mainstream.” Thus, a great risk is still posed that disability and neurodivergence become segregated from the “ordinary,” similar once again to the example of the counter-canon. Both physical disability and neurodivergence require empathetic consideration for accommodation and inclusion, not resentment or sarcasm. Education, both of instructors and students, is integral to the inclusivity of all students, and as mentioned, it is vital for both physical conditions and mental conditions to be taken seriously. As someone who has struggled with worsening symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (in a world which still largely validates ADHD only by the characteristics and criteria associated with 6-year old white boys) and as someone who knows many other musicians who are diagnosed with (or are actively seeking diagnosis for) ADHD, ASD, PTSD, depression, anxiety disorders, BPD, OCD, or other conditions, it is imperative to me (and assuredly, to all of them) that communication on mental health and neurodivergent support dramatically increases within the realm of classical music.

As of right now, access to mental health care is narrowly limited, due to services across the country being largely booked since the rise in mental health crises after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cost can also pose a major constraint for musicians and music students seeking care. Seeing as medication and/or therapy services are not always accessible, we do not always know the best way to go about navigating our own circumstances – particularly in cases where our condition is not as well represented (for example, inattentive-type ADHD, which is

more common in biological girls and does not exhibit nearly as many outward symptoms as its hyperactive counterpart, which is more common in biological boys). Even if a student or professional does not have access to the resources that would directly help with navigating their condition, equitable practices (social practices, but also specifically musical ones) and solution-discovery should be accessible within musical communities, especially in institutions of education where the point is to grow as a learner. Personal growth should not be limited to a linear standard, one that is inaccessible to those who are not inherently advantaged by said standard.

It is imperative that we as a musical society adopt approaches to all of the aforementioned circumstances (race, sex, gender, disability, neurotype) with respect to their differences in need. Solutions must follow suit and be collaborative between the affected communities, whose voices should be leading these conversations, such that equitable practices can be both effectively and efficiently implemented for our future generations pursuing music.

Chapter 6

A Gigue: New Music

We are now more aware of the circumstances which make rethinking the canon a more complex subject. Certain practices designed to be inclusive have the potential to not be as inclusive as intended, while others like counter-canon are outright exclusive and unproductive. If the goal is to attain a sense of social autonomy which the traditional canon has been lacking, as Weber points out, the question must then be raised, how do we achieve equity and advance our practices?

Some scholars have advocated for an advancement in the field of musicology by establishing “New Music” in response to the faults embedded within the classical canon. However, Anke Charton argues that the current initiatives designed to lead us into New Music are, as has been established in this thesis, unproductive and detrimental:

Exclusionist practices that maintain a supposedly universal field of New Music within an unmarked Western, bourgeois setting are often micropatterns of implicit situated knowledge. They are mirrored in the range of instruments and framework of music theory expected in degree entry exams in Western schools that situate themselves as global. If repertoire pieces are expected in New Music, they are often still tied to a canon of white Western serious music. The unspoken dress codes and codes of grooming when presenting at international auditions and competitions echo the white, bourgeois, binary gender norms of the mid-twentieth century. Unless these default settings are marked and understood within their positionality,[23] the outrage over cases of racial and cultural

discrimination and appropriation will continue, in New Music as well as in the classical music business at large, since the established institutions will continue to educate and further homogenic groups that then make the designation of a differing ‘other’ - without access to dominantly Western knowledge and networks – easy.³⁴

I echo Charton’s idea of how New Music will need to be informed, by a “cascading” approach of interventions which are capable of fundamentally uprooting systemic structures over time. To properly diversify musicology moving forward, it is of course not as simple as checking off items on a to-do list; it is vital that we modify our language surrounding our approach to these interventions so that we are asking the right questions. Instead of “how can we add (insert marginalized voice) to our programs,” we should be asking, as Charton says, “Why is this voice not part of this group yet, and what would it have taken to make this voice belong from the start?”

A Final Note

Music reflects its cultural context. A context, in our Western case, which excludes numerous voices and thus produces a wide variety of power dynamics between those whose identities are reinforced by the standards it upholds, and those who do not meet these standards, whether on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, biological sex, disability, neurotype, or class. This project is far from a complete analysis on any of these topics, particularly in their relevance to classical music, but investing in discourse on all of the above will be pivotal in shaping the future of musicology, music performance, and music pedagogy. While the issues discussed are

³⁴ Anke Charton, “Diversity and New Music: Interdependencies and Intersections”, <https://www.on-curating.org/issue-47-reader/diversity-and-new-music-interdependencies-and-intersections.html#.ZC5zxezMLRY>.

unique to their respective communities, we have established patterns which connect our communities together. Cultivating our means of finding ways to connect and collaborate on revitalizing classical music from a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive approach will be indispensable moving forward.

Regardless of if it is recognized, validated, or honored, diversity is inevitable. Inclusivity is our choice.

Appendix A

Glossary

Ableism – discrimination targeting individuals who are disabled/who are perceived to be disabled

ASD – autism-spectrum disorder

BPD – bipolar disorder

Cisgender - (abbr. cis) refers to a person who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth

Gender binary – idea of gender being classified by two categories (man and woman)

LGBT+ - abbreviation for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. The plus sign denotes other queer identities

Neurodivergent – refers the diversity in neurotypes (ADHD, ASD, etc.) which affect human operation, learning, attention, and mental function.

Non-binary – identity of an individual whose gender does not align with the gender they were assigned at birth but is not that of the “opposite binary”. See gender binary.

Transgender – umbrella term referring to a person who identifies as a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth.

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ACADEMIC VITA

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EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University | Schreyer Honors College Aug 2019 – May 2023
Bachelor of Musical Arts in Music, Viola Performance
Minor: Astronomy and Astrophysics

HONORS AND AWARDS

Music Activities Fund Aug 2019 – May 2023
Gerald Bayles Memorial Scholarship Aug 2019 – May 2023
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Brock Honors Scholarship – Arts & Architecture Aug 2022 – May 2023
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LEADERSHIP

Vice President Aug 2019 – May 2020
American String Teachers Association
Co-Author Jan 2020 – June 2021
Pulsar Search Collaboratory, Penn State University

Collaborated with research team on attaining and writing a publication on astrophysical data pertaining to null-pulsars

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