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Women in Music

Are they absent from Western Music History?

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Abstract

Are women absent from Western Music History? This is a question of an apparent and easy answer; however, the reality differs. This issue prevails and only started to be discussed more seriously in recent years, since feminism has been a current on-going discussion through the world. In music, circumstances are seemingly slower to evolve still allowing discriminative actions. Through the analysis of historical records and research publications this paper aims to understand the sociological implications and historical events that influenced the outcome of society: how can there still be differences between all genders and how can one change them to transform the classical music world into a fairer and inclusive art form.

Keywords: Women, Music History, Composers and Performers, Feminism, Gender Equality

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1. Introduction

The primary reason why I decided to write about this subject is because I am interested in the women rights. Growing up in an era where technology has flourished and themes such as abortion and feminism were discussed during philosophy class in secondary school, certainly contributed for me to really dive into this matter. I started to focus my choice of literature in books written by feminist activists such as Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) and a whole world opened before my eyes. It is curious how one's life resides in a quite narrow-minded world when one does not really know much about it.

Portugal lived under dictatorship for 41 years before the big Revolution of 25th of April of 1974. This affected the country's history profoundly since during this time the Portuguese society did not evolve with the rest of Europe. Women were greatly oppressed and only after the collapse of the dictatorship women regained contact with the rest of the world. As consequence of this any Portuguese, including myself, has relatives that lived during this time and have had several kinds of sexist remarks that remain present within the tradition since said historic event. Needless to say, when a big or small event in history occurs, one's beliefs will be inherently influenced by it.

Thus, this also contributed to my perspective of the world increasing my interest in it. When I began to develop my knowledge in music and started to learn music history at the local *Conservatoire*, I started to notice that there were not many women present in the endless list of male composers most of which I already knew by then. This stuck with me until today and decided now was the perfect timing to finally speak about it.

As a young woman performer it is imperative of me to be actively conscious about this discrepancy that exists in the music world. Perhaps, because I am a woman I might feel this need for clarification and justice within our society more vehemently, however I also believe that for the society to evolve everyone must understand the errors and outdated beliefs that influence peoples' lives everyday. Shouldn't it be primarily important for everyone to have the initiative to fight for a world where everyone has the same chance to follow their dream's profession? As it is with the field of music, as one will see forward along this text, there are still actively present obstacles and inconsistencies that still dictate some minorities' lives. Also, as a performer it is frightful how I have already encountered situations where there was not much I could do as a woman whereas as a performer I should have been able to. For that, the urgency of this matter must not be taken lightly.

There is no illusion that amongst all the human population women have been neglected through the history of time. Anyone can look at our history as human race and determine on their own that this is a well-known and thoroughly spoken issue. The emancipation of woman has been gradual through the 20th Century starting officially with the *Suffragette* movement¹ and going through the birth of the feminism concept that consists of fighting for complete equality between men and women. Yet, even though this subject has been brought up and fought for, for decades now, we can still find it as an ongoing discussion very present nowadays.

The primary issue when addressing these sorts of controversial topics is that there is never enough discussion regarding people's prejudice and consequential beliefs. In other words, what may seem the right thing for a person may not be the same for someone else. Moreover, it is crucial to be aware that as an inter-cultural species there are always going to exist many different factors that should be taken into consideration, such as politics, religion, gender, sexuality etc, which may or may not influence one's opinion.

Thankfully, regarding feminism and the women rights, this subject has been continuously brought up as a discussion and it has been repeatedly addressed over the media. We can presently find a lot of research and publications on the matter which differentiates tremendously what signifies to live as a woman in the 21st century versus how it was to live in the 18th century. Yet, there is still a gigantic gap in human history regarding women accomplishments, and for some reason, a big lack of knowledge in general regarding this matter. Even Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) mentions in her essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929/2000) that in the writing of fiction [...] *nothing is known about women before the eighteenth century* [...] (Woolf, 1929/2000, 92) showing us clearly that things started to change not so long ago.

When analysing human history regarding any subject matter, there is always a missing part of information about women. There are countless archives and historic documents stating an endless list of male personalities, several important dates and significant achievements that are considered crucial and necessary to learn about. However, it is not men's fault that the normative way society usually behaves is narrowed, and has been for centuries, even though the reality is: there are simply almost no women in these records.

¹ The women's suffrage means: [...] the right of women by law to vote in national or local elections. (Britannica, 2023) Beauvoir explains plainly in her book: [...] New Zealand gave woman full rights in 1893. Australia followed in 1908. But in England and America victory was difficult. Victorian England imperiously isolated woman in her home; Jane Austen wrote in secret; it took great courage or an exceptional destiny to become George Eliot or Emily Brontë; in 1888 an English scholar wrote: "Women are not only not part of the race, they are not even half of the race but a sub-species destined uniquely for reproduction." Mrs. Fawcett founded a suffragist movement toward the end of the century, but as in France the movement was hesitant. [...] French women would have to wait until 1945 to acquire political power. (Beauvoir, 1949/2009, 183)

And curiously, not until recently, for one is not so far from the 20th Century, women did not have the same access to information, for instance historical literature or any kind of literature really. Woolf expresses this very well in her essay; the frustration regarding the different accesses to culture as a woman: [...] *Only the Fellows and Scholars are allowed here; the gravel is the place for me.* (Woolf, 1929/2000, 59)

Nonetheless, it is remarkable that we can find women, even if very few, that stood out through this stigma and have proven themselves in a world of men. We find them across the arts but also in science, and one incredibly good example of that is Marie Curie (1867-1934) who was awarded a Nobel Prize² twice and recognized with her great discovery of the elements polonium and radium. (Britannica, 2023)

[...] demonstrating that women have, in fact, made important contributions to what has been defined as mainstream science. [...] the woman who defied convention to claim a prominent position in an essentially male world. (Schiebinger, 1987, 314)

One of the most important aspects to address on this subject is that we still need to discuss and speak about these women lives. In the classical music we have several composers, conductors, and performers mentioned and played every day, however we also have women in the music field, but we do not really give them the necessary credit. For instance, their absence has nothing to do with music or performance quality, but strictly with the fact that one can analyse music history and validate all the existent personalities and their inherent accomplishments in music without purposely leaving some out. And even so, it remains impressive how these women broke the standard belief that “women weren’t made for creating and playing music”:

During twentieth century, massive social changes – particularly the entrance of women into paid labor force at progressively higher professional levels – have overcome some of the ideologies about women’s artistic place. (Bowers & Tick, 1986, 9)

1.1. Purpose and research questions

Are women absent from Western Music History? This is the question I decided to name this paper with because of its ambiguity. There are several female composers and performers that are acknowledged in music history, but are they given enough credit? This question is still very contemporary.

² She was awarded a Nobel Prize for Physics in 1903 and a Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1911: *She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, and she is the only woman to win the award in two different fields.* (Britannica, 2023)

Are schools focusing on female composers in the same way they do with male composers? Are orchestras playing the equal amount of music written by women as they do with music written by men? Do orchestras have more male musicians than female? Is there any gender discrimination against different musical instruments? Do women musicians earn the same as men?

Alas many of these questions will not be answered within this text, however they constantly emerge defying the present-day and exposing the all time stigma that in the 21st Century there is little to change since we live in a more modern and equal society. Within these several concerns one may find these questions quite disturbing. One can suppose we have never been more conscious about the several issues of the world than we are now. Still, it is imperative to continue to discuss this matter since the issue prevails in the art of music.

The purpose of this paper consists of bringing the history of music together and analysing the absence of women. The methods used during its process were literary studies: a compilation of books and research papers mostly written by women. Even though this method goes on the opposite end of my practice as a performer, reading and studying this material was the key for a better comprehension of the music history and thus what it means to be a woman performer in the 21st Century. This initiative encouraged discussion amongst my colleagues at the university and also made me contact female composers so I could integrate new music written by women into my repertoire. If with a text of this dimension I was able to become motivated to integrate more music written by women into my repertoire, what does it take to encourage every musician to do the same?

During the process of working on this text I started to look for female composers so I could incorporate already at least a piece written by a woman in my master's final examination. As a result I ended up playing a piece by a Romanian composer, Doina Rotaru, with whom I have maintained contact with. I am planning on collecting several pieces by female composers, focusing not only on today's music such as other previous centuries, and hopefully making a concert at the university with those pieces.

After writing this paper, I will certainly be continuing to dedicate my time to this subject: playing more music written by female composers, and deepening this subject further, dedicating my time to a research project where I may interview female composers and performers. In the light of this, besides the already existing literature on the subject, hearing the opinion of musicians and discussing it with them in first hand is something that I want to do, so more impact and awareness may be created in the musical community. Plus, it will inherently create a safe space where any gender may speak openly about these concerns.

So, these questions remain: are women absent or are we neglecting them by continuously not mentioning the ones that defied the “ordinary”? The ones that stood out when it was unthinkable for a woman to be literate? And is it today any different from before? There is a tangible line that urges one to dive more deeply into this matter and make it a priority since it is still possible to find drawbacks in women lives today. Hopefully, this paper may become useful for one to understand the sociological repercussions on a gender role and change for the better, the long-time goal of a more equal society, and consequently, a fairer and even music world.

2. Contextualization

The absence of women in the standard music histories is not due to their absence in the musical past. (Bowers & Tick, 1986, 3)

Since the Middle Ages, it is noticeable how few the records are regarding women in music, and even though it is difficult to comprehend why history was made in this way, we still must accept it and regard it as a written record of events intangible by time and therefore learn from them. This is the way history eventually progress and evolve thus changing its course and the beliefs of humankind.

[...], and women and minorities are not featured extensively in that historical record. Moreover, given the past dominance of male composers and the prominence of exclusionary music institutions, women of the Middle Ages and Renaissance were unlikely, perhaps even unable, to rise to positions at the top of the musical profession. Thus, evidence for the achievements of women and minorities in the field of early music can be difficult, though not impossible, to locate. (Cyrus & Mather, 1998, 101)

In the article *Rereading Absence: Women in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (1998) it is clear right from the start that there were difficulties when making this research. Even though this is not a new topic, since it has been discussed for quite some time now³, the lack of information indicates that there will certainly be some obstacles when approaching this matter.

One of the reasons for such neglect has to do with the nature of musicology. (Bowers & Tick, 1986, 3) When speaking regarding women in music it is intrinsically inherent that one must mention the sociology of music. The prejudice against a specific gender is clearly linked to this area of study. Every and each influence may affect a gender role in a society.

³ *Women making music: The Western Art Tradition* (1986), *Historical Anthology of Music by Women* (1987), *Women & Music: A History* (1991), *Women in Music - An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present* (1996), *Contemporary Anthology of Music by Women* (1997), and several other books and articles written during the last and present century.

They have focused instead on documents (manuscripts, prints, and treatises), relatively few of which exist for women's music in the periods that have been most thoroughly investigated. (Bowers & Tick, 1986, 3)

When all the male composers were the leaders in style or period change that we today call the musical eras, they were the ones emphasized by the musicologists creating this predictable pattern in history. The female "ability" to compose was questioned and excluded.

Also, the musicologists were always studying in institutional musical structures where women were rejected completely or sometimes included in the most negligible numbers. (Bowers & Tick, 1986)

According to Ann N. Michelini in the first chapter of *Women & Music: A History* (1991): [...] *poetic works were the source of almost all knowledge about history, religion, morality, philosophy, and geography* [...] (Michelini, 1991, 3) validating that since the Ancient Greece the art of creating music was deeply linked to poetry so that the early stages of music making were directly connected with the literature of that time. This is important in the sense that in this period, even though it was a society considerably divided through different rulers and their own regulations, women could have in specific circumstances some "freedom" in their lives. This is also mentioned by Michelini:

[...] Although the roles of Greek women differed widely from city-state to city-state, in most early Greek cultures women and men tended to work, play, and socialize in single-sex groups. On the one hand this meant rather strict lines of segregation, amounting in some Greek societies to virtual seclusion for women. On the other hand, this same segregation left room in some areas and periods for rich cultural life within female society, including the production by women and for women of poetry and its musical accompaniment. (Michelini, 1991, 3-4)

De Beauvoir also explains this in *The Second Sex* (1949/2009):

[...] if she escapes the family, she escapes this total dependence as well; if society rejects the family by denying private property, woman's condition improves considerably. Sparta, where community property prevailed, was the only city-state where the woman was treated almost as the equal of man. [...] Women underwent the burdens of maternity as men did war: but except for this civic duty, no restraints were put on their freedom. [...] (Beauvoir, 1949/2009, 131)

This said "freedom" was also linked to music and poetry in an incredibly wise way since, despite the prejudice and oppression, women were always regarded as a source for inspiration representing fertility and beauty by goddesses and queens, although sometimes linked to a darker side representing temptation and corruption often portrayed in later centuries by religious literature and art. (Beauvoir, 1949/2009)

Like the *trobairitz*, most of the female *trouvères* were noblewomen, and some were among the most influential and powerful people in western Europe during twelfth and thirteenth centuries. (Edwards, 1991, 13-14)

The early medieval period was a distinct period where women could have a sense of power and freedom. In northern Europe, women did have some privileges same as men regarding legal and economic affairs, such as inherit properties and manage estates. (Coldwell, 1986)

Even though the aristocratic and considered noblewomen could not contribute to the development of polyphonic music, they were made by those who had access to musical training which one could only have in cathedral schools or universities. Curiously, women from lower social classes were also musicians. They were: [...] *traveling juggleresses and [...] more stationary servants and courtesans*. (Coldwell, 1986, 43)

It is known that since the medieval and renaissance periods women have contributed with several roles in music, such as amateur and professional singers, dancers, and instrumentalists, composers, benefactors, educators, and copyists. (Edwards, 1991) However it is in the early centuries of the Christian Church that women start to appear more prominently being an important part of the divine worship. It was when the church started to grow and expand through the world that the opposition to women's participation in lyrical rites started to diminish.⁴ Since Christianity has always been a male centric religion (Beauvoir, 1949/2009) and the Western Music was deeply influenced by it, one could say that it made women lives more difficult to achieve other roles in music, and specially, to pursue it eventually as a career.

Nonetheless, in the late 16th Century there were several Italian convents that were distinguished, and among them was the convent of *San Vito* in Ferrara. This convent gave the chance to numerous young women from wealthy families to invest their lives in music, which brought a surprisingly: [...] *considerable growth in the performance of polyphonic music and sparked the work of certain women as composers*. [...] (Neuls-Bates, 1996, 43) It was considered especially remarkable because of its instrumentalists, although this ensemble also included singers. (Neuls-Bates, 1996)

⁴ [...] The evolution of the feminine condition was not a continuous process. With the great invasions, all of civilization is put into question. Roman law itself is under the influence of a new ideology, Christianity; [...]. The economic, social, and political situation is overturned: and women's situation suffers the consequences. [...] Christian ideology played no little role in women's oppression. [...] (Beauvoir, 1949/2009, 141)

One of the forms that gave women more ground in music was to sing. In Ancient Greece women were not allowed to perform, so in theatre men would dress up and use wigs to portray women characters in plays, whereas in the 16th Century one starts to see virtuoso singers rising from these convents in Italy.

[...] the activity of these virtuoso singers had ramifications for the style of the late-sixteenth-century madrigal, with its scoring for two or three difficult parts in the treble clef, and in the seventeenth century for the new genre of opera, with its roles for trained women singers. (Neuls-Bates, 1996, 50)

This new form of music writing always required women singers, eventually creating a gateway for women to pursue music as a career, and because of this, opera singers flourished throughout Europe. Even though women normally ceased making music at the time they married, women in families of court singers often continued with their musical careers after it. (Jackson, 1991):

Professional activities within extended families included the creation and performance of various types of music, instrument building, and music engraving and publishing. There were active and successful women in every one of these activities (although church performance was rare). (Jackson, 1991, 56)

Naturally, besides the singers, there were also instrumentalists in the middle of 18th Century that were exceptionally good. Since the harpsichord and the organ were the main keyboard instruments, there were renewed women composers one of which will be mentioned further on in this work. On the contrary, in the late 18th Century, the piano started to rise so eventually female pianists, both composers and performers, were some of the best performers of said instrument when compared to male musicians. (Jackson, 1991)

In the beginning of 19th Century women start to appear more often and occupying more important positions. Names such as Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847) and Clara Schuman (1819-1896) are just two well-known composers people still mentioned today, if not the few names from this period. Even though they are still acknowledged today, one could think that may be because of their marriages or their family background. This will be addressed further on in this paper focusing on different aspects.

So, in a sense, women were always there and came up continuously through the evident oppression against said gender. Maybe more difficultly as composers than as instrumentalists, but still one can find patterns that easily show the effort women put and went through so that they could still live and be the way they wanted to be, even if one is just mentioning singers, pianists, harpsichordists, harpists, etc.

In the 20th Century, history takes a big turn with the more prominently defence of feministic thinking. Various factors influenced history as a whole and women more specifically. Both World Wars brought in a very tragic way of an escape for women creating a completely different reality. This new way of life gave them the opportunity to prove that they could do everything that men were until then doing, and in the absence of men women grew. Feminism flourished during this century, and when the war was over it became impossible to go back to the way things were.

With the Industrial Revolution and the birth of radio and television the interest for the electronics also began to grow, and it is curious to note that even in this field, in a time so contrasting from the norm, women also appeared and with important achievements. As one may consider, within this new field of study, working with synthesizers, tape and recordings was not considered appropriate for women. Despite this, some women found a way to work with this kind of equipment, creating innovative music within this genre. (Rovner, 2020)

When researching about *Musique Concrète*⁵ and its creator Pierre Schaeffer⁶ (1910-1995) one finds about Éliane Radigue (1932). Her music is known for using a synthesizer and a medium recording tape. She composed several interesting pieces that contributed for the development of electroacoustic music. What is even more interesting is that she became a student that sometimes worked at the *Studio D'Essai* and afterwards became an assistant of Pierre Henry (1927-2017), another notorious name in the electronic music history, since he was the one that diverged from the solely recorded sounds to synthesised ones, later established by Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007) and others. (Griffiths, 2017)

However, one must think that even though she was capable of such achievements it was not an easy path for her as a woman. In the documentary *Sisters with Transistors* (2020) it is shown an interview with her where she states:

I worked as a devoted assistant. I remember a technician once saying, “How nice is to have Eliane in the studio, it smells good,” which shows the kind of appreciation we women had at the time. (Radigue, 2020)⁷

⁵ *Musique concrète* was an: [...] experimental technique of musical composition using recorded sounds as raw material. [...] The fundamental principle of musique concrète lies in the assemblage of various natural sounds recorded on tape (or, originally, on disks) to produce a montage of sound. During the preparation of such a composition, the sounds selected and recorded may be modified in any way desired [...]. The finished composition thus represents the combination of varied auditory experiences into an artistic unity. (Britannica, 2018)

⁶ Pierre Schaeffer was a: [...] French composer, acoustician, and electronics engineer who in 1948, with his staff at *Radio-diffusion et Télévision Française*, introduced *musique concrète* in which sounds of natural origin, animate and inanimate, are recorded and manipulated so that the original sounds are distorted and combined in a musical fashion. [...] Schaeffer's 10-movement *Symphonie pour un homme seul* (1950; “Symphony for One Man Only”), produced in collaboration with Pierre Henry, was the first major concrete piece. (Britannica, 2022)

⁷ This interview was recorded in French and its translation was made by the makers of the documentary.

Nowadays, it is possible to be a woman and have a career as a musician. So much has changed in the last century that it becomes unbelievable how in such a short time history was reversed. Still, it is quite common to hear stories by women stating numerous unthinkable situations that perhaps could have been prevented if there was more awareness regarding this issue, because even though we live in a better world, discrimination will never be eradicated completely.

2.1. Literature on the subject: Female composers and performers

The choice of literature for this paper was not that difficult. There are plenty of books and articles on the matter. However, I think that if it were not for it, I wouldn't have known about their existence, at least regarding the anthologies about women in music history, which are not considered mandatory reading when taking a class about music history in an academic institution.

Regarding music history the chosen most important books are *Women making music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* (1986) edited by Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, *Women & Music: A History* (1991) edited by Karin Pendle, and *Women in Music - An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present* (1996) edited by Carol Neuls-Bates.

Then there is the complementary literature supporting sociological or historical information about women in time: *Madame Dacier: Scholar and Humanist* (1976) by Fern Farnham, *A Room of One's Own/Three Gineas* (1929/2000) by Virginia Woolf, and *The Second Sex* (1949/2009) by Simone de Beauvoir.

As articles and research publications only used in very specific contexts: *The History and Philosophy of Women in Science: A Review Essay* (1987) by Londa Schiebinger, *Rereading Absence: Women in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (1998) by Cynthia J. Cyrus and Olivia Carter Mather, *Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of "Blind" Auditions on Female Musicians* (2000) by Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse, *The "Suppression" of Fanny Mendelssohn: Rethinking Feminist Biography* (2002) by Marian Wilson Kimber, *Recruitment in symphony orchestras: testing a gender neutral recruitment process* (2006) by Anette Fasang, the dissertation *ODETTE ERNEST DIAS: discursos sobre uma perspectiva pedagógica da flauta* (2009) by Raul Costa d'Avila, and *Female Composers, Conductors, Performers - Musiciennes of Interwar France, 1919–1939* (2018) by Laura Hamer.

3. Female composers and performers

This chapter is divided in four sections, so it is easier to connect each chapter and the personalities mentioned within them. I chose to purposely speak about these female composers and musicians because several of them are well known amongst musicians whereas others are not. Comparing their lives and their outcomes can clarify significantly how society came to be, leading to the feminist movement and the awareness of the existing discrimination. Other valuable detail is that this research focuses most prominently on Western Europe, not because of lacking material, but because of the impossibility of writing a paper of this dimension and including all women from around the world. In this light, I have chosen these personalities accordingly and in the most fitting way possible.

3.1. 17th and 18th century

The reason why I placed the French harpsichordist and composer Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre together with Anne le Févre Dacier and the flutist Anna Bom was to cover different parts of history in the same chapter: Madame Jaquet de la Guerre is mentioned in several of the resources I consulted and considered an important figure of the 17th Century; Madame Dacier on the other hand, was not a musician, but a figure who made a career in the European letters, translating texts that are still used today; and Anna Bon who is the musician I found less information on, however not less important comparing with the other two personalities. Together these three women set the circumstances of how it was for a woman to live in the 17th Century society and how did this impact their lives and subsequent careers.

3.1.1. Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre

One of the first significant examples of a female musician from the 17th Century is the French harpsichordist and composer Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729). She is considered by several sources (Bower & Tick, 1986; Pendle, 1991; Neuls-Bates, 1996) the first major female composer of instrumental music. Her main instrument was the harpsichord, being the main keyboard instrument at the time. However, she is most known for her extensive compositions of musical works. She has contributed to the development of the chamber music tradition in France; she wrote an opera and a ballet which music is unfortunately lost, amongst other theatrical works. (Neuls-Bates, 1996)

Both parents were from families of performers, teachers, and, in the case of the Jacquets, harpsichord builders. (Pendle, 1991, 72) Perhaps one could theorize knowing the fact that her father was a harpsichord builder this could have influenced her choice of instrument since she would have easier access to it. It was the King Louis XIV interest that permitted her to perform in his court several years in a row. During this period, a noble or an aristocratic woman would have more chance of diverging from the norm and engaging in various kinds of performing arts in which otherwise they would have never had the chance to live by. (Neuls-Bates, 1996) Needless to say, both men and women from the working class would never have the same opportunities since they endured a precarious life with minimal resources and with no access to education.

When speaking solely about Madame Jacquet de la Guerre, her life provided all the means for her to utmost exploit music in her advantage. When she married Marin de la Guerre (1605-1679), she was obliged to follow her husband consequently returning to Paris. What could seem like a negative factor for her career was instead something that she benefited from significantly, since any musician would develop more by traveling to a bigger city. *She maintained her contacts with the court without having to live there, enjoying the best of both worlds.* (Pendle, 1991, 73) She was such an outstanding musician, both improvising and playing the harpsichord, that she quickly became well known and praised by the listeners. (Neuls-Bates, 1996)

One can say that never had a person of her sex had such talents as she for the composition of music, and for the admirable manner in which she performed it at the Harpsichord and on the Organ. (Neuls-Bates, 1996, 64)

Pendle also mentions that *La Guerre apparently never left France, but her music was known in Germany.* (Pendle, 1991, 74), which confirms that she was known across Europe at the time.

Although her rediscovery took longer than Couperin's, today she is probably the woman composer of the period best known to modern audiences, through performances of her harpsichord works and cantatas and several fine recordings. (Pendle, 1991, 74)

3.1.2. Anne le Févre Dacier

Another interesting female personality from the 17th Century and early 18th Century was Anne le Févre Dacier (1645-1720). She was one of the earliest professional women in European letters. She was a translator, philologue, critic, and woman of letters, mostly praised by her translation of Homer [...] *which is her finest work, left a permanent impress on English literature.* (Farnham, 1976, 10) Even though her determination and hard work were what made her accomplishments true, a few aspects of her life contributed for it as well, such as the heritage from her father and later her marriage, and the period in which she was active: the golden era of French culture of Louis XIV. (Farnham, 1976, 11)

Madame Dacier had a confrontation with Christian's beliefs towards pagan literature, however she stood her stance. She believed that [...] *for her the route to this truth takes its rise in learning, not ignorance.* (Farnham, 1976, 12), which clearly shows that her work and how she performed it was more important for her than to follow other's rules. In a society where the [...] *aristocratic woman [...] feared to publish in her own name [...]* (Farnham, 1976, 14) it would be considered unthinkable for a woman to challenge the ordinary lest the Church.

Farnham makes an interesting analogy about Madame Dacier's life with Woolf's essay *A room of one's own* (1929/2000):

In 1929 Virginia Woolf imagined for Shakespeare a wonderfully gifted sister, who scribbled pages on the sly, who resisted an early marriage which would mean endless drudgery and child-bearing, and who, carrying with her only a small parcel of belongings, finally escaped London. There she met with hostility and ridicule, until in utter discouragement she killed herself and was forgotten. Anne Dacier's story is somewhat similar, but it has a happy ending. (Farnham, 1976, 13)

This analogy is appealing in the sense that in Woolf's essay she attempts to show how a woman could not be successful and have her own career even if she tried. Although Dacier's life is similar to Shakespeare's sister life, referring specifically to her struggles right when she moved to Paris, she accomplished more and greater than any other woman did at the time, which is impressive. (Farnham, 1976)

She also possessed an education in classical literature which would be the envy of many a man. [...] found employment at the court, and eventually won her way to a place in society where she could move freely and happily among her intellectual peers. (Farnham, 1976, 14)

What is even more interesting about Madame Dacier who clearly contributed extensively for the whole world's literature is that she was neglected for quite some time before scholars began to credit her again. How was she capable of doing the same work as men and be credited for it in that period, and to be forgotten afterwards nevertheless? There is more to this matter than what one may be able to perceive. And Farnham captures this in her book and recaps it quite succinctly:

[...] showing how one woman nearly three hundred years ago achieved a dual fulfillment, a satisfying home life and a meaningful intellectual career. (Farnham, 1976, 15)

3.1.3. Anna Bon

To conclude this chapter another important personality from the 18th Century is Anna Bon (1738—?). There is almost no information about her and her musical career, but she was influential in her time. She was born into a family of musicians and was educated at Venice's *Ospedale della Pieta*, which provided one of the best musical educations in Italy at the time. As the other two women previously mentioned, she was also part of the court, proving how talented she was and credited for. (Anderson, 2010)

Anna Bon, who was a flutist herself, wrote many pieces for the flute. She wrote six sonatas for flute and basso continuo; six sonatas for flute and harpsichord or cello (1757); and six *divertimenti* for a flute duet and basso continuo (1757) written at the age of 19 and dedicated to the Duke of Bavaria, Karl Theodor. (Boenke, 1988)

But there is no information regarding her playing, only her works, and even so there is not much to add about her life. However, one could hypothesize what she thought of the flute as an instrument at that time.

Curiously, in the 18th Century the lower octave of the flute was considered masculine. In the *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte Traversière zu Spielen* (1752) by Johann Joachim Quantz⁸, one can find: *Eine proportionirliche Oeffnung der Zähne und des Mundes, und ausdehnung der Kehle, verursachen einen dicken, runden, und männlichen Ton.*⁹ (*Das IV Hauptstück. Von dem Ansätze* § 25, 51)

Nowadays the flute is statistically played by more women than men because of it being considered an instrument with a certain feminine character, which is an old-fashioned discriminative perception. Personally, I do not think this should be applied as valid criteria. Whatever instrument despite its characteristics should not be characterized into qualitative gender biased notions. This perpetuates the wrong idea, when in reality a musical instrument should be genderless.

However, before this historical setting it is almost impossible to not wonder how was this idea perceived by female composers and performers at the time? And how did this idea influence Anna Bon in her own approach to the flute? One may wonder about such matters; however, one must find a way to reconcile with the impossibility of never knowing it.

⁸ Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773) was a German composer and flute virtuoso who published a treatise on playing the *Traverso*, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte Traversière zu Spielen* in 1752, and who also made important mechanical improvements on the instrument. (Britannica, 2023)

⁹ *A proportional opening of the teeth and mouth, and expansion of the throat, produce a thick, round, and masculine tone quality.* (Of the Embouchure, § 25, 59)

3.2. Women behind men

In this chapter I will be focusing on the lives of three different women: Maria Anna Mozart (1751-1829), Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847) and Clara Schumann (1819-1896). The reason I chose to analyse these women lives lies in the shadows they lived in. Even though they are usually mentioned as one is remembering their existence, they lived behind the name they carried.

3.2.1. Maria Anna Mozart

Maria Anna Mozart (or *Nannerl*¹⁰ Mozart) and her brother Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) were the only two children of Johann Georg Leopold Mozart (1719-1787) and Anna Maria Pertl Mozart (1720-1778) that survived. Maria Anna showed since an incredibly early age talent for music. Both she and her brother received clavier lessons by their father, and in 1762, when Maria Anna was ten and Wolfgang six years old, their father took them on a professional tour around Europe. (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901a)

It is interesting to note that by this time Leopold Mozart was quite vocal about his children's talents and made several remarks about his daughter whom by then was considered a prodigy alongside her brother. In 1763 on a letter to his wife he stated: *Nannerl no longer suffers by comparison with the boy, for she plays so beautifully that everyone is talking about her and admiring her execution.* (Bevan, 1961, 487) And then in a letter to his wife from Paris in 1764: *My little girl plays the most difficult works which we have of Schobert and Eckardt and others, Eckardt's being the most difficult, with incredible precision.* (Bevan, 1961,487)

Eventually they went to London where they performed at least three times at the Court for King George III. Leopold Mozart then said [...] *Marianne was 'one of the most skillful players in Europe'*. (Bevan, 1961, 487) In an excerpt from the advertisement of their first London recital one can read:

[...] At the Great Room in Spring-Garden, near St. James's Park, Tuesday, June 5, will be performed a grand Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music. For the benefit of Miss *MOZART* of eleven and Master *MOZART* of seven years of age. Prodigies of Nature; taking the opportunity of representing to the Public the greatest Prodigy that Europe or that Human Nature has to boast of. [...] (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901a, 82)

¹⁰ A nicknamed used within the family. (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901a)

Afterwards she stayed in Salzburg while her father and brother went on a subsequent tour. However, even if she did not come with them on this tour [...] *her playing was still considered remarkable [...] by the fact that visitors to Salzburg frequently called to hear her play.* (Bevan, 1961, 487)

During this period, even though these two siblings were not many times together, Mozart maintained a close relationship with her brother, and this is proved by their incessant correspondence by letters. In one letter from the 19th of May of 1770, her brother said: [...] *Haydn's 12th Minuet which you sent me pleases me very much; you have set the bass to it incomparably and without the smallest mistake. Pray make such essays more often.* [...] (Mersmann, 1986, 14) Later on in another letter from the 7th of July of the same year, he said: [...] *I am amazed indeed that you can compose so well. In a word, the song is beautiful. Try such things more often.* [...] (Mersmann, 1986, 16)

Mozart trusted his sister's judgment very much as he used to send many of [...] *his piano compositions to her for criticism.* (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901a, 84) Needless to say, through their correspondence, she was proud of her brother's fame: [...] *she would always say, after being complimented upon her performances, 'I am but the pupil of my brother.'* (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901a, 83-4)

While in Salzburg, Mozart was a pianoforte teacher, continuing to play on the side which curiously her brother would always say to people that *she plays with greater precision than he.* (Bevan, 1961, 488) Regarding her teaching: *She was much liked as a teacher, and her pupils were distinguished for the precision and accuracy of her playing.* (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901a, 84)

After her mother's death Mozart was the one that had to take care of the household leaving little time to practice, even though she always tried to do it everyday. After her marriage, there is not much else to say about her. Mozart's husband died in 1801, making her to return to Salzburg where she [...] *resumed her former occupation of giving music lessons.* (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901a, 84)

Even though Mozart's brother had his own career and a consequent busy life because of it, he always took time to recur to his sister and even tried to help her improve her life situation. In 1781, he tried to persuade his sister and father to come and live in Vienna: *Apart from his own longing to be with them again he argued that there would be much better prospects for Marianne's teaching there.* (Bevan, 1961, 488)

One can find proof of that in a letter from the 29th of September of 1781:

[...] you could earn more money enough here, by playing at private concerts and by giving lessons, for example. You would be besieged with applications—and you would be well paid. Then my father would have to resign his post and come, too—and we could live happily together again. (Mersmann, 1986, 182)

One can think of numerous ways to consider Mozart's life. She was indeed incredibly devoted to her family, and although that might be a positive aspect of one's personality, her altruism made her neglect her own chance to have a career alongside her brother. Even though her brother was very amiable towards her, upon her brother's success, their father never helped Mozart to pursue her own talents. For instance, in the article *The Sisters of Two Great Composers. I. Nannerl Mozart* (1901) it is said: [...] *It is quite natural that Nannerl had to play second fiddle to her brother in the attention bestowed upon the gifted pair.* [...] (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901a, 82) Because Mozart's brother was much younger than her, he was a higher prodigy and for that she was put in second.

Another reason that might explain this is Mozart was a woman, and because of that household chores were always given to the women in the family, firstly to their mother and after their mother's death, to the girl. Perhaps, that is the reason why her father continued to come along on tours with her brother while she stayed in Salzburg.

[...] It is regrettable that Marianne's having had a manuscript book is apparently considered to be the crowning achievement of her musical life, for we are rarely told more about her in accounts of the family's subsequent activities either on tour or at home in Salzburg. (Bevan, 1961, 487)

There is nothing else one can say or do to change the course of the music history, but at least one can recall with respect and admiration this great performer and composer undeniably lost in time. Besides, through the written history one has prove of her character towards life and one can now think of a multitude of names that are now perpetually lost because there are no records of them.

3.2.2. Fanny Mendelssohn

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847) was a woman composer and performer whose life one could compare with Maria Anna Mozart's life. Even though they both had similar lives they did diverge in numerous aspects that will be discussed further on.

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel was the sister of the well-known composer Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847). Their mother Lea Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1777-1842) gave them pianoforte lessons since they were incredibly young. In 1816, their father Abraham Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1776-1835) took them to Paris so they both [...] *became pianoforte pupils of Madame Bigot*. (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901b, 156), who was an appraised French composer and pianist of said period.

When she was thirteen, she played twenty-four Bach Preludes by heart as a surprise to her father, which was something indeed very impressive for her age: [...] *She retained her excellent memory for music in after years, and her repertory of Bach, Beethoven, and other classical composers*. (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901b, 156)

As Mozart, Fanny Mendelssohn had a close relationship with her brother. They exchanged music between them, and they would also tell each other about concerts they attended. Especially Mendelssohn, upon her descriptive letters one may perceive how well literate and educated she was:

[...] Fanny Hensel was an excellent letter writer. Many opportunities were afforded her of exercising her gifts of descriptive writing during the journeys of the Hensels in Italy and France, and on musical matters to Mendelssohn and Klingemann. She had a very good contralto voice, which was of great service in the choral music, she being an excellent reader and a true musician. (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901b, 158-9)

After Mendelssohn's marriage in 1829 there is not so much to add about her life. In her spare time of taking care of the household, she would train her little choir in Leipzig, where she ended up having a stroke in 1847 while sitting by the pianoforte in the middle of a rehearsal. (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901b)

Despite what one might think, Mendelssohn did publish a few of her compositions:

Although her o 1 did not appear until 1846, several of her compositions had appeared in print earlier. Her setting of *Ave Maria* was published in England in the *Harmonicon* in 1832, two years after an article praising her musical abilities and describing how she composed "with the freedom of a master". Another song, *Die Schiffende*, was published by Schlesinger in a collection in 1837, after hearing it performed at a concert in Leipzig that year, Felix wrote to Fanny that "I, for my part, give thanks in the name of the public of Leipzig and other places that you published against my wishes." Fanny published a third Lied, *Schloss Liebeneck*, in a collection entitled *Rhein-Sagen und Lieder* in 1839. (Kimber, 2002, 119)

Mendelssohn's works extend to Opus 11, they include various [...] *books of songs and Lieder for the pianoforte, a pianoforte trio in D, and a set of six-part songs (Gartenlieder)* [...]. (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901b, 159) Besides publishing on her own, six of her songs were published in her brother Opus 8 and 9 in 1827 and 1830. One of the reasons why these compositions were published under Mendelssohn's name were because by this time women were not well regarded in the industry of publishing.

Many writers of this period chose to publish under a pseudonym or even the name of their husband:

[...] the larger cultural context that made it not uncommon in the early nineteenth century for women writers or composers to publish anonymously or under the designation "by a lady."
[...] Dorothea Schlegel [...] had published her novel *Florentin* (1801) not under her own name, but under the reported "editorship" of her husband Friedrich Schlegel. (Kimber, 2002, 119-20)

One can also think of the so well-known Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797-1851) author of the novel and classic *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) that was firstly published anonymously. Mary Shelley would be credited for the first time in a French translation in 1821 and then in a second edition of the original English version in 1823 under the supervision of her father, William Godwin.¹¹

In 1842, Felix Mendelssohn visited Queen Victoria at the Buckingham Palace whereby the suggestion of the Prince Consort, asked the Queen to sing to him one of his compositions. She selected one song named 'Italy' that was in fact one of his sister's compositions. He then described this incident in a letter:

[...] When it was finished I had to confess that the song was composed by Fanny! (I must say it was rather hard to have to say it, but "pride comes before a fall.") I then asked the Queen to sing a song which was really my own composition. [...] (The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, 1901b, 159)

The case of Fanny Mendelssohn has been more discussed over the years where numerous feminist biographical texts state how oppressed she was by the men around her. Some even stated that she led a frustrated life and that her brother Felix Mendelssohn took advantage of her. This is extensively explained in the article *The "Suppression" of Fanny Mendelssohn: Rethinking Feminist Biography* (2002) by Marian W. Kimber.

¹¹ First edition: *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus*, 3 vols. (London: Printed for Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Jones, 1818). The first edition. Second edition: *Frankenstein, ou le Prométhée moderne*, 3 vols., by Mme. Shelly [sic], trans. Jules Saladin (Paris: Corréard, 1821). Translation into French. And third edition: *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*, 2 vols. (London: Printed for G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1823). A two-volume reprint of the 1818 edition, supervised by William Godwin.

However, it is essential to note that even though she was oppressed because she lived in a patriarchal society the [...] *cultural conditions in which she lived* [...] *cannot be solely attributed to her brother*. (Kimber, 2002, 120) And this distinction is crucial when analysing personalities from the early 19th Century:

Hensel, however, was as much of her time and her culture as her brother; any degree of frustration specifically with being female and confined to the domestic sphere is difficult to document. (Kimber, 2002, 124)

In a patriarchal society there is little room for one to go against the norm. Abraham Mendelssohn subjected his children to *a patriarchal discipline and a rigorous training which left its mark upon them*. (Review: *Fanny Mendelssohn d'après les mémoires de son fils*, 1888, 339)

Even though he encouraged Mendelssohn to invest in her musical talent [...] *it was always on the understanding that it was to be an accomplishment and a resource, never a means of livelihood*. [...] (Review: *Fanny Mendelssohn d'après les mémoires de son fils*, 1888, 339) Her father had discriminatory views against women appearing in public which conditioned her to stay, in a way, hidden from the world. (Review: *Fanny Mendelssohn d'après les mémoires de son fils*, 1888)

This is when it becomes interesting to compare Maria Anna Mozart with Fanny Mendelssohn. Even though they led different lives, [...] *the contrasts are as striking as the parallels*. [...] (Review: *Fanny Mendelssohn d'après les mémoires de son fils*, 1888, 340) Both had almost the same age difference between their brothers, and they were both older than them. They were gifted as performers and proud of their brothers' successes. However, when Mozart played constantly in public since the age of ten, Mendelssohn did not. She would only start playing in public when she [...] *turned thirty, and then only at a Charity Concert*. [...] (Review: *Fanny Mendelssohn d'après les mémoires de son fils*, 1888, 340) Also, Mozart lived several years after her brother's death, and had monetary problems towards the end of her life, whereas Mendelssohn who never knew poverty died very young in the prime of her life even so when she was already attempting to publish more compositions. (Review: *Fanny Mendelssohn d'après les mémoires de son fils*, 1888)

There were so many variables that influenced Mendelssohn's life. She remained true to her father's ideals, and still, she published a few compositions in the brief time she lived. Needless to say, her brother who expressively showed his opinion regarding publishing, for sure influenced by their father's patriarchal ideals, did not stop her from publishing at all, which shows that she had her own boundaries and decisions regarding anything in life. Besides, Mendelssohn's husband

[...] encouraged her salon concerts, her composing, and her publishing; he even provided texts for her to set. Wilhelm's positive role, however, is often overlooked in the rush to judgment of Fanny's brother. (Kimber, 2002, 116)

After the recognition one gains upon learning about these women lives it is easier to understand the repercussions of which they were victims, however, it is also important that although they were victims, they were also the product of their own making.

This means that they lived the life they wanted inside the structural society they lived in. Kimber comprises this exactly:

[...] How does one devise a “plot” for a woman who married, had a son, hosted salons in her home and composed music, and died at forty-one? [...] Here is a woman who was largely happy in her personal life, was wealthy enough to enjoy travel, art, and music, and had sufficient leisure time to produce over four hundred compositions. (Kimber, 2002, 120)

3.2.3. Clara Schumann

Clara Schumann was a woman composer and performer from the 19th Century. In relation with the other two composers and performers before mentioned in this chapter, she had a completely different outcome which makes her life intriguing as a case subject. Schumann was a woman in a patriarchal society in which she thrived. There are not so many stories like hers. One can not forget about the inherent difficulties of being a woman in this kind of society, however her life has a lot one can think upon. Besides, in conjunction with the other two cases, each one of these women did have different lives and consequently different outcomes, but nonetheless each one of them had the period in which they lived in common.

Clara Josephine Wieck (1819-1896) was a German pianist, composer and, later in her life, she was the wife of the composer Robert Schumann (1810-1856). (Britannica, 2022) She was a woman who lived her life as a female musician which was not expected of a woman in the 19th Century.

From her first concert in December 1837 in the Musikvereinsaal to her last concert in April 1838 before the emperor in the Burg, she was greeted with the admiration and respect usually reserved for artists like Paganini and Thalberg. (Reich, 1986, 249)

Clara Wieck's father, Friedrich Wieck (1785-1873), had a background within music. He had an established music-lending library and a piano business [...] *in which he sold, rented, and repaired pianos.* (Reich, 1986, 252) In 1815, he started to teach piano in Leipzig and acquired a reputation as an excellent teacher. In 1816, he married Marianne Tromlitz (1797-1872). She was daughter of George Tromlitz (1725-1805), a widely known teacher, flutist, and flute maker. [...] *Marianne, a shadowy figure in the Clara Schumann literature, has received little credit for her contributions to the musical development of her daughter.* (Reich, 1986, 252-3)

It is interesting to note that Wieck's mother continued with her career in music even after the birth of her children. In 1821, two years after Wieck's birth:

[...] Mme Wieck again appeared with the Gewandhaus orchestra, this time as a pianist, playing the Concerto in E-flat Major by Ferdinand Ries. Her career was not interrupted by the birth of a third child, Alwin, in 1821, and another son, Gustav, in 1823. She performed at the Gewandhaus in October 1822 and again in November and December 1823. Another son was born in January 1824. (Reich, 1986, 253)

This means that she must have performed while being pregnant. In this period, it was unthinkable of doing so, however this observation will be clarified further on this chapter.

Wieck's parents divorced in 1825 leaving all children to Friedrich Wieck since the children were [...] *according to the Saxon law of the time, the father's property, and his authority over them was practically unlimited.* (Reich, 1986, 253)

Wieck did not speak until she was four years old, and before that she gave little evidence of language comprehension. Despite this, her father began to give her piano lessons after she returned from her mother upon their divorce, focusing only on her education and neglecting his other children. (Reich, 1986)

On another note, when Wieck left her father's home, Friedrich Wieck focused more on his half-daughter Marie Wieck: [...] *But although Marie had a successful career as an artist, she always lived in the shadow of her more famous (and gifted) sibling.* (Reich, 1986, 255) This is curious in the sense that Mozart and Mendelssohn were also overshadowed by their siblings. In a patriarchal society between men and women, men are always going to be prioritized over any other gender, however in this case, between sisters, the one that had already conquered the audience was the one that kept growing within her own reputation.

Wieck and her father went to Vienna in 1837. It is said that the musicians would have marvelled at her sight-reading. Those days in Vienna were a whirlwind of activities: [...] *courtesy visits, presentation, formal acceptance of gifts, private musicales, public concerts, practice sessions.* (Reich, 1986, 249) She also received the greatest honour in 1838 called *Königliche und Kaiserliche Kammer-Virtuosin*, Royal and Imperial Chamber Virtuoso, a great distinction to [...] *an eighteen-year-old who was, moreover, a Protestant, a foreigner, and a woman.* [...] (Reich, 1986, 250) It was at this age that she reached the potential that would form the basis of her artistic career.

One of the most important distinctions about Clara Wieck's life is that her father never felt that her femininity was a drawback in her career. He taught her as he would have instructed a boy and encouraged her in her practice so much to the point of not allowing her to do all the usual activities women were supposed to do at the time: *All his pupils were advised against sewing, knitting or crocheting.* (Reich, 1986, 256)

In 1840, Clara married Robert Schumann, [...] *the day before Clara's twenty-first birthday.* (Reich, 1986, 259) Even though they did not have a perfect marriage, she thrived as a musician.

She was the artist who first played the concerto, the piano sonatas, the quintet, and almost every work in which a piano figured. [...] Almost all Schumann orchestral works were the first presented in conjunction with her piano performances. Clara also prepared piano reductions of his orchestra scores, copied music for him, rehearsed singers, accompanied the choruses he conducted in Dresden and Düsseldorf (sang, too, when necessary), and acted as his mouthpiece when he was ill and depressed. (Reich, 1986, 260)

Although Robert Schumann was generous with her, he had ambivalent feelings about her career which manifested through their marriage. However, Schumann was very sure about her ambitions and her desires for her own career, and this kind of independence was present in all her life decisions: [...] *Clara never intended to give up her concert career after marriage, and Robert never seriously suggested it.* (Reich, 1986, 260)

Clara and Robert Schumann had eight children, and one miscarriage. None of her pregnancies stopped her from performing, playing [...] *even in advanced stages of pregnancy* [...] (Reich, 1986, 263) just like her mother did, embarking also in tours right after giving birth. However, she was very conscious of the lack of mothering contact with her children. Because of this she would let her children know she was thinking of them no matter where she was. (Reich, 1986)

Clara was not the devoted mother she is often pictured to be. Of paramount importance were her art, the music of Robert Schumann, and her career, which, of course, provided the family income. (Reich, 1986, 265)

This is a unique case within the 19th Century. Schumann lived for the music and provided for her family with it. She built her life around the music she was making, and that is extraordinary for this period. She was also the leading pianist, being the first pianist to play the Beethoven sonatas publicly. She premiered several works by Chopin, Schumann, and Brahms, and she was one of the firsts to play by heart in concerts.

She also gave entire recitals without any supporting musicians:

She rented the pianos and had them moved and tuned, rented the halls and provided for lights and heat, had tickets printed and distributed, arranged for advertising in newspapers and on posters—and then appeared, beautifully gowned in concert attire, to play as though this was her sole care. (Reich, 1986, 269)

Her choice of program was also innovative for this period since she chose to play pieces by Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, when these composers were not being played that often. (Reich, 1986)

Until then, many female composers and performers would give up their own careers when they married or would just realize the impossibility of maintaining a family life with a professional career. They would eventually disappear and be forgotten, like Mozart when she had to stay at home after reaching eighteen years old of age and stop accompanying her brother in his tours around Europe. [...] *Clara Wieck Schumann, however, played over 1,300 public programs in England and Europe.* [...] (Reich, 1986, 251) Plus, [...] *No other pianist of her century, male or female, maintained a position as a performing artist over such a span of time.* [...] (Reich, 1986, 251)

Another interesting aspect about Schumann is that she was not confident about her compositions, even though her husband would encourage her to compose. She wrote several times negative comments about her ability to compose. In 1839, regarding her *Trois Romances pour le Piano* (O 11) she wrote in her diary: [...] *a woman must not desire to compose—there has never yet been one able to do it.* (Reich, 1986, 267) Later on regarding her *Trio* (O 17): [...] *Naturally, it is still only woman's work, which always lacks force and occasionally invention.* (Reich, 1986, 268)

Schumann is an icon from the 19th Century because she did precisely what seemed impossible of doing. The fact that she fought for her independence while struggling with her own ideals influenced by the patriarchal society, it is both heart-breaking and mesmerizing. She fought all her life against her own instincts and without even understanding why she thought the way she did because of the pre-constructive education she was given:

Clara Schumann was a woman and an artist and did not see the two as antithetical. [...] She ordered her life in a way that enabled her to reach the summits of musical artistry. (Reich, 1986, 276)

These three women show perfectly in their own way why they chose to live the lives they led. They made their own decisions upon the normative society in which they lived and at the same time also followed their hearts. It is unfair for one to think that their decisions were made because of external parties, like their brothers, husbands, and fathers.

Even though that might be the case, as one saw with Clara Schumann, that her father encouraged her to have a career in music despite her being a woman; maybe there just was not enough positive circumstances and strong will for independence in Mozart and Mendelssohn that would have encouraged them to act against the “ordinary” in the 19th Century, and despite what one might think, it is not their fault. It is unfair for one to speculate about people lives when one cannot ask said people about it. However, this subject will be addressed in more depth further on this paper in the Discussion.

Nonetheless, these women deserve that their lives are spoken of and that their stories are shared, and more importantly, that as musicians we credit their work when there are records of it and that we value their resilience against the rule, so that one has equilibrium amongst all genders in music, and consequently, in life.

3.3. Nadia and Lili Boulanger

After the cases addressed in the previous chapter, we enter a new Era in the classical music history. I chose to specifically analyse the lives of these two sisters: Nadia and Lili Boulanger. Besides France being an important country in the history of feminism through Europe during the 20th Century, these two women lived during the First World War. As mentioned earlier in the contextualization, big events in the human history such as wars can have a tremendous impact in the way people perceive the world. Looking into the life of the Boulanger sisters is also significant for my own development as a flutist since Lili Boulanger composed a few works for flute and piano, and even in her works for orchestra one may notice that she uses the flute quite often and with important roles within the orchestra. Deepening my knowledge about their lives will not only help me understand how I should approach their music as well as acknowledge better how their music works structurally.

Another interesting aspect regarding this family is the connection with the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris*:

The Boulanger family had been carrying off prizes from the Paris Conservatoire for nearly a century before the birth of Lili, who with her sister Nadia upheld the family tradition. (Palmer, 1968, 227)

Their father Ernest Boulanger (1815-1900) won the *Prix de Rome* in 1836. After having success as an opera composer due to winning the prize he ended his career as a singing teacher at the Paris *Conservatoire*. Regarding his children, Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979), the eldest, entered the Paris *Conservatoire* at the age of ten. In 1903, she won first prize in harmony, and in the following year she also won first prizes in organ, fugue, and piano accompaniment. (Potter, 1999)

She tried for many years to win the *Prix de Rome* as her father did, but it would have been Lili Boulanger (1893-1918) that would win the prize in 1913, becoming [...] *the first female recipient of the Prix de Rome for composition*. (Palmer, 1968, 227)

On another note, it is interesting that the Paris *Conservatoire* gave several first prizes to women during this period:

An investigation of the prizes awarded to candidates for the annual end-of-year examinations in at the Paris Conservatoire in the years leading up to the First World War reveals that *premier prix* were regularly awarded to women in piano, harp, string instruments, piano accompaniment, harmony, counterpoint, and fugue. (Hamer, 2018, 6)

A few are: Cornélie Falcon (1814-1897) won a second prize in *Solfège* in 1829, a first prize in vocalization in 1830, and a first prize in singing in 1831; Marie Joséphine Claire Prestat (1862-1933) won first prize in *Solfège* in 1876 at the age of 14; Mathilde Alice Saïman (1891-1940) won, during her studies at the Paris *Conservatoire*, the first prize in singing; Marthe Chenal (1881-1947) won first prize in a singing competition in 1905, in her final year of studies at the *Conservatoire*.

These records about female musicians show a different side of the overall story. In a patriarchal society it would have been unthinkable for a woman to win prizes at a prestigious institution. It is an undeniable truth that there was a certain pattern as one may conclude by analysing said records. During the 19th Century women were allowed to focus on the harpsichord and the piano as an instrument, as discussed in the previous chapter, and to sing. Singing has been one of the only ways women were allowed to express themselves in music, since the female voice is such a unique trait compared to the male one. However, looking upon these records one may conclude that even though the oppression was present, these women were allowed to dedicate time to a proper education in music and at the same time given the opportunity to compete against a different sex and win.

Returning to Lili Boulanger and the first prize in composition, what it is even more impressive is that she was the first woman winning a prize in composition. This may not seem of significant importance as an only time event in history, but there has always been a first time in everything related to the human history and acknowledging that a woman is distinguished in composition was a considerable step since until then women were not considered fit to compose music.

Be that as it may, woman's music has just been born; it has been born, it has revealed itself in a truly remarkable way, and its fortuitous advent has been consecrated by the verdict of the Institute which awarded the *first "grand prix de Rome" to a young girl barely nineteen years old*. (Landormy, 1930, 511)

Despite this accomplishment Lili Boulanger died young. She suffered from a chronic illness due to a case of bronchial pneumonia at the age of two. Because of this, she never had the chance to fully develop her work as a composer. However, she [...] *worked at composition up to the time of her death*. (Palmer, 1968, 227) Her works up to 1913 are considered apprentice attempts at composition, however the works of her final years [...] *testify to the emergence of a distinctive musical personality and are clearly the product of a distinguished, markedly individual creative intelligence*. (Palmer, 1968, 227)

It is fascinating that in the short life Lili Boulanger had, her sister Nadia Boulanger was immensely proud of her sister compositions. In the journal *The Musical Times* (1968) Christopher Palmer adds in the article named *Lili Boulanger 1893-1918*: [...] *I should like to thank Mlle Nadia Boulanger for her assistance in the preparation of this article*. (Palmer, 1968, 228) He also wrote at the end: [...] *The intrinsic quality of her finest creations justifies us in regarding her not as a composer who 'might have been' but as one who quite definitely 'was'*. (Palmer, 1968, 228)

Nadia Boulanger was quite taken by the sudden death of her sister. Even though she began her teaching career in 1908 that would last until shortly before her death in 1979, she [...] *stopped composing some years after Lili's death in March 1918*. (Potter, 1999, 546)

One could say that their lives were in a sense quite tragic since both were influenced by specific events. Potter elaborates this succinctly: [...] *it would be fairer to say that neither sister attained maturity as a composer, Lili because of her death at the age of twenty-four, and Nadia because she gave up composing*. (Potter, 1999, 546)

One of the reasons Nadia Boulanger also did not really stand out in the composing sphere might be because she focused her compositions as solo songs being her large-scale pieces works composed for the *Conservatoire* competitions (Potter, 1999). This is explained by Laura Hamer in her book *Female composers, conductors, performers: Musiciennes of Interwar France, 1919-1939* (2018):

In contrast to the situation before the war – when women who wrote music had tended to concentrate on smaller musical genres, especially *mélodies* and piano miniatures, often aimed at the domestic market – female composers were able to benefit from greatly developed opportunities to write, to publish, and to have performed large-scale works. (Hamer, 2018, 3)

It is worth noting that during the war women contributed to cultural activities and entertainments made with the intuition to boost public morale or raise money for the troops. Therefore, female musicians, actresses and other entertainers were active within these environments:

[...] The First World War allowed women to undertake many jobs and professions which had previously been largely the sole terrain of men, and orchestral conducting was no exception.

[...] by 1917 people were used to seeing women doing 'men's' jobs. (Hamer, 2018, 8)

Though with the First World War the way society worked changed, most women did not maintain their jobs after the war was over. However, the war changed the way society was perceived by the population: [...] *In the absence of men, they were obliged to assume economic responsibility* [...] *Consequently the government was forced to allow women more legal rights.* (Hamer, 2018, 8)

A curious note regarding Nadia Boulanger, in Hamer's book, the observations she made for an article in the *New York World Telegram* on 11th of February of 1938 are mentioned:

Boulanger believed that women were naturally drawn to careers in the arts or business but placed these desires in a hierarchical system below those of wishing to be wives and mothers.

This assured readers that Boulanger was not a threat to the existing social order. She did not urge other women to emulate her, but counselled them that the traditional feminine roles were of higher value. (Hamer, 2018, 13)

This record is curious in the sense that she, as a not married woman who focused her life solely in her own career, defended women for being mothers and wives. While it must not make sense, discrediting her own activities as a musician and composer, she made herself free to engage in them without being concerned with the opposition (Hamer, 2018).

When one looks upon the Boulanger family and the legacy they left, it is of great interest to acknowledge all the components that created this sphere of success and inevitable end. The relation with the Paris *Conservatoire* showed how women were still able to appear in the podium of important prizes, being Lili Boulanger the first woman to win a prize in composition. From this point on, the war changed temporarily a patriarchal society which convoluted in the uprising of feminism: [...] *World War One had irrevocably changed women's roles in society, and no amount of conservative interwar politics could reverse this.* (Hamer, 2018, 20)

However, and not forgetting about the amount of change that came upon the beginning of the 20th Century, there was still a long way to go meaning that the music field would still have a lot to change for women to feel safe in it. As mentioned before, even Nadia Boulanger felt the need to discredit her own work publicly so she could continue pursuing her career as a female musician and composer.

It is, however, still important to position their achievements against a background which was largely hostile to female professionalism and to understand the reception and criticism of their work and activities as having been strongly shaped by the society within which they were produced, which perceived career-orientated success by women as unusual. (Hamer, 2018, 21)

Nonetheless, it is still intriguing to analyse history and perceive how these kinds of events changed so much in so little time in comparison to centuries of oppression. And one can not help but to wonder how Nadia's life would have been if her sister Lili would not have died so young. Certainly, these kinds of tragedies also change the course of history.

3.4. In the present days

Discussing about what came upon until today is not an easy task, since there might always be something left out mentioning. There is still the certainty that prejudice is implacable. It shapes peoples minds and defines centuries of human history whether one speaks specifically about race, gender, or cultural discrimination. In the case of chauvinism, the history is endless because it is still very present and part of our daily lives. Humanity came a long way after all that has been through regarding evolution. No one can compare today with how it was one hundred years ago. But chauvinism is still alive whether it might be because of tradition, religion, or conservative thoughts.

In the world of music, there are a few aspects worth mentioning. Women did accomplish incredible advances in the music world throughout the centuries, and today one can say there is some kind of equality between these two genders. Nonetheless, there are still smaller and sometimes imperceptible drawbacks that resist it, occurring through the various stages of life.

There are still differences in salaries between women and men. When a woman gets pregnant there might be a chance of getting fired or never getting a promotion because of it. There are still differences in competitions, schools, and universities, where one gender might be favoured than the other, as I came to be familiar with during my studies as a musician. Women composers are still neglected in the music world to the point where they might feel the need to hide from the public, like women have been doing for centuries when upon publication using a male pseudonym so people would give them the same chance they would to a man. Conductors might be not taken seriously just because they are female since the female sex is considered to be in a general sense "the weaker sex" when it comes down comparing the two. And the most concerning part of this is I have noticed these differences while playing with different conductors within the academic setting, which simply confirms the urgency and topicality of this matter.

While this might happen in the music world industry, it happens in whatever industry:

The implementation of appropriate recruitment procedures is essential to tackle persistent gender inequalities in the labor market. Whereas ‘within-job wage discrimination’ and ‘valuative discrimination’, referring to lower pay of female-dominated occupations, are well-researched phenomena, the issue of ‘allocative discrimination’ at the point of hire has only recently been raised and is less clear. (Fasang, 2006, 801)

Until very recently some orchestras did not accept female musicians. Hamer mentions this precisely in her book:

[...] That one of Paris’s most prestigious orchestras accepted women instrumentalists by 1912 indicates that it was very progressive (in terms of opportunities for women) for the time. [...] the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, to take a notorious example, would not admit women players until 2003, nearly a century later! [...] (Hamer, 2018, 6)

It makes one wonder that even with the creation of blind auditions in the 1950s, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra still chose to take their time until finally starting to accept female musicians. When the blind auditions were created its aim was to eliminate gender bias and starting to include more female musicians in the, until then, all male orchestras. If the jury could not see the candidate, then it would only focus on the performance itself, rather the person. This would also be helpful against other kinds of discrimination. However, it took some time for it to become viable.

In a study made with collected data from auditions dating the late 1950s until 1995 of Symphony orchestras in the United States, Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse concluded that [...] *the adoption of the screen and blind auditions served to help female musicians in their quest for orchestral positions.* (Goldin & Rouse, 2000, 738) Using the audition data they were able to prove that [...] *the screen increases – by 50 percent – the probability that a woman will be advanced from certain preliminary rounds and increases by severalfold the likelihood that a woman will be selected in the final round.* (Goldin & Rouse, 2000, 738)

It is worth noting that through this study the lower numbers until the 1970s were also justified because [...] *many music directors, ultimately in charge of hiring new musicians, publicly disclosed their belief that female players had lower musical talent.* (Goldin & Rouse, 2000, 737) Plus, this increasing in the numbers between the late 1970s to early 1980s might also mean that during this period [...] *the labor force participation of women increased generally and [...] their participation in various professions greatly expanded [...]* (Goldin & Rouse, 2000, 718) At some point, orchestras also started to [...] *roll out a carpet leading to center stage to muffle footsteps that could betray the sex of the candidate.* (Goldin & Rouse, 2000, 721)

However, in a more recent study with collected data of German orchestras in 2003, there is a hypothesis that the blind audition might not be as transparent as it appears to be:

‘Blind’ auditions make it difficult to collect information about discrimination, because they are seemingly neutral. Decisions about invitations are made internally within the instrument groups and are not transparent. [...] The opaque joint decision-making process on whom to invite to auditions seems to be the key aspect of discriminatory recruitment. (Fasang, 2006, 803/807)

Another aspect pointed out in this study is that German symphony orchestras are in the public sector, which:

[...] therefore provide high job security and allow maternity leaves of up to 3 years, statistical discrimination may also contribute to a reluctance to recruit women, since such leaves involve additional uncompensated work for the other musicians. [...] Are women discriminated against only if they have young children or are ‘at risk’ of becoming pregnant? (Fasang, 2006, 808)

In the end of this study, they were able to conclude that the recruitment process of blind auditions does not suffice the neutrality of the recruitment process, which proves effectively that broader measures are still needed to compensate for any kind of discrimination that might be present in said circumstances. (Fasang, 2006)

It is essential to not forget about how difficult it was for women to pursue higher education, specifically professions considered more “masculine”. Composing always was a profession considered masculine. In the 19th Century, mentioned in the previous chapters Schumann considered her own compositions not worthy for the simplest fact of her being a woman, and that women could never write music as valuable as music written by men, likewise the *Premier Prix de Rome* in composition would not be won by a woman until 1913 by Lili Boulanger. Even though women started to follow the path of composition they would inevitably do it with some resistance, even Virginia Woolf writes in her essay:

And here, I said, opening a book about music, we have the very words used again in this year of grace, 1928, of women who try to write music. ‘Of Mile Germaine Tailleferre one can only repeat Dr Johnson's dictum concerning a woman preacher, transposed into terms of music. “Sir, a woman's composing is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all.”’* So accurately does history repeat itself. (Woolf, 1929/2000, 101)

How can one know women composers that were equally influencing as men for said period? If women were not allowed to speak up their ideas and have a proper education in any academic or performative art, how are there supposed to exist records of women composers? Still, times did change and inadvertently, however this change took time, and until very recently numerous professions, such as composition, were still considered not suitable for women.

Kaija Saariaho (1952) is a Finnish composer who received several prizes in composition one of which being the Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition with her opera *L'Amour de Loin* (2000). This composer is worth mentioning because she has always been vocal about how it was for her to be a woman composer in the end of the 20th Century.

In an interview with Katarina Aronsson for the Royal Swedish Opera, Saariaho tells her experience at the beginning of her studies at the Sibelius Academy:

The people at the Sibelius Akatemia, there were professors who did not want to teach me because they said: "oh you're a pretty girl but soon you will get married, so my time is too precious to give you lessons"... So that was very normal at that time. So, at some point, my music started to be played a lot and I realized that my colleagues started thinking, my male colleagues, that it is because I am a woman... So, I don't know, maybe some of it is true. Maybe at some point I stood out also because I was a woman. But I can tell you that the beginning was quite tough anyway. (Saariaho, 2021)

In an interview for a project designated »Femmes4Music« from the Center for Art and Media of Karlsruhe, Saariaho also adds:

I think that honestly the most important for me was really to leave Finland at that time when I went to Freiburg because I felt myself very lonely in Finland because of being woman. Everything had to have its own box and there was no box for women composers. So, they tried to stick me to a box which didn't exist, so when I continued to Freiburg, I met many colleagues that already showed me that one can be a woman composer and that it is not so unusual done (as) I had imagined maybe in Finland: It didn't need to be so lonely. (Saariaho, 2022)

And then about her own recognition as a woman composer:

In the beginning I was a little bit hesitating, do I get these things because I'm a woman or is it only because of my music. And then I had many fellow man composers around me saying that 'well she got it because there are not so many good women composers'. I don't know. (Saariaho, 2022)

Beyond the fact that she received resistance by her teachers at the time, a fact not always mentioned that seems quite presence in her is the way she wondered if the recognition and success she was receiving was truthful to her compositions or if it was because she was a woman.

After the emancipation of women, a lot of measures started to be taken into consideration, such as admission of equal gender parties. One can not help to wonder if it is being recognized or admitted even, when referring to auditions, competitions, job positions, because there is this need of a place being equally distributed for the sake of gender equality. This has a big fallacy, because one may decide to pick a person less suited for the place to fulfil an established rule.

Saariaho also states in the interview:

There are still so much less women than men in our field so that makes me a little bit wonder. I think it should have to do with the strict education in this sense already from when you start your studies, when you start playing the instruments. Very easily talented girls are taken to interpretation and talented boys are proposed composition. (Saariaho, 2022)

Which is a valuable statement because if the education has been focusing more in the path of interpretation it is going to be statistically obvious that there will be less women following composition. Knowing that this problem persists, perhaps it should be created a more attentive way to motivate young students, regardless of their gender, to also follow the path of composition. The same opportunities should always be given for every student when upon their studies in music.

It is also worth mentioning Marie Thérèse Odette Ernest Dias (1929). She is a French flutist that went to Brazil when she was 20 years old to integrate the *Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira* and the *Orquestra Sinfônica Nacional*. She studied in the Paris *Conservatoire* and received the *Premier Prix de Flûte* in 1951. She also studied with Nadia Boulanger. (d'Avila, 2009)

There is an interesting quote from her used in the dissertation *ODETTE ERNEST DIAS: discursos sobre uma perspectiva pedagógica da flauta* (2009) by Raul Costa d'Avila, where Madame Odette states: [...] *hoje eu sei, olhando o passado com uma visão mais distante e ampla, e olhando o presente, que o homem nunca deve se acostumar à violência e à repressão.*¹² (d'Avila, 2009, 63) Which is an appealing perspective on the events that inevitably take place within one's life. It is not right to stand by and accept violence, prejudice, or oppression. I suppose if one does accept it, we will never continue to evolve as an intelligent species. However, sometimes even if you do not accept reality as it is, you might also not be able to change it.

As an example, during Portugal's dictatorship – Estado Novo under António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) regency there was a special police force called PIDE, later described as a police force specialized also in espionage - many people were interrogated and tortured because of suspicion against the regime.

¹² [...] today I know, looking at the past with a more distant and broader vision, and looking at the present, that man must never get used to violence and repression. (d'Avila, 2009, 63)

Hypothetically, even if women at the time had ideas that went against the regime, they would not be able to do much, because otherwise they would be submitted to interrogation. If people would have accepted this dictatorship however, the revolution of 25th of April of 1974 would have never happened. This example shows how difficult it is to live in a repressed political regency and how sometimes history can not solve years of oppression.

Not moving to Brazil could have been a decision that would undeniably have contributed for Madame Odette's personality. In this period, upon her moving to Brazil, women were still regarded in a certain way. It would have shown necessary the whole 20th Century for people to reach the point one could say we have reached "today".

And while one may think most women would help with the enduring situation of oppression - which went on for centuries - there has always been conflict, as one perceived by the previous chapters, within this gender: the acceptance and realization of the reality in which they lived. Thereupon, moving to a different country with a different culture and traditions, it can contribute to a change in one's perspective and influence their way of thinking. That is why in Raul's dissertation it is often described Madame Odette's way of perceiving education and how her teaching is so ample and rich in the eyes of her own students. She was considered exceptionally open minded and acceptive of different methods and ways of teaching a student, considering the student background as a person with a unique personality and of worthy apprenticeship.

For Odette Ernest Dias to decide to move to the other side of the world must have not been an easy decision. It was also extremely difficult to compete with other remarkable musicians for the few same positions available in orchestras at the time, hence the fact of being a woman. When someone is exposed to a different culture and traditions dissimilar from their own, the overall perspective will inherently change. d'Avila explains this precisely:

Deste modo, tanto o seu relativismo cultural, isto é, uma postura negando normas e valores absolutos, defendendo o pressuposto de que as avaliações e reflexões sobre a cultura estão relacionados às origens, quanto sua visão do mundo, são resultados de uma intensa vivência e formação humana, familiar, cultural e social que lhe possibilitaram, como disseram seus ex-alunos, transpor limitações que seriam normais para qualquer pessoa que não tivesse as mesmas experiências vividas por ela.¹³ (d'Avila, 2009, 66-7)

¹³ Therefore, both her cultural relativism, that is, a posture denying absolute norms and values, defending the assumption that evaluations and reflections on culture are related to origins, and her vision of the world, is a result of an intense experience and human, family, cultural and social formation that allowed her, as her former students said, to overcome limitations that would be normal for anyone who did not have the same experiences she had. (d'Avila, 2009, 66-7)

I am also adding my own experience however short-lived to this chapter. In the academic world there is a quite established transparent knowledge about favouritism and prejudice against students. And to think that I have witnessed this during my studies is quite concerning.

The relationship between the student and the teacher is an inevitable one. Still, the teacher operates from a position of power and sometimes this position allows them to take advantage of the student. One must understand that in the same way one can take advantage of a person, they can also help said person. In the music world there is a lot of favouritism. It might be because someone is considered a prodigy or just because there is more history behind that relationship. One could say it is more frequent in situations where men utilize this power in their favour, however the opposite also happens, and it is usually not commented on.

Another aspect about discrimination is that it can be towards someone not only because of one's gender. It is important to not forget that even though the purpose of this paper is mostly directed to chauvinism and discriminatory actions towards women, there are always other types of discrimination such can be against religion, race, political views, or educational background, for example.

The primary problem with these kinds of situations is how someone can manage them, because unfortunately the school might not be the most helpful. The disappointing part of the academic world is often the support one gets from the school when situations like these undeniably happen, otherwise it would not be so common to witness it. Usually said teacher remains at the school and does not receive any kind of warning whereas the student must suffer the consequents of trying to stand up against a situation such as this, which also enlightens why in most cases nothing is said or done.

When referring to discrimination, whatever that may be, no one should be able to apologize and forgive, since ideals such as these move so deep inside you as a human being, moreover, defining you as a person. But somehow the academic world and the educational system always finds a way for these individuals to remain in the school network and continue normally with their lives.

Therefore, a safer academic environment is needed for the student. Otherwise, discriminative situations are undoubtedly going to prevail in every and each educational institution. It is not only directed to women, but every student regardless of their gender.

4. Discussion

Through the course of history there have been several women in literature that have written important books and essays about the emancipation of women¹⁴. Simone de Beauvoir is a notable example in the feminist history that took care of this subject in a very inclusive way. She published *The Second Sex* in 1949¹⁵ which one could consider as a treatise, showing in a quite extensive way why does the discrimination against women exists. She states right from the first sentence of its introduction that even she hesitated before writing this book for the sole reason that [...] *the subject is irritating, especially for women; and it is not new.* (Beauvoir, 1949/2009, 28)

The most drawing part of this book is that it was written in a way that neither man nor women are at fault with said situation. She took the liberty to describe quite detailly the nature of numerous species and explain the differences between all genders, sometimes also referring to species that are androgynous. In the second part of the book one can also find a detailed whole chapter about the human history and how did we evolve into this great discrepancy amongst genders. She starts this chapter by stating:

This world has always belonged to males, and none of the reasons given for this have ever seemed sufficient. By reviewing prehistoric and ethnographic data in the light of existentialist philosophy, we can understand how the hierarchy of the sexes came to be. (Beauvoir, 1949/2009, 102)

The amount of research and distancing that one must have put themselves through to write a book in such an impartial way is quite remarkable. The analytical point of view regarding this matter is the primary reason why it is referenced in this paper. Although it is outstanding in the historical sense as a very credible source of material, De Beauvoir addresses the victimization as it should be addressed. This means that eventually, by historical and biological means [...] *If one of the two has an advantage over the other, that one prevails and works to maintain the relationship by oppression.* (Beauvoir, 1949/2009, 102)

However, within the oppression one can consider that even though women suffered greatly for many years, there were also women that fought against this claim and did what they wanted while the society opposed to them, nonetheless.

¹⁴ Feminism consists in [...] the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes. [...] (Burkett & Brunell, 2023)

¹⁵ Originally published in French as *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949) in two volumes as *Les faits et les mythes* (Vol. I) and *L'expérience vécue* (Vol. II). (Beauvoir, 1949/2009) The first edition translated to English was published in 1953 but was severely edited leaving a lot of the work out. Eventually there was a new revised translation published in 2009. (Britannica, 2023)

For example, in *A Room of One's own* (1929/2000) by Virginia Woolf, she states:

[...] I need not hate any man; he cannot hurt me. I need not flatter any man; he has nothing to give me. So imperceptibly I found myself adopting a new attitude towards the other half of the human race. It was absurd to blame any class or any sex, as a whole. Great bodies of people are never responsible for what they do. They are driven by instincts which are not within their control. [...] (Woolf, 1929/2000, 86-7)

This admission proves that one can fight for the woman rights and, at the same time, be rational and impartial about it. She even mentions the sentiment of anger. As for said anger one cannot use their faculties in their true potential subsequently of being totally immerse within their own beliefs and personal judgment: it is unrealistic and impossible to be partial regarding any matter that goes inherently against their own: [...] *They had been written in the red light of emotion and not in the white light of truth.* (Woolf, 1929/2000, 82)

De Beauvoir was eventually considered by many a very courageous woman for her time¹⁶. She took the stance by addressing and speaking about the gender inequality in a very rational way, grounding herself on philosophical and scientific beliefs which made her a considerably reliable source in this matter. She defended: [...] *the basic options of an individual must be made on the premises of an equal vocation for man and woman founded on a common structure of their being, independent of their sexuality.* (Britannica, 2023)

When addressing the problematic around victimization, there is an outlook that must be taken into consideration: feminist biography. During the process of writing this paper I came across several biographies about the lives of various female composers and performers, and while reading the article *The "Suppression" of Fanny Mendelssohn: Rethinking Feminist Biography* (2002) by Marian Wilson Kimber, I found a remarkably interesting and detailed analysis regarding this matter. As biographies can give us a detailed and thorough description of one's life for the purposes of keeping its record, it can also give us [...] *stories of other women's lives that can help us to invent or reinvent our own.* (Kimber, 2002, 125) Which signifies that these biographies can also bring light and courage to women who might identify with the story: [...] *Many women have identified with them, likened our struggle to theirs, and have taken courage from their spirited lives. [...] historical women can serve as "foremothers" for aspiring female musicians.* (Kimber, 2002, 125)

¹⁶ [...] Legal birth control would be denied to French women until 1967, and legal abortion, until 1975. Not until the late 1960s was there an elected female head of state anywhere in the world. [...] (Beauvoir, 1949/2009, 10)

The primary fallacy undertaking these kinds of biographies is that a writer might not be able to not include themselves in the written matter. Kimber mentions several researchers on the same issue stating:

Dee Garrison recognizes that “all scholars to some degree choose their topics in order to enact the main themes of their own lives.” Paul Murray Kendall goes further, noting that “any biography uneasily shelters an autobiography within it.” [...] biographers “may project their own desires on their subjects.” (Kimber, 2002, 125-6)

One may be dependent on biographies; otherwise, how could we have records of someone’s life? However, it is imperative that one must have the capacity to uncover these fallacies that compromise the text itself, as if sabotaging the truth: how history really happened. Kimber puts this simply:

If feminist biography and women’s history as a whole are to have any validity, they must not abandon a historical method that believes in evidence and replace it with fiction. This commitment sometimes means telling a story that we wish to be different. (Kimber, 2002, 126)

Kimber also uses a quote from another researcher: [...] *Sara Alpern has written: “As a feminist, there were times when I wanted the story to come out differently. As a historian I had to tell what I found.* (Kimber, 2002, 126) Plus, to romanticize someone’s life could imply that we are not doing justice to said person’s beliefs, but on the contrary, we might be mistakenly offending the decisions once taken that can not be corroborated because said person is no longer alive. When researching and writing about women’s history, or history about any oppressed group for instance, the writing [...] *must be true to the historical record as much as possible.* (Kimber, 2002, 126)

Consequently, putting any personality in the same situation and victimize them to fulfil a void with what must have happened, in this case chauvinism or the dominant patriarchal culture, will without a doubt be a partial perspective on what must be the historical reality of events:

To write a biography of a female artist with the assumption that “each woman’s story is moulded by a pattern, more or less the same pattern” only reinscribes the essentialist gender division that feminist biography supposedly seeks to critique. (Kimber, 2002, 127)

In a way, it is necessary to recognize the cultural forces that nowadays we find unjust without portraying these women lives as failures, since doing so we are not crediting their value as musicians but dynamizing them solely for their role as women midst of society. All genders have suffered upon the patriarchal construction, not for the same reasons, however, there has always been men who helped women to overcome the normative construction of a patriarchal society. Although sometimes it is not simple to see it, in the battle of the sexes, we do find each other in a somewhat equal place today, that we must cherish and protect.

Women have been undeniably absent from the Western Music History. Their names were forgotten and buried under centuries of history. Nonetheless, one can say that nowadays women have more rights than they used to have. Society changed considerably and this is detectable when analysing historical records and its subsequent events. Unfortunately, there are places in our world where this is still an occurrent issue. These may be due to religious beliefs, conservative traditions, or political oppression. It is never enough to mention those who still live under such circumstances and for some reason or another can not change their lives for the better. It would be unrealistic to think that all the deconstructive beliefs are presently eradicated. As humans it is not intrinsically possible to live under the same ideals and judgements, and one must accept it when dealing with any kind of social discrimination.

Another notable disclaimer is the usage of the term “female” several times through this paper. It is used in a historical context and without any pejorative intention. It is challenging to discuss chauvinism and feminism without highlighting the oppressed group in question. However, and with the sole intention of clarifying such matters, any of the terms used along this paper translate to anyone who identifies as a woman, also including people who do not menstruate. The discussion around gender identity is crucial and valuable when addressing feminism since it represents an inherent link between both subjects, demonstrating the acceptance towards any gender on reason of freedom and equality. As De Beauvoir states in *The Second Sex* (1949/2000): [...] *One is not born, but rather becomes, woman.* (Beauvoir, 1949/2009, 340)

By the people mentioned in this paper, one can understand the implications that women endured, and the issues still faced today. Thankfully, information is not difficult to gather on the matter and discussion always finds its way to the surface. That is precisely why there is so much literature about the subject. One of the most curious aspects during the analysis of some biographies used in this paper were the family and personal letters that showed the most intricate thoughts and actions about these personalities' lives. It bluntly showed the conflict of being a woman and the necessity to be independent in a patriarchal society, which for the period is riveting. These unconscious feelings are in a way extensively complex, because even though women were victims of the patriarchal society sometimes, they were able to grow within it and unconsciously have doubts regarding the system. One could say these doubts made it possible to change the society immensely.

Writing this paper confirmed that there are women through all the music history. The problem lies on how one manages the historical information in the various aspects of our human lives, because women keep on not being mentioned and credited for whenever there is a chance for it.

Even though the numbers are scarce, it's up to our generation to change the way these records are approached and applied. More research in the matter might be needed so one can have an easier access to these records and biographies, however it is not a difficult task when there are already several publications available, a few even mentioned on this paper. Perhaps the academic setting should create more inclusive programmes with woman composers and performers. Besides this, it is also necessary to create a safer academic environment for the student to prevent any type of discrimination. It is vital for the *Conservatoires* to create new ways to motivate the students to pursue their own instrument or composition in the most inclusive way without any kind of distinction whatsoever. It remains quite noticeable even inside the various groups of instruments a silenced form of discrimination dictating which gender should play a specific instrument. As in composition and as part of one's education it is urgent to stop differentiating musical areas on the primary basis of gender. One should have the same opportunities as anyone else regardless of their gender.

One should also consider a different audition process for orchestras, since its partial and non-transparent procedure still endangers women candidates sustaining the continuation of a perpetual discrimination. With different selection methods besides live audition, it remains impossible to find a good balance in the applied criteria during such process. On the academic setting and as mentioned before, it is also essential to create a safer work environment on which the salaries should be the same for each musician, regardless of their gender, and there should also be a better understanding towards pregnancy, supporting both men and women during parental leave. Pregnancy and childbirth are fundamental parts of our human lives. We can even consider it the most primal and natural processes which remain unconceivable to undervalue such events by discriminating them with such easiness.

On another note and regarding the source material used as reference on this paper, it is noticeable the prevalence of female authors regarding any subject related to women and women oppression. One can also conclude an increasing of literature towards the end of the 20th Century. It is wonderful to know that there are many sources on this matter and the amount of research put into consideration is unbelievable, however maybe the inexistence of male authors on the subject could be considered problematic. Feminism and the women rights are both themes of extreme importance for all genders. Perhaps this tiny aspect could be something to change in the near future.

It is indeed never too late to embrace the current problems of society, but it is certainly urgent to invest time and effort in a constant evolution of human lives. It might seem impossible or even reckless to hope for a perfect future in which we all live in peace and with freedom.

However, one must not forget the history, the immensity already achieved, and the number of lives lost in the process. Despite everyone's sociological origins, today is the goal for a better future and it is up to each one of us to continue the legacy left by those who were courageous enough to give the first step:

[...] Even if one could state the value of any one gift at the moment, those values will change; in a century's time very possibly, they will have changed completely. Moreover, in a hundred years, I thought, reaching my own doorstep, women will have ceased to be the protected sex. Logically they will take part in all activities and exertions that were once denied them. (Woolf, 1929/2000, 89)

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