

INTENTIONAL DIVERSIFICATION OF REPERTOIRE IN ENSEMBLE PROGRAMS

| A Position Paper |

The Problem

Though female composers are composing for wind bands, there is a lack of presence of their works in band programs.

A 2018 study of a state repertoire list found that of 1,167 total works for wind band, only **35** selections (**3%**) were composed by women (Bakers & Biggers, 2018).

What Do These Numbers Mean?

- Female composers are underrepresented in band.
- Band directors are not programming music by female composers as often as male composers.

Why Are Female Composers Underrepresented?

- Past stereotypes of women in music as “unladylike”.
- Sexism established through military tradition, leading to little female experience in the wind band field.
- Gender stereotyping (children, homemaking, masculine roles) for women in music.
- Female composers may focus on less complex genres for economic reasons.

Paper referenced: Baker, V., & Biggers, C. (2018). Research-to-resource: programming ensemble literature composed by women. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 36(3), 51-54. doi:10.1177/8755123318761915

Why Would Band Directors Not Program Works by Female Composers?

- Band directors’ unawareness of female composers. The 35 works in the 2018 study were only composed by 10 women. The study later references 12 prominent wind band composers that didn’t “make the cut” for that list (Baker & Biggers, 2018).
- May provide rationale to not programming works by female composers: not experiencing inequality personally, a single example of programming a work by a female composer, or only programming off of “artistic merit”.

Why Should Band Directors Program Works by Female Composers?

- Women are just as capable of composing artistic music as men. Their works are powerful, musical, expressive, artistic, and worthy of programming, even if they are not yet considered to be “standards”.
- Provides impactful role models for students. Neglecting to program their works sends a message to students that females cannot compose for the band medium, while providing examples demonstrates that they can.

Recommendations

- Band directors need to expand their knowledge of works by female composers (IMSLP, The Women Composers Database, The Wind Repertory Project, International Alliance for Women in Music).
- Create a greater demand for publication of music by female composers by purchasing, performing, and actively promoting their works.
- Bring in female composers as guest artists/presenters.
- Commission or co-commission a work by a female composer.
- Actively teach students about female band composers.
- Program a concert exclusively of female composers, given they are already included in normal concert programming (to avoid tokenism).
- Promote composition as a career for both female and male students through music theory/composition training, and access to compositional technology/performers to perform student works.

