

CECILIA RECLAIMED: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON
GENDER & MUSIC
eds. Susan C. Cook & Judy S. Tsou
(Urbana & Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994)

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Feminist Approaches to Musicology

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Feminist musicology is coming of age. The critical mass of feminist contributions that debuted at the 1988 annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, the discipline's major public forum, marked a turning point. Ideas aired in papers and panel sessions sparked a palpable feeling of excitement and fostered a sense of a vital research community.¹ Some believe the field has matured to the point that spadework exploration of overlooked women composers—so-called compensatory history, which has mostly proceeded via traditional (male-defined) epistemology and methodology—has yielded its monopoly to the possibilities offered by truly woman-centered or feminist strategies. Such strategies are in general more conceptual and more analytical from an intellectual point of view, and arguably more perceptive and telling in their potential for understanding women's musical contributions. They already boast a significant history in other disciplines. Although musicology is experiencing a remarkable proliferation of feminist work, it has made only modest gains compared with other fields, where feminism took root as early as the 1960s.

Several reasons account for the situation; they fall into two broad categories. The first encompasses structural and institutional characteristics of musicology as an intellectual discipline, as it has been practiced, that challenge and perhaps discourage feminist inquiry. I have discussed some of the issues elsewhere.² The second category concerns properties of music as an art form that render feminist categorization and analysis elusive, especially compared with other art forms. This elusiveness in no way spells impossibility. On the contrary, it seems to suggest a multiplicity of approaches, many involving assumptions, theories, and methodologies taken from other fields. These new modelings can infuse the traditional ways of conducting research into West-

ern art music, akin to what has been happening when feminist viewpoints are assumed in other fields.

In this essay I explore two approaches that hold promise for feminist musicology. The first approach, premised on the ability of Western art music to reflect and construct social meanings and relationships, challenges the paradigm of autonomy that accompanied the rise of public music and capitalism.³ In particular I show how sonata form and the sonata aesthetic, especially in the nineteenth century, encoded gendered structures that reflected and constructed relationships of gender and power in Western society. The second approach describes how reader-response theories might be utilized to underpin theories of gendered listening and thereby undermine the myth of universal response. Each issue is broad and could easily fill an entire essay.⁴ But even in relatively abbreviated form they are suggestive, and it is hoped they will lead to further feminist work.

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Aesthetic challenges confront feminist musicology: characteristics of music that tend to inhibit the positing of woman-centered theories and methodologies. Instrumental music creates the most obvious barrier in its seeming lack of tangible content, reality, and hence meaning. This has become particularly evident as we have turned to feminist colleagues in other disciplines and have attempted to apply their theories and strategies to music. We have also noted how they have generally ignored music, even in seemingly relevant studies.⁵ Naturally, the positivist emphasis in musicology is partly responsible. Not to be discounted either is the mystique of music to the uninitiated: the arcane notion of reliance on aural rather than visual or intellectual faculties.⁶ Add to this the ability to "hear" a score or play by ear, evoking awed admiration, and the glass wall is erected.

To repeat, however, it is the fundamental aesthetic attribute that has proven the most daunting: music (textless) has no apparent content. How do we locate content, especially narrative content, in sounds—mere acoustical phenomena? Do we locate content in the visual, the experiential—the phenomena of the notated page, the performance?⁷ Do we fill in explicit content through a story line or a succession of specific emotional states, much as the Romantics did? Do we give up in exasperation and claim there is no content, while still sensing that something is happening to us as we listen? Whatever the particular strategy, we have to admit it is much easier to identify and analyze content in other art forms: literature with its linguistic,

art with its visual signs. One can easily pick out images of women, stories of women, characters who are women and proceed to thematism or symbolism to construct more complex analyses. Such easily accessible bases for feminist exploration make us envious. On the other hand, the very indefiniteness of instrumental music increases the potential for a greater number of interpretations. Early German Romantics, for instance, found this a major attraction. Perhaps, then, the perceived disadvantage is actually an advantage. In any case, we must dismantle the modernist impulse that implies music lacks content and meaning and ponder their interrelationship in new and varied ways. Although breaking the barrier of pure music means the destruction of a long-held ideology, it represents a crucial step for feminist musicology. It makes possible the construction of links between gender and meaning and hence affords new ways of conceptualizing women's relation to music.

Those of us who teach courses in women's music in Western society invariably encounter the question of whether a specifically woman's style in music exists. There is general agreement that women have emphasized certain genres more than others.⁸ This, of course, begs the question of whether specific elements of musical language—harmony, melody, rhythm, texture—bear the identifying stamp of a female creator. Such gendered elements are not to be confused with another type of gendered element: musical language that connotes attributes linked with women, whether in pieces authored by a woman or a man. Both Eva Rieger and Susan McClary have brilliantly explored these elements from an ideological perspective in canonic works by men. McClary, for example, has analyzed the misogynistic semiotic associations of chromaticism in Bizet's *Carmen* and Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 4. She has also explored gendered strategies in an instrumental work by the female composer Janika Vandervelde.⁹ Identifying vocabulary or syntax specifically attributable to a female rather than a male composer is a formidable challenge. Elsewhere I have suggested that while we might isolate certain tendencies that could be part of a female aesthetic, I have found no specific language, style, or dynamic that every woman utilizes. Such tendencies depend on variables of culture and individual disposition and could also be utilized by men. Moreover, women are not raised in "pure" female culture and will tend to express, at least in part, aspects of masculine culture that they have internalized.¹⁰

The sonata aesthetic has functioned as a major creative ethos in Western music for over two hundred years. Compositions deemed the highest and the most revealing of skill and imagination, especially the symphony, have been based on the sonata aesthetic and in turn have



became the concrete embodiments of that aesthetic. We are of course talking about textless instrumental music; texted music has its own hierarchies, with opera at the top. I suggest in the following discussion that the sonata aesthetic, of which sonata form is an important part, involves gendered discourse and rhetoric to a significant degree. Furthermore, these gendered aspects may have played a major role in the tendency of many women composers to eschew the sonata aesthetic in favor of other creative configurations.

In much historical work on women composers, including my own, considerable space has been devoted to the stories of women's lack of access to the professional (patriarchal) world of music. This includes educational, performing, conducting, organizational, and critical exclusion, as well as more invisible barriers. Such accounts have been absolutely necessary to reveal the heightened, unacknowledged, and often insurmountable difficulties women have faced in acquiring what was a matter of course for men. These explorations generally rest on a model of oppression and implicitly situate male culture as the norm and female culture as the Other in relation to that prevailing culture. Many feminists, however, object to that model because it perpetuates the Freudian thesis of woman as lack and simultaneously views her activities as marginal and subsidiary. This is a compelling argument and one to which I subscribe. Nonetheless, we have to exercise care lest we discard vital historical evidence in our newfound enthusiasm for theory. Ignoring received paradigms, even if rejected in principle as representative of male-centered society, can lessen our effectiveness in bringing about meaningful change.

In many respects the sonata aesthetic stands as a symbol and product of Western patriarchal values. Instead of reinforcing the notion that women avoided symphonies, sonatas, and chamber music because of some essentialist lack of skill or imagination, I will show how the conventions and subtext of the sonata aesthetic have privileged the masculine and thus held lesser meaning for women. This model enunciates difference, not oppression. Nonetheless, history has judged women composers as lesser partly because they eschewed the sonata style. We should also remember that various social circumstances prevented women from obtaining the education and professional access necessary to succeed in the many structures enmeshed in the aesthetic.¹¹

The term *sonata aesthetic* includes sonata form, the sonata cycle as a multimovement form type, and the genres that deploy these plans, namely symphony, chamber music, solo sonata, and to a lesser extent concerto. It also entails their attendant rhetoric, ideology, and sym-

bolism, a powerful cultural force. "The most prestigious of musical forms" is how Charles Rosen has characterized sonata form, which he defines broadly.¹² For the aspiring composer, the sonata style was the sine qua non of success. Beethoven, according to Rosen, "raised the prestige of the sonata form to an eminence that made it the major challenge to every composer for more than a century to come." For those successive composers, "the proof of greatness was the sonata. Only through the sonata, it seemed, could the highest musical ambitions be realized. . . . Pure music in its highest state was sonata."¹³ Such statements betray the reverence accorded the aesthetic: at once an ideal, a goal, a test, a barometer of skill and success. It became an icon, a monument, a symbol of society itself. Its privileged musical status mirrored privileged social groups and thus found greater resonance in the male composer than in the female composer.

Sonata form lies at the core of the sonata aesthetic. Given musicology's traditional emphasis on formalist concerns, we have come to view sonata form, like all form types, as a neutral, abstract plan. As a neutral scheme, sonata form should be free of gendered attributes or symbols. This is certainly how it was viewed in the last modernist phase of musicology, when scholars attempted, for example, to discredit the validity of the notion of masculine and feminine themes, a concept apparently first articulated by A. B. Marx, in 1845.¹⁴ In 1971, for instance, Charles Rosen made a valiant but unsuccessful effort at dismissal in his landmark study *The Classical Style*. Rather than state categorically that no correlation existed between bold gestures and masculinity and between lyricism and femininity, Rosen observed that he had found masculine and feminine themes in areas in the movement where they are not supposed to be, not to mention hermaphrodite themes that mix elements of both sexes.¹⁵ He apparently did not realize that by continuing to link the designated traits with gender labels, he actually confirmed, rather than refuted, the traditional terms.

These historical gender associations reveal merely the tip of the iceberg; sonata form holds deeper, more fundamental gender associations. These ties express and privilege the masculine and consequently, like the larger aesthetic, have tended to hold less meaning as a potential creative outlet for women. The rhetoric of sonata form centers on masculine metaphors, notably power, hegemony, opposition, and competition. The opposition metaphor occurs frequently. Rosen, for example, describes classical (i.e., sonata) form "as the symmetrical resolution of opposing forces" and offers this extended summary: "The exposition of a sonata form presents the thematic material and articulates the movement from tonic to dominant in various ways

so that it takes on the character of a polarization or opposition. The essential character of this opposition may be defined as a large-scale dissonance."¹⁶

He characterizes the difference between sonata form and ordinary ternary form (ABA) as the former's progression of opposition-intensification-resolution, presumably referring respectively to the exposition, development, and recapitulation. The opposition entails the contrasting themes of the first and second groups, as well as the contrasting tonalities of tonic and dominant.¹⁷ Donald Francis Tovey, for example, cloaked the opposition in martial imagery in his statement that some J. C. Bach transitions have been "wittily described as 'presenting arms' to the new key." Of more recent vintage is James Webster's description of the onset of the recapitulation as "a relaxation of tension or as a triumph over difficulties."¹⁸ In the 1950s Ernst Meyer offered a socialist interpretation that constructed links with aggressive tendencies in nineteenth-century bourgeois society: "Through the dialectical contrasting of two opposing themes (often a forward-storming and a restrained) there originates an aggressive, dramatic element, which corresponds to the love of combat [*Kampfesfreudigkeit*] of the progressive currents of the era."¹⁹

A hierarchic scheme is fleshed out in the innocuous terms *principal theme* and *subsidiary theme*. They do not indicate opposition, which in the abstract implies equality of participants, but instead suggest domination of one over the other. The nature of that domination is uncertain, however. We can imagine such pairs as more important—less important, better quality—lesser quality, stronger—weaker, and no doubt others; one correspondence involves the terms *masculine* and *feminine*. In the late eighteenth century the structure of sonata form was expressed mainly in terms of dual tonal areas, tonic and dominant. In the early nineteenth century, however, theorists began to define the form more in terms of themes than tonality, and in compositional treatises starting with Marx they began to affix gendered labels to the themes. Here is Marx's introduction of gender in 1845: "The second theme . . . serves as contrast to the first, energetic statement, though dependent on and determined by it. It is of a more tender nature, flexibly rather than emphatically constructed—in a way, the feminine as opposed to the preceding masculine."²⁰ Subsequent definitions—including appearances in the works of Hugo Riemann and Vincent D'Indy around 1900 and in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* as late as the 1950s—continued the core ideas of masculine strength and feminine tenderness and dependence.²¹ The distinguishing feature seemed to be the lyricism of the feminine theme *topos*, presumably

expressive of gentleness in women. Other metaphors could have been applied, or eschewed in favor of the existent terms *first and second themes* or *principal and subsidiary*.

The use of gendered metaphor shows how essentialist notions of male and female permeated society, at least masculine society, and how they could be utilized in the discourse of high culture. Perhaps this functioned as a means of inscribing the Romantic ideal of *das Ewigweibliche*—the eternal feminine—into the realm of supposedly abstract music. This idealization threw into greater relief the masculinity of the opening theme and thereby rendered it more important. The opening theme not only reinforced the masculinity of its male creator but also affirmed the presence of the male composer as the main compositional subject of the movement: subject as individuated person and subject as musical theme.²² In contrast, the feminine theme conveyed metaphorically two negative portrayals of woman: woman as lack and woman as Other. Viewed patriarchally, the lyrical feminine theme lacked the completeness found in the powerful gestures of the masculine theme and thus mirrored a basic Freudian distinction between the sexes. The analysis seems particularly apt, since to many nineteenth-century and modern critics the adoption of lyricism as a thematic component in sonata form helped spell its doom. At the least it lessened its effectiveness. Another salvo at woman as scapegoat?

The metaphor of woman as Other emerges when we consider that not only does lyricism function as an introduced element of disruption to the more energetic opening but it arrives with another striking feature of disruption: a new key center. The imposition of a new tonality brings tension, even if in lyrical guise, and needs to be tamed, resolved, brought back to the original key, representative of the masculine. Thus the element of Otherness is neutralized by the prevailing masculine order. Seen this way, the opposition described above is in no way a contest between equals but a clear hierarchic relationship, with the feminine functioning as the subsidiary. How ironic that the original key of the feminine theme should be called the dominant, for in the end it is the tonic that dominates.

Gendered themes also exhibit links with social structures. One link involves the notion that the gendered thematic dichotomy reflected the gendered dichotomy between the public and private spheres, a split largely resulting from realignments in the nature and locus of production brought on by increasing industrialization. As I have argued elsewhere, however, the public-private duality is an artificial concept, whose power, nonetheless, has generally worked to the detriment of women.²³ The second hypothesis is fairly obvious: the subsidiary, fem-

inine theme symbolized women's subordination in society, while the principal, masculine theme reflected male hegemony.²⁴ Overall, sonata form met the need of the newly emergent bourgeois society to validate itself and maintain social control over women. Sonata form became a metaphor for this gendered struggle, and once entrenched it acted to reinforce and reconstruct the gendered ideology in Western society at large.²⁵ In addition, the persuasiveness and power of gendered codes in sonata form suggest the distinct possibility of gendered systems inscribed in other structures of Western art music, particularly those that seem gender-neutral.

Rosen mentioned "pure music," or what others have termed "absolute music," music without any stated narrative or function and hence supposedly devoid of content. In the twentieth century we have tended to follow our Romantic ancestors and elevate the concept to what Susan McClary has dubbed the "Master Narrative."²⁶ That is, absolute music has taken on an aura of primal myth, of sanctity, of privilege, of control, it is generally accepted without question. Women composers, however, have evinced considerably less interest in absolute music. Narrative genres such as song and character piece have held a greater attraction, probably because they have provided a more direct means of female self-expression.²⁷ Women in the nineteenth century, increasingly relegated to the home as a result of the economic and social forces of industrialization, had few avenues for direct communication in the public sphere. Perhaps they believed abstract music too impersonal, too disembodied, or too rife with multiple meanings for the kind of directness and immediacy they desired. Women seemed to crave the potential for their own involvement or literal embodiment in the process of that communication, in other words, the performance. In addition, they may have felt alienated by masculine emphases on the metaphysical and on the transcendent ego in absolute music.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines metaphysical as "of or relating to the transcendent or to a reality beyond what is perceptible to the senses." This entails an infinite, unbounded realm of time and space. Transcendent implies not only going beyond but also moving toward the ultimate, toward the perfect, toward God, the embodiment of transcendence and perfection. God the creator is the model for man the creator, who is a likeness of God. As exclusive bearer of God's image, only man is validated as a creator, not woman. This is especially so when the type of music is deemed absolute. Metaphorically, therefore, men occupy center stage in the theater of absolute music.²⁸ Another link between absolute music and God is conveyed through the medium of the concert hall. Carl Dahlhaus offers

the intriguing notion that concert halls of the nineteenth century, devoted largely to absolute music, especially symphonies, functioned as new temples of art.²⁹ Secular music was replacing sacred music, but symbolically the religious continued in these architectural monuments sanctifying the art of music. Dahlhaus's emphasis on a religious base in Western music, of which absolute music is a major component, implies another reason why women creators might shy away from absolute music: women had little power in shaping and operating religious institutions and only a limited role in them as creators.³⁰

A central component of the metaphysical concerns the transcendence of the composer as subject. This situates attention on the ego, on a very strong, sometimes exaggerated notion of self, and it formed a basis for the influential cult of genius that Beethoven and his worshipers perpetuated. The mythology elevated the individuated composer above everyday concerns and tangible reality. On this view the composer's ego intruded on the art work.³¹ Women composers, however, seldom injected a strong sense of ego into the art work. Many, in fact, had difficulty placing themselves in positive juxtaposition with their compositions, not to mention dominating it with an individuated self.³² I believe women composers viewed themselves more in the tradition of craftspeople, an attitude characteristic of both sexes prior to the nineteenth century.³³ This resulted in a greater intersubjective space between the creator's ego and the created, much less of the ego was invested in the composition. With ego transcendence an important part of the symbolism of absolute music, however, women apparently preferred to gravitate toward genres free of this intrusion.

Absolute music inscribes a male psychological profile of growth that stresses quest and transcendence.³⁴ The socialization process encourages separateness, exploration, and adventure, which result in personal change. The quest, whose early stages resemble rites of passage, is an important component. It includes the search for knowledge, self-knowledge, and self-realization—basically an amalgam of the three great male literary themes of Faust, Don Quixote, and Don Juan. The quest also informs much vocal music—another way of saying that literature abounds in the quest theme.³⁵ Transcendence caps male psychological growth as the ego attains maximum separateness and goes beyond the here and now. The developmental road traversing quest and transcendence has been described as a spiritual journey, a notion applied to male creative maturation but seldom if ever ascribed to a woman.

In addition to its personal association, spiritual journey can pertain to a piece of music. For example, we commonly speak of Beethoven's

spiritual journey over the span of his career or over the span of a given symphony, such as the fifth or the ninth. The conceptual overlap helps blur the divisions between the person and the art work. One interesting historical question is how much the male journey actually reflected personal psychological processes and how much it began to adopt a life of its own as an independent convention implanted in pieces of music. Perhaps in Beethoven's time the musical journey directly reflected a male psychological profile. Afterwards the journey often may have been an abstract version of an established convention. Whether original or derivative, the crucial point is that absolute music, particularly the symphony, was grounded in a gendered process reflective of one sex and alien to the other.

If the spiritual journey does not characterize a female psychological process, then what might a female profile look like?³⁶ While this question raises the dangers of essentializing women and obscuring individual differences, we could say that white Western women of the middle and upper classes over the past two hundred years have generally been socialized to develop close to home, to establish inclusive rather than exclusive bonds ("we" rather than "I"), and to acquire knowledge and self-knowledge through interaction with others and for the benefit of the larger group. Personal growth is important but has usually occurred in the context of interconnected systems within a tangible reality of finite time and space. Women's prescribed role as primary nurturer and caretaker of the family and other socially conceived conventions of femininity have been critical in focusing women's attention on the here and now rather than on the ambiguous beyond.³⁷ The metaphysical and transcendent characteristics of absolute music, therefore, might seem alien and alienating. We should not be surprised that women have evinced lesser interest than men in interacting with its ideology. Nonetheless, most women composers, performers, and listeners are also socialized in mainstream society and as a result experience ambivalence and conflict. Perhaps a psychology of contradiction aptly characterizes a crucial aspect of women's relationship with absolute music.

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Music is often dubbed the universal communicator by virtue of the accessibility of sound and its ability to go beyond the kinds of barriers erected by language. The aesthetic catholicity tends to obliterate differences in transmission and reception and consequently diminishes the viability of sexual difference as a critical constitutive factor. Yet as

we have seen in the sonata aesthetic, reputedly abstract musical structures encode aspects of cultural difference. Response theory, which has dramatically expanded conceptualizations of the dynamics of agency and the production of meaning in literature, can suggest ways of highlighting the importance of gender differentiation in the listening process. Effectively undermining universality of response, such an emphasis has potential in constructing feminist theories of perception.

Reader-response criticism embraces great diversity. Theories range from the strict author intentionality espoused by E. D. Hirsch, to the playful, creative role ascribed to the reader by Roland Barthes, to the primacy of phenomenological experience endorsed by Wolfgang Iser. Some theories, especially the ideas of Hans-Robert Jauss and his teacher Hans-Georg Gadamer, pay attention to historical context and its impact on the attitudes and expectations a respondent brings to a work of art. Yet major theorists have generally ignored social specificity, especially variables of class, race, gender, sexuality, and nationality. They either have been vague on the makeup of their respondent(s) or have posited some kind of idealized reader, for instance, an implied reader or an inscribed reader. In practice, these utopian constructs have probably represented the culturally empowered group of the well-educated, white, Euro-American male. Because women and other muted cultural groups tend to disappear under such universalizing views of response, it is crucial to affirm and articulate the terms of sociohistorical specificity in theories of response. Instead of limiting interpretive possibilities, specificity yields multiplicity, multiplicity in the number of theoretical models and in the kinds of responses that follow those models.

In addition to these factors, specificity entails historical grounding and a sense of the position and involvement of the individual in relation to a group or groups. This turns out to be a complex dynamic but one that calls for definition. In music, for instance, it is important to separate listening on the level of the individual from listening on the level of the audience or general public and then to relate the two. But which individual, in what temporal relationship with the composer and the performance (it could, after all, be a recording), and in what performing location with what semiotic associations? For women we must draw distinctions between a woman as a specific individual and women in general and realize that one flirts with essentialism and its potentially negative connotations when discussing the latter.³⁸ Women display a broad spectrum of cultural characteristics, and specificity plays as great a defining role here as it does in dealing with humankind in general. On the other hand, multiplicity comes into play through

an individual's varied response patterns to different sections of a work and from one listening to another of a given piece. For a specific female respondent, multiplicity also exists as a result of the conflicts and contradictions between her sense of herself as a woman and her conditioning in male-dominated society. Strategies of resistance have often resulted.³⁹

Phenomenological theories of literary response offer attractive possibilities for music. In the theories of Iser, for instance, the very experience of reading occupies primacy of position in the production of meaning. As a temporal process that includes filling in gaps and shifting viewpoints, it bears considerable resemblance to music. Barthes, steeped in a very different intellectual tradition, also emphasizes performance in his view of reading as a dynamic process in which the reader, the primary element, interacts playfully with the text: manipulating, rearranging, chopping. According to Barthes, these activities render the respondent a creator, and he considers the respondent more important in that regard than the author.⁴⁰ The theory opens up several possibilities for reconceptualizing the nature and function of artistic creativity and the cultural signs associated with the figure of the composer. In musicology this could imply a deemphasis of the traditional focus on the figure of the composer and could result in greater cognizance of the social context. Such cultural broadening enormously benefits the exploration of women composers and their music.⁴¹

Although seemingly last in a process starting with creation, response displays temporal multiplicity. It precedes creativity in the sense of constructing the social and aesthetic conditions in which a work will be written and thereby influencing the way the work is fashioned. Furthermore, the conditions of response are inscribed in the work and usually include the type(s) of intended respondents as well as intended locale for performance. For example, I have shown elsewhere how intended audience and place of performance may have influenced the deployment of a particular strategy of gendered codes in Cécile Chaminade's Piano Sonata.⁴² In music, response also occurs by way of the performers, in the midst of the transmission process. While they are responding to a complex web of cultural and aesthetic codes, they are simultaneously creating cultural and aesthetic meanings in their playing. Compared with literary response, therefore, music provides an additional locus of response/creativity and thus complicates the three-fold communicative model of author-work-respondent underlying many theories of literary response.

Patrocínio Schweickart has posited an intriguing feminist theory of response that asserts that for a woman a sense of full meaning as a

respondent is possible only when she is responding to a work authored by a woman.⁴³ Without the possibility of forging ties of identification with another woman—in other words, the author—a female respondent experiences feelings of alienation and conflict,⁴⁴ Schweickart's argument implies that in music the gender of the performers would also play a role. Overall her theories raise a host of questions, including potential noncongruences resulting from a woman composer of another cultural context, the strategies a woman listener might use in listening to mostly male repertoires, and whether music by a woman is always expressing femaleness. They assume that separate female traditions can and do exist and that they are desirable. Whatever the potential difficulties, however, Schweickart's theories would probably promote affiliation and identification among women and suggest some fundamental commonalities that strengthen community.⁴⁵

Another approach to response that has elicited feminist discussion concerns the centrality of a woman's experience as a basis for response. Jonathan Culler, building on the work of Peggy Kamuf and Elaine Showalter among others, proposes in his well-known "Reading as a Woman" that a meaningful theory of response for women would be based on hypothesized female experience—that is, a woman responding as a derivative, theorized woman rather than as herself on behalf of her own experiences. Although Culler perceptively recognizes that the category of woman cannot be pure because of socialization in masculine culture, several feminists take exception to this construct because it undermines the reality and agency of actual women. For some it smacks of patriarchal tokenism packaged in goodwill.⁴⁶ Whatever one's opinion of Culler's ideas, however, the larger issue remains of conceptualizing the role of experience in female response, including music response. Experience, of course, can be defined much more broadly than mere empirical events and can encompass, for example, psychological and sexual factors. Embedded in and reflective of the social fabric, these factors demonstrate how consumption and production—response and creation—operate as two vantage points from which to deal with the same phenomena. Both are vital if we are to understand the complexities of women's involvement in Western art music.

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What seems clear in light of the issues raised in this essay is that despite disciplinary and aesthetic challenges, several viable avenues lie ahead for meaningful feminist musicological work. Psychoanalysis, for ex-

ample, may prove extremely important, although one major hurdle concerns its traditional disregard for historical grounding. That very property, however, allows it the freedom to structure imaginative theories that historians (including musicologists) could use yet might not posit themselves because of certain paradigms in their own field. Further work is needed on the sonata aesthetic in toto and on its individual components. I did not have space, for example, to discuss Hegelian theories or explore pieces by women that fall within the sonata aesthetic. Listener-response theory holds great potential for reconceptualizing the nature, significance, and diversity of female musical response.

Anyone writing feminist musicological work must be prepared to take a stand, to go out on a limb as it were—a serious challenge given the objectivist traditions of the discipline. The rewards, however, are many, including intellectual growth and heightened sensitivity to non-traditional viewpoints. In this regard ethnomusicology has much to teach us. We can only look forward to future work.

NOTES

1. See the summary report by Solie and Tomlinson, "Women's Studies." In June 1991 the first major conference devoted to feminist theory and music took place at the University of Minnesota; other important gatherings that summer occurred in Utrecht (Seventh International Congress on Women and Music) and London (Gender and Music Conference). See Cash, "Conference Report," on the Minneapolis conference; and Citron, "Conference Report," on the Utrecht and London conferences.

2. See Citron, "Gender, Professionalism, and the Musical Canon," especially 114–17, where I underscore the intellectual insularity of graduate musicology education and the absence of feminism as a distinct area of specialization in the field. These circumstances derive partly from roots in positivism and elitism that embrace objectivity, while feminism engages the personal and the political, emphasizing subjectivity. As time passes, I sense that graduate education is gradually incorporating theory and methodology from other fields, necessary tools for feminist inquiry. Furthermore, the proliferation of papers devoted to gender since I wrote the essay in 1988 hints at the possibility that feminist musicology might be recognized as a distinct area of specialization. It will probably be a while before this occurs, however, because disciplinary categories change slowly and with considerable resistance. Yet substantial interest exists in feminist musicology, and not merely within its circle of practitioners. Although mainstream journals and grant agencies are only beginning to support feminist work, music-book publishers' great interest in

feminist topics implies pent-up demand in the musicological population, mostly among women.

3. For more on this relationship, see Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, especially chap. 1. Susan McClary has written extensively on social referentiality in music, especially in her essay "The Blasphemy of Talking Politics."

4. I offer a more detailed analysis of sonata form and the sonata aesthetic in *Gender and the Musical Canon*, chap. 4, including a reading of how the gendered codes of sonata form are configured in the first movement of Cécile Chaminade's Piano Sonata, op. 21. Chap. 5 treats issues of response.

5. Wolff, "Autonomous Art," 8-9, also discerned this trend.

6. One aspect of poststructuralism is the movement away from exclusive reliance on the visual as the medium for obtaining knowledge. The aural, for example, is gaining a foothold in some theoretical work, as philosopher Karey Harrison pointed out in her paper "Reason Embodied." See also Mowitt, "Sound of Music."

7. The visual plays a major epistemological role when musical works are treated as texts. See Kerman, "Canonic Variations," 107-25; and Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, chap. 1. On the centrality of the performance, see Goehr, "Being True to the Work." The phenomenologist Wolfgang Iser considers the experience of perceiving central to his theories of response; see the discussion later in this essay.

8. One barometer of the widespread interest in the notion of a specifically woman's style is the notice inserted in the June 1989 issue of the College Music Society's *Bulletin* by the editors of *The Musical Woman*, soliciting opinions from readers on the matter. See also Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, chap. 4; and the opinions of several contemporary female composers in "In Response."

9. See Rieger, *Frau, Musik und Männerherrschaft*, especially "Sexistische Strukturen in der Musik," 129-50; and McClary, "Sexual Politics," *Georges Bizet*, and "Beanstalk." See also Kallberg, "Harmony of the Tea Table." My thanks to Susan McClary and Jeffrey Kallberg for sending manuscript versions of their essays.

10. For a fuller discussion and additional bibliography, see Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, chap. 4. See also Rieger, "'Ich recycle Töne,'" and Cox, "Recovering *Jouissance*."

11. See Citron, "Gender, Professionalism, and the Musical Canon." The sonata aesthetic is more specific to Austro-Germanic culture and its attempts to exert and maintain musical hegemony in Europe.

12. Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 1.

13. *Ibid.*, 284, 293.

14. Marx, *Lehre*, part 3, 273.

15. Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 81.

16. The shorter excerpt is from Rosen, *Classical Style*, 83, and the longer is from Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 222.

17. Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 17.
18. Tovey, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "sonata forms," 20:978; Webster, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "sonata form," 17:498.
19. Quoted in Rieger, *Frau, Musik und Männerherrschaft*, 141. Meyer's use of *dialectical* obviously refers to Hegel. Unfortunately, lack of space precludes discussion here of Hegelian dialectics and sonata form.
20. Translation in Bloom, "Communication," 161-62. Bloom actually translated the fifth edition (1879), but the wording of the passage in question is identical.
21. Riemann, *Katechismus*, 128; D'Indy, *Cours de composition*, 2:262; Müller-Blattau, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, s.v. "Form," 4:col. 549. Subsequent editions of Marx and Riemann also contain the gendered description.
22. See Rieger, *Frau, Musik und Männerherrschaft*, 141.
23. See Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, chap. 3.
24. Rieger, *Frau, Musik und Männerherrschaft*, 3.
25. Evolution, in the distorted form of biological determinism, was used in a similar way to validate the white European male of the middle to upper classes; see Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*.
26. See McClary, "Sexual Politics."
27. Kallberg, "Harmony of the Tea Table," for example, posits a feminine topos as a basic feature of the nocturne.
28. For more on absolute music and women, see Rieger, *Frau, Musik und Männerherrschaft*, 147-48.
29. Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 44.
30. Perhaps their only ecclesiastical creative power resided in the convents, as the significant accomplishments of Hildegard of Bingen, Isabella Leonarda, and other nuns attest. See, for example, Yardley, "'Ful weel'"; and Bowers, "Women Composers in Italy."
31. Rose Subotnik, "On Grounding Chopin," 117, citing Theodor Adorno, notes the paradox of the impurity created by this personal intrusion within absolute music.
32. See, for instance, the disparaging self-images of Fanny Hensel and Clara Schumann in, respectively, Citron, *Letters of Fanny Hensel*; and Reich, *Clara Schumann*. Similarly, many nineteenth-century women writers, including Emily Dickinson and Christina Rossetti, doubted their artistic self-worth; see Gilbert and Gubar, *Norton Anthology*, 185.
33. Edith Borroff convincingly proposed this notion in a conversation we had a few years ago.
34. I am presenting generalized psychological profiles, drawn from generally accepted psychological theory. See, for instance, Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*.
35. For example, Goethe's influential *Wilhelm Meister* pair, whose poems were set by many Romantics, embodies the quest ritual.

36. See, for instance, two classic feminist tracts of psychological development: Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*; and Chodorow, *Reproduction of Mothering*.

37. In contrast to this profile, Meredith Monk's opera *Atlas*, premiered in Houston in February 1991, focuses on a woman's quest that challenges boundaries beyond the here and now, thereby challenging traditional patterns of female socialization in Western society.

38. Essentialism also lurks when *woman* is used as a transcendent signifier, without social qualification.

39. See, for instance, Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic*; and Fetterley, *Resisting Reader*. Stout, *Strategies of Reticence*, has hypothesized that many women writers deployed silence as a conscious strategy of resistance.

40. Barthes, "Death of the Author," 142-48. See also Barthes, "From Work to Text," 73-82, for his distinctions between a work, which is the raw product emanating from the author, and a text, the semiotically rich entity constructed by the reader.

41. See Foucault, "What Is an Author?" 141-60. See also Wolff, *Social Production of Art*, 117-36, for a fine discussion of the decentered author; and Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, chap. 3.

42. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, chap. 4.

43. Schweickart, "Reading Ourselves," 31-62.

44. Female creative traditions are also critical for a woman creator; see Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, chap. 2. Georges Poulet has posited intimate relationship as a fundamental link between author and reader in literary response; see the Introduction of Tompkins, *Reader-Response Criticism*, xiv.

45. Lipking, "Aristotle's Sister," speaks of the importance of structures of affiliation among women.

46. Culler, "Reading as a Woman." Critiques emanated from Modleski, "Power of Interpretation," 121-38; Scholes, "Reading like a Man," 204-18; and Fuss, "Reading like a Feminist," 77-92.

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