



In Tune With Heaven Or Not

Women in Christian
Liturgical Music

JUNE BOYCE-TILLMAN

Peter Lang

This book explores the alliance of theology and music in the Christian liturgical tradition, interrogating the challenges posed by the gendered nature of church leadership in many areas of its life. It examines the relationship between theology, spirituality and music, concentrating on women's perceptions of these. The title draws on the Report of the Archbishop's Commission on Church Music from 1992 which was entitled *In Tune with Heaven*. It questions the absence of women's voices and experiences from the literature and attempts to redress this. It sets out the values that underpin Christian musical liturgical traditions primarily in Europe and the USA with a view to understanding where women are situated within or outside these traditions. It draws on material from many interviews with contemporary practitioners from a variety of contexts. It does not set out to be a definitive history of women in these traditions but simply to give some small vignettes that illustrate a variety of positions that they have occupied in various denominations – and thus make their often hidden contributions more visible.

'In this scholarly work, Professor Boyce-Tillman traces the exclusion of women from the formal musical tradition of the Church and brings to light their "hidden" contribution to the Church's liturgical music, drawing on compositions of Hildegard, Shaker music and congregational hymnody. Professor Boyce-Tillman encourages worshipping communities to embrace greater diversity and inclusivity in musical traditions. This book is a major contribution to understanding the contribution of women in the Christian musical tradition past, present and future.'

— DR JOHN SENTAMU, Archbishop of York

JUNE BOYCE-TILLMAN is Professor of Applied Music at the University of Winchester, as well as Extraordinary Professor at North-West University, South Africa. Her research into children's musical development has been translated into five languages. She is a composer and active in community music making, exploring the possibilities of intercultural/interfaith sharing through composing/improvising. She is a Wisdom theologian, author of *Unconventional Wisdom* and has written over 300 hymns used internationally. Her one-woman performances on the women mystics have been performed on three continents. She has written widely on music and healing and on Hildegard of Bingen. She is an Anglican priest and an honorary chaplain to Winchester Cathedral. She was awarded an MBE for her services to music and education.



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Series Editor

JUNE BOYCE-TILLMAN



PETER LANG

Oxford · Bern · Berlin · Bruxelles · Frankfurt am Main · New York · Wien

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Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014936229

ISSN 2296-164X

ISBN 978-3-0343-1777-1 (print)

ISBN 978-3-0353-0613-2 (eBook)

© Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, Bern 2014
Hochfeldstrasse 32, CH-3012 Bern, Switzerland
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This publication has been peer reviewed.

Printed in Germany

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Acknowledgements

This book has taken many years to write and even longer to be published. I am extremely grateful to the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge Massachusetts for my time as a Procter Fellow there which enabled me to do the primary research. Here I was helped particularly by Professor Carter Heyward, Professor Kwok Pui Lan and Jane Ring Frank. I am also grateful to all the people who have been interviewed for this book and the research students whose work I have quoted. These have enabled current hidden voices and hidden stories to be made more public. They are the primary sources which balance the use of more secondary sources in other areas of this study. The use of secondary texts was necessary because of the considerable historical period covered by the book. Other parts of the book have been drawn from over forty years of sharing in alternative liturgy groups in the UK and beyond. I am extremely grateful to all the members of these who encouraged my creativity and were often the first people to sing my pieces. I owe a particular debt to Catholic Women's Network – now Women Word Spirit and WomenChurch, Reading.

Various friends have encouraged me to persevere when the project ran into problems and affirmed me and the need for such a publication, such as Professor Mary Grey, Professor Tina Beattie, Professor Michael Finnissy, the Rev Dr Janet Wootton and Professor Lisa Isherwood. I am grateful to Ianthe Pratt and the Association for Inclusive Language who enabled me to disseminate my material first, Dr Carol Boulter who funded my first recording and Hannah Ward who compiled the index. Stainer and Bell have played a significant part in my journey in publishing my hymns, songs and chants and for permission to use those that are their copyright in this book (Boyce-Tillman 2006a). My good friends the Rev David Page, Dr Carol Boulter and Susan Lawes have helped my journey through the difficult times and Elizabeth and Stanley Baxter at Holy Rood House have enabled me to try out new ideas and supported and critiqued them. My two sons – Matthew and Richard – have also encouraged and helped me.

I am grateful to Peter Lang and Lucy Melville for enabling it to be published and to Oliver Osman for helping me to prepare my final manuscript. At the University of Winchester I am grateful to my colleagues in Foundation Music and The Centre for the Arts as Well-being for their encouragement and Professor Elizabeth Stuart and Professor Joy Carter for their continual support in the process.

— THE REV DR JUNE BOYCE-TILLMAN MBE,
Professor of Applied Music,
University of Winchester, UK. February 2014
Convenor of The Centre for the Arts as Well-being
Extraordinary Professor, North-West University, South Africa

Introduction

Gender stereotypes have been challenged in many musicological texts; but the alliance of theology and music in the Christian liturgical tradition has taken much longer to interrogate the challenges posed by the gendered nature of church leadership in many areas of its life. The title of this book draws on the Report of the Archbishop's Commission on Church Music from 1992 which was entitled *In Tune with Heaven*. It questions the absence of women's voices and experiences from the literature and attempts to redress this.

This is all the more perplexing because the patron saint of music in the West is a woman. It is now a disputed story; but St Cecilia has held her place and is celebrated in many churches on her feast day by means of music of one kind or another. However, her image has not been altogether helpful as Susan Cook and Judy Tsou pointed out in 1994:

St Cecilia was in many ways the *patronized* saint of music, limited, by her sex, to a passive role, idealized, even swooning, muse or performer but not as an active creator. Cecilia thus presented cultural notions of acceptable female practice; she played the organ but she did not compose organ symphonies. St Cecilia presents just one example of gendered musical activity. (Cook and Tsou 1994 p. 1)

Discovering this writing clarified my own journey into church music in the UK in the Anglican tradition in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Cultural role models of this kind had dug deeply into the world into which I was being initiated.

When I first started the research for this book while a Visiting Fellow at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts I thought I was driven from a story from my childhood: at the age of eight a singer was required to sing *O Jesus I have promised* in the Church Hall as part of a play. Various children came forward, both girls and boys. A girl was selected for the role. When she offered herself as a chorister for the liturgy she was told that only boys sang in CHURCH. No explanation was offered. She could only assume that a [male] God preferred the sound of boys' voices.

This story epitomises a deep controversy in church music and for much of my life it represented a deep woundedness in my experiencing of music. Why did God not want my voice? Why could I not be part of the church musical ritual? Why could I not sing in the beautiful cathedrals and have that wonderful education? Why can I still not sing in a cathedral ensemble? Why has it been so difficult to get pieces by women composers into the repertoire of churches? Why do women do many of the unpaid musical jobs in churches and the men take the paid ones? Are women not in tune with heaven (Archbishops' Commission 1992)? These questions strike at the heart of the powerful alliance between a patriarchal theology and a theology of music. When I related this story I was accused by some more traditionalist church leaders of starting from a position of anger. I have spent many years examining these remarks and now see that it was more a position of lament and initially of incomprehension. This book may be seen as an attempt to understand this position. Also, further reflection and encounters with not only the joyful stories of the choral world of the Church but also the sadnesses of the less appreciative participants, have led me to reflect that I may have been spared a quite bruising culture. I might also have been given a chance to see the dominant tradition more clearly by being placed outside it. This book therefore is a reflection by an outsider. In it, I hope to set out some frames for viewing the tradition and illustrate them by various vignettes from church history. It will attempt to make the hidden voices of history more audible as well as showing how entrenched cultural patterns were and how we might reconstruct heaven so that women's voices might be heard.

My Theological Background

My story described above took place in the context of rural Anglicanism in which I explored a number of different theological positions ranging from a fairly conservative evangelicalism to a quite liberal Anglo-Catholicism.

While working in London in Notting Hill post the 1960s race riots, I worshipped with the Methodists for seven years – quite ‘high’ Methodists who tried a great deal of liturgical experiment and innovation. I have enjoyed Quaker worship, but in the end have re-housed myself back in my home tradition of Anglicanism and am an ordained priest. The journey to this was long and complex and involved exploring several other faith traditions and some of the more ‘New Age’ variety before finding this resting place along the way.

My main spiritual nurturing has been received through a variety of ‘alternative’ liturgy groups listed below, that all embrace a strong feminist theology (although not all of them are composed exclusively of women). However, I write hymns and liturgical music which are finding a place worldwide in more ‘mainstream’ Christianity (Boyce-Tillman 2006a). The discovery of the Wisdom traditions has been very important for me. Julian of Norwich was an important guide in the journey. She came at a time in my life when I was sort of at a crossroads and experiencing quite severe depression. Largely through the ministrations of the Beatles, Transcendental Meditation came to the UK with the Maharishi; and I learned it in the same way as hundreds of others from diverse backgrounds. Despite being brought up in the Church I had encountered nothing like the peace of the twenty-minute practice and there was no one to talk about it to in Christianity which seemed to regard it as devilish. Then I found Gonville ffrench-Beytagh, ex-Dean of Johannesburg, with whom I discovered the Christian contemplative tradition, the way of unknowing and of darkness. That for me was the beginning of the Wisdom journey, which was tightly tied up with the aspect of the feminine in God. I think, as with so much of my life, at first I did it my way. For me it was to do with finding the other half of one of the binary divides that characterise the Christian tradition:

- The darkness that balances the light,
- The unknowing that balances the aggressive pursuit of knowledge which has led theology in patriarchal form to reduce God to a series of creedal statements,
- The feminine images to balance the male images,
- The accepting God to balance the judgmental God that had peopled my childhood fears,

- The intuitive God who cannot be held by the reasoning mind alone.

I think I would describe her (Wisdom) at that time as a blessed all-embracing darkness where I could take refuge from the worst of the excesses of the so-called Enlightenment that took its stranglehold on Europe in the late eighteenth century (Boyce-Tillman 2007b). Thanks to this rediscovery I was able to pursue (with much struggling) my route into the Anglican priesthood that resulted in my ordination to the priesthood in September 2007.

My Musical Background

Musically also the patterns of knowing that had been presented by my education were very limited. Trained as a musician at Oxford University in the 1960s where sexist jokes were the common currency of the lecture hall and, in general, unquestioned by men or women, I am now attempting to bring together in this book insights from theology and musicology. This is because for most of pre-Enlightenment Europe most 'high art' music was written for the Church, the 'objective' underpin of much musicology can be laid at the door of the notion of God as constructed by mainstream theologians during that period.

My further musical exploration represented an embracing of a musical freedom; this was not true of the classical training I received at Oxford University, consisting as it did of history, analysis, and written composition in the style of composers from 1550 to 1900. My grandfather had been the dance band pianist in a New Forest village and played by ear; but he wanted his granddaughter to enter the world of classical music (epitomised by his 78rpm recording of Jose Iturbi playing Chopin's *Fantaisie Impromptu*). I was too young when he died to realise what I had missed by not learning his skills. In fact, as a child, I was glad of the containment of the classical tradition. I knew where I was by learning how to read the notes and enjoyed the poise and elegance of Mozart and Haydn who were my favourites at that time. I was terrified of improvisation in any form. The printed notes

offered the security that I needed. It was later through exploring sound with children in school that I found that freedom to improvise; and this was followed by playing folk guitar and (much later) buying a djembe. Twenty-five years after leaving Oxford I dared to improvise in public and felt that I could claim that musical freedom.

My route into Oxford consisted largely of a set of challenges called examinations and as a child I remember my musical life as a series of hurdles. No sooner was one surmounted the next one loomed on the horizon. The notion of using music for relaxation was not a possibility and indeed was discouraged by teachers of musical analysis who despised what they called 'wallpaper' music. They used to set listening up as something to engage the whole mind and certainly never to be indulged in while doing something else. It took the discovery of therapeutic massage to introduce me to the use of music to nurture and heal, as an accompaniment to other activities.

Although I composed a few original pieces at Oxford (not as part of the academic course) I wrote few classical pieces for the next twenty years. Oxford had taught me that composers were usually male, German- or Italian-speaking and dead. It was during a prolonged illness that I started to compose again. The process of doing so was actually part of my own healing process, that in combining and recombining the ideas musically I was actually changing parts of myself. At this point composing was essentially an individual activity done at the piano or on paper, as I had been taught it to be. I was a pianist, an essentially individual instrument. I enjoyed accompanying but the examination system dictated that I was always examined as an individual. My parents could only afford for me to learn the cello in a class, so advanced orchestral playing was not available. Choral singing was the only communal music-making experience open to me. Playing folk guitar for large gatherings in the 1960s offered me an experience of communal music-making that had largely been denied.

My first move into other musical traditions was the protest song movement in Notting Hill in the 1960s. I remember the sense of rebellion in going back to Oxford to sing at my college and using a song entitled *O that greedy landlord* which I accompanied on the guitar in my essentially classical programme. The scene was set for the embracing of musical diversity as a way of exploring different parts of my own psyche. It has led me through

various New Age groups, into ethnic traditions and an exploration of the tenets of music therapy. At first I was concerned about the diversity and discrepancies between what was the dominant tradition for me – classical music – and the other ones. Now I rejoice in the diversity and realise that each represents a different aspect of my persona and can be respected in the same way as I taught respect for difference in the course on World Musics. This is as true internally as it is externally in terms of society.

Through these other traditions, especially the drumming, I discovered a much greater awareness of the role of my body in music-making. Although I necessarily spent much time on technical exercises in learning the piano and was aware of how the state of my physical health affected my singing, the tradition I was being initiated into did not show a great concern for the role of the body and concentrated largely on the role of the mind which was seen to be the ruler of the body. I sang in church (but not in the choir) for as long as I can remember and was a deeply religious child. When later I did sing in a choir that included girls, I found that most of the members of the church choir had little sense of the religious meaning of music (less so often than the congregation). It took explorations into Hinduism and New Age to discover a group of people who genuinely believed in the transcendent power of music and indeed, sometimes linked this with the embodied art of dancing.

What Does this Book Hope to Do?

It was in those various journeys that this book was born. It seeks to examine the values that underpin Christian musical liturgical traditions primarily in Europe and the USA with a view to understanding where women are situated within or without these traditions. It does not set out to be a definitive history of women in these traditions but simply to give some small vignettes that illustrate a variety of positions that they have occupied in various denominations – and thus make their often hidden contributions more visible. It will examine these through a particular set of lenses developed

from my philosophical understanding of the nature of the musical experience – like what musical materials are used, what expressive character is created and how it is constructed. Before the Enlightenment there would have been a congruence between the value systems of music and the prevailing spiritual frame. Various contemporary writers like Noirin Ni Riain (2011) have attempted to restore this relationship in her book *Theosony*:

Through the ear, although not exclusively, revelation from God can freely enter and be completed. One important way of being with God is through sound; the auditory is a direct invitation out of oneself towards the Divine. Sensory perception of God's self-communication is vital for humanity and no one sense exists or operates in isolation in the work of the divine communication. (Ni Riain 2011 p. 34)

This book will look at the value systems and the spiritual experience separately and also try in the final chapter to bring them together again. It will examine how the value systems and the spiritual frames have served the work of women working in liturgical and religious music.

The tradition of Christianity in its first three centuries saw women in positions of authority liturgically and musically in some traditions as well as a fluid theology which included feminine figures in the notion of the Divine. The subsequent loss of the feminine in the Divine and women's authority in the Church are inextricably linked together. After this came a male trinity which dominated theology with characteristics such as triumphalism, clarity, order, eternality and unity. People looked in this divine mirror and saw male values. When the Church lost its power post-Enlightenment these values passed into the apparently ungendered world of aesthetics. Although there has been evidence of a feminine Wisdom tradition that has surfaced occasionally in Christianity, this has often been more hidden and less public. Women have been systematically excluded from public music-making traditions in Christianity. The last half of the twentieth century has seen an attempt to unearth the hidden theological tradition and to encourage women to write liturgical material. Although this is finding some expression in publications, the mainstream of the Church protects its patriarchal structures. As churchgoing declines in the UK, it is often the more liberal thinkers that leave the Church, leaving behind them a more conservative rump and a growing number of Christian

fundamentalists anxious to preserve the maleness of God as a core belief justified by Jesus' regular use of the term Father for God. The centrality of hymnody to many traditions means that it is important that the insights of feminist theologians are encapsulated in the songs of Christianity, if they are to be disseminated. Inclusive language is slowly being accepted. Folk material (which necessarily includes women in its process of oral transmission) and material by women is appearing, although there is a perceived lack of musical expertise among the women. The conflux in the late twentieth century of a belief in a God that is partly or wholly feminine and women in positions of authority is the first time the two have coincided in Church history since the first three centuries of Christianity. This may herald the beginning of women's entrance in the public musical traditions of the Church. However, there is no sign of the acceptance of the mature women's voice in the choral traditions of significant churches and cathedrals in England. The women's voice choir does not have the standing of the male voice choir in secular society if we consider, for example, the way that Women's Institute choirs are rated alongside the Welsh male voice choir tradition.

The most accepted public corporate voice of the Church has been a group of men. Here, as in other areas, the model of the Body of Christ is constructed as male. Much of the material by women is being used primarily in small liturgy groups and services concentrating on what are perceived as feminist or women's issues. There is great difficulty in getting material by women better known. I hold to my basic belief that it is for women to realise their creativity and have courage to sing, to play, to compose, and to improvise within the Church; for music is power. It is in this courageous spirit of empowering women by making their stories visible that this book was written.

The first chapter sets up a frame for examining musical activity through a variety of lenses (Boyce-Tillman 2006b). This will be used for the analytical work in the rest of the book. It draws on a variety of theorists – some from feminism, some from cultural studies and some from ethnomusicology. I have chosen here to concentrate on the musicological literature as this gives a frame for thinking about the music and assumptions of more popular music literature and musicians outside of the Academy that are

often drawn from these sources. The music itself will be encountered and viewed through the frame developed here in the subsequent chapters. Traditional musicology has looked at music primarily from the point of view of how it is constructed. Ethnomusicology caused a revisiting of the materials used for music-making with the study of organology. Expression has been in general downplayed despite the fact that it is an emotional bond that holds most people to music. Its study is often confined to the area of music therapy. So different academic traditions have valued different aspects of the musical experience; this book suggests that there is a need for it to be regarded once again in its entirety. Until developments in cultural studies were included in musicology in the late twentieth century there was little attempt at dealing with the values that surround music or are implicit within it, except passing references to the end of the age of patronage in the nineteenth century. Music was traditionally presented as value-free. Spirituality had already disappeared from the academic agenda (except for departments of theology or religious studies) when the discipline of musicology as we know it now was being developed.

The next chapters are vignettes of times in Christian history when women have held positions of authority in the tradition and therefore some control in shaping the dominant musical tradition. It will examine the early years of Christianity, Hildegard of Bingen (as a woman who not only composed liturgical music but also wrote about music), the Italian nun composers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ann Lee and the Shakers, women hymn-writers and a variety of people now working in liturgical music (drawn largely from interview material from the English-speaking world) – both women and men. Some of these are well established within the mainstream churches but others have left it, are challenging it, or hanging onto it by a fingernail. The final chapter draws all of these together and suggests ways forward.

The book will show how the prevailing value systems in the areas of theology and music have controlled the way in which liturgical music has developed and will be of interest to all who wish to examine how the dominant culture values are reflected in liturgical practice (Foucault/Gordon 1980).

Summary

The route into this book has been a journey that has included academic scholarship, personal friendship and musical performance and composition. It is only a beginning in examining what a narrative of Christian liturgical music that includes women's contribution might look like. It will be of interest to any concerned about women's systematic exclusion from positions of authority in the Church (particularly in the area of liturgy) and show how what is true of admission to the priesthood is also true of the musical aspect of liturgy. The narratives in this book will show how the alliance of Christianity with the surrounding musical culture has not served women well.

The limitations of size and cost has meant that certain choices have been made as to which areas (called vignettes) of the history of liturgical music are explored; but I hope the scene is set for a more comprehensive historical survey of a tradition that has largely been hidden. I have indicated some of the signposts that might direct such a journey and I look forward to continuing on it with old and new companions – both supportive and infuriating, both dead and living, from the human and the natural world. The past is always with us and is always shaping the present. I hope that this book gives some pointers as to how it can be seen as a source of energy and power for men and women – in fact, as the Music of Wisdom – a tradition that is truly inclusive and can contain these controversies within itself.

Controversies in Musicology

Story

When the men in New Guinea are away at war, or on a long journey, their women beat upon booming gongs and sing to hasten the coming of the new moon ... No man composed the music ... No audience listens ... They are not doing this to entertain anybody, even themselves. This is woman's music made by women only, for a woman's purpose ... Theirs is an incantation of singing to invoke the powers that govern the rhythm of life ...

— DRINKER 1948 p. 3

About 500 BC [sic] there fell on these hopeful civilizations of our earth a kind of creeping blight. It did not come all at once, but slowly in a change here and a change there that may have seemed at first a great improvement in the organization of life or a correction of local abuse ... But the men, in taking over, did it crudely. Their idea of making sure that their children were their own was to shut women up from the moment they could bear a child ... In China they achieved this in the end by so crippling the women that they could not move beyond their homes ... As exemplified by the Chinese, Hindus, Jews, and Greeks – four widely separated peoples of the ancient world – women's authority in music waned at the same time that it weakened for emphasizing her special way of life ... A new theory was persuasively expressed by Aristotle to the effect that *only* men transmitted the spark of life and that women were merely incubators of the male seed. 'The Father alone is Creator; the Mother is but the Nurse'. He even taught that woman was man in arrested development – a deficit of nature ... Woman's fundamental assumption for symbolic thinking has always rested upon her faith in herself as a creative being, pre-eminently potent in the making of both children of the flesh and those of the imagination ... It was only gradually that the serious consequences of women's altered value to civilization affected women musicians. Changes in religious and musical customs did not occur everywhere

at the same time, nor did women suddenly lose their prestige in the religious ceremony ... Finally, when the mother-musician became denuded of her musical heritage, wedding songs and laments – always women's greatest contribution to song – no longer appeared in the lists of new compositions. And it is an undeniable fact that the quality of music was vitiated for several centuries until men developed another idiom from an entirely different inspiration ... One of the direct results of the revolution, and one which profoundly affected women in relation to music, was the twilight of the goddess.

— DRINKER 1948 pp. 127–42

The opening story from a remarkable book by Sophie Drinker looks back to a golden age based on archaeological artefacts from various sources and some of the hidden women's musical traditions today. There are some who would rubbish such historical utopias for women, but there are within the story hints at what the subjugated ways of knowing for Western music might look like.

This chapter will explore the value systems of western musical culture – dominated as they have been for some time by the western classical canon – a patriarchal theology leading to the implicit assumption that women cannot be 'in tune with heaven'. We will start with a form that expresses this most clearly because here text, drama and music are combined so the themes are more clearly discerned:

Opera is not forbidden to women. That is true. Women are its jewels, you say, indispensable for every festival. No prima donna, no opera. But the role of the jewel, a decorative objective, is not the deciding role; and on the opera stage women perpetually sing their eternal undoing. The emotion is never more poignant than at the moment when the voice is lifted to die. Look at these heroines. With their voices they flap their wings, their arms writhe, and then there they are, dead on the ground. Look at these women who fill the theatre accompanied by penguins in uniforms that scarcely vary: they are present, they are decorative. They are present for the dispatch of women like themselves. And when the curtain closes to let the singers take the last bow, there are the women kneeling in a curtsy, their arms filled with flowers; and there, beside them, the producer, the conductor, the set designer.

Occasionally a ... But you wouldn't know how to say it: a produceress? A conductress? Not many women have access to the great masculine scene surrounding this spectacle thought up to adore and also to kill, the feminine character. (Clement 1989 pp. 5–6)

Because of the systematic persecution of the feminine in Western culture we find the same forces operating in theology and music. There are as many stories to be found now of the ridiculing and marginalisation of women's music on the Internet as there are in the area of women priests. A member of the International Alliance of Women in Music¹ describes an adjudicator's disparaging description of Karen Tanaka's piano piece as 'just a mood piece' lacking in musical content which resulted in students who performed it being marked lower than those playing the 'standard' repertoire.

This chapter will examine the writings of people (mostly women) critical of the traditional field of musicology to see how their critique of the traditional value systems of western classical music relate to those of feminist theologians on western theology and how these relate to subjugated ways of knowing and the values of the musical academy which have increasingly dominated the musical scene. The development of this elite academy has had disastrous consequences for music-making in Western culture. One of these is that most people – both women and men – define themselves as failures. In a recent conversation with a woman at an inter-faith gathering she defined herself as a musician by these standards: 'I am not really a musician, I mean, I don't have Grade 8 or anything like that.'²

So this chapter will unpack the values of the Academy. To do this it will set out a model of musical experience as having four domains and show how the expansion of the traditional limitations within the domain of Value will affect other areas of the total musical experience. It will then examine how revisiting this domain will affect the other domains of the experience.

Since the Enlightenment, Western thought (especially as Music struggled to hold its place in the Academy) followed the valuing of objectivity of the dominant value system and concentrated on the cognitive aspects

1 Becky Billock, DMA candidate, University of Washington in mailing list discussion March 2003.

2 Unpublished conversation in Tooting, London in 2006.

of music and therefore devalued other aspects of the musical experience. Notions of beauty and aesthetic excellence have been based in the area of the way in which music is constructed – the cognitive aspects of music – rather than the way in which it is experienced. Similar charges have been made about the relationship between academic theology and experience by feminist theologians. It would be interesting to speculate what would have happened to our approaches to music in Western culture, if the basic premise of the dominant culture had been ‘I feel therefore I am’ or ‘I pray therefore I am’ rather than ‘I think therefore I am’ with its concentration on rationality as the hallmark of ‘humanness’. What, however, happens if we look at a model of the musical experience that tries to reclaim a rounded approach to music?

Feminist theorists have charted the growth and increasing dominance within the classical music tradition of the concept of the musical canon (Goehr 1992, Citron 1993). This is a construct in the area of what is ‘valuable’. It set up a model of Western Art Music moving smoothly from masterpiece to masterpiece and master composer to master composer in an orderly sequence moving continually forward by means of a process of innovation from about 1550 to the present day or at least 1950. However,

Women have exercised minimal power in the formation and semiology of the canon in Western art music. (Citron 1993 p. 40)

The construct of the master composer underpins the model based on philosophers like Nietzsche (Citron 1993 p. 49) who claimed ephemerality as the characteristic of women’s creations. Creativity has traditionally been linked with male potency

Creation, which involves the mind, is reserved for male activity; procreation, which involves giving birth, is applied to women ... God is actualized as male and referred to as He, Lord, and King. This forms the basis of the connections between creator and male, divinity and creativity, and divinity and male. Created in God’s image, man assumes the potential if not the actuality of these characteristics. (Citron 1993 pp. 45, 46)

The result of this is that a woman composer often feels isolated and without a past (Citron 1993 p. 66). Virginia Woolf (Citron 1993 p. 68) sees a general problem for female creators who have to resort to such justifications of herself as being 'only a woman' or as being as 'good as a man' and thereby rejecting her female identity, sometimes very dramatically by using a male pseudonym.³ These refrains run like a leitmotif through women composers' accounts of their lives and works.

In this construction, Bach and Beethoven are often regarded as the Old and New Testaments of the musical Bible and have often been treated as such by the historians of western music. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza writes powerfully of the role of androcentric interpretations of the Bible in the history of women's oppression (Fiorenza 1990 p. 32). The way in which the Bible functions as an oppressive document for women is very similar to the role the figures of Bach and Beethoven have played in constraining women in the Western classical tradition. Still, for example, when I am asked to think of 'a composer' the immediate image is of the busts of those two composers that sat on my music teacher's piano. How similar is this to the role that God as Father in the Bible – with its associated visual images – has played in the position of women theologically?

The notion of the canonical progress of musical history is based on a Darwinian view of history which sees the processes as 'objectively' sifting what is good from what is bad. Carr's book on history in general challenged this in 1963:

The facts are really not at all like fish of the fishmonger's slab. They are like fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean; and what the historian catches will depend partly on chance, but mainly on what part of the ocean he chooses to fish in and what tackle he chooses to use – these two factors being, of course, determined by the kind of fish he wants to catch. By and large, the historian will get the kind of facts he wants. History means interpretation. (Carr 1963 p. 26)

- 3 Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979) had pieces rejected under her name that were accepted under her male pseudonym Anthony Trent. Some of Fanny Hensel Mendelssohn's songs were published in the name of her brother, Felix.

Feminist musicologists took up the opportunities offered by this deconstruction of traditional views on the nature of history. In 1986, Jane Bowers and Judith Tick compiled a collection of historical studies about women – the ‘first written by musicologists from different specialisations within the discipline’ (Bowers and Tick 1986 p. 4). They included work by scholars focusing on a variety of time periods. In this way they were able to evaluate women’s contributions to Western Music over an eight-hundred-year period – a period that roughly coincides with the development of notation between 1150 and 1950, including four essays on music before 1600. Their book reflected new criteria for what is ‘valuable’ in the history of western music. It was an inspiration to many scholars to search for female role models in the Western Art music traditions.

As feminist philosophies developed in other areas, musicians worked them out in musicology but more often in areas around the edge of it like music education. Roberta Lamb runs a listserve for those interested in this area. Drawing on the writings of Audre Lorde (Lorde 1984) and bell hooks (hooks 1994) she identifies the following as what she has learned:

- The value of passionate knowing
- The power of self determination
- The need to create space to ‘protect [women’s] genius’
- The significance of feminist insights for men and women (Lamb 2000)

The insights of sociologists and social philosophers of music started to create a new view of history which identifies the processes of marginalisation within it and how they function. Carol Robertson, in her revisiting of theories underpinning ethnomusicology interestingly entitled *The ethnomusicologist as midwife*, writes how the marginalised have developed strategies for survival:

I want to approach these issues by looking at the relationship between what we have valued in scholarship as *mainstream* and as *marginal* and by examining the ever-shifting relationship between the *center* and the *periphery* ... Cultural synergy may rest in the hands of those who are willing to wear many masks, play many roles, and defy the stasis of the mainstream. Change, when seen as a constant in any living

tradition, always seems to yield a fool or a trickster who embodies the paradox of experience and who transforms the perception of truths in order to open discourse between the center and the periphery. (Robertson 1993 pp. 108, 124)

Ethnomusicology, based as it is in the discipline of anthropology, has from its beginning paid more attention to context than traditional musicology. Marcia Herndon (Herndon 2000) describes, in the book *Music and Gender*, the creation of the Study Group on Music and Gender by the International Council for Traditional Music with the declared aim of including gender in all musical analysis:

Most approaches thus far have been less theoretical than descriptive, definitional and methodological. The study group's initial efforts often focused on women's music, or women's roles in music cultures [this anthology includes the role of tea-maker in its analysis of roles in a Pelaminni music group], because this information had often been neglected whether the scholar was male or female. Considerable time and effort were also expended in distinguishing sex from gender, as well as exploring concepts of androgyny and more ambiguous areas of gender blurring [as is hinted at in the literature on older women in some cultures]. Now that scholars have filled some of the gaps, particularly with the women 'missing' from the literature on various musical cultures, this volume begins to situate gender in its proper place as a major factor in musical exegesis and analysis. (Herndon 2000 p. 348)

She sees ethnomusicologists as dealing with 'living musics in a synchronic way', whereas musicologists deal with 'historical musics in a diachronic way'. She sees the beginning of a merging of the fields (Herndon 2000 p. 357). This has resulted in a division in the ranks of the theoreticians of music between those upholding the values of traditional musicology and those in the 'alternative' musicology camp, some of whom see the entire music experience as a question of values. Rose Rosengard Subotnik, identifying the problems of the career of a woman with children in academe, stresses the problems of finding a 'middle' ground (Subotnik 1996 p. xxvi), a position that I have tried to embrace with the ideas set out in Chapter 8. The result of this is that many feminist musicologists present articles that include a variety of readings of the same situation. In her book each article is 'an argument between two views' Rose Rosengard Subotnik struggles to retain the 'autonomous and nonautonomous views of music' (Subotnik 1996 p. xxviii).

But the ideas of feminist theorists have notably failed to influence the mainstream of musicology in the same way as mainstream theology has chosen to ignore the insights of feminist theologians:

Indeed one of the signs that the discipline has even noticed the challenges feminism has presented elsewhere is that musicology appears to be in the vanguard of anti-feminist backlash. Norton's specially reprinted collections from *The New Grove Dictionary of Music* ... are entitled 'Masters of Italian Opera' 'Masters of the Second Viennese School'... There was also a prestigious new series of books and videos on the various periods of music history from Prentice Hall called *Man and his Music* ... If music has lagged behind in admitting feminist criticism to its list of legitimate areas of inquiry, it is way ahead of the game in its efforts to expunge all evidence that feminism ever existed. (McClary 1991 pp. 5–6)

So the central questions of the literature are summed up by Bowers and Tick:

How have prejudice and discrimination – roughly parallel to belief and behavior – shaped the history of women in music? (Bowers and Tick 1986 p. 11)

Values and Patriarchy

I have written more fully about this elsewhere (Boyce-Tillman 2006b, 2007a). In my earlier writing (Boyce-Tillman 2000a) – based on the work of the philosopher Foucault (Foucault/Gordon 1980) and the work of anthropologists like Gooch (Gooch 1972) – I built a notion of subjugated ways of knowing. These are ways of knowing that are not validated by the dominant culture of the time. The trick of the controllers of a culture is to make these meanings/values seem fixed and given – even God-given – when, in fact, they are cultural constructs. Many writers have identified the role of myths in the maintenance of the apparent truth of the dominant values, which suggest a fixed version of a value system that transcends temporality. The role of mythologies is carefully explored by Barthes (1972) and Mary Midgley in *The Myths we live by* (2003). They represent a sort of

pattern or grid that gives meaning to a range of experiences (Pollock 1984). Gender relations, in particular, are often supported by myths. In western culture the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* have played a significant part in the roles which women are expected to occupy.

Michael Kirwan in reworking mimetic theory sees the possibility of transformation by means of reworking literature (Kirwan 2004 p. 123). This book explores how this might work in reworking the music. What we need is 'in place of a transcendent myth, any emotionally satisfying narrative that speaks to our humanity, we have created a materialistic religion that leaves us, as people, empty of an emotionally satisfying, shared purpose' (Clarke 2002 p. 233). The absence of such a myth Clarke sees as the deep root of human stress and 'may well be responsible for most fatal violence on others (murder) and in self (suicide), as well as for the much more frequent instances of lesser violence' (Clarke 2002 p. 306). I tried to set this out in a song:

There stood in heaven a linden tree
Whose leaves would heal the nations
Of many colours, many shapes
And each contained a story.
CHORUS We'll tell the stories that heal the earth (×3)
And bring it to rebirth

Some stories fell as binding rope
To keep the people tightly bound
With laws and morals and beliefs.
These stories had no hope
CHORUS (Boyce-Tillman 2006a p. 158)

Nowhere is the power of the myth in Western society more clearly seen than in the area of motherhood which has played out in such myths as around men making artworks and women making babies. Myths associated with maternal instincts have been a cause of guilt for many women (Rye 2003 p. 6). Stephen Hunt (2005) explores how the Alpha course is maintaining powerful gendered myths within the Church and women's essentially domestic role. Kristin Aune also sees how the charismatic movement New Frontiers International (NFI) uses the Bible for the maintenance of these myths (Aune 2005 p. 2). Margaret Myers in her work on women's orchestras in Europe looks at the origin of the myths in the wider society:

The latter day Aristotelians – Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Weininger and in Sweden, Strindberg – were all the rage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were published and republished in cheap popular editions and quoted in daily newspapers and the popular press. Their ideas permeated most educated people's thinking. They were all thoroughly misogynist and denied women all creative and artistic capacity, as had their forefather, Aristotle, whose ideas had survived into modern times because they resonated with the ideas of the Church Fathers.

These misogynist ideas were projected on any woman who embarked on a public, professional career in occupations defined as masculine or creative. Such a woman had to be prepared for ridicule and castigation. She might be accused of being essentially male or essentially immoral. (Myers 2000 pp. 206–7)

Although many of these quotations are taken from feminist literature of one discipline or another, my use of the term subjugated ways of knowing rather than women's ways of knowing acknowledges that there are a variety of subjugated groups of which women are only one. There is a clear link between those who hold power – who in western culture have, in general, been patriarchs – and which ways of knowing will become subjugated. In a passage resembling that of Sophie Drinker at the opening of the chapter, this linkage was identified by Matilda Joslyn Gage in *Woman, Church and State* in her remarkable analysis in 1893:

The difference in civilization between Christian Europe and pagan Malabar at the time of its discovery was indeed great. While Europe, with its new art of printing, was struggling against the church for permission to use type – its institutions of learning few; its opportunities for education meager; its terrible inquisition crushing free thought and sending thousands each year to a most painful death; the uncleanness of its cities and the country such as to bring frequent visits of plague; its armies, its navies, with but one exception, imperfect; its women forbidden the right of inheritance, religious, political or household authority; the feminine principle entirely eliminated from divinity; a purely masculine God, the universal object of worship – all was directly opposite in Malabar. Cleanliness, peace, the arts, a just form of government, the recognition of the feminine – were found in Malabar ... under the missionaries sent by England to introduce her own barbaric ideas of God and man, this beautiful matriarchal civilization soon retrograded and was lost. (Gage 1893/1998 p. 7)

The Church has been a publicly masculinist organisation after the first few hundred years of Christianity as will be discussed in Chapter 2. This has had a devastating effect on generations of women. The Church has sought

to control, for example, women’s creative processes. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward (writing in 1869) describes powerfully the effect that the patriarchal nature of the western Church had in her experience of church which was, significantly for this book, carried by its hymnody:

For it came to seem to me, as I pondered these things in my own heart, that even the best and kindest forms of our prevailing beliefs had nothing to say to an afflicted woman that could help her much. Creeds and commentaries and sermons were made by men. What tenderest of men knows how to comfort his own daughter when her heart is broken. What can the doctrines do for the desolated by death? They were chains of rusty iron, eating into raw hearts. The prayer of the preacher was not much better; it sounded like the language of an unknown race to a despairing girl. Listen to the hymn. It falls like icicles on snow. Or, if it happen to be one of the old genuine outcries of the church, sprung from real human anguish or hope, it maddens the listener, and she flees from it, too sore a thing to bear the touch of holy music. (Ward 1896 pp. 97–8)

Carter Heyward (2003) in this diagram shows clearly the effects of patriarchy and shows the variety of those who are likely to become subjugated knowers.

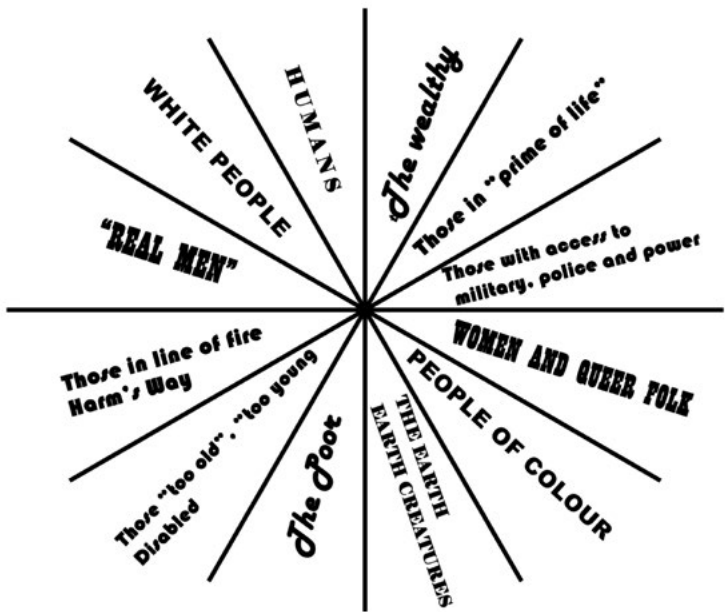


Figure One – People in Positions of Power

It is the value systems of these people, often linked together by the term patriarchy or heteropatriarchy, that will become dominant and these groups will put systems in place to see that they remain dominant, like prisons, mental hospitals and redundancy. As we see here it is not only women who are subjugated but a range of different people as well as the natural world; and, as such, the calls to examine the subjugated ways of knowing have come from many sources. Dominant ways of knowing develop into internalised 'self-policing' practices in subjugated knowers who imbibe the negative and disempowering mores of the surrounding culture:

The gendered nature of socialization processes ensures that males and females internalize different *and unequal* self-understandings. (O'Grady 2005 pp. 6–7)

The people in power in a state often resort to violence to maintain their position as we shall see in the story of Mother Ann Lee and the Shakers in Chapter 5. In relation to women Helen O'Grady reworks this as internalised violence (O'Grady 2005 p. 2) which happens when women take on within themselves the dominant values of the surrounding society. We shall see how this still affects contemporary female musicians. The effect of the often violent enforcement of western values on indigenous culture has been devastating – musically and theologically as well as politically. My own experience of staying with native Canadians illustrates the differing value systems very clearly:

I was privileged to spend some time with a native people in North America. I had been present at several sweat lodges at which a particular medicine man had been working. I had also purchased a small hand drum and he had consented to beat the Bear Spirit into it for me. One evening he was preparing for a sweat lodge and said that he needed a powerful woman to help him and sit alongside him. This would usually be his wife but she was unable to be there so would I help him. I was both honoured and terrified; but he said he would help me with the ritual and so I agreed to the role. The first round of prayer took place and he concluded it by saying that now June would sing a song about the eagle and the sunrise. It was here that I thought that I had met an insuperable problem. I knew no songs from the culture. But I remembered that in the songs I had heard each phrase started high and then went lower in order to bring the energy of the sky to the earth. So I started each phrase high and took it lower while singing about the eagle and the sunrise. It was