

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA GRADUATE COLLEGE

MODEL OF DIVERSE UNDERGRADUATE PERCUSSION CURRICULUM FOR THE
REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN COMPOSERS

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MODEL OF DIVERSE UNDERGRADUATE PERCUSSION CURRICULUM FOR THE
REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN COMPOSERS

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
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DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my family for their unwavering love for me and support of my musical endeavors. To my dad for showing me what it means to truly love what you do for a living, spending countless hours in the pursuit of knowledge and betterment for your field in aviation maintenance. To my mom for continually lending an ear, giving advice, and gifting me with unconditional love throughout my life. To my sister, for being a role model in women's health and advocacy as well as being my lifelong best friend. To my husband, for being the solid rock of support, loyalty, and love that gets me through each and every day.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to develop an undergraduate percussion curriculum based on repertoire and resources composed by women. The study aims to promote a more equitable distribution of diverse programming within the percussion community, with the potential to increase the number of women who pursue advanced education and professional careers in the field. This document proposes and analyzes a model undergraduate curriculum that includes detailed repertoire lists for marimba, vibraphone, snare drum, and timpani, all featuring works by women composers. I thereby address the longstanding gender imbalance in percussion repertoire, offering practical tools that place the work of women composers at the center of undergraduate study. A curriculum grounded in these works provides educators with accessible resources to diversify their pedagogical approaches. This curriculum seeks to broaden students' musical horizons by introducing them to a variety of perspectives and encouraging the growth of both technical skill and expressive artistry. A comprehensive overview of foundational techniques for each primary percussion instrument highlights essential elements for achieving technical command and musical fluency. The curated repertoire is thoughtfully matched to these core competencies, offering a sequential approach that supports the development of both technical precision and expressive interpretation. It amplifies underrepresented voices and fosters a more inclusive learning environment—one that has the potential to inspire and empower more women to continue in the discipline. The inclusion of women's voices in percussion pedagogy also supports the development of male allies and strengthens a studio culture rooted in equity. This work contributes to long-term cultural change within the percussion field, challenges traditional gender norms, and expands the range of repertoire studied and performed.

INTRODUCTION

There is no denying that the classical music community is dominated by men. The Donne Foundation study compiled programs from the world's top 100 orchestras in 2023-2024, finding that only 7.5% of compositions were by women, which is down 7.7% from the year before.¹ The website of the largest music distributor in the United States advertises just 61 pieces by women composers of the 4,632 in their Band Concert & Contest catalog. These statistics are also reflected in the field of classical percussion. Although an increasing number of women are studying percussion at the collegiate level, a disconnect remains, as many who pursue degrees in percussion performance and education do not ultimately enter the professional music field.² Women are less likely to feel they belong in a community that does not support their demographic.³ Percussion programs are often male centered in their curriculum and concert programming, leaving women with a lack of role models from which to gain inspiration. It is of the utmost importance that percussion students are exposed to diverse music and composers throughout their musical development, as doing so ensures the curriculum reflects and validates the diverse identities and experiences of the students themselves.

Many percussion educators may not know where to begin when attempting to diversify their curriculum. They may know of a hand full of woman-composed percussion pieces, but they might not have studied the pieces themselves and do not know the specific techniques, musical qualities, and educational value these compositions hold. Although there are repertoire lists

¹ "Research." *Donne, Women in Music*, donne-uk.org/research-new/.

² Calloway, Cassidy. *Whence Comes the Lady Percussionist? The Changing Role of Females in Professional Percussion Positions in the United States, 2011-2020*. 2020, p. 36.

³ Washington, Samantha. "Diversity in Schools Must Include Curriculum." *The Century Foundation*, 17 Sept. 2018, [tcf.org/content/commentary/diversity-schools-must-include-curriculum/](https://www.tcf.org/content/commentary/diversity-schools-must-include-curriculum/), par. 3.

available that educators can use to find pieces, these lists simply contain title and composer information and do not cover the techniques and skills students stand to learn and develop by playing these compositions. This document contains the first resource of its kind: an undergraduate percussion curriculum of all woman-composed pieces. The curriculum is divided into two categories: pitched instruments -- marimba and vibraphone -- and non-pitched percussion -- snare drum and timpani. These four instruments have been recognized by the percussion community as the core for undergraduate percussion curricula. Undergraduate students are able to learn fundamental skills and techniques on these four instruments in their undergraduate education that they can then expand onto other instruments like drum set, hand percussion, steel pan, and more. This document contains a separate curriculum list for each of the core percussion instruments, containing compositions composed by women at multiple difficulty levels: beginner, intermediate, intermediate-advanced, and advanced. Each piece is given an in-depth description of musical qualities like dynamics, tempo, and style as well as technical qualities students will develop when studying said composition. Each piece also has a purchasing link and reference recording, allowing educators to easily listen to a piece, gauge if it fits their students' developmental goals, and then purchase it. This resource has the potential to reshape the percussion world and broaden the scope of musical representation, which will foster a more inclusive environment and encourage students to engage with diverse perspectives. The diversification of the repertoire challenges outdated gender norms and helps create a more equitable and dynamic future for percussion education.

The undergraduate percussion curriculum of woman-composed pieces is one of a kind and contains invaluable resources for educators and students alike. One question that may arise from the creation of this curriculum is if the use of diverse compositions in the undergraduate

curriculum works to encourage women in the field? Further, this question raises the issue of whether the inclusion of women's works can challenge gender biases in the percussion world and encourage more women to pursue careers in percussion composition, performance, and education. A comparison to the world history curriculum paints a clear picture of the empowering benefits diverse exposure grants students of all ages. History educator and author, Elena Stevens, says this about the importance of curriculum diversification: "At its heart, a more diverse, representative curriculum is much better placed to engage, inspire and include than one which is rooted in traditional topics and approaches."⁴ This is just as true for the field of percussion as it is for history. The continual use of canonized white male-composed pieces in percussion curriculum has the potential to discourage and disempower those who do not fit within that demographic. Students deserve access to music by individuals who reflect their own identities, which enables them to envision themselves as successful composers, educators, and performers—parallel to those represented in the repertoire they study and perform. There is no need to overplay and assign older music that lacks diversity when there are countless new compositions by diverse composers that are created to develop technical and expressive skills in percussion students. A perfect example of this idea is Chelsea Tinsler Jones' 2023 collection, "Level Up! 15 Sequential Duets for the Developing Snare Drummer." This new work contains valuable educational resources that older pieces do not like reference recordings and play along tracks, and Chapter 5 explores the educational value of Tinsler Jones' collection in greater detail. This is just one example of many that will be explored in later chapters, each highlighting the educational value of diverse and contemporary works by women-composers. Educators who stay up-to-date on educational resources and expose their students to the music of marginalized

⁴ Stevens, Elena . "NACE." *Nace.co.uk*, 2025, www.nace.co.uk/blogpost/1761881/461338/Diversifying-the-history-curriculum-how-to-embed-challenge-and-confront-misconceptions, par. 3.

composers create more inclusive and enriching learning environments. The prioritization of music by women over the continual recycling of works by canonized white men allows educators to challenge historical biases, promote gender equity, and provide students with a more relevant, diverse, and inspirational educational experience.

In her article on the importance of diversification in AP History curricula, Samantha Washington states:

The choices being made about what history students learn are not trivial, but rather, core to the mission of educating students in diverse and supportive environments...Diversity in curricula is about more than just teaching a full view of history; it is proven to empower students of color.⁵

To teach history accurately, one must include a variety of cultures and ethnicities, not just the histories of Eurocentric white males. Researchers from Stanford University analyzed data from a pilot program in San Francisco where students at high risks of dropping out were enrolled in one of the state's ethnic studies programs. Attendance increased by 21 percent, grade-point averages increased by 1.4 percent, and students who were enrolled in ethnic-studies courses earned an average of 23 more credits toward graduation than those who did not.⁶ Numbers do not lie. Students who once faced academic challenges and lacked engagement emerged from the ethnic-studies classroom feeling supported, inspired, and empowered. "Reading texts written by members of the ethnic groups that are underrepresented in school curricula improves the self-esteem of students of that ethnic group and caused all students to have a greater appreciation for

⁵ Washington, par. 3.

⁶ Washington, par. 4.

cultural difference.”⁷ This is exactly the effect that percussion students stand to gain when exposed to compositions by women in their undergraduate degree. To teach history—or music—without diverse voices is not only incomplete but also ineffective. Just as ethnic studies courses transform student engagement and success, the inclusion of music by women provides percussion students with an education that fosters inclusivity, empowerment, and inspiration.

This document is divided into six chapters; the first three are meant to describe the theoretical context behind the research, and the later chapters contain the women composed core percussion curricula. The first chapter includes a discussion of the current state of women’s roles as educators and performers in the percussion field. There is evidence drawn from surveys and statistics to highlight the lack of female representation in professional orchestras, collegiate teaching positions, and military bands. There is also a discussion of the current state of under representation in collegiate undergraduate curriculums, referencing the University of North Texas undergraduate percussion syllabi as a case study. These surveys and statistics support the argument for a model of diverse curriculum that supports women composers, educators, and students alike. This first chapter also contains a discussion of systemic instrument gendering in elementary selection as well as the gendering of specific percussion instruments. Societal and historical implications are used to discuss the lack of female representation on snare drum and timpani as compared to keyboard instruments. Chapter one contains a brief discussion of parallels in other fields such as STEM and athletics and the work these areas are doing to improve female representation as well as a brief discussion of tokensim.

⁷ Washington, par. 4.

Chapter two is an overview of the philosophy of empowerment that O used to create this model of diverse undergraduate percussion curriculum. This philosophy is deeply rooted in feminist theory, engaged pedagogy, acoustic justice, and female empowerment. This chapter draws from the writings of musicologists, philosophers, and educators, including the following: *Gender & the Musical Canon* by Marcia Citron; *Acoustic Justice: Listening, Performativity, and the Work of Reorientation* by Brandon LaBelle; *Teaching to Transgress* by Bell Hooks; and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire. Chapter two also contains a discussion of feminist theory and its effect on the purpose behind this study, drawing particularly on philosophies of empowerment and the need for female representation in the field of percussion. This discussion includes theories such as phenomenology, embodiment, modeling, and empowerment.

Chapter Three describes the diverse curriculum model and the way the resources were collected and can be used. It also contains a discussion of the definition of fundamentals in percussion development. A brief history is provided for each core percussion instrument as well as an identification of the fundamental techniques that undergraduate percussion students are expected to develop throughout their degrees. Since many of the pieces in the curricula are geared toward technical and fundamental development, it is important that pedagogical expectations are properly defined.

Chapters four and five contain my proposed undergraduate curricula of women composed pieces. Chapter four contains the pitched instrument curricula, and chapter five contains the curricula for the non-pitched instruments. The curricula contain an in-depth resource and repertoire list graduated by difficulty for each of the instruments previously mentioned. Each piece on the list has a brief description of the technical and expressive skills utilized. The end of each curriculum features a comparison of a piece composed by a man to one written by a

woman, discussing the shared technical and musical qualities that both pieces have. With this comparison I argue that students will learn the same skills but by playing the piece written by a woman, students and educators have the opportunity to support female composers and empower the young women in their studios.

Chapter six acts as a summary and closing argument for diversity and female representation in the field of percussion both generally and using the model of diverse curriculum presented in this document. The final portion is a call to action for equity, inclusion, and empowerment in the music community. This chapter also contains a brief description of ways this curriculum will be shared with wider audiences in future.

I acknowledge that in this study, I am making an identity-based assumption: that women students will necessarily feel empowered by performing works composed by women. While this may hold true in many cases, I recognize that this perspective is essentialist and does not account for the full complexity of student identity. Other intersectional factors such as race, gender identity, class, and cultural background undoubtedly influence how students relate to repertoire and representation. However, due to the scope and focus of this research, I am unable to fully explore these dimensions. This represents a limitation of the study, and one that I hope future research will address more comprehensively.

CHAPTER I

CURRENT STATE OF WOMEN IN THE FIELD OF PERCUSSION

Chapter one examines the long-standing gender disparity in the field of percussion, tracing its roots to historic sexism and exclusion, and explores current efforts to improve representation. Despite increased participation by women in the percussion community, significant gaps remain in professional, educational, and performance opportunities. Parallels are drawn with diversity initiatives in STEM and athletic fields and similar strategies in music are explored. This chapter also discusses the historical and ongoing impact of gender stereotyping in musical instrument selection, with a focus on percussion. Lastly, chapter one explores tokenism in music education and performance, particularly as it relates to the representation of women in the percussion field.

As is the case for many disciplines and careers, the field of percussion has been historically male dominated. Although women have made their mark in the community over the years, there is a large disparity in numbers when compared to their male peers. Women have been discouraged from playing percussion in years past with the argument that the sight of a woman engaging in physical exertion was deemed unattractive.⁸ This archaic opinion is one of countless sexist viewpoints that is gradually becoming extinct, but many women are still grappling with the societal implications and stereotypes these beliefs caused. Meghan Aube's dissertation, "*Women in percussion: the emergence of women as professional percussionists in the United States, 1930-present*" gives invaluable insight into ways in which women percussionists have explicitly and implicitly dealt with discriminatory and sexist viewpoints.

⁸ Aube, Meghan. *Women in Percussion: The Emergence of Women as Professional Percussionists in the United States, 1930-Present*. 2011, p. 65.

Aube's research is a thorough attempt at answering the question, "Why are there fewer female percussionists than male?" Aube interviewed twelve women percussionists about what it is like to be a woman in the field, selecting them "based on their achievements in the percussion profession and their willingness and ability to contribute varying opinions..."⁹ The participants included: Julia Gaines, percussion professor at the University of Missouri; Vicki Jenks, private percussion teacher and Wisconsin Youth Symphony Director; She-e Wu, percussion professor at Northwestern University; Gwendolyn Burgett Thrasher, percussion professor at Michigan State University; Julie Davila, percussion performer and educator; Laura Franklin, percussion professor at Brevard College, North Carolina; Kathleen Kastner, percussion professor at Wheaton College, Illinois; Rebecca Kite, percussion scholar, performer, and teacher; Julie Hill, percussion professor at the University of Tennessee Martin; Vida Chenoweth, marimba soloist; Lisa Rogers, percussion professor at Texas Tech University; and Sherrie Maricle, drum set artist and band leader.¹⁰

Many of the participants shared commonalities when it came to sexist and/or discriminatory actions enacted upon them as well as ways of coping with being the minority in a male-dominated field. Multiple participants said they took on tomboy identities as children to be taken seriously as percussionists, not wanting to be viewed as different or the "girl drummer."¹¹ Many of the interview participants experienced discrimination on the job. Band leader and drummer Sherrie Maricle shared multiple instances of rejection due to her sex. "After winning the audition and joining comedian Rodney Dangerfield's trio, she was fired and told, 'Rodney

⁹ Aube, p. 6.

¹⁰ Aube, p. 55-56.

¹¹ Aube, p. 61.

doesn't want any women in the band because he thinks you'll cry if he swears at you.'" ¹²She was later let go from another job performing with Bobby Short because, "Bobby can't share the stage with a woman." ¹³ It is stories like these that shed light on the negative interactions women have experienced in the percussion field. It is discouraging to know that this just scratches the surface of the types of discrimination and sexism women have endured over multiple decades. It is no wonder that this dark history has had a palpable long-term effect on engagement by women in the field of percussion.

There are multiple studies that have tracked the current state of women as professional percussion educators and performers. Meghan Aube's research not only contains interviews from current women in the field, but she also collected data on the number of women percussionists who were currently acting as educators and performers as of 2011. Her data was later updated and expanded by Cassidy Calloway in her thesis, *"Whence Comes the Lady Percussionist? The Changing Role of Females in Professional Percussion Positions in the United States, 2011-2020."* Roles in the study included women studying percussion at the collegiate level, female percussionists in orchestra personnel, professor positions, Percussive Arts Society leadership, and United States military premiere ensembles. Her research findings were enlightening and frustrating all at once. It was disheartening to learn that over the course of 40 years, women's roles as percussionists in the top two-tier orchestras of the United States have essentially remained unchanged: 5.50% in 1975-6, 5.11% in 2010-11, and 5.36% in 2019-20.¹⁴

Calloway's addition of women's roles in military bands in her research is something Aube did not include, and it is important to understand the multi-faceted climate of under-

¹² Aube, p. 88.

¹³ Aube, p. 88.

¹⁴ Calloway, p. 32.

representation. Calloway found that The President's Own United States Marine Corps does not include female percussionists; neither does the United States Coast Guard Band, the United States Navy Concert Band, the U.S. Air Force Academy Concert Band, or the U.S. Air Force Concert Band. The only two military ensembles that include women are the United States Army Pershing's Own, where there is one female percussionist in the U.S. Army Ceremonial Band and one female timpanist in the U.S. Army Concert Band.¹⁵ This data is not surprising given the military's history of male domination. Women were not even allowed to join the United States military until 1948. These statistics are important to understand the current degree of inclusion, but we have a long way to go as a percussion community if we are to have equitable representation.

It is only slightly more encouraging to see that the number of women teaching at the collegiate level has increased minimally: 6% in 1974, 6.20% in 2010, and 7.70% in 2020.¹⁶ Both Calloway and Aube found that women were more likely to hold less prestigious positions such as adjunct, part-time, and assistant professorships as compared to men who hold a higher percentage of full-time, tenured positions. This phenomenon in higher education is explained in more depth by Beth Higham-Edwards in her account as a United Kingdom based percussionist in the classical music industry from the book *Voices for Change in the Classical Music Profession* by Anna Bull and Christina Scharff:

It still appears relatively easy for a principal player of any major orchestra to gain a teaching position in a conservatoire regardless of their ability as an educator.

With female percussionists and brass players underrepresented in orchestras, and

¹⁵ Calloway, p. 41.

¹⁶ Calloway, p. 37.

with the conservatoires still favoring teachers with orchestra seats, the issue of representation among teaching staff continues to self-perpetuate.¹⁷

The cycle of under-representation is clearly an international issue as evidenced by Higham-Edwards' analysis. Educational institutions prefer to hire professionals who have considerable experience in orchestras, military bands, and other prestigious performance ensembles. Given that the number of women percussionists in these performance positions is painstakingly low, it is no wonder that there is a clear correlation to a small number of conservatory and collegiate women educators.

The self-perpetuating cycle of under-representation of women in educational settings goes one step further when addressing collegiate undergraduate percussion curriculums. To properly address the need for my model of diverse undergraduate curriculum containing detailed repertoire and resource lists of pieces by women, it is important to first analyze the current state of diversity in percussion curriculums today. The University of North Texas is a well-established music institution with a large percussion studio. The percussion program is held in high regard and has a strong reputation in the percussion community. The full-time percussion faculty at this institution include Gideon Alorwoyie, José Aponte, Quincy Davis, Mark Ford, Dave Hall, and Paul Rennick. The adjunct faculty include Stockton Helbing, Sandi Rennick, Ed Smith, and Poovalur Sriji. Out of this list of ten educators, only one, is a woman, and her position is adjunct. Already, student exposure and education are highly male dominated, and the teaching staff does not reflect the student body. UNT's undergraduate and graduate private lesson syllabi for the

¹⁷ Bull, Anna, and Christina Scharff. *Voices for Change in the Classical Music Profession*. Oxford University Press, 2023, p. 131.

2023-2024 school year is publicly accessible and follows the trend of male centered education.¹⁸ Students are expected to study timpani, snare drum, mallet instruments such as marimba and vibraphone, and drum set in a variety of musical styles. Not a single one of the educational materials listed for these instruments is written by a woman. It is disappointing and concerning to learn that one of the most significant percussion programs in the country does not use any gender-diverse pedagogical resources. Unfortunately, University of North Texas is one of many collegiate percussion programs that does not adequately represent women in their pedagogy. Women are less likely to feel they belong in an educational environment that does not reflect their demographic.¹⁹ This is not a new issue, and it will continue to be a problem if educators do not redefine their values to be more inclusive in relation to their percussion curriculum and diverse exposure. Choosing works of composers from a diverse range of identities, backgrounds, and experiences creates a curriculum that better reflects members of the student body, empowering all individuals to seek professional opportunities in the field of percussion.

It is evident that the current state of women in the field of percussion is stuck in a self-perpetuating cycle of under-representation as compared to men. The challenge is to find positive solutions to break the cycle of under-representation in our music community. It can be beneficial to draw parallels between the music disciplines and other fields in their attempts to rectify the current disparity in the representation of women. Much like the music field, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines have historically struggled with the under-representation of women. There has been an aggressive push to increase the percentage of

¹⁸ Texas, University of North. 2023. *Student Resources, Percussion*. <http://percussion.music.unt.edu/student-resources>.

¹⁹ Washington, Samantha. "Diversity in Schools Must Include Curriculum." *The Century Foundation*, 17 Sept. 2018, [tcf.org/content/commentary/diversity-schools-must-include-curriculum/](https://www.tcf.org/content/commentary/diversity-schools-must-include-curriculum/), par. 1.

women in the STEM community over the last decade. According to the National Science Foundation, “The STEM workforce increased by 20% in the decade ending in 2021. While women have not yet achieved parity with men in STEM fields, the number of women entering STEM fields increased faster — by 31% — than the number of men entering STEM (up 15%).”²⁰ The drastic increase in women's participation in STEM fields is an encouraging comparison to the static rate of representation the field of music has seen over multiple decades. It is also important to note that STEM initiatives are greatly incentivized by government funding. The sheer amount of financial support STEM fields are given is not even close to being matched by the arts and the music disciplines. Even so, it is helpful to identify what initiatives the STEM disciplines have implemented to increase their diversity. Can the same procedures be adapted and applied to the music community to the same effect? In March of 2024, the Women in STEM Ambassador Program was created. “These ambassadors participate in programs at schools, colleges, and conferences to raise awareness about opportunities for women in the semiconductor industry and inspire interest in engineering and related STEM fields.”²¹ This new program sends women representatives all over the community to act as role models and educators for the capabilities the field of STEM offers. Role modeling is a crucial part of empowerment. This is evident in STEM and music. Locascio states:

When people learn about the achievements of people with whom they identify, they believe they can achieve them, too. Role models and mentors also can help

²⁰ Locascio, Laurie. “Women in STEM: Representation Matters.” *U.S. Department of Commerce*, 2024, [www.commerce.gov/news/blog/2024/03/women-stem-representation-matters#:~:text=While%20women%20have%20not%20yet,entering%20STEM%20\(up%2015%25\)](https://www.commerce.gov/news/blog/2024/03/women-stem-representation-matters#:~:text=While%20women%20have%20not%20yet,entering%20STEM%20(up%2015%25),), par. 3.

²¹ Locascio, par. 10

people from underrepresented groups with the skills and support they need to overcome barriers to becoming a STEM professional.²²

There are members of the percussion community who are doing similar work as the STEM Ambassador Program. One such group is the Percussive Arts Society Diversity Alliance. This collection of percussion educators, performers, and manufacturers coordinate efforts to expand PAS membership diversity and enhance community outreach with a special emphasis on serving historically marginalized populations within the percussion world.²³ There are multiple subcommittees for this group, one of which handles gender concerns. This subcommittee likely deals with women's representation issues, but public information on this group is minimal. There is one other known organization when comparing representation efforts within the STEM and percussion communities, and that is the Network of Diversity in Concert Percussion. The network's mission statement is as follows:

The Network for Diversity in Concert Percussion is a collective of performers, educators, and businesses who serve as a resource for, and support to, aspiring professional percussionists from underrepresented and underserved communities in an effort to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in the concert percussion community.²⁴

The NDCP has two programs that offer support to diverse percussionists. One is the Youth Artist Program, which offers a wide range of support for diverse developing percussionists in grades 6-12. The network's supportive measures include group and individual mentoring sessions, private

²² Locascio, par. 13.

²³ "Diversity Alliance." *Percussive Arts Society*, 29 Apr. 2024, pas.org/diversity-alliance/. Accessed 23 Jan. 2025.

²⁴ "NDCP." *NDCP*, 2016, www.percussiondiversitynetwork.org/. Accessed 23 Jan. 2025, par. 1.

instruction, financial support for summer camps, youth orchestras and festivals, and support in accessing equipment, and all these services are free to Youth Artists associated with the network. The second NDCP Program is for Emerging Artists between the ages of 18-25, which offers the same opportunities provided to the Youth Artists as well as opportunities for mentoring Youth Artists and financial support for auditions and conferences, and it is also free to Emerging Artists in the network. NDCP's work is crucial in its potential to empower young women to seek a profession in concert percussion. Their support equips diverse individuals with the financial, mental, and educational fortitude to feel confident in the percussion community. It is important to highlight that both the NDCP and the PAS Diversity Alliance are advocating for more than just the representation of women. The percussion community does not have an organization whose singular focus is to promote women such as the STEM Ambassador Program. Nonetheless, the important work of both the Network for Diversity in Concert Percussion and the Percussive Arts Society Diversity Alliance is making a difference for women in the field of percussion, but there is still more work to be done before we see the equity that is needed in the discipline.

Title IX is a major component of women's representation across many disciplines as we know it today. Educational institutions all over the country have been grappling with Title IX and what it means for students pursuing a variety of degree paths. Title IX was enacted in 1972 as an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Acts prohibited sex discrimination in employment but did not protect individuals receiving education. Title IX was created to fill the gap and directly address sex discrimination in education.²⁵ The effects of Title

²⁵ Powell, Alvin. "How Title IX Transformed Colleges, Universities over Past 50 Years." *Harvard Gazette*, 22 June 2022, news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2022/06/how-title-ix-transformed-colleges-universities-over-past-50-years/, par. 3.

IX on collegiate athletics were particularly transformative. Lisa Kaplowitz, a Rutgers Business School professor of professional practice in finance and executive director of the Center for Women in Business explains:

In the pre-Title IX era, 15% of college athletes were women. [As of 2022,] 44% of the opportunities to play sports go to women. Since the introduction of Title IX, 3 million more high school girls and 200,000 more college women have opportunities to play sports each year.²⁶

These statistics are promising when comparing women representation before Title IX was instated. With that said, 80% of colleges are yet to reach full compliance with the mandates of the amendment. Also, as is the case with many disciplines, young girls and women of color are not given the same opportunities to play sports that white men and women are.²⁷ Kaplowitz suggests a few strategies for leveling the playing field, both figuratively and literally, for women in athletics. First, colleges spend a fraction on women's sports as compared to men's. When colleges equalize the monetary value of men's and women's programs, more opportunities for women athletes will be received.²⁸ A comparison to music programs in this case would be to support women musicians on a monetary level, offering scholarships to make the dream of pursuing music at the professional level a reality. The second thing Kaplowitz suggests is increasing the marketing of women's sports. "Nearly 90% of sports media coverage is dedicated to men... [increasing women's sports marketing] would raise visibility (and dollars), which would lead to increased viewership and school funding, and could create more opportunities for

²⁶ Kaplowitz, Lisa. "Title IX Increased Opportunities for Women Athletes, but There's Still Work to Do." *Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick*, 23 June 2022, www.business.rutgers.edu/business-insights/title-ix-increased-opportunities-women-athletes-theres-still-work-do, par. 9.

²⁷ Kaplowitz, par. 11.

²⁸ Kaplowitz, par. 12.

female athletes.”²⁹ A comparison to collegiate music programs can also be applied in this case. Social media and live streaming play a significant role in student recruitment. It is important that music programs equally represent all demographics of their student body when marketing to prospective students. This could include the programming of public concerts with women composed music and performers as well as incentivizing student outreach and role modeling at local primary schools and community events. Title IX has afforded countless women opportunities over the years, but there is still work to be done. Colleges must encourage equal opportunities for their students through funding, marketing, and community engagement. This issue applies to many areas within music schools that are traditionally male dominated like percussion.

The disparity in numbers of women percussionists can actively deter young women from seeking professions in the field if they feel they do not belong in the community. In her interview with Aube, Vicki Jenks, private percussion teacher and Wisconsin Youth Symphony Director, said, “I never felt any, well you’re a girl so you can’t do it. But let’s face it, when I would go to PASIC or I would go to clinics, you would just look around the room. That’s all you have to do.”³⁰ We as a percussion community must create an environment that is inviting and empowering for young women. Calloway and Aube’s research substantiates the theoretical

foundation of this study, demonstrating that modeling is a critical mechanism for effecting change. In a music educational setting, it is important that students feel they belong and that works composed by women are just as worthy of study. Assigning music by women and engaging students in critical analysis of its technical and expressive elements during performance

²⁹ Kaplowitz, par. 13.

³⁰ Aube, p. 85.

fosters deeper musical understanding. Teachers and students actively discuss the significance of performing music by women, reinforcing its value in the curriculum. These practices convey both subtle and explicit messages: students matter, their musical voices carry weight, and their lessons prepare them to contribute meaningfully to the percussion community. When percussion educators model equal representation in their studios, classrooms, and lessons, their students are more likely to develop into professional musicians who feel empowered to be a part of a community that supports diversity. The model of diverse undergraduate curriculum presented in this document contains detailed repertoire and resource lists of pieces by women that percussion pedagogues can use to equally represent women in their undergraduate studios. The curriculum is designed to empower the women in collegiate percussion programs to seek professions in the field while also creating a studio culture that promotes diversity and equality as well as artistry. The rest of chapter one will discuss common issues that are currently acting as a hindrance to the representation of women in the field of percussion. Understanding and acknowledging these issues will better inform the percussion community about how to improve the representation of women for future generations of percussionists.

Instrument Gendering

It is important to understand instrument gendering as it has had a profound effect on the current numbers of women in the percussion field. Like many other activities and objects, cultures and individuals associate musical instruments with gender stereotypes.³¹ In correlation with musical instruments, people have considered a tuba or percussion as more masculine, while

³¹ Wiedenfeld, Laura. *Sex-Types and Instrument Selection: The Effect of Gender Schemas on Fifth Graders' Instrument Choices*. 2012, p. 64.

the flute and oboe have historically been considered in U.S. music culture to be more feminine.³² Although these ideas about gender stereotyping are being deconstructed, the historical implication of them remains significant, nonetheless. The societal and historical identification of percussion as a masculine field has discouraged countless young women from seeking education in the discipline. Since the 1970s, music education researchers have conducted studies on societal views of musical instruments in correlation with gender stereotypes. These studies have often centered around children, ranging from preschool to high school age, gauging their gender stereotyping of instruments by having instrumental demonstrators of both sexes perform each instrument. The first study of its kind was “The Sex-Stereotyping of Musical Instruments” by Abeles and Porter in 1978, which was later updated in 2009. Over several decades, studies have consistently found that children continue to associate musical instruments with gender in ways similar to previous generations, suggesting that educators and educational practices are reinforcing traditional gender norms in music instruction.

A more recent study conducted in 2012, painted a more promising picture. In her research, “Sex-Types and Instrument Selection: The Effect of Gender Schemas on Fifth Graders’ Instrument Choices,” Laura Wiedenfeld aimed to answer the following question: do the views of students, teachers, and parents affect their opinions and instrument selections? She argued, influential factors are determined, they can be used to enact change. Wiedenfeld surveyed students and their parents in a North Texas-area middle school. The student survey asked who helped them pick out their top three instruments, why they selected them, and if they would refuse to play if they had to play a specific instrument they did not select.³³ The study’s findings

³² Harrison, Anna, and Susan O’Neill. “Children’s Gender-Typed Preferences for Musical Instruments: An Intervention Study.” *Psychology of Music*, vol. 28, 2000, pp. 81–97.

³³ Wiedenfeld, p. 66.

were overwhelming in that the number one factor in the students' decisions was not social but kinesthetic and aural. The sound of the instruments and the students' ability to play them were the two main reasons they made their decisions. Wiedenfeld's study revealed that at least in this school's case, "Fifth graders do select their instrument based on social perceptions; however, the social perceptions are changing, and more instruments are considered gender neutral or androgynous."³⁴ This study's sample was small, and a larger-scale study needs to take place to gain a clearer picture of societal implications on instrument selections and stereotyping. This study offers valuable insight into the factors students may consider when selecting an instrument. In a perfect world, students would choose musical instruments not based on gender stereotypes but based on the kinesthetic and aural factors previously mentioned. Wiedenfeld's research clearly shows that this shift in value is taking place in north Texas. But can this also be said for other parts of the country such as smaller institutions or rural areas? For areas where this is not the reality, how does gender stereotyping affect the current state of instrument fields that have been historically male dominated, and what can we do to empower young musicians to play those instruments?

One proven method for the dismantling of gender stereotyping of musical instruments is opposite-gendered role modeling of said instruments. Anna Harrison and Susan O'Neill's study, "Children's Gender-Typed Preferences for Musical Instruments: An Intervention Study," investigated the influence of exposure to gender-stereotypic role models on 357, 7–8-year-old children's gender-typed preferences for six musical instruments (piano, trumpet, violin, drums, guitar, flute).³⁵ It was the authors' hope that exposure to opposed-gendered musicians playing

³⁴ Wiedenfeld, p. 74.

³⁵ Harrison and O'Neill, p. 81.

certain historically gender stereotyped instruments at an early age would make children more open minded and less likely to be swayed by societal connotations of the six musical instruments demonstrated. Students were presented with a concert by solo musicians who played two selections of music in contrasting styles while wearing uniform dark clothing. After the concert, the children were asked to indicate their preferred instruments. Through their research, they found that children were more likely to prefer an instrument after seeing it performed by a musician who matched their sex. In other words, a girl who saw a woman play the drums was more likely to want to play the drums afterward. This is an extremely significant finding and one that supports the importance of role modeling in the percussion field. Harrison and O'Neill's study proved that there is a direct correlation between empowerment and exposure to women in the field. Young women are more likely to feel they can play percussion if they see their identity reflected in successful percussion performers. That is why it is so important for educational institutions to expose students to diverse music, performers, and educators so that all students can feel they belong in that setting. Educators will be able to use my model of diverse undergraduate curriculum to expose their students to women composed music to empower their female students and dismantle the preconceived notion that percussion is a masculine instrument.

There is a deeper level of instrument gendering that takes place within the field of percussion that must be addressed. Given that the percussion discipline covers multiple instruments (marimba, drum set, glockenspiel, timpani, snare drum, vibraphone...etc.), there is an added opportunity for certain percussion instruments to be categorized as more masculine or feminine. This categorization is the byproduct of countless discriminatory and sexist beliefs that have plagued our society for centuries. In her discussion on instrument gendering in her thesis,

“Whence Comes the Lady Percussionist? The Changing Role of Females in Professional Positions in the United States, 2011-2020,” Cassidy Calloway uses a 1952 quote from the music director of the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra, Raymond Page, to illustrate a common belief among musicians of the time regarding women in music:

Instruments requiring physical force are a dubious choice, partly because women lack the strength for them, partly because the spectacle of a girl engaging in such physical exertions is not attractive. There are women who play the heavier brasses, the contrabass, the big drum, but their employment chances are slimmer. The orchestral manager, thinking in terms of full audience enjoyment, is reluctant to hire a player whose appearance at her instrument gives off a feeling of forcing or incongruity.³⁶

There is a lot to unpack in this quote, and it is evident that Page, as well as many others, felt that women were too weak to play drums, and doing so was unattractive. He then went on to say that women had less of a chance of winning orchestral jobs as percussionists for that reason. It was much more socially acceptable for women to play percussion instruments that were not as physically demanding and had more expressive qualities like the glockenspiel or the marimba.

To this day, it is less common to see women playing or writing music for drums as compared to keyboards. This is a direct product of the sexist beliefs such as Page’s that permeated the music community for decades. It is important to note the decreased output from women on snare drum and timpani specifically, as this will be thoroughly discussed in chapter five of this document. In one of Meghan Aube’s research interviews, percussion scholar,

³⁶ Calloway, p. 13.

performer, and composer Rebecca Kite said that her teacher did not want her playing crash cymbals, “I guess because women have breasts and can’t hold cymbals up there, it’s just too masculine.”³⁷ In another interview, current Percussive Arts Society President Julie Davila explained her University of North Texas teacher’s reservation at having her play snare on the drumline. “I remember him saying that he would never have a girl march on his snare line or a left hander, and I’m both of those. I’m competitive, so that just made me want to do it more. I was like, I’m going to prove him wrong.”³⁸ Davila did in fact prove him wrong, performing as a member of the UNT snare line shortly after. We owe these women—and countless others—deep gratitude for breaking gender norms to pursue careers in percussion performance and education. It is more important than ever that young percussionists are exposed to women role models performing on and composing for these instruments that have been historically male dominated. This disparity will decrease over time when women are empowered to feel that they belong on those instruments.

Tokenism

When dealing with issues of representation, tokenism is a subject that is inevitably discussed. If representation is not ethically achieved, tokenism can be a common cause.³⁹ To prevent this problem from permeating the music community further, it is important to discuss what tokenism looks like and how to avoid it. The Merriam Webster definition of tokenism is as follows, “the practice of doing something (such as hiring a person who belongs to a minority

³⁷ Aube, p. 86.

³⁸ Aube, p. 86.

³⁹ Hess, Juliet. “Decolonizing Music Education: Moving beyond Tokenism.” *International Journal of Music Education*, vol. 33, no. 3, 5 May 2015, pp. 336–347, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761415581283>.

group) only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated fairly.”⁴⁰

In the music community, this definition applies to concert programming just as much as hiring. There has been an effort among orchestras across the United States to program music by diverse composers. The issue of tokenism comes into play when the intent behind the effort is examined. On National Public Radio’s program, *All Things Considered*, chief programming officer of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Jeremy Rothman, stated that “Every program [they] look at is an authentic representation of our community and of our world...And that includes gender, sexual orientation, geography, cultures, religions, backgrounds.”⁴¹ Music institutions must re-examine their concert programming in an attempt to equalize the representation of composers and performers to reflect the community they serve. In her research article, “Decolonizing Music Education: Moving Beyond Tokenism,” Juliet Hess discusses tokenism and its prevalence in collegiate music curricula. Hess compares common uses of tokenism in music education to curricular models of women’s studies programs designed by Chandra Talpade Mohanty.⁴² Hess explains that many music curricula reinforce the impossible idea of a “universal student,” and concepts discussed in courses position the universal student at the center instead of uprooting power positionalities:

Universality is an impossibility; however, music curricula assumes a universal student – a (white, [male] Western) student who will feel at ‘home’ in the world

⁴⁰ Merriam-Webster. “Definition of Tokenism.” www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tokenism.

⁴¹ Huizenga, Tom. “Our Biggest Orchestras Are Finally Playing More Music by Women. What Took so Long?” *NPR*, 2022, par. 7.

⁴² Chandra Talpade Mohanty. *Feminism without Borders : Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Duke University Press, 2003.

of Western European music. The curriculum places this so-called universal student at the center and arranges ‘Others’ around the periphery.⁴³

The impossible universal student has been the basis for countless music courses for decades. When courses do introduce music from non-western or minority worldviews, they are discussed as “other” and only reinforce current social power dynamics (white, male, Western). Hess identifies this as the ‘...Musician-as-Tourist Model:’

Many music curriculum documents encourage an ‘add world music and stir’ approach to Western classical music, leaving the latter music intact as normative or naturalized. There is no questioning of the center; marginalized musics simply affirm it.... This additive approach then does not exclude Other musics; rather, it uses them to reinforce the dominant Self, perhaps even unintentionally.⁴⁴

This “Musician-as-Tourist Model” is considered a form of tokenism because the reasoning behind the discussion of “other” musics is not to equalize but to marginalize. Even when educators believe they represent marginalized communities and musics appropriately, they fall short, ultimately reinforcing existing power dynamics.

We as educators and concert programmers must uproot the dominant culture by integrating a wide range of musics to equally support and represent members of our communities and classrooms. In the words of pedagogue Bell Hooks, it is not enough to simply “introduce a bit of ‘spice.’”⁴⁵ A frequent example of added spice in a curriculum can be found during the nationally recognized heritage and history months. The government’s acknowledgement of the

⁴³ Hess, par. 3.

⁴⁴ Hess, par. 4.

⁴⁵ Hess, par. 4.

rich history and cultural influence of certain communities is a great start, but educators often use this time as an excuse to briefly discuss figures, ideas, and musics related to the celebrated community only for one month without fully integrating the topic into the full curriculum. Hess gives an example of this in a music classroom setting:

Why, for example, do the African drums come out in February in classrooms for ‘Black History Month?’ When we, as educators, give black history a tiny moment in the year as an interruption to our western classical program, we tokenize and temporally marginalize it. This unit becomes an add-on – an unnecessary frill to the rest of the program. This feeling of a frill is then communicated to and absorbed by the students.⁴⁶

A comparison can easily be drawn for women’s history month and educators’ minimal discussion of women’s music during that brief time. The key to a culturally and positionally diverse curriculum is one that carefully considers the subjectivities and sensibilities of the students in the classroom, studio, or ensemble and is constructed based on these considerations.⁴⁷

Tokenism is an important topic as it relates to my diverse model of undergraduate percussion curriculum. An educator might be tempted to use one or two of the suggested pieces from my curriculum without fully integrating woman-composed music into their percussion studio curriculum. Only having students play a small selection of woman-composed works only solidifies the dominant male culture that is heavily prevalent in studio curricula today. This is not to say that educators should fully remove male composed music from their curricula. An equally diverse curriculum allows students to engage with music relationally, that is, by forming

⁴⁶ Hess, par. 5.

⁴⁷ Hess, par. 5.

personal, cultural, and contextual connections to the music—which is crucial to the learning process. “Additionally, understanding musics relationally allows students and teachers to also come to know themselves relationally. Music is, by nature, a social practice to be understood in context.”⁴⁸ Women’s music is an essential component at every level of learning, complementing rather than replacing music by men. The musical selections in a curriculum are most effective when they align with and support the student demographic. Women feel empowered to continue their percussion study when they are frequently exposed to material that supports their demographic. Men are empowered to be allies and support women's roles in the percussion community when they are frequently exposed to women’s music as they learn crucial skills from the repertoire.

The issues of women’s under-representation, instrument gender bias, and tokenism explored in chapter one reveals the underlying, often ingrained causes of gender inequality in the field of percussion. These issues are the biproduct of longstanding historical and cultural dynamics that have shaped opportunities and perceptions in the music industry. It is crucial that educators, institutions, and performers understand the roots and impact of these barriers to make lasting, meaningful change. We gain valuable insight into how to address these issues effectively when we critically examine their historical and societal contexts. The recognition of persistent patterns in gender stereotyping, whether in instrument selection or in the under-representation of women in professional and academic settings, is the first step toward dismantling these systems of exclusion. However, simple acknowledgement of the problem is not enough. In order to create tangible change, the music community can move beyond performative acts of inclusion, such as tokenistic programming or superficial gestures, and adopt more deliberate, holistic strategies.

⁴⁸ Hess, par. 2.

This shift requires a commitment to fostering a truly inclusive environment—one where diverse voices and experiences are not merely added as afterthoughts but are central to the educational narrative. By integrating the music of women into all aspects of education, performance, and programming, we begin to level the playing field. This approach not only empowers women but also enriches the experience for all musicians, which creates a more dynamic and comprehensive understanding of percussion as an art form. Purposeful action toward equity cultivates a space where all percussionists are given the opportunity to thrive, develop, and contribute to the rich diversity of the music community.

CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHY OF EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DIVERSE CURRICULUM MODEL

Chapter two explores the significance of feminist theory in the amplification of women's voices in the music community, and by extension, in the field of percussion. Theories from feminist philosophers, psychologists, and activists such as Maria Lugone, Elizabeth Spelman, Sally MacArthur, Marion Young, Joan Chrisler, and Ingrid Johnston-Robledo are drawn upon. Feminist thought offers both the theoretical foundation and practical strategies for this research, particularly in relation to Deleuzian theory, phenomenology, and embodiment. The second half of chapter two provides the philosophy of empowerment for this research in regards to engaged pedagogy and acoustic justice from the work of Marcia J. Citron, Brandon LaBelle, bell hooks, and Paulo Freire. LaBelle's ideas on the power of sound and listening, Freire's critique of oppressive education systems, and hooks' focus on holistic and engaged pedagogy shape the creation of the undergraduate percussion curriculum of women composed pieces presented in this document.

Feminist Theory

One simply cannot argue for the amplification of women's voices in the field of music without the involvement of feminist theory. It is due to the invaluable work of feminist scholars and activists over the last few decades that the topic of this research is even taken seriously. In the words of feminist philosophers and activists Maria Lugone and Elizabeth Spelman:

Feminism is among other things, a response to the fact that women either have been left out of, or included in demeaning and disfiguring ways in what has been an almost exclusively male account of the world....And so the demand that the

woman's voice be heard and attended to has been made for a variety of reasons: not just so as to greatly increase the chances that true accounts of women's lives will be given, but also because the articulation of experience (in myriad ways) is among the hallmarks of a self-determining individual or community.⁴⁹

The reasoning behind the research presented in this document is to amplify women composer and student voices alike, empowering women to seek professions in the field of percussion after being exposed to the work of women composers during their undergraduate studies. A new generation of students will engage with a broader range of music composed by women, providing opportunities to understand and value these composers' contributions and perspectives within the music community. We as a society have come a long way in our engagement with equity and representation of minorities, but there is still considerable work to be done. Feminist theory equips this research with tangible philosophies, arguments, and activities to empower women in the field of percussion. Throughout this chapter, I will discuss feminist ideas such as Sally MacArthur's Deleuzian philosophy of positivity, phenomenology, and embodiment as these topics have greatly impacted the reasoning behind the diverse women composed curriculum model for undergraduate concert percussion.

Sally MacArthur is an important figure in the discussion of women's representation in the music community. Her research focuses on the representation of music by women in twentieth and twenty-first century concert venues. As a professor of musicology at Western Sydney University, she has authored multiple books such as *Feminist Aesthetics in Music* (Greenwood Press, 2002) and *Musics and Feminisms* that have been widely accepted and utilized within the

⁴⁹ Lugones, Maria, and Elizabeth Spellman. "Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism, and the Demand for 'the Woman's Voice.'" *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 6, no. 6, 1983, p. 573.

music community (AMC, 1999). Her book, *Towards a Twenty-First-Century Feminist Politics of Music* (Ashgate, 2010) has had a profound impact on the research presented in this document. MacArthur translates the work of French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, into a feminist framework, utilizing his ideology of positive activism to redefine ways of approaching empowerment. A substantial portion of MacArthur's book focuses on the positive ways statistics can be used to enact change. The data presented by Calloway and Aube in the previous chapter provide clear evidence of the persistent underrepresentation of women in percussion, underscoring the need for targeted research and intervention. The use of statistics to shed light on the current state of representation is a method that emphasizes the disparity in the number of women as compared to men. The moral message behind the numerical evidence emphasizes the importance of increasing the representation of women in the percussion community as a matter of justice and equity. MacArthur's argument is not to suggest that statistics are not useful, but she calls readers to think positively and find a solution that will generate the shift toward non-discriminatory patterns. One can easily get wrapped up in the negative reality the statistics so clearly present, but we must use the statistics to enact change and create positive ways of thinking.

The question then is how can we reconfigure the minority representation of women's music to destabilize the normalized power dynamic within percussion programs? MacArthur suggests that the use of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy can enlighten us to the positive mindset needed to approach the statistics. Deleuze uses the word "virtual" to describe an aspect of reality that is ideal, not actual. The virtual in his philosophy is the creation or emergence of something that will then become actual:

If the future is not bound by the past, then by extension women's music need not be defined on pre-existent patriarchal terms. The concept of the virtual makes

possible the philosophical shift from hierarchical, representational thought to a way of thinking that is characterized by an ever-changing and interactive, limitless universe of positive concepts and thought patterns.⁵⁰

This Deleuzian mindset reminds us that the future is not set, and there is still time to shift the hierarchical power dynamics embedded in our society. This philosophy reinforces the call to action, which is to promote, perform, and use woman-composed music to create positive patterns of representation and dismantle the patriarchal majority. MacArthur further discusses Deleuzian theory within the framework of the representation of women composers:

It is possible to reconfigure the minority representation of women's music in the concert hall to the process of 'becoming-minoritarian.' This conception entails viewing women's music in terms of its transformative potential of 'becoming-minoritarian,' that is, its destabilizing capacity of the normalizing power of the majority music instead of its numerical insignificance.⁵¹

Statistics are important and can be used to address issues of representation, but one must use those same statistics to approach the issue from a positive mindset with the possibilities for change and improvement. Programming women's music has the potential to destabilize patriarchal patterns when music educators, performers, and programmers choose the music not because statistics say they need to but because the music itself is rewarding and is educationally valuable. The discussion and interaction with MacArthur's Deleuzian feminist theory and others

⁵⁰ MacArthur, Sally. *Towards a Twenty-First-Century Feminist Politics of Music*. Routledge, 24 Feb. 2016, p. 40.

⁵¹ MacArthur, p. 36.

is crucial in creating a philosophy that makes this document's research as useful, groundbreaking, and transformative for the music community as possible:

Whatever else we know feminism to include, concrete direct political action-theorizing is integral to it: theories about the nature of oppression, the cause of it, the relation of the oppression of women to other forms of oppression. And certainly, the concept of the woman's voice is itself a theoretical concept.⁵²

The quote underscores that feminism involves both theoretical analysis and political action, particularly in understanding and dismantling systems of oppression. Within music education, this perspective positions the inclusion of women composers not merely as a matter of representation, but as a critical pedagogical act. Integrating their work into the curriculum challenges dominant narratives, affirms the theoretical significance of women's voices in music, and fosters a more equitable and socially conscious learning environment. The rest of this chapter will include more in-depth discussions of feminist theories and their relation to the research presented in this document.

Phenomenology in music performance refers to the study of how music is experienced and perceived by performers and listeners in real time. Rather than focusing solely on technical or structural elements, phenomenology emphasizes the subjective, lived experience of engaging with music—how it feels to perform, interpret, and embody musical expression. It is also a crucial part of role modeling as well as the discussion of body awareness in developing musicians. Phenomenology is a psychological term for the study of ways in which we as humans experience things and the meaning things have on our human experience. Political philosopher

⁵² Lagones and Spellman, p. 574.

and feminist Iris Marion Young, in her 1980 essay "*Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality*," examines how women's bodily experiences are shaped by social and historical conditions, using phenomenology to reveal how gendered norms influence movement, physical presence, and spatial awareness. Her definition of phenomenology as it pertains to women can be beneficial to gain further understanding of the term:

Every human existence is defined by its situation; the particular existence of the female person is no less defined by the historical, cultural, social, and economic limits of her situation. We reduce women's condition simply to unintelligibility if we 'explain' it by appeal to some natural and ahistorical feminine essence. In denying such a feminine essence, however, we should not fall into that 'nominalism' which identifies the real differences in the behavior and experience of men and women. Even though there is no eternal feminine essence, there is a common basis which underlies every individual female existence in the present state of education and custom. The situation of women within a given socio-historical set of circumstances, despite the individual variation in each woman's experience, opportunities, and possibilities, has a unity which can be described and made intelligible.⁵³

Young's explanation of the woman's phenomenology is the societal and historical grooming of behaviors and movements that have been taught to women over multiple generations. There is a commonality between the ways in which individual women have been

⁵³ Marion Young, Iris. *Throwing like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality*. 1980, p. 139.

taught to experience their lives and the world around them. The feminine existence is, "...a set of structures and conditions which delimit the typical situation of being a woman in a particular society, as well as the typical way in which this situation is lived by the women themselves."⁵⁴ Young's argument is that there is a particular style of bodily comportment that is typical of the feminine existence, which has been defined by cultural, societal, and historical norms. This is an extremely crucial topic when identifying ways in which women are expected to act in the music discipline and specifically in the percussion field. The previous chapter's discussion of instrument gendering are particularly prudent here as many women have been discouraged from playing instruments that were societally deemed too masculine, including brass instruments and percussion. Societal norms deemed it more fitting for a woman to play instruments that fit ideals of feminine existence and bodily comportment such as the flute, clarinet, or other small and high-pitched musical instruments. This is also echoed by Rebecca Kite's reflection on her teacher's reluctance to teach her crash cymbals because her breasts would be in the way, and the act of playing cymbals was deemed "too masculine." This is a real-life example of a woman being societally and historically coerced into conforming to taking on a more feminine role as opposed to masculine. Women have different body comportment as compared to men when it comes to the performance of crash cymbals, but it does not mean that one is deemed more effective or socially acceptable than the other. Young explains:

The culture and society in which the female person dwells defines woman as other, as the inessential correlate to man, as mere object and immanence. Woman is thereby both culturally and socially denied by the subjectivity, autonomy, and

⁵⁴ Young, p. 140.

creativity which are definitive of being human and which in patriarchal society are accorded the man.⁵⁵

In Kite's case, she was denied the creative outlet of playing crash cymbals because the culture of the music community did not allow her the autonomy that has always been afforded to men. Countless women have been denied the autonomy of choosing to play the musical instrument they would prefer, which has negatively impacted the percussion discipline for decades. The feminine experience and phenomenology of being a woman in the music community has unfortunately been restrictive. The acknowledgement of this fact puts us one step closer to finding positive solutions to break the cycle of under-representation of women in the percussion. One of these solutions includes the use of the diverse undergraduate percussion curriculum of women composed pieces presented in this document.

An important facet of phenomenology is the physical facilitation of certain activities for women as compared to men. This is ever-present in the percussion discipline as young women are not exposed to nearly as many women role-models as compared to men. Role-modeling is essential for the empowerment of young women, support of their pursuit of careers in the discipline, and provides them with a tangible representation of how an activity is embodied in a body similar to their own. Young compares general body comportment delineations between men and women in her essay, analyzing the societal structures that have caused these dissimilar behaviors. "Even in most simple body orientations of men and women as they sit, stand, and walk, one can observe a typical difference in body style and extension."⁵⁶ It is important to note that the same can be said for individuals of different ages and within various stages of

⁵⁵ Young, p. 141.

⁵⁶ Young, p. 142.

development. This idea will be further explored in later chapter discussions of musical and technical skill facilitation in developing musicians. Young further explains:

The approach persons of each sex take to the performance of physical tasks that require force, strength, and muscular coordination is frequently different...Women often do not perceive themselves as capable of lifting and carrying heavy things, pushing and shoving with significant force, pulling, squeezing, grasping, or twisting with force. When we attempt such tasks, we frequently fail to summon the full possibilities of our muscular coordination, position, poise, and bearing.⁵⁷

All these physical tasks that Young mentions are utilized in the percussion discipline. In its most basic form; percussion is the act of striking musical instruments to produce sound. We must lift heavy mallets and are often tasked with moving large instruments such as keyboards and timpani to different practice and performance spaces. The techniques required to hold sticks and strike instruments utilize squeezing, grasping, and twisting motions. Given that women are historically predisposed to feeling unstable when performing these tasks, it is not surprising that women have been discouraged from learning percussion instruments. This is why it is crucial that young women are exposed to women role models performing effectively in the discipline. When a young musician sees a developed same-sex adult physically facilitate percussion activities, she is more likely to believe she will be able to as well and that she belongs in that space. Young elaborates:

⁵⁷ Young, p. 142.

Women often approach a physical engagement with things with timidity, uncertainty, and hesitancy. Typically, we lack an entire trust in our bodies to carry us to our aims. There is, I suggest, a double hesitation here. On the one hand, we often lack confidence that we have the capacity to do what must be done...The other side of this tentativeness is, I suggest, a fear of getting hurt, which is greater in women than in men. Our attention is often divided between the aim to be realized in motion and the body that must accomplish it, while at the same time saving itself from harm. We often experience our bodies as a fragile encumbrance, rather than the media for the enactment of our aims. We feel as though we must have our attention directed upon our body to make sure it is doing what we wish it to do, rather than paying attention to what we want to do *through* our bodies.⁵⁸

There is another aspect to this idea of fear as it pertains to women in percussion, and that is the fear of being seen as other or not as good compared to men. This has prevented countless young women from choosing percussion in the first place or continuing their education in the discipline. There is an added weight or pressure of representing women as a group when acting as an individual. In her document, Aube cites Elayne Jones, the first African American woman to hold a principal orchestra position as timpanist for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra (1972). “I had to prove that music could be played by anyone who loves it... It’s been a terrible burden because I always felt I had to do better, that I wouldn’t be allowed the lapses other musicians have.”⁵⁹ Jones’ feelings of burden and having to prove oneself are shared with many

⁵⁸ Young, p. 144.

⁵⁹ Aube, pp. 29-30.

women in the percussion community. Women can find it hard to assimilate and are frequently compared to their male peers, being told they are “pretty good for a girl” when we play percussion instruments. What will it take for women to be treated as musicians in a diverse percussion community without having the added pressure of proving ourselves on multiple levels? It is concerning to recognize that the feelings of burden that women had in the 1970s and earlier are still prevalent for countless women today. Acknowledgment of the phenomenology of women’s experiences in the percussion community is essential to dismantling historical and societal barriers and provides a critical foundation for fostering greater representation, empowerment, and equitable opportunities for women in the discipline.

The third feminist theory that has deeply influenced the research of this document is the idea of embodiment. Embodiment and phenomenology are related and were developed by many of the same psychologists and philosophers. In their essay, *Woman’s Embodied Self: Feminist Perspectives on Identity and Image*, psychologists Joan Chrisler and Ingrid Johnston-Robledo give some historical and cultural context for the feminist understanding of embodiment:

Although Western cultures frame the body as private and allocate different amounts of personal space around it to form boundaries between individuals and others, Merleau-Ponty (1962) insisted that the body is never isolated from the world but instead is always engaged in it, given that it mediates all of our interactions with others. Foucault (1977) shared this view, and he emphasized the fact that the body is seen, evaluated, and reacted to by others, and those others influence individuals’ evaluations of their bodies and their selves. Evaluations of bodies are invariably marked by assumptions made about their gender, their race, their ethnicity, their class, and their natural abilities, as well as their age and their

attractiveness. Thus, people's embodiment is continually mediated by interactions with others.⁶⁰

Both embodiment and phenomenology have to do with the human experience and societal, historical, and cultural gender norms. They both understand the body as the basis of subjectivity and self-expression. The major difference between these two concepts is that embodiment aims to identify the ways in which people evaluate themselves and others based on the information gleaned from observations of their own bodies. These observations result in certain prejudices such as racism, ageism, lookism, sizeism, and sexism. As a result of these observations, Chrisler and Johnson-Robledo explain that people have the following expectations:

To assume, or refrain from, particular duties and activities...The first generation of women psychologists dedicated themselves to marshaling evidence against the widespread beliefs that a woman's reproductive body prevented her from engaging in certain activities (e.g., higher education, rational thinking) and required her to engage in other activities (ie., become a wife and mother).⁶¹

These issues of embodiment pertain to societally acceptable roles for women in the music community discussed earlier in this document. A woman's body has only been accepted on certain instruments as opposed to others. Kite's example of women's breasts getting in the way of playing crash cymbals is again made prevalent in this discussion of embodiment. Chrisler and

⁶⁰ Chrisler, Joan C, and Ingrid Johnston-Robledo. *Woman's Embodied Self : Feminist Perspectives on Identity and Image*. Washington, Dc, American Psychological Association, 2018, p. 9.

⁶¹ Chrisler and Johnson-Robledo, p. 7.

Johnson-Robledo explain that is important to address how body image affects self-evaluation and body image in women:

The many ways by which the body influences the self have long been of interest to personality, clinical, and social psychologists; these include self-identity (“Who am I?”), self-esteem (“Do I approve of myself?”), self-worth (“Am I valuable and respectable?”), self-consciousness (“How do I appear to others?”), self-regulation (“Can I control myself?”), self-image and self-monitoring (“How should I present myself to others?”), self-efficacy (“Can I do what I want to do?”), and self-confidence (“Can I succeed at what I do?”)⁶²

The purpose of the research presented in this document is to help women in the percussion field positively address the questions of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-confidence in relation to their sense of belonging in the percussion community. Women must approve of themselves and their ability to be successful in the field of percussion. It is essential that young women feel empowered to pursue their interests freely, including the choice to perform on percussion instruments, rather than being influenced by traditionally gendered expectations regarding instrument selection. Exposure to role models in the field provides women with the knowledge and assurance that success is attainable, as demonstrated by the achievements of other women before them.

It is important that the cycle of disempowerment of women be dismantled within all stages of development. This is posited by the following developmental theory of embodiment by Piran and Teall (2012):

⁶² Chrisler and Johnson-Robledo, p. 6.

Beginning in early childhood, social experiences shape people's embodiment through three paths: (a) 'experiences in the physical domain,' (b) 'experiences in the mental domain involving exposure to dominant social labels and expectations,' and (c) 'experiences related to social power.'⁶³

This developmental theory of embodiment suggests multiple cycles of under-representation and even discrimination of women in the field of music. Given that the mental domain involves social experiences and labeling, the impact of such social interactions creates stereotypes of diverse types of women such as girly, tomboy, prude, slut, and so on. As discussed in the previous chapter, the stereotype of the tomboy is highly prevalent in young women in the percussion community as a means to gender their identity and behavior similar to their male peers in order to be respected by them. Chrisler and Johnson-Robledo offer a solution:

The social power domain refers to treatment based on identity characteristics (e.g., gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ability status) and experiences of marginalization, discrimination, and harassment. Positive experiences lead to social empowerment, whereas negative ones lead to disempowerment.⁶⁴

This social power domain is where issues of under-representation of women in percussion resides. The use of the woman-composed curriculum presented in this research is intended to empower women to feel a stronger sense of belonging in the percussion community. When collegiate institutions only use resources and perform works by white men, they reinforce the current patriarchal power dynamic that primarily values white men, leaving women and other

⁶³ Chrisler and Johnson-Robledo, p. 9.

⁶⁴ Chrisler and Johnson-Robledo, pp. 9-10.

marginalized communities feeling disempowered, under-represented, and labeled as “less than.” The addition of repertoire composed by women to the percussion field will help this discriminatory and disempowering cycle come to an end. The inspiration of feminist philosophies, theories, and epistemologies of Deleuzian positivity, phenomenology, and embodiment have emboldened this document’s research with arguments for the equal representation of women in the field of percussion. The discussion and application of these feminist issues and theories gives a better understanding of the current state and cycle of under-representation of women who are directly affected by them. A better understanding of the social, historical, and culture dynamics that have created this situation informs the ways in which this research will break the cycle of marginalization and empower women in collegiate percussion studios. The rest of this chapter will include ideas from musicologists, pedagogues, and philosophers who have also had a profound impact on the research presented in this document through their ideas on acoustic justice, pedagogy, and empowerment.

Philosophy of Empowerment Through Diverse Pedagogy

A re-examination and implementation of the percussion canon repertory could substantially contribute to the creation of a more equitable percussion community for future generations. In the words of musicologist Marcia J. Citron, the canon “...creates a narrative of the past and a template for the future.”⁶⁵ It is evident that the percussion repertoire canon, as many others, has been historically dominated by white male composers, creating a cycle of minority under-representation that is likely to continue if not addressed. More women than ever are writing percussion music, and it is our responsibility as performers and educators to support

⁶⁵ Citron, Marcia J. *Gender and the Musical Canon*. Urbana ; Chicago, University Of Illinois Press, 1993, p. 1.

these composers. By assigning students pieces written by women, working from female authored method books, and modeling performance of works by female composers, this research will contribute to breaking the cycle of under-representation. Citron further argues, “Music by women is beginning to affect the values behind current canons and position itself for eventual incorporation into canons with a more pluralistic set of values.”⁶⁶ The hope of this research is to influence educators to redefine their values of diverse exposure in relation to percussion curriculum by choosing works by composers from a diverse range of identities, backgrounds, and experiences to create a canon that is more inclusive and better reflects members of the percussion community. By promoting a broader spectrum of musical voices, this research equips students with greater cultural competency, preparing them to engage meaningfully in an increasingly global and diverse musical landscape. The philosophy of empowerment used to create this research is deeply rooted in feminist theory, engaged pedagogy, acoustic justice, and female empowerment. This sub-chapter will discuss the philosophy of empowerment through diverse pedagogy, drawing from the writing of musicologists, philosophers, and educators including *Gender & the Musical Canon*; *Acoustic Justice: Listening, Performativity, and the Work of Reorientation* by Brandon LaBelle; *Teaching to Transgress* by bell hooks; and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire.

The philosophy of empowerment through diverse pedagogy is informed by Brandon LaBelle’s ideas of acoustic justice. LaBelle is an American artist and sound theorist whose work has greatly influenced the field of sound studies. In his book, *Acoustic Justice: Listening, Performativity, and the Work of Reorientation* (2020), LaBelle brings “into question the issue of acoustics and the ways in which it can be understood to impact onto expressions of individual

⁶⁶ Citron p. 41.

and collective agency.”⁶⁷ The music we choose to listen to, perform, and engage with affects our sense of identity. Percussion educators and performers can utilize what they teach and play as a means of female empowerment. Educators who create curricula are “...deciding who or what is heard - whose voice may gain traction within particular places and in what way.”⁶⁸ This document’s percussion curriculum amplifies women's voices as composers and educators in the field of percussion. It utilizes women authored method books and educational repertoire, giving women an equal place in the curriculum. As previously discussed in chapter one, University of North Texas percussion educators have yet to include women’s voices and works in their curriculum. We educators are responsible for creating a safe and inviting environment for our students. Young women are likely to feel unwelcome in programs that fail to reflect or support their identities through inclusive curricular resources.

Music has been used over the course of history to “...construct paths of resistance, togetherness, and social consciousness by way of sound and listening.”⁶⁹ This is evident in the field of percussion as the repeated performance and support of male composed work as opposed to female has created a male-dominated social environment. The way music is utilized within our community holds the power to either perpetuate or disrupt the ongoing underrepresentation of women. A collegiate percussion program that frequently utilizes women authored educational resources, performs music by women, and supports the women in their program creates a sense of togetherness. Sustained efforts in diverse programming and education foster a cohesive environment that empowers women.

⁶⁷ Labelle, Brandon. *Acoustic Justice : Listening, Performativity, and the Work of Reorientation*. New York, Ny, Bloomsbury Academic, Bloomsbury Publishing Inc, 2021, p. 550.

⁶⁸ Labelle, p. 550.

⁶⁹ LaBelle, p. 554.

The approach to female empowerment in percussion in this document has been impacted greatly by the work of the Brazilian philosopher and pedagogue Paulo Freire. His book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) introduced a revolutionary outlook on the relationships between teachers, students, and society itself. Freire criticized the use of education as a tool of oppression and advocated critical pedagogy as a tool by which oppressed peoples could liberate themselves. Many teachers in Freire's time and even today have fallen into the habit of using an educational system of knowledge banking. In Freire's words:

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories, and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat.⁷⁰

Percussion educators and students can also fall prey to such a depositing educational system. There are many instructors in percussion whose shared goal is to create carbon copies of themselves when teaching their students. They teach their students the repertoire they were taught, their students perform music that they themselves have played, and the cycle continues. This is extremely problematic for many reasons and harms curriculum diversification. It restricts students' exposure to diverse compositional voices, stylistic approaches, and cultural perspectives, ultimately narrowing their creative and interpretive capacities. By continuously cycling through the same repertoire and pedagogical frameworks, instructors risk fostering artistic homogeneity rather than encouraging innovation, exploration, and personal expression. Given that the percussion community has been historically male dominated, the banking system

⁷⁰ Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 1970, p.72.

of education supports the cycle of female under-representation. Students are not given the opportunity to break the mold so heavily bestowed upon them by their instructors, and they are more likely to play the same male composed works as their instructors. Freire further explained:

It is not surprising that the banking concept of education regards men as adaptable, manageable beings. The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.⁷¹

The banking system of education minimizes students' creativity and decisiveness and serves the interest of the oppressors, which are the male dictators of the percussion field. Many men do not see representation and diversity in the percussion curriculum as an issue because their demographic is already fully supported in the percussion community. They have no personal need for the field to transform into a more diverse environment because they already hold all the power. It is important that students have autonomy and are given the opportunity to choose repertoire by diverse composers. The well-rounded students of today will become educators who use diverse programming in their future work, leaving the percussion community more creative, welcoming, and diverse for future generations. According to Freire, "The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not 'marginals,' are not people living 'outside' society. They have always been 'inside' - inside the structure which made them 'beings for others.'"⁷²

⁷¹ Freire, p. 72.

⁷² Freire, p. 74.

Women have been in the percussion community for decades but have not been able to fully situate themselves as equal members. A telling example of this truth can be found in the leadership of the Percussive Arts Society. In PAS' 62 years of existence, it has only had three female presidents out of 24: Lisa Rogers (2011-12), Dr. Julie Hill (2015-17), and Julie Davila (2023-present). It is inspiring to see a woman as the current president; this is hopefully a sign of a more equitable future to come.⁷³

Throughout the musical learning process, it is common for women to constantly play the same male composed pieces that countless others have. Women may feel that they need to prove themselves as a player by learning and performing the same pieces that their male peers execute. However, the use of the woman-composed curriculum presented in this document will encourage students to ask themselves important questions about repertoire selection early on in their musical development. That is not to say that students should feel discouraged from playing the music they want to play no matter the composer, but there is a way they can play the kind of music they want while helping the community and repertoire grow into a more diverse landscape.

The ideas on critical awareness through musical selection presented in this document were informed by bell hooks in her book, *Teaching To Transgress* (1994). Gloria Jean Walkins, better known by her pen name bell hooks, was an American author, theorist, educator, and social critic whose work centered around education as a practice of freedom. Her work was also heavily influenced by Paulo Freire's philosophies. hooks' educational values were centered around the

⁷³ "Board of Advisors." *Percussive Arts Society*, 15 Aug. 2024, pas.org/board-of-advisors/. Accessed 31 Oct. 2024.

growth of students as individuals as opposed to receptacles for informational deposits associated with the banking system of education. hooks said that we as educators should:

believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.”⁷⁴

hooks’ words on the intellectual and spiritual growth of students are particularly apparent when teaching women. Sometimes, as educators, we become so focused on specific techniques and skills that we lose sight of the individual student’s identity, values, and ability to engage critically with the assigned material. When an educator only works out of male authored method books and only assigns male composed pieces, the message they subliminally send is that women’s voices and sense of belonging are less valued than men’s. When working with women, it is important that they feel they belong in the percussion community, and the works by women are just as worthy of study. This can be achieved by assigning them works by women, asking them to critically analyze technical and expressive facilitation when performing the music, and telling them why playing music by women is important. The subliminal and outright messages being sent in this case are that they are important, and their musical voice is important, and they leave the lessons empowered to be a part of the percussion community. In the future, they are more likely to play pieces by women after having learned the value it holds in educational and performative spaces. hooks further explained:

⁷⁴ hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York, Routledge, 1994, p. 13.

Progressive, holistic education, ‘engaged pedagogy’ is more demanding than conventional critical or feminist pedagogy. For, unlike these two teaching practices, it emphasizes well-being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students.⁷⁵

By neglecting their own self-awareness and growth, instructors may unconsciously perpetuate a limiting educational environment, rather than one that fosters critical thinking, diversity, and student empowerment. When teachers default to reproducing their own experiences through repertoire, stylistic preferences, or narrow pedagogical models, they risk prioritizing conformity over individuality. This undermines the core of engaged pedagogy, which calls on educators to create space for students’ unique identities, voices, and paths to creative fulfillment. Percussion educators must practice what they preach, learning and performing works by women if they are to empower their female students to do the same. Only then will they be able to self-actualize the lessons they are giving their students on the importance of diverse representation in the percussion community.

Marcia Citron, Brandon LaBelle, bell hooks; and Paulo Freire have all greatly influenced the philosophy of empowerment through diverse pedagogy as applied in this document. The values behind this research are deeply rooted in feminist theory, engaged pedagogy, acoustic justice, and female empowerment. The work of building a more equitable and inclusive percussion community begins with intentional curricular choices and pedagogical practices. Through a re-examination of the percussion canon, educators have the power to disrupt cycles of

⁷⁵ hooks, p. 15.

underrepresentation and reshape the field to reflect the diversity of those who participate in it. This research emphasizes that the music we teach, study, and perform is not neutral—it shapes identities, signals belonging, and determines who holds space in our musical conversations. The hope is to influence educators to redefine their values of diversity in relation to their percussion curriculum by choosing works by composers from a diverse range of identities, backgrounds, and experiences to create a canon that better reflects members of the percussion community.

Chapter Two underscores the essential influence feminist theory, acoustic justice, and engaged pedagogy has had on the creation of the undergraduate percussion curriculum of woman-composed pieces presented in this document. Feminist ideas on Deleuzian theory, phenomenology, and embodiment provides a rich foundation for the ways in which gender biases can be challenged and reconfigured within the percussion field. The philosophy of empowerment, rooted in engaged pedagogy and acoustic justice, offers a transformative approach to percussion education. The outcome of this research is to create a curriculum that not only includes diverse voices but also fosters critical thinking, inclusivity, and improves student agency and well-being. The holistic well-being of students extends beyond academic achievement to include emotional, social, and intellectual growth. Educators best serve their students when they are attuned to the unique needs, identities, and voices of their students in order to create a learning environment that supports their development not only as musicians, but as well-rounded human beings. For women in percussion, this means providing access to a diverse range of works by women-composers, not only as a means of representation but also as a way to affirm their place within the percussion community. Male allies are empowered to critically engage with the repertoire they perform and teach, which ensures that they not only support but also advocate for the inclusion of women's voices. This active participation in

education promotes a more inclusive and reflective percussion studio and community, where male allies and women alike dismantle biases and advance diversity in the percussion field.

CHAPTER III

DIVERSE CURRICULUM MODEL DESCRIPTION

Chapter Three introduces the structure of the curriculum of woman-composed pieces specifically designed for undergraduate concert percussionists. This chapter also includes a discussion of the carefully curated resources with an eye for technical and musically expressive development. The outcome is to provide a comprehensive, balanced, and inclusive pedagogical resource for the core percussion instruments that not only serves to develop technical and musically expressive skills but also challenges historical gender biases in the percussion repertoire. The chapter will also delve into the concept of “fundamentals” in percussion development, which forms the foundation of the curriculum. Pedagogical parameters for technical and fundamental development are clarified, which provides a detailed guide for instructors to understand how these pieces align with the educational goals of percussion students. These parameters are designed not only to properly identify and develop the mastery of technical skills but also to foster deeper musicality and expression in students’ performances. The undergraduate percussion curriculum of woman-composed pieces presented in this document can be used to create an educational environment where all students, regardless of gender, can find role models and sources of inspiration that reflect the breadth of the percussion community.

The diverse curriculum model of women composed percussion pieces presented in this document is for undergraduate concert percussionists and contains repertoire and resource lists for the following core instruments of percussion: marimba, vibraphone, snare drum, and timpani. There are other instruments undergraduate percussionists are exposed to during their degree such as drum set, multi-percussion, and various non-western instruments such as congas, djembe, and

steel pan. The curriculum model presented in this document is solely focused on the core instruments of percussion as previously defined. This research has the potential to be expanded upon in future, including discussions on pieces for other percussion instruments as well as new repertoire for the same core instruments.

The curriculum contains the following for each of the instruments previously mentioned: The first is an in-depth resource and repertoire list graduated by difficulty. Each piece on the list has a brief description of the technical and expressive skills utilized and links to both reference recordings and purchasing. On average, percussion undergraduates learn around two-four solos an academic year. There are enough pieces in each instrument's curriculum to expose students to multiple women composed pieces within every year of their studies. The difficulty gradation is of particular importance as there is a selection of pieces for each developmental stage of an undergraduate percussionist's educational journey. These difficulty stages are designated by the particular skills presented in the pieces themselves and gradually rise from basic fundamentals to advanced techniques. It is important that students are exposed to a woman-composed piece at every stage of the developmental process, not only learning valuable technical and expressive skills from the repertoire but also learning the importance of representing the composers themselves. Without properly assigning and engaging with diverse resources throughout the full educational journey, educators might knowingly or unknowingly tokenize women composed pieces. That is why it is of the utmost importance that diverse music be fully integrated into the undergraduate curriculum.

After the initial repertoire list is presented, there will be a comparison between a piece composed by a man to one that was written by a woman, discussing the shared technical and musical qualities that both pieces have. The argument is that students will learn the same skills

with both pieces but by playing the piece written by a woman, students and educators have the opportunity to support female composers and empower the young women in their studios. This is an integral part of the curriculum and warrants careful attention. Given that there are many canonized male-composed percussion works that have been used in undergraduate curricula for decades, it is important to compare some of these canonized pieces with those written by under-represented composers. As each comparison suggests, students can learn the same skills from each piece, and some compositions written by women are even better situated to meet the needs of the developing percussionist.

Fundamentals

A brief discussion of the definition of fundamentals in percussion development is pertinent as many of the pieces in the presented curriculum are geared toward technical and fundamental development on the core percussion instruments. As this curriculum is fitted within an educational framework, each piece contains opportunities for educators to teach and for students to learn techniques and musically expressive practices that set each student up with the skills needed to be successful facilitators of each core percussion instrument by the end of the undergraduate degree. This sub-chapter defines the fundamental skills needed for success on each of the core percussion instruments. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines something fundamental as a “basis supporting existence or determining essential structure or function that is of central or principal importance.”⁷⁶ In percussion, fundamentals are the skills percussion pedagogues and performers have deemed essential to the facilitation of percussion instruments. These skills are the basic techniques that support musical facilitation and are gradually

⁷⁶ “Definition of FUNDAMENTAL.” *Merriam-Webster.com*, 2019, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fundamental.

developed over time and practice. Many of the pieces in the curriculum presented in this document are created to develop specific fundamental techniques and skills to support students in their education of percussion instruments. This discussion of percussion fundamentals draws from canonized method books and resources to define the skills that have been deemed essential by percussion pedagogues. Notably, many of these standardized and canonized resources were created at a time when the state of women representation in the percussion field was even worse than it is now. Many of these resources were created by people the community considers to be the “Founding Fathers” of the percussion discipline. Given that society has been patriarchally dominated, it is no surprise that the percussion field's foundation was the same.

The development of the marimba as a solo instrument has been extremely fast paced in comparison to other musical instruments. While there are centuries of historical instances where marimbas were used in the indigenous cultural practices in Africa, Guatemala, and later as an ensemble performance instrument in large marimba bands of Guatemala, Mexico and eventually the United States, the marimba was only first played as a solo instrument in the 1940s when Paul Creston wrote the first composition for solo marimba: *Concertino for Marimba and Orchestra*. That is extremely late compared to many instruments. For example, piano and violin were used soloistically for hundreds of years by that point. After Vida Chenoweth’s premiere performance of Creston’s work at Carnegie Hall, composers around the world jumped at the chance to make their compositional mark on the solo capabilities of the marimba. Virtuoso performers such as Vida Chenoweth -- an Oklahoma native and music educator -- and Keiko Abe -- a Japanese marimba performer and educator -- commissioned and premiered hundreds of solo marimba works by leading composers over the course of their lifetimes. Keiko Abe is alive and well today and currently performing and teaching developing marimbists at her school, Toho Gakuen

College of Music in Tokyo. Given that two women were so instrumental in the founding of marimba as a solo instrument, keyboard instruments have tended to have a higher representation of women performers than men. This shows that the presence of women role models directly correlates to the number of women on keyboard instruments.

Novice percussion keyboard players start with a pair of mallets, holding one in each hand. The techniques for two-mallet playing are incredibly important and set a foundation for more advanced techniques. By the undergraduate degree, most students are mostly proficient with two mallet facilitation, only needing minor adjustments before moving on to four-mallet technique. With that in mind, the keyboard repertoire presented in this document contains a higher percentage of four-mallet pieces, and the discussion on fundamentals is focused on information pertaining to technical facilitation of four mallets. Students are being introduced to four-mallet technique at a younger age than ever. At the time four-mallet technique was developed, it was common to introduce it at the collegiate level. Currently, highschoolers and even middle schoolers are being introduced to the skill.

One cannot discuss four-mallet technique without including Leigh Howard Stevens and his book, *Method of Movement for Marimba* (1979).⁷⁷ This book is widely considered the go-to resource for four-mallet technical introduction and development. It outlines how to hold the mallets themselves in Stevens' personally developed grip. It also contains a series of exercises to practice techniques and ways marimbists are encouraged to move when efficiently facilitating music. Stevens gives extremely thorough descriptions of four fundamental techniques and motions of four mallet playing.

⁷⁷ Leigh Howard Stevens. *Method of Movement for Marimba*. Charles Dumont & Sons, 1 Jan. 1979.

The first and most common motion is called the single independent stroke. A stroke is classified as single independent when one single mallet from each hand is used. Marimba literature contains a high percentage of this first stroke type. The second is called the double vertical stroke. This is achieved when both mallets in one hand strike the keyboard simultaneously. This technique is also known as a double stop. Both the double vertical and single independent strokes encompass a high percentage of the technical proficiency required for most marimba compositions. The third technique, double lateral, is slightly more advanced. Double lateral strokes are single motions that produce two successive pitches. This technique is considered slightly more difficult compared to the previous two because it is used when playing fast, rhythmically adjacent notes in the same hand. The fourth and final technique is the triple lateral. This stroke type is similar to the double lateral, but the player instead plays three successive notes instead of two. This technique is also considered more advanced due to the speed needed to facilitate that motion. Although marimbists had been using these motions to facilitate music prior to Stevens authoring his book, he coined these technical terms for the motions and was the first to create a succinct book to develop the techniques. Each composition included in the curriculum includes a list of the four-mallet techniques used in the piece.

Since Stevens authored his book in 1979, there have been others who have written resources for marimba musical and technical development that are used to best describe musical and expressive qualities as well as grip types other than Stevens' grip. It is important to briefly mention the other common four-mallet grip types in association with technique as the grip type slightly affects the ways in which techniques are facilitated. In her book, *Sequential Studies for Four Mallet Marimba- Level 1* (2018), Julia Gaines offers a detailed introductory chapter that features pictures and explanations of the three main four-mallet grip types: independent, cross

(Burton), and cross (traditional).⁷⁸ She also includes supplemental reference texts, prominent performers, and historical context for each of the grips. This is a great resource that can be easily overlooked. Even though Gaines is not a specialist in all of these grips, she provides a basic description and suggested resources to start students. Descriptive pictures on grip types and technique facilitation are notably of Gaines herself, giving a clear representation of what these techniques should look and feel like in a woman's hands.

It is important to discuss ways in which marimbists are frequently asked to facilitate musically expressive passages of music. Nancy Zeltsman's book, *Four-Mallet Marimba Playing, A Musical Approach for All Levels* (2003) is as the name suggests, extremely useful for any marimbist. Zeltsman offers detailed knowledge on all aspects of marimba playing, including mallet selection, tone production, grips, stroke types, phrasing, practice guidance, body positioning, mallet angling, and philosophies on interpretation. Section II of Zeltman's book contains a collection of 50 short music excerpts. Each excerpt or "study" demonstrates various four-mallet marimba techniques. These studies "...are not 'technical' exercises in the traditional sense...they are meant to be more mentally and musically challenging."⁷⁹ These studies are used to simulate musical situations marimbists often find themselves in when learning solo or chamber repertoire. They are short snippets of musical segments to encourage less developed marimbists to truly understand and master them. The musically expressive techniques and qualities identified in the marimba curriculum repertoire of this document includes rolls (both one handed and four-mallet), musically expressive qualities like dynamic contrast and rubato, tempo, tonality, and the musical style of each piece: moto-perpetuo, groove-based, lyrical, etc.

⁷⁸ Gaines, Julia . *Sequential Studies for Four-Mallet Marimba - Level 1*. Tapspace Publications, 2018.

⁷⁹ Zeltsman, Nancy. *Four-Mallet Marimba Playing*. Hal Leonard Corporation, 1 Nov. 2003, p. 25.

These are all factors deemed important to understand the technical and musical facilitation needed to teach, learn, and perform each piece in the curriculum effectively.

In many ways, the techniques utilized to facilitate the marimba are the same as those used on the vibraphone. Performers use the same grip types, which leads to the utilization of the same four-mallet techniques. Although notably, it is more common to use Burton cross-grip when playing the vibraphone as that grip was created and developed by one of the most prolific vibraphone performers of all time, Gary Burton. That said, keyboardists usually use whichever grip they are most comfortable with, no matter which keyboard they perform on. There are a few techniques that are singular to the vibraphone due to its structure and mechanical workings. The biggest differences between the vibraphone and marimba are that the vibraphone bars are made of metal, not wood, and it has a dampening pedal that the marimba does not. The metal bars naturally ring much longer than wood. The pedal allows players to dampen the ringing of the bars. For performers, this means that the foot must be involved to work the pedal. Since an extra limb is needed, this takes a fair amount of practice to facilitate the music with the hands and properly dampen with the feet. There are also ways in which vibraphone players can dampen with the hands while leaving the pedal down. This is known as mallet dampening. In his book, *Vibraphone Technique: Dampening and Pedaling* (1973), David Friedman gives a detailed overview of both mallet and pedal dampening techniques.⁸⁰ He includes exercises to develop the techniques and short etudes to put them to practical use. Given that the vibraphone is deeply rooted in the jazz idiom, Friedman includes jazz theoretical etudes in the book as well. The vibraphone curriculum presented in this document includes the same technical and music

⁸⁰ Friedman, David. *Vibraphone Technique*. Berklee Press Publications, 1973.

facilitation specifications as the marimba portion and the identification of dampening techniques used.

The snare drum is deeply rooted in two particular musical styles: rudimental and orchestral. The brief discussion of these two musical contexts and their histories gives a clearer picture of the fundamental techniques needed to achieve successful playing in both styles. The first uses of the snare drum were in a military setting. Drums such as the tabor, a medieval predecessor of the modern snare drum, were used by foot soldiers as a signaling device in military environments. They were also used as accompaniment for dancers who would perform in battle-evoking tournaments. These tabors were played with one hand while the other was used to play pipes. The first instance of two sticks was used on Basel or field drums in the fifes and drums military units of the Swiss army in the battle of Sempach in 1386.⁸¹ This history of military drums was prolific in many militaries across multiple decades and geographic areas. Field drums were used by colonists to convey military orders as well as call people to gatherings. “The famous rudimental snare drum solo, “Three Camps” was played as a way for a divided company of soldiers to communicate.”⁸² This rudimental, military, style of playing is an important part of the snare drum’s history and is still prevalent in percussion education today. Rudiments are the foundational patterns and techniques used in snare drum playing to build coordination and greater fluency on the drum itself. Dr Dave Gerhart explained the history of standardization:

Over the years, percussionists have tried to come up with a standardized list of rudiments. The original rudiments were developed in Europe hundreds of years

⁸¹ Brensilver, David. “History of the Snare Drum: Eight Centuries of Innovation & Ingenuity.” *Drummagazine.com*, 2020, drummagazine.com/history-of-the-snare-drum/, par. 3.

⁸² Brensilver, par. 4.

ago and were introduced into the United States during the American Revolution.

In 1933, the [National Association of Rudimental Drummers](#) (NARD) created the “Thirteen Essential Rudiments” from the 26 Standard American Drum Rudiments.⁸³

More rudiments have been gradually added over time to account for new techniques required to meet the demands of the repertoire. The Percussive Arts Society currently has a chart of 40 essential rudiments for snare drum playing.⁸⁴ The snare drum curriculum in this document contains a list of specific rudiments utilized in each piece; there is an identification of the style of each piece and a designation of difficulty based on the rudiments utilized in the composition. The style indication is important to understanding how each piece should be played as there are different ways of approaching the snare drum depending on what style the piece is in. The traditional military/rudimental style of playing features double bounce rolls as opposed to multiple bounces. Rudiments are generally played more openly, and the rudimental vocabulary utilized in this style is distinct as compared to the orchestral counterpart.

The historical evolution of the snare drum’s role in the orchestra gives insight into the techniques used in this musical setting. Composers in the classical era wrote relatively simple percussion parts that evoked a particular atmosphere or scene such as Joseph Haydn’s “Military Symphony.” Abstract timbres and colors started appearing in the late 19th century during the Romantic period. In *Modern School for Snare Drum*, the composers offer the following explanation:

⁸³ Gerhart, Dr Dave. “Snare Drum Rudiments - Yamaha Music - Blog.” *Yamaha Music - Blog*, 20 Sept. 2018, hub.yamaha.com/drums/d-how-to/snare-drum-rudiments/, par. 1.

⁸⁴ Wessels, Mark. “40 ESSENTIAL RUDIMENTS.” *Vic Firth Artists & Education*, 12 Oct. 2023, ae.vicfirth.com/education/40-essential-rudiments/.

Debussy and Ravel used the percussion instruments as colors, but colors which played an integral part in a larger canvas. That is to say the percussion section became a functioning part of an orchestra that was made up of a color palette and thus became a section within the orchestra rather than one imposed upon it.⁸⁵

The importance of the percussion section was further developed in the 20th century with trends towards instrumental individuality and more complex rhythmic structures. A monumental piece in this regard is Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat." There are ways of playing the snare drum that have been deemed appropriate for this particular orchestral context. Players should generally approach the drum in a more delicate manner so as not to overpower the string sections. Ornaments and embellishments on basic rhythms should be played uniformly and more strictly as compared to rudimental playing. Rolls are to be played as multiple-bounce strokes to create a homogenous, long sound to imitate the long notes that can be easily achieved on brass and string instruments. As the snare drum serves a different function in rudimental and orchestral styles, it is not surprising that the approach to the drum is different as well. The snare drum curriculum in this document contains the following information for each piece: difficulty levels, stylistic labels, tempo markings, and extended techniques if present.

The first function of the timpani is similar to the snare drum in that it too was created for a military environment. Hannah Lim explains:

Brought to Europe by returning crusaders from the Middle East in the thirteenth century, Arabian *nakers* or *naqareh* drums are the ancestor of timpani and one of the oldest known kettledrums in the world. These drums were initially

⁸⁵ Goldenberg, Morris, and Anthony J Cirone. *Modern School for Snare Drum*. 1955. Alfred Music, 19 Sept. 2002, p. 70.

implemented for military purposes, alongside trumpets to signal the cavalry. The name ‘timpani’ originates from the Latin word ‘tympanum’ and from the Ancient Greek ‘*τύπανον*,’ meaning drum.⁸⁶

Although the timpani were deeply rooted in the military tradition for centuries, composers started writing timpani parts in Western classical music around the mid to late 1600s. One such early example is Jean Baptise Lully’s 1675 French opera, “Thésée.” In the early works of the Baroque and Classical periods, the timpani were used to accentuate and support brass, often playing 4th and 5th interval in accompaniment with the trumpets. The mechanics of the timpani in these time periods were also slightly different than the modern timpani we know and play today. They were smaller in size, had calf skin heads, and were only used in pairs of two. The pitches were set by hand cranks and could not be easily and quickly changed like modern timpani. Further development of the timpani and its role in the orchestra was completed by different composers over time, but the real expansion to four drums and pedal tuning took place in the 19th century. Although timpani are occasionally used in marching band front ensembles, the leading role of the timpani is now centered in large ensemble and orchestral playing. In fact, it is common practice for professional orchestras to have Principal Timpanists whose sole responsibility is to play the timpani parts. They are not considered a member of the percussion section. They are singular and principal members of their own section in the orchestra. With these historical and stylistic contexts in mind, it is important that an undergraduate percussion student develops specific fundamental timpani techniques to be successful in solo and large ensemble playing.

⁸⁶ Lim, Hannah. “The Surprising History of Timpani.” *Substack.com*, Percussion Around the World, 30 July 2024, percussion.substack.com/p/the-surprising-history-of-timpani, par. 2.

There are a few techniques considered fundamental to music facilitation on the timpani: legato strokes, staccato strokes, rolls, muffling, and pedaling. The membranous heads on the timpani are sensitive and require great attention to detail when striking. The legato stroke is the default stroke type used to draw the pitch and resonance out of the timpani effectively. This basic stroke is crucial in achieving the highest amount of sound quality possible. The staccato stroke utilizes a tighter grip and a quicker velocity stroke that creates clarity. This technique is useful for quick and intricate music passages. In his book, *Exercises, Etudes, and Solos for the Timpani* (1996), Raynor Carroll includes this brief discussion of the staccato stroke: “The staccato stroke is used to articulate rhythm. In contrast to the legato stroke, this attack should be sharp and short, resulting in clear and precise rhythm.”⁸⁷ Carroll’s book includes multiple pages of exercises to develop both the legato and staccato strokes on two drums in various groupings of rhythms such as eighth, sixteenth, and tripletized notes.

Rolls on the timpani are achieved not by multiple bounce strokes like the snare drum, but by quickly alternating single strokes. Given the sheer size of the drums and tension of the heads, the drums resonate much longer than a tighter headed drum like a snare or tom tom. For this reason, the approach to rolls must be different in order to achieve a roll. A good roll is characterized by moving the hands at just the right pace to achieve an optimal resonance on the drum. When players roll too fast, it results in the elimination of resonance. If the roll is too slow, it will not resonate the drum enough and will result in the clear articulation of multiple single notes as opposed to one long sound. The lower the pitch of the drum, the slower the roll. The distance from the edge or hoop of the drum can also affect the tone production when playing

⁸⁷ Carroll, Raynor. *Exercises, Etudes, and Solos for the Timpani*. Batteric Music, 1996.

rolls. In his book, *Modern Method for Tympani* (1948), Saul Goodman describes the most effective way to play rolls in relation to their dynamic marking:

As the roll increases in volume beyond *mf*, the maximum distance from the hoop should be approached...The elbows move in closer to the body, and the player should step back very slightly. This position will give the greatest amount of freedom and enable the player to produce the maximum amount of volume required. It should be remembered that in the loud roll, the forearms are used to assist the wrist and fingers.⁸⁸

When dealing with timpani head resonance, it is also important that students learn to muffle the drums in an effective manner. Muffling is achieved by pressing the pads of the fingers on the head of the drum. The placement of the fingers on different areas on the head can alter the effectiveness of the muffling itself. Mitchell Peters' book, *Fundamental Method for Timpani* (1993), contains multiple pages of muffling exercises with various rhythms, tempi, and time signatures.

The last technique that is singular to the timpani is pedaling. The pedal on the timpani does not affect the resonance of the drums like the vibraphone but instead changes the pitch. Each drum has a range of pitches available given the diameter of the drum itself. The larger the drum, the lower the pitches. Students must learn to effectively use the pedal to change the pitch of the drum. The ability to find needed pitches is deeply rooted in ear training and aural skills. In the back of his book, *Tympani Method* (1974), Haskell Harr writes multiple pages of ear-training

⁸⁸ Goodman, Saul. *Modern Method for Tympani*. Warner Bros. Publications, 1948, p. 33.

and pedaling exercises to develop students' drum tuning abilities. Many of these exercises are changing one note at a time by a half step. Others are small excerpts of commonly known folk songs. The discussion of these fundamental techniques and canonized books are important in identifying the skills that the percussion community has deemed essential to timpani studies over the course of multiple decades. Again, many of these canonized method books were written by the "founding fathers" of percussion pedagogy. The curriculum in this document is not created to slight the work of influential male pedagogues from the past but to highlight under-represented music and resources by women in the music community today. The fundamental techniques identified in the timpani curriculum pieces are legato and staccato stroke types, rolls, muffling, and pedaling. The pieces are labeled by difficulty based on the techniques utilized. The curriculum also includes general musical qualities such as tempo and style.

Chapter Three presents a comprehensive pedagogical framework for the undergraduate curriculum of woman-composed pieces for concert percussionists. This curriculum aims to expand the musical landscape for students, offering them the opportunity to engage with diverse voices and develop both technical proficiency and musical expression. A detailed discussion of the fundamentals for each core percussion instruments identifies the keys for technical and musically expressive success. The selected repertoire presented in the curriculum aligns with these fundamental skills, which provides a structured pathway for students to build their technical abilities and sense of musicality and expression. This alignment ensures that the compositions of woman-composers' are not only pedagogically viable but also essential to the technical and musically expressive development of well-rounded, capable percussionists. The inclusion of woman-composers at every stage of a percussionist's development ensures that all students, regardless of gender, find inspiration and representation in the music they perform. This

ultimately contributes to a more equitable and diverse percussion community for future generations.

CHAPTER IV

KEYBOARD CURRICULA

Marimba Curriculum Repertoire List

Each of the solos listed below are presented to meet the technical and expressive demands of the undergraduate marimbist. They are presented in graduated order of difficulty from beginner to advanced. The difficulty levels mentioned are just a starting point as all students are on their own musical timelines. The solos from each difficulty category can be used in each year of the undergraduate degree (i.e. Beginner solos for freshmen, intermediate for sophomore...etc.). An undergraduate student learns on average two-four marimba solos an academic year. An educator can select the solos below that best meet the technical, expressive, and developmental needs of each individual student at every stage of the undergraduate degree while exposing the student to women composers and their music.

Beginner

1. Title: *Kinetic Energy*
Composer: Patricia Islas
Length: 3:15
Tempo: Quarter note = 110 bpm
Style: Pop influenced/contemporary
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 4 octave
Techniques: 2-mallet
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast 7/8 meter
Recording link: https://youtu.be/Nv9PhzDfNdg?si=XGJGg_mHGM8pBfea
Purchasing link: <https://teamislasing.com/shop/momentum/>
2. Title: *Breezy*
Composer: Julia Gaines
Length: 1:39
Tempo: not given
Style: Chorale
Tonality: Tonal

Range: 4 octave

Techniques: 4-mallets, rolls

Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato

Recording link: https://youtu.be/A0vK98Mt5mg?si=Cy3QSlDV_qZUamDA

Purchasing link: <https://www.tapSPACE.com/books-education/sequential-studies-book-2>

3. Title: *Outback Suite*

Composer: Amanda Sycamore

Length: Mvt. 1. 2:00; 2. 4:00; 3. 3:00

Tempo: Mvt. 1. 100 bpm; 2. 80 bpm; 3. 170 bpm

Style: Classical art music with contemporary flair

Tonality: Tonal

Range: 4 octave

Techniques: 4-mallets, double verticals, single independent, double laterals

Expressive Qualities: free rhythm, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture

Recording link: <https://soundcloud.com/c-alanpublications/sets/outback-suite-solo-4-octave-marimba-amanda-sycamore>

Purchasing link: <https://c-alanpublications.com/outback-suite/>

4. Title: *Once Upon a Time*

Composer: Andrea Venet

Length: 5:00

Tempo: Quarter note = 60 bpm

Style: Chorale

Tonality: Tonal

Range: 4.3 octave

Techniques: 4 mallets, rolls

Expressive Qualities: free rhythm, rubato, dynamic contrast

Recording link: <https://youtu.be/VSA-VIrPrtw>

Purchasing link: <https://www.andreavenet.com/music/once-upon-a-time>

Intermediate

1. Title: *Celebration Suite*

Composer: Donna Bohn

Length: Mvt. 1. 2:30; 2. 2:30; 3. 2:30

Tempo: Quarter note = 92

Style: Classical art music with contemporary flair

Tonality: Tonal

Range: 4.3 octave

Techniques: 4 mallets, double verticals, single independent

Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture

Recording link: <https://soundcloud.com/c-alanpublications/celebration-suite-by-donna>

Purchasing link: https://c-alanpublications.com/search.php?search_query=celebration+suite

2. Title: *Afterglow*
 Composer: Jennifer Bellor
 Length: 3:00
 Tempo: Quarter note = 72
 Style: Ballade
 Tonality: Tonal/modal
 Range: 4.3 octave
 Techniques: 4 mallets, one-handed rolls, double verticals, single independent
 Expressive Qualities: free rhythm, rubato, dynamic contrast
 Recording link: <https://youtu.be/z2VT73dGnNQ>
 Purchasing link: https://www.jenniferbellor.com/?page_id=4877

3. Title: *Violet's Etude*
 Composer: Elena Katz-Chernin
 Length: 3:20
 Tempo: Half note = 128 bpm
 Style: moto-perpetuo
 Tonality: Tonal
 Range: 4.3 or 5 octave
 Techniques: 4 mallets, double verticals, single independents
 Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, homogenous & accompaniment/melody textures
 Recording link: https://youtu.be/wSdDm18G9EQ?si=JVaOD_ZyJUXAZn3I
 Purchasing link: <https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/work/katz-chernin-elena-violet-s-etude>

4. Title: *In the Sea*
 Composer: Jeanine Maddox
 Length: 5:10
 Tempo: Dotted quarter note = 58 bpm
 Style: moto-perpetuo with Japanese influence
 Tonality: Tonal
 Range: 4.5 octave
 Techniques: 4 mallets, double verticals, single independent, one handed rolls
 Expressive Qualities: free rhythm, rubato, dynamic contrast, optional improvisation, homogenous and accompaniment/melody textures
 Recording link: <https://youtu.be/TBWxpFCw0AU?si=suObb03x5BFMsJaj>
 Purchasing link: <https://c-alanpublications.com/in-the-sea-solo/>

Intermediate-Advanced

1. Title: *Wild Rose*
 Composer: Ivana Bilić
 Length: 5:20
 Tempo: Eighth note = 55 bpm
 Style: Jazz/rock/groove/art music fusion

Tonality: Tonal
Range: 5 octave
Techniques: 4-mallets, double verticals, single independent, double laterals, triple laterals
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture, highly expressive cadenza
Recording link: <https://youtu.be/q3Pnkj1IqXg?si=jaLnyzhjgS4834jK>
Purchase link: <https://editionsvitzer.com/catalog/wild-rose/c-23/p-399>

2. Title: *Over There*

Composer: Carla Bley
Length: 4:30
Tempo: Quarter note = 132 bpm
Style: Jazz waltz
Tonality: Modal
Range: 5 octave
Techniques: 4-mallets, double verticals, single independents
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, accompaniment/melody texture, extremely wide range
Recording link: https://youtu.be/9FhiVwoo9L4?si=wQLf6DEv4cAw_anz
Purchasing link: <https://www.steveweissmusic.com/product/intermediatemasterworks-for-marimba-1/marimba-solo>

3. Title: *Night Song*

Composer: Paola Prestini
Length: 6:00
Tempo: Quarter note = 60 bpm
Style: New music
Tonality: Atonal
Range: 5 octave (4 octave version available)
Techniques: 4 mallets, double verticals, single independent, one handed rolls
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, free/open barline sections, expressive flexibility
Recording link: https://soundcloud.com/paola-prestini/nightsong?utm_source=clipboard&utm_campaign=wtshare&utm_medium=widget&utm_content=https%253A%252F%252Fsoundcloud.com%252Fpaola-prestini%252Fnightsong
Purchasing link: <https://c-alanpublications.com/nightsong/>

4. Title: *Remember, Marimba*

Composer: Errollyn Wallen
Length: 6:30
Tempo: Half note = 54 bpm
Style: art music with contemporary flair
Tonality: Tonal/modal
Range: 4.3 octave

Techniques: 4 mallets, double verticals, single independent, double and triple laterals, one handed rolls

Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, frequent meter changes, accompaniment/melody and homogenous textures

Recording link: <https://youtu.be/6PC7iAnBDmE?si=ntsSSt7ac25tMZko>

Purchasing link: <https://www.steveweissmusic.com/product/intermediate-masterworks-for-marimba-2/marimba-solo>

Advanced

1. Title: *Toccata*

Composer: Anna Ignatowicz

Length: 8:30

Tempo: Quarter note = 72 bpm

Style: Art/new music

Tonality: Tonal

Range: 5 octave

Techniques: 4-mallets, double verticals, single independent, double laterals, triple laterals, one handed rolls, high percentage of inter-dependence between hands

Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody and homogenous textures

Recording link: <https://youtu.be/TCB02mWxv5A?si=yrMzjnGcscVtyQhv>

Purchasing link: <https://www.steveweissmusic.com/product/toccata-for-marimba-anna-ignatowicz/marimba-solo>

2. Title: *how sweet the thought of you as infinite*

Composer: Emma O'Halloran

Length: 7:00

Tempo: Quarter note = 85 bpm

Style: Art/new music

Tonality: Tonal

Range: 5 octave

Techniques: 4-mallets and live electronics, double verticals, single independent

Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, accompaniment/melody and homogenous textures

Recording link: <https://youtu.be/A3HYsvphIOs?si=d6RMknFzd5XKDgyd>

Purchasing link: <https://www.emma-ohalloran.com/store/how-sweet-the-thought-of-you-as-infinite>

3. Title: *Graffito*

Composer: Marta Ptasińska

Length: 11:20

Tempo: Quarter note = 80 bpm

Style: Rondo

Tonality: Atonal

Range: 4.5 or 4.3 octave

Techniques: 4-mallets, double verticals, single independent, double and triple laterals, one handed rolls

Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, free rhythm, rubato, accompaniment/melody and homogenous textures, expressive flexibility

Recording link: <https://youtu.be/wnW3BqlsAdk?si=VI33Hgow83K-y--i>

Purchasing link: <https://www.steveweissmusic.com/product/graffito-ptaszynska/marimba-solo>

4. Title: *Blue Identity*

Composer: She-e Wu

Length: 5:30

Tempo: Quarter note = 60 bpm

Style: Art music with contemporary flair

Tonality: Atonal

Range: 5 octave

Techniques: 4-mallets, double verticals, single independent, double and triple laterals, fast tempo permutations

Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody and homogenous textures, fast rhythmic sequences, multiple metric modulations

Recording link: <https://music.apple.com/au/album/blue-identity/1449479460?i=1449479470>

Purchasing link: <https://www.tapSPACE.com/marimba-xylophone/blue-identity-solo-version>

Marimba Repertoire Comparison

Now that the marimba is fully situated as a core instrument in the percussion curriculum, students are learning marimba techniques at a younger age than ever before. This means that the repertoire needs to support the musical needs, technical development, and bodies of younger students more successfully. This sub-chapter compares an older, canonized piece in the marimba solo repertoire, *Yellow After the Rain* by Mitchell Peters, to a newer piece in the repertoire, *Outback Suite* by Amanda Sycamore. Both of these pieces are categorized as solos meant to introduce and develop four mallet techniques, but the argument of this comparison is that *Outback Suite* better meets the demands of the developing marimbist today in regard to four-

mallet technique development, musical analytics, pedagogical approach, performance practice, and percussion curriculum diversification.

Yellow After the Rain by Mitchell Peters is a marimba solo that is fully embedded in percussion curriculums across the globe. Steve Weiss Music, one of the most popular percussion music and instrument distribution companies, says this about the piece in the purchase description, “Virtually an entire generation of marimbists has been introduced to four-mallet techniques with this work, and it is likely that this legacy will continue, even as a wealth of excellent material joins it in the repertoire.”⁸⁹ At the time this piece was written in 1971, collegiate percussion curricula were finally starting to embrace the marimba as a solo instrument. Peters was on the ground floor of this movement, creating a marimba solo to teach his students four mallet techniques during his long-time career as a collegiate applied percussion instructor in the state of California. The piece caught on, quickly becoming percussion educator’s “go to” beginner solo when teaching marimba. Even though the piece has garnered a reputation for being an appropriate piece for beginners, it contains several musical and technical elements that are quite difficult for introductory four-mallet marimba players.

Yellow After the Rain utilizes two primary four-mallet stroke types: double vertical and single independent stroke types. A double vertical stroke has both mallets in one hand hitting simultaneously. This technique is also known as a double stop. This technique is realized in the first four measures of the piece, having the right hand play C and F while the left hand plays D and G.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ “Peters-Yellow after the Rain-M.” Steve Weiss Music, 5 Apr. 2023, www.steveweissmusic.com/product/yellow-after-the-rain/bestsellers?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAoJC-BhCSARIsAPhdfSgWSjAyGONDQvkm-bgCw2YbCMD2hfQpicIGrHtRApt2b1qMk-lbqTgaAsE6EALw_wcB. Accessed 2 Mar. 2025.

⁹⁰ Peters, Mitchell. *Yellow after the Rain*. Mitchell Peters Publishing, 1971.



Figure #1: First line of *Yellow After the Rain*, Mitchell Peters

As the piece begins, Peters has both hands playing the same technique instead of writing the piece in such a way that allows students to develop the technique in each hand individually. As the piece continues, so does this idea of four notes being played at once by utilizing double vertical strokes.

The most challenging section of the piece is found at the end, and this 18-measure segment is even difficult for fully developed marimba players. Both hands are again playing two notes simultaneously, and Peters adds another element by having the two hands play at two different heights. The marimba has the same layout as a piano, containing the same chromatic pitches of natural (white keys) and accidental (black keys) pitches. The accidental notes that are black on a piano are suspended over the natural notes on a marimba, making them slightly higher than the natural pitches. In the last 18 measures of the piece, Peters has both hands playing combinations of natural and accidental pitches, making the section difficult to physically facilitate. The marimbist must negotiate issues of body placement, height adjustment, and note accuracy. The final ingredient in this recipe for technical disaster is the metronomic mark of quarter note = 126, making this eighth note passage exceedingly more difficult. Here is a small three measure example of this much longer and difficult section:⁹¹

⁹¹ Peters.



Figure #2: Double verticals in both hands, *Yellow After the Rain*, Mitchell Peters

As the age at which marimba is introduced to students gets younger and younger, the issues of body awareness and placement are a big hindrance when learning this piece. *Yellow After the Rain* was written for college age students, not teenagers. Teenage bodies are constantly changing, and the brain is not yet fully developed, making this piece much more difficult at the anatomic level for younger students. Many young players have not fully developed their four mallet technique, and their hands themselves are growing and developing. This can make even the act of holding four mallets at a time difficult. Many young marimbists' arms might barely be long enough to reach the accidental keys, and moving between accidental and natural keys at the same time with both hands is an exceedingly challenging task. Peters' use of double vertical strokes in *Yellow After the Rain* highlights challenges for marimbists of any age and skill level, making it extra difficult for young beginners.

It begs the question why percussion educators around the world are still using *Yellow After the Rain* as an introduction to four-mallet marimba technique when there are many compositions available that can more efficiently fill that pedagogical role. Percussion instructors play an essential role in the evaluation of repertoire they assign, ensuring it aligns with the developmental and physical needs of their students to support overall growth and achievement. It is also important that music educators be well-informed and up-to-date on the developments in the repertoire as a whole, finding new and innovative materials to meet their educational goals. The argument of this repertoire comparison is that *Outback Suite* by Amanda Sycamore better meets the demands of the developing marimbist today. Sycamore has been teaching K-12 private

lessons in percussion for over 20 years. She wrote *Outback Suite* in an attempt to fill a void in the introductory four-mallet repertory to use with her students and published it through C. Alan Publications in 2020 to share the resource with other educators. The suite contains three pieces that can be performed together or as standalone works. Each movement elicits a scene from Australia and focuses on the development of four-mallet techniques. The first piece, *Boomerang*, develops double vertical strokes and single independent strokes, *K'gari* concentrates on double lateral and double vertical strokes, and *The Never, Never* exercises musical expression through rubato and four-mallet rolls. In comparing *Yellow After the Rain* and *Outback Suite*, this comparison primarily focuses on *Boomerang* as that piece develops the same two techniques for which *Yellow After the Rain* was designed.

When comparing *Yellow After the Rain* and *Boomerang*, the easiest facet to be taken into account but also overlooked is the length of both pieces. *Yellow After the Rain* is 100 measures in length and takes approximately three minutes and twenty seconds to play in its entirety. *Boomerang* is 47 measures long and takes two minutes to perform. One might be likely to believe that a longer piece allows a developing student more time to practice technical proficiency. In reality, a longer piece can easily overstimulate a student, oversaturating a piece to the point where the player is less able to address specific technical issues and development in a concise manner. A way to get around that is by writing repetitive material; that way, the student can play longer but does not have to learn new notes as well as new techniques. Not only is *Yellow After the Rain* considerably longer in measure length, but it only has a brief section of exact repetition, making a high percentage of the piece new notes and musical material along with technical development. The form of *Yellow After the Rain* is essentially in sonata form, containing an exposition, development, and recapitulation (A-B-C-A), but Peters often does not

write exact repetition within this form. Only 18 measures of the piece are considered exact repetition. The first eight measures of section A are exactly repeated in the first eight measures of letter F.⁹²



Figure #3: Repeated sections in *Yellow After the Rain*, Mitchell Peters

In comparison, *Boomerang* contains 19 measures of exactly repeated material in the 47-measure long piece, making the repeated material a much larger percentage of the music. Sycamore utilizes the musical form to maximize repetition in her piece. The overall form of *Boomerang* is essentially in sonata form, containing an exposition, development, and recapitulation: intro-A-intro-A1-intro-B-C-intro-A-(intro) coda. The two-measure introductory theme that begins each new section is exactly repeated in the five times it occurs, giving the piece a greater sense of unity. Students are given the opportunity to mentally reset and play something they are familiar with before moving on to new material.⁹³

⁹² Peters.

⁹³ Sycamore, Amanda. *Outback Suite*. C. Alan Publications, 2020.



Figure #4: Measures First two measures of *Boomerang* by Amanda Sycamore

In addition to this repeated introduction, the A section of the piece is repeated exactly three times. A1 is only slightly different as the roles of the hands have been switched, giving the students a chance to play the melody in the left hand while the right hand plays the accompanimental material.⁹⁴



Figure #5: Repetition in A sections of *Boomerang* by Amanda Sycamore

Utilizing the same material in both hands is a powerful pedagogical tool, allowing students to develop technical proficiency in both hands at the same pace. If students play repertoire that only has the melody in the upper register and accompaniment lower, their hands will develop different techniques at different paces. This can lead to significant technical deficiencies if not addressed. Repeated sections are also useful in introducing musical expression with developing marimbists. Educators can use these repeated motives to discuss dynamic contrast, rubato, and phrasing. To keep the listener engaged, the performer can vary the artistic

⁹⁴ Sycamore.

approach to a repeated section to make the performance more dynamic. Amanda Sycamore utilizes profound pedagogical systems of repetition in her piece, *Boomerang*, making it an extremely useful piece for developing four-mallet technique and musical expression.

In comparing *Yellow After the Rain* to *Boomerang*, it is important to take tempo and rhythm into account. As addressed earlier, Peters gives *Yellow After the Rain* a metronomic mark of quarter note equals 126. Educators must consider tempo markings when teaching four-mallet technique. It is much harder to facilitate basic stroke types at higher speeds. *Yellow After the Rain* contains a 27-measure long section that employs a particular sticking combination during a constant stream of 16th notes. This extensive section contains single independent strokes that are classified as one single mallet from each hand being used. This part of the piece uses a particular repeated sticking order, which we in the percussion community call a permutation. In this case, the permutation utilizes the mallets in this particular order: mallet 1, 3, 2, then 4. Mallets are labeled from left to right: left hand - 1, 2 and right hand - 3, 4. This section extends from measure 43-69.⁹⁵



Figure #6: Measures 43-44 from *Yellow After the Rain*, Mitchell Peters

This is a lot to ask of a beginner four-mallet student for a number of reasons. This particular permutation has the hands and the mallets contained in the hands themselves alternating, making it difficult to master. Quarter note equals 126 is too brisk to learn the technique, and the section itself is too long. Techniques are best developed and practiced slowly in digestible segments to

⁹⁵ Peters.

achieve proper facilitation. Learning techniques too quickly and rushed can lead to injury, errors, and general discomfort. Peters asks too much of the developing marimbist during this 16th note section, which unfortunately takes up a large percentage of the work.

Boomerang by Amanda Sycamore is a shorter and slower piece that contains shorter rhythms in a more digestible manner than that of *Yellow After the Rain*. The shortest notes Sycamore writes are eighth notes and even then, the eighth notes are combined with an almost equal amount of quarter notes. The metronome marking is quarter note equals 100, making the piece generally more relaxed. This relaxed tempo and rhythmic make-up allows students to dive into four-mallet technique at an appropriate pace, preventing injury and technical error. Educators can see the technical facilitation in a student's playing more easily at the slower metronomic marking, making the piece a useful resource for both educators and students alike. Students are given the opportunity to develop their techniques in a relaxed and precise manner as opposed to being forced to learn a technique too quickly to facilitate a rigorous section of the music they are working on. The shorter length of *Boomerang* as compared to *Yellow After the Rain* allows students to develop their four-mallet technique with less chance of getting fatigued or injuring themselves from constant facilitation at a rushed pace. *Boomerang* better suits the pace of learning needed for young developing marimbists.

We in the percussion field have an important responsibility to seek resources that foster an inclusive environment for our students. Pedagogical material used for percussion lessons is most effective when tailored to the individual level, ensuring it meets each student's physical, technical, and developmental needs for optimal growth and success. *Outback Suite* by Amanda Sycamore better meets the needs of the young developing marimbist in regard to four-mallet technique development, musical analytics, pedagogical approach, performance practice, and

percussion curriculum diversification. Educators are encouraged to replace *Yellow After the Rain* by Mitchell Peters with *Outback Suite* as an introduction to four-mallet marimba playing in their undergraduate percussion curriculum.

The comparison between *Yellow After the Rain* by Mitchell Peters and *Outback Suite* by Amanda Sycamore not only highlights the importance of appropriate pedagogical material selection for developing marimbists but also underscores the critical issue of women's representation in the percussion repertoire. As the marimba becomes more deeply integrated into the percussion curriculum, it is essential that the pieces chosen to teach four-mallet techniques reflect the diversity of voices and perspectives within the percussion community itself. The issue with continued prioritization of works like *Yellow After the Rain* lies not just in its technical difficulty, but in its perpetuation of a largely male-dominated canon. The continued reliance on this male-composed work, while historically significant, inadvertently narrows students' exposure to the broader landscape of marimba repertoire and overlooks the groundbreaking contributions of women composers and performers, such as Keiko Abe and Vida Chenoweth, whose innovative approaches have shaped the technical, expressive, and pedagogical possibilities of the instrument. The integration of woman-composed works into the curriculum not only broadens artistic perspectives but also affirms the vital role women have played and continue to play in the evolution of marimba performance and literature. The inclusion of works composed by women, such as *Outback Suite*, into the undergraduate curriculum affirms the presence and achievements of women in percussion, which provides young women with concrete role models whose careers and compositions demonstrate that their voices belong in the field, both on stage and in the classroom.

Vibraphone Curriculum Repertoire List

Each of the solos listed below are presented to meet the technical and expressive demands of the undergraduate vibraphone player. They are presented in graduated order of difficulty from beginner to advanced. The difficulty levels mentioned are just a starting point as all students are on their own musical timelines. The vibraphone is not usually given as much emphasis in the undergraduate percussion curriculum as the marimba. That said, students are often required to play vibraphone in large ensembles and study solo vibraphone during their undergraduate study. An educator can select the solos below that best meet the technical, expressive, and developmental needs of each individual student at any given stage of the undergraduate degree while exposing the student to women composers and their music.

Beginner

1. Title: *Where the Sun Meets the Sea*
Composer: Mo Longo
Length: 5:15
Tempo: Quarter note = 124 bpm
Style: Waltz
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, minimal pedal indications
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture
Recording link: <https://soundcloud.com/molongomusic/where-the-sun-meets-the-sea>
Purchasing link: <https://molongomusic.com/b/where-the-sun-meets-the-sea>
2. Title: *On a Sunday*
Composer: Julie Davila
Length: 1:35
Tempo: Free time
Style: Ballade
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itWl7UR268E>
Purchasing link: <https://rowloff.com/product/inspirations-4-mallets/>

3. Title: *October Day*
 Composer: Ginger Zyskowski
 Length 2:24
 Tempo: Quarter note = 112 bpm
 Style: Waltz
 Tonality: Tonal
 Range: 3 octave
 Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, no pedal indications
 Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture
 Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i2BSOGelCU>
 Purchasing link: <https://c-alanpublications.com/october-day-song-for-simon/>

4. Title: *As She Sleeps*
 Composer: Julie Davila
 Length: 2:16
 Tempo: Quarter note = 90 bpm
 Style: Contemporary art music
 Tonality: Tonal
 Range: 3 octave
 Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, pedaling
 Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture
 Recording link: <https://youtu.be/52mjGMV7S3k?si=8OJ8NZzSu0dB81lT>
 Purchasing link: <https://rowloff.com/product/as-she-sleeps/>

Intermediate

1. Title: *Cerulean Blue*
 Composer: Jessica Flannigan
 Length: 4:00
 Tempo: Quarter note = 60 bpm
 Style: Contemporary art music
 Tonality: Tonal
 Range: 3 octave
 Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, 4-1-3-2 permutation, freedom for mallet and pedaling experimentation
 Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, free time, homogenous texture
 Recording link: <https://soundcloud.com/c-alanpublications/cerulean-blue>
 Purchasing link: <https://c-alanpublications.com/cerulean-blue/>

2. Title: *Lullaby for Maj*
 Composer: Ginger Zyskowski
 Length: 2:00
 Tempo: Eighth note = 112-120

Style: Lullaby
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, mallet dampening, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture
Recording link: <https://soundcloud.com/c-alanpublications/lullaby-for-maj-by-ginger>
Purchasing link: <https://c-alanpublications.com/lullaby-for-maj/>

3. Title: *Poppy's Polka*
Composer: Elena Katz-Chernin
Length: 2:30
Tempo: Quarter note = 100 bpm
Style: Art music
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, mallet dampening, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iy654mG3Bw>
Purchasing link: <https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/workversion/kats-chernin-elena-poppy-s-polka/36015>
4. Title: *Kyle's Song*
Composer: Ginger Zyskowski
Length: 2:26
Tempo: not indicated
Style: Waltz
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, mallet dampening, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, busy accompaniment/melody texture
Recording link: <https://soundcloud.com/c-alanpublications/lullaby-for-maj-by-ginger>
Purchasing link: <https://c-alanpublications.com/lullaby-for-maj/>

Intermediate-Advanced

1. Title: *Still a Mystery*
Composer: Jane K
Length: 3:55
Tempo: Quarter note = 68 bpm
Style: Jazz ballade
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, mallet shaft playing, mallet dampening, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, free time, accompaniment/melody texture
Recording link: <https://soundcloud.com/c-alanpublications>

Purchasing link: <https://c-alanpublications.com/still-a-mystery/>

2. Title: *Strobilanthes*
Composer: Andrea Venet
Length: 6:30
Tempo: Quarter note = 120
Style: Groove-based art music
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, double laterals, mallet dampening, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: odd meter, dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody and homogenous, and moto-perpetuo textures, contrasting slow and fast sections
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFV2NSnA37c>
Purchasing link: <https://www.andreavenet.com/music/strobilanthes>
3. Title: *The World is Orange*
Composer: Helen Caddick
Length: 2:20
Tempo: Quarter note = 52
Style: New music
Tonality: Atonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, mallet dampening, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, homogenous texture, room for expressive flexibility
Recording link: <https://www.instagram.com/ocupercussion/reel/C5Em0NaAEio/>
Purchasing link: <https://composersedition.com/helen-caddick-the-world-is-an-orange/>
4. Title: *Clouds*
Composer: Linda Catlin Smith
Length: 2:20
Tempo: Quarter note = 56
Style: New music
Tonality: Atonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, mallet dampening, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, homogenous texture, room for expressive flexibility
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oi7GizuxN4k>
Purchasing link: <https://composersedition.com/linda-catlin-smith-clouds/>

Advanced

1. Title: *Stone Mosaic*
Composer: Anna Ignatowicz
Length: 7:00-8:00
Tempo: Quarter note = 76
Style: Contemporary art music
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, double and triple laterals, mallet dampening, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, dense accompaniment/melody and homogenous textures
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73yeN1PF3Kc>
Purchasing link: <https://www.percussion-brandt.de/Ignatowicz-Anna-Kamienna-mozaika/-Stone-mosaic-for-Vibraphone-Solo/en>
2. Title: *Mirroring*
Composer: Alice Chase
Length: 5:15
Tempo: Quarter note = 60 bpm
Style: Contemporary groove-based art music
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, double and triple laterals, mallet dampening, pedaling, mallet shaft playing
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato accompaniment/melody texture, quick transitions between mallet heads and shafts
Recording link: https://youtu.be/cEhX1m_NS3s?si=ye2pMIpsMFn5b_gY
Purchasing link: <https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/workversion/chance-alice-mirroring/37743>
3. Title: *Mallards and Sea Turtles: For Neel Foon*
Composer: Sasha Berliner
Length: 5:30
Tempo: Quarter note = 94
Style: Moto-perpetuo/jazz/art music
Tonality: Tonal
Range: 3 octave
Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, mallet dampening, pedaling
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, rubato, moto-perpetuo texture
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fN81ATAmmys>

Purchasing link: <https://www.sashaberlinermusic.com/shop-1/mallards-and-sea-turtles-sheet-music-mp3-composers-notes>

4. Title: *V*

Composer: Juri Seo

Length: 8:00

Tempo: Quarter note = 50

Style: New music

Tonality: Atonal

Range: 3 octave

Techniques: 4-mallet, double verticals, single independents, double laterals, triple laterals, mallet dampening, pedaling

Expressive Qualities: Multiple contrasting movements, frequent meter and tempo changes, dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody and homogenous, and moto-perpetuo textures

Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5ihE1BOYqU>

Purchasing link: <https://www.juriseomusic.com/store/v>

Vibraphone Repertoire Comparison

Vibraphone instruction commonly takes place in undergraduate curriculums within the end of the second or beginning of the third year of the percussion degree. By that time, students have been studying fundamental four mallet techniques and general musical expressive skills for two years at the collegiate level through their education on marimba. In this way, students have a strong foundation to work from when introduced to the vibraphone and the unique techniques the instrument offers. This repertoire comparison features two vibraphone pieces: *Waltz King* by Bill Molenhof and *Kyle's Song* by Ginger Zyskowski. Both pieces are of a similar difficulty level, utilize the same techniques, are of similar length, style, and are beautifully lyrical. The argument of this comparison is not to say that one piece is inherently better or more useful for vibraphone instruction than the other. In fact, these pieces are too similar to make that kind of a comparison. The suggestion is that educators consider incorporating the woman-composed work into their curriculum, as it meets the same educational demands as the piece composed by a man. This would provide an opportunity for students and educators alike to be exposed to more woman-

composed pieces, creating a more diverse and equitable curriculum for undergraduate percussion students. This sub-chapter includes information on the composers of both pieces, in-depth score comparisons of both musical and technical qualities, and a call to action to play Zyskowski's piece when selecting curriculum for undergraduate vibraphonists.

Bill Molenhof is a percussion performer and composer currently living in Argentina. He has written over 200 works for percussion instruments, many of which are considered cannon pieces in our repertoire. As a previous student and associate of the great vibraphonist, Gary Burton, Molenhof situated himself as a prominent figure in vibraphone composition in the 1970s. At that time, formalized degrees in percussion were just starting to make traction in higher education. Many pieces were written to fill the void of repertoire that was needed to properly meet the demands of collegiate students. Attempting to fill this void himself, Molenhof wrote a collection of six Grade V vibraphone solos entitled, "Music of the Day" in 1977. This collection is an early example of fully scored and composed pieces for vibraphone. It was more common during the 1970s to teach vibraphone as a vehicle for jazz improvisation and accompaniment. That reality is still true today, but the vibraphone has also evolved into a solo instrument in its own right over the last few decades. Molenhof bridges the gap between jazz and solo art music in his collection, writing the pieces in a fully scored and soloistic format while utilizing the harmonic language of the jazz idiom.

Waltz King is the second piece in the "Music of the Day" collection. Molenhof wrote all the pieces at a Grade V difficulty level. Level V is designated as a piece of music that employs a wide range of musical expression and techniques at around an intermediate-advanced level. By this point, those playing the piece have already learned a large amount of foundational material for keyboard instruments. The things students are more likely to need developed are those skills

that particularly pertain to the vibraphone, including mallet dampening and pedaling. *Waltz King* is a relatively short piece, only taking approximately two minutes and thirty seconds to perform. As the name suggests, the music is set in a waltz ballade style, and players are given a great amount of flexibility to incorporate rubato in left-hand accompaniment and right-hand melody texture. The form of the piece is quite simple and repetitive: introduction, AABA, coda. This form essentially creates an arc shape where the beginning and end are more mellow, and the middle of the piece has more energy. With the exception of the last measure of the piece, pedaling is left up to the performer. There are only three measures that contain mallet dampening suggestions, two of which are in the introduction and one noted in the last chord of the piece. The rhythmic texture of the piece is quite simple; the left hand plays the same two eighth notes and a half note rhythm throughout the whole composition, only deviating slightly in a few measures to add length. Here, a score example of the first four bars of A that clearly shows the rhythmic language that is found throughout the entire work. A score sample of section A can be found in figure #7 below.

The harmonic language is the biggest difference when comparing *Waltz King* and *Kyle's Song*. Both utilize chords that are typically associated with jazz, but Molenhof's harmony in *Waltz King* changes more frequently as compared to *Kyle's Song*. There is a trade off in that the rhythms are slightly simpler in Molenhof's composition, but the harmonic language is not. A harmonic analysis of the A section of *Waltz King* shows that the harmony is intricate yet creates a simplistic and pleasing sound. The harmony changes every measure and is as follows: C, Ab+7, Am7, C7, Fsus2, Fm, Em7, A7, F#dim, Am, F#dim, C, G7, C, G7. Again, that is a large

amount of harmonic motion happening under a simple melody. A score sample of the A section is included here.⁹⁶



Figure #7: Section A harmonic analysis in *Waltz King*, Bill Molenhof

The mixture of the complex harmony and the simplistic soaring melody creates a beautiful piece that is easily accessible for performers. There are only two four-mallet techniques utilized in this piece as well as *Kyle's Song*, and that is double vertical and single independent strokes. Bill Molenhof's piece, *Waltz King*, is a canonized work for vibraphone curricula, but it is important to note that there are many other pieces, *Kyle's Song* included, that have not seen as much traction that meet the same musical and developmental goals.

The composer of *Kyle's Song*, Ginger Zyskowski, is a retired freelance percussion performer, composer, and educator. She spent most of her career in the state of Kansas, performing in regional symphonies and teaching lessons at high schools and Kansas colleges, including Central Christian College, Sterling College, and Hutchinson Community College. *Kyle's Song* is one of four compositions Zyskowski has written for the vibraphone. As much of

⁹⁶ Molenhof, Bill. *Music of the Day*. Kendor Music Inc., 1977.

her experience has been in the education of developing percussionists, it is no surprise that her compositions are written in that same framework of artistic development. Although her pieces are written to be accessible for the less experienced keyboardists, the compositions themselves are extremely lyrical and would fit well on a percussion recital at any level.

Kyle's Song is similar to Bill Molenhof's piece, *Waltz King*, in a myriad of ways: it is written in the same waltz ballade style, it is the same length at 2:30 seconds, it utilizes the same double vertical and single independent four mallet stroke types, it is set in the same left hand accompaniment and right hand melody texture, and the form of the piece also follows a general arc shape. Again, the main difference between the two pieces is the composers' use and pacing of harmony. Molenhof changes the harmony every measure. Zyskowski's use of harmony is much more simplistic. *Kyle's Song* trades two chords back and forth throughout the entire piece: G6 and Amaj7. Each of these chords is played two measures at a time. As the piece progresses, the melody grows busier with added embellishments such as right-hand octaves, triplets, and dotted rhythms. Here are the first three lines of the score. It is clear that the harmony is following the same two bar trend while the melody gradually builds above it.⁹⁷



Figure #8: Harmonic analysis of *Kyle's Song* by Ginger Zyskowski

⁹⁷ Zyskowski, Ginger. *Kyle's Song*. C. Alan Publications, 1999.

Zyskowski gives pedal indications for the first four measures to set the tone and then leaves the rest of the pedaling up to the performer. In the case of both *Waltz King* and *Kyle's Song*, the performer is given a high amount of artistic freedom. The lack of pedaling and mallet dampening indications allows the opportunity for educators to teach these skills from a place of music expression and facilitation as opposed to the student doing what is written without critically thinking about the reasoning behind the score indications.

Each of these pieces is extremely beautiful and has great musical and technical developmental qualities. Unfortunately, the reality is that Zyskowski's music has been overlooked and not played as often compared to Molenhof's. There are many reasons why this happened, including but not limited to the many things that have been mentioned in this document in earlier chapters such as instrument gendering, a lack of female role-modeling, and a general lack of representation of women composed music in percussion curriculums over the course of multiple decades. Although *Waltz King* was composed significantly earlier (1977) as compared to *Kyle's Song* (1999), both pieces have been in existence for multiple decades now and have had ample time to gain traction in the percussion community. Unfortunately, Zyskowski's piece has not received the momentum that Molenhof's has. To put this sad truth into perspective, there are 35 YouTube recordings of *Waltz King* and one recording of *Kyle's Song*. That single recording of Zyskowski's piece is only audio and does not have any visual footage. How is it that two pieces that are so similar and have essentially the same educational content have been played at drastically different rates? This is why it is of the utmost importance that educators frequently evaluate their curricula with an eye for diverse exposure for their students. Ginger Zyskowski's piece, *Kyle's Song*, would make a great addition to any vibraphone curriculum and would serve the same educational demands that the canonized male-composed

piece, *Waltz King*, does. By teaching Zyskowski's piece to vibraphone students, educators expose their students to more woman-composed pieces, creating a more diverse and equitable curriculum that better reflects the demographic of their percussion studio members.

The comparison of *Waltz King* by Bill Molenhof and *Kyle's Song* by Ginger Zyskowski highlights an important issue in women's representation in music, particularly in the context of percussion education. While both pieces are musically and technically similar, *Waltz King* is far more commonly included by educators in percussion curricula, overshadowing *Kyle's Song*, which has not been as widely recognized despite its similar pedagogical value. This disparity is indicative of a broader trend where woman-composers are often overlooked in favor of their male counterparts, even when their works meet the same educational goals. The inclusion of more works by woman-composers like Zyskowski can create a more inclusive and equitable curriculum that reflects the diverse voices of the percussion community.

Chapter Four presents and examines an undergraduate percussion curriculum focused on works by women composers for marimba and vibraphone. Although historically underrepresented, women have made vital artistic and pedagogical contributions to the field. This curriculum supports technical growth and artistic expression while advancing a more inclusive and diverse model of percussion education. While traditional works by earlier male composers remain valuable, exclusive reliance on them can narrow both educational scope and representation. Incorporating pieces like *Kyle's Song* by Ginger Zyskowski enriches students' technical and musical development while introducing them to a broader range of compositional voices. By aligning contemporary works with core technical and musical skills, the curriculum equips educators with a practical framework to modernize their repertoire and teaching approaches. For younger students, engaging with accessible contemporary pieces like *Outback*

Suite encourages creativity, sharpens rhythmic accuracy, and deepens interpretive skills.

Grounding technical instruction in age-appropriate, expressive music not only builds essential competencies such as four-mallet technique but also fosters confidence and personal connection to the instrument.

CHAPTER V

NON-PITCHED PERCUSSION CURRICULA

As mentioned in previous chapters, instrument gendering has had an immense impact on the current state of women in percussion. Since countless women over multiple decades have been discouraged by society from playing instruments such as snare drum and timpani, it is no surprise that there is a shortage of woman-composed pieces for those instruments. Although more women than ever are writing music for percussion, there is still a drastic lack of representation in snare and timpani composition as compared to other instruments. Women are more likely to write music for keyboard instruments as those instruments were deemed “feminine” and thus more socially acceptable for women to play than their non-pitched counterparts. The marimba was also reinvented as a solo instrument thanks to the prolific careers of women such as Keiko Abe and Vida Chenoweth. Given that both snare drum and timpani were associated with masculine activities like war, it is no surprise that a higher percentage of males compose for and perform for these instruments even today. Due to this unfortunate reality, there are fewer women-composed compositions for snare drum and timpani included in this document as opposed to keyboard compositions. This has also highlighted a disparity of compositions at certain difficulty levels. Women are writing more advanced solos for non-pitched instruments than they are for easy or intermediate stages. This may be because women feel they can express their artistry as composers more fully through advanced and extended techniques. The reasoning behind this level of disparity is not clear and would need more in-depth research to make any factual claims. One certainty is that women lack representation at all levels of snare drum and timpani composition compared to their male counterparts.

Snare Drum Curriculum Repertoire List

Beginner

1. Title: *Roll Basis For Your Consideration*
Composer: Chelsea Tinsler Jones
Length: 1:25
Tempo: Quarter note = 90 bpm
Style: Orchestral
Techniques: Multiple bounce rolls, playing on rim, snares on and off
Expressive Qualities: Duet or play-along track, dynamic contrast
Recording link: <https://soundcloud.com/tapspacedpublications/level-8-roll-basis-for-your>
Purchasing link: <https://www.tapspace.com/books-education/level-up>

Intermediate

1. Title: *Breaking Borders*
Composer: Julie Davila
Length: 2:00
Tempo: Half note = 128 bpm
Style: Rudimental
Techniques: Multiple and double bounce rolls, playing on rim and shell, basic rudiments such as flams, ruffs
Expressive Qualities: Play along track, dynamic contrast, multiple metric modulations, use of cowbell
Recording link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxBR8t_c1mk
Purchasing link: <https://rowloff.com/product/breaking-borders/>
2. Title: *Translations*
Composer: Elizabeth DeLamater
Length: 5:13
Tempo: Quarter note = 110 bpm
Style: Orchestral/Ewe Gahu influences
Techniques: Multiple bounce rolls, playing on rim and shell, rim shots, cross sticking
Expressive Qualities: dynamic contrast, non-Western rhythms common for the sabar and jembe
Recording link: https://youtu.be/_XBpOBXFFGw?si=gSE7P1wKEoNZhcl6
Purchasing link: <https://www.elizabethdelamater.com/store/translations-for-solo-snare-drum>

Intermediate-Advanced

3. Title: *Kamelion*
Composer: Andrea Venet
Length: 3:30
Tempo: Quarter note = 130 bpm

Style: Rudimental/orchestral

Techniques: Multiple and double bounce rolls, snares on and off, cross stick, use of multiple basic rudiments

Expressive Qualities: Written to be played on 5-snare unit strainer, dynamic contrast, multiple contrasting sections

Recording link: <https://youtu.be/KhS1lr4M8y0?si=7ZUrggv0WJttwrQa>

Purchasing link: <https://www.andreavenet.com/music/kamelion>

2. Title: *Explorations of a Drum*

Composer: Da Jaeong Choi

Length: 5:30

Tempo: Quarter note = 96 bpm

Style: Orchestral/contemporary

Techniques: Multiple bounce rolls, playing on rim and shell, use of fingers, palm, and fist of hand

Expressive Qualities: Three contrasting movements, dynamic contrast, quick rhythmic passages within multiple meter changes

Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0CPSBWo99w>

Purchasing link: <https://www.steveweissmusic.com/product/1128793/snare-drum-solo?srsId=AfmBOorGtU4nQaRX6L3LLfiR11I2497mjq94vmGkYjXETiRCUnyIiosz#ful>

3. Title: *Start*

Composer: Hannah Lash

Length: 7:00

Tempo: Quarter note = 120

Style: Orchestral/contemporary

Techniques: Use of multiple implements such as sticks, brushes, chopsticks, and fingers.

Expressive Qualities: Dynamic contrast, theme and variation on basic rhythmic idea.

Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWYn2lnvV68>

Purchasing link: <https://www.eamdc.com/psny/composers/hannah-lash/works/start/>

Advanced

1. Title: *Psalm 2 for Snare Drum*

Composer: Sarah Hennies

Length: 12:00

Tempo: Quarter note = 120 bpm

Style: Contemporary

Techniques: Single strokes, drum muting with hand and objects

Expressive Qualities: The same rhythm is played for the entire piece, changing the timbre and muting of the drum over a prolonged period of time

Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnmi4lfPsbk>

Purchasing link: <https://www.sarah-hennies.com/store/psalms-2-for-snare-drum>

2. Title: *Monologue*

Composer: She-e Wu

Length: 3:00

Tempo: Eight note = 160 bpm

Style: Orchestral/contemporary

Techniques: Multiple bounce and double stroke rolls, playing on rim, rim shot, flams and ruffs at fast tempos

Expressive Qualities: Open free cadenza at the beginning, dynamic contrast, quick rhythmic passages with intricate embellishments

Recording link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUw_RByZZaQ

Purchasing link: https://www.steveweissmusic.com/product/wu-monologue/snare-drum-solo?srsltid=AfmBOooJhlQqqNJSLOzpLrWO9aFjQ4LETOKw90zhmoj_bii5fLhDqc3V

3. Title: *Rain*

Composer: Kate Moore

Length: 8:15

Tempo: Quarter note = 120

Style: Orchestral/rudimental/contemporary

Techniques: Multiple bounce and double stroke rolls, playing on rim, use of fingers and palm of the hand

Expressive Qualities: Improvisation, dynamic contrast, timbral contrast with use of hand techniques

Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtd0qriFcj0>

Purchasing link: <https://www.steveweissmusic.com/product/moore-k-rain/snare-drum-solo?srsltid=AfmBOooPnpD2suFfVnqX1CBgkDbgBxyJrpDhWLQ4ajGF4ut4p9Gotfy8>

4. Title: *The Far Night.fm*

Composer: Nicole Lizee

Length: 7:00

Tempo: Not available

Style: Contemporary

Techniques: Live electronics

Expressive Qualities: Improvisatory soundscape

Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3s2G9OtwEDo&t=162s>

Purchasing link: <https://www.nicolelizee.com/works>

5. Title: *Skinscape IV*

Composer: Bekah Simms

Length: 7:24

Tempo: Not available

Style: Contemporary

Techniques: Amplified snare drum and live electronics, muting with arm, reeds as implements

Expressive Qualities: Improvisatory soundscape

Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZI8h7Yvmy0&t=47s>

Purchasing link: <http://www.bekahsimms.com/index.php?id=works.html>

6. Title: *Ghost in the Machine*
Composer: Amy Beth Kirsten
Length: 7:42
Tempo: Quarter note = 60
Style: Contemporary
Techniques: Amplified snare drum, muting with hands, triangle, shot and wine glass, multiple implements such as xylophone and timpani mallets, knitting needles, rutes, and hands
Expressive Qualities: Dynamic contrast, improvisation, maximization of each implement combination
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGEPoOc5fc4&t=80s>
Purchasing link: <https://www.amybethkirsten.com/inventory/ghost-in-the-machine-for-amplified-snare>

7. Title: *Negative Magic*
Composer: Tonia Ko
Length: 9:00
Tempo: Quarter note = 60
Style: Contemporary
Techniques: Snare drum and optional electronics, multiple bounce rolls, muting with timpani mallet head, pitch bending, rim shots, playing on rim, both implements in one hand, head scraping with nails
Expressive Qualities: Dynamic contrast, rubato, artistic freedom and improvisational sections
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8TS4trPeLg>
Purchasing link: <https://toniako.com/works/negative-magic>

8. Title: *Heart.throb*
Composer: Nina C. Young
Length: 11:30
Tempo: Quarter note = 60
Style: Contemporary
Techniques: Snare drum and live electronics, muting with mallet head, brushes, sticks, playing on rim, specific beating spots indicated
Expressive Qualities: Dynamic contrast, rubato, artistic freedom and improvisational sections
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqpqF9ZKgxI>
Purchasing link: <https://www.ninacyoung.com/works/heart-throb.html>

Snare Drum Repertoire Comparison

Many percussion pedagogues consider the snare drum the heart of percussion studies.

Students learn many fundamental techniques and music facilitative skills that can be applied to

more instruments as they progress in their education. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that undergraduate percussion students continually study snare drum throughout their degrees. It is also crucial for educators to stay up to date on resources to develop their students' snare drum playing and by extension, their general musical facilitation. This sub-chapter will compare two educational resources for snare drum. One is male composed, canonized, and composed in 1988. The other is composed by a woman in 2021. Both of these resources are intended for the early development of snare drummers and are meant to address the specific technique of multiple bounce rolls. The argument of this repertoire comparison is that the woman-composed piece is in many ways better suited to meet the demands of a developing snare drummer. The topics of discussion when making this argument are compositional titles, the educational comparison of a duet versus a solo, and the importance of up-to-date educational resources in an undergraduate percussion curriculum. The two repertoire comparison pieces are *Study #70* from “Elementary Snare Drum Studies” by Mitchell Peters and *Roll Basis For Your Consideration* from Chelsea Tinsler Jones’ book, “Level Up!”

Both pieces by Peters and Tinsler Jones are short and almost exactly the same length. *Study #70* is 28 measures in length, and *Roll Basis For Your Consideration* is 32 measures long. Both pieces are written to develop 16th note based multiple bounce rolls. When facilitating multiple bounce rolls, it is common practice to move the arms at particular subdivisions like eighth, sixteenth, sextuplet, or thirty-second notes to achieve proper flow and even rolls within a piece. To practice this technique, many developmental exercises and pieces contain the same rhythm: first without rolls, then the same material with rolls indicated. This helps the student

recognize that the pacing of the arm motion is the same with and without rolls. Tinsler Jones provided this useful diagram above her piece, *Roll Basis for Your Consideration*.⁹⁸



Figure #9: Roll diagram above *Roll Basis for Your Consideration* by Chelsea Tinsler

This diagram is an extremely clear and useful illustration of 16th note roll bases and what they look like in a musical context. This is just one example of a more modern, useful resource that educators can utilize in their snare drum instruction.

There is a major difference between the pieces by Peters and Tinsler Jones. *Roll Basis for Your Consideration* is a duet, whereas *Study #70* is a solo. One may be tempted to dismiss a duet when teaching individual lessons, but there are many benefits to utilizing duets in applied instruction. Chelsea Tinsler Jones is a freelance percussion performer, arts administrator, and music educator currently teaching at Utah Valley University. Her position as a private studio instructor since 2009 allowed her the unique insight to create a snare drum etude book to meet the needs of developing percussionists entitled, “Level Up! 15 Sequential Duets for the Developing Snare Drummer.” Tinsler Jones included many useful resources that go along with her book. Each piece has both a reference recording of the full composition as well as play along tracks for both duet parts. This means that an individual student can play one of these pieces by themselves, playing along to the tracks that Tinsler Jones incorporated. This can be an incredibly

⁹⁸ Tinsler Jones, Chelsea. *Level Up!* TapSPACE Publications, 2021.

useful practice for students. Not only can they learn each part separately, but they can simulate the experience of playing with others. Although a large emphasis is given to solo playing in individual study, a higher percentage of performance experiences undergraduate students have is playing with other musicians in large ensembles, jazz combos, chamber groups, and more. Utilizing Tinsler Jones' book allows teachers to improve and reinforce skills that are needed to play with others. These skills include listening, time keeping, and dynamic contrast. Another opportunity that is important to consider is for teachers to play along with their students. This is a great way to role model proper comportment and skills with students. For educators who are women, it is one more opportunity for gender role modeling in an educational and performative setting. Students are able to understand concepts in a new way by having them demonstrated by their instructors while playing along with them. It can also be a fun change of pace. Given that Tinsler Jones' book is written for the developing snare drummer, some of the duets may be easier for students than others. For those pieces that are much easier than the student's current playing level, instructors can use these duets as fun exercises in sight reading. Chelsea Tinsler Jones' book, *Level Up! 15 Sequential Duets for the Developing Snare Drummer*, is a valuable educational resource for percussion educators to consider adding to their curriculum.

Study #70 is one of 79 short etudes from Mitchell Peters' book, "Elementary Snare Drum Studies." This book is meant to cover most of the fundamental skills needed to facilitate the snare drum. These include the ability to count and play basic rhythms such as whole, half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes along with their rests. The book also covers techniques specific to the snare drum, including flams, ruffs, paradiddles, and multiple bounce rolls. The book contains a series of exercises to introduce a technique, which are then followed by a "study" or etude that allows the student to perform said techniques. This is a no frills, direct

approach to snare drum development that many educators have used for decades. There are certain skills and resources that this book lacks as compared to Tinsler Jones' book. None of the 79 studies contain any dynamic or tempo markings. These studies are strictly written to give students the opportunity to develop certain techniques through repetition. There are many advantages to teaching techniques within a tempo and dynamic framework though. Snare drummers have to change their technique slightly to accommodate certain fast or slow tempos as well as loud or soft dynamics. It is important that students develop their technical facilitation at various tempos and dynamic levels as any real pieces of music they play, either at the individual or ensemble level, will contain these musical elements. To illustrate the difference between the lack of dynamic and tempo information between *Study #70* and *Roll Basis for Your Consideration*, the first line of each piece has been included here.⁹⁹



Figure #10: First two measures of *Study #70* by Mitchell Peters



Figure #11: First four measures of *Roll Basis for Your Consideration* by Chelsea Tinsler Jones

One vital difference is the fact that *Roll Basis for Your Consideration* is an actual title, whereas *Study #70* is not. Tinsler Jones' addition of titles for the compositions in her book

⁹⁹ Peters, Mitchell. *Elementary Snare Drum Studies*. TRY Publishing, 1988.

affords these pieces more legitimacy, allowing them to be played in State Solo Contests. Studies or etudes are often not deemed appropriate for these performance opportunities as they do not have official titles. Students are also more likely to feel more of a sense of ownership and willingness to perform with a full-fledged piece that has a title.

Both *Study #70* and *Roll Basis for Your Consideration* are valuable resources for educators when teaching snare drum to developing percussionists. The key difference is that Mitchell Peters' book and the etudes within are bare bone, canonized, and older resource as compared to Chelsea Tinsler Jones' book. The use of "Level Up! 15 Sequential Duets for the Developing Snare Drummer" allows educators to role model and teach fundamental snare drum techniques within a tempo and dynamic framework and allows students to simulate the experience of playing with others with reference and play-along recordings. This illustrates the importance of having up-to-date resources for undergraduate percussion curricula. Although the Peters' book is still useful and had its place in the canon for decades, Tinsler Jones' book is just as useful if not more so due to the added resources. Utilizing her book exposes developing snare drummers to woman-composed compositions within a woman authored book. This is an important part of the developmental process, showing students that women are relevant at all levels of percussion instruction and composition. "Level Up! 15 Sequential Duets for the Developing Snare Drummer" by Chelsea Tinsler Jones is an invaluable resource for the undergraduate snare drum curriculum. The utilization of Tinsler Jones' book enhances students' educational experience by offering a structured, progressive approach to snare drum technique while also providing students with a diverse, inclusive perspective that underscores the importance of women's contributions to percussion education and composition.

Timpani Curriculum Repertoire List

Women are also not writing nearly as many timpani pieces in comparison to keyboards. Notably, timpani solo writing is the least prolific in comparison to the other core percussion curriculum instruments. To give an example, Steve Weiss Music has a total of 1,634 marimba solos in their catalogue but only 338 timpani solos. Given the drastic lack of timpani works as compared to keyboard, it is no surprise that there are even less woman-composed timpani pieces. Notably, the representation of women in timpani writing is extremely low as compared to men, even when the total numbers are lower than other instruments. Given the parameters of the repertoire listed, there were pieces that did not have reference recordings and were thus left out of the timpani curriculum. These pieces are *Toccata for Timpani* by Emma Lou Diemer and *International Style Etudes vol. 1 & 2* by Marilyn Rife. Educators are encouraged to explore these compositions when adding woman-composed works to their undergraduate percussion curricula.

Intermediate

1. Title: *Tension/Release*
Composer: Jessica Flannigan
Length: 3:10
Tempo: Quarter note = 95 bpm
Style: Orchestral/Art music
Instrumentation: Four timpani
Techniques: Rolls, legato and staccato strokes, pitch changes while playing, hand muting, playing with mallet shaft, center and edge beating spots, glissandi
Expressive Qualities: Dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture between hands
Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJIClGben-s>
Purchasing link: <https://c-alanpublications.com/tension-release/>
2. Title: *Declaration, Song, and Dance*
Composer: Kristen Shiner McGuire
Length: Three movements, 11:00
Tempo: Not indicated
Style: Orchestral/Art music
Instrumentation: Four timpani

Techniques: Rolls, legato and staccato strokes, high amount of pitch changes, mallet shafts and hands

Expressive Qualities: Dynamic contrast, rubato, accompaniment/melody texture between hands as well as homogenous textures, improvisation

Recording link: <https://youtu.be/pxRCTcxIx00?si=Y0LbVcEu7khKW24A>

Purchasing link: https://www.alfred.com/declaration-song-and-dance/p/36-10630491/?srsltid=AfmBOoowCdcv-BcDHqxb_xqju2oyiH8PlNCGaT7E96TrEI6Vd8HuySwX

3. Title: *Rhythmic Chants*

Composer: Marilyn Rife

Length: Three movements, 6:45

Tempo: Quarter note = 130

Style: Orchestral/Art music

Instrumentation: Four timpani

Techniques: Rolls, legato and staccato strokes, pitch changes, playing with hands

Expressive Qualities: Dynamic contrast, rubato

Recording link: https://youtu.be/NSPCkPLHJkc?si=_MWG94McOI0cFjwc

Purchasing link: https://www.steveweissmusic.com/product/9882/timpani-solo?srsltid=AfmBOooiBG3RA9Cg781iBfoCCQQRahlH_2hL-Psbm-qItpQqyk2dduCi

4. Title: *Quatre/Quatre*

Composer: Nancy Zeltsman

Length: Four movements, 6:45

Tempo: Half note = 54

Style: Orchestral/Art music

Instrumentation: Four timpani

Techniques: Rolls, legato and staccato strokes, high amount of pitch changes, muting,

Expressive Qualities: Dynamic contrast, rubato, expressive flexibility playing with hands

Recording link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMsyG3SKcgE&t=18s>

Purchasing link: <https://editionsvitser.com/catalog/quatre-quatre/c-23/p-304>

Timpani Repertoire Comparison

The lack of solo timpani repertoire as compared to the other core percussion instruments has created an educational environment that promotes the repeated performance of a small selection of pieces as opposed to a wide variety. A handful of timpani solos composed during the early years of percussion education between 1940 and 1960 are still played just as frequently, if not more so, in modern percussion studios as they were when originally written. One of these canonized collections is Elliot Carter's "Eight Pieces for Timpani" (1949). This collection is

arguably the most famous and frequently performed work for solo timpani in existence. Each piece within the collection was written for a particular timpani performer of the time period and contains techniques that were unheard of prior to their composition. A favorite piece within the collection that this repertoire comparison will focus on is the final movement, *VIII. March*.

Written for timpani virtuoso, Saul Goodman, this movement features two march rhythms that are at different speeds and superimposed. The piece features playing with both mallet heads as well as the back end of the stick, which was a new technique for the time. This movement of Carter's collection is relatively short but musically dense, creating common pitfalls and technical issues for performers. It is for that reason that Jessica Flannigan's 2023 timpani solo, *Tension/Release*, is used as a comparison. The argument of this comparison is that Flannigan's piece is better suited for developing timpanists and makes a great steppingstone or building block for the eventual performance of Elliot Carter's *VIII. March*.

Both Carter's and Flannigan's pieces use four timpani and contain the use of mallet head and shaft playing. They are also of similar length: *VII. March* takes approximately 2:44 minutes to perform, while *Tension/Release* is a bit longer at 3:10 minutes. Although Flannigan's piece is slightly longer, the pacing is much more manageable. An example of this comparison of thematic material and pacing between pieces can be found in each composer's use of the mallet head and shaft playing. Both pieces start with the left hand using the back of the mallet and the right hand striking the drum with the mallet head. Right from the beginning, Carter's writing is denser in comparison to Flannigan's, featuring a faster tempo, more dynamic information, and quicker subdivisions like the 32nd note triplets in measure three. A score example of the first two lines for each piece is included below, the first image being the Carter and the second featuring the

Flannigan.¹⁰⁰



Figure #12: First seven measures of *VIII. March* by Elliot Carter



Figure #13: First six measures of *Tension/Release* by Jessica Flannigan

Although both pieces are working within the same textural framework, Flannigan's piece in comparison to Carter's has a much more relaxed pace of thematic material. The right hand only plays at the end of each measure, giving performers plenty of time to focus their energy on the technical execution of the staccato strokes with the mallet shaft in the left hand. In the first two lines of Carter's piece, players are immediately charged List with playing with both hands simultaneously; the right hand performs legato strokes while the left hand facilitates staccato

¹⁰⁰ Carter, Elliott. *Eight Pieces for Four Timpani (One Player)*. Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1949.

markings. This is a clear example of Flannigan's piece being a building block for Carter, allowing students to focus their attention and facilitation on each technique individually before putting them together. The pacing of Flannigan's musical material is much more manageable for developing timpanists.

As *VIII. March* continues, performers must quickly flip the mallets in both hands in quick succession, making for a unique challenge throughout the work. Although this creates visual and musical appeal, it is hard to execute and is best suited for a developed timpanist who already has a firm grasp of the general technical facilitation needed for the instrument. A score example of measures 19-30 shows the frequency at which performers must flip their mallets within a short timeframe.¹⁰¹



Figure #14: Measures 19-30 from *VIII. March* by Elliot Carter

Not only is this piece challenging for its frequent mallet flipping, it also features multiple metric modulations, a feature that Flannigan's piece does not have. Metric modulations were invented by Elliot Carter and are defined as the shift from one tempo to another by the use of a note value

¹⁰¹ Carter.

from a previous passage to pivot into a new passage. This idea is a hard one to grasp for less experienced musicians and requires a mindset in which tempo is relative and subject to manipulation. An example of metric modulation is found between measures 27 and 28, where a quarter note and dotted quarter tied together in measure 27 becomes the half note in measure 28, resulting in the overall tempo of the piece shifting to half note = 56.

While *Tension/Release* does not have metric modulation, it does contain a developmental middle section that contains a long series of 16th notes across all four drums within multiple time signatures. This section allows for developing timpanists to learn proper body and mallet placement across all four drums within a texture of 16th notes. Here is a score example of the first four measures, 30-34, of this section.¹⁰²



Figure #15: Measures 30-34 of *Tension/Release* by Jessica Flannigan

Although this is slightly more difficult compared to other parts of her work, Flannigan's piece and the techniques within are not nearly as frequent or dense compared to those found in Carter's piece. Not only does *VIII. March* also contain a series of 16th notes like *Tension/Release*, but the meter changes and metric modulations are much more frequent. Here is a similar 16th note texture as measures 30-34 in *Tension/Release* found in the middle section of the Carter.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Flannigan, Jessica. *Tension/Release*. C. Alan Publications, 2023.

¹⁰³ Carter.

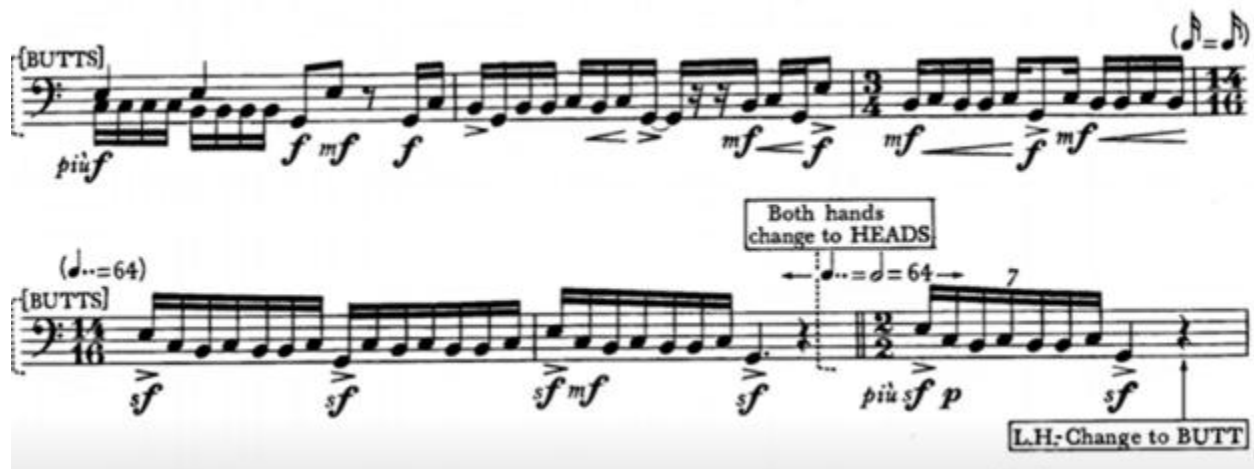


Figure #16: 16th note section of *VIII. March* by Elliot Carter

This is a clear indication that *VII. March* is a piece that better fits the musical and technical facilitation of a more developed timpanist as opposed to Flannigan's piece, which can be used to improve skills earlier in a timpanist's development.

Both pieces generally follow an ABA form where the beginning and end feature the same motivic material. This format gives both pieces more continuity and allows performers to build on the same techniques in the beginning and end. In the Carter piece, there is an added use of mutes, which creates more of a challenge for performers. Although both pieces have the same flow and end with the opening material set to a dynamic fade, the Flannigan piece is an easier version of the two pieces, featuring the exact same rhythms in the left hand from the beginning. Although the right hand has quicker rhythms such as eighth note triplets and 16th notes, the performer does not have to facilitate the use of different parts of the mallet or muting as compared to the end of *VIII. March*. Here is the ending of both pieces to illustrate this

idea:¹⁰⁴



Figure #17: Ending of *VIII. March* by Elliot Carter

The image shows a musical score for the ending of 'Tension/Release' by Jessica Flannigan. It features two staves: the top staff is for the [HEAD] and the bottom staff is for the [BUTT]. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and triplets, with dynamics ranging from 'mp' to 'pp'. There are also articulation marks like 'rit.' and 'acc.' and a tempo marking of '♩ = 95'. The [BUTT] part includes instructions for 'D-F-B-D' and 'R L R'.

Figure #18: Ending of *Tension/Release* by Jessica Flannigan

Both *Tension/Release* by Jessica Flannigan and *VIII. March* by Elliot Carter are valuable resources for the development of timpani technique and musical facilitation for undergraduate students. Flannigan's piece can be used as a building block to introduce developing students to techniques that will be utilized in a slightly more difficult way in Carter's piece. The more relaxed pacing of *Tension/Release* allows students to spend ample time and energy practicing

¹⁰⁴ Carter.

their timpani facilitation before moving on to the Carter piece, which features denser textures, harder musical features such as metric modulation, and techniques such as mallet flipping in quick succession. *Tension/Release* is an engaging piece of music that educators can use in undergraduate percussion curriculum to develop technical and musical facilitation for their timpani students.

In conclusion, the historical and societal gendering of percussion instruments has significantly shaped the current landscape for women in the field, particularly in the areas of snare drum and timpani composition. Despite ongoing efforts by women composers, a disparity in representation persists, with woman-composers more frequently contributing to works for keyboard percussion instruments. In response to the lack of representation, this research contributes a woman-composed section of the curriculum specifically for non-pitched percussion instruments: snare drum and timpani. This curriculum offers structured, skill-aligned repertoire that addresses fundamental techniques while simultaneously challenging traditional gender norms in percussion education. By deliberately centering the works of women composers, the curriculum provides a model for equitable programming and helps fill an important gap in pedagogical resources.

Resources like Chelsea Tinsler Jones' *Level Up! 15 Sequential Duets for the Developing Snare Drummer* and Flannigan's *Tension/Release* offer educators essential tools that not only enrich students' technical abilities but also highlight the contributions of women composers to percussion literature. Tinsler Jones' and Flannigan's works, with their thoughtful pedagogical approach, serve as vital resources for modernizing percussion pedagogy, promoting gender equity, and ensuring students engage with a more diverse range of composers throughout their studies. These pieces empower students to develop key technical skills such as dynamic control,

rhythmic precision, proficiency with various stroke types, a solid 16th-note roll foundation, and ensemble awareness in collaboration with a duet partner, while also reinforcing the importance of representation and inclusion in percussion education.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The creation of an undergraduate percussion curriculum centered on woman-composed works is more than just an academic or pedagogical project; it is an urgent act of equity, empowerment, and cultural transformation. The dominance of male-centered repertoire in undergraduate percussion programs perpetuates a cycle of invisibility and exclusion for female percussionists and other minorities. But educators have the power to disrupt this dynamic by intentionally integrating the voices and compositions of women into the core of their pedagogy. This curriculum is the first of its kind: a comprehensive, skill-based undergraduate percussion curriculum entirely composed of works by women for the core percussion instruments. It is structured to meet the needs of students at various levels of difficulty to ensure accessibility and pedagogical value. Each composition includes detailed technical and musical annotations, purchasing information, and recordings to support easy integration into the classroom or studio.

This curriculum does not just teach percussion; it models a more inclusive vision of the field. The diversification of voices students encounter during their formative years has the potential to increase the likelihood that more women will feel seen, validated, and empowered to pursue careers as percussion performers, composers, and educators. This model challenges outdated gender norms that have historically marginalized women's contributions to music, and it equips all students, regardless of sex or gender, with the opportunity to engage with a richer, more diverse body of work. The benefits of diverse curricula are well-documented across disciplines. Just as ethnic studies programs have significantly improved academic performance and engagement for students of color, exposure to diverse voices in music education has the power to transform student outcomes and classroom environments. Studies show that when

students see their identities reflected in the material they study, their self-esteem, sense of belonging, well-being, and academic motivation all improve.¹⁰⁵ Music education has this same potential for the improvement of student well-being.

The intertwined issues of women's under-representation, instrument gender bias, and tokenism in percussion as discussed in chapter one reflects deep-seated historical and cultural forces that have long shaped the field. Addressing these inequalities requires more than surface-level inclusion; it demands a sustained and intentional effort to understand and dismantle systemic barriers. The examination of the societal and historical roots of gender disparities affords us the critical insight that is needed to move toward meaningful change. This shift takes root when educators adopt genuinely inclusive approaches that move past symbolic efforts and actively prioritize diverse perspectives throughout every facet of music education and performance. The curriculum of woman-composed percussion pieces introduced in this dissertation, grounded in feminist theory, acoustic justice, and engaged pedagogy, serves as a model for such change. It encourages both students and educators to challenge ingrained biases and foster an environment that supports the holistic development of all musicians. Through thoughtful integration of underrepresented voices and a commitment to equity, the percussion community can evolve into a more inclusive and dynamic space.

A percussion curriculum centered on works by women composers proves to be a powerful and necessary tool for both musical and cultural advancement within undergraduate education. As presented and analyzed in chapters four and five, this curriculum not only acknowledges the historical marginalization of women in percussion but actively responds to it by highlighting their significant artistic and pedagogical contributions. By aligning contemporary

¹⁰⁵ Washington, par. 4.

works with essential technical and musical competencies for marimba, vibraphone, snare drum, and timpani, the curriculum provides educators with a valuable tool to modernize their repertoire and teaching practices. Unlike the continued reliance on traditional, male-composed works, these compositions bring forward fresh perspectives and innovative pedagogical strategies that reflect the evolving landscape of the percussion field. The woman-composed compositions presented in this research do more than develop skill—they foster awareness, encourage critical engagement with issues of equity, and affirm the significance of representation in music education. Ultimately, a woman-composed curriculum serves as a meaningful resource for shaping a more inclusive, dynamic, and forward-thinking percussion community.

Research applied to the creation of this curriculum has exposed deficits in woman-composed works for certain instruments particularly at specific levels of difficulty. There is a drastic lack of pieces by women for the early developmental stages of snare drum and a general lack of compositions for timpani at all levels. The parameters of the curriculum require pieces to have reference recordings, which prevented a handful of pieces from being added. A future addition to the research presented in this document would be to create and upload video reference recordings to YouTube for the compositions that do not currently have them. The addition of these reference recordings would increase the number of recordings of woman-composed music, giving the public more exposure to music by women. This would also create educational resources for students learning the pieces and give teachers an idea of what a piece looks and sounds like prior to assigning it to their students.

To properly address the lack of pieces for snare drum and timpani, future research in relation to this document could include a commission project of snare drum and timpani pieces by various women composers for specific difficulty levels that are lacking in the curriculum. The

commissions could be expanded to consortiums, allowing multiple percussion performers and educators to invest in the project and utilize the pieces in their own performances and undergraduate percussion curricula.

The undergraduate percussion curriculum of woman-composed pieces presented in this document has potential for expansion and can be shared with the percussion community in a variety of formats. The curriculum itself can be expanded to include other percussion instruments that undergraduate students are likely to learn during their degrees such as drum set and multi-percussion. The curriculum could also expand to include duets, chamber pieces, and even larger percussion ensembles that undergraduate students play in recitals and concerts. As it stands, the curriculum for the core percussion instruments can be broken down into the specific curriculum for each instrument and shared as separate articles in journals such as *Percussive Notes* and the *College of Music Society Forum*. A discussion of the entire curriculum has potential as a topic for an educational session at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention as well as state chapter meetings and other conferences such as the National Convention of Percussion Pedagogy. All these opportunities will be explored in the future as the goal for the curriculum is to be utilized by as many percussion educators as possible.

Educators who adopt this model demonstrate a commitment to shape not only technically developed musicians but also more empathetic, culturally aware individuals. I have witnessed firsthand how my curriculum empowers students in meaningful and lasting ways. I taught a student who was initially timid and self-conscious about her body posture, coordination, and ability to play percussion instruments. She grew up with little exposure to women composers, educators, or performers in percussion, which left her with doubts and questions about her place in the field. We spent much of our lesson time playing together, allowing her to observe another

woman actively modeling proper technique, musical facilitation, and comportment. As her confidence and playing ability grew, I gave her the opportunity to explore musical expression through a woman-composed vibraphone piece from my curriculum: *Cerulean Blue*, by Jessica Flannigan. It was important to me that she felt empowered to take full ownership of the piece and make interpretive choices that reflected her voice and personal connection to the music. We met with the composer to discuss the meaning behind the piece, and she provided my student with personalized feedback on her performance. This interaction offered my student a meaningful opportunity to connect with and learn from a successful woman in the field, which further reinforced her sense of belonging in percussion. The culmination of her work on the piece was a video recording session intended for publishing on YouTube. This opportunity empowered her to share her interpretation of the piece with a global audience. The outcome was a performance by a woman of a composition by another woman at a professional level. Through this experience, my student not only developed her technical and musical skills but also built a deeper sense of self-assurance and well-being. As a woman educator, my active demonstration of technique, musical interpretation, and professional conduct served as a tangible model of success, showing my student not only that women belong in percussion, but also how they can lead, perform, and teach with authority and confidence. The opportunity to take ownership of her performance and make artistic decisions based on her interpretation of the piece allowed her to feel empowered and in control of her own narrative. Further, the opportunity to work with a woman composer provided her with a sense of connection and validation, which fostered a stronger sense of belonging in the field. This experience supported her mental and emotional growth as a musician and helped her to not only see her potential but also to embrace her identity and role in the percussion field.

This is a call to action for educators, performers, and composers alike to take deliberate steps toward the transformation of the music education landscape. Active engagement with and incorporation of diverse, woman-composed works into their curricula equips educators with the resources to challenge the traditional, male-dominated canon that has limited opportunities for marginalized voices. This dissertation represents a call for the music community to embrace this model and take responsibility for the creation of more equitable and representative learning environments for future generations of musicians. The inclusion of women's compositions in undergraduate percussion programs is a critical step in the cultivation of a richer, more diverse musical education that benefits the well-being of all students. Educators are encouraged to engage with this resource and work together to reshape the future of percussion education. This ensures that every student, regardless of sex or gender, feels seen, heard, and empowered to achieve their fullest potential. Together, barriers can be broken down, outdated gender norms challenged, and a more inclusive and dynamic future for the field of percussion can be created.

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