

The Second

(sex + city)

May 4th, 2018 @7:00pm // Prop Thtr

May 5th, 2018 @5:00pm // Vail Chapel at Millar

This is a show celebrating
underrepresented female
composers from the early
modern era.

How can we use the filter of the
past to reflect on today?

Songs

Hildegard chants
Hildegard von Bingen

Regina Caeli
Francesca Caccini

Ave Suavis Dilectio
Isabella Leonarda

Che Dolce Udire
Barbara Strozzi

Judith Cantata, Accompagnement & Air
Jacquet de la Guerre

Trio Sonata C minor
Jacquet de la Guerre

Duo Seraphim
Caterina Assandra

Why aren't there more women composers that are well known?

Historically women composers were often the daughters, sisters, wives or lovers as well as pupils of famous men composers. The number of women represented in earlier dictionaries of composers can be substantially augmented by reckoning in those women hidden in the entries of their 'menfolk'.

Hidden in this word search are the names of the women composers and song titles.

A	D	R	A	N	O	E	L	W	A	N	S
B	I	E	O	X	Y	L	V	Q	Q	U	M
C	N	R	Y	H	L	N	G	Z	D	I	J
O	I	T	C	E	L	I	D	I	H	C	L
S	O	S	Y	S	U	O	R	P	A	A	Q
D	M	D	E	K	T	E	A	S	C	C	Z
B	A	R	P	P	P	R	S	Q	J	C	C
U	O	J	F	V	E	A	O	A	Z	I	R
W	R	I	J	S	N	J	U	Z	Q	N	P
E	B	U	L	D	L	T	F	N	Z	I	A
Z	P	D	R	M	E	N	U	K	R	I	N
P	O	A	N	X	A	N	I	G	E	R	V

CACCINI
ASSANDRA
STROZZI
LEONARDA

REGINA
SERAPHIM
DILECTIO
UDIRE

Some critics assert that women's music has not survived because it is simply not good enough. However, that assessment is patently false and reflects a gendered bias when considering musical contributions from men and women from the early modern era to today.

The fact of sociological conditioning certainly encourages us to consider the likelihood of a 'gendered voice' for both men and women.

Have you encountered misogyny in your workplace? or in your career as an artist?

Share your experience in words or doodles.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a user to share their experience in words or doodles.



Saint Lucy

Many of tonight's composers were nuns. Convents provided opportunities for leadership and creativity that were often frowned upon outside of these gynocentric circles.

"Only through visions could a religious or intellectual woman gain a hearing... while men might perhaps heed a divinely inspired woman, they would have little patience with a mere presumptuous female"

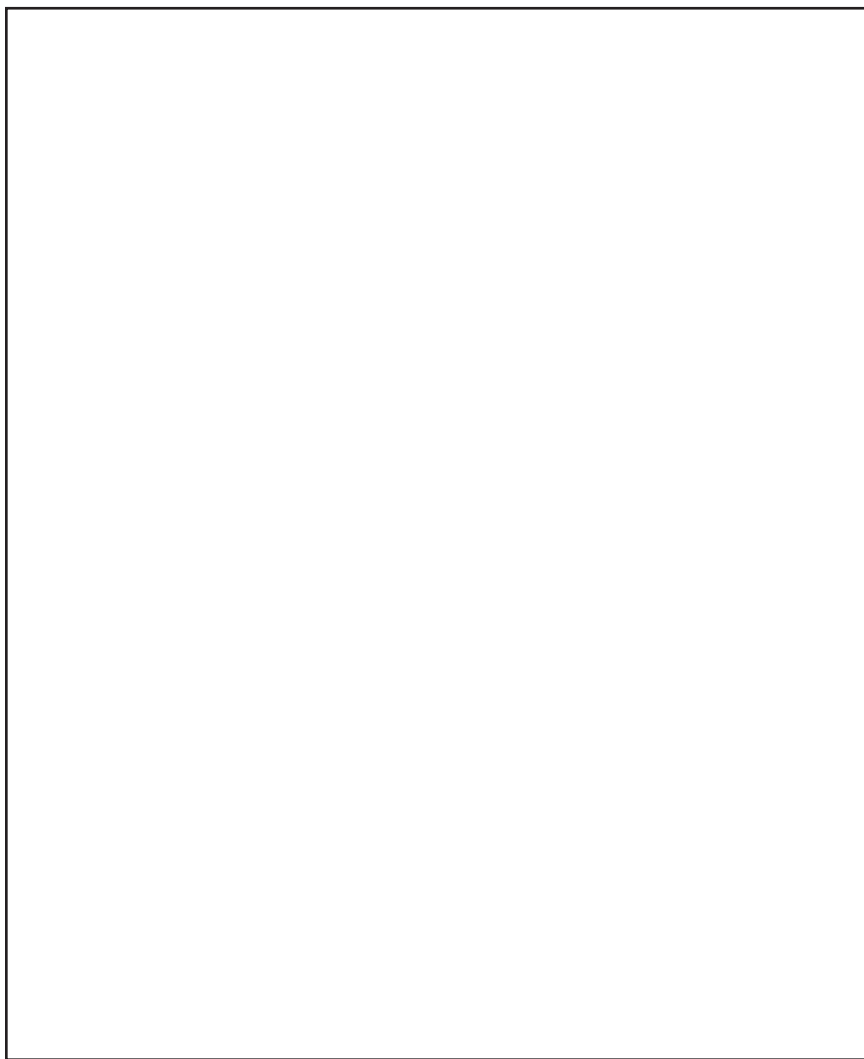
- Barbara Newman



Hildegard von Bingen was a German Benedictine abbess, writer, composer, philosopher, Christian mystic, visionary, and polymath. She is considered to be the founder of scientific natural history in Germany.

Hildy had celestial visions that inspired her scientific and musical work.

What inspires you? Answer below with words or doodles.

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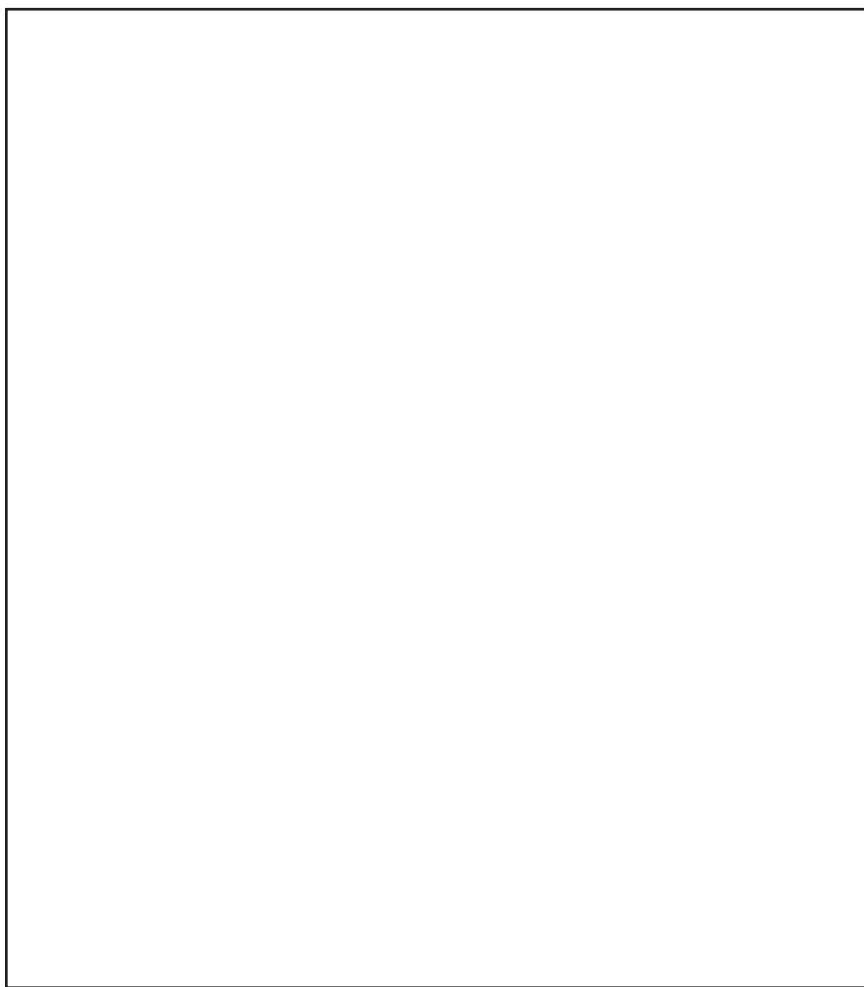
If the works of most women composers have been neglected, the fault lies in part with the musical community itself. In the past, most of those who directed performances were themselves composers. These directors were mostly men who, out of professional necessity, performed primarily their own most recent compositions. This, plus a general lack of support for female composers, provides one reason why music of the same era by women composers was rarely sought or performed in public.

The move to unearth women artists in music, as in any other art, is not a neutral act, any more than is their previous neglect.

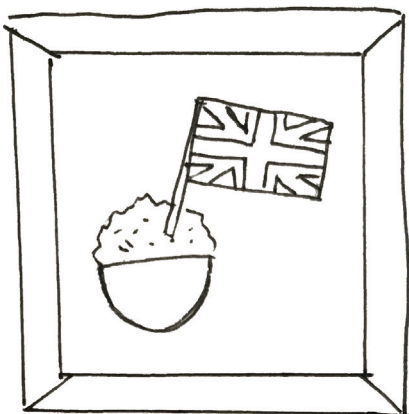
When more studies of the music of individual composers, modern editions of their works and better integrated studies of the social context of music-making have been produced, a truer, more even-handed view of the history of music will emerge.

What could you do to unearth
underrepresented communities in your life?

Answer below with words or doodles.

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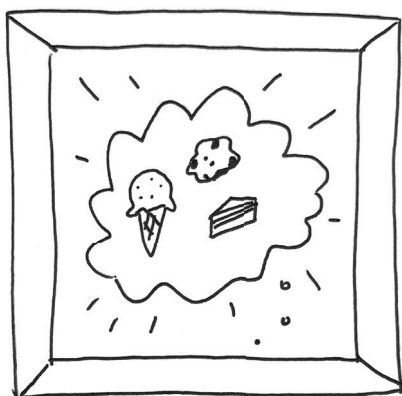
Performer Bios



Sun Chang is a burgeoning pianist/ harpsichordist hybrid and loves rice. She also enjoys british things like scones and clotted cream, which is good because she's going to England for grad school next year.



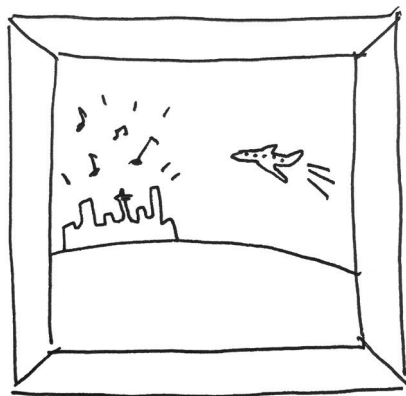
Anna Steinhoff enjoys all things that are cello-like, from the viola da gamba to the cello banjo and everything in between. In her spare time she enjoys hanging out with her beautiful briard Mona.



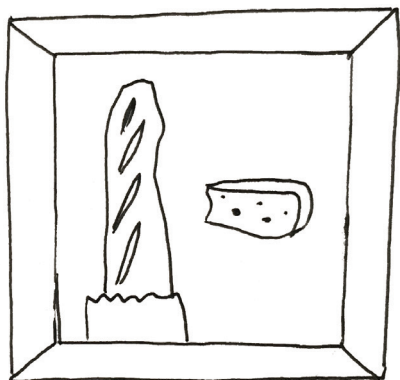
Amanda Marshall is a 24 year old violinist from Utah and has a bright future ahead of her. She is most proficient in violin out of all of the instruments, but can also play six chords on guitar. She will be graduating from Northwestern University with her MA in violin performance this spring. Other hobbies include making new friends and thinking about dessert.



Harrah Friedlander is a soprano whose passion for music is only overshadowed by her love for cats and iced tea. She also enjoys continually buying notebooks and pens with the intention of writing something... anything...at some point...



Lauren Biglow is a mezzo from California who loves to sing in places like Chicago & Denmark, where her loveliest musical friends live. Soon she's going to Madrid for grad school!



Pauline Kempf is a doctoral violinist at Northwestern. She enjoys baguettes and good cheese as she is from Paris.



Quinn Middleman sings lots of different music and is currently obsessed with women composers. She also enjoys yoga, reading, and knitting things like hats and baby blankets.

Hildegard von Bingen

1098 - 1179

Hildegard von Bingen was a German Benedictine abbess, who was a Renaissance woman 200 years before that explosion of artistic and scientific exploration occurred in Europe. A writer, composer, philosopher, mystic, and visionary, Hildegard carved out a space of autonomy and respect in a period and sector that largely sought to cloister and silence women.

Hildegard denied receiving any formal education, despite her works revealing familiarity with medieval music theorists, claiming her writings and music came to her through divine visions. However, medieval gender politics that prohibited women from holding authority over men or teaching may have necessitated this claim as the church would listen to a divinely inspired woman but shun an impertinent female.

Music composition was her means of aspiring to God and divine beauty and her texts and melodies eschew the staid predictability of traditional Gregorian chant. Her free-verse or prose resulted in freely spun, irregular melodic lines with frequent melismatic elaboration. In Hildegard, is one of the largest extant repertoires of medieval music, including many chants that honor women. Her poetry was frequently gynocentric with women taking an active role in spiritual salvation.

Despite these references to the power of woman in sacred history, Hildegard had to veil her strength in order to be a respected, sovereign voice. She was allowed ecclesiastical and scientific authority so long as she was perceived as the mere messenger.

Francesca Caccini

1587 - 1645

Francesca Caccini made her professional musical debut at thirteen in Jacopo Peri's *Euridice*. She subsequently travelled with the family as "il concerto Caccini" and sang with her sister, Settimia Caccini, and renowned singer Vittoria Archilei performing across Europe. Caccini served the Medici court as a singer, teacher, rehearsal coach, and composer and by 1614 had become the highest paid musician under the regent Grand Duchess Christina of Lorraine.

In 1625, Caccini's opera *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina*, the first extant opera by a woman, was performed to celebrate the visiting crown prince of Poland. Despite her own success as a performer and composer, Caccini refused to allow her daughter Margherita to perform onstage, fearing it would compromise art chances of convent placement or a good marriage and tarnish the social position of her son.

Caterina Assandra

1590 - 1619

More than half of the music published by women in the 1600s was composed by nuns, where their isolation from society at large allowed them to develop unique music to be used in services. Even when music composed by nuns was performed in public services, the nuns might sing from an inner church, invisible to the public.

A member of the Benedictine convent of Saint Agata in Milan, Caterina Assandra was exposed to the most contemporary developments in musical style. She became renowned as an organist and had several works published in her lifetime, both of a conventional and more innovative nature. "Duo seraphim" exists amidst those works that evolved beyond traditional motets.

Barbara Strozzi

1617 - 1677

Renowned as a “virtuosissima cantatrice,” Barbara Strozzi was a composer and performer in Venice. One of the most prolific composers of secular vocal music in Venice, she made her public career predominantly through publishing her compositions, keeping her performance career fairly private at her father’s Accademia degli Unisoni. Her sheltered career might have resulted from a desire to avoid scandal and slander, however, at sixteen she was still a victim of malicious rumors that she was a courtesan.

The majority of Strozzi’s music is secular for soprano, except for one volume of sacred songs, and truly glorifies the unique qualities and potentials of the human voice.

Isabella Leonarda

1620 - 1704

A member of the Collegio di Sant'Orsola, an Ursuline convent in Novara, Isabella Leonarda composed over two-hundred works, one of the most prolific nun composers. She was also one of two Italian women known to have made contributions to instrumental music. Her works are exemplified by a highly expressive sectional style, both mirroring and expanding on extant forms.

Because her family was a benefactor of her convent, Leonarda held several positions of authority within her religious community and also acted as a music teacher for the nuns. Leonarda felt a strong personal devotion to the Virgin Mary and the majority of her works carry a double dedication to Mary and a human dedicatee.

Elizabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre

1665 - 1729

One of the best known female composers of the early modern era, Elizabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre was by all accounts a musical prodigy. A contemporary account recognized her talent even as a child: "For four years a wonder has appeared here. She sings at sight the most difficult music. She accompanies herself, and accompanies others who wish to sing, at the harpsichord, which she plays in a manner that can not be imitated. She composed pieces, and plays them in all the keys asked of her...and she is still only ten years old."

De la Guerre spent her formative years learning and performing in Versailles at the court of Louis XIV. After leaving the court for marriage, she continued composing: writing an opera, many cantatas based on strong biblical and mythical women, and was one of the first French composers to explore violin solos and trio sonatas.

Evrard Tito's du Tillet gave de la Guerre the highest compliment a man of that time could: "One can say that never had a person of her sex had such talents as she for composition of music, and for the admirable manner in which she performed it." However, de la Guerre along with the other composers in this concert, and too many others to comprise just one evening of music, deserve their place among the great composers of the early modern era and their own chapter in the record of musical progress. Hildegard von Bingen, Francesca Caccini, Caterina Assandra, Barbara Strozzi, Isabella Leonarda, and Elizabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre developed unique, progressive compositional styles—finding a voice that transcended their cloisters—be they literal religious confines or social structures.

Lyric Translations

Regina Caeli

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, Alleluia,
Because He who you were worthy to bear, Alleluia
Was resurrected as he foretold, Alleluia,
Pray for us, O God Alleluia

Ave Suavis Dilectio

Hail, sweet love.
Hail, fulfilling charity.
O food of life, o immense table,
To drink of you is to live, you support the spring.
Hail, light of souls. Hail, river of thanks,
If I thirst, you sate; if I hunger, you satisfy,
O mysterious love, the sinner refreshing.
In you safety, in you life, in you all Paradise.
Bread of glory, wine divine.
From death, life.
Instead of mortality, life-giving death, true believers, o what a fate.

Che dolce udire

How sweet to listen to a delightful mouth
joyously singing verses of love.
Lovely, charming voice,
with rapid scales,
allures you, surrounds you, also touches you
and sinks within almost to kiss your heart,
while the musical lip
describes the rewards of love.
Nothing is expressed
by that happy singer
other than the joys that you feel,
the delights you experience,
other than your new pleasures,
your old contents.

Tell it, o my heart;
how sweet to listen to a delightful mouth
joyously singing verses of love.
That air, harmonized
by a singing throat
renews you and restores you,
makes your soul blessed.
You are foolish if you do not enjoy, do not begin,
hampered here below in a mortal veil,
Tirsis, to taste the melodies of Heaven.

Judith, mvt. 7&8

Judith again implores the heavenly power; her arm, ready to strike,
remains suspended;

She trembles with vengeance. Sustain her distraught heart.

O Heaven! you who inspire her, be her assurance.

The blow is struck. What a glorious victory.

Judith is triumphant; Israel is saved!

For this too tender warrior, there is no more awakening.

Death has just taken him in the arms of sleep.

Duo seraphim

Two seraphim cried to one another:

Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth.

The whole earth is full of his glory.

There are three who bear witness in heaven:

the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit:

and these three are one.

Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth.

The whole earth is full of his glory.

Tonight was mere whispers of a
vast oeuvre of works that time
and rigid gender roles sought to
suppress.

Thank you for giving these
composers life and recognition.

Find your own megaphone,
amplify those voices that time
and circumstance may not buoy
on their own.

