How to talk about Women Composers

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Abstract

Despite multiple efforts from the discipline of feminist musicology, not much results have trickled down into our current educational and cultural canon. In this thesis, I will research multiple aspects of the discipline, seeking for the origins of the lack of result visible in 2017.

To start my research, I will first look at the critical reception on the music of women composers, especially claiming objectivity. Along the lines of Donna Haraway, Kimberle Crenshaw and Adrienne Rich, I will analyse YouTube comments to seek out these claims.

My second research point will be a historiography of feminist musicology. By looking critically at the problems the discipline encountered, and also the solutions that were posed, I contribute to answering my main question.

By conducting a reception research, I confirm multiple stereotypes still standing towards the reception of audiences on classical music. With this, I want to bring internalised prejudices to the conscious minds of an audience.

The last chapter is a musical analysis of two Trio's: Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn's Trio's in d minor. By comparing both works, I want to both focus on the music of a women composer, and confirm that analytically, the two pieces should have equal space in the canon.

My conclusion revolves mostly around internalised prejudices in the collective reception of music written by women composers. Although difference thinking through categorisation seems inevitable, I propose a more analytical approach, with taking accountability for your own position as a researcher.

> When I began graduate training in musicology 26 years ago, no women appeared in the curriculum. It never even occurred to some of us to wonder why there were no women in the histories of music we studied; if we asked, we were told that there had not been any – at least none worth remembering.[1] - *Susan McClary*

Although this statement was written in 1994, it is still relevant for my own experience, graduating musicology in 2017. Women composers are remarkably absent, not only in academic sense, but also in the musical canon. As McClary writes, besides simply getting to know 'forgotten' music, feminist musicology should bring to light certain hidden processes in our society. The way in which gender-structures and artistic creation by women in general are perceived, says significant things about a society. McClary provided a clear recipe for making musicology a less white male-dominated discipline.[2] However, from my point of view as a curious musicology student with interest for gender studies, not much has trickled down to university curricula. Multiple efforts for the addition of women composers to the classical canon and curricula have been done by feminist musicologists, yet the results in practice are scarce. This poses numerous questions about musicology as a discipline, its research traditions and its reluctance to work together with other disciplines.

It is striking how music written by female composers is always perceived as 'gendered,' while musical works by male composers are perceived as the norm. Many theorists have written about the problems existing around female composers, for instance, Sophie Fuller states in her explanatory chapter in the book *Girls! Girls! Girls!*: 'Classical music may be losing its elitist image and reaching out to become relevant and important to many more people. But what difference has this made to women's involvement?'[3] And yet again, how did it happen that these texts have not yet resulted in added women's music to the educational and musical canon? In what follows, I do not intend to write about female composers in order to 'redeem,' them, 'take back' or 'take accountability'. Instead I suggest a more analytical approach to musical works written by women, while keeping in mind their (difficult) social and political position of their times.

To achieve this, I raise the question: 'What kind of prejudices are hampering the effects of feminist musicology on today's classical and academic canon?'

To answer this question, I divide my research into multiple sub questions.

The first question, and thus my first chapter, concerns music and objectivity. Which concepts of objectivity can be helpful in arguments about women in classical music? And to what extent can objectivity-based reasoning debunk gendered stereotypes by analysing them along the lines of feminist theory? In this chapter, I analyse YouTube comments posted under a music video featuring Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto in

[1] Susan McClary, "Of Patriarchs…and Matriarchs, Too. Susan McClary Assesses the Challenges and Contributions of Feminist Musicology," *The Musical Times* 135:1816 (1994): 365.

[2] McClary, "Of Patriarchs…and Matriarchs, Too," 365- 368.

[3] Sophie Fuller, "Dead White Men in Wigs. Women and Classical Music," in *Girls! Girls! Girls!*, ed. Sarah Cooper (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1995), 23.

A minor, opus 7. In order to expose certain underlying assumptions about gender I rely on feminist theorists Donna Haraway, Kimberle Crenshaw and Adrienne Rich. My main goal here is to see how musicology and feminism can work together to challenge prejudices.

The second chapter is about the historiography of feminist musicology. Here, my question is: what are the reasons feminist musicology does not seem to have much effect? By looking at different texts in feminist musicology, I analyse the discipline itself: what are the ground-breaking results and why are they almost invisible in our current time?

The third chapter is about perception. How an audience perceives certain music influences the acceptance of this music in the canon. Are the stereotypes originating decades ago still in place concerning classical music? I point out the prejudices that still occupy prominent places in thinking about (and thus listening to) classical music. In addition, I look at the changing contexts surrounding the 'male' and 'female' concepts in music. For example, Edith Borroff elaborates on how certain genres were ascribed to women because these were not 'serious' enough for men.[4] In addition, Marcia J. Citron talks about the binary opposition existing with regard to 'female' and 'male' traits.[5] She also adds the public/private debate to this and the more general problem of women as creators.[6] Furthermore, I look not only into male prejudices, but moreover to prejudices in the minds of women themselves. To elaborate, I refer to Judith Butler's concept of performative gender,- which argues that 'gender' is a social construct, and has an effect on the exclusion of certain 'genders'.[7]

The fourth and final chapter is a musical analysis of both Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn's *Trio in d minor*. With this comparison, I want on the one hand contribute to the body of work consisting on musical analysis of music written by women composers. On the other hand, by analytically showing the similarities, I want to place music of a women composer in the same canon as the music written by her male counterpart.

My thesis features multiple angles of research. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of my thesis, I use texts both from musicology and gender studies. Building on the tradition of New Musicology, I look at the interplay between purely musical- and social elements. Furthermore, I operate with the concept of intersectionality, originating from gender studies but applicable to my case, since intersectional approach – looking at the multiple layers of a single identity – was one of the cornerstones of New Musicology.

As a result, I want to expose preconceptions about the music written by women and make room for a more 'intra-musical' way of analysing female composers. Additionally, as McClary puts it,[8] my thesis makes visible examples of female excellence, which as a result can provide role models. Higher visibility, resulting from disseminating academic research among general reading audience, would enable women to enter creative

[4] Edith Borroff, "Women Composers: Reminiscence and History," *College Music Symposium* 15 (1975): 33.
[5] Marcia J. Citron, "Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon," *The Journal of Musicology* 8, no. 1 (1990): 109.
[6] Citron, "Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon," 110.
[7] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2011).
[8] McClary, "Of Patriarchs…and Matriarchs, Too," 369.

professions and thus would catalyse a social change. By conducting this research, I hope to actively participate in the debate about women composers, by bringing in my original point of view. For example, I am going to pitch my thesis at TivoliVredenburg, where a performance of both Trio's I analyse in chapter four is performed in October. By giving a short speech beforehand or writing about women composers in the program, I want to make the audience conscious of the prejudices they might experience.

Chapter 1: Music and objectivity

Reception of music written by women composers is usually marked by critical attitudes. In this critique, one idea is particularly prominent: claiming objectivity. The objectivity claim has a long history and has been analysed extensively in the discipline of gender studies. One of such gender theorists is Donna Haraway, who coined the term 'the God trick', a concept by which one claims their 'objective' truth as undisputable.[9] However, she also warns us about 'relativism and totalization', because they also 'are both "God tricks" promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully[…].'[10] With 'relativism and totalization' Haraway means the generalisation of a certain group where for example one trait is perceived as a general trait for the whole group.
In the next paragraphs, I use several feminist theories to examine the faults in the way the idea of objectivity is used in reception of music. I dispute the way listeners claim to hear 'quality' in music written by women composers. The objectivity claims I discuss derive from YouTube comments posted under a video of music written by Clara Schumann. My main goal is to analyse the comments in light of the arguments put forth by Donna Haraway, Kimberle Crenshaw and Adrienne Rich.. First, I give a brief overview of the theories of the three authors that deconstruct the notion of objectivity. Afterwards I analyse the comments on YouTube along the lines and solutions the authors declare.

Donna Haraway

> 'Feminist objectivity means quite simply *situated knowledges*.'[11] …The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular.[12]

Donna Haraway was one of the first to propose a more positioned knowledge production. This concept puts a speaker in a position where they can take accountability for their production of knowledge. This specific 'perspective', she calls 'partial', is the only 'promise(..of) objective vision.' Feminist objectivity is about "limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable […]."[13] Thus, taking accountability for one's position could make for a better knowledge production.

[9] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 581.
[10] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 584.
[11] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 581.
[12] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 590.
[13] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 583.

From her own vantage point as a researcher, Haraway places science in its current time of the 1980s. She claims that scientific discourse is rhetorical, with multiple hierarchies of power in play.[14] According to Haraway, these power relations are essential in the production of knowledge, and she critiques the way the power relations exist in that time. The power relations Haraway described in the 1980's are today still active in the production of knowledge. A good example is the concept of 'gatekeepers'; people within a certain canon, who have some kind of authority and therefore decide who can and cannot enter the canon. The gatekeepers have the power to construct the canon, which makes their knowledge privileged over others.[15]

Haraway declares: "So, I think my problem, and 'our' problem, is how to have *simultaneously* an account of radial historical contingency because all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own 'semiotic technologies' making meanings, *and* a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world, one that can be partially shared […]."[16] Here, Haraway advocates for a critical way of looking at knowledge claims, which in the times of alternative facts and fake news, connected to the presidential elections in the US of 2016, is important to point out. Haraway shows how by applying critical thinking to multiple concepts, unheard voices are made audible.[17] This is a significant statement for my own research, because I do not 'deny' voices to particular groups of people, however I look at the different meanings ascribed to music.
In particular, Haraway maintains that women artists in history were victims of claims of objective knowledge. 'Relativist' knowledge favours one contribution over the other, resulting in the dismissal of the input of women. Haraway suggests an alternative for relativism, in the form of 'partial', 'locatable', and 'critical knowledges'.[18] Here, Haraway advocates for an intersectional approach towards knowledge production, something I will later elaborate on.

Haraway uses an example of the visual sense to substantiate her argument. Visuality has been focused on the 'male gaze', the point of view of men. As the years passed by, especially when media became an important part of our society, even women look at the world, and themselves with this 'male gaze.' Haraway says that we should 'reclaim' visuality, to see through the 'tricks and powers' of our society, media and the current 'technological' developments that have changed the way we look at objectivity. Her solution to this is "a feminist writing of the body that metaphorically emphasizes vision again."[19]

Although multiple authors applied Haraway's theories to musicological problems[20], mostly the 'God trick' and the concept of situated knowledge as a whole, I additionally want to apply the concept of the visual to

[14] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 577.
[15] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 576.
[16] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 579.
[17] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 580.
[18] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 583.
[19] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 582.
[20] See for example Music/ideology: Resisting the Aesthetic : Essays, by Jean-François Lyotard, and Henry James Klumpenhouwer.

the audible. This has not yet been done, thus I do this throughout my essay, 'reclaiming' the audible, or music itself. This is one of my main methodological points. Being aware of these changes can make a listener more aware of the power relations music has gone through until it reaches our ears.[21] I want to apply this solution to my case, not merely talking about women composers as they are always women first, biographically, yet focussing on their music itself. For me, this deserves as much, or even more attention in current research. Further this section, I use Haraway's theories when looking at the YouTube comments, to see to what extent they (refuse to) see their knowledge as situated or take accountability for their position.

Kimberle Crenshaw

Her origin as a civil rights advocate makes Crenshaw more generally committed to race and gender issues. Crenshaw coins the term 'intersectionality' in her article from 1993. This term is now used extensively in gender studies, to critically look at identity politics. In general, 'intersectionality' plays on the idea that one identity is made up out of different axes of difference, with these axes intersecting and influencing each other.

Crenshaw is critical towards the identity politics from the 1990's, where difference thinking was the norm. She proclaims: "The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics argue, but rather the opposite – that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences…[which leads to] tension *among* groups."[22] Crenshaw shows that this phenomenon "owes a great deal to the postmodernist idea that categories we consider natural or merely representational are actually socially constructed in a linguistic economy of difference."[23] She thus sheds light upon the multiple 'narratives' surrounding the categories, which cause 'privileged experiences'. [24] Here, Crenshaw also touches upon Butler's theory, by claiming that categories are 'socially constructed'.

A point Crenshaw makes in accordance with Haraway (and Rich, see below) is when she uses 'a politics of social location', where 'disempowered groups' can reclaim power.[25] Crenshaw sees the power relations existing within identity politics and terminology, and proposes a different approach, as I stated before; to not think in 'categories' but about the intersections that happen within an identity.[26] Crenshaw's recognition of the existence of categories makes it, in my opinion, more realistic to talk about the intersections, because categories are very much present, still in our time.

Applying this kind of critical thinking to my case, I want to look at the YouTube commenters' claims with an 'intersectional' approach, keeping in mind the multiple axis of their identity, as far as it is possible in case of anonymous online comments. Most importantly for my cause, I want to use this 'intersectional' approach,

[21] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 582.
[22] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," 1993, 1242.
[23] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins," 1296.
[24] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins," 1298.
[25] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins," 1297.
[26] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins," 1299.

exposing patterns that are invisible because they are deemed 'natural'. My goal is to disclose certain patterns in the way we look and listen to women composers. Besides, the point Crenshaw makes how some 'experiences' are 'privileged' over others, speaks to a core problem that I engage with in my thesis and want to bring into the light.

Adrienne Rich

> The problem was that we did not know whom we meant when we said "we".[27]

This remark, originating from Adrienne Rich's influential article *Notes toward a Politics of Location*, is connected to Haraway's notion of situated knowledge, where the authors wonder who 'they', 'us' and 'we' are. Rich proposes a 'politics of location', where one could take accountability for the 'we' or 'I' they talk about. Being aware of your own position, with its privileges and disadvantages makes for a better production of knowledge.

Rich's theory is in many ways connected to the theories of Haraway and Crenshaw. One of those is how we should take our objectivity '…as a point of location for which I needed to take responsibility.'[28] Rich attests for a critical movement that looks at itself and is aware of the patterns it uses and produces. By doing so, Rich claims one *can* take responsibility, because: "How, except through ourselves, do we discover what moves other people to change?"[29]

One of Rich's most important conclusions is: "There is no liberation that only knows how to say 'I', there is no collective movement that speaks for each of us all the way through."[30] For my thesis, this is important to remember, because I know I exclude certain groups or certain axes of difference. In my research, I mainly exclude people of colour. The way I write about women composers could encompass another research focused on composers of colour, a group that is even more marginalised. My awareness for this enables me to speak for one side, knowing that there is more to say from another. Furthermore, I want to use Rich's 'Politics of Location' to once more look for accountability in the YouTube commenters; to see to what extent the commenters have a smaller or broader view of the music and its composer, and use this in their argumentation.

The subsequent part of this chapter is an analysis of multiple YouTube comments, where I examine the use of objectivity along the lines of the theories of Haraway, Crenshaw and Rich. The comments are posted between April 2016 and February 2017, under a recording of Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor, op. 7. The choice of the comments are made based on relevance; to illustrate a claim to objectivity.

The first commenter, *Hyramess Hiramess,* writes:

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[27] Adrienne Rich, "Notes toward a Politics of Location," in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry*. New York - London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984, 217.
[28] Rich, "Notes toward a Politics of Location," 219.
[29] Rich, "Notes toward a Politics of Location," 223.
[30] Rich, "Notes toward a Politics of Location," 224.

> An historical curiosity, but hardly destined to enter the standard repertoire. All in all, despite some impressive passagework in double notes in the finale, the work is generally tedious and comes off as static and rather banal. It lacks even one memorable melodic theme.[31]

Multiple things can be said about this remark. First of all, Hyramess Hiramess speaks from a certain point of authority. Because I do not know their background, I cannot speak about the validity of this. What I do want to stress is how the commenter uses certain stereotypes about 'male' or 'female' qualities in the music. Here lies the validity of using this comment, because this avenue of criticism makes it obvious how stereotypes come up. When they say: 'the work .. comes off as static and rather banal,' these qualities refer back to the stereotypes that throughout history have been used for 'female' qualities. In *Music as a gendered discourse*, Marcia J. Citron asks the question: 'is there a women's style?'[32] As I have stated in my introduction, some stereotypes are consistently reappearing when talking about women composers, such as music that is 'charming' and 'delightful,' mostly written in small forms and that it lacks 'virility'.[33] There are sources that claim these stereotypes to originate from critics in the 19th century, which "developed a system of sexual aesthetics that analysed music in terms of feminine and masculine traits."[34] Respectively, these traits were 'graceful' and 'delicate' music, 'full of melody', opposed to 'powerful in effect and intellectually rigorous in harmony, counterpoint, and other structural logic'.[35] Therefore, calling a work 'static' and 'tedious' is to point out the lack of 'development' which has historically been seen as a masculine trait. This 'gendering' of musical traits thus has a long tradition in critical thinking. Citron debunks the way of thinking that perceives these stereotypes as something inherent in music itself, as if the musical traits are themselves gendered, and points to 'socio-cultural factors' as the cause of the gendered perception of some musical traits as being 'female'.[36] Although the commenter does not actively engage in a gendered critique of the music, it does make apparent how certain stereotypes about music written by women composers passively make their way into the perception of the music.

Another remark matches this well. *Freudian Slippers* says:

> It's unsurprising she isn't as polished, considering girl children were often regulated to domestics, marriage and child rearing during this time. Males of the time had a greater access to education, leisure time, social institutions/respect and economic/social power; when the odds are stacked, of course the outcome will be rigged.

Here, the commenter seems to have read up on certain socio-cultural aspects of the time of Clara Schumann. Furthermore, when they say: 'when the odds are stacked, of course the outcome will be rigged', it points to

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[31] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHnYlORpL5Q&lc=z13xz5s4ryf5jtxko23tw5tj0yepe33h404 All the comments discussed in this chapter are based on this source.
[32] Marcia J. Citron, "Music as Gendered Discourse," in *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 159.
[33] Melissa J. de Graaf, "'Never Call Us Lady Composers': Gendered Receptions in the New York Composers' Forum, 1935-1940," *American Music* 26:3 (2008): 286-288.
[34] Citron, "Music as Gendered Discourse," 159.
[35] Neuls-Bates in Elizabeth Wood, "Women in Music," *Signs* 6, no. 2 (1980): 283–297.
[36] Citron, "Music as Gendered Discourse," 159.

a certain knowledge of the disadvantage women composers had in the course of history. The last sentence of this commenter makes apparent how the perspective of women of that time is 'rigged', what makes the commenter aware of the partial knowledge, corresponding with Haraway's theory, one has and can produce. I come back to this particular commenter, because their sayings are to some extent in accordance with my main points about objectivity.

The commenter under the name *Josh Hamilton* is in my eyes exemplary for assembling knowledge and objectivity claims.

> Disliking a piece of art created by a woman does not make one sexist any more than disliking a piece of art created by a man would make one sexist.…Or sometimes it is naff and boring, like this piece.

After this, Hamilton goes on saying:

> So not liking a piece for legitimate and valid reasons makes me an "idiot troll" - rather than insulting me, why not point out the artistic merit of this piece of banality?
>
> Or perhaps you should listen to Robert Schumann and gain a sense of objectivity

First, Hamilton brings in gender multiple times, and uses the 'God trick'. For example, Hamilton quite literally brings in sexism and the fact that this work was written by a woman. Just because they claim gender has nothing to do with (dis)liking a piece, the fact of the matter is they *do* bring in gender as part of the discussion after being called out. By doing so, Hamilton brings in the traditions of critique where gender always plays a role when talking about women creators. They may be doing so unconsciously, but by bringing in gender, the neutrality of the subject is broken. Secondly, the commenter makes it sound as if by comparing Clara to Robert Schumann, one could objectively claim quality. They additionally make it sounds as if the experience of Robert is privileged over the experience of Clara. Moreover, they engage in a discussion, disputing arguments other commenters give by pointing to their dislike of the music. Although the commenter is clear in their dislike of the piece and uses many negative adjectives, this does not make for strong arguments. Moreover, by using the words 'legitimate and valid', Hamilton puts forth his 'perspective' as 'privileged', as Haraway would say, making his knowledge claim liable for claiming power. *Freudian Slippers* responded to this comment: "This is entirely subjective, Josh. It's fine you don't like something. Declaring your preference as objective reality, is what the problem is." One could argue that Hamilton makes an essentialist claim, because they leave no room for other thoughts about the music. Haraway, Crenshaw and Rich all warn us about this.

Here we can see an example of someone trying to convince others by claiming their opinion as the truth, as objective and factful. Another interesting thing happens when another commenter, *Odisseu de Ítica,* agreeing with Josh Hamilton, uses an almost secondary knowledge claim when talking more generally about Schumann:

> One of my teachers of composition told me once: "if Beethoven/Bach/Mozart/Brahms/Rachmaninoff took a nasty crap in a score and publish it, people would still call it genius."

With this remark, the commenter claims 'one of his teachers of composition' has the universal knowledge claim, without questioning or thinking critically themselves. Based on Haraway's theorizing of the 'God trick,' I read this as a typical example of playing this, claiming perspectives 'from everywhere and nowhere, equally and fully', as Haraway is quoted in the introduction of this chapter. *Freudian Slippers*, comments on this by pointing to different ways in which 'musical taste and expression' can contribute to the (dis)liking of a certain piece. They thereby keep in mind that 'measurable standards of quality' cannot easily be measured without claiming some sort of 'authority'. The commenter uses calm and factual 'solutions' to make their points: they use, in their own words 'deductive reasoning' to figure out first why the other commenter would claim authority for their opinion while others may possess another opinion. Secondly, *Freudian Slippers* poses possible ways to approach giving critique: 'self-awareness is key when engaging in the structures of critical thinking.' *Freudian Slippers* debunks certain objectivity claims the other commenters make, separating 'belief' from 'factual', 'ideals' from 'critical thinking', and 'personal vantage points' from 'reasoning skills'. *Freudian slippers* ends with a clear metaphor:

> To say beyond all deniability you can substantiate the "quality" of one piece of music over another (objectively) is as erroneous as someone claiming their favourite flower is the perfect choice for everyone, based entirely on their own senses.

The final note of *Freudian Slippers* is something that would be welcomed by Rich and Haraway.

Chapter 2: Historiography of feminist musicology

Since the rise of feminist musicology in 1980, a lot of time and energy went in the inclusion of women in the classical canon. As I have mentioned in the introduction, scholars established clear guidelines to achieve this inclusion. However, in 2017, the classical music canon and musicological curricula are almost as exclusionary as four decades ago. In her book, *Towards a Twenty-First-Century Feminist Politics of Music* (2010), Sally McArthur looks for the reasons why feminist musicology did not have more impact on academic and educational practices. For McArthur, the main reason lies in the way scholars in the Western world produce knowledge. Another author who confirms this point of view is Linda Nochlin. She points in her article *Why have there been no great women artists?* to institutions and to education as important places to start a change.[37] McArthur quotes Patti Lather, a scholar who specializes in educational and gender studies, who claims that the discourse of this knowledge production "is anchored in the liberal humanist belief 'of knowledge as

[37] Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" in *Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, edited by Vivian Gornick and Barbara Moran (New York: Basic, 1971), 2.

cure'."[38] By addressing this concept, McArthur points to the thought that science revolves around acquiring an extensive amount of knowledge. Paradoxically, there must be a reason why the egalitarian thinking and meritocracy introduced by feminist musicologists did not have much effect in current musicology. In the next few paragraphs I examine this reason according to Sally McArthur, Marcia J. Citron and Kheng K. Koay. I also look at the different solutions the authors offer concerning the inner change of the discipline.

I begin by giving a detailed overview of the several reasons McArthur suggests impede the enterprise of feminist musicology, because they have a direct bearing on my case studies and perception research in the following chapters.

The first thing McArthur brings up is the opposition between equality and difference thinking. Equality and difference thinking are connected to gender studies, to identify the thoughts feminists had on the female-male relation. For example, difference thinking assumes inherent differences between women and men. By categorising music, one could reinforce the difference. Another author McArthur relies upon is Rosi Braidotti, a renowned scholar in philosophy and founding professor of gender studies at Utrecht university, who in her book *Posthuman, All Too Human* critiques the notion of the 'master-narrative'.[39] Braidotti comes to the conclusion that one can look at the music written by women composers as 'a positive variation from the norm', but she also warns that difference thinking reinforces an 'us-them' relationship.[40] According to McArthur, this emphasis on difference is one of the main reasons why feminist musicology did not develop into our current time.

The second reason has to do with a flaw inherent in the intersectional and poststructuralists perspectives. Poststructuralist thinkers saw difference as something bigger than just the category 'women'. As I discussed in chapter 1, one identity is made up out of many components. By introducing difference as a main focus in the research discipline, poststructuralists "downplayed the importance of the category 'woman'," which led to the downfall of feminist musicology.[41] McArthur criticizes the radical feminists for generalising women, and takes Haraway's critique further, applying her criticism to the entire discipline of musicology, where, again: old standards are used to measure new developments.[42] McArthur's next thought is about partial knowledge production (see chapter 1). Because knowledge production is always partial, it is important that knowledge comes from different perspectives. If the points of view are limited, knowledge is inevitably biased – because it does not tell the whole story. McArthur paraphrases Butler: "[research conducted with awareness of partial knowledge] could…produce a discourse which exposes how power is produced always to construct what it excludes."[43]

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[38] Sally McArthur, "How Is Gender Composed in Musical Composition?" in *Towards a Twenty-First-Century Feminist Politics of Music* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 22.
[39] Rosi Braidotti in McArthur, 90.
[40] Rosi Braidotti in McArthur, 90.
[41] Sally McArthur, "Feminists Recomposing the Field of Musicology," in *Towards a Twenty-First-Century Feminist Politics of Music* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 90-91.
[42] McArthur, "Feminists Recomposing the Field of Musicology," 96-97.
[43] McArthur, "How Is Gender Composed in Musical Composition?" 29.

McArthur's third reason points out several weaknesses in the feminist musicological discourse, that produced further obstacles for its success, such as the 'disconnectedness' from one study to another, and the lack of 'contextualisation in the broader field of women in the arts'.[44] These are concrete shortcomings in feminist literature written about musicology. Furthermore, McArthur blames the radical feminists for 'putting male against female', which originated in 'hostile' dualisms within the research area, thus bordering on essentialists claims. This essentialist claim (claiming for example the existence of a 'female' style) and (probably) the label 'feminist musicology' itself compromised the work of radical feminists in the eyes of scholars in the field of music analysis, and therefore diminished its impact.[45]

In general, the title 'feminist' has had a bad name for years, and has only recently started recovering from its negative connotation. The stereotypes surrounding feminism could have been one cause why the efforts did not trickle down into the musical canon. When I say standard canon, I mean the classical canon as we know it; the repertoire that is programmed in concert halls and that students learn about in universities

As a fourth reason, McArthur talks about inertia: the proliferation of old musicological habits. Internally, musicologists did not *want* to change their ways. According to Braidotti: "The potentially innovative, de-territorialising impact of the new technologies is hampered and turned down by the reassertion of the gravitational pull of old and established values."[46] McArthur makes a connection between Braidotti's 'trend' and musicology.[47] Thus, positivist scholarship is stuck in a 'research framework [that] is based on old and established ways of thinking.'[48] For McArthur, positivist scholarship has a 'one-dimensional research hypotheses' that, when researching music by women composers, does not look at the question 'why was this music marginalized in music historiography?' Therefore, the image of women composers stays negative, because criteria of quality in music are not updated to include different perspectives.

Solutions

However, McArthur finds musicological research focused on women composers necessary. Besides making more music available for the public, McArthur claims that scholars should 'look at the issues preventing women from participating fully in the public world of composing'.[49] For me, this thought feels utopian, because most feminist musicological texts I read left the impression they lacked that insight. McArthur is one of the few who tries to find an origin to the problem of the current insufficiency of the inclusion of music written by women composers.[50]

McArthur proposes multiple ways of thinking about solutions. For her, 'the decomposition of the subject' would enable musicology to effect methodological change. McArthur points to:

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[44] McArthur, "How Is Gender Composed in Musical Composition?" 29-31.
[45] McArthur, "Feminists Recomposing the Field of Musicology," 97.
[46] Rosi Braidotti in McArthur, 105.
[47] McArthur, "Feminists Recomposing the Field of Musicology," 104.
[48] McArthur, "How Is Gender Composed in Musical Composition?" 32-33.
[49] McArthur, "Feminists Recomposing the Field of Musicology," 89.
[50] McArthur, "Feminists Recomposing the Field of Musicology," 90.

> Variations on postmodernist themes, advocating multiplicities of difference […], the fragmentation and perpetual performative state of the subject, relativism in place of universalism, the end of aesthetics, the collapse of high and low art and the end of the discipline.[51]

Although the 'end of the discipline' is farfetched, these propositions point to the positive results that came out of critical (or feminist) musicology: it "enabled dialogue to emerge between musicology and feminism."[52] According to McArthur, the fact of the matter is that the core of musicology is still dominated by men. Multiple articles on which composers are being performed in concert halls confirm this, but also my own experience studying musicology: we mainly read texts written by white men. Thus, although it seems as if the feminist movement tried to leave permanent footprints on critical musicology, it instead swirled back to the old ways after a decade or so. So the question then really is: what can trigger an inner change? To sum up, McArthur's advocates for "a Deleuzian conception of women's music, [which] produces a different conclusion which is dynamic and productive."[53] If nothing inherently changes in the entire discipline, including the way it produces knowledge and conceptualizes itself, the results of feminist scholarship go unnoticed.

In her book *Gender and the Musical Canon*, Marcia J. Citron writes about specific contexts surrounding music and how gender is constructed through these contexts.[54] Although this book is already 20 years old, many of her points are still relevant today. In her chapter *Music as a Gendered Discourse*, Citron mentions multiple time specific social factors, such as 'gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality,' through which music communicates.[55] Citron disputes the neutrality of the recipient by pointing to the 'politics of location'[56] - that is, she problematizes one's understanding of something that has been made in the past. Times are ever changing and so are meanings attached to certain contexts. Citron claims the recipient's understanding of a composition depends on "one's present semiotic context and how it [the recipient] interprets the signs of the past."[57] By taking accountability for one's own position in time and historical context, one could in a way overcome the problems of understanding cultural phenomena from a different epoch.[58] Citron thus sees a composition as a communicator, speaking about certain 'social values and ideologies', such as the valuation of masculinity and femininity in music.[59] Focussing on female and male traits is a good example of how this valuation is taking place.[60]

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[51] McArthur, "Feminists Recomposing the Field of Musicology," 101-102.
[52] McArthur, "Feminists Recomposing the Field of Musicology," 102.
[53] McArthur, "How Is Gender Composed in Musical Composition?" 39.
[54] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 120-212.
[55] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 120-121.
[56] A theory constructed by Adrienne Rich who claims that one only produces partial knowledge, coming from a certain position in their own time and space.
[57] Citron, "Music as a gendered Discourse," 121.
[58] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 121.
[59] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 121.
[60] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 122.

In addition, Citron goes on to say how classifications create a norm. With a norm come boundaries and clear distinctions what can and cannot enter a canon. If a musical work falls outside of these boundaries, where does it go?[61] Citron offers one solution for this problem: deliberately mixing up the genre. Relying on Dalhaus' statement about genre: "Not every piece fits into a recognized genre and implies that it need not do so."[62] Citron goes on to propose that pointing to contexts surrounding music could work in favour of including more diverse works to the classical canon.

Citron makes a striking remark when paraphrasing Barbara Herrnstein Smith: "Structures of education, like canons, construct behavioural and evaluative paradigms that replicate themselves and thus reconfirm their own validity."[63] This, again, echoes Butler's concept of gender as a social construct; repeating certain patterns that helps construct them. The dualism between female and male could also be analysed as an idea reinforced by reception. Furthermore, Citron analyses the stereotypes attached to certain musical traits. She quotes D'Indy, who first came up with an idea that a lot of theorists followed: the male quality in a first theme of a sonata, and the female quality in the second theme.[64] These stereotypes still prevail even though more than a century passed after D'Indy's statement. Educational systems still support these stereotypes, keeping them intact. When studying musicology, we still learn about the concept of male or female traits connected to music.

Citron asks bluntly: is there a female style? Her answer is no less straightforward than her question:

> There is no style that issues from inherent traits in female biology. It cannot be claimed that every female composer writes in a style that all women composers utilize, that is unmistakeably their own, and that cannot be found in works by men. Without additional information or the presence of a text, it is extremely difficult to discern via style whether a work is by a woman or a man. While certain codes of gendered representation might grow up around a particular chord in a particular context, composition itself is basically a technical discipline whose language is available to men and women alike; an interval or a chord is not inherently gendered.[65]

With this statement, Citron dismisses any possibility of a biologically informed style (because I am female, I write in a specific style). Rather, she uses this example to point to the existence of gendered boundaries within a canon. Furthermore, Citron shows 'the complexities of subject positioning and socialization' as tools to break through the rigid boundaries of the canon.[66]

The last author I discuss here is Kheng K. Koay and her book *The Kaleidoscope of Women's Sounds in Music of the Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries* (2015). The tone of her first chapter is dominantly positive, although Koay does mention the marginalising practices in musical practice and composition. Her conclusion points

[61] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 124-125.
[62] Carl Dalhaus in Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 125-126.
[63] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 131-132.
[64] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 136-138.
[65] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 159.
[66] Citron, "Music as a Gendered Discourse," 165.

to the "continuous[…] fight and struggle to obtain equality in music with men."[67] Koay gives multiple reasons for the gap still existing between women composers and male composers: "Women have not been fully integrated into all aspects of musical activities",[68] the lack of acceptance of women into academic spheres,[69] the absence of role models,[70] the 'criticism and sarcasm', with which women composers deal in their professional lives,[71] and conservative ideas about women who create.[72] An interesting thing Koay points to is the networking connected to a professional career as composer. She quotes Judith Shatin, composers and the president of the American Women Composers: 'Until women are included, nothing will change.'[73] Koay thus broadens the compositional world to the social world it exists in, claiming that equality in a work field can only be achieved if there is equality in society itself. Another striking strategy advocated by Koay is the inclusion of the audience when solving the problem of exclusion. Koay points to the 'neglect' of the focus in research on audience,[74] and I agree with her. The audience are (unconsciously) upholding certain stereotypes. By looking into these stereotypes, researchers can start debunking them, as I intend with my next chapter.

Solutions

I find some of Koay's comments bordering on utopian, because I think the compositional field is not as tolerant and open as Koay sometimes suggests. The solutions posed by Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, one of the women composers Koay interviewed for her book, make for a more realistic inclusion of women composers: "In our high school we had behind-the-screen auditions. It didn't matter whether you were male, female, a tenth or twelfth grader. The emphasis was on musical merit."[75] Zwilich adds that the attitude towards women composers should not be any different than towards male composers, the focus should be on the quality.[76] This attitude points toward a more intra-musical focus, one that I support in my thesis. Furthermore, according to Koay, there should be more 'awareness' of women composers.[77] Koay points to Joan Tower, a pianist and composer, who uses this awareness when "recommend[ing] women in an effort to balance inequities that still exist."[78] Libby Larson, a composer, proposes another solution: that of an 'alternative approach'.[79] She does not dismiss the contemporary compositional culture but provides an alternative, which provides a shorter path to inclusiveness. With this alternative, Larson means not a

[67] Kheng K. Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," in *The Kaleidoscope of Women's Sounds in Music of the Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries*, 1st ed. (Newcastle-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 5.
[68] Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," 6.
[69] Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," 7.
[70] Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," 8.
[71] Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," 9.
[72] Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," 10.
[73] Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," 13.
[74] Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," 18.
[75] Ellen Taaffe Zwilich in Koay, 17.
[76] Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," 17.
[77] Koay, "Women Composers and Modern Society," 30.
[78] Joan Tower in Koay, 30.
[79] Libby Larsen in Koay, 36.

replacement for, for example, the 'instrumental ensemble,' but an alternative, to introduce more people to an alternative side of the classical canon.[80]

All three authors thus dismiss conservative stereotypes reflected on the perception of music written by women composers. In my next chapter, I show that these stereotypes are still very much present in the perception of this music.

Chapter 3: Reception

> …reception histories (studies of critical responses, past and present) have become extremely important. For not even the greatest symphony can determine how it will be assessed or the kind of impact it will have on the world: its post-compositional life and (in some crucial sense) its meanings depend on the kinds of response circulated about it…'[81]

One of the main reasons of starting this research was a question McClary already asked in the 1990's: why did nothing happen? With the abundance of feminist musicological texts, some of which pose clear strategies of diversifying the canon, why has nothing trickled down? My preliminary assumption was that there are still rigid stereotypes in place concerning music written by women. By this, I mean not just the musical stereotypes I talk about in Chapter 1, but also a (subconscious) collective denial of the existence of women composers. Most of these are related to larger issues of social inequality, such as patriarchy. To test the stereotypes still present in the reception of music written by women composers, I put together a musical survey.

In our times, the question of 'why?' concerning women and the classical canon is starting to spark the interest of multiple writers. Articles about the absence of women on the radio,[82] in festivals, and in concert halls[83] are published regularly. As a contribution to answering this question, I put together a musical survey, where I asked recipients to answer multiple questions after listening to fragments of music. In this chapter, I first explain the content of my survey, after which I will interpret the results and finally draw a conclusion.

Throughout my musicological education, one of the most intriguing things I encountered was the way in which music was assigned 'male' and 'female' traits, and how these traits were evaluated as respectively positive (heroic, strong, prestigious) and negative (weak, light and therefore non-prestigious) qualities. I also came across assertions that one could 'hear' these qualities in the music, as was stated in several texts I had to read – texts whose topics ranged from medieval to Romantic music. By conducting a research into the reception of music written by female composers, I debunk the prejudices about female music, which is

[80] Libby Larsen in Koay, 36.
[81] McClary, "Of Patriarchs…and Matriarchs, Too," 368.
[82] https://decorrespondent.nl/6743/zo-weinig-vrouwen-kwamen-er-afgelopen-jaar-op-de-nederlandse-radio/994977093748-52247f46
[83] http://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2017/05/05/526968527/looking-for-womens-music-at-the-symphony-good-luck and https://theaderks.wordpress.com/2017/05/22/vanachter-de-chador-vrouwelijke-componist-nog-altijd-veronachtzaamd/

generally perceived as 'charming' and 'delightful,' mostly written in small forms and that it lacks 'virility'.[84] I do so by setting music written by women next to music written by men, and letting test subjects answer closed questions about their reception of the music. By gathering data I want to debunk the common perception that one could hear if music is written by a woman.

My starting point was the research conducted by Paul R. Farnsworth, J.C. Trembley and C.E. Dutton (*Masculinity and Femininity of Musical Phenomena*). I conducted a similar survey but replaced some of the examples written by male composers with music by female composers. When picking which musical works I wanted to analyse, I looked at the stereotypical musical attributes I mentioned above. I constructed my survey around prejudices about music written by women composers. To avoid premeditated answers by steering questions, I hid my gender based questions between more general questions about the music. The subsequent paragraphs are an explanation of the content of my survey, the method I used and the results.

Content

For the precise content of my reception survey, I refer to the appendix. When processing the answers, I measure four parameters extensively, to see if there are differences within a certain group of respondents. My assumption was that there were not that many differences because my aim was to find stereotypes, and we are all sensitive to stereotypes. I designed the survey so that it would prompt people to listen to their first instincts, because associations were very important for my survey. This was also the reason why respondents had to choose between 'feminine' and 'masculine', without a third option.

Method

I'm grateful to Josine Stuber for her help in analyzing the survey data that I gathered . Differentials between groups were statistically tested using the Chi-square tests (Fisher's exact test, 2-sided). The *p*-value of <0.05 was considered as statistically significant. Individuals who chose 'other' in the field "gender" were excluded from the analysis, in order to make comparable groups for statistical testing. The analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS software (version 24.0 for Mac).

Results

It was striking to see almost no significant differences in the answers provided. The only p-value close to a significant difference was 0,099, but my sample group shows no significant difference. With this, I mean the differences between groups (for example, female versus male), are very small: men and women answered the questions in the same way. Therefore, the results show that both men and women are subject to the same preconceptions about gender in classical music. If I held another test with a bigger group of respondents, according to these number my results would still be the same, making them appropriate to draw conclusions from.

[84] de Graaf, "'Never Call Us Lady Composers," 287.

The first table shows the differences where I focused my survey on. On the basis of the results in subsequent tables, I can conclude that female and male respondents did not answer differently (table 2), because no p-value was below 0,05. Some of the values were even 1, which means that there was no difference at all.

Table 1, analysed variables

Table 1: Total *n* =	93
Gender, *n* (%)	
Female	51 (55)
Male	40 (43)
Other	2 (2)
Age, *n* (%)	
<30 year	59 (65)
≥30 year	32 (35)
Work or study in music, *n* (%)	
Yes	35 (38)
No	58 (62)
Knowledge of classical music, *n* (%)	64 (69)
Yes	29 (31)
No	

Table 2, perception of music as 'female' or 'male' measured along the variables

Table 2:	**Piece is feminine**	**Piece is masculine**	***P*– value**
Piece of music 1			
Gender, *n* (%)			
Female	34 (69,4)	15 (30,6)	
Male	22 (62,9)	13 (37,1)	0,640
Age, *n* (%)			
<30 year	38 (69,1)	17 (30,9)	
≥30 year	18 (62,1)	11 (37,9)	0,627
Work/study in field of music, *n* (%)			
Yes	25 (78,1)	7 (21,9)	
No	31 (59,6)	21 (40,4)	0,099
Knowledge of classical music, *n* (%)	39 (65,0)	21 (35,0)	
Yes	17 (70,8)	7 (29,2)	0,798
No			
Piece of music 2			
Gender, *n* (%)			
Female	5 (11,4)	39 (88,6)	
Male	6 (15,8)	32 (84,2)	0,747
Age, *n* (%)			
<30 year	9 (17,0)	44 (83,0)	
≥30 year	2 (6,9)	27 (93,1)	0,313
Work/study in field of music, *n* (%)			
Yes	4 (13,3)	26 (86,7)	
No	7 (13,5)	45 (86,5)	1,000
Knowledge of classical music, *n* (%)	9 (15,8)	48 (84,2)	
Yes	2 (8,0)	23 (92,0)	0,490
No			
Piece of music 3			
Gender, *n* (%)			
Female	38 (84,4)	7 (15,6)	
Male	30 (88,2)	4 (11,8)	0,749
Age, *n* (%)			
<30 year	49 (90,7)	5 (9,3)	
≥30 year	19 (76,0)	6 (24,0)	0,093
Work/study in field of music, *n* (%)			
Yes	28 (93,3)	2 (6,7)	
No	40 (81,6)	9 (18,4)	0,191
Knowledge of classical music, *n* (%)	49 (87,5)	7 (12,5)	
Yes	19 (82,6)	4 (17,4)	0,722
No			

Something that stood out immediately, but not surprisingly, is that people did not mention women composers when they answered the question 'who do you think composed this piece?' I asked this question 'three times, and out my 91 respondents (and thus out of the 273 possible answers), three answers in total

named a women composer (table 3). In addition, most of the respondents did not know the pieces I asked them to listen to (table 4).

Table 3, composers mentioned per musical fragment

Who do you think composed this piece?	**Piece 1** Frequency (percent)	**Piece 2** Frequency (percent)	**Piece 3** Frequency (percent)
No idea	33 (36,3)	33 (36,3)	34 (37,4)
Chopin	18 (19,8)	2 (2,2)	1 (1,1)
Beethoven	8 (8,8)	15 (16,5)	3 (3,3)
Schubert	8 (8,8)	1 (1,1)	2 (2,2)
Mozart	4 (4,4)	9 (9,9)	6 (6,6)
Brahms	3 (3,3)	5 (5,5)	5 (5,5)
Bach	3 (3,3)	3 (3,3)	-
Liszt	2 (2,2)	1 (1,1)	1 (1,1)
Debussy	2 (2,2)	1 (1,1)	1 (1,1)
Sibelius	1 (1,1)	-	2 (2,2)
Schumann (Robert)	1 (1,1)	3 (3,3)	1 (1,1)
Satie	1 (1,1)	-	-
Mendelssohn (Felix)	1 (1,1)	1 (1,1)	3 (3,3)
Vivaldi	1 (1,1)	-	4 (4,4)
Mendelssohn (Fanny)	1 (1,1)	-	-
Tsjaikovski	1 (1,1)	6 (6,6)	5 (5,5)
Scriabin	1 (1,1)	-	-
Shostakovich	1 (1,1)	2 (2,2)	2 (2,2)
Einaudi	1 (1,1)	-	-
Schumann (Clara)	-	1 (1,1)	-
Saint-Saens	-	1 (1,1)	-
Wagner	-	3 (3,3)	-
Mahler	-	2 (2,2)	2 (2,2)
Dvořák	-	1 (1,1)	1 (1,1)
Rachmaninov	-	1 (1,1)	-
Mascagni	-	-	1 (1,1)
Donizetti	-	-	1 (1,1)
Grieg	-	-	1 (1,1)
Ravel	-	-	2 (2,2)
Strauss	-	-	2 (2,2)
Bernstein	-	-	1 (1,1)
Rimsky-Korsakov	-	-	1 (1,1)
Haydn	-	-	1 (1,1)
Alma Mahler	-	-	1 (1,1)
Fauré	-	-	2 (2,2)
Total	91 (100)	91 (100)	91 (100)

Table 4, knowledge of the musical fragments

Are you familiar with this piece?	**Piece 1** Frequency (percent)	**Piece 2** Frequency (percent)	**Piece 3** Frequency (percent)
Yes	4 (4,4)	6 (6,6)	5 (5,5)
No	87 (95,6)	85 (93,4)	80 (87,9)
Left blank	-	-	6 (6,6)
Total	91	91	91

Furthermore, my survey confirmed the biases in assigning female or male traits to musical instruments. When answering the question about the perception of instruments as being female or male, an overwhelming majority chose for the same gender (table 5). My assumptions were also confirmed when I asked questions about the female/male qualities of dynamics and rhythm: louder dynamics and faster rhythm were predominantly perceived as male (table 6). Softer dynamics and slow rhythm were more around the average (2), but tend to be slightly more perceived as female.

Table 5, perception of 'femininity' or 'masculinity' in musical instruments

	Gender Female	Gender Male	*P*-value
Piano is more, *n* (%[a])			
Feminine	29 (61,7)	21 (65,6)	
Masculine	18 (38,3)	11 (34,4)	0,814
Dubble bass is more, *n* (%)	0 (0,0)	1 (2,6)	
Feminine	48 (100)	38 (97,4)	0,448
Masculine			
Cello is more, *n* (%)			
Feminine	24 (49,0)	19 (50,0)	
Masculine	25 (51,0)	19 (50,0)	1,000
Drums is more, *n* (%)			
Feminine	1 (2,0)	0 (0,0)	
Masculine	49 (98,0)	40 (100)	0,814
Flute is more, *n* (%)			
Feminine	49 (98,0)	38 (95,0)	
Masculine	1 (2,0)	2 (5,0)	0,583
French Horn is more, *n* (%)	6 (13,3)	5 (13,5)	
Feminine	39 (86,7)	32 (86,5)	1,000
Masculine			
Harp is more, *n* (%)			
Feminine	48 (98,0)	39 (97,5)	
Masculine	1 (2,0)	1 (2,5)	1,000
Violin is more, *n* (%)			
Feminine	45 (93,8)	32 (91,4)	
Masculine	3 (6,3)	3 (8,6)	0,693
Oboe is more, *n* (%)			
Feminine	26 (66,7)	17 (53,1)	
Masculine	13 (33,3)	15 (46,9)	0,330
Trombone is more, *n* (%)			
Feminine	1 (2,1)	1 (2,6)	
Masculine	47 (97,9)	38 (97,4)	1,000
Clarinet is more, *n* (%)			
Feminine	35 (72,9)	27 (69,2)	
Masculine	13 (27,1)	12 (30,8)	0,813
Trumpet is more, *n* (%)			
Feminine	1 (2,1)	3 (7,5)	
Masculine	47 (97,9)	37 (92,5)	0,326

Thus my assumptions were mostly confirmed by the survey, which means that standing stereotypes and prejudices are still in place when thinking about classical music. Thus, the collective memory of the audience needs to diversify if women composers want to enter the canon.

Table 6, perception of 'female' or 'male' in rhythm and dynamics

Scale of dynamics & rhythm where 0 means more female and 5 more male	Soft dynamic	Loud dynamic	Slow rhythm	Fast rhythm
0	2 (2,2)	2 (2,2)	-	3 (3,3)
1	9 (9,9)	-	8 (8,8)	3 (3,3)
2	53 (58,2)	3 (3,3)	32 (35,2)	9 (9,9)
3	18 (19,8)	21 (23,1)	32 (35,2)	31 (34,1)
4	2 (2,2)	48 (52,7)	11 (12,1)	33 (36,3)
5	1 (1,1)	11 (12,1)	2 (2,2)	6 (6,6)
Missing	6 (6,6)	6 (6,6)	6 (6,6)	6 (6,6)
Total	91 (100)	91 (100)	91 (100)	91 (100)

In short, both female and male respondents answered the questions dominantly the same. This could have multiple origins, such as people who have no knowledge of classical music who answer for example 'male' when describing the double bass, simply because they know a man who plays this instrument. On the other hand, even the people with knowledge about classical music give assumed answers, probably because our society (subconsciously) puts certain genders to certain instruments. Striking enough, the differences between the groups of respondents, especially the ones about knowledge or professional interest in (classical) music were minimal, something I did not assume beforehand.

Besides the assumed answers, some respondents gave interesting responses when there was space for open answers. When I asked who composed the piece, someone answered: 'Presumably an old dude in a wig', which aligns with the chapter written by Sarah Cooper about the preconceptions on classical music. Connected to this, another respondent said 'Some guy in the 17th century,' which points to the same prejudices.

Some respondents were quick to decide if a piece was feminine or masculine, one respondent even said: 'Masculine, definitely.' A few others even gave musical traits connected to this assumed masculinity, such as 'low notes,' or more vaguely; 'it feels like it was written by a man, so masculine.' This gave me a quick insight into the minds of the audience, the way they define femininity and masculinity according to music. A woman said: 'Define masculine or feminine. Neither of those words apply. But if I'd have to answer I'd say feminine, but that's just because I'm a woman and it kind of speaks to me.' So both the gender of the composer and the gender of the respondent seems to be playing a role when deciding if a piece is feminine or masculine.

Chapter 4: musical analysis

Musical analysis of Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel's Trio in d minor, opus 11, and Felix Mendelssohn's Trio in d minor, opus 49.

There is a long tradition in music history of assigning 'female' and 'male' qualities to musical traits.[85] For example, in the middle ages, the semitone was seen as 'female' and therefore, dangerous. When talking about 'gendered' perception of music in her article *The Woman in the Music,* Marianne Kielian-Gilbert claims that every person in a society has their own "relationship with and (re)articulates the socially constructed aspects of gender."[86] Here, the author means that people are, consciously or unconsciously, aware of certain patterns that affirm their gender. As a starting point, Kielian-Gilbert relies on Butler's theory of gender as a social construct where patterns affirm gender. She applies this theory to music by looking at gendered aspects of music theory. She emphasises the importance of this new perspective,

[85] See for examples from the Middle Ages Elizabeth Eva Leach's chapter in *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice*: "Music and Masculinity in the Middle Ages."
[86] Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, "The Woman in the Music (On Feminism as Theory and Practice)," *College Music Symposium* 40 (2000): 62–78.

because it apparently changes the way theorists look at music, and presents us with ways to 'use' gender as a tool in analysing and fully understanding music.[87]

When talking about theory and practice, Kielian-Gilbert points to the way the masculine is seen as the norm, where differences are overlooked and binaries are produced.[88] For me, one of her most valid questions is: "[W]hat are the various positions we as reading and listening subjects can, or are directed to, occupy? How are these positions culturally, socially, and historically – and I would include, compositionally and analytically – constituted?"[89] Kielian-Gilbert goes on to propose multiple approaches to more nuanced research. By doing this, she applies feminist discourses to music theory. In conducting my own musical analysis, I take this kind of analysis as a starting point.

Additionally, for my own research, the concept of 'intentional fallacy' is of great importance. Kielian-Gilbert describes this as: "The mistake of evaluating a literary work by reference to the author's intentions or biographical history, and of assuming that the work takes its meaning from aspects "external" to the text."[90] Summing up her point, "intentional fallacy," as conducted by researchers in the past, is a dated concept that has been supplemented by looking at the work itself and at the author. Though Kielian-Gilbert warns to not draw conclusions out of these positions. My thesis relies on this viewpoint, by taking analysis a step forward to shed the 'fallacy' from the reception of music itself, if it is written by a man or a woman.

When choosing which musical works I compare, to fill the analytical gap existing in research towards women composers, I looked at the classical canon. I searched through the most current concert programs from the Concertgebouw, de Doelen and TivoliVredenburg. These are a few of the biggest concert houses in the Netherlands. It was noticeable that in all the programs, there were either no or very few women composers.

In October 2017, Tivoli Vredenburg, located in Utrecht, is programming two Trios by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, played side by side and written in the same key.[91] Here, I apply 'feminist analysis', as formulated by Kielian-Gilbert and combine it with more traditional music analysis to give the Trio by Fanny the attention it usually lacks in common research. My analysis will be about both Trio's; not to prove that Fanny's music has the same quality, but to find reason for including one Trio to the canon, but not the other.

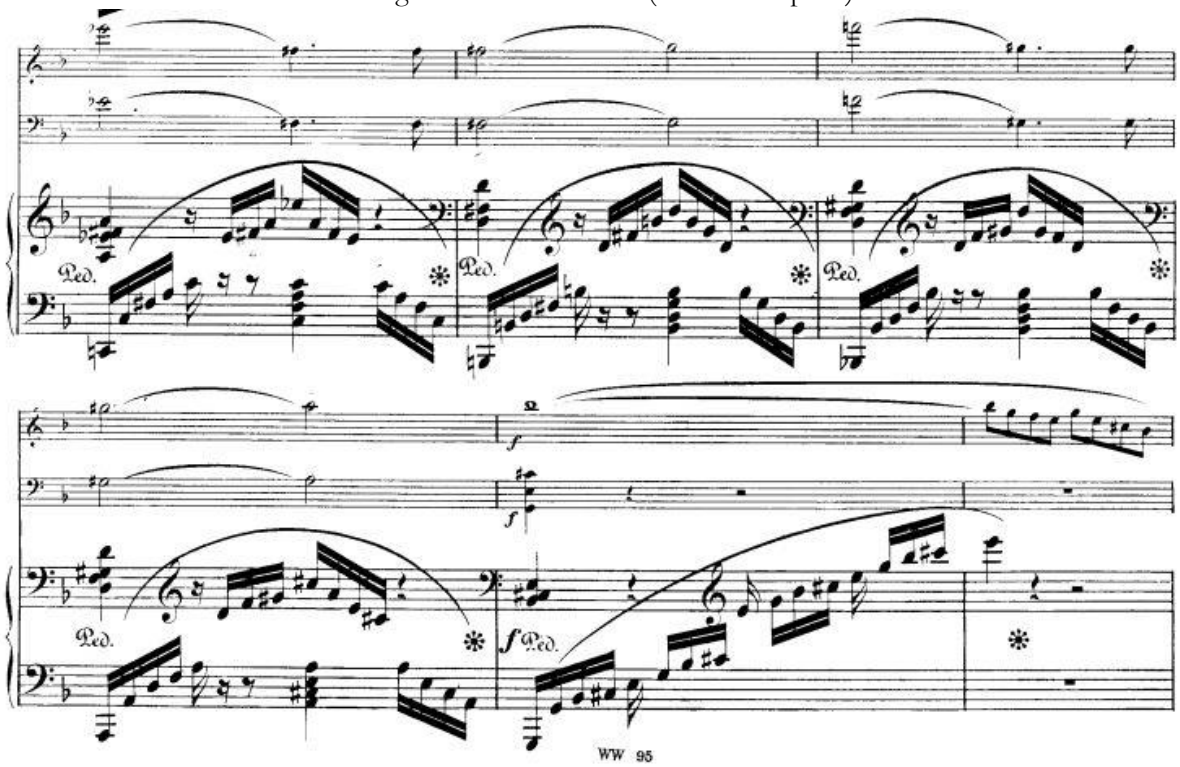
[87] Kielian-Gilbert, "The Woman in the Music," 73.
[88] Kielian-Gilbert, "The Woman in the Music," 64.
[89] Kielian-Gilbert, "The Woman in the Music," 65.
[90] Kielian-Gilbert, "The Woman in the Music," 72-73.
[91] Fanny Mendelssohn: *Trio in D op. 11*, Felix Mendelssohn: *Trio in D no. 1*. Edition (first, reprint): Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel. Reprinted: Munich: W. Wollenweber, 1984. Plate WW 95.

Judit Bach wrote an elaborate analysis of the two trio's in 2005. Although Bach's analysis sometimes strays from looking at the music to describing what it feels like, yet she does give a very sufficient overview of the two Trio's.

Bach begins by comparing the form of the two pieces in this table:[92]

	Movement I	Movement II	Movement III	Movement IV
Fanny Mendellsohn	*Allegro molto vivace,* in D minor, sonata-allegro form, large scale, passionate	*Andante espressivo,* in A major, ABA form, lyrical, expressive	*Lied, Allegretto*, in D major, strophic song form (Fanny's signature genre)	*Finale, Allegro moderato*, in D minor, ending with D major, in hybrid sonata-rondo form
Felix Mendelssohn	*Molto Allegro agitato*, in D minor, sonata-allegro form, large scale, passionate	*Andante con moto tranquillo*, in B-flat major, ABA form, lyrical, expressive	*Scherzo, Leggiero e vivace*, in D major, scherzo without trio (Felix's signature genre)	*Finale, Allegro assai appassionato,* in D minor ending with D major, hybrid rondo form

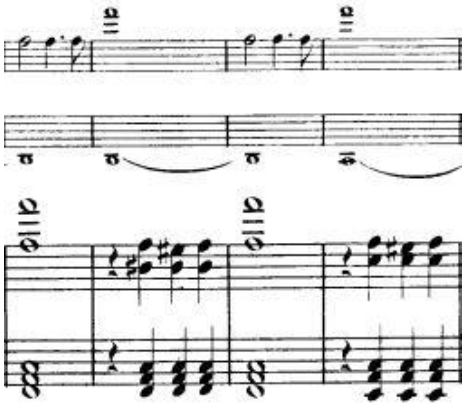
In this general overview, you can already see the similarities in key and form. Specific for Fanny's Trio is the extensive use of seventh and augmented sixth chords (music example 1):



Music example 1, Fanny Mendelssohn, consequent phrase

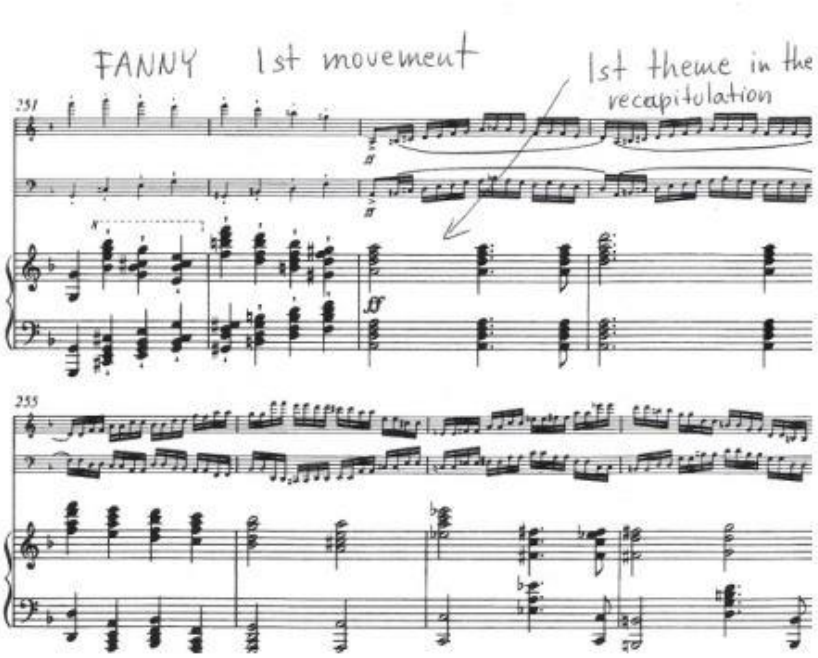
[92] Judit Bach, "A Tale of Two Piano Trios: Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn's Piano Trios in D Minor (Op. 11, Op. 49); and How a Woman Composer's Work Should Relate to the Canon," The Ohio State University, 2005, 48.

Notable is the working of the keys throughout the themes. As Bach analyses; Fanny Mendelssohn uses a major-minor relationship between the first and the second theme, and a major-minor relationship between the second and the closing theme.[93] Characteristic for Fanny's Trio are the cleverly thought out variations on the themes. Instead of simply repeating the themes, all three voices alternate, where variations are more subtle in the dynamics or as a kind of 'call and response' figure (music example 2):



Music example 2, Fanny Mendelssohn

The first part of Felix's Trio is featured by the theme in the cello. There is a major-minor relation between the themes, but unlike Fanny's Trio, the relation in Felix's Trio is between the second and the third theme (from A major to A minor).[94] Notable in the first part of Felix's Trio is the way the theme is processed: unlike Fanny, Felix stays close to his original theme, taking fragments but mostly repeating the theme (yet in another key). Thus, Felix stays more within melodic, harmonic and rhythmic lines of his theme, while Fanny mostly varies on these. Bach sums up the comparison of the first part of the Trio's by analysing the works along the lines of traditional 'main stream sonata-allegro form pattern.' She notices that although the composers use different keys and develop musical material differently, they both fit into this tradition.[95]

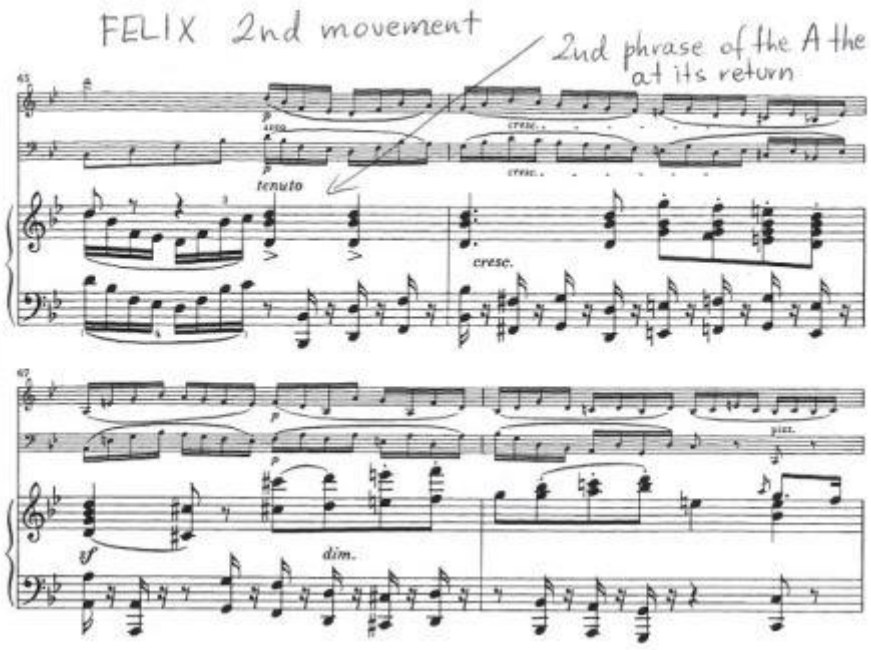


Bach goes on analysing the Trio's, finding many similarities, especially in the second part. Although Bach's analysis is mostly a summary of musical traits used by the composers, she does find a very interesting similarity in the second part of Felix's trio. There is a return of a theme that bears resemblances to the first theme of Fanny's first part of her Trio (music example 3&4):

Music example 3, Fanny Mendelssohn

[93] Bach, "A Tale of Two Piano Trios," 53.
[94] Bach, "A Tale of Two Piano Trios," 63.
[95] Bach, "A Tale of Two Piano Trios," 67.

Music example 4, Felix Mendelssohn[96]



There are, as is common in the case of brother/sisters, wives/husbands, multiple myths about the 'inspiration' Felix and Fanny got from each other. Here, the themes are visibly in accordance.

Bach goes on confirming the similarities in the third part: both composers use a title, and write in their own expertise (Fanny a *Lied* and Felix a *Scherzo*).[97] The most visible similarities in the fourth part are the title (*Finale*), the key that changes from D minor to D major at the end, and the 'hybrid form with mixed characteristics of sonata-allegro and rondo forms, based on three themes, with one in F major.'[98]

Bach's conclusion of her chapter relies on the same reasons on performing analysis as I stress: by looking at the music itself, I can prove the similarities in the two Trio's. It is undeniable that from an analytical standpoint, these belong to the same genre. 'Belonging' here means also worthy of the same attention when it comes to analysis, and even the entrance into the classical canon.

Conclusion

As Linda Nochlin already demonstrated: it is not just the question of 'why has there been no great women artists?', but the patterns and borders that lie beneath the question.[99] An answer to my main question could simply be: because it was not yet the time for inner change. But now, almost three decades later, in the 'tolerant' twenty-first-century, why is this not the time for that change to occur? By pointing to the difference, one could argue (as does Nochlin) that the problem is seen from a certain perspective, reinforcing the difference by insisting on dualities. Still, it is according to multiple authors I discussed, a necessary evil to do look at women composers in particular, because the lack of results is evident. So how can we approach the problem: to open up the canon, and diversify the music written by a diverse set of composers?

[96] Bach, "A Tale of Two Piano Trios," 81.
[97] Bach, "A Tale of Two Piano Trios," 88.
[98] Bach, "A Tale of Two Piano Trios," 105.
[99] Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" 3.

In my research, I tried to collect multiple solutions from different angles: to not only look at the problem (the absence of women composers in the classical canon) but to offer solutions. Du Yun, a women composers and Pulitzer Prize winner said about the discipline:

> When you are in the visual art world, literary world or film world, all the works are reflective of the time and society we are in. But music, somehow, it's as if we are in another completely parallel universe.[100]

Although I do agree to a certain extent, I hope with my research to have opened a different view on musicological research. As I have shown in chapter 1, it is fruitful to apply feminist theories to receptions on music. Gender studies helps to understand the different facets that exist within reception of music. By using the concepts of situated knowledge, intersectionality and the politics of location, I found underlying claims of objectivity in the reception of music written by women composers. Furthermore, the historiography of feminist musicology displays the 'do's' and 'don'ts' of a complex trend within musicology. Different authors from different times reflect on this from their own standpoints, and it is helpful to look at these visions to find the solutions.
One of the most evident assumptions about gendered perception of music was confirmed by the reception research. Although feminist musicologists warn for looking for the assumed, for me, this assumption was something that needed to be confirmed. By analysing the reactions to music based on 'femininity' and 'masculinity', I found deeply rooted stereotypes that I believe most people are not aware of. With my reception research, I want to raise awareness of internalised prejudices, to break open the discussion and make people conscious about their own prejudices the next time they listen to classical music. Although this thought might be utopian, I did receive interested responses from recipients, asking what music they were listening to. I take this as a positive sign for the interest in classical music, especially when exposing the composers that wrote the musical fragments the respondents listened to.
My musical analysis is not to 'redeem' or in any way show that this music is the same quality as music written by men, but to simply analyse the music for what it is. By turning to the work itself, I wanted to contribute to the solutions I am posing in this thesis: reclaiming the audible as I applied Haraway's theory to my case of music.

Categorisation and binary oppositions are a part of our society. But as history has showed, thinking in these differences did not resulted in a more diverse canon. When reading a piece of music, a researcher can be aware of their place, their prejudices and continue to focus on the music without letting those affect their critical view. As far as one can be objective, this analytical approach, focussing on the music itself but taking accountability for one's own position, may prove to be more sufficient.

[100] http://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2017/05/05/526968527/looking-for-womens-music-at-the-symphony-good-luck

Appendix Reception Survey (chapter 3)

Bachelor Thesis

Hello!

And welcome to my musical survey. This is part of my bachelor thesis at the University of Utrecht. The test will consist out of a few questions about yourself, and some questions after listening to some musical fragments. Have fun!

Start

www.thesistools.com

Bachelor Thesis

1.

What is your age?*

2.

What gender do you identify with?*

- Female
- Male
- Other, namely

Are you working/studying in the field of music (either practical or theoretical)?*

- Yes
- No

4.

Do you have any knowledge of classical music?*

- Yes
- No

Next page

For the next question, you will listen to a short music fragment, the question will come after the fragment. Do listen carefully, you can focus on the things that catch your ear.

6.

What are the first words that pop into your mind when listening to this piece of music? You can name up to 5 words.

-
-
-
-
-

7.

Who do you think composed this piece?

8.

Along the lines of western thought, do you think this piece of music is more masculine or feminine?

-

9.

Are you familiar with this piece? And if so, where do you know it from?*

- Yes
- No

Continue to next page

The next musical example will focus on timbre (the sound colour of the instruments), so focus mostly on the instruments and the associations you have.

11.

Who do you think composed this piece?

-

Are you familiar with this piece? And if so, where do you know it from?*

- Yes
- No

13.

Along the lines of western thought, do you think this piece of music is more masculine or feminine?

-

14.

What instrument(s) or sound(s) stood out for you?*

15.

If you have to categorize instruments under, what in Western terms is understood as, feminine or masculine, what would you give the following instruments? This is very associative, so any answer that pops up in your head is the right one.
You can put an F or M behind every instrument, that means F (for female) or a M (for male), choose for you the correct answer. If you are not familiar with an instrument, you can leave it blank

- Piano
- Dubble bass
- Cello
- Drums
- Flute
- French Horn
- Harp
- Violin
- Oboe
- Trombone
- Clarinet
- Trumpet

Next page

For the last musical fragment, I would like you to focus on rhythm and dynamics (from soft to loud music). Again, the answers can be given by anything that catches your ear.

17.

Who do you think composed this piece?*

18.

Are you familiar with this piece? And if so, where do you know it from?*

- Yes
- No

19.

Along the lines of western thought, do you think this piece of music is more masculine or feminine?

-

20.

Was the music more on the soft or more on the loud side? Choose from left (dominantly soft) to right (dominantly loud)

	Soft				Loud
Dynamic					

21.

Along the lines of western thought, do you think this piece of music is more masculine or feminine?

-

22.

Along the lines of western thoughts on femininity and masculinity, what do you think respectively soft music and loud music sounds like?
In these scales, you can assign (fe)male traits to respectively soft, and loud music. Assign a 1 if you find the dynamics mostly female, and a 5 if you find the dynamics mostly male.

	Soft music: female			Soft music: male		Loud music: female			Loud music: male	
Dynamic										

23.

From a scale from 1 to 5, how was the rhythm in this piece? 1 being very slow and 5 being very fast.

	Slow				Fast
Rhythm					

24.

Along the lines of western thoughts on femininity and masculinity, what do you think respectively a slow rhythm and a fast rhythm sounds like?
In these scales, you can assign (fe)male traits to respectively slow, and fast rhythm. Assign a 1 if you find the rhythm mostly female, and a 5 if you find the rhythm mostly male.

	Slow rhythm: female				Slow rhythm: male	Fast rhythm: female				Fast rhythm: male
Rhythm	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

I am done!

Thank you so much for making time to help me graduate!
You can read the results in my thesis, when finished. Have a nice day!

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