

Mosaics: Profiles in Social Justice and Advocacy
in the Works of Gabriela Lena Frank, Missy Mazzoli, and Jennifer Jolley

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of advocacy and social justice in the music of three living American women composers, and the ways their efforts as mentors, patrons, academics, and educators interact with their work as composers. Case studies include Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972), Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980), and Jennifer Jolley (b. 1981). My musicological narrative is informed by Kimberly Francis's concept of women as "cultural mosaics" and Patricia Hill Collins's theorization of intersectionality, which addresses the junction of variable characteristics (such as race, gender, or class) as they relate to an individual's identity. I have centered my narrative on social issues these composers address through their activism and their music.

Gabriela Lena Frank's orchestral work, *Peregrinos* (2009), emphasizes Frank's value of community outreach and her interdependence on others. Frank uses folklorica traditions and Latin mythology to musically recognize the diverse experiences of Latin American immigrants living in Indianapolis. Missy Mazzoli blends operatic traditions with electronics to convey messages of female empowerment in *Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt* (2012). Mazzoli's characterization of the fascinating life of this nineteenth-century woman resonates with modern understandings of intersectionality and agency, and aligns with her work with the Luna Composition Lab. Jennifer Jolley's approach to musical activism in *Prisoner of Conscience* (2017) mirrors her philosophical and political messages explored on her blog and e-magazine articles. Juxtaposing punk rock with church motets and madrigals, Jolley comments on the nature of protest and the punishment of Russian feminist punk group, Pussy Riot.

I position these composers as cultural agents with diverse concerns and diverse means by which to voice them. Frank, Mazzoli, and Jolley each participate in valuable extra-musical roles outside of their compositions: from Gabriela Lena Frank's Creative Academy of Music, to Mazzoli's Luna Composition Lab, to Jolley's NewMusicBox articles. Each of these composers negotiate agency within traditions that have not always been open to women, and they seek to further remedy race and gender inequities through their prominent positions as educators and composers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Concert music has long been an effective format for protest, advocacy, and civil disobedience. From Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony to Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony and Ethel Smyth's *March of the Women*, composers have regularly made profound political statements in their compositions. Revolution and national turmoil are often the subjects of significant works of instrumental music, operas, and vocal works. The tradition of rallying musical voices is continued today by composers worldwide, who express their discontentment through their art, education, and activism.

My research seeks to examine the roles of advocacy and social justice in three living American women composers's music. I investigate how their efforts as mentors, patrons, academics, and educators interact with their work as composers, thereby making them cultural agents. The composers discussed in this work are Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972), Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980), and Jennifer Jolley (b. 1981). Rather than focus on examining how numerous composers address a particular social issue, I welcomed the opportunity to examine various social issues present in their music. Additionally, each composer interacts with and experiences life differently than her contemporaries; I wanted to devote space in my project to explore the intersections of their work and their advocacy in a variety of ways—as they did in their music. Thus, the inclusion of various social and political issues feels justifiable in my work.

The body of work examining women composers and how their gender interacts with their lived experiences and their musical careers is expansive. Much of the existing research on women composers is biographically focused or aims only to analyze or

catalog their repertoire. Historically, this type of work has been called “compensatory” music history. To differentiate my research from this established format, I decided to look beyond the so-called—and often dreaded—“woman composer question.” Still, I wanted my research to emphasize the unique perspectives of women in their professional musical fields. My goal, however, is not to recover ground lost to time and systems of patriarchy, nor do I want to fall victim to the proclivity in some areas of musicology to focus a narrative around “the great composer” trope. In my examination of this selected group, I wish to center my narrative on what they care about most as presented in their activism and music. I seek to position these composers as cultural agents and as women with diverse concerns and diverse means to voice them.¹

Some of these composers—like Jolley and Mazzoli—*do* address women’s rights and marginalization, but not exclusively. Frank approaches issues of identity, race, and environmentalism, among many other issues. To treat the voices and goals of these composers as monolithic entities is misguided. Instead, I explore the unique perspectives of these active and engaging women as they relate to themselves, their work, their passions, and their communities. To achieve this distinction, I make connections between these women’s lives and their intersections with social justice and music as cultural agents.²

¹ Kimberly Francis, “Her-Storiography: Pierre Bourdieu, Cultural Capital, and Changing the Narrative Paradigm,” *Women & Music* (Washington, D.C.) 19, no. 1 (January 2015): 169–177.

² “Cultural Agency,” as Francis uses it, invokes agency and power of women who participate in the “cultural marketplace” of Bourdieu.

Methodology

I developed a list of criteria in order to determine which composers and pieces to include in this academic undertaking. In addition to my interest in studying living women composers in the U. S., I considered the following statements:

1. The composition responds to an event relevant to social justice such as race, ethnicity, gender, immigration, or censorship.
2. It shows potential for hermeneutic analysis.
3. It was composed with the intent of advocacy or protest.

My research methodology is culturally based and informed by intersectional feminist theory and feminist musicology. Though not all the works (nor even the composers) studied in this work explicitly embrace feminist philosophies, the intersectional theories of Kimberlé Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins are helpful in discussing social justice in the professional activities of these woman composers. These composers' biographies as they relate to their work with social issues, and a hermeneutic analysis of representative works from each composer, help explain the compositional tools they employed to convey their messages and the reasons they did so. Using this approach, I expound on these composer's roles as cultural agents and tastemakers, influenced by Kimberly Francis's theories.

Feminist Intersections

In her book, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* (2019), Patricia Hill Collins defines intersectionality as a social theory that “bundles together ideas from disparate places, times, and perspectives, enabling people to share points of view that

formerly were forbidden, outlawed, or simply obscured.”³ Collins argues that intersectionality has immense potential in the future of feminism; it simply needs the realization of a formal foundation. This form of theorizing, she explains, “criticizes existing social inequalities, with an eye toward creating possibilities for changes and aims to reform what is in the hope of transforming it into something else,” and is the “sweet spot between critical analysis and social action, with theories that cultivate links between the two.”⁴

Jennifer Nash also provides an excellent and pragmatic critique of the institutionalization of intersectionality in her 2008 article for *Feminist Review*, “Re-thinking Intersectionality.” In it, she positions intersectionality as a means of “speaking against internal exclusions and marginalizations to challenge institutions and radical political projects to hear the voices that have been silenced.”⁵

My analysis of these three composers through an intersectional lens with these feminist theories is justified due to the nature of these composers’ work as artists and activists. Frank, Mazzoli, and Jolley each engage in the “bundling of disparate ideas” that enables the collaboration and dissemination of varied perspectives in a manner that is itself critical action through art. With respect to their varied identities through their gender, race, ethnicity, ability, and class, these three composers and their work with their collaborators are intersectional “mosaics.”

³ Patricia Hill Collins, “Introduction,” *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory*, (Durham, United States: Duke University Press, 2019), 2.

⁴ Collins, 5.

⁵ Jennifer Nash, “Re-Thinking Intersectionality,” *Feminist Review*, 2008, 13.

Outline of Chapters

In Chapter 2, I summarize the relevant literature supporting and positioning this document. In the subsequent chapters, I explore the question: *What do advocacy and protest look like in the work of three U.S. women composers in the 21st century?* Chapter 3 will examine each composer's inspiration and motivation for engaging in advocacy or protest in her professional work. This chapter aims to ground my research in their lived experiences and seek common ground where it may exist. Chapter 3 will also explore specific examples of activism, protest, and advocacy in the composers' professional lives, outside of composition. Examples of the activism considered range from Mazzoli's formation of The Luna Lab with fellow composer Ellen Reid to Jolley's essays for the e-zine, *NewMusicBox*. This chapter contributes significantly to my mission to avoid simply cataloging these women's compositions, and instead to note their approaches to advocacy and protest in their non-musical pursuits.

Chapters 4-6 include the hermeneutic analysis of a selection of compositions from each woman and an exploration of their use of musical tools to express a message of social justice or protest. These works include Gabriela Lena Frank's *Peregrinos* (2009) for orchestra, movements from Missy Mazzoli's 2012 opera, *Song from the Uproar*, and Jennifer Jolley's 2015 song cycle *Prisoner of Conscience*. These pieces were selected as exemplars of advocacy for this paper, but they are not the only examples of relevant works in these composer's oeuvres.

My conclusion in Chapter 7 will synthesize and summarize my findings. Here, I will reflect on my research and discuss potential areas for further research. I intend that this work will both reflect existing musicological discourse on women's music and

protest music and bridge the worlds of feminist musicology and social justice in a topical and informative manner. Moreover, my efforts to integrate the theories of Collins, Nash, and Francis, among others, is an exploration into feminist intersectionality and cultural agency through the work of three extraordinary composers, suitably portraying their work—compositional or otherwise—as impactful instances of intersectional social justice and musical advocacy.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Big Picture: Woman Composers and Activism in Music

American historian David Dunaway gives an overview of political music in the U.S. since 1861 in an entry for *Grove Music Online*. He details that “political music belongs to no one form nor does it fall entirely into any one of the categories of popular, traditional, or art music.”⁶ Yet, most of the works he mentions fall under the umbrella of folk and popular music. The only mention of concert music is a short note about “classically trained musicians” collaborating in 1933-8 “to produce music that would serve on picket lines while simultaneously improving the supposedly poor taste of the proletariat.”⁷

Jeff Rodnitzky takes a similar stance in his *Grove Music* entry on “Protest song” in the U.S., asserting that “protest music” has a dynamic definition. He calls upon singer-songwriter Pete Seeger, who claims that “if folks think a song protests something, it is a protest song.”⁸ Rodnitzky also observes that protest songs, being topical in nature, often have short-lived significance. Due to this fleeting nature, Rodnitzky states that no canon of protest music, although “We Shall Overcome,” an adaptation of Charles Albert Tindley’s hymn, “I’ll Overcome Someday,” could qualify as a candidate for such a multi-generational canon.⁹ In any case, their near-constant presence as a “genre” in music warrants note in itself. Like Dunaway, Rodnitzky makes practically no mention of art music as a form of protest, despite its presence in history and the present. Both

⁶ David Dunaway, “Political music,” *Grove Music Online*, May 25, 2016.

⁷ Dunaway.

⁸ Jerry Rodnitzky, “Protest song,” *Grove Music Online*, October 16, 2013.

⁹ Rodnitzky.

Rodnitzky's and Dunaway's personal interests lie in folk and popular music, so presumably, their research centers on those genres, as well.

Charles Walton, professor of sociology at the University of Lynchburg, discusses gender politics in popular music, with particular attention to Riot Grrls and female rappers in his essay "You're Equal but Different: Women and the Music of Cultural Resistance" (2014).¹⁰ Walton notes that popular music has been an avenue for progressive protest for centuries and that women frequently find success in folk and popular music careers.¹¹ Though centered around popular music, Walton makes several excellent observations about the subjugation of women by larger populations and the subsequent sub-cultures that develop out of protest. Like Dunaway and Rodnitzky, Walton does not address concert music and the women who operate within that sphere. Here it is beneficial to superimpose some of the methodologies and critiques used by popular music critics on concert music to compare and contrast the relationships between women, music, and political activism that exist in both realms of analysis.

In an article for Nashville Classical Radio, Colleen Phelps discusses the history of music and protest in concert music, ranging from Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Nabucco* (1842) to Joel Thompson's *The Seven Last Words of The Unarmed* (2014).¹² Phelps also briskly walks readers through a selection of politically charged works from William Grant Still, Olivier Messiaen, Dmitri Shostakovich, Luciano Berio, Steve Reich, Sergio Ortega, and Catherine Likhuta. She relays a handful of reasons that classical music is

¹⁰ Charles Walton, "You're Equal but Different: Women and the Music of Cultural Resistance," *Sounds of Resistance: The Role of Music in Multicultural Activism*, Rojas, Eunice, and Michie, Lindsay, eds. Westport: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2013.

¹¹ Walton, 2013.

¹² Colleen Phelps, "Plans, Polonaises and Unarmed Men: The Role of The Protest in Classical Music," *91 Classical*, June 1, 2020.

well-suited to reflect dissent and participate in protest. Where others focus primarily on popular music, artists like Ella Fitzgerald are mentioned here only in passing. Phelps's scope is broad, chronologically speaking, but remains centered around politics in concert music. However, only one female composer—Likhuta—is discussed at length, leaving room for greater dialogue about women in composition and activism.

Books:

James Garratt, professor of Music History and Aesthetics at the University of Manchester, endeavors to explore “contemporary political theory, engaging with an array of musical cultures and practices from medieval chant to rap” in his 2019 book, *Music and Politics: A Critical Introduction*.¹³ Garratt calls upon Plato, Marx, Foucault, Adorno, and others to inform his practice and methodologies. The work is organized historically and tracks the many intersections of political theory, music theory, performance, and protest throughout key events in world history. Garratt defers to Judith Butler's and Susan McClary's feminist theories, and he speaks about Pussy Riot and contemporary political issues facing women of the world. However, he does not appear to analyze any female composers in this wide-ranging political work.

In the book *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States*, Jennifer Kelly, director of choral activities at Lafayette College, addresses the “woman question.” Kelly interviews twenty-five U.S. composers spanning eight decades to explore their diverse perspectives on being a composer, being a woman, and whether these identifiers are of any consequence on their professional and personal experiences.

¹³ James Garratt, *Music and Politics: A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

From Joan Tower to Tania Leon, Maria Schneider to Pamela Z, Kelly's book offers a variety of voices active in composition, each with their own perspective to share. Kelly "explore[s] the composers' sense of time and place; the influences of their education and training; their family and cultural identity; their paths to finding their voices; their views of creativity; their takes on the business of composition; and the importance or irrelevance of gender issues for twenty-first-century American composers who are women."¹⁴ Like others before it, Kelly's work focuses primarily on addressing the marginalization of female composers. It informs my research questions and provides a framework for writing about women composers in a way that avoids the tendency to position them as monolithic.

In the text, *Women of Influence in Contemporary Music: Nine American Composers*, editor Michael Slayton and his collaborators speak with Elizabeth Austin, Susan Botti, Gabriela Lena Frank, Jennifer Higdon, Libby Larsen, Tania León, Cindy McTee, Marga Richter, and Judith Shatin.¹⁵ Slayton's format, like Kelly's, situates these accomplished female composers in conversation with their experiences within their canon, their profession, and their gender. In my research, I draw on the interview with Gabriela Lena Frank to inform my understanding of her experiences and how they reveal intersectional identities in her compositions.

¹⁴ Jennifer Kelly, *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States*, Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

¹⁵ Michael K. Slayton, *Women of Influence in Contemporary Music: Nine American Composers*. Blue Ridge Summit: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2011.

Dissertations:

In his 2019 Ph.D. dissertation, Jack Eaddy examines social consciousness in band music through the works of Adam Schoenberg, Frank Ticheli, and Omar Thomas. Eaddy asserts that these three wind composers “respond to specific events, allowing them to reach and empower performers and audiences, to heal, thrive and build past these events.”¹⁶ To support his analysis, Eaddy provides relevant biographies of each composer, background information on the compositions, and an evaluation of each composers’s “use and understanding” of various social issues.¹⁷ He also examines how each composer employs certain compositional techniques to convey their implicit intent to address a specific message in social justice. Eaddy references several interdisciplinary studies, including psychological studies on student survivors of school shootings, the influences of the Black Lives Matter movement, and media coverage of teen suicide rates. Like Eaddy’s dissertation, my research is situated in the topical environment of modern American discourse around social justice in music. However, I include the additional lens of feminism.

Similarly, Shayna Stahl examines the perspectives of four woman wind composers: Jocelyn Morlock, Elizabeth Raum, Marilyn Shrude, and Augusta Read Thomas. Stahl interviewed each composer to gain insight into their personal histories and their compositional processes. Stahl asserts that her main goal is to “elevate wind

¹⁶ Jack A., Eaddy Jr., “Social Consciousness in Wind Band Music of the Early 21st Century, Represented Through a Study of Three Wind Band Works: Symphony No. 2-Migration by Adam Schoenberg, Silver Lining-Concerto for Flute and Wind Ensemble by Frank Ticheli, and Of Our New Day Begun by Omar Thomas,” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Texas, 2019). ProQuest Theses and Dissertations, Order No. 27592342.

¹⁷ Eaddy, 2019.

chamber music written by women composers in the world of art music.”¹⁸ Additionally, Stahl briefly examines the composers’s and her own concerns around motherhood and family, barriers faced by women in composition, the #MeToo movement, and even bullying in academia. She provides statistics regarding women in wind chamber music and postulates the cause for the relative lack of programming in mainstream art music.

Both Eaddy and Stahl’s work is pertinent to my proposed question: What do advocacy and protest look like in the work of Gabriela Lena Frank, Missy Mazzoli, and Jennifer Jolley? They both call on individual composer’s personal experiences and political perspectives to inform their arguments. They also use salient social issues like BLM and #MeToo to contextualize the composers’ musical works within the bigger picture of American activism. Eaddy examines activism in band music in the 21st century but quite noticeably excludes women’s voices on the issues presented. Meanwhile, Stahl focuses on the gap in visibility for women composers of wind music, calling attention to their unique perspectives as women in a male-dominated field, but not their work as activists. My work is positioned at the intersection of these dialogues as I examine how women composers contribute, through their professional activities, to academic discourse and social justice in 21st-century concert music.

Online Resources: Women’s Associations and Activist Collectives in Music

There are several insightful composer and music advocate collectives with missions pertinent to my research. The Institute for Composer Diversity is dedicated to

¹⁸ Shayna Stahl, “Wind Chamber Music by Women Composers - The Biographies, Compositional Techniques, and Perspectives of Jocelyn Morlock, Elizabeth Raum, Marilyn Shrude, and Augusta Read Thomas,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2019) ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis Global, Order No. 10195848.

the “celebration, education, and advocacy of music created by composers from historically underrepresented genders, racial, ethnic, and cultural heritages, and sexual orientations as well as disabled composers.”¹⁹ Their work includes ongoing diversity databases, organized by composer and by work. They’ve also published a comprehensive analysis of the 2019-2020 orchestra season, examining the visibility (or lack thereof) of women composers and other such “Underrepresented Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Heritages” in the programming of all major U.S. orchestras. Also available on the website is an extensive and thoughtfully curated bibliography of research regarding composer diversity. The works are categorized by “Women and Non-Binary Composers” (general and individual) and “Composers of Color” (general and individual). Website curators also include a list of works organized by State repertoire requirements in an attempt to make diversity in music education programming more accessible.

I Care if you Listen (ICIYL) is a new music multimedia platform founded in 2010. Their “about” page mentions that they aim to be a “leading advocate for artists who have been historically underrepresented or marginalized in Western classical music by highlighting equitable programming, facilitating challenging conversations, cultivating a safe platform, and creating educational resources.”²⁰ ICIYL features insightful interviews with all of the composers in my case studies about advocacy and protest in music. In addition to their frequent interviews, ICIYL publishes essays, playlists, music videos, program notes, concert promos, and much more. They are a significant resource of contemporary thought on new art music pertaining to intersectionality and progressive innovation in the field.

¹⁹ “Who we Are,” *Institute for Composer Diversity*, <https://www.composerdiversity.com/about>

²⁰ “About,” *I Care if You Listen*, <https://www.icareifyoulisten.com/about/>

The *Listening to Ladies* podcast has been airing since 2016. Hosted by Elisabeth Blair, the podcast focuses on two major themes: “the composer's experience of being a woman in this field, and the composer's music and aesthetics.”²¹ Blair, a multidisciplinary artist, composer, and feminist writer, began the podcast to call attention to the “Victorian-esque state of affairs in classical music” and advocate for greater representation and participation in canon formation.²² While the podcast claims to focus on these two issues, intersectionality, social justice, and activism are frequent topics for the interviews. The podcast’s dedication to diverse voices from women in a male-dominated field lends itself well to my research on active woman composers as activists.

The Women’s Philharmonic Advocacy is another composer’s collective dedicated to “leveling the playing field” for women in art music. Their weekly “link round-ups” make accessing new music news regarding women composers and musicians easier than ever. Like ICIYL, WPA promotes concerts, shares the latest research on women in the field, and features articles, interviews, and repertoire from women in orchestral music.

Composer-Specific Resources:

Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972)

Gabriela Lena Frank features in the aforementioned works of Jennifer Kelley, Michael Slayton, and in a chapter by Deborah Hayes. Kelley’s chapter on Frank in *In Her Own Words* includes a poignant interview with the composer that touches on her cultural inspirations, compositional methods, and feminine standpoints. The chapter also contains an exhaustive list of Frank’s works, including orchestral ensembles, operas, a band piece,

²¹ “About Listening to Ladies,” *Listening to Ladies Homepage*, <http://listeningtoladies.com/>

²² “About Listening to Ladies.”

chamber works, solo works, and vocal pieces. In the interview, Frank “expresses why and how she holds women and other historically underrepresented groups to higher standards, having experienced firsthand the assumptions about and expectations of a composer with these gender and cultural identities.”²³

Deborah Hayes is a professor emeritus and former associate dean of the College of Music at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Her chapter in *Women of Influence in Contemporary Music: Nine American Composers* offers a detailed biography of Frank, her upbringing, multicultural identity, compositional techniques, and analyses of several of her works to highlight stylistic features. Hayes also interviews Frank, in which Frank cites Bartók as an inspiration for her approach to incorporating indigenous styles and instruments in her compositions.²⁴

In addition to these insightful book chapters, Frank’s compositions are often the subject of Ph.D. dissertations—many of which are reviews and literature surveys of Latin American composers. A number of these works examine cultural influences on Frank’s music, but only a few seem to examine her impact on culture and canon. I will draw on these studies, as their contents provide excellent insight into Frank’s inspirations and ideals.

Lisa Rose Julianna Neher’s 2016 dissertation aimed to “fill the void of scholarship on Frank’s vocal music by providing an in-depth analysis of several pieces and summarizing stylistic traits as seen in this selection of repertoire,” a task she most

²³ Jennifer Kelley, *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States*, (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 61.

²⁴ Deborah Hayes, “Gabriela Lena Frank (1972–)” in *Women of Influence in Contemporary Music: Nine American Composers*, ed. Michael Slayton, (Blue Ridge Summit: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2011), 92.

certainly accomplished.²⁵ Neher analyses four of Frank’s vocal works, *Cuatro Canciones Andinas* (1999), *New Andean Songs* (2008), *Seven Armenian Songs* (2013), *Honey* (2013), and establishes Frank’s voice in the world of musical scholarship. In addition to her musical analyses, Neher also provides relevant historical information on each piece, information on the authors of the poems where applicable, and a summary of Frank’s stylistic traits. She also thoughtfully includes appendices with translations and pronunciation guides for a number of the works.

Similarly, Liliana Veronica Guerrero surveys the works of Mari É Isabel Valverde, Tania León, and Gabriela Lena Frank in her 2020 Ph.D. dissertation “Mi Canción: Contemporary Song Literature by Select Latina Composers.” Guerrero explores the changing definition of American music in the 21st century, which Frank envisions as becoming more multicultural as time passes and cultures merge with one another.²⁶ Guerrero even makes a brief but insightful reference to Kimberlee Crenshaw’s theories on intersectional identity.

Frank is featured in several documentaries, including *Compadre Huashayo* (2013), *Peregrinos (Pilgrims): A Musical Journey* (2009), and the Emmy nominated *Música Mestiza* (2016).²⁷ Frank also has an entry listed in *Oxford Music Online*, written by George Grella. Several other *Grove* articles mention Frank in passing: Judith Tick’s entry on “Women in America”; Leonard Burkat, Gilbert Ross, and Frank J. Oteri’s entry

²⁵ Lisa Rose Julianna Neher, “The Chamber Vocal Works of Gabriela Lena Frank,” (Ph.D. Dissertation for University of Iowa, 2016), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, Order No. 10195848.

²⁶ Liliana Veronica Guerrero, “Mi Canción: Contemporary Song Literature by Select Latina Composers,” (Ph.D. Dissertation for Florida State University, 2020), ProQuest Thesis and Dissertations Global, Order No 27740754.

²⁷ Gabriela Lena Frank, *Compadre Huayshano*, produced by Aric Hartvig, (Indianapolis: WFYI and PBS 2013); Gabriela Lena Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*, produced by Aric Hartvig, (Indianapolis: WFYI and PBS, 2009; Gabriela Lena Frank, *Musica Mestiza*, produced by Aric Hartvig, (Indianapolis: WFYI and PBS 2015).

on “Chamber music in the United States”; Amelia S. Kaplan’s “Silk Road Project”; and Rodney H. Mill’s “Orchestral Music.”²⁸ Most of these articles only list her as a member of a project or as an example of a technique but offer little insight or discussion beyond the title of her compositions.

Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980)

Missy Mazzoli regularly voices her feminist and intersectional views in her compositions, particularly her operas. Renowned musicologist Suzanne Cusick writes about sexual violence in opera in her article “Colloquy Sexual Violence in Opera: Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Production as Resistance Abstracts.” In the section entitled “‘Women in Impossible Situations’ Missy Mazzoli and Kamala Sankaram on Sexual Violence in Opera,” Cusick interviews Mazzoli to get her perspective on her depiction of sexual violence and gender oppression in her reimagining of the 1996 film *Breaking Waves*. Mazzoli confirms when asked that she is “drawn to women in impossible situations. . . because all women are in impossible situations.”²⁹ Mazzoli also responds to Clément’s *Opera, or The Undoing of Women*, to declare that depicting violence against women in opera does not condone or glamorize the violence in itself.³⁰ She discusses themes she deems more important than just the violence or rape in the opera, referencing her heroine’s journey to find power and agency, which are not experienced through the violent crimes committed against her.

²⁸ Amelia S. Kaplan, “Silk Road Project, the,” *Grove Music Online*, January 20, 2016; Rodney H. Mill, Frank J. Oteri, and Susan Feder, “Orchestral Music,” *Grove Music Online*, July 10, 2012.

²⁹ Suzanne Cusick, *MA Hershberger, R Will, M Baranello, B Gordon, and EM Hisama*, “Colloquy Sexual Violence in Opera: Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Production as Resistance Abstracts,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 71, no. 1 (2018), 245.

³⁰ Cusick, 245.

In a similarly insightful interview with Kate Stringer for the *Boston Music Intelligencer*, Mazzoli again discusses her perspective on “impossible situations.” Mazzoli articulates that she is drawn to writing about strong women in impossible situations, like Isabelle Eberhardt, “a woman in an impossible situation where she’s living in the tail end of the Victorian era but has this irrepressible spirit and this individuality that she has to reconcile with the times she’s living in, as a woman.”³¹ Mazzoli details that she sometimes feels as though her works bleed into one another, which I argue is particularly evident when examined through a feminist lens. Stringer inquires about the biases against women in the field of composition, specifically for opera. Mazzoli answers in stride that women face adversity in all professions and that composition—especially opera composition—is no exception.

A small handful of dissertations have covered Mazzoli’s works, including “Musical Narrative in Missy Mazzoli’s Solo Piano Works” by Christina Lai at Florida State University and “Analyzing Gender Inequality in Contemporary Opera” by Hillary Labonte at Bowling Green State University.³² However, none examine her work outside of composition or as an advocate for young composers. She is also featured in an *Oxford Music Online* entry by George Grella, who also wrote the entry on Gabriela Lena Frank.³³ Additionally, Mazzoli is mentioned in passing by Rodney H. Mill in his article on “Orchestral Music.”³⁴

³¹ Kate Stringer, “Complex Women, Impossible Situations,” November 6, 2016.

³² Christina Lai, “Musical Narrative in Missy Mazzoli’s Solo Piano Works,” (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 2020), 27742856. ; Hillary LaBonte, “Analyzing Gender Inequality in Contemporary Opera,” (Ph.D. diss., Bowling Green State University, 2019), Order No. 27539032.

³³ George J. Grella, “Mazzoli, Missy,” *Grove Music Online*, 20 Jan. 2016.

³⁴ Rodney H. Mill, Frank J. Oteri, and Susan Feder, “Orchestral music,” *Grove Music Online*, 10 Jul. 2012.

Jennifer Jolley (b. 1981)

Though she is an active academic and writer herself, little of Jolley’s professional work has been analyzed and explored by academic authors. She is, however, mentioned in a chapter of Katie Sutton Storhoff’s 2018 dissertation entitled “Defining Sound, Confronting Hierarchies: A Study of the American Wind Ensemble Community.” Storhoff’s work addresses four themes in the wind band communities: “American national heritage, sound palettes, hierarchies and canonicity, and gender, specifically the privileging of male participants over female ones.”³⁵ Storhoff uses Jolley as an example of the band-professional community’s tendency to exclude women composers from their canon, conferences, and conversations. Through a series of interviews and emails, Sutton Storhoff explores Jolley’s experiences as a woman in this environment. Though this kind of insight is indeed necessary, especially in a profoundly white male-dominated field like wind band, I explore a different avenue of Jolley’s work—one that recognizes and validates her experiences as a woman but does not necessarily center on them.

The scholarship surrounding my research interest is inconsistent. Though the general oeuvre of research is bountiful in some sources (such as the books about Frank or the catalogs of woman composers), it is strikingly deficient in others; few, if any, seem to address the unique positions of these specific women as composers, mentors, and advocates. Interviews with the composers offer excellent and necessary perspectives but sometimes do little to analyze or justify their work. My research addresses what is a

³⁵ Kate Sutton Storhoff, “Defining Sound, Confronting Hierarchies: A Study of the American Wind Ensemble Community,” (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 2018), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, Order No. 10751333.

substantial gap in the study of women in music, starting with Gabriela Lena Frank, Missy Mazzoli, and Jennifer Jolley.

CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND, STYLE, AND INFLUENCE

To situate these composers appropriately in dialogue with their work and within the community at large, I offer a brief “snapshot” of each composer’s life. Others have already done the initial work in this regard, so I will primarily share pre-existing biographical information on each composer and a general overview of their musical styles and influences. Hermeneutic analysis and applications of intersectional feminism, when appropriate, are found in later chapters.

Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972)

Gabriela Lena Frank proudly identifies as a *mestiza* woman—a Spanish term that translates to “mixed race” —of European and Indigenous American descent.³⁶ She notes in Hayes's *Women of Influence* that “*mestizaje*, in which cultures exist in harmony, ‘is something that everybody needs to think about, because we’re all living in a mestizo society now.’”³⁷ Her “American melting pot” upbringing is evident in her compositions, which blend Western European and Latin Indigenous genres and instruments. In her conversation with Jennifer Kelly, Frank explains that she is acutely aware of her identity and how it is perceived in her work and at large and explains that she often finds herself holding women and POC composers to higher standards.³⁸

³⁶ Jennifer Kelly, In *Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States*, (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2013) ProQuest Ebook Central, page 61.

³⁷ Quoted in Kelly, 71.

³⁸ Quoted in Kelly, 70.

Born September 26, 1972, in Berkeley, California, Frank's cultural heritage is rooted in what Hayes describes as a "cosmopolitan, multicultural university milieu."³⁹ Her New York-born father, Michael Barry Frank, is Jewish Lithuanian and has worked at Bancroft Library as a Mark Twain scholar and editor of the University's Mark Twain Papers.⁴⁰ Gabriela's Peruvian mother, Sabina Cam Villanueva de Frank, met her husband while he volunteered in the Peace Corps in Peru during the 1960s. She is a stained glass artist with Peruvian, Spanish, Chinese, and Quechua Indian ancestry.⁴¹ Frank explores all of these cultural connections in her music through the use of indigenous instrumentation, programmatic works based on folklore, and the incorporation of traditional musical forms.

Gabriela Lena Frank began playing piano early in her life, a passion she shared with her paternal grandmother and her older brother, Marcos Gabriel Frank.⁴² It later became clear that Gabriela had "high moderate to profound neurosensory hearing loss." Her parents held her on their chests while they read to her so she could feel the words in much the same way she felt the vibrations of the piano.⁴³ Frank disliked how her hearing aids made the piano sound, and as an adult, she still removes them when she practices.⁴⁴

Frank recalls spending many hours absorbing the vast repertoires of Clementi, Haydn, Scarlatti, Beethoven, and Mozart with her longtime piano teacher, Babbette Salamon.⁴⁵ She also remembers not knowing that composers "could be living, or that

³⁹ Hayes, 70.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Kelly, 71.

⁴¹ Quoted in Kelly 71.

⁴² Quoted in Kelly, 72.

⁴³ Quoted in Kelly, 73.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Kelly, 73.

⁴⁵ Hayes, 71. Salamon hails from South Africa, and trained in London at the Royal College of Music.

they could be women.”⁴⁶ The Frank family frequented Bay area folkloric concerts held by rotating musicians from Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia, whose sounds she worked to blend into her healthy diet of canonic piano works.⁴⁷

She studied composition and piano at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, where she earned both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Frank studied both composition and piano with Jeanne Kierman Fischer, who still teaches at Rice.⁴⁸ In 2001 she earned a Ph.D. in composition from the University of Michigan. Currently, she is a member of Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Project, working with a collective of composers, arrangers, musicians, and storytellers to create “music that engages difference, sparking radical cultural collaboration and passion-driven learning for a more hopeful and inclusive world.”⁴⁹

In 2020, Frank received the 25th Annual Heinz Award in the Arts and Humanities for her work.⁵⁰ She is also the recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, a United States Artists Fellowship, and the Brillante Prize awarded by the Hispanic Scholarship Foundation. In 2009, Frank won a Latin Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Music Composition for *Inca Dances*, and her piece *Hilos* was nominated for a Grammy for Best Small Ensemble Performance in 2011.⁵¹ Frank also founded the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music in 2017, which is discussed at greater length in Chapter 4. Frank’s repertoire includes pieces written for

⁴⁶ Quoted in Hayes, 72.

⁴⁷ Hayes, 72.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Kelly, 66.

⁴⁹ “About the Ensemble,” Accessed Feb 9, 2021, <https://www.silkroad.org/>.

⁵⁰ “Gabriela Lena Frank,” Access Feb 4, 2021 <http://www.heinzawards.net/recipients/gabriela-lena-frank>. She will be honored at a ceremony in November 2021.

⁵¹ Kelly, 62.

orchestra, chorus, wind band, several works for small ensembles (both vocal and instrumental), and one opera.⁵²

Missy Mazzoli (b.1980):

In a 2021 recent interview with The National Endowment for the Arts, Mazzoli discussed her musical beginnings. She recalls starting music around the age of ten and “immediately felt that that was what I wanted to do. I fell in love with classical piano and with [classical] composers. I thought, ‘Whatever they do, that’s what I want to do.’”⁵³ She cites Meredith Monk, Julia Woolfe, and Jennifer Higdon as influences, though she also remarks that she did not meet other women composers until several years after college.⁵⁴

Missy Mazzoli was born in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, on October 27, 1980, to Polish- and Italian-American parents. Mazzoli studied theory and composition at Boston University.⁵⁵ In 2002, a Fulbright Grant allowed her to travel to the Netherlands to study with Louis Andriessen and Martijn Padding at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague from 2002-2004. She later attended the Yale School of Music, where she studied under Martin Bresnick and earned a Master’s in 2006.⁵⁶ Mazzoli now resides in Brooklyn, where she serves on the faculty at Mannes School of Music in the New School department.⁵⁷ She is also the Mead Composer-in-Residence at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.⁵⁸

⁵² Hayes, 39.

⁵³ Victoria Hutter, “Composing Women’s Stories: A Conversation with Missy Mazzoli,” *National Endowment for the Arts Blog*, January 27, 2021.

⁵⁴ Hutter, 2021.

⁵⁵ Missy Mazzoli, “About,” missymazzoli.com.

⁵⁶ Mazzoli, “About.”

⁵⁷ Mazzoli, “About.”

⁵⁸ Mazzoli, “About.”

In a mini-documentary by Filmkraft, a Brooklyn-based media producer, Mazzoli shares that she fell in love with music, performing, and composers and viewed music as her “opening to the world.”⁵⁹ She shares that her rural Pennsylvanian upbringing did not give her access to avant-garde or experimental music, but rather the “greatest hits” of classical music—Beethoven in particular.⁶⁰ She moved to New York at the age of twenty-five and expresses her great love for how the city nourishes and feeds her creative soul now.⁶¹ She says that she finds endless inspiration and fascination in humanity and relationships. Mazzoli excitedly shares that her latest obsession has been in opera, which she loves for its collaborative nature and ability to satisfy her storytelling urge.⁶²

Mazzoli also discussed her upbringing and inspirations in a write-up by Lisa Houston with the *San Francisco Classical Voice*, sharing that although she fell in love with classical music, she was not coaxed into any particular medium. Thus, her musical development was “a natural outgrowth of all of [her] interests. Whatever the piece requires I can pull from this toolbox of influences.”⁶³ Though also inspired by minimalists, Mazzoli maintains that “any label falls flat and is incomplete” regarding her music.⁶⁴ She clarifies that she is “very comfortable with the word composer. But I don’t even like to call the work classical. I just try to talk enough about the story behind the

⁵⁹ Dmitry Trakovsky and Paloma Veinstein, “Impromptu Episode 4: Missy Mazzoli,” Filmkraft, Jan 14, 2019, video, 7:15, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ly-ITXg025c>.

⁶⁰ “Impromptu Episode 4: Missy Mazzoli,” 2019.

⁶¹ “Impromptu Episode 4: Missy Mazzoli,” 2019.

⁶² “Impromptu Episode 4: Missy Mazzoli,” 2019.

⁶³ Lisa Houston, “Missy Mazzoli: Operatic Frontiers,” *San Francisco Classical Voice*, August 7, 2018.

⁶⁴ Houston, 2018.

work to get people interested.”⁶⁵ For all her classical inspirations, Mazzoli asserts that she is committed to being a composer *now* and making music that can only be made now.⁶⁶

Mazzoli explores new music in numerous avenues of her work. In 2008, Mazzoli founded the band Victoire, an electro-acoustic chamber group dedicated to performing her compositions. Members of this group currently include violinist Olivia De Prato, clarinetist Eileen Mac, experimental pianist Lorna Dune (aka Lorna Krier), double bassist and electric bassist Eleonore Oppenheim, and soprano Mellissa Hughes.⁶⁷ Their album *Cathedral City* was named one of 2010's best classical albums by *Time Out New York*, NPR, the *New Yorker*, and the *New York Times*.⁶⁸ Mazzoli has also received four ASCAP Young Composer Awards and a 2019 Grammy nomination for *Vespers for Violin*.⁶⁹

Missy Mazzoli frequently voices her feminist and intersectional views in her compositions. Her advocacy for women in music takes many forms, including her co-founding of the Luna Composition Lab in 2016 with Ellen Reid. Their website asserts that “female-identifying, non-binary, and gender nonconforming composers continue to make up the small minority of professional composers who are consistently performed, recorded and celebrated.”⁷⁰ They established the program in an effort “to address this gender imbalance” by providing “aspiring young female-identifying, non-binary, and gender nonconforming composers (ages 12-18) with a year of one-on-one mentorship, performance opportunities, and high-quality recordings of their work.” Mazzoli’s work

⁶⁵ Houston, 2018.

⁶⁶ “Impromptu Episode 4: Missy Mazzoli,” 2019.

⁶⁷ Victoire, “About Us,” accessed Feb 8, 2021, <http://www.victoirmusic.com/about-us>.

⁶⁸ Mazzoli, “About.”

⁶⁹ Mazzoli, “About.”

⁷⁰ Luna Composition Lab, “Program Overview.”

with Luna Lab and its impact on young composers is discussed further in Chapter 6.⁷¹ She composes pieces for orchestra, chamber ensembles (instrumental and voice), solo works, one ballet, and several operas thus far.

Jennifer Jolley (b. 1981):

Jennifer Jolley is well known for her politically charged work. An interview with Brianna Matzke at *I Care if You Listen (ICIYL)* introduces Jolley as a composer known for “often working collaboratively with writers and communities to use new music as a tool for advocacy.”⁷² She is no stranger to activism, writing passionately about gender, race, violence against women, gun violence in schools, and climate change. Her catalog for wind band, orchestra, chamber ensemble, voice, electronics, and sound art is extensive and diverse in subject matter, making her a prime subject of interest to my studies.

Her interview with *ICIYL* begins on a high note, rephrasing the near-ubiquitous question: “what’s it like to be a woman composer?” to “What, if anything, does gender have to do with your professional identity?” Jolley responds with relief and asserts that:

I feel when I’m characterized as a “woman composer,” it actually anticipates conversation. It’s a title that’s too often understood as only empowering. Yes, I’m a woman, yes, I’m a composer, and historically these categories didn’t overlap. But it’s not just an acknowledgment of past exclusion, it’s still necessary today. The title makes gender a modifier. “Woman” is an adjective that must be applied to the noun “composer” before it recognizes me. It’s a reminder that I always come in a shape that doesn’t match the definition of composer for a lot of people today.⁷³

⁷¹ Luna Composition Lab, “Program Overview.”

⁷² Brianna Matzke “5 Questions to Jennifer Jolley (composer),” *I Care if You Listen*, September 2, 2020.

⁷³ Matzke, 2020.

Jolley’s assessment of this gender modifier is not particularly surprising or new, but rather an echo of women before her and an affirmation that she—like many other women—are navigating an environment that has not always been welcoming to them. Yes, she *is* a woman, but that is not *all* that she is.

Jolley’s outlook on political composition in the Trump era comes as another pertinent point in the interview. Jolley states that she thinks “politics will be increasingly dominant in music, but we need to rethink what it means.”⁷⁴ She goes on to say that “We’ve engineered a country where the survival of too many people is an act of defiance. I think one really important political act to encourage is the audience. Listening to the silenced, the ignored, the neglected, and the dispossessed is going to be critical.”⁷⁵

On her website, Jolley states she is often drawn to provocative and political subjects.⁷⁶ Her 2015 piece for the Quince Ensemble, *Prisoner of Consciousness*, centers on the arrest of the feminist punk rock group Pussy Riot, free speech, misogyny, xenophobia, and corruption in Russia. Frank J. Oteri of *NewMusicBox* called it “the ideal soundtrack and perhaps balm for our current ‘toxic’ times” when addressing the intense political climate in the U.S. in 2016.⁷⁷ Also a regular contributor to *NewMusicBox* herself, Jolley has published several articles addressing cultural appropriation in music, music as political action, and silence as protest (in the work of John Cage).

Jennifer Jolley hails from Los Angeles, California, and is now based in West Texas as an assistant professor of composition at Texas Tech University. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Southern California Thornton School of

⁷⁴ Matzke, 2020.

⁷⁵ Matzke, 2020.

⁷⁶ <https://www.jenniferjolley.com/>

⁷⁷ Frank Oteri, “Jennifer Jolley: Prisoner of Conscience,” *NewMusicBox*, Dec 19, 2018

Music and completed her graduate studies at Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. Jolley has taught at Ohio Wesleyan University and has served as composer-in-residence at Brevard College, the University of Toledo, the Vermont Symphony, the Central Michigan University School of Music, the Alba Music Festival in Italy, and the Women Composers Festival of Hartford in 2019.⁷⁸ She also works on the composition faculty for the Interlochen Summer Arts Camp and is a member of the Blue Dot Collective—a group of seven composers focused on writing new wind band music.⁷⁹

In an entertaining and enlightening video conversation with fellow composer Spencer Arias, Jolley speaks about creating in isolation, her family, and her experiences as a mixed-race composer—all while teaching viewers how to make Pajeon (a savory Korean “pancake.”)⁸⁰ Interspersed among cooking directions, the two composers discuss Jolley’s Korean mother. She speaks about her experiences as a mixed-race person and her recent work to learn her mother’s language. At the 15:45 minute mark of the video, Jolley recalls Professor Joel Hoffman asking a composer symposium the following question: “Why do you compose, and who do you write for?” Jolley explores this questioning again, sharing how she once felt pressured to be experimental and avant-garde as a young composer before finally realizing that it was more valuable to her (and to her music) to express herself freely through music.⁸¹ In other words, she composes to express herself

⁷⁸ Jennifer Jolley, “About,” Accessed Jan 2021, <https://www.jenniferjolley.com/about>.

⁷⁹ Blue Dot Collective, “About,” accessed Feb 9, 2021.

Other members of the group include David Biedenbender, Viet Cuong, Benjamin Taylor, Omar Thomas, Jess Turner, and Roger Zare.

⁸⁰ Spencer Arias, “Cooking with Creatives: Ep 4 Jennifer Jolley makes Pajeon,” YouTube video, 41:01, June 30, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsc-P8teNqw>.

⁸¹ “Cooking with Creatives: Ep 4 Jennifer Jolley makes Pajeon,” 16:23.

and her thoughts for herself. She encourages her students at Texas Tech to ask themselves these questions throughout their careers as well.⁸²

Jolley's style is inspired and influenced by a variety of sources. From urban settings to environmental factors, Jolley is careful to consider her audience and the message she wishes to convey in her compositions.⁸³ Jolley composes diverse pieces for band, orchestra, chamber ensembles, voice, electronic and sound art, and flex ensembles. Her personal blog "Why compose when you can blog?" —which archives her more than 100 rejection letters from competitions, festivals, and prizes—as well as her articles for *NewMusicBox*, are explored in Chapter 7.

Concluding Thoughts and Connections

These women's lives are far more complex than indicated by the summaries included here and could easily fill many volumes. For this study, I have included sufficient information to honor their experiences and recognize their identities as artists, women, performers, students, and teachers, while also focusing on the information pertinent to my question: What do advocacy and protest look like in the work of three U.S. women composers in the 21st century?

These three unique people are all inspired by their experiences; people are almost always at the core of their writings. Each of their repertoires embrace unique stories and styles that are as varied and interesting as their own lives. None of them seem interested in forcing their compositions (or their inspirations for them) to live in a pre-conceived musical form, style, or genre, but opt to push boundaries of expression and innovation in

⁸² Jolley, 2021.

⁸³ Jolley, 2021.

ways that “feel right” to them. They drive their own compositional expeditions with their personal interests to investigate and interrogate the human experience.

It is also notable that each of these composers commented on how to label—or rather, how *not* to label—their music. They all shared their experiences with being pressured to use “avant-garde” practices in their formal training. Frank and Jolley remember being averse to them initially, only to later adopt and adapt them into their works as they saw fit. Mazzoli, however, was not exposed to “avant-garde” styles until later and now comfortably uses them to tell her stories. Perhaps this institutional pressure to “fit” into some sort of compositional box that has motivated these women to avoid traditional labels. Even Frank, who calls herself “old-fashioned,” twists Western traditions with a flair of her own.⁸⁴ As these women navigate this compositional world, they negotiate their place by defying labels and composing as they like.

These brief biographical sketches provide background for a closer examination of their efforts in activism and advocacy. In the following four chapters, I recognize each woman’s intersectional interests and efforts by highlighting some of their endeavors in advocacy outside of composition. I do this in recognition of each woman's life as a tapestry of roles, traits, and identities beyond “composer” and certainly beyond “woman composer.” As Kimberley Francis notes in *Her-storiography: Pierre Bourdieu, Cultural Capital, and Changing the Narrative Paradigm*, musicology can benefit from maintaining a distance from “the great composer” narrative.⁸⁵ With that in mind, I chose to highlight these aspects of their lives to recognize each as a whole person: as a cultural

⁸⁴ Kelly, 60.

⁸⁵ Kimberley Francis, *Her-Storiography: Pierre Bourdieu, Cultural Capital, and Changing the Narrative Paradigm*, 170.

mosaic of interests, abilities, and passions.⁸⁶ I argue that this approach benefits understanding of each of these composers as cultural agents.

Moreover, I analyze the hermeneutics of one work from each composer to discern and discuss the “meaning” of their compositions and how they relay cultural values, explore social justice advocacy, and relate to the human experience. In the remaining chapters, I position Gabriela Lena Frank, Missy Mazzoli, and Jennifer Jolley as examples of Francis’s notion that women in music can be written about as “mosaics” of cultural roles, supported by my analysis of these activist compositions.

⁸⁶ Francis, 177.

CHAPTER 4

GABRIELA LENA FRANK: CIVIC OUTREACH AND PEREGRINOS (2009)

In her interview with Kelly, Gabriela Lena Frank discusses “the idea of the artist as citizen.” She says, “you’re almost by default put on the path of civic initiative just by being an artist.”⁸⁷ Likewise, Frank’s biography with the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music notes that “civic outreach is an essential part of Gabriela’s work” and “she has volunteered extensively in hospitals and prisons, with her current focus on developing the music school program at Anderson Valley High School, a rural public school of modest means with a large Latino population in Boonville, California.”⁸⁸ Frank is by no means an isolated creator, but one who finds brilliance in the people around her. This notion of “artistic citizenship” is threaded throughout Frank’s life and work.

Frank and her husband Jeremy Lyron founded the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music (GLFCAM) in 2017 after a road trip through the Southwestern United States, during which they passed through struggling small towns with tiny arts centers.⁸⁹ The couple was inspired to connect with these communities and sought to “highlight the power of creativity and arts citizenship.”⁹⁰ The couple opened their own home in Boonville, California, to a small, diverse, and energized group of composers and performers to achieve this dream together.⁹¹ The school defines its mission under no uncertain terms. Four tenants guide their operation:

⁸⁷ Quoted in Kelly, 70.

⁸⁸ “About Gabriela,” Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, <https://www.glfcam.com/people/gabriela>

Jeremy is also GLFCAM’s property manager, videographer, and co-host of the Academy.

⁸⁹ “About Gabriela,” GLFCAM

⁹⁰ “About Gabriela,” GLFCAM

⁹¹ “About Gabriela,” GLFCAM

1. To inspire emerging composers to create self-determined artistic lives through mentorship, readings with master performers, and hands-on practicums addressing the creative habit in the intimate and eco-conscious setting of Gabriela's two farms in Boonville, CA; to create a support structure for alumni of our programs that entails commissions and seed funds for collaborations with one another.
2. To honor essential civic initiatives: Connecting guest musicians and composer fellows with a local small rural community; encouraging composer fellows to strategize and realize their own potential citizenship in low arts access areas; encouraging the efforts of composers hailing from diverse backgrounds.
3. To practice climate citizenship, acting meaningfully to address the current environmental crisis, and to equip emerging composers with the skill set to make music ethically.
4. To document the stories and teachings of the Academy for video and online dissemination for the widest audience possible.⁹²

The Frank Academy reflects the composer's civic commitments: it aims to uplift individuals, their communities, and their environment. One of the missions of GLFCAM is "to encourage composers to think of the arts as indispensable to communities beyond the concert hall," a credo that is observable in the school's active involvement with Anderson Valley High School, a low-income public school that is primarily attended by the children of Latino farmworkers.⁹³ Outside of the schools, GLFCAM presents the Bueno Yabbelow Music Series, a low-cost venture that offers the Anderson Valley a tapestry of musical engagement.⁹⁴ And per their climate commitment, students and faculty live onsite in lodgings developed with sustainability and permaculture at their core.⁹⁵

⁹² "About Gabriela," GLFCAM.

⁹³ "History," GLFCAM, <https://www.glfcam.com/about/history-mission>

⁹⁴ "History," GLFCAM.

⁹⁵ "History," GLFCAM.

On top of assistance for fellows while they live and work with the GLFCAM, the Academy launched the Alumni Support Initiative in 2018 that brokers funding and commissions for its alumni.⁹⁶ Similarly, they offer networking and mentorship through the Composers for Racial Equality in the Arts (CREA), which matches GLFCAM fellows with a cohort of established composers from underrepresented racial demographics to serve as mentors.⁹⁷ At every turn, Frank and her collaborators are vocal and influential proponents of arts citizenship and activism.

In addition to civic commitments to her community and education, Frank is also a climate activist. She co-authors a climate change column with Rebecca McFaul for *Chamber Music America Magazine*, much of which is accessible for free on the Chamber Music America Magazine's webpage.⁹⁸ To further demonstrate Frank's belief in the importance of composers' civic initiative, Frank wrote and adopted a Climate Commitment for the GLFCAM that outlines their dedication to offsetting carbon emissions, creating a robust virtual learning program, and calling for composition commissions regarding climate action.

Frank is active not only as a composer but also as an educator, a collaborator, a mentor, and an activist. Her values seem to permeate her every engagement; it is no small wonder she received the 25th Heinz Award for the Arts and Humanities in 2020.⁹⁹ To date, Frank's compositional catalog is filled with pieces that weave her cultural

⁹⁶ "Alumni Support Initiative," *GLFCAM*, <https://www.glfcam.com/alumni-support-initiative>

⁹⁷ "Composers for Racial Equality in the Arts," GLFCAM, <https://www.glfcam.com/alumni-support-initiative/crea> It's also worth noting that "crea" is the "command form of 'believe' in Spanish."

⁹⁸ Access GLF's articles and the rest of the magazine here: <https://www.chamber-music.org/chamber-music-magazine> or through GLFCAM's Musician's Climate Citizenry Blog here: <https://www.glfcam.com/mcc-blog-2020>.

⁹⁹ 25th Heinz Awards, "Gabriela Lena Frank," October 13, 2020, <http://www.heinzawards.net/recipient/gabriela-lena-frank>

influences and social values into technicolored works of art. *Peregrinos* (2009) is representative of Frank's creative citizenship and collaborative art.

Peregrinos (2009)

From 2007 to 2009, Frank held a residency with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. During this period, Frank worked closely with Latino immigrants in the area; the Latino Youth Collective inspired her orchestral work *Peregrinos/Pilgrims*. It is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two B-flat clarinets, bassoons, two F horns, two C trumpets, timpani, three percussionists, piano (doubles celesta), harp, and strings. Debuted in 2009 by the Berkeley Symphony and conducted by Joana Carneiro, the work recounts the tales and testimonies of life as a Latin American immigrant in the United States. WFYI-TV Indianapolis produced and distributed a thirty-minute documentary about the piece's premiere, entitled *Peregrinos/Pilgrims: A Musical Journey*.¹⁰⁰ The documentary is viewable through PBS and offers excellent insight into Frank's compositional process, including interviews with her, the orchestra members, and the Latino community that inspired the work.

In Frank's program notes for *Peregrinos*, she commends the Indiana Symphony for helping to broker meetings with "Latino reverends, local politicians, nurses, young parents, 'at-risk' youth, carpenters, ESL teachers, community activists, librarians, salsa musicians, and many others who were stunningly generous in sharing their experiences as immigrants."¹⁰¹ Each movement is the *testimonio* of the people Frank befriended. Their

¹⁰⁰ Gabriela Lena Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*, produced by Aric Hartvig, (Indianapolis: WFYI and PBS, 2009), <https://www.pbs.org/show/peregrinos-pilgrims-musical-journey/>.

¹⁰¹ Gabriela Lena Frank, "Composer Note," *Peregrinos*, (New York: G Schirmer Inc, 2009).

lived experiences take on new life in these musical representations through tales of heroism, heartbreak, and hope. As a daughter of a Peruvian immigrant herself, she shares that these stories helped her re-articulate her musical voice in the Latin tradition.¹⁰²

The first movement, *Arbol de Sueños*, is rooted in a community art project from the Theater of Inclusion, an Indianapolis-based artist collaborative that has partnered with the Indianapolis Symphony to provide unique creative experiences for students.¹⁰³ The piece's central image, entitled “Dream Tree,” is a laundry drying rack covered in many pieces of “brightly-colored flagging tape,” which are left long to fly freely in the wind.¹⁰⁴ Upon these ribbons are the handwritten messages of the community’s residents, conveying personal messages and prayers of hope and aspiration from people of all walks of life.¹⁰⁵ Frank remarks that the art project reminds her of the “Dream Tree” in many Latin creation myths and cites this relationship as inspiration for her use of “música folklórica” in the movement.¹⁰⁶

Frank does not specify which folkloric traditions she is borrowing from in this movement, but she does appear to use syncopations and techniques commonly found in multiple Indigenous, Iberian, and mestizo traditions. This ambiguity allows for diverse immigrant populations from these traditions to identify with the work. Frank articulates this notion in the documentary *Peregrinos*:

Most of the testimonials that I heard were about difficult experiences. And that was something that I had to really confront. It would be safer to do a piece that was maybe a bunch of Merengue and salsas and cumbias and quechas and

¹⁰² Frank, “Composer Note.”

¹⁰³ Theater of Inclusion, “About Us,” <https://theaterofinclusion.com/marketing/on-site-education-training/>

¹⁰⁴ Frank, “Composer Note.”

¹⁰⁵ Frank, “Composer Note.”

¹⁰⁶ Frank, “Composer Note.”

huayanos. These are beautiful, beautiful song forms, but didn't really speak to what was happening here.¹⁰⁷

Rather than represent these struggles and cultures in their typically celebrated forms, she draws more generally on folklórica without committing to any single form. Instead, she hints at familiarity while painting a musical picture of immigration that encompasses many complicated emotions.

In “Arbol de Sueños,” Frank employs one technical element that evokes a sense of some música folklórica traditions: pizzicato chords for solo string instruments. Having orchestral strings articulate in this way is reminiscent of a guitarron or Andean charango, both popular folklórica strings instruments. The strings employ this technique almost sporadically, appearing at intervals of two to eight measures apart, while a violin soars over them with a rubato E minor pentatonic melody. (see Example 4.1)

The image shows a musical score for strings in mm 1-6 of "Arbol de Sueños". The score is written for five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The tempo is marked "Lyrical, poco rubato" with a quarter note equal to 88 (♩ = 88). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various performance instructions such as "1 solo", "cantando", "pizz.", "gentle", "pushing forward", and dynamic markings like "mp", "f", and "f gentle". The strings play pizzicato chords, while the Violin I part features a melodic line with slurs and accents.

Example 4.1: “Arbol de Sueños,” strings in mm 1-6.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Frank, “Composer Note.”

¹⁰⁸ Gabriela Lena Frank, *Peregrinos*, (New York: G Schirmer Inc, 2009), <https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/37105/Peregrinos--Gabriela-Lena-Frank/>.

The disjointed juxtaposition of this haunting melody against the irregularity of the chords is striking. It gives an impression of cultural fragmentation, which can suggest a range of interpretations, including harsh policies and the policing of cultures or the unpredictability of life and its challenges. The accompanying string section feels incomplete, forced to suddenly stop as if being interrupted before having the opportunity to complete its thought. Another interpretation comes to mind, guided by Frank’s statement that this is a hopeful piece—perhaps these are interjections of people’s voices, shouts of encouragement, hoots of joy and affirmation. The melody soars over these fragments, not unlike the immigrants’ ribbons of hope tied to the “Dream Tree.” The main melody is heavily syncopated, and the whole work dances through varied meters, including 2/4, 6/8, 3/8, 5/8, and 8/8. Such variety reflects elements of folkloric music, which rarely conforms to Western notations of meter.

♩ = 80
 1 stand
 arco, *leggero*
mp *f*

gli altri *f* *mp*
 1 stand
 arco, *leggero*
mp *f*
 tutti, div.
 pizz.
 tutti, div.
 pizz.
 tutti, div.
 pizz.

Example 4.2: “Arbol de Sueños,” strings in mm. 30-33

In the *Peregrinos* documentary, Frank shares some additional insight into each movement’s inspiration and highlights some of the musical forms, figures, and characters. As the first and fifth movements of the work, *Arbol de Sueños* bookends the

other three testimonios. Frank points out her desire to enter the work on a positive note and concludes it on an equally positive message of hope.¹⁰⁹ In between, however, she musically imparts some of the harsh immigrant realities in the United States. Even in this hopeful movement, the m2 dissonances in the violas and cellos impart an underlying anxiety and frustration amid the cheerful rollicking of the violins. (Example 4.2) These frustrations and complicated sentiments become more apparent in the middle three movements.

Testimonio II: Hero Brothers

The inspiration for “Testimonio II: Hero Brothers” comes from Frank’s friendship with an eleven-year-old boy she calls “KS” and his younger brother (who remains nameless). KS was born in Mexico and is now living undocumented in the United States. He doubtlessly faces numerous obstacles, but she notes that he is already “social-justice minded and college-bound.”¹¹⁰ On the other hand, his younger brother was born in the United States, granting him birthright citizenship. The boys understand that KS will face different challenges than his brother, something the youngest reportedly feels immense guilt over. Frank compares the deep bond of these young brothers to that of “The Hero Brothers,” Hunahpu (WAH-nuh-pwuh) and Xbalanque (shi-BAY-lan-kay) of ancient Mayan mythology, who outsmart many supernatural beings in their adventures together.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*.

¹¹⁰ Frank, “Composer Note.”

¹¹¹ Frank, “Composer Note.”

The Mayan myth of Hunahpu and Xbalanque appears in the *Popol Vuh*, an ancient book of mythology that originates from the Quiché Mayan highlands of Guatemala.¹¹² The twins are considered a major part of the Mayan creation myth, in which their father, Hun-Hunahpu, was killed by the gods of Xibalba (shi-BAHL-buh), and his head hung from a tree. Xquic, a daughter of one of the underworld gods, happened upon the tree and became miraculously pregnant with the twins when the skull in the tree spat upon her hand. This myth again resonates with the Dream Tree described earlier in this chapter, a thread that underscores much of *Peregrinos* as a whole.

The twins are featured in several major legends, including one in which they outsmart the lords of Xibalba in retribution for murdering their father. The lords sent the twin heroes on a terrible quest through some of the most terrifying places in the underworld. In each trial, the twins use their wits and their trust in each other to overcome the obstacles before them. Ultimately, the twins defeat the lords of the underworld and retire to the heavens together. In some versions, they become the sun and the moon.¹¹³

Other descriptors Frank attaches to this movement are “vivacious” and “almost like fight music.”¹¹⁴ Keeping in mind the legendary adventures of Hunahpu and Xbalanque, it is not difficult to imagine two mythical heroes fighting their way through wild obstacles while the winds and marimbas whirl through “brilliant” cascading runs.

¹¹² Delia Goetz, Sylvanus Griswold Morley, and Adrián Recinos, *Popol Vuh the sacred book of the ancient Quiché Maya* 1st ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), 77.

Popol Vuh means “Book of the People/Community” and is the source of numerous Mayan legends.

¹¹³ Goetz, 94.

¹¹⁴ Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*

The push and pull between the marimbas and the gut-punching brass accents illustrate a mighty battle between the heroes and their otherworldly foes.

The recurrent pizzicato moments throughout the movement remind Frank of footsteps, leading one to consider the measured journey these two boys will walk together.¹¹⁵ Frank also notes that this movement is “flavored” with marimba and is “robust, powerful, and optimistic in spirit.”¹¹⁶ The pizzicato figure referred to by Frank first appears in the violas in m. 32 before it is picked up by the cellos in m. 36, the basses in m. 38, harp in m. 40, and finally in the second violins in m. 44, eventually doubled at the octave by the first violins from mm. 48-52. (Example 4.3)

Example 4.3: “Testimonio II: Hero Brothers,” piano reduction of pizzicato “footsteps” figure mm 32-52

The first violin part drones on a C as the secondary part descends by major seconds. This simple gesture evokes an intense sort of forward movement, aligning well with Frank’s implication of the boy’s footsteps throughout their heroic journey. The footsteps reappear, transposed down to A in m. 85, as if the brothers have defeated one trial and have picked up the journey to the next one. They seem to catch their breath and plod along before facing another trial.

¹¹⁵ Paraphrasing Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*

¹¹⁶ Frank, “Composer Note.”

The movement ends with the same pizzicato figure, in mm. 195-214. This time, it begins high in the first violins and descends through the strings section, maintaining the same intervals as earlier. Meanwhile, the upper winds sustain a G minor sixth chord, punctuated by the chimes of a triangle as if the heavens have opened up for them. At last, the contrabass comes to rest, leaving the impression of the brothers walking off into the sky after their final, glorious victory.

In casting the two boys she met in Indianapolis as these beloved Indigenous heroes, Frank makes a powerful statement about their bravery in the face of racial and political adversity. Her message of empowerment characterizes these children as nothing less than superheroes. Through their perseverance, intelligence, and fraternity, these boys—and many others like them—can surmount the many unjust challenges presented to them. While the casting of the narrative may seem like an oversimplification (or even a romanticization) of the immigrant experience in the U.S., Frank is nonetheless committed to juxtaposing the tunnel of dehumanization, eugenic practices, and rampant racism with the humor and optimism she observed through her ethnographic work with the Latin Youth Collective. Despite the ugly truth of systemic racism and oppressive immigration policies, Frank includes an underlying message of hope in each movement to honor the pilgrims' spirit of perseverance.

Fireflies

The third movement, *Fireflies*, addresses the experience of a young woman crossing the Mexican border into Arizona. The woman spent hours cramped in the trunk of a car with two other women. When they were finally let out to stretch, her vision was

blurred, and she struggled to get her bearings. Upon rubbing her eyes, she noted the little bursts of “sparkles” in her field of vision. Eventually, she realized that the sparkles were fireflies flitting through the dark night air, mingling with tombstones in the cemetery where they had stopped.¹¹⁷ Frank’s informant confided that she is haunted by the image and the experience and suffers from anxiety. Frank describes this movement as a tone poem of this anxious and frightening incident.¹¹⁸

The movement begins with an ominous, low-pitched tremolo in the marimba and triangle with sudden “shimmering” interjections from the violins. This hectic, tumultuous figure is passed around through all of the strings. Each part builds upon the last until the entire string section becomes a frightening cacophony of agitated, panicked buzzing.

(Example 4.4) They are all marked with frequent dynamic changes, frantically changing between piano and forte, adding to the chaos until they arrive at a fortissimo strike in m. 67.

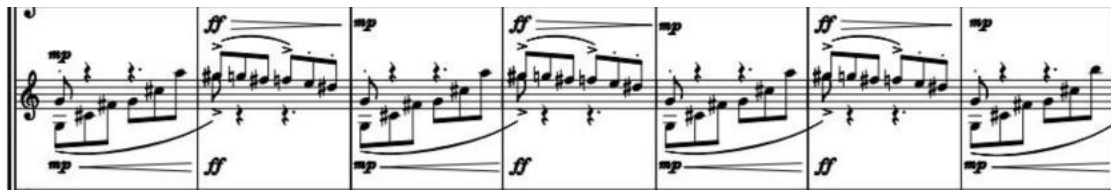
The image shows a musical score for five string parts: Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Va.), Cello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score spans from measure 59 to 65. Each part features a complex, shimmering tremolo pattern. Performance instructions include 'div.' (divisi), 'sul pont.' (sul ponticello), 'al ord.' (all'ordine), and 'verso il pont.' (verso il ponticello). Dynamic markings alternate frequently between piano (p) and forte (f), with some instances of fortissimo (ff). The overall texture is dense and chaotic, characteristic of a 'shimmering' or 'fireflies' effect.

Example 4.4: “Fireflies,” shimmering/fireflies in strings, mm. 59-65.

¹¹⁷ Frank, “Composer Note.”

¹¹⁸ Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*.

By m. 68, the strings now enter softly, on a unison F. Chimes join the scene to evoke a sense of dread and anxiety as the young woman becomes aware of her surroundings in the cemetery. M. 84 begins the B section of the piece, which is marked “fleeting” and features woodwind figures representing the fireflies. The figures rise and fall in a repeated pattern, mimicking the darting paths of the insects in the night. This “character” is passed from the clarinet to the flute, piccolo, and then oboe, growing in intensity as each part comes in, much like the strings did previously in m. 59-65.



Example 4.5: “Fireflies,” Firefly character in the clarinets, mm. 86-92.

The movement ends as the fireflies disperse again, and the woman is left alone in the dark cemetery, with only the echoes of the church bells and her fears. In contrast to the *Hero Brothers*, which is full of bombastic vigor and ends with a sense of victory, *Fireflies* embodies a person’s deepest anxieties and fears and leaves one with a heavy sense of foreboding. As if to soothe this sentiment, the fourth movement portrays a compassionate and loving religious figure.

Devotional for Sarita Colonia

The fourth testimonio acknowledges the belief in a “higher protective spirit” that Frank often encountered in the stories people shared with her.¹¹⁹ Sarita Colonia, Frank explains, was a young Peruvian woman who migrated from an un-named mountain range

¹¹⁹ Frank, “Composer Note.”

to the coast in search of a better life.¹²⁰ Sarita was granted sainthood after her death, and she is often associated with immigrants, the poor, and outcasts.

Sara “Sarita” Colonia Zambrano was born in Huaraz, the capital city of the Ancash Region of Peru, in 1914. In 1924 her mother, Rosalia, became ill with bronchitis, and the family moved to Lima where their father could better provide for them. Sara and one of her sisters, Esther, attended primary school at Santa Teresita de Marvillac, where Sara was inspired by and drawn to a life of piety and devotion. She dreamed of becoming a nun, but her family’s needs took priority over her wishes. After their mother succumbed to her illness, Sara became the family’s matriarch and dedicated her time to caring for her sisters. Her father remarried and added three more siblings to Sara’s care. To help support the family, Sarita toiled at many odd jobs, working in a bakery, selling fish, and cleaning houses. Legends say that despite her hardships, Sarita maintained her devotion to God and often gave her “last pennies and clothes off her back to street beggars” and prayed on behalf of those who asked her.¹²¹ Sarita died unceremoniously of malaria in 1940 and was buried in a mass grave.¹²² Today, she has developed a massive devotional following in Peru, whose citizens have made her into a (non-canonical) saint for Peru’s outcasts.¹²³

Frank says the harp in this piece is a portrayal of the Andean harp, in homage to Sarita’s home of Peru.¹²⁴ Similarly, Frank has basses 1 and 2 playing harmonics near the nut, while bass 3 plays harmonics near the bridge. (Example 4.6) The effect Frank

¹²⁰ Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*.

¹²¹ Craig Mauro, “In Peru, the Saint Who Isn’t Inspires a Cult,” *LA Times*, June 23, 2002.

¹²² Mauro, 2002.

¹²³ Mauro, 2002.

¹²⁴ Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*.

achieves with this technique is reminiscent of the Andean panpipes (or sikus).¹²⁵ The clarinets double the basses in this figure, aiding in the timbral suggestion of panpipes. As a “final touch” to the musical invocation of Sarita, the upper strings play a shimmering tremolo, representative of an angelic and luminous Sarita descending from her mountain.¹²⁶ The players are given several cues throughout the movement, with entrances marked “whispering” and “delicate,” adding to the reverence of the saint’s portrayal. The harp and marimba also take turns flourishing through ethereal scales and glissandi.



Example 4.6: “Sarita Colonia,” Bass harmonics, mm. 10-17.

The movement conveys a sense of excited reverence. Since Sarita is uncanonized by the church (canonization can take centuries), it seems fitting that a piece in her honor might have a slightly different “flavor” than a traditional religious work. Sarita has become a “cult” favorite of diverse populations in Lima, and she appears on earrings, t-shirts, and artwork throughout the city. She is also commonly associated as the inspiration for Gabriela Ventura, a drag queen in Peru.¹²⁷ Sarita is a unique Peruvian figure and one that Frank portrays in a whimsical, compassionate manner that pays homage to some of the indigenous instruments of Peru.

¹²⁵ Paraphrasing Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*.

¹²⁶ Paraphrasing Frank, *Peregrinos: Pilgrims, A Musical Journey*.

¹²⁷ Mauro, 2002.

Concluding Thoughts:

Peregrinos is a mosaic of stories as diverse and multi-faceted as the people who shared them with Frank. It testifies to the strength of immigrants in the United States and provides a musical voice to the disenfranchised and dehumanized. Frank honors the immigrants she spoke to in Indianapolis as mythological heroes, weary refugees, unconventional saints, and perhaps most clearly: dreamers. Frank's portrayal of the range of emotions in these musical testimonios is evidence of her ability to capture humanity and the Latin experience in the U.S.

The work is critical of immigration policies and does not shy away from "ugly" experiences and emotions. Still, it is ultimately an optimistic composition about the resilience of the people she portrays. As a cultural agent and mestiza composer, Frank effectively uses her position to elevate the voices of her peers in a way that is empowering and encouraging.

I have placed Frank at the center of this narrative as a key figure in her mosaic. However, I have sought to highlight her work as a composer in addition to her career as an educator, mentor, advocate, and collaborator—roles that are often ancillary and frequently male-dominated. Gabriela Lena Frank is not *only* the composer at the center of this paradigm, but *also* a mosaic of her roles, reflective of the culture of collaboration upon which she depends. *Peregrinos*, in particular, highlights Frank's efforts in community outreach and her interdependence on others in its conception. She is not an isolated creator, but one who recognizes brilliance in those around her.

CHAPTER 5

MISSY MAZZOLI: MENTORSHIP, FEMINIST SPACES, AND SONG FROM THE UPROAR (2012)

Missy Mazzoli and Canadian composer Ellen Reid founded The Luna Composition Lab (LCL) in 2016 in partnership with the Kaufman Music Center.¹²⁸ The LCL seeks to address the gender imbalance in music professions by providing “aspiring female, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming composers (ages twelve through eighteen) with one-on-one mentorships, performance opportunities, and high-quality recordings of their work.”¹²⁹ The fellowship takes place over the course of one year, during which Fellows receive bi-monthly online lessons with their Mentors via Skype or Zoom. The experience culminates in a week-long festival in New York City where their pieces are rehearsed and performed by live ensembles. This festival also offers opportunities to attend masterclasses, workshops, backstage tours, additional concerts, and networking events.¹³⁰ It provides a unique (and vital) professional experience for young composers that sets these budding creatives up for success. Mazzoli asserts that to change the gender dynamic in composition, the community *must* support young women’s interests.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Kaufman Music Center is a New York-based performing arts complex. In addition to Luna Composition Lab, the complex is home to other youth enrichment programs including Lucy Moses School, Face the Music, and Special Music School. <https://www.kaufmanmusiccenter.org/>

¹²⁹ Luna Composition Lab, “Program Overview,” *Kaufman Music Center*, <https://www.kaufmanmusiccenter.org/luna-lab/program-overview/>

¹³⁰ LCL, “Program Overview”

¹³¹ Paraphrased in Julie Zeileger, “An Interview with Groundbreaking Composer Missy Mazzoli,” *The FBomb for Woman’s Media Center*, September 10, 2018. <https://www.womensmediacenter.com/fbomb/an-interview-with-groundbreaking-composer-missy-mazzoli>.

LCL has built a fellowship curriculum grounded in professionalism and pedagogical proficiency. In the fall, mentors meet bi-monthly with their Fellows to guide them through the beginning stages of their creative work, “exploring a new sonic landscape that will develop into a piece, including sketches, conversations, directed listening, and score study.”¹³² By winter, the Fellow’s compositions become a priority, and they workshop their compositional “sketches” with performing students from all over NYC.

The emphasis on mentorship in the program is grounded in Mazzoli and Reid’s awareness that teenage girls often shy away from careers in composition due to the relative lack of role models and mentors in the field to guide them.¹³³ Reid and Mazzoli each suffered from a palpable scarceness of female mentors, and they hope to alter the landscape for future generations of young women and non-binary composers. Mazzoli adds a personal touch in an interview with Izzy Cihak: “If I can serve as a role model to even a few women who have found their voice through music, I will have accomplished a major life goal.”¹³⁴ In an interview with Reid, Rebecca Letjes poses an essential question about the emotional and logistical labor required to be an effective mentor. Reid shares that she and the other women at LCL find the whole experience inspiring and energizing in their own creative projects.¹³⁵ Mentorship for Mazzoli, Reid, and LCL is a mutually beneficial relationship that elevates the entire community.

¹³² LCL, “Program Overview”

¹³³ Quoted in Julie Zeileger, 2018.

¹³⁴ Quoted in Izzy Cihak, “Missy Mazzoli: ‘It’s So Easy to Create an Idea of What my Music is Based on its Labels... and They Actually Get in the Way,’” *Philthy Mag*, March 18, 2015. <https://www.philthymag.com/missy-mazzoli-its-so-easy-to-create-an-idea-of-what-my-music-is-based-on-its-labels-and-they-actually-get-in-the-way/>.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Rebecca Lentjes, “5 Questions to Ellen Reid (Composer, Co-founder of Luna Composition Lab),” *I Care if You Listen*, June 12, 2018.

The LCL festival is not the final goodbye for its fellows; the composers use the platform to network with other professionals and potential clients. The Toulmin Luna Composition Lab Alumni Fund, underwritten by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, also offers continued support to LCL Fellows with funding opportunities for creative projects, equipment, software, continuing education, and professional development.¹³⁶ The LCL boasts a growing register of influential mentors, including Caroline Shaw, Du Yun, Laura Karpman, Reena Esmail, Alex Temple, Jessie Montgomery, and Jennifer Higdon. There is no shortage of support—creative, financial, emotional, or otherwise—with the collective composers of Luna Lab.

A few months before co-founding LCL, Mazzoli was making experimental waves with her band, Victoire. Founded in 2016 to perform Mazzoli’s compositions, Victoire features a unique lineup of talent: violinist Olivia De Prato, clarinetist Eileen Mac, experimental pianist Lorna Dune (aka Lorna Krier), double bassist and electric bassist Eleonore Oppenheim, and soprano Mellissa Hughes.¹³⁷ Mazzoli explains that she first chose members for their musical talent and later realized it was “important and fulfilling for [her] to have a small portion of [her] music-making take place in an all-female environment.”¹³⁸ Victoire has become a space for this group of artistic women to experiment and sometimes “fail spectacularly” in a safe and supportive environment.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Luna Composition Lab, “Toulmin Luna Composition Lab Alumni Fund,” <https://www.kaufmannmusiccenter.org/luna-lab/luna-lab-toulmin-alumni-fund/>

¹³⁷ Victoire, “About Us,” accessed Feb 8, 2021, <http://www.victoirmusic.com/about-us>.

¹³⁸ Quoted in Zeileger, 2018.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Zeileger, 2018.

Still, their work together is about “the music first, but to frankly and honestly answer questions about gender when they come up.”¹⁴⁰

Wary of labels, Mazzoli shares that calling Victoire a band (as opposed to an ensemble or an orchestra) was deliberate. Although her process for Victoire is the same as it is with an orchestra or opera, she notes that the word “band” helps dismantle preconceived walls between her, her music, and her audience.¹⁴¹ She challenges standard valuing of music-making in a concert hall over that in a bar; her work with Victoire situates itself somewhere between those spaces, where these worlds collide and interact with one another in a way that she hopes is fulfilling and exciting for all.¹⁴²

Mazzoli strives to redefine twenty-first-century music and create spaces for music that are unintimidating and supportive. Victoire solves part of that problem by bridging conventional and “unconventional” settings: they have performed in Carnegie Hall, the Cleveland Museum of Art, concert halls, pubs, and nightclubs across the country. Luna Composition Lab fulfills another part of the equation, encouraging young women interested in the arts to become full-blown, empowered composers. Inspired by people and the complexity of relationships, Mazzoli’s work—as a mentor and as a composer—reflects the challenges of life as an artist, as a woman, and simply as a human being. One of her definitive works, *Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt* (2012), encompasses much of Mazzoli’s passion for people and storytelling in her own unique, accessible, and boundary-breaking style.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Zeileger, 2018.

¹⁴¹ Joel Hoffman, “The Rumpus Interview with Missy Mazzoli,” *The Rumpus Magazine*, June 5th, 2013.

¹⁴² Hoffman, 2013.

Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt:

Mazzoli's first opera engages with the fascinating life of Swiss-Russian explorer and writer Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904). Mazzoli was attracted to Isabelle's story because she "felt it paralleled not only my life but the lives of lots of other people, particularly young women today. Isabelle didn't feel like she had any role models, she felt like she was carving her own path. I took great comfort from her words and her journals."¹⁴³ Consistent with Mazzoli's own disappointment in not having a female mentor as a young woman, Mazzoli's passions are apparent in *Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt*.

The multimedia chamber opera is not the first musical appearance of Eberhardt in Mazzoli's repertoire; in 2007, she appeared in *Isabelle Eberhardt Dreams of Pianos*, a piece for piano and electronics (a pre-recorded soundtrack). Mazzoli's interest in Eberhardt began in a Boston bookstore where she stumbled upon her journals by accident in 2004.¹⁴⁴ Two weeks later, Mazzoli had devoured everything written by Eberhardt and tracked down everything written about her.¹⁴⁵ Enthralled, Mazzoli knew she had to turn Eberhardt's captivating life into an opera.¹⁴⁶ With a libretto from Royce Vavrek and an ethereal balance of acoustic and electronic sound, Mazzoli breathes Isabelle Eberhardt back to life.¹⁴⁷ The opera does not follow a conventional narrative style, and at times

¹⁴³ Audie Cornish, "Missy Mazzoli: A New Opera and New Attitude for Classical Music," *All Things Considered* with *NPR Classical*, November 20, 2012.

¹⁴⁴ Missy Mazzoli, *Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt*, Program Notes, 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Mazzoli, *Song from the Uproar*, Program Notes, 2012.

¹⁴⁶ Cornish, 2013.

¹⁴⁷ Royce Vavrek is a critically acclaimed Canadian-born and Brooklyn-based librettist and lyricist. He has collaborated with Mazzoli on *Song from the Uproar* (2012) and the operatic adaptation of Lars von Trier's controversial film, *Breaking the Waves* (2016).

Royce Vavrek, "About," <http://www.roycevavrek.com/about-royce-vavrek>.

“feels more like a fever dream,” but its message remains clear: intention, empowerment, and agency.¹⁴⁸

The one-act opera is scored for mezzo-soprano, SSATB chorus, flute, clarinet, electric guitar, piano, double bass, and electronics. *Song from the Uproar* premiered at the Brooklyn venue, The Kitchen, on March 3, 2012, with Abigail Fischer portraying Eberhardt, supported by the acclaimed NOW ensemble lead by Stephen Osgood.¹⁴⁹ According to Lauren Ishida’s *I Care if You Listen* review, the atmosphere of the opera was surreal and illusory against the abstract background film by Stephen Taylor, which projected images of people, barren desert vistas, and flashes of light onstage and on the ceiling.¹⁵⁰

The life of *Uproar*’s titular heroine is fascinating, and it is clear how she became Mazzoli’s muse. Isabelle Wilhelmine Marie Eberhardt was born in Geneva in 1877, the illegitimate child of Nathalie Moerder (née Eberhardt) and Alexander Trophimowsky.¹⁵¹ Isabelle was Nathalie’s fifth child and was given her mother’s maiden name, presumably due to the couple’s rejection of familial norms.¹⁵² Isabelle and her siblings were educated at home by Trophimowsky and subsequently gained a diverse education in language, literature, philosophy, and science. The children were fluent in French, Russian, Latin, Italian, and Arabic.¹⁵³ Fond of literature, Isabelle reveled in the writings of Émile Zola,

¹⁴⁸ Frank J. Oteri, “Missy Mazzoli: Communication, Intimacy, and Vulnerability,” *NewMusicBox*, March 1, 2016, <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/missy-mazzoli-communication-intimacy-and-vulnerability/>.

¹⁴⁹ Lauren Ishida, “Missy Mazzoli’s *Song from the Uproar*: A Masterpiece of Modern Opera,” *ICIYL*, March 19, 2012, <https://www.icareifyoulisten.com/2012/03/missy-mazzolis-song-from-the-uproar-a-masterpiece-of-modern-opera/>

¹⁵⁰ Ishida, 2012.

¹⁵¹ Emma Garman, “Feminize Your Canon: Isabelle Eberhardt,” *The Paris Review*, Feb 11, 2019. <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/02/11/feminize-your-canon-isabelle-eberhardt/>.

¹⁵² Garman, 2019.

¹⁵³ Garman, 2019.

Pierre Loti, Leo Tolstoy, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Voltaire.¹⁵⁴ She enjoyed dressing in boy's clothing as a child, "enjoying the freedom" they granted her. The young Eberhardt was no stranger to nonconformity, given her unconventional upbringing, and her parents thought nothing of her resistance to gendered norms. Tophimowsky even encouraged it, keeping Isabelle's hair cropped short and insisting she wear trousers on her solo strolls through the streets of Geneva.¹⁵⁵

By 1895 Isabelle began publishing short stories under the pseudonym Nicolas Podolinsky and developed a deep infatuation with the Sahara and the people of North Africa. Eberhardt and her mother relocated to Algeria in 1897, where the two became immersed in the local Arabic communities and eventually converted to Islam. Eberhardt often traversed unveiled, dressed as a man in a burnous (a Berber hood) and turban.¹⁵⁶ By age twenty-one, both her mother and father had died, and she began traveling the Maghreb (Northwest Africa) and introducing herself with a man's name, Si Mahmoud Saadi. Under this persona, she regularly went on expeditions into the Sahara on horseback, sleeping in tents with groups of men, frequenting the bazaars, and visiting brothels to satisfy her "artist's curiosity."¹⁵⁷ When questioned about her lifestyle and Arab male performativity, Eberhardt reportedly said, "It is impossible for me to do otherwise."¹⁵⁸

Eberhardt traveled to Paris briefly to pursue a career as a writer before returning to Algeria in 1900. There, she befriended and fell in love with Slimène Ehni, a male

¹⁵⁴ Garman, 2019.

¹⁵⁵ Garman, 2019.

¹⁵⁶ Garman, 2019.

¹⁵⁷ Garman, 2019.

¹⁵⁸ Garman, 2019.

Algerian soldier. The pair were married in 1901, and during the ceremony, she wore a wig, “bowing to convention for once.”¹⁵⁹ During this time, she wrote for a local newspaper for several years, conducted “intelligence missions” for a French brigadier general, and worked as an “intermediary between the general and the local people.”¹⁶⁰ The latter employments contradictory to her anti-colonial views, “she apparently trusted that a French protectorate . . . would benefit the Arab Muslims in Morocco.”¹⁶¹ In October 1904, Eberhardt died in a flash flood in Aïn Séfra, and she was buried in a Muslim cemetery of Sidi Boudjemâa, west of Aïn Séfra, Algeria, under both her adopted Arabic name and her birth name. The partial works recovered from the flood were published posthumously by Victor Barrucand, a French journalist, writer, and political philosopher.

Mazzoli titled Isabelle’s story this way because “it’s her song; this song emerging from the chaos of her life, that’s the song coming out of the uproar.”¹⁶² Eberhardt’s nomadic life was shaped by her unconventional attitude, artistic curiosity, steadfast spirituality, and intensely romantic sensibility. Through the use of unconventional timbres and techniques, Mazzoli creates an atmosphere in which Eberhardt’s character mirrors the plights of many modern women, making her accessible and admirable to audiences across the nation.

“This World Within Me is Too Small”

Mazzoli draws on Eberhardt’s journals and letters to find the voice of this astounding young woman. In the first aria, “This World Within Me is Too Small,”

¹⁵⁹ Garman, 2019.

¹⁶⁰ Garman, 2019.

¹⁶¹ Garman, 2019.

¹⁶² Garman, 2019.

Isabelle has decided to leave Switzerland to explore Algeria. The deaths of her mother, father, and brother motivate Isabelle's journey to Algeria, and she contemplates death, isolation, and silence. The libretto reads:

Death moves his hands through me again
A lonely outsider among men
I'll keep my silence here
I'll leave this place alone
I'll give myself to no one at all
Death moves his hands through me again
A lonely outsider among men
This world within me is too small
But still inside it something sings
I'll keep my silence here
I'll leave this place alone ¹⁶³

The piano enters in C-sharp minor and is in a “driving, motoric” 9/8, establishing an aural atmosphere that is at once contemplative and urgent. The warm tones of a bass clarinet bubble along as a flute joins the piano's urgency, punctuating the young woman's contemplations over death, loneliness, and her place in the world. As the mezzo shifts into 12/8 meter, she laments the sense of death moving through her—perhaps a shudder at the thought of dying alone in a society she where does not belong. She is but “a lonely outsider among men,” after all.

In m. 27, the aria transforms into a lyrical signaling of her commitment to this inner voice of encouragement. The phrase “I'll keep my silence here, I'll leave this place alone, I'll give myself to no one at all” relays that she has abandoned notions of staying silent—as “proper” society would expect of her—and leave everything holding her back in Geneva. She resolves to depart on her own, giving herself to “no one at all.” As the

¹⁶³ Missy Mazzoli, “This World Within Me is Too Small,” *Song from the Uproar*, 2012.

first aria in the opera, Mazzoli sets the expectation that Isabelle is a woman on her own, dependent on no one but herself.

In mm. 48-53, an interlude on the flute appears like a mirage, an oasis in her fluctuating anguish between being an outsider and searching for meaning in her own life. Cycling loosely from 9/8 into 6/8 and back, it snakes along like a breeze through the trees. Her imagination tempts her to leave her birthplace. Mazzoli goes against “conventions” of representing the “exotic” by avoiding tropes such as the harmonic minor—which Western ears often associate with dreams of the “exotic” —while still reflecting a dream-like quality.

The image shows a musical score for flute and piano. The flute part is marked 'G flute' and features a melodic line with a fermata over measures 48-50. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a more active eighth-note line in the right hand. The time signature changes from 9/8 to 6/8 at measure 48 and back to 9/8 at measure 51. A '5' fingering is indicated for the flute in measure 51.

Ex 5.1: “This World Within Me is Too Small,” Flute “oasis,” mm. 48-53.¹⁶⁴

Isabelle’s voice returns in m. 55, declaring in a soaring statement: “This world within me is too small.” This lyrical testimony captures Isabelle’s reaction to the repressive bourgeois society of Geneva that limits her dream for a life beyond conventionality. Though her family offers some respite from this crushing sense of loneliness and expectation, Eberhardt still finds herself yearning for something beyond.

¹⁶⁴ Missy Mazzoli, *Song From the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt* (New York: G Schirmer Inc., 2012), https://issuu.com/scoresondemand/docs/song_from_the_uproar_pv_45741

She acknowledges this voice inside her: “But still inside it something sings.” Despite the potential of being an outcast yet again in Africa, her inner voice encourages her to pursue the oasis.

78

mp **K**

I'll keep my si - lence here

legato

mp

Example 5.2: “This World Within Me is Too Small,” mm.78-81.

In m. 79, Mazzoli alters the tonality of the aria from B-flat Major into G-sharp minor, which has a reflective and introspective effect. Here, she seems to shift from her triumphant, wild dreaming into the quiet determination that comes from making a life-changing decision. Isabelle’s voice also enters at a *mezzo-piano*, in contrast to the *forte* from the m. 27 sequence, strengthening the notion that she has turned inward to begin planning her North African adventure. She has set the plan in motion.

“I Have Arrived”

I have arrived
I'll pick out my own song
A music that will bleed the heart into silence
I have arrived
I'll pick out my own song
Line by line
And at last
Throw back my head and sing¹⁶⁵

This energetic aria in A minor follows an instrumental interlude that features a recording of waves gently crashing against the shore, the sounds of gulls and wharf bells in the distance. Isabelle makes the expedition to Algeria, searching for a salve for her “capsized heart” over the deaths of her family.¹⁶⁶ The ostinati in the flute and piano seem to mimic the sea and the wind, while the clarinet translates the chatter of the passengers aboard the ship and bustling about on the shore around her in the same pattern of the flitting birds of the flute. Mazzoli marks this piece “presto, lighthearted, with dark secrets.”¹⁶⁷ Perhaps this “dark secret” is her unconventional gender performance wherein she adopts a male persona while traveling. The woodwinds punctuate her revelry in the freedom of the vast world around her.

¹⁶⁵ Missy Mazzoli, “I Have Arrived,” *Song from the Uproar*, 2012, 30.

¹⁶⁶ Missy Mazzoli, “Capsized Heart,” *Song from the Uproar*, 2012, 18.

¹⁶⁷ Missy Mazzoli, “I Have Arrived,” *Song from the Uproar*, 2012, 30.



Example 5.3: “I Have Arrived,” mm. 1-6, flute bustling



Example 5.4: “I Have Arrived,” mm.76-79, clarinet bustling

Isabelle’s voice does not appear until rehearsal mark N, 226 measures into the opera. The hopeful message of independence and empowerment bubbles over from “The World Within Me is Too Small,” harkening back to the song within her (“This world within me is too small/But still inside it something sings”). Here, in North Africa, Isabelle’s song is freed; she throws her head back to sing a song of her own, “at last.”

Example 5.5: “I Have Arrived,” mm 251-255 outline of P5 and key change.

The re-iteration of “I have arrived” in mm. 251-5 features a brief modulation into A-flat Major before returning to A minor. The interval outlined by the first and fourth notes, a perfect fifth from F to C, is a familiar consonant leap. Western audiences would

be inclined to associate this leap with triumph and heroism.¹⁶⁸ Paired with the key change into A-flat major, the tone suggests that Isabelle hopes her arrival will be met with the happiness she seeks. However, perhaps foreshadowing the variable triumph and challenges she will face in Algeria, it quickly returns to A minor in m. 257.

“The Hunted”

Five arias, a whirlwind romance, and an ample amount of adventure and suffering later, Isabelle briefly reprises “I have arrived” as she reflects again on her existence.

I have arrived
I'll pick out my own song
This music will bleed the heart into silence
I have arrived
I'll pick out my own song
Line by line, and at last throw back my head...
I am the hunted, the assassin's prey
Men who do not know me
Annihilate a helpless dreamer
I am inching towards an abyss
The assassin's prey
I am the hunted
In this vast, mysterious world
Nearly shattered, nearly destroyed
With faith and pride intact
My soul tempered, I am not weakened¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Leonard G. Ratner explores the association of heroism with nobility and trumpet fanfares through his concept, topic theory, in *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1980.

¹⁶⁹ Missy Mazzoli, “The Hunted,” *Song from the Uproar*, 105.

16
Isabelle
I have ar - - rived I'll

104
Isabelle
pick out my own song I'll pick out my own

Example 5.6: “The Hunted,” mm. 16-17, call back to “I Have Arrived”

In this E-Major movement, Isabelle survives an assassination attempt, an actual event in her life. Abdallah ben Mohammed attacked her with a knife in 1901 while she waited for a meeting with Si Lachmi, a Muslim religious leader in the Qadiriyya, a Sunni order.¹⁷⁰ Supposedly sent by French authorities—disturbed by her decadent and cross-dressing lifestyle in Algeria—Isabelle’s assailants wanted her to return to her homeland and her “appropriate” social caste.¹⁷¹ Mazzoli notes that as Isabelle sings, “at last throw back my head,” the singer is to enact that gesture, as if “exposing her neck intentionally to the executioner.”¹⁷²

The piece features the unsettling whispers of the SSATB ensemble. Perhaps these are the whispers of gossip and judgment surrounding Isabelle’s defiant choices. Alternatively, they may represent her inner voices questioning her love for Slimène Ehnni and her life thus far. Perhaps they suggest both. They rise and fall in intensity and volume, while Isabelle reprises “I Have Arrived” in a dreamy tone.

¹⁷⁰ Cecily Mackworth, *The Destiny of Isabelle Eberhardt*, (Quartet Books: 1977), 110. The Qadiriyya is an order of Sunni Islam that has roots in Sufism—mysticism—in Islam.

¹⁷¹ Mackworth, 111.

¹⁷² Missy Mazzoli, “The Hunted,” *Song from the Uproar*, 105.

Soprano 1
f
 Sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha

Soprano 2
f
 see see see see see see

Alto
f *mf* *p*
 so so so so so so so so so so so

Tenor
f *p* *whisper*
 pa di da pa di da pa di da pa di da pa di da pa di da pa di da

Baritone
f
 Sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha sha

Example 5.7: Measures 1-3, SSATB vocal effects

In m. 31, she notices her attacker just before he strikes her, driving the knife into her arm. The orchestra illustrates her panic as she decries being hunted by “men who do not know me” and wish to “annihilate a helpless dreamer.” The electric guitar, electronic instruments, and small orchestra have a unique timbral effect on the lamentation of Isabelle’s brush with death. Mazzoli writes in a style typical of her oeuvre, merging “old” and “new” instrumentation, blurring lines between genres and styles. Throughout the opera, Isabelle sings of the hand of death passing through her. In this movement, it almost takes her in its clutches at last. Still, she asserts that despite being frightened and angered by the attack, she survived “With faith and pride intact/My soul tempered, I am not weakened.”¹⁷³ After withstanding heartache, sea travel, the challenges of immigration, and now assassination, she seems invincible in her agency and untouchable in her faith.

¹⁷³ Missy Mazzoli, “The Hunted,” *Song from the Uproar*, 114.

Ultimately, however, death does take her in its cold grasp, and Isabelle tragically drowns in a flash flood at the age of twenty-seven.

In “Mektoub (It is Written),” Isabelle recuperates from the attack on her life in an Algerian Monastery. She receives a letter from Slimène Ehnni, informing her that he has left her for another woman. Mazzoli writes that “At this point even religion is not a solace, and Isabelle summons the flood that takes her life.”¹⁷⁴ She greets death as a familiar companion, “No shudder, no fuss, no agitation, no revolt. . . Wash me away.”¹⁷⁵ In the opera’s final aria, “Here Where Footprints Erase the Graves,” she succumbs to the rising waters, washing away with her writings as the pre-recorded song of a siren calls ethereally from off-stage. The effect is intense and haunting, and as it dissolves, it gives the distinct impression of a young life fading away too quickly.

The image shows two systems of a musical score for the character Isabelle. The first system starts at measure 140 and includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a fermata over a note, followed by the syllable 'ah'. Above the vocal line, there is a marking 'pre-recorded, from offstage' and a dynamic marking 'f'. The piano accompaniment features a complex, rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more sustained bass line. The second system starts at measure 143 and continues the vocal and piano parts. The vocal line has two 'ah' syllables. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings 'p', 'mp', and 'ff'.

Example 5.8: mm. 140-146; Ghostly siren song from Isabelle in “Here Where Footprints Erase the Graves.”

Concluding Thoughts:

¹⁷⁴ Missy Mazzoli, “Mektoub (It is Written),” *Song from the Uproar* Program Note.

¹⁷⁵ Missy Mazzoli, “Mektoub (It is Written),” *Song from the Uproar* Program Note.

The combination of Mazzoli's extended techniques with Royce Vavrek's haunting libretto realizes the tragedy of Isabelle Eberhardt's life and death, and her intense and passionate life is aptly portrayed in the ethereal quality of the NOW ensemble and the electronic instruments. Eberhardt's life affirms both the value and challenges of women's agency. Mazzoli, perhaps more gently than Eberhardt, mirrors this alternative way of living in her genre-defying score.

Song from the Uproar is the first of Mazzoli's operas, joined later by two micro-operas and two full operas. In 2016, she composed *Breaking the Waves*, an opera based on Lars von Trier's controversial film. In 2018, Mazzoli became one of the first women in a century, Jeanine Tesori being the other, to write a commission for the Metropolitan Opera, an achievement many composers and audiences view as a hopeful step toward institutional change.¹⁷⁶ This opera, *Proving Up*, was also a collaboration with Royce Varrek, and imparts a "surreal and haunting commentary on the American dream."¹⁷⁷ In combination with her work for Luna Composition Lab and Victoire, Mazzoli has created a network for herself and the women around her to flourish. Like Gabriela Lena Frank, Mazzoli engages in the male-dominated culture of composition by orchestrating a mosaic of support and innovation. Her artistic citizenship as a mentor for young women demonstrates her forward-thinking ideals, as she helps to plot the blueprints for future mosaics.

¹⁷⁶ Natalia Kazaryan, "Missy Mazzoli Is Shaping The Future On And Off Of The Opera Stage," *Classical Post*, October 8, 2020.

¹⁷⁷ Missy Mazzoli, "Proving Up," *Music*, <https://missymazzoli.com/recordings/proving-up/>.

CHAPTER 6

JENNIFER JOLLEY: CONFRONTING TABOO AND PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

(2015)

Since 2014, Jennifer Jolley has contributed to *NewMusicBox (NMB)*, an online magazine from New Music USA (NMUSA), an organization dedicated to community collaboration and the nurturing of new music for creators, performers, and listeners.¹⁷⁸ The organization offers programming in grant writing and media production throughout the United States. Jolley is a member of its Program Council of Composers, which “enables artists, practitioners and others from the new music community from across the U.S. to bring ideas, contribute feedback and advise staff on New Music USA activities and the changing needs of the field.”¹⁷⁹ *NewMusicBox* is often an eclectic blend of news, interviews, essays, topical political and musical commentaries, creator spotlights, and more.

In her NMB publications to date, Jolley reflects upon a range of experiences: professional rejection, political action in music, cultural appropriation, and composing operas. Each piece is touched by Jolley’s own sincerity, humor, and insight, offering colloquial quips as well as biting commentary. In her first piece from 2014, “Cataloguing the Fail: A Cathartic Scrapbook,” Jolley ruminates on rejection and its crushing effects on

¹⁷⁸ NewMusicBox Staff, “American Music Center and Meet The Composer Have Officially Merged as New Music USA,” November 9, 2011, <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/american-music-center-and-meet-the-composer-have-officially-merged-as-new-music-usa/>.

The American Music Center was founded in 1939 by Marion Bauer, Aaron Copland, Howard Hanson, Harrison Kerr, Otto Luening, and Quincy Porter. AMC is “dedicated to building a national community of artists, organizations, and audiences creating, performing, and enjoying new American music.” The other former non-profit, Meet the Composer, was founded in 1974 by the New York State Council on the Arts. Led by John Duffy, MTC is “dedicated to the idea of composers as active professionals with a central role in our country’s musical culture.”

¹⁷⁹ New Music USA, “Board & Councils,” *About*, <https://www.newmusicusa.org/about-us/board-and-councils/>.

young professionals. A student of hers was rejected from a prestigious program and was lamenting the fact with her, seeking support and guidance. Like any compassionate educator and mentor, Jolley points out that “there is no perfect plan or perfect system that allows for guaranteed success.”¹⁸⁰ Putting philosophy into practice by diversifying her output beyond her publications with *NewMusicBox*, she reaches greater audiences through her blog and social media.

Jolley’s website, “Why Compose When You Can Blog?” features a cache of “Composer Fails.” The “fails” pull back the curtain on the taboo of admitting to rejection in professional and intellectual pursuits. In this era fixated with social media, everyone tries to curate only the “best” parts of their lives to parade online. So, it is intriguing and valuable to see a composer reveal her failures so candidly. Between 2014 and 2016, Jolley shared ninety-four “Composer Fail” posts, and every single one featured a rejection letter (and often a cat).¹⁸¹ By highlighting the frequency of her own failures, Jolley normalizes professional rejection. Jolley’s status as an emergent composer and educator puts her in a position of influence, which she uses to oppose toxic mindsets about success and composition.

In “The Curious Case of Keiko Yamada,” Jolley reports on her interview with Larry Clark, the subject of a media scandal caused by his appropriation of “Asianness”—adopting a Japanese-sounding female pseudonym—to boost the reception of his

¹⁸⁰ Jolley, “Cataloguing the Fail: A Cathartic Scrapbook,” *NewMusicBox*, April 3, 2014, <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/cataloging-the-fail-a-cathartic-scrapbook/>.

¹⁸¹ Jennifer Jolley, “Composer FAIL #94”, *Why Compose When You Can Blog?* <http://jenniferjolley.blogspot.com/2016/06/>.

compositions.¹⁸² Because she is an ardent supporter of social justice and is half-Korean herself, it is not surprising that Jolley confronted this bizarre case of appropriation in her profession. To make a peculiar situation even stranger, after Clark's deception was revealed, the compositions remained available under his real name. He was asked to speak at the Midwest Orchestra and Band Clinic in 2019, ironically slated to give a presentation on "Selecting Quality Literature."¹⁸³ It was later canceled in response to backlash from the composer and educator communities and prompted the removal of both Clark's *and* "Yamada's" music from several major internet vendors.¹⁸⁴ In her NMB entry, Jolley expresses confusion and disbelief; there is no justifiable reason for a white man to use a pen name in the twenty-first century. While pen names have historically been used by women and people of color to circumvent discriminatory practices, the obstacles preventing an established male composer from publishing his own music are relatively few.¹⁸⁵ The issue with Clark is not that he wrote works inspired by Asian music and culture, but that he did so under the pretense of being an "insider" within that community—a grossly deceptive and appropriative act. Jolley reflects on her conversation with Clark, revealing *some* empathy for him, but does not dismiss her immense frustration with him and the institutions that enabled him, offering her final

¹⁸² Jennifer Jolley, "The Curious Case of Keiko Yamada," *NewMusicBox*, November 7, 2019, <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/the-curious-case-of-keiko-yamada/>

¹⁸³ Jolley, "The Curious Case of Keiko Yamada," 2019.

¹⁸⁴ Jolley, "The Curious Case of Keiko Yamada," 2019

¹⁸⁵ Jolley, "The Curious Case of Keiko Yamada," 2019. Jolley cites the 1965 concert band standard, *Variations on a Korean Folk Song*, written by John Barnes Chance (a white man), as evidence of the absurdity that Clark should think it necessary to disguise himself as another race or gender to publish a composition.

thoughts: “A culture of silence and selfishness of vision in the highest reaches of the publishing world permitted Clark to act as he did.”¹⁸⁶

In her 2018 article, “All the Rage: When Is Music a Political Action,” Jolley details her first interaction with political activism, the rage she felt, and its impact on her career as a musician. As a newly-graduated composer in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Jolley questioned the nature of her career and its validity in a world “on fire.”¹⁸⁷ She worried that her music was meaningless—that it would never “fix” anything, but ultimately decided that

Maybe through my actions and music, I was being politically active in ways I couldn't fully see. And maybe because we composers reflect on our surroundings, we often (directly or indirectly) make commentary about the political environment around us.¹⁸⁸

As with her public admission of failure, Jolley sees her protest-themed music as an avenue to make whatever difference she can. She touches on similar themes in another 2018 article, “(Okay Ladies Now Let's Get) In Formation.” Here, she delves into her experiences writing her song cycle inspired by the punk performance art group, Pussy Riot, and Vladimir Putin's persecution of them. The resultant composition, *Prisoner of Conscience* (2015), is the subject of my hermeneutic analysis.

¹⁸⁶ Jennifer Jolley, “The Curious Case of Keiko Yamada,” 2019.

¹⁸⁷ Jennifer Jolley, “All the Rage: When Is Music a Political Action,” *NewMusicBox*, February 5, 2018, <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/all-the-rage-when-is-music-a-political-action/>

¹⁸⁸ Jolley, “All the Rage,” 2018.

Prisoner of Conscience (2015)

Pussy Riot was founded in Moscow in 2011 by fifteen women infuriated by the political actions of the Russian president, Vladimir Putin.¹⁸⁹ Some members were previously involved with Voina, a Russian street art and performance art group whose name translates to “War.”¹⁹⁰ Preferring to remain anonymous, Pussy Riot’s members are known for their pseudonyms, bright, neon-colored balaclavas, and tights to protect their identities during their performances and interviews. Pussy Riot protests the Putin administration’s election fraud and its dehumanizing treatment of the LGBTQIA+ community and women.

Members cite British “oi! -punk bands” from the early 1980s as their musical influences. One member notes that bands such as The Angelic Upstarts, Cockney Rejects, and Sham 69 had an “incredible musical and social energy, their sound ripped through the atmosphere of their decade, stirred trouble around itself. Their vibe does really capture the essence of punk, which is aggressive protest.”¹⁹¹ Another member, Garadzha, also credits the punk band Bikini Kill and the Riot Grrrl movement of the 1990s in the Pacific northwestern US, noting that their “feminist musical acts, activism, and community building” influence their ongoing actions in Russia.¹⁹²

On February 12, 2012, known members of Pussy Riot Maria Alyokhina, Yekaterina Samutsevich, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova were arrested following a performance of a “punk prayer” entitled “Virgin Mary, Redeem Us of Putin” in

¹⁸⁹ In office 2000–2008 and 2012–to present.

¹⁹⁰ Nicholas Tochka, “Pussy Riot, Freedom of Expression, and Popular Music Studies after the Cold War,” *Popular Music* 32, no. 2 (2013), 304.

¹⁹¹ Paraphrased in Henry Langston, “Meeting Pussy Riot,” *Vice*, March 12, 2012, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/kwnzgy/A-Russian-Pussy-Riot>.

¹⁹² Quoted in Langston, 2012.

Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior near the Kremlin. The song's text, which beseeches the Virgin Mary to banish Putin, was predictably condemned by the Russian Orthodox Church and enraged the Putin administration and its supporters. Band members were charged with hooliganism motivated by religious hatred, and the ruling judge condemned their "grave violation of social order."¹⁹³ Amnesty International, a non-governmental human rights global organization, labeled them "prisoners of conscience" following their arrest in 2012 and organized a campaign to aid with their legal fees and gain their release.¹⁹⁴ The title of Jolley's song cycle refers to this designation, given to individuals imprisoned because of their inflammatory expressions of political, religious, or other conscientiously held beliefs. The Russian government's response to Pussy Riot's protest music is not unique., In most cases, prisoners of conscience suffer government-sanctioned imprisonment and are considered a danger to governmental norms and beliefs.

Analysis

Inspired by English punk rock band The Clash and the Medieval abbess and composer Hildegard von Bingen, Jennifer Jolley's *Prisoner of Conscience* is a wildly unique blend of taboo (profanity and sexual innuendo) and convention (plainchant and sacred polyphonic styles).¹⁹⁵ *Prisoner of Conscience* was a commission for Quince, an a cappella quartet comprised of Liz Pearse, Kayleigh Butcher, Amanda DeBoer Bartlett,

¹⁹³ "Pussy Riot Members Jailed for Two Years for Hooliganism," *BBC World*, August 17, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19297373>.

¹⁹⁴ Amnesty International, "Russian Federation: Further information: Pussy Riot punk singers imprisoned," August 21, 2012, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/033/2012/en/>.

¹⁹⁵ Paraphrasing Jennifer Jolley, "(Okay Ladies Now Let's Get) In Formation," *NewMusicBox*, February 26, 2018, <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/okay-ladies-now-lets-get-in-formation/>.

and Carrie Henneman Shaw.¹⁹⁶ The cycle was featured alongside other socially conscious works by Gilda Lyons, Laura Steenberge, and Cara Haxo on Quince’s 2018 album, *Motherland*. The explicit content of Jolley’s work lands the album with a parental advisory, something indeed unusual for a “classical” album.

Ohio-based librettist Kendall A. had been following Pussy Riot before being approached by Jolley about the project.¹⁹⁷ She saw it as an opportunity to “honor the spirit of the punk group that went as far as to sacrifice their own freedoms to expose the degradation of freedoms around them.”¹⁹⁸ Kendall composed eight new poems for the cycle to convey this message and her support of the band’s activism. In the program, she writes:

I see this work largely as street art, a crude homage to three heroes unjustly incarcerated, fighting a corrupt system that unfortunately at times bears a little too much resemblance to our own in the unequal distribution of justice and the willful ignorance of people to the cries of the downtrodden. The graffiti I paint here may fade with time, but I hope the legacy of these three brave women carries through it.¹⁹⁹

Kendall and Jolley juxtaposed punk rock protests with “church-style motets” to reflect the place of arrest, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.²⁰⁰ The combination is both sobering and, at times, humorous. In addition to this musical juxtaposition, the translations of the closing statements from Maria Alyokhina, Yekaterina Samutsevich, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova—delivered during their hearing at Moscow Khamovniki

¹⁹⁶ Quince Ensemble, “About,” <https://www.quince-ensemble.com/about-2>.

¹⁹⁷ Kendall A. appears to be the alias of an individual about whom little information is available. I could only link her to an old Twitter account, which appears to have been dormant since 2016. Her handle there was @KendallRocksOn.

¹⁹⁸ Paraphrased in Jennifer Jolley, “(Okay Ladies Now Let’s Get) In Formation,” 2018.

¹⁹⁹ Kendall A, “Librettist Note,” *Prisoner of Conscience*, May 8, 2015.

<https://www.jenniferjolley.com/prisoner-of-conscience>.

²⁰⁰ Paraphrasing Jolley’s own description of her work in “(Okay Ladies Now Let’s Get) In Formation,” 2018.

District Court in 2012—alternate with the musical movements of *Prisoner of Conscience*.²⁰¹ The result is poetically diverse, sometimes profane, and emotionally charged.²⁰² I see this particular piece as an extension of Jolley’s engagement with previously “taboo” subjects for women and composers: professional failures, politicized music, and profanity in song cycles.

I. Eve of Destruction

biting an apple
over and over again
fucked by snakes
cursed by gods
for spilling blood
out of their vessels

there can be no
peace in possession
there can be no
calm in obstruction²⁰³

The first movement erases any doubt that this is a conventional song cycle. Its title carries multiple meanings; it shares the name of a 1965 protest song by P.F. Sloan and Barry McGuire, which used incendiary lyrics to address contemporary issues such as the draft and the outwardly hypocritical position of Christianity on war. Some of the more “egregious” lines include, “You’re old enough to kill but not for votin’, You don’t believe in war, but what’s that gun you’re totin’?” and “You can bury your dead but don’t

²⁰¹ Kendall says the translations she used for Pussy Riot’s statements come from the New York literary magazine, *n+1*. Read the translations by Marijeta Bozovic, Maksim Hanukai, Sasha Senderovich, Maria Corrigan, and Elena Glazov-Corrigan here: <https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/pussy-riot-closing-statements/>

²⁰² Readers are warned that a number of these songs are explicit in nature, reflective of Pussy Riot’s explicit practices as “guerilla” feminists.

²⁰³ Jennifer Jolley and Kendall A, “Eve of Destruction,” *Prisoner of Conscience*, 2015.

leave a trace, Hate your next door neighbor but don't forget to say grace.”²⁰⁴ The song topped the US, UK, Canadian, and Irish charts before some stations banned it from the airwaves for its provocative messaging.²⁰⁵ The title of Jolley’s movement is also an apparent reference to the biblical Eve, who is often shamed for the role she played in committing the original sin and causing “the fall of man.”²⁰⁶

Jolley arranges the voices to begin in a whisper before manifesting into speech and finally into sung pitches, mirroring the ways women sometimes develop their political voices: from hushed whispers among friends to fearless protest songs. The phrase “biting an apple/over and over again” is repeated cyclically. This repeated indulgence in the forbidden fruit shows how women have historically been branded as wicked for enjoying “forbidden” indulgences. From Pandora to Eve, Salem witches to Pussy Riot, women have long been unceremoniously condemned—“fucked by snakes/cursed by gods” —simply for being obstinate or noncompliant.

Like a punk pseudo-madrigal in G minor, “Eve of Destruction” loosely follows an AA’B form.²⁰⁷ The first stanza is split into couplets and set to similar melodies, while the second stanza introduces new music. Because it is a “punk” setting, Jolley toys with expectations by overlapping musical phrases and lyrics to blur the lines between each recognizable section. The first A section in mm. 1-58 uncompromisingly repeats the same

²⁰⁴ P.F Sloan and Barry McGuire, “Eve of Destruction,” *Eve of Destruction*, 1965.

²⁰⁵ James T. Patterson, *Eve of Destruction: How 1965 Transformed America*, (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 193.

²⁰⁶ “The Fall of Man” (Genesis 3:1-24)

²⁰⁷ Though Jolley claims inspiration from Hildegard, I struggle to find anything particularly “Medieval” in these settings. Despite being associated with secular music, the form I detect here aligns with my understanding of 16th century Italian madrigals. This poetic form sometimes employ “a single stanza with a free rhyme scheme and a varying number of seven- and 11-syllable lines, revived the 14th-century poetic term ‘madrigale.’”

two poetic couplets in unison, “biting an apple/over and over again” and “fucked by snakes/cursed by gods.” (Example 6.1)

S. 1 *p subito* bit - ing an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a - gain *mp* bit - ing an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a - gain

S. 2 *p subito* bit - ing an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a - gain *mp* bit - ing an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a - gain

S. 3 *p subito* bit - ing an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a - gain *mp* bit - ing an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a - gain

M.S. *p subito* bit - ing an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a - gain *mp* bit - ing an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a - gain

Example 6.1: “Eve of Destruction,” mm 9-12, “biting an apple” couplet²⁰⁸

The couplets overlap with one another in mm. 38-56, so that it sometimes appears that the women sing “fucked by snakes/over and over again.” In the imitative texture, the phrases are passed from voice to voice, suggesting that each woman carries the same weight in this protest song. (Example 6.2)

S. 1 bit - ting an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a gain_ _ _ _ _ fucked by snakes cursed by gods_ _ _ _ _

S. 2 _ _ _ _ _ bit - ting an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a gain_ _ _ _ _ fucked by snakes

S. 3 cursed by gods_ _ _ _ _ bit - ting an ap - ple o - ver and o - ver a gain_ _ _ _ _

M.S. _ _ _ _ _ fucked by snakes cursed by gods_ _ _ _ _

Example 6.2: “Eve of Destruction,” mm 43-47

The A’ section, mm. 58-86, presents the last couplet of the first stanza, “for spilling blood/out of their vessels” (presumably a euphemism for menstruation) to a

²⁰⁸ Jennifer Jolley, *Prisoner of Conscience*, (New York: Broadcast Music Inc: 2015.)

melody that resembles the setting of the previous couplets. “Out of their vessels” appears as a variation of the melody line “over and over again,” transposed up a third in m. 60. (Example 6.3) The urgency of spilling blood is felt in the *subito forte*, and the sudden octave leap from the previous couplet in the A section. The cyclic pattern of menstruation is evoked again, further cementing the connection between a woman’s sin and shame for simply “being.” This shame is made exponential for speaking out against the snakes and gods who condemn her.

64

S. 1 *f subito* *p subito* *f subito*
 for spill - ling blood out of their ves - sels_ for

S. 2 *f subito* *p subito* *f subito*
 for spill - ling blood out of their ves - sels_ for

S. 3 *f subito* *p subito*
 for spill - ling blood out of their ves - sels_

M.S. *f subito* *p subito*
 for spill - ling blood out of their ves - sels_

Example 6.3: “Eve of Destruction” mm 64-67 “spilling blood” couplet

The B section of the song takes on a slightly different character. In mm. 90-106, the chorus recites a punk philosophy: “There can be no peace in possession/there can be no calm in obstruction.” The chorus is in unison when singing “there can be no,” but they split into harmonies when singing the remainder of the mantra as if passing between moments of solidarity (in unison) and dissent (in harmony). (Example 6.4) The measure of rest between each couplet creates tension in its silence which anticipates the next entrance. The texture here is homophonic and homorhythmic, emphasizing textual clarity.

92

S. 1
peace in pos - ses - sion there can be no

S. 2
peace in pos - ses - sion there can be no

S. 3
peace in pos - ses - sion there can be no

M.S.
peace in pos - ses - sion there can be no

Example 6.4: “Eve of Destruction,” mm 92-95

From mm. 107 to the end in m. 145, the two stanzas overlap in a cyclical manner, suggesting a relationship between “biting the apple” and protest. It is as if to say there can be no peace or justice while their protest is obstructed, over and over again. This theme of punishing or ostracizing women for their defiance recurs throughout the song cycle and makes a powerful tribute to the imprisonment of Pussy Riot.

II. *Virgin Mary, put Putin Down*

We can never be heroes,
no martyrs to Liberty’s cause
that story is not ours,
we cause the riot,
not the revolution;
we break the quiet,
not the institution.

Fuck the informers,
Fuck the enslavers,
Get off on your vacuums,
On your kitchen dusters

But one way or another
one day or some other,
the devil has to come down
Virgin Mary, put Putin down²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Jennifer Jolley and Kendall A, “*Virgin Mary, put Putin Down*,” Prisoner of Conscience, 2015.

An homage to the punk prayer that got members of Pussy Riot arrested, the second song in the cycle seems to begin innocently enough. It seems to mimic the monophonic style of plainchant as they lament their places in history, rioters rather than revolutionaries. Mm. 1-7 model a Gregorian-style chant that starts in B minor and modulates through A minor, B-flat major, and D minor. All voices begin in unison and occasionally sing melismatically, seen pictured in Example 6.4. The melody moves stepwise for the bulk of this section but in disjunct leaps (though no more than a sixth) at other times. In mm. 4-7, the mezzo appears to take on the role traditionally assigned to a bass voice, doubling the upper voices an octave below. (Example 6.5)

The musical score for Example 6.5 consists of four staves, labeled S.1, S.2, S.3, and M.S. Each staff contains a melodic line with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "sto - ry is ___ not ours, we cause ___ the ri - ot, not ___ the rev - o - lu - tion; ___". Above the first staff, there is a box containing the number "5" and the word "rit." with a dashed line extending to the right. The music is written in a 4/4 time signature and features a mix of stepwise and disjunct melodic motion.

Example 6.5: “Virgin Mary, put Putin Down,” mm 4-7 melismatic chant-like motion

The second stanza humorously juxtaposes “beautiful” harmony against foul language. The women’s voices suddenly become sexually suggestive, and encourage women to masturbate with the very tools meant to domestically “enslave” them. This sort of language aligns with the messages of sex-positive feminism, which encourages women

to embrace their sexual desire and pleasure as their right and as a weapon of political resistance.

Jolley continues to experiment with certain “tropes” from early music in the third stanza. The line “devil has to come down” is suddenly in 6/4 meter and embellishes a descending tritone from the F-sharp to C in a predictable musical reference to the “the devil’s interval.” In contrast, “Virgin Mary” is sung in consonant chords, reflecting her piety and “conventionality” as a good and pure mother. (Example 6.6) However, in the following phrase, the women seem to call upon Mary to “put Putin down,” in a justified act of punishment—something not typically associated with Mary. This departure compounds the urgency and absurdity of the situations addressed in the song cycle.

Example 6.6: “Virgin Mary, put Putin Down,” mm 25-29, Devil vs. Mary

Jolley resolves the song on the tonic of a completely different key, B-flat minor, which perpetuates the unresolved conflict and again plays into the satirical nature of the women’s prayers of destruction to the Virgin Mary. On the word “down,” all voices drop down a half-step in a moment of obtuse word painting. (Example 6.7)

Example 6.7: “Virgin Mary, put Putin Down,” mm 30-35 Cadence

Jolley creates an unstable musical environment that reflects the disquietude of the cycle as a whole. She plays a sort of musical joke in this cadence, ending on the tonic of the unrelated B-flat minor, rather than the relative major of G minor (the key of the piece), B-flat major. This odd conclusion is yet another example of Jolley’s approach to subverting expectations. This seemingly random cadence leaves a sense of incompleteness, as if it were interrupted in the middle of a performance just as Pussy Riot was. This sense of unease and unresolved conflict recurs throughout the song cycle before finding a dark sense of closure in the final movement.

VIII. Prisoner of Conscience

When we stay blind
 when we stay deaf
 to cries of defiance
 against tyranny
 or oppression,
 we invite it
 into our homes,
 our nurseries,
 our beds,
 asking it

to pay us
in advance²¹⁰

The last movement in the cycle is a call to action against injustice, written as a lullaby. The chorus sings sweetly and scornfully about the dangers of failing to act against tyranny and oppression. Again, Jolley arranges these unsettling lyrics against the mostly consonant E-flat major, predominately centering around the I, VI, and V chords. The bottom two voices often mimic the top two, as seen in mm. 4-5, 8-10, 14-15, and 21-22, in an eerie echo effect. (Example 6.8) It is as if the message is dramatically echoed through generations while the women who sing it urge for change. Their voices lilt gently and sorrowfully for their children.

The harrowing “punchline” of this sardonic lullaby, which requests that tyranny “pay us in advance,” recalls the prostitute’s requirement. The moral lesson being that ignoring the violence and transgressions of a corrupt institution perpetuates systematic oppression. Refusing to acknowledge such offenses against social justice allows these institutions to strengthen, endlessly escalating from “the home” to “the nursery” to “the bed” until the oppression is absolute. These institutions can justify their actions because they were “invited” in and made comfortable. In a striking contradiction to the other sex-positive messages in this song cycle, this reference to invitation evokes feelings akin to shame; the sexual act depicted here is not one of pleasure or female empowerment, but of complacency in allowing themselves to continue being “fucked by snakes, cursed by gods,” the very institutions that got them into this unjust situation in the first place.

²¹⁰ Jennifer Jolley and Kendall A, “Prisoner of Conscience,” *Prisoner of Conscience*, 2015.

22

S. 1
ask - ing to pay us in ad - vance...

S. 2
ask - ing to pay us in ad - vance...

S. 3
ask - ing to pay us in ad - vance...

M.S.
ask - ing to pay us in ad - vance...

Example 6.8: “Prisoner of Conscience,” mm. 21-25

M. 27 to the end at 38 repeat the melody first presented in 1-26, but here it is hummed, a phonation that suggests a mother rocking a child to sleep. (Example 6.9) However, in this context, it is more likely that the closed mouths symbolize the silencing of women in their protest. The lyrics here are far from comforting despite their lulling tones, quietly warning their daughters not to fall into the same traps. Perhaps they hum them to mask their warning as a coddling cradlesong so as not to be caught and made prisoners of conscience.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Prisoner of Conscience". It features four vocal parts: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Soprano 3, and Mezzo Soprano. The lyrics for the first part are: "When we stay blind, when we stay deaf to cries". The second part of the score, starting at measure 27, shows a lullaby melody for all four parts, marked with a box containing the number 27. The melody is a simple, repetitive pattern of notes, with the lyrics "(Mm)" written below the notes.

Example 6.9: “Prisoner of Conscience” mm 1-5 vs. mm 26-20 lullaby melody

A lullaby with a radical feminist message might seem disconcerting to some, and it certainly has an unsettling effect on the listener. However, in keeping with Jolley and Kendall’s derisive tone throughout the cycle, it brings the song cycle to a correspondingly contemptuous close. Rather than end the piece on an agitated or even hopeful note, Jolley leaves the audience with an uncomfortable sense of what is left to be done. There is no celebration here, no victory in overcoming dictators or autocrats—just a mother’s intoned warnings beneath the guise of a sweet song, providing high contrast to the mood of “Eve of Destruction.” Jolley’s cycle begins with abrupt rage and profanity but ends in a disquieting, albeit soft, warning. The connotation is that this rage must be transformed into action, or else they will be doomed to repeat this endless cycle.

Concluding Thoughts

Mere months before Jolley completed the piece in 2015, Pussy Riot appeared in the news again, for the first time since the coverage of their arrest in 2012. They had released a song and music video in English—their first in that language—entitled “I Can’t Breathe,” named for the famous and horrific last words of Eric Garner, the Black man murdered by New York Police in 2015 with an unlawful chokehold. The lyrics are chilling and, as I write this in 2021, ring horrifically true today.²¹¹ Jolley also recalls feeling surprised at the continued relevance of Pussy Riot, who in 2016 released “Make America Great Again” and featured lyrics such as: “let other people in, listen to your women, stop killing black children, make America great again.”²¹² She ends the song cycle’s program note saying:

In an era where there are rumors of Russia meddling with a presidential election and the White House doling Fake News Awards, I now know that the protection of our most basic right—free speech—is always relevant. The fight is still on.²¹³

Jennifer Jolley does not shy away from making political statements in her posts on social media, her professional writings for *NewMusicBox*, or her numerous pieces for band, orchestra, choir, flex ensemble, chamber groups, and sound art. She is an activist on many fronts and seems quite comfortable using her multiple platforms for the good of her peers and communities. Though not all of Jolley’s compositions are inherently political—some reference Mister Roger’s Neighborhood and cast cats as composers—the

²¹¹ Lyrics may be read here: <https://genius.com/Pussy-riot-i-cant-breathe-lyrics>

²¹² Jennifer Jolley, “Composer’s Note,” *Prisoner of Conscience*, 2016.

²¹³ Jennifer Jolley, “Composer’s Note,” *Prisoner of Conscience*, 2016.

ones that do tend to be abrasive and direct.²¹⁴ *Prisoner of Conscience* is in the company of other political compositions like “The Eyes of the World are Upon You” (2017), a work for wind band addressing gun violence in schools, and “Never Forget, Never Remember” (2017), another band piece calling out the hypocrisy of conservative news coverage in the wake of tragedy.

Where Jolley shines as a “mosaic” composer—like the other composers I have previously examined in this work—is through her multiplicity as an artist. She writes think pieces on politics and composes sardonic protest songs, intertwining her profession and her passions within the communities she serves. Openness about her own rejection and political fearlessness qualifies her as a composer who embraces her own agency by going against the grain. In her blog and in *Prisoner of Conscience*, Jolley engages her influence and creative cultural capital to make political statements and normalize certain taboos. Though she differs from Frank and Mazzoli, who have established their own non-profits, Jolley engages with her cultural mosaic through her writing. Like the other women, Jolley is an educator, and she values her time as a mentor for her students. This academic role, like any other mentioned in this thesis, should not be diminished in relation to her role as a composer, but observed as part of the many “pieces” that make up the whole.

²¹⁴ Spielzeug Straßenbahn (2014) and *The Lives and Opinions of Literary Cats* (2017), respectively.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

My research sought to answer the question: *What do advocacy and protest look like in the work of three U.S. women composers in the 21st century?* An additional question I ultimately answered through this process was: *How are these composers exemplars of intersectionality in their communities and collaborations?* The women I selected to study, Gabriela Lena Frank, Missy Mazzoli, and Jennifer Jolley, are boundary breakers—they perform defiantly within traditions that have not always been open to women. Moreover, they seek to further remedy the marginalization of others within their field through their educational and compositional prominence. Their compositions often transgress common labels, but they embrace mainstream values in their personal identities. Gabriela Lena Frank calls herself “old-fashioned,” despite breaking barriers as a mestiza and deaf composer. Missy Mazzoli composes operas that blur the lines between concert and popular theatrical genres while also building an avenue of empowerment and support for herself and her peers through Luna Composition Lab. Jennifer Jolley labels herself as a “composer, blogger, professor person,” and her work adapts to suit many styles and labels, even as it defies taboos associated with women and protest. Each of these women transcends her “labels” and simultaneously embraces intersectionality in her practices.

I defer to Patricia Hill Collins again, whose designation of intersectionality as a social theory “bundles together ideas from disparate places, times, and perspectives, enabling people to share points of view that formerly were forbidden, outlawed, or

simply obscured.”²¹⁵ The composers I have examined here reach the “sweet spot” of intersectionality that Collins describes, balancing their work between critical analysis and social action, cultivating connections between their compositional practices and activities as academics and mentors.²¹⁶

In addition to Collins, my research is guided by Kimberly Francis, whose “Her-storiography: Pierre Bourdieu, Cultural Capital, and Changing the Narrative Paradigm” challenged my musicological perceptions. The statement that has influenced me most from Francis’s work is this:

I advocate for the introduction of additional narrative paradigms within musicology that displace composers from their central location as isolated geniuses and instead portray them as interdependent upon those within their cultural mosaic.²¹⁷

In this thesis, I have tried to practice musicology in ways that displace the isolated genius trope and exemplify this concept of women artists as “cultural mosaics.” I recognize the potential pitfalls in examining these three composers from a historical perspective that centers around their biographies, work, and activism. In Francis’s words,

Indeed, even the work of feminist musicologists— scholarship undeniably essential for the field— has tended to focus on women composers or feminist interpretations of male composers, marking the maker of the work as the center of the story, the essential protagonist, a critique made by Suzanne Cusick in 1999 that remains true today. This structural dependency entrenches composers and their works as the nucleus of any musicological narrative.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Patricia Hill Collins, “Introduction,” *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory*, (Durham, United States: Duke University Press, 2019), 2.

²¹⁶ Collins, 5.

²¹⁷ Kimberly Francis, “Her-storiography: Pierre Bourdieu, Cultural Capital, and Changing the Narrative Paradigm,” *Women & Music*, Vol 19, (January 2015): 170.

²¹⁸ Francis, 170.

By treating these composers' advocacies as the nuclei of my case studies, it is possible to avoid the "great composer" narrative. Additionally, mentioning and contextualizing their collaborators and partners creates a space for each of these women-as-composers at the metaphorical table that is the musicological canon. Further, highlighting the ways in which women's intersectional identities *interact* with their work as composers positions them as cultural mosaics. While this statement may point to the sort of musicological romanticization of "The Great Composer" that Francis decries in "Her-storiography," I suggest that shifting the paradigm of women's music historiography should begin with recognizing the composer in all of her professional capacities and the impact of her influence in her community to date. Ultimately, the composers discussed in this thesis are more than *just* "great composers"; their mentorships, academic advocacies, and community collaborations are just as vital to their own personal musical narratives as their compositions.

The disparate roles Frank, Mazzoli, and Jolley occupy beyond 'composer' are *as valuable as* their roles as composers. The discussion of their work as activists, mentors, patrons, educators, and leaders in music shifts the traditional, composer-focused narrative paradigm to include all of their intellectual and emotional labors. The intersection of these various roles with their compositions demonstrates the mosaic characteristic of these women; they represent their many "parts" as complete individuals. Compartmentalizing women—and all people—in music as "composer" or "non-composer" is a damaging dichotomy that devalues the work of both and fails to recognize how these experiences overlap and depend on one another. Addressing how a woman can be a composer *and* a non-composer evades the danger of diminishing musical roles that

women have historically operated within as educators and patrons while maintaining balance for progress in their “non-traditional” roles as composers.

Summary of Findings

Gabriela Lena Frank is an educator to the core; through the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, she has established an environment in which emergent composers may develop careers and find support in their peers. Frank’s practice of mentoring and supporting young composers of various economic, cultural, ability, and gender backgrounds is fundamentally intersectional and inclusive. Additionally, Frank advocates for environmentalism at every turn, adopting sustainable practices on her ranch, in her travels, through her column writing, and in her academy. Frank also merges the voices of “the old world” with the new, incorporating Latin inspirations and instruments in her symphonies and orchestral arrangements, effectively negotiating a place for her heritage within the institution of composition. Gabriela Lena Frank’s diverse identities as a deaf, mixed-race daughter of a Peruvian immigrant merge naturally with her roles as a composer, mentor, and teacher in all of her work.

Frank’s orchestral testimony to the immigrants of Indianapolis, *Peregrinos*, is intersectional in its representation of women, children, and dreamers through musical storytelling. *Peregrinos* gives a voice to the disenfranchised and dehumanized people Frank befriended in her time with the Latin Youth Collective and acknowledges their struggles as well as their triumphs. Each movement is an expression of the immigrants’ shared experiences with hope, loss, fear, and faith. In bringing these stories into the concert hall—a realm historically dominated by white, Western, male voices—Frank

navigates the juncture between her Latin identity and her composer tradition, setting a precedent for further exploration and reconciliation between them (in her own pursuits, and hopefully in the pursuits of her peers). Frank centers her narrative on “outsiders,” people who are seen as lesser than because of an arbitrary fact, their national citizenship. Frank tries to use her artistic citizenship as a cultural tonic to these struggles.

Like Frank, Missy Mazzoli has carved out a specialized corner in the world for emergent composers. Luna Composition Lab is dedicated to addressing the gender imbalance in composition and fosters the musical pursuits of female, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming adolescents. Mazzoli’s mentorship program with LCL seeks to correct the scarcity of woman leaders in the field’s history by looking to the future; validating the compositional pursuits of young, marginalized people elevates their voices and prepares them for careers as leaders and mentors in their own right. Mazzoli’s role in co-founding such a program is evidence of her commitment to breaking this cycle. She perpetuates hope for a future that is balanced and intersectional for composers, mentors, and musicians alike.

Song from the Uproar intersects concert and popular practices, merging opera with electronics, immersive staging, and modern musical styling. Her muse, Isabelle Eberhardt, defied many gendered practices in her lifetime, and her musical persona in Mazzoli’s opera defies traditional styles, genres, and techniques as well. Centering her narrative on an “outsider” woman like Eberhardt is intersectional, as it recognizes her complex identities in her class, religion, sexuality, career, and immigration. *Song from the Uproar* began Mazzoli’s sincere interest in woman-centered operas and established her as an avant-garde, feminist voice in the genre. The standard she sets as a mentor,

composer, and educator is that of a woman who is unafraid of pushing boundaries in the name of her art, negotiating new environments in which her work may thrive, as evidenced by the establishment of Victoire. Her artist citizenship connects her compositions with her students and seeks to improve opportunities and visibility in her field.

Jennifer Jolley promotes intersections in her personal and public personas, boldly injecting her compositions with her political convictions and articulating her experiences with rejection on her social platforms. Though she differs from Mazzoli and Frank because she does not operate a specialized music academy or mentorship, Jolley's writing for *NewMusicBox* illuminates another critical factor in artistic citizenship. She uses her digital platforms to engage with a broad audience regarding pressing issues in her field with straightforward and accessible prose. Where other composers may be careful to keep their politics and personal opinions to themselves, Jolley addresses social justice and protest explicitly—sometimes in graphic detail.

Jolley traverses “forbidden” territory in *Prisoner of Conscience*, a song cycle that amalgamates elements of early European music and feminist punk rock. She and her librettist embrace the abrasive messaging of Pussy Riot, allowing the member's voices to shine through alongside her own protests. The piece demonstrates similarities in the intersectional experiences of women oppressed, ostracized, and punished for their protests. She draws unambiguous connections to the political climate of the United States, making the experiences of Pussy Riot and feminist action all the more relevant.

Religion and spirituality are recurrent themes within each of the compositions examined. Frank recounts an immigrant community's faith in times of extreme hardship,

and dedicates a movement of *Peregrinos* to the beloved Peruvian saint, Sarita Colonia. In what is surely an intentional commentary on the arduous journey of the immigrants depicted, the name of the composition itself, *Pilgrims*, recalls a deep religious history. Mazzoli's heroine, Isabelle Eberhardt, also turns to her faith in the face of adversity; she seeks comfort within her status as outsider, and finds some sense of belonging in her practice of Islam. Meanwhile, Jolley finds no comfort in the Russian Orthodox Church and musically renounces it, in the name of Pussy Riot. Though I cannot speak to these composers's personal religious practices, the intrinsic religious ideas found throughout these compositions—whether to glorify or rebuke—is undeniable.

From immigrants to Isabelle Eberhardt and Pussy Riot—all of the inspirations for the compositions considered are “outsiders” in their respective environments: immigrants for their status in the oppressive United States immigration system, Eberhardt for her gender-defying lifestyle and career in Algeria, and Pussy Riot for their unflinching protest of a tyrannical government administration. Though Frank, Mazzoli, and Jolley are “insiders” by virtue of their positions as composers and academics, they elevate the voices of outsiders by inviting them into their thriving careers, ultimately driving more significant change from within.

Additional Scholarship

Initial plans for this thesis and research methodology created several unanticipated limitations, which I will remedy in future scholarship. For one, my initial attempts to contact composers via email proved unproductive. My work would have benefitted greatly from the composers' input. I honor their personal boundaries and

respect the reasons they did not respond to my queries. Still, I retain the hope that we may discuss their intersectional lives at a later date to foster deeper understanding and collaborative process. Working during a time of global pandemic and civil unrest has been a unique and sobering experience, and I recognize the challenges it has presented for myself, my peers, those I wrote about, and my mentors.

Additionally, I would like to expand my study to embrace advocates and mentors in concert music not mentioned here, including a few that I dropped from my initial research for this thesis. I want to recognize Nkeiru Okoye's labors, primarily her vocal works and operas that address racism and Black history, an endeavor I grudgingly cut from this work after finding her scores were not available to me.²¹⁹ I also wish to further explore intersectionality in the compositions of LGBTQ+ composers, which I may find fruitful in the composer mentors such as Alex Temple at Luna Lab. I should also like to explore advocacy in composition outside of the United States for a transnational perspective, perhaps exploring Errollyn Wallen's efforts, whose operas *ANON* and *Another America* address misogyny and racism.²²⁰ The nature of intersectionality suggests there are doors aplenty to discover and open.

Frank, Mazzoli, and Jolley were not chosen because they exemplify superlatives in the field of compositional advocacy, but simply because they provide strong points in

²¹⁹ Nkeiru Okoye (b. 1972) is an American composer of Nigerian descent. A few examples of her socially conscious and antiracist works include: *The Journey of Phillis Wheatley* (2005), *Harriet Tubman: When I Cross that Line to Freedom* (2014), *Invitation to a Die-In* (2017), and *Black Bottom* (2020). Okoye is the inaugural recipient of the International Florence Price Society's Florence Price Award for Composition and has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Commission for the Arts, ASCAP, and the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. <https://www.nkeiruokoye.com/home>

²²⁰ Errollyn Wallen (b. 1958) was born in Belize City, Belize and educated in the British Isles as a young girl. She trained in dance at Maureen Lyons School of Dancing and the Urdang Academy before taking dance classes at the Dance Theater of Harlem. Wallen holds degrees in music and composition from Goldsmiths College and King's College in London. <http://www.errollynwallen.com/>.

my quest to understand concert music's role in protest and social justice. They are certainly not the only women engaging in music in this intersectional musical professionalism, but they have opened up a floodgate in my own interests. As discussions take place regarding antiracism and misogyny and their perpetuation in established institutions of higher education and beyond, I hope that the field will continue to engage in the work of living composers and their activism in meaningful ways. Whether through conducting personal interviews, engaging with new music scholarship, or advocating for new music performances, it is, perhaps, the charge of this generation of musicologists to become the new tastemakers, who challenge the canon, explore intersectionality, and shift paradigms.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Caitlin Martinac received her Master of Arts degree in Musicology at Arizona State University in May of 2021. While at ASU, she was awarded a teaching assistantship for the 2020-2021 academic year. She assisted Professors Glen Hicks and Kay Norton during that time. Caitlin also holds a B.A. degree in Music Education from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. At FLC she was awarded Most Outstanding Music Student of 2019. Her research on Clara Wieck Schumann and Nannerl Mozart was published in *Metamorphosis* and presented at the 2017 FLC Undergraduate Research Symposium. Her current research interests center around gendered aspects of the musical canon, sociology of music, and film/multimedia music.

In the Spring of 2021, Caitie began working virtually as a Development Intern for Wirth Center for the Performing Arts in St. Cloud, Minnesota, with Kait Alschwede. In 2019-2020 Caitie was an Education intern at the Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) in Phoenix, Arizona. There, she helped to facilitate youth classes, lead museum tours, and developed an informal curriculum for museum visitors. Her immediate supervisor was Katherine Palmer. Martinac is a member of the College Music Society and the American Musicological Society.