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The power of female: the representation of female composers through a senior flute recital

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The Power of Female: The Representation of Female Composers
through a Senior Flute Recital

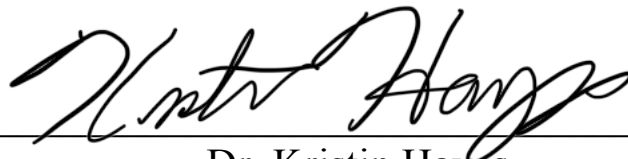
by

Savannah Palmer

HONORS PROJECT

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Graduation from the Honors Program of
St. Mary's University
San Antonio, Texas

Approved by:



Dr. Kristin Hayes
Adjunct Professor of Flute



Dr. Camille Langston
Honors Program Director

Abstract

In a prominent number of musical performances, the number of female compositions being performed is small. The dominance of male composers throughout time has created a barrier that prevents female composers from being represented in the music community. Female composers possess great creativity and virtuosity in their compositions, yet gender bias impacts their representation in music repertoire, specifically flute repertoire (Fairouz). With less than 6.10 percent of female compositions being programmed in concerts and recitals, members of various communities are lacking exposure to the powerful musical works that women create (Peters). To empower female composers and demonstrate their artistry and brilliance, six flute compositions had been selected to be performed in a senior flute recital. The composers, whose musical compositions span across musical periods, including the Baroque, Romantic, and Contemporary eras, deserve to be recognized for their transformational and evolutionary compositions, specifically in the realm of flute and piccolo. This performance recognizes a wide array of female composers whose unique musical techniques push the musical boundaries of their respectful times. The purpose of this senior recital was to expose members of the San Antonio community and beyond to a diverse set of musical works by female composers, while simultaneously encouraging the promotion of musical compositions written by members of various minority populations, including women and people of color.

Key words: baroque, contemporary, female composers, flute, flute recital, male composers, minority, music, performance, piccolo, romantic era, recital repertoire, San Antonio, senior flute recital, underrepresentation.

Overview

Women have continuously played a pivotal role in the evolution of musical literature. Throughout the course of music history, women have created musical pieces that push past the boundaries of their times. With compositions such as Cécile Chaminade's *Concertino for Flute and Piano* and Allison Loggins-Hull's *Homeland* leading the way in the evolution of new musical techniques, female composers possess incredible musical talent that audiences across the globe deserve to hear. And yet, only approximately 21 percent of performance programs from the top 21 orchestras in the United States have female composers in their season repertoire (Women's Philharmonic Advocacy, 2022). Along with this, spanning from 2002-2017, less than 3 percent of the 2,251 pieces programmed at the Midwest Clinic were composed by women (Boeckman, 2019, pp.47). The lack of representation within concert and recital programs continues to exist when members of the music community fail to promote works from diverse groups.

Currently, female composers are continuing to struggle with equal representation in the music space. Whether it is through gender bias, societal stereotypes, or a deficiency of knowledge about diverse composers, female composers are forced to climb extensive barriers that lead them trailing behind their male counterparts (Eastburn, 2019). As a result, female composers may experience feelings of doubt and discouragement, as these barriers hinder "their [women] aspirations to reach the top roles of leadership and visibility" (Fairouz, 2017). With this, musical compositions by female composers are often undermined and underplayed, as musicians are selecting works composed by males whose works are often promoted. Consequently, members of our various communities are lacking the exposure to innovative ideas

and creative musical concepts that are found in the works of many female compositions. This problem halts the growth of the music community as it hinders our female members from being fully represented in the space.

After analyzing various recital and concert programs, female composers are drastically underrepresented in comparison to their male counterparts. The lack of awareness when it comes to female composers signifies the need to promote their compositions and diversify our performance programs. The question posed is this, in what ways can female composers be fully represented in the music community? It is hypothesized that the more female composers are represented in musical programs, such as a senior flute recital, the more likely that audience members will promote works composed by underrepresented communities, such as women or people of color. To build more inclusivity within the music space, it is important to empower female composers and educate our communities through performances and recitals. In fact, composer Mohammed Fairouz states that “The more that their music is allowed to speak to an audience, the harder it is for people to objectify or dehumanize the creators of the works that speak to their hearts”. It is up to the musicians to take charge in this effort in promoting the works of women to diversify the music space. This honors project focused on this immense problem through a senior flute recital that included works from six female composers whose compositions span across several musical eras: including the Baroque, Romantic, and Contemporary Eras.

The purpose of this project was to recognize six influential female composers who have aided in the evolution of flute repertoire. With each composition demonstrating the various musical skills that can be performed on the flute, members of the audience were able to grow their musical knowledge, while also experiencing first-hand the musical compositions by six

powerful women. In doing this, members of the San Antonio community and beyond were inspired to promote the musical works of female composers. Overall, this performance signified the incredible contributions that female composers have on the flute community and the importance of promoting their works in the music space. Female composers deserve to be represented in various musical idioms, and this project was an opportunity for women to be promoted in the San Antonio community through the performance of six flute and piccolo works.

Savannah Palmer

Senior Flute Recital



Friday, November 17th, 2023 / 7:00 PM
Treadaway Recital Hall

St. Mary's University Department of Music Presents

Welcome!

Thank you so much for your attendance this evening! I am beyond grateful for your presence at this special event.

This recital is a culmination of the skills and knowledge that I've developed as a musician throughout my time at St. Mary's University.

Within this recital, I have selected 6 works from female composers that span across musical eras. With only a small percentage of composers on music programs being female, I wanted to use my platform to promote equality and equity of minority composers, such as women and people of color.

The goal of this performance is to bring a greater awareness towards underrepresented composers, while advocating for the representation of female composers in musical programs. Female composers possess creative and unique ideas that continuously push the musical boundaries and deserve to be represented in various musical idioms. This project aims to promote and encourage diversity in the music space through the promotion of six influential female composers.





Savannah Palmer

is a Senior at St. Mary's University pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music with a Teacher Certification.

She studies flute under the leadership of Dr. Kristin Hayes, Adjunct Professor of Flute at St. Mary's University.

In the Department of Music, Savannah is principal flutist of the St. Mary's University Wind Ensemble, Flute Ensemble, and Woodwind Ensemble. At the end of the month, Savannah will be a featured conductor at the St. Mary's University Christmas Spectacular

Savannah is a member of several honor societies including the First-Generation Honor Society, Freshmen Honor Society, the National Society of Leadership and Success, and the

St. Mary's University Honors Program. She prides herself on continuously striving for excellence in her academic and musical studies.

Upon completion of her Clinical Teaching, Savannah will be graduating Summa Cum Laude in May 2024. Along with graduating with the highest honors, Savannah will be graduating from the St. Mary's University Honors Program, under the guidance of Dr. Camille Langston.

She looks forward to completing her final semester as a Clinical Teacher at Taft High School in Northside ISD, under the guidance of Mr. Greg Mills

Following graduation, Savannah plans to pursue a position as an Assistant Band Director at a local high school

Savannah is beyond grateful for the countless blessings that God has provided her with.

Program

Sonata IV in D Major, Op.1 Anna Bon di Venezia(1738-1769)

I - Allegro Moderato

II - Andante

III - Allegro assai

Dr. Wayne Ching, Piano

Three Romances, Op.22 Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

I - Andante Molto

II - Allegretto

III - Leidenschaftlich Schnell

Dr. Wayne Ching, Piano

Hall of Ghosts Amanda Harberg (b.1973)

Intermission (5 minutes)

Shenanigans Nicole Chamberlain (b. 1977)

Damien Chavez, Euphonium

Fabien Chavez, B-flat Clarinet

Homeland Allison Loggins-Hull (b. 1982)

Concertino Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)

Dr. Wayne Ching, Piano

Please silence all electronic devices

Please hold applause till the end of each musical selection

Program Notes

Sonata IV in D Major, Op.1 | Anna Bon di Venezia

*Anna Bon di Venezia is an 18th century European composer and musician whose presence is an enigma. The mysterious life of Anna Bon di Venezia leaves musicologists wondering about the life she lived. Her compositions possess stylistic aspects of both the Baroque and Classical Eras. Her Sonata embodies a charming character through the use of embellishments and scalar figures.

Movement one, Allegro Moderato, emphasizes the characteristics of the Baroque Era through its technical passages and ornamentation. The Andante section is a lyrical movement with beautiful melodic lines. The final movement, Allegro assai, is a lively ending that concludes a pleasant sonata.

Three Romances, Op.22 | Clara Schumann

*Clara Schumann is a gifted pianist and composer who rose to fame early as a child prodigy in Germany. Her distinctive compositions reveals her romantic nature and strength that she possessed throughout her life. Yet, Schumann's Three Romances, Op.22, was originally composed for violin and piano, but was later arranged for flute and piano. This piece starts with a Gypsy opening that develops into an emotional and passionate dialogue. The second movement aims to connect the first and third movement by portraying a melancholy character. The last movement displays a long bubbly and light accompaniment over a beautiful melody. The contrasting musical characters demonstrates Schumann's love for musical romances, which signifies her impacts as one of the most influential composers of the Romantic Era.

Hall of Ghosts | Amanda Harberg

*Amanda Harberg is a revolutionary pianist and composer whose emotional compositions aim to evoke emotions within the performer and the audience. Her composition for solo piccolo entitled *Hall of Ghosts* aims to convey the emptiness of concert halls and performance venues during the COVID-19 pandemic. These once loud venues became empty halls that were filled with the echoes and memories of life before the pandemic. The battle between the liveliness of the middle sections and the silence of the beginning sections displays a haunting fight between the ghosts that fill the halls and a piccolo trying to make itself heard. Who will win? The piccolo? Or the ghosts?

Program Notes

Shenanigans | Nicole Chamberlain

*Nicole Chamberlain is a quirky and out-of-the-box female composer who pushes musical boundaries through her fun and humorous compositions. In this mixed winds work entitled *Shenanigans*, Chamberlain takes a spin off the traditional winds trio by composing a piece that demonstrates a wide array of extended techniques. Whether it is through fluttering tonguing, mixed meters, scattered rhythms, and awkward fermatas, the use of these musical techniques displays the unexpected, joyful characteristics of Chamberlain's works. The audience is taken on a wild and chaotic journey as three best friends express their animated and chaotic group dynamic. Nicole Chamberlain is a unique composer whose creativity has no boundaries.

Homeland | Allison Loggins-Hull

*Allison Loggins-Hull is an extraordinary flutist and composer who continuously pushes the musical boundaries of this era. Following the tragedies that took place in Puerto Rico after the devastation of Hurricane Maria, Loggins-Hull began feeling confused and overwhelmed. With questions about the political climate of the U.S., along with the loss of land due to climate change, questions arose about the meaning of home during a crisis. In her electrifying and empowering solo flute work entitled *Homeland*, Loggins-Hull uses intense trills, harmonics, and unexpected tempo changes to bring the audience on a chaotic musical ride. During a crisis, where is home? Do we even have a home?

Concertino | Cécile Chaminade

*Cécile Chaminade is a French Composer and Pianist who pushed the musical boundaries of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Her most famous composition, Concertino for Flute and Piano, was dedicated to the world-renowned flutist and educator Paul Taffanel, but was rumored to be written to punish a former lover. Chaminade's Concertino is a one-movement work that starts with a straight-forward piano introduction and then a beautiful flute melody that shows the wide-range of the flute. Then, an animated middle section includes an array of different techniques that aim to be virtuosic in nature. An exciting cadenza follows, which requires technicality. A return to the opening melody arises, followed by an energetic coda that concludes Chaminade's incredible work.

Acknowledgements

From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much to everyone who made this special day possible!

God above all

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Dr. Adrian Ruiz

Dr. Camille Langston

Dr. Angeli Willson

Dr. Lydia Bartlett

Dr. Wayne Ching

Professor Mona Lopez

Professor Joann Gawlik

Stevens HS Band Directors

Taft HS Band Directors

Jennifer Greulich

Jeff Schomburg & Academic Media Center

Starla and Bob Allen

Amber Aston

The Palmer Family

Shelby Frederick and Family

Ianna Bomba

Lexie Wingenter

Damien and Fabien Chavez

Thank you for your attendance!
God Bless You All



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