



4-19-2020

## Bridging the Gap: An Academic Recital for Solo Voice Featuring the Music of Underrepresented Female Composers throughout History

Keiley Vieau  
Western Michigan University, keileyvieau@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/honors\\_theses](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/honors_theses)



Part of the Music Education Commons, and the Music Performance Commons

---

### Recommended Citation

Vieau, Keiley, "Bridging the Gap: An Academic Recital for Solo Voice Featuring the Music of Underrepresented Female Composers throughout History" (2020). *Honors Theses*. 3312.  
[https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/honors\\_theses/3312](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/honors_theses/3312)

This Honors Thesis-Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Lee Honors College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [maira.bundza@wmich.edu](mailto:maira.bundza@wmich.edu).



## **Self-Reflection**

I have seldom seen someone use an academic recital as a thesis defense, but I feel strongly about the topic I have chosen and saw this as an opportunity to step outside of my comfort zone. As a musician, I've always been extremely anxious to perform in front of others. I love making music, but solo singing has never been comfortable for me. As a future music educator, I don't believe I could ask my students to perform and be vulnerable if I myself could not. I also believe educators must do more to diversify the repertoire we present to our students which requires searching outside the normal musical cannon we see performed. With our world in its current social state, I saw my thesis defense as the chance to perform music that is underrepresented while growing as a musician and educator.

After three years of listening to students and professionals perform solo voice literature, I found myself wondering why most of it was by white men. I myself had yet to perform music by a woman. I knew it was out there, for my friends studying performance had introduced me to Amy Beach, a more contemporary composer. As a woman, it was important for me to see representation of women in musical composition throughout history. I had a hard time believing women had only recently begun composing. My curiosity led me to search further back in history. With the assistance of my voice teacher, I was able to find repertoire in our music library that was representative of female composers from different countries and different time periods. After researching these composers, I found that many of them had to conceal their identity in order to publish their work, since women weren't socially accepted as serious composers, hence their lack of representation in solo voice literature. This suppression of female creativity continues today. After speaking with composition majors, I found that many women in the field feel that their music is valued less than their male counterparts. While this may not be the case,

we see less women studying and pursuing musical composition because of the damage that has been done historically. I chose to perform all music by female composers to bring awareness to great musical literature as well as show others there we still have work to do. I feel prepared to speak to my students about this topic, as I feel it needs addressing before change can be made.

Personally, this was a journey of growth as well as an acquisition of knowledge.

Preparation for this recital forced me to be more consistent with my practicing. To accomplish this, I created a practice schedule that required me to work on my repertoire six days a week for at least two hours a day. On top of scheduled practice, I structured these times so that I was rehearsing specific pieces that were causing me trouble. I recorded these sessions and reviewed them to find areas that needed improvement. This process has taught me how to use my time efficiently in the practice room. While the act of performing for people was and still is nerve wracking, this structure has provided me with the confidence in my own ability and allowed me to see progress. I have also learned what it takes to put on a recital and the amount of research and practice required to do so successfully. I am extremely proud of the work I've put into this process and feel as though it will help me better educate my students on what they are capable of as musicians and people.