

## Preface

The situation of women in music has evolved significantly since 1900. At the start of the twentieth century, female musicians faced considerable gender-specific barriers. Prior to the First World War, much of women's musical work was confined to the private sphere; strict social conventions still dictated which instruments were deemed appropriate for women (piano, harp, guitar, the higher strings, and voice) and which were not (woodwind, brass, and percussion); and the work of female composers was largely confined to smaller-scale genres. The situation improved undeniably over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Access to education and training increased; the full range of genres within which to write music became available to female composers, as the full range of instruments did to performers; and women's music was performed, published, broadcast, and recorded with increased frequency. In the period since 1900, women musicians have achieved many significant firsts, although a number of these have come shockingly recently. In 1913, Lili Boulanger became the first woman to win a Premier Grand Prix de Rome in composition, and in 1930 Ruth Crawford Seeger became the first woman composer to be awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. Despite these early victories, however, it was not until 1983 that Ellen Taaffe Zwilich became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music, and 1990 that Joan Tower became the first woman to win the Grawemeyer Music Award. More shockingly still, Marin Alsop could claim a first for women in 2013, when she became the first woman to conduct the Last Night of the BBC's Proms, and Rebecca Saunders could claim one as late as 2019 when she became the first woman composer to win the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize. Alongside these developments in the world of classical music, popular music has developed rapidly since 1900, and women's voices have been present across a vast range of genres, although there too they have faced significant gender-based barriers and obstacles. In recent years there has been both a growing awareness of the gendered nature of the music industries, and some steps taken towards enabling positive change; as seen, for instance, in the PRS Foundation's Keychange initiative to encourage 'festivals and music organisations to achieve a 50:50 gender balance by 2022'.<sup>1</sup>

That such enterprises are necessary highlights the fact that – despite undeniable improvements in some areas – the music industries remain highly gendered, and significant gender-based constraints for women still exist. In particular, women musicians are still regularly subjected to gendered criticism, which often undermines their artistry by focusing upon their appearance and is sometimes highly sexualised. The career choices of women musicians are often dictated by their family circumstances. Much musical work takes place outside of family-friendly hours, childcare remains extremely expensive, and the gender pay gap persists. Some musical fields – including, but not limited to, conducting, music technology, parts of the music industries (company executives, managers, promoters, and producers amongst other roles spring readily to mind), and certain popular music genres (such as hip-hop and heavy metal) – remain extremely male dominated. And gender, of course, is only one factor – amongst which, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, disability, faith, and others are also of great significance – in exclusion, from music and more widely. That we are now more consciously aware of the gendered nature of the music industries stems in part from the development, over recent decades, of the branch of musical scholarship which seeks to address the work of women musicians. Intended as both celebration and critique of women's musical work since 1900, this book fits within this wider academic trend which seeks to create a more gender-balanced music studies.

Notwithstanding the work of such early pioneers as Sophie Drinker, women in music studies – sometimes referred to as feminist musicology or included more broadly within music and gender studies – developed through the critical work of such as scholars as Eva Rieger, Nancy B. Reich, Marcia J. Citron, Suzanne Cusick, Susan McClary, Judith Tick, and Jane Bowers during the 1980s and '90s. The publication of Aaron I. Cohen's *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers* in 1981 (revised and enlarged in 1987 through collaboration with the International Council of Women),<sup>2</sup> followed by *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, edited by Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel, in 1994,<sup>3</sup> and *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States 1629–Present*, by Sophie Fuller, in 1994,<sup>4</sup> marked a new level of recognition for women composers. Meanwhile, the work of such trail-blazing scholars as Sheila Whiteley increased awareness of the centrality of gender and sexuality within popular music studies.<sup>5</sup> Like women's history itself, however, the development of women in music studies has been non-linear. Once the initial activity of the 1980s and '90s – a period which I like to refer to as the first wave of feminist

musicology – subsided, research interests in women musicians seemed to drop off somewhat around the turn of the twenty-first century. Working upon a doctorate on women musicians in interwar France in the late 2000s, I sometimes felt as though I was pursuing a rather lonely research endeavour. In a 2017 article, Sally Macarthur, Dawn Bennett, Talisha Goh, and Sophie Hennekam perceptively referred to ‘The Rise and Fall, and the Rise (Again) of Feminist Research in Music: “What Goes Around Comes Around”’,<sup>6</sup> as we have recently seen something of a renaissance of interest in women in music studies. What I find so exciting about this second wave of feminist musicology is the broadening out of the field, away from a focus upon composers – which could be seen as being in danger of replicating patriarchal historiographical tendencies to focus upon the lives of ‘great’ individuals – to a more inclusive view of women’s work in music, encompassing, amongst others, roles such as performers, conductors, educators, songwriters, sound artists, as well as those, such as journalists, promoters, managers, and arts administrators, working in the music industries more broadly. The cross-genre focus of much of this more recent work, and a new willingness for scholars and practitioners to come together at a plethora of new conferences, festivals, performances, collectives, recordings, and publications, is equally exhilarating. The opportunity to edit this book, focused upon women’s musical work specifically in the period since 1900 from a cross-genre perspective, is an honour.

It would be impossible to consider every single woman working in music since 1900 within one book. Rather, the women and topics covered here represent examples and case studies of the sorts of musical work which women have done and the lived experiences which they have had, covering as broad a range of professional fields and musical genres as possible. Each chapter concludes with suggestions for ‘further reading’ intended to direct the interested reader towards more information on each topic. The focus of this book is upon Western music since 1900, including classical music, popular music, music technology, and women’s wider work in music. The vast contributions which women have made to non-Western musics in the same period deserve specialist consideration in a further volume. The authors brought together within this book have taken a wide range of approaches to their specialist topics, including broad surveys, archival research, and detailed ethnographic micro-studies. Each section ends with a shorter ‘In Her Own Words’ reflection written by a female practitioner active within the field which that particular part of the book covers.

Part I considers women working within classical music. The first four chapters cover the changing situation of female composers between the early twentieth century and the early twenty-first. In Chapter 1, Sophie Fuller considers the musical landscape which female composers working in the earlier twentieth century inhabited. From the early days of the twentieth century, when women were expected to concentrate upon song and small-scale piano works, to the wider opportunities which opened up during the interwar period, Fuller considers a wide range of composers, including, amongst others, Cécile Chaminade, Maude Valérie White, Ethel Smyth, Elizabeth Maconchy, Grace Williams, Ruth Crawford Seeger, and Germaine Tailleferre. Chapters 2 and 3 move on to consider women working professionally as composers during the Cold War period of the mid-to-later twentieth century. Chapter 2, 'Women in Composition during the Cold War in Music', focuses on women active in the West, where, for all the apparent government liberalism, in musical terms, composers had to face what could often, at the time, seem like the monolithic regime of total serialism. Through a range of case studies, including Williams, Maconchy, Elisabeth Lutyens, Thea Musgrave, Betsy Jolas, Louise Talma, Julia Perry, and Miriam Gideon, Rhiannon Mathias deftly considers the compositional strategies which women developed to respond to this musical environment. Chapter 3, 'Behind the Iron Curtain: Female Composers in the Soviet Bloc', turns to the situation of women composers working within the Soviet Bloc, where, despite the public advocacy of gender equality by state-socialist regimes, more traditional constructs of gender difference actually tended to be propagated. With a particular focus on the careers of Galina Ustvolskaya and Sofia Gubaidulina in the USSR, Ruth Zechlin in the GDR, and Grażyna Bacewicz in Poland, Elaine Kelly probes the possibilities open to female composers working under state socialism. Chapter 4 discusses the situation of contemporary female composers and poses the question: to what extent are they 'still exceptional'? Ranging across a wide range of figures, Astrid Kvalbein considers how contemporary women, including, amongst others, Kaija Saariaho, Jennifer Walsh, Judith Weir, Olga Neuwirth, Du Yun, Unsuk Chin, and Gabriela Lena Frank, explore feminist themes and provide gender critiques through their works, the tendency for women to engage with wider societal issues, including environmentalism, and the strategies that women have adopted to respond to an increasingly globalised world. In Chapter 5, I turn to the situation of women conductors. Through a case study of Ethel Leginska, I consider the early women conductors of the twentieth century, the majority of whom founded and led their own women's

orchestras. I explore how many of these lost opportunities following the Second World War, and examine their re-emergence in the later twentieth century, with a particular focus upon Marin Alsop. I conclude my chapter by discussing the important work that Alsop and others, notably Alice Farnham, are doing through mentoring and training the younger generation of women conductors through such initiatives as Alsop's Taki Concordia Fellowship and Farnham's Women Conductors programme at the Royal Philharmonic Society. Chapter 6 shifts the focus to female performers within the classical music industry. Francesca Placanica considers the increased opportunities which female performers gained throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; not only in terms of being able to achieve star status, but also through being able to integrate into professional orchestras. Focusing upon the trumpeter Alison Balsom and percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie, she considers the new opportunities that have developed over recent decades for women to maintain careers as virtuosa performers of instruments historically deemed unsuitable for women to play. Placanica also deftly probes the high degree of sexualisation which many contemporary performers, including Yuja Wang, Katherine Jenkins, and Vanessa Mae, face in the contemporary classical music industry and how this can be negotiated in a mediated culture. Composer Elizabeth Hoffman concludes Part I with a searching consideration of how gender has affected her own career and how it continues to affect women within the academy.

Part II turns to the rich tradition of women in popular music. Chapter 7, 'Most of My Sheroes Don't Appear on a Stamp: Contextualising the Contributions of Women Musicians to the Progression of Jazz', considers the vital part that women – both vocalists and instrumentalists – made to the development of jazz, although they have tended to be excluded from standard historiographical narratives of the genre. With a focus on the development of jazz in the United States, Tammy L. Kernodle considers women jazz musicians' work from the early days of New Orleans jazz; through jazz in Chicago, New York, Kansas City, and Europe; to the emergence of women jazz singers, including Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald; and to the all-girl swing bands of the 1940s. Chapter 8 turns to the girl groups of the 1960s. Although often not taken seriously, they were one of the most successful musical phenomena of the first half of the 1960s in the United States. Jacqueline Warwick skilfully unpacks 'girl culture', the intersection of the girl groups with the contemporaneous Civil Rights Movement, and key figures and groups of the era, such as the Shirelles, the Ronettes, the Shangri-Las, and the Supremes. Chapter 9

probes the ‘women-in-music’ trope through a rock music lens. Leah Branstetter deftly draws upon the work of Joanna Russ to examine how women have been marginalised within rock. She considers the tendency of historiographies of rock to construct female rock musicians as anomalies, to devalue their contributions, and to resist categorising their music as ‘authentic’. In Chapter 10, Katherine Williams considers female songwriters, focusing upon singer-songwriters who write and perform their own material, as opposed to songwriters who compose material for other artists. Concentrating upon four case studies, Williams interrogates the music of Carole King, Joni Mitchell, Kate Bush, and Adele. Turning to folk music, in Chapter 11, Michael Brocken focuses upon the British folk revival to consider both the traditional marginalisation of women’s voices and the recent emergence of a more open folk scene within which women’s voices ‘figure’. Blending an auto-ethnographic and an ethnographic approach, Brocken considers not only his own growing awareness of gender issues within the folk scene as a male researcher, but also draws upon interview material with folk musician Emily Portman and folk and acoustic music promoter Rose Price. Chapter 12 presents a discussion of female solo artists in the popular music industry, with a particular focus on the influence and lasting effects of MTV and superstar branding. Through considering the careers of Tina Turner, Sinéad O’Connor, Alanis Morissette, and Fiona Apple, Kristin J. Lieb probes the recurring themes of the human sacrifice of being a pop star, the sharing of narratives about abuse and exploitation, the recasting of the hot mess as a survivor, and the exploration of taboo subjects and identities. Virginia Kettle concludes Part II through a reflection of her career as a folk musician.

Acknowledging that music technology was (and to an extent remains) one of the most male-dominated musical fields, Part III turns to the theme of women and music technology. Louis Niebur’s Chapter 13, ‘Case Studies of Women in Electronic Music: The Early Pioneers’, considers a range of the earliest ground-breaking women working with electronic music, including Daphne Oram and Delia Derbyshire at the BBC’s Radiophonic Workshop in the UK, and Wendy Carlos, Pauline Oliveros, and Suzanne Ciani in the United States. Moving forward to the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Chapter 14 provides a survey of contemporary female and gender-non-conforming artists using electronics for music. Margaret Schedel and Flannery Cunningham highlight how greater access to affordable means to manipulate digital sound from the autonomy of personal computers – away from difficult-to-access studios staffed by technicians and equipped with complex technology, which were

previously largely the domain of male ‘experts’ – has opened up electronic music to a wider demographic of people (in terms of gender, race, and class). Taking an ethnographic approach which draws upon survey material from twenty-four respondents variously identifying as composers, sound artists, instrument builders, and programmers, this chapter explores some of this diversity through the artists’ own words. Electroacoustic composer Manuella Blackburn concludes this part through an exploration of how motherhood, and a new interest in domestic sound sources, inspired by prolonged time spent in the home during pregnancy and the early days of motherhood, changed her compositional practice.

Part IV broadens the scope to consider women’s wider work in music. Chapter 15, ‘Women and Music Education in Schools: Pedagogues, Curricula, and Role Models’, surveys women’s contribution to music education. Although women in music studies has gained a steady foothold in university and conservatoire education over the last two decades, music education at school level (this chapter’s focus) has tended to remain fairly conservative. Robert Legg discusses women’s access to the teaching profession, highlighting that, while it has always been relatively open to women, persistent barriers remain, including a lack of women in leadership roles, and the gender pay gap. He also critiques the body/mind dualist view of music education, the lack of female role models in many curricula, and recent pedagogical debates of the twenty-first century. Chapter 16, ‘Women in the Music Industries: The Art of Juggling’, considers the persistent male-dominated nature of the popular-music industry and the space which contemporary FIMAs (Female Independent Music Artists) have carved out within it to sustain portfolio careers. Clare K. Duffin also presents two detailed case studies of Glasgow-based FIMAs, Emma Gillespie and Carol Laula. Steph Powers concludes Part IV ‘In Her Own Words’ through an auto-ethnographic exploration of her own portfolio career, which combines work as a performer, composer, music examiner, and critic. In the Afterword, Victoria Armstrong turns to the working conditions of women in the contemporary UK classical-music industry. She draws upon her recent UK-based ethnographic study into the working lives of twenty-four professional, classically trained female composers, conductors, and performers to examine the concepts of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ work within the cultural industries through a gendered lens.

The final stages of editing this book happened during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. As the devastating effects of the virus, and the lockdowns which governments worldwide imposed in an effort to try to contain it, became

more fully felt, it became apparent that the particular consequences for women seemed to represent in microcosm the wider gendered conditions which have shaped women's lived experiences for so long. Insidiously, domestic abuse and violence increased in lockdown, when victims found themselves trapped in homes with their abusers. Women often took on the brunt of childcare and other caring and domestic responsibilities. An analysis of the impact of the pandemic on working parents by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (UK) in May 2020 found that working mothers were more likely than working fathers to have lost their job or been furloughed; that their working hours had fallen more; and that their time was interrupted more often by childcare.<sup>7</sup> Women's loss of employment – and the lack of childcare (rendered more acute by childcare providers facing long-term financial crises) – has led to many women facing a future of economic insecurity. Women of colour often suffered the very worse impact of the pandemic, as the virus affected BAME communities to a disproportionately high degree. The lives of all the authors in this book were touched in one way or another by the pandemic. I hold each one in awe for being able to maintain their focus upon completing this project during that time. The words used by Elizabeth Hoffman in her practitioner contribution about valuing female friendships as a 'special category of relationship' often echoed in my own thoughts as regular online 'girls' nights' with my friends, musicologists Helen Julia Minors and Laura Watson and composer Manuella Blackburn, became the weekly glimmers of light which sustained me during that difficult time.

This book would not exist without Kate Brett at Cambridge University Press. Her enthusiasm for the topic and support throughout the project were truly tremendous. My thanks go also to Eilidh Burrett and Hal Churchman at CUP. I am also grateful to the agents of Marin Alsop and Dame Evelyn Glennie, and to Emma Gillespie and Carol Laula for allowing us to reproduce images. My thanks go to The Open University for supporting this project through study time, to my colleagues in Music and within the AHSENT team for their interest in the project, and especially to my Staff Tutor colleagues for providing cover for me while I was working upon writing and editing. My interest in women in music was first sparked by my Oxford tutor, Prof. Susan Wollenberg. I could not imagine a more inspiring role model. My heartfelt thanks go to my parents, Christine and Robert, for all their support and encouragement over many years, and also to my parents-in-law, Wauki and Anthony. I am deeply grateful to my husband, Mark, who provided tremendous support, not least through taking on a great deal of the work in our home, while I was



engulfed in the final stages of editing this book during the lockdown period. My thanks as always go to my daughter, Clara, who makes me smile every day.

## Notes

1. See <https://prsfoundation.com/partnerships/international-partnerships/keychange/> (accessed 21 June 2020).
2. Aaron I. Cohen (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers*, second revised and enlarged ed. (New York: Books & Music USA, 1987).
3. Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Musicians* (New York: Norton, 1994).
4. Sophie Fuller, *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States, 1629–Present* (London: Pandora, 1994).
5. See, in particular, Sheila Whiteley (ed.), *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), and Sheila Whiteley, *Women and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity and Subjectivity* (London and New York, 2000).
6. Sally Macarthur, Dawn Bennett, Talisha Goh, and Sophie Hennekam, ‘The Rise and Fall, and the Rise (Again) of Feminist Research in Music: “What Goes Around Comes Around”’, *Musicology Australia*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2017), 73–95.
7. Alison Andrew, Sarah Cattan, Monica Costa Dias, Christine Farquharson, Lucy Kraftman, Sonya Krutikova, Angus Phimister, and Almudena Sevilla, ‘How Are Mothers and Fathers Balancing Work and Family Under Lockdown?’, Institute of Fiscal Studies Z (27 May 2020), available at [www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14860](http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14860) (accessed 14 June 2020).