

"A Woman Must Not Desire to Compose"¹:
Gender, Genius, and the Woman Composer

The argument has often been made that because there has as yet been no female Beethoven or Shakespeare, women must therefore be incapable of the creative genius of men. This argument is based on the assumption that the situations of male and female artists have been equivalent and that women have had the same opportunities for development as men.

I argue that this presumed equality of opportunity has not been the case. My argument is based on several aspects of creativity. One is the gendering of the language of genius to exclude women, which clearly affects both the self-confidence of the individual woman artist and the societal decision of whose work to include in the artistic canon. Another factor is that societal norms--such as restrictions on women's behavior, socialization into the prescribed social roles of daughter, mother, and wife, and the psychological effects of internalizing the patriarchal hegemony--have prevented women from participating as fully in the artistic community as men.

After a general discussion of these aspects of society and creativity, I will look at reflections of these concepts in the writings and life stories of two women composers, Clara Schumann and Ethel Smyth. I will focus on the writings of these two women in part because of the quantity of material that is available, and in part because they were writing and composing during a time when the rhetoric of excluding women from genius was particularly open and virulent. This rhetoric has been brought into the present along with the Romantic view of the artist, so it would be enlightening to bring the study into the present at a later date.

Gender and Genius

The gendering of the concept of genius goes back as far as the Roman origins of the word itself, which referred to the male "essence," or "gens" that was passed down through the generations in the male line of a family. The idea that a person could *be* a genius, rather than *have* genius is more recent. This latter idea, which developed along with a more explicit rhetoric of excluding women from "genius," began to develop in the 17th century and reached its most overt stage in the Romantic period of the late 19th century. It goes hand in hand both with the increasing status of the artist and with the development of the concept of artist as distinct from that of craftsman. As art became a realm in which one could achieve influence, recognition, and economic benefit, women began to be systematically excluded from the practice of it.

As Battersby (1989) expresses it,

"This rhetoric praised 'feminine' qualities in male creators . . . but claimed females could not -- or should not - create. To buttress the man/animal, civilized/savage division, the category of genius had to work by a process of exclusion. The non-genius was always described as lacking some quality or qualities: a lack that made his or her output valueless. The descriptions of these deficiencies contradicted each other, but were used to explain the differences between civilized European man and animals, primitives, children ... and women. The genius was *like* an

¹Clara Schumann, 1839. cited in Litzmann (1972, v.I:259)

animal, a primitive, a child or a woman; but, of course, this likeness was deceptive" (3).

The qualities valued in male geniuses, such as instinct, intuition, and strong emotions, were devalued in women and "primitives" because they are expected of them. In a (white, European) man, wedded to his enlightened rational mind, they became something sublime.

Renaissance writers such as Juan Huarte, whose views grew out of an Aristotelian understanding of physiology, held that women were incapable of great artistry because they lacked the necessary intellect or "ingenium." The fact that they also lacked "genius," which was the male procreative ability, was not part of the argument. This was during a time when art was representational; it was supposed to accurately reflect nature, not the individual character of the artist. The artist was seen as possessing great "ingenium," but all men possessed "genius." By the 18th century, the two terms "ingenium" and "genius" began to be collapsed into one concept. It began to be common to talk of an artist as "being" a genius rather than "having" genius. Women could not have "genius" because of their sex; therefore they could not "be" geniuses either (Battersby 1989: 27-30, 71).

The writings of Kant, who was himself influenced by Rousseau, were influential in the development of the concept of genius during the Romantic era. Both reveal a new attitude toward the self and individuality as the source of art. Both maintained that although women had sufficient intellect to learn, it was unbecoming and unnatural for them to learn too much. Both also held that women were incapable of thinking profound thoughts. Rousseau's misogyny surpasses Kant's, however, in that Rousseau believed women incapable even of good taste or appreciation of art, while Kant held that women could appreciate art (Battersby 1989: 76-78, 107).

The rationales given during the Romantic period were often quite confused. Some authors, such as Rousseau, excluded women because they were not emotional enough, being too bound by nature to their womb and their children to raise their heads out of mundane practicality. Women's emotions were perceived as being shallow, while those of those of great artists were seen as very deep. William Duff thought they lacked sufficient imagination; Kant thought they lacked intellectual depth; and Schopenhauer thought they lacked free will (Battersby 1989: 115). Darwin classified women along with "primitives," as genetic throwbacks, because they had "intuition, perception, and imagination" rather than the "courage, energy, intellect, and inventive genius" that enabled men to "inevitably excel in art, science, and philosophy" (Matthews 1992: 166). These contrary claims came together in Schopenhauer's development of the idea of a third sex and Nietzsche's idea of the "superman" or "übermensch" who combined the receptivity of the female with the will of the male. Both relegated women to the function of sexual reproduction; cultural production was the realm of this third sex (Battersby 1989: 107-111 and 119-123).

This reasoning led to differing treatment of men and women exhibiting the same symptoms of "melancholy." As Matthews (1992) summarizes it, "For males, ecstatic, passionate suffering was the avenue to the sublime revelation of ultimate truth and creativity, whereas, for women, such states were seen as feeble-minded manifestations of mental illness" (163). This is tied to Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's view that women had no ego, but were merely passively controlled by nature. If a woman has no ego, her strong emotions do not mark her as a more refined and "interesting" individual as they would a man (Lutz 1990: 5-6).

Some Romantic era writers, such as George Upton, a Chicago music critic writing in the late 19th century, continued the argument that women were too emotional and not intellectual enough. They argued that although women embodied the great depths of feeling necessary to great art, they were by that fact alone incapable of distancing themselves enough to process these emotions into artistic forms comprehensible to others. As Upton phrases it,

"woman does not musically reproduce them (emotions) because she herself is emotional by temperament and nature, and cannot project herself outwardly, any more than she can give outward expression to other mysterious and deeply hidden traits of her nature. . . . Man controls his emotions, and can give an outward expression of them. In woman they are the dominating element, and so long as they are dominant she absorbs music. . . . to treat emotions as if they were mathematics, to bind and measure and limit them within the rigid laws of harmony and counterpoint, and to express them with arbitrary signs, is a cold-blooded operation, possible only to the sterner and more obdurate nature of man" (Upton 1892: 23-24).

Whatever direction the rhetoric took, the end result was to undercut women. In reading criticisms of women artists of the time, one finds that both their strengths and their weaknesses were ascribed to their gender. Neuls Bates (1982) summarizes the situation:

"Critics of the late nineteenth century developed a system of sexual aesthetics that analyzed music in terms of feminine and masculine traits. Feminine music was by definition graceful and delicate, full of melody, and restricted to the smaller forms of songs and piano music. Masculine music, by contrast, was powerful in effect and intellectually rigorous in harmony, counterpoint, and other structural logic. Symphonies, operas, and similarly large-scaled works lay in the realm of masculine music, and as women in increasing numbers came to write in large forms they were decried as venturing beyond their proper sphere. . . the system of sexual aesthetics found both virtues and defects in a composition by a woman to be the inevitable result of her gender" (223).

This kind of sexual aesthetics is apparent in Arthur Elson's Women's Work in Music (1903). He believes women to be incapable of the depth of men's music, or, as he terms it "virile" music. Women's music will "always show more of delicate grace and refinement than man's, and will be to some extent lacking in the broader effects of strong feeling" (237). If a passage of music was light and graceful -- that was a natural and appropriate expression of femininity. It also, of course, made the piece not serious or deep enough to be considered great art. If a passage of music was strong and forceful, the woman composer was castigated for trying to compose like men (and not succeeding, of course). Above all, a woman did not compose *well*. She composed *like a man*. Or, if she was a writer, she wrote like a man, as is said of George Eliot.

As the number of successful women performers began to increase, the rhetoric changed ever so slightly. Women's "genius" was for interpretation, not for creation. Women composers and artists were allowed in certain genres -- the light, not too serious genres of piano music or flower painting.²

Elson and Upton typify another response to the "women in music" question. Their conclusion is that women's great role in music is to inspire the men in their life. This provides a convenient way to subsume the work of most historical women composers and artists under that of the men close to them because women primarily learned their craft as daughters and wives, schools and conservatories being closed to them until late in the nineteenth century. Carl Jung agrees that woman's role is to inspire: "Just as a man brings forth his work as a complete creation out of his inner feminine nature, so the inner masculine side of a

² Léon LaGrange(1860) states "Male genius has nothing to fear from female taste. Let men of genius conceive of great architectural projects, monumental sculpture, and elevated forms of painting. In a word, let men busy themselves with all that has to do with great art. Let women occupy themselves with those types of art they have always preferred, such as pastels, portraits or miniatures. Or the painting of flowers, those prodigies of grace and freshness which alone can compete with the grace and freshness of women themselves" (Battersby 1989: 40).

woman brings forth creative seeds which have the power to fertilize the feminine side of the man" (Battersby 1989: 3).

Women artist's contemporaries within their own fields were often among the most virulent protesters against their abilities (presumably because the most threatened by the possibility of being surpassed by a woman). For example, Renoir says "Women are monsters who are authors, lawyers and politicians, like George Sand, Madame Adam, and other bores who are nothing more than five-legged beasts. The woman who is an artist is merely ridiculous" (Battersby 1989: 39). In the field of music, Saint-Saens said of a woman composer that she "was like a dog walking on its hind legs, a freak of nature, unnatural, and as a steady sight unwelcome." He goes on to say that although it isn't done well, it is amazing that it is done at all (Rosentiel 1982: 65).

Another important issue is canon construction. The exclusion of women from the capability of genius on the basis of history is based on the assumption that genius is not socially constructed, and is therefore objectively determined. However, not only is the concept of genius socially constructed, but the definition of *who* can be considered a genius is also socially constructed. In the model of European society, a woman cannot be a genius because the concept of genius presupposes male gender. Women's work of the same value is therefore often rated lower than that of men, especially when judged by men (Frieze 1975: 168).

As Robinson (1985) points out, women's works have been excluded from the artistic canon because it is men who decide what to include. Although she is speaking of works of literature, it is equally applicable to music.

"It is probably quite accurate to think of the canon as an entirely gentlemanly artifact, considering how few works by nonmembers of that class and sex make it into the informal agglomeration of course syllabi, anthologies, and widely commented-upon "standard authors" that constitute the canon as it is generally understood. For, beyond their availability on bookshelves, it is through the teaching and study -- one might even say the habitual teaching and study -- of certain works that they become institutionalized as canonical literature" (106)

Women's music is dismissed by Upton and Elson because it is ephemeral and does not become part of the canon. Since the canon itself is culturally constructed within a patriarchal society, this is not a valid argument.

The idea of a canon of art is itself based on European cultural assumptions about art and individuality. When art becomes separated from craft and linked up to the individuality of its creator, it becomes reified and permanent. This makes history relevant. When history becomes relevant, originality and influence become factors in the concept of genius, because history is traced through schools and spheres of influence. Because women were systematically excluded from spheres of influence and marginalized, they are excluded from a history that traces spheres of influence, and are therefore categorized as "not genius."

Social Roles

The flip side of the rhetoric of genius is that it is absolutely necessary for men to exclude women from the possibility of genius precisely so that they will be the mothers and wives and caretakers of the male geniuses, whose work would be disturbed by having to think about the mundane matters of daily life; to keep for themselves the leisure, economic security, and room of one's own that are the essential preconditions to creation. Upton waxes most eloquent on one of women's roles in music -- they are to provide "steadfast love and thoughtful care of woman in the quiet duties of home life" (Upton 1892: 16).

Amy Fay, an American pianist who wrote about her music studies in Germany, finds that women have done this only too well:

"Women have been too much taken up with helping and encouraging men to place a proper value on their own talent, which they are too prone to underestimate and to think not worth making the most of. Their whole training, from time immemorial, has tended to make them take an intense interest in the work of men and to stimulate them to their best efforts" (Neuls Bates 1982: 37-38).

There are two aspects to women's traditional roles that affect their ability to function as artists. First, there are external obstacles: the lack of space and time due to devotion to family and household duties; restrictions on behavior due to social norms; and lack of access to education and experience of the world. Secondly, and I think more insidiously, there are the internal obstacles: the psychological effects on the woman herself that these roles and restrictions have produced.

The rhetoric of genius has asserted time and again that a woman's creative urge is fulfilled in bearing children. Men's creative urge is brought outward into the world as cultural contributions because they cannot bear children.⁴ It is certainly true that, historically, women composers who married and bore children have either ceased to compose altogether or their output has dwindled to almost nothing. The argument against women's capacity for genius asserts that this is entirely biological. I would argue that it is due primarily to the social structures of a patriarchal society.

Women are not the only members of society who desire children; therefore, the desire for children cannot mean a lack of desire for artistic expression. But in a social system in which women are the primary caregivers, they are forced to assume the greater responsibility toward their children. In a social system in which women's creative abilities are devalued, there is no support for their need to have time and space apart from their children. Indeed, "motherhood" has gathered such an aura about it that women have historically been brought up to feel guilty for any negative thoughts toward their children.⁵

Women have historically lived their lives in relation to men. First they are daughters, then their father gives them away and they become wives. They have historically been economically dependent on men throughout their lives, which has been a powerful incentive to live out the roles assigned to them. This dependence has also been a powerful incentive to conform to other social norms that restrict their behavior.

During Clara Schumann's and Ethel Smyth's lifetimes, respectable women did not go out in public alone; a woman alone invited unwanted attentions from men because just being alone in a public place was enough to damage her reputation. Even now, when there is no overt prohibition on women's going places alone, women are restricted in their activities by the fear of what may be done to them. Marie Baskirtsev, a young Russian artist living in Paris, wrote,

"What I desire is liberty to go walking alone, to come and go, to sit on the benches in the Tuileries Gardens. Without that liberty you cannot become a true artist. You believe you can profit by what you see when you are accompanied by someone, when you must wait for your companion, your family! . . . Thought is shackled as a result of that stupid and continual constraint. . . That is enough to make your wings droop. It is one of the main reasons why there are no women artists" (Beauvoir 1974: 791-2).

Without the liberty to experience the world, a person's life -- and therefore that person's art -- is limited.

Women were barred from public positions because for a woman to be talked about was scandalous (Jones 1986: 76-79). In many cases, they were discouraged by their families from performing in public or

⁴ We have seen this sentiment in Rousseau, Duff, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. It does not end with the 19th century, however. Modern writers such as Anthony Burgess (1986), Andrew Gemant (1961) and Frank Barron (1969) continue to make this same assertion (quoted in Battersby 1989: 18-19, 20-21, 131).

⁵ See, for example, Adrienne Rich's discussion of motherhood in Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution. New York: Norton, 1976.

publishing because it would reflect badly on the family (Pendle 1991: 98). Even professional women musicians were dependent on male agents to make arrangements because they themselves were not treated with respect. Women composers depended on male publishers, conductors, and performers and on the male committees who decided what to program on concerts and festivals. As if this were not enough of a burden, women performers also had to find traveling companions to protect their reputations. This doubled the expenses for a woman performer, and made it even harder for her to succeed economically.

As Neuls Bates (1982) notes,

"The roles of composer and performer were totally intertwined and therefore the restrictions placed upon women as singers and instrumentalists directly influenced their potential as composers. . . They did compose large works, but not in the same proportion as man -- because they did not hold the prestigious positions that offered optimum opportunities for performance as well as crucial on-the-job training" (267).

Women composers also suffered by being denied the opportunity to conduct publicly. Many new works by Romantic composers were premiered with the composer himself as conductor. Conducting and teaching were the primary ways male composers supported themselves, and both fields were closed to women, which greatly hampered them economically.

Not only were women barred from public positions, but theory and composition classes at most conservatories were not open to women until late in the nineteenth century. Even at that point, men's and women's classes were frequently separated, with women's training--which included up to a year less of music theory--geared toward producing performers or teachers or possibly composers of small feminine genres, while men's training provided a much more thorough grounding in harmony, orchestration, and score reading -- skills conducive to orchestral or opera composing (Pendle 1991: 100).

Even women's clothing has been restrictive. Due to social norms, it has also often been more expensive to maintain, and certainly less practical for any kind of freedom of movement.⁶ Women's bodies have been blamed for the fall of man and for all manner of evil thoughts, so women have been taught to be ashamed of their bodies and to circumscribe their postures and movements (Jones 1986:76-79). At the same time they have been taught to turn themselves into display items to attract admirers. Cixous talks of woman returning "to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display -- the ailing or dead figure, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions. Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time" (Cixous 1980: 250).

Women have also been affected psychologically by their position and roles in society. One issue that has been discussed recently is the greater difficulty women seem to have in developing ego boundaries and a strong sense of self. Many studies suggest that gender identity is established by the time a child is three.⁷ Because women have primarily been responsible for child care during these early years, the "feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does" (Gilligan 1982: 7). As Carolyn Heilbrun expresses it, "Men define themselves by their separation from women; women define themselves by their lack of separation, of selfhood" (1979: 193).

Another problem has been self esteem. Jeanne Block (1984) asserts that the father's treatment of the mother affects the development of self-esteem in the daughter (232); therefore, a society in which women's work is devalued automatically means lower self-esteem in the daughter. Block also discusses "the more

⁶ Heilbrun (1988) relates an anecdote about George Sands' experience as a "poor woman artist" who could not afford to go to the theater in the style required for women. Her mother suggested dressing as a man, saying that she and her sister had done so as young women in order to go to the theatre with their husbands at half the expense. George Sands took her mother's advice, and greatly freed herself to experience the world (34).

⁷ Nancy Chodorow and Robert Stoller, cited in Gilligan (1982: 6-7).

restrictive childrearing practices characterizing parents of girls (emphasis on physical proximity, expectations of "ladylike behaviors," close supervision, and provision of help in problem-solving situations)" which inhibit the girl's interaction and experimentation with her environment (275-6). She finds that parents expect their sons to be "independent, self-reliant, highly educated, ambitious, hardworking, career-oriented, intelligent, and strong-willed. In contrast, parents more often expected their daughters to be kind, unselfish, attractive, loving, and well-mannered and to have a good marriage and be a good parent" (129). According to Block, the results of these attitudes and parental behaviors toward their daughters are to make them more concerned about social approval, more obedient to authority and rules, more timid, less self-confident, and more susceptible to anxiety. Their self-esteem is more tied to the approval of others (185-6).

Studies have also shown that many women have a fear of success. According to Matina Horner (1972), women fear success, especially in competitive situations, because they fear possible negative consequences for themselves. "Among these are social rejection and feelings of being unfeminine or inadequate as a woman" (62). As we have seen above, women are socialized towards communion with others, so the fear of social rejection is very powerful. Horner makes the point that "It is precisely those women who most want to achieve and who are most capable of achieving who experience the detrimental effects of a 'fear of success'" (62). It is women's fear of incurring hostile attitudes from their male peers that seems to be the most significant factor (65).

Both Heilbrun (1979) and Block (1984) discuss women who have been successful in traditionally male professions. Both suggest processes through which this may have been made possible. Heilbrun suggests a list of five factors, "one of which, at least, must be present to produce an achieving woman in a male-dominated profession. . . 1) socializing forces, perhaps of a particular foreign culture, which encourage professional commitment within a certain class of women; 2) the family position of first-born child, only child, or a child with all siblings very much older or younger; 3) experience in an all-girl environment, either an all-girl family or an all-girl school or college; 4) the role of "son" (not boy) to the father, accompanied by a strong sense of the father as role model; 5) a sense of the mother, however affectionately viewed, as representing a female destiny to be avoided at all costs" (107). Block suggests only the last of these possibilities (161). Some of these factors seem to play a part in the lives of Clara Schumann and Ethel Smyth, as I will discuss later.

Artist or Woman?

The very character traits that women are supposed to possess are inimicable to being an artist. And, as contemporary composer Elizabeth Swados (1988) finds, "masculine" traits in a woman will be judged more harshly than in a man:

"When I was old enough to be considered a woman, I ceased being an unthreatening child to be discovered, taught, and protected. . . when I fought back for ideals and forms that came from deep within my musical soul, I was labeled hysterical or neurotic. The stronger I fought for myself, the more self-involved and unreliable I seemed. What would be called adventurous for a man was careless for me; prolific for a man was facile for me; opinionated, passionate, strong for a man, was schoolmarmish, hectoring, strident for me. Unbeknownst to me, I had entered a dangerous sexual combat zone, full of power struggles, critical prejudice, and political games. . . finally I learned to stop reacting, rebuild my confidence, and fight for the life of my music" (185).

Women are brought up to be nurturers, to meet the needs of others; artists must be selfish of their time and space. Women are brought up to be modest, and often suffer from low self esteem and fear of success; artists must actively promote themselves. A woman defines herself in relation to others; an artist is an individual with something to say. A woman is supposed to be in control of her emotions, or she risks being labelled hysterical; an artist is the possessor of strong and deep emotions. A man can be assertive; a woman behaving in the same manner is a bitch.

The end result is that women artists feel they must choose between art and womanhood. For a man, the choice is what to do, not what to be. For a woman, the choice is what to be - a woman or an artist. As Battersby (1989) summarizes,

"Creativity was displaced *male* procreativity; male sexuality made sublime. Females, however, were represented either as lacking sexual drive, or as incapable of resisting their sexuality ... A woman who created was faced with a double bind: either to surrender her sexuality (becoming not *masculine*, but a surrogate *male*), or to be *feminine* and *female*, and hence to fail to count as a genius" (3).

Virginia Woolf says "The ultimate battle for creative women is to conquer the consciousness of the way men will react (1979: 62). I think this is true; only then can a woman feel unafraid to succeed, and strong enough to risk failures.

Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

As the concept of the individuality of the artist developed, "the uniqueness and individuality of the artists' own character also became aesthetically significant" (Battersby 1989: 13). This is certainly true in music. At the time Clara Schumann was composing, the music of past generations was being rediscovered. Prior to this time, music was functional, and was not expected to become part of the future. What was listened to was what was new. Mozart competed against his contemporaries, not against Bach or Vivaldi. The movement of music out of the patronage system into the commercial concert hall as a business and a way of making money coincided with the rediscovery of Bach and Beethoven and with the glorification of virtuoso performers like Liszt and Paganini. Because music was perceived as an expression of the artist's individuality, it became stylistically much more diverse than it had been in previous eras.

In a sense, Clara Schumann belongs to a past tradition. Although her compositions belong stylistically to the Romantic period, her concept of what it meant to be a musician seems tied more to the concept of music as craft than as Art. She was a diligent student of counterpoint and harmony throughout her life, and had a thorough musical training beginning at the age of five. Robert Schumann, on the other hand, belonged philosophically to the Romantic era. His studies of music were dilatory at best until he was well into his twenties. His view of the artist coincided with the view of the time, in that his personality and individuality were to him the most important things. His erratic personality was an integral part of the art he produced.

Clara had a very successful and influential career as a concert pianist. She began her career as a child prodigy, and was composing virtuosic display pieces by the age of eleven that were considered the equal of composers many years her senior. Although her concert tours were shortened and interrupted during her childbearing years, she was always performing. Her composing, however, is a different story. Although she was a gifted composer with a thorough musical background, she was a reluctant composer. She seems to have composed only at the urging first of her father and then of her husband. Nancy Reich (1985) has suggested that this is because she found composing a chore and was not interested in it. Based on materials in her diary, I do not agree with this assessment. I think that she internalized many of the messages about women's lacks and that this created in her profound conflicts between her ideal of womanhood and her aspirations as an composer. Her life was not conducive to the opportunities to develop as a composer, but I think that her personality and self image are the key factors to understanding her experience as a composer.

Clara Wieck was the first surviving child of Friedrich Wieck and Marianne Tromlitz, both of whom were musicians. Her mother was twelve years younger than her father, a student of his, and he seems to have treated her as a child. Clara was raised for the first several years of her life by a maid so taciturn that Clara did not learn to talk until she was five. Shortly before her fifth birthday, Clara's mother left Friedrich. Her father got custody of her on her fifth birthday, and she did not see her mother again except for brief visits until she was an adult. Her father remarried, but prevented a close relationship with her stepmother.

Shortly after she returned to her father's house, he began to instruct her in music. He arranged piano classes with other girls her age in the hope that she would learn to speak more quickly. Before her birth, he had planned to train her, if she proved to be a girl, as a virtuoso pianist, as a proof of his teaching method. When he began instructing her, he began a diary in her name, which he kept for her until she could write. Many entries are his, either dictated to her, or written in his own hand, until she reached the age of 20. Clara was entirely dependent on her father, who was her only parent, her only teacher, and her traveling companion on tours. He was extremely critical and often inconsistent in his treatment of her, sometimes lavishing her with praise and sometimes being hypercritical. Because it was obligatory during this period for a virtuoso performer to perform an original piece on each concert, he provided her with a thorough musical training, including studies in composition and harmony from the time she was as a child. She never attended school; she had tutors at home, but most of her studies were directed toward music. Her debut as a solo performer was in 1830, at the age of 11.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856), who was nine years her senior, began to study with her father in 1828. One of the reasons he chose to study with Wieck was because he was impressed with Clara's musicianship at such an early age. Robert began to court Clara in 1835, and they became secretly engaged in 1837. Later that year, Robert asked Wieck for Clara's hand. Wieck was enraged. He prevented them from seeing each other or having any contact with each other. This period of time was extremely difficult for all concerned, but especially for Clara. She was so torn at being forced to choose between the two men that she became physically ill. She attempted to reconcile them on numerous occasions. Her father at one point backed out of a concert tour and left her, an inexperienced girl of 18, to make all of her own concert arrangements. He seems to have been trying to prove how much she needed him, but she instead learned that she could do it.

In 1839, Robert and Clara filed a petition at court to get permission to marry. Her father had by this time spread lies about them to try to turn people against them. He painted Clara as an undutiful daughter, and Robert as a drunkard. He scheduled concert tours for other students of his to coincide with his daughter's appearances, presenting them as rivals and conspicuously appearing with them while ignoring her own concerts.

The court decided in favor of Clara and Robert in 1840, and they were married shortly after. The rift with Wieck was not healed until after the birth of their second child, at which time Robert's career was becoming increasingly successful. Clara jumped at the opportunity for reconciliation.

Between 1841 and 1854, eight children were born to the couple, one of whom died in infancy (there was one additional miscarriage). In February 1854 Robert attempted suicide, and spent the remainder of his life in the hospital. Four months after his hospitalization began, Clara and Robert's eighth child was born. Clara began lengthy concert tours to support her family in October 1854, and continued touring until 1888. In 1878 she began to teach at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, which she continued to the end of her life. She composed only one work between 1854 and her death.

I will turn now to an analysis of the conflicts between artistry and womanhood in Clara's life. In many ways, her marriage to Robert benefited her. They studied music together, and he encouraged her to compose. He also introduced her to literature, which broadened her experience considerably. On the other hand, Robert was clearly ambivalent about allowing her to continue to perform in public after their marriage. In a letter to Clara before their marriage he comments

"And if you were to be forgotten as an artist, would you not be beloved as a wife? . . . The first year of our marriage you *shall* forget the artist, you *shall* live only for yourself and your house and your husband, and wait . . . just see how I will make you forget the artist--because the wife stands even higher than the artist and if I only achieve this much--that you have nothing more to do with the public--I will have achieved my deepest wish. Yet you still remain an artist. The bit of fame in the contemptible paper--I despise it" (Reich 1985: 92)

Although Robert was attracted to her as a fellow artist, they both clearly had traditional expectations of marriage. Robert's wedding present to her was a cookbook. Shortly before their marriage he wrote to her, "Young wives must be able to cook and keep house properly, if they wish to have contented husbands" (Litzmann 1972:I, 121). Around this same time, Clara wrote to a friend, "Now I am endeavoring to combine the artist with the housewife so far as possible. That is a difficult task!" (I, 205). Clara was expected to assume the role of running the household, and later of supervising the children's daily activities and education, leaving Robert free to compose during the day. In addition, she was frequently prevented from practicing and composing by the circumstances of their household. She could not do either while he was composing because it would disturb him.

Because women were not allowed to travel alone, and married women were not expected to travel without their husbands, Clara and Robert frequently clashed over her going on tour. On the one hand, they needed the money, and Clara greatly enjoyed performing. But for Robert, tours were draining and debilitating. He could not compose, and would get very depressed and ill. If he stayed at home while she travelled with someone else, he complained in the diary about being alone. And yet he shows pride in her artistry at other times.

Robert sometimes was aware of the sacrifices Clara made for his art. In 1840 he writes "too often she has to buy my songs at the price of silence and invisibility." (Litzmann 1972: I, 313) And again, in 1843 he writes,

"But to have children and a husband who is always living in the realms of imagination, do not go well with composition. She cannot work at it regularly and I am often disturbed to think how many profound ideas are lost because she cannot work them out. But Clara herself knows her main occupation is as a mother and I believe she is happy in the circumstances and would not want them changed" (Reich 1985: 228).

As the last sentence in this quote reveals, he at heart agrees with the philosophy of the time.

Clara herself often bewails her inability to work. In 1853, upon finding that she was again pregnant, she wrote in her diary, "My last good years are passing away, and my powers too - there is certainly reason enough for me to distress myself... I am more discouraged than I can say" (Litzmann 1972: II, 42).

Clearly there are external reasons enough to make composing difficult -- the responsibilities of running a large household, many pregnancies, many exhausting concert tours, financial worries, lack of space and inability to work when it would bother Robert. But Clara's success as a concert pianist and teacher in the face of these same obstacles leads me to believe that there are internal barriers to composing as well as the (substantial) external barriers.

In relation to Heilbrun's list of five characteristics of successful women professionals, mentioned above, Clara meets several of the factors. She was brought up to be a virtuoso performer, a professional musician. She was the first-born child and had a sense of her father as her role model. Her father brought her up away from her mother, and she did not like her stepmother, so she did not grow up emulating a traditional female role model. She was very successful as a performer, and successfully competed against men in that role. Why not as a composer?

She seems to have emerged from an emotionally deprived childhood with a deep-seated need for approval. This made her very sensitive to criticism, which is a difficult thing for an artist of any kind. In addition, the approval that she got from her father was directly related to how well she did, not for who she was. This experience tends to make the fear of failure especially strong, because failure means the withdrawal of all validation. It is especially hard for a composer to separate criticism of the work from criticism of the person.

Although Clara was primarily raised by her father, individuation is still an issue because his ego boundaries were blurred in relation to her, as is evidenced by his treatment of "her" diary and his

overreaction to her marriage of Robert. It was a wrenching experience for her to have to break away from him to fulfill the even closer attachment to Robert.

Because she did not talk until she was five, her parents thought at one point that she was hard of hearing. It seems rather that she did not have sufficient verbal interaction with any of the adults in the house. It is also possible that she was withdrawing from a stressful home environment. In any case, it is hard to have a concept of the self in relation to the world without a language to put it in.⁸

Living with an emotionally unstable man like Robert, who in many ways was like her father, must have been very difficult. There are many anecdotes that show him treating her as little more than a servant, at his beck and call. When he was moody he was highly critical of her playing, and it was his opinion that mattered most to her. One colleague recalled her weeping on stage, while the audience applauded her performance, because she had looked at Robert and seen that he was not pleased (Süsskind 1977: 141-42). It seems apparent that she transferred the intense need for male approval from her father to Robert.

Although both her father and Robert encouraged her to compose, they both also caused her a lot of stress because of problems in the relationships. It also seems that, in addition to the ambivalence already mentioned towards her public career, Robert believed men were intellectually superior to women. For example, after Clara had played his quintet at a party, he said to another (male) pianist, "You play it, a man understands [how to play it] better" (Süsskind 1977: 260). In his letters to Clara, he often addressed her as "my dear child"; although this may be in part due to the age difference, it still places her on unequal footing similar to that found in the relationship she observed between her father and stepmother.

Clara clearly felt a need to be in relationship to a man, going directly from her father, to Robert, to a long-term friendship with Johannes Brahms which lasted until her death. All three were given to swift mood swings and bad temper, and she frequently felt that she had earned their disapproval.

Block states that "Over the crucial age period from eighteen to twenty-six years, females demonstrated a decrease in ego sufficiency, while males during the corresponding period showed an increase in their perceived sense of competence" (1984: 260). Women are more likely to blame their failures on lack of ability rather than lack of motivation. In Clara's case, this age coincided with the intensification of her relationship with Robert and their subsequent marriage, and with her growing realization of the views about women's intelligence and creative capacity current in the society. Süsskind (1977) notes "her growing perception of the limited intellectual capabilities allotted to the nineteenth-century woman -- a general assumption which was aggravated in her case by a specific personal intimidation, Robert himself" (100). In 1839 she wrote to Robert, "Once I am with you I shall never think of composing again. I should be a fool" (Litzmann 1972: I, 241).

One of her father's students, Hans von Bulow, wrote,

"Reproductive genius can be admitted to the pretty sex, as productive genius unconditionally cannot. . . . There will never be a woman composer, at best a misprinting copyist. . . . I do not believe in the feminine form of the word "creator." Moreover, I hate unto death anything that smacks of emancipation of women" (Süsskind 1977: 259).

In my view, this is what Clara came to believe. She is clearly confident in her capabilities as a performer, "Often and often I have felt how blessed a thing it is that every year I feel more vigorous in the practice of my art, that I become more and more master of the works I study, my fingers have really more power" (Litzmann 1972: II, 315). Furthermore, she even uses the same language: "I feel myself called to *reproduce* beautiful works, Robert's above all, so long as I have the strength, and even if it were not absolutely necessary I should still go on tour" (Litzmann 1972: II, 260).

⁸ Helen Keller, in writing about this experience, talks of engulfing emotions and confusion (1935).

About her composing, she is much more ambivalent. Often, she writes of the joy which composing gives her. In 1853, when she was able to compose regularly again due to a move that gave her a studio on another floor from Robert, she wrote,

"Today I began to work again, at last. When I am able to work regularly like this, I feel really in my element; quite a different feeling seems to come over me, I am much freer and lighter, and everything seems to me more bright and cheerful. Music is, after all, a good piece of my life, and when it is wanting I feel as if I had lost all physical and mental elasticity" (Litzmann 1972: II, 36-37).

A few months later, "Composing gives me great pleasure. I wrote my last song in 1846, seven years ago!" and "There is nothing which surpasses the joy of creation, if only because through it one wins hours of self-forgetfulness, when one lives in a world of sound" (Litzmann 1972: II, 36-37). This burst of creativity -- Clara's last -- was brought to an end by Robert's suicide attempt and subsequent hospitalization.

Earlier, Clara had written disparagingly of her -- or any other woman's -- abilities as a composer. "I cannot stick to one idea, another comes at once. . . . I do not know what will come of it. I always comfort myself with the thought that I am a woman after all, and they are not born to compose (Litzmann 1972: I, 140). A year later, in 1839, she wrote "I once thought I possessed creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not desire to compose--not one has been able to do it, and why should I expect to? It would be arrogance, though indeed, my father led me into it in earlier days" (Litzmann I, 259).

In 1846, Clara composed her piano trio, which was one of her most successful pieces. Reviewers doubted it could be entirely her work, commenting with surprise that a woman could write so masterly a piece of chamber music. Over the space of a year, she wrote the following about this piece:

"There is nothing greater than the joy of composing something oneself, and then listening to it. There are some pretty passages in the trio, and I think it is fairly successful as far as form goes . . . Of course, it is only a woman's work, which is always lacking in force, and here and there in invention. . . . This evening I played Robert's piano quartet and my trio, which seems to me more harmless each time I play it. . . . (the following year) I received the printed copies of my trio today; but I did not care for it particularly, after Robert's D minor, it sounded effeminate and sentimental" (Litzmann I, 410).

Being a woman, she was subject to the same critical treatment of her compositions afforded other women. In other words, they were either not reviewed at all, or they were reviewed in terms of gender. The passage above shows her using the same kind of language to disparage her own piece.

Clara clearly believed in her intellectual inadequacy as a woman,

"Do you not understand how bitterly conscious I am of my own insufficiency, when I have studied this or that piece with my whole soul for a long time, and then have to realize that after all I have not yet properly grasped it? Is not intellectual mastery what I am striving for (so far as this is possible for a woman) And is it possible that I should not be pained when I find myself lacking in intellectual capacity?" (Litzmann 1972: II, 151).

In summary, it seems that she was very sensitive to the social attitudes regarding women as creators and performers and the idealized view of woman as wife and mother. She could justify her role as a performer because women were allowed "re-creative" genius; but she could not resolve her ambivalence about her creative gifts.

Ethel Smyth (1858-1944)

Ethel Smyth was born in London to a middle class military family. She was the fourth in a family of eight children (six girls and two boys). There was a four year gap between Ethel and her next youngest sibling due to her father's military career, which took him back to India. For the most part she and her sisters were educated at home, which was the custom in her social class. She and her next oldest sister were

sent to a boarding school for a short time because of conflicts between their governess and the governess hired to educate the younger set of children.

Ethel and her sisters learned to play the piano as a matter of course; it was expected of middle class Englishwomen of the time. When she was 12, she heard a Beethoven sonata played by one of the family's many governesses, and decided to devote her life to music. The governess had studied in Leipzig, so Ethel promptly told her family that she was determined to go there to study. She was not taken seriously and was not encouraged.

She had set age 17 as the time she would begin her studies in earnest; however, when she reached that age she felt bound by filial duty to remain in the family home. This was due to the death of her elder brother after a hunting accident, and the marriage of her two older sisters, which left her as the oldest child at home. She felt a deep obligation to help with the younger children. Her mother persuaded her father to allow some harmony studies with Alexander Ewing, a hymn composer, who was stationed at the army garrison near their home, but her father's jealousy soon brought these studies to a close.

When Ethel was 19, she again announced her intention of studying in Leipzig. When it became clear that she was serious about it, she met fierce opposition from her parents, who considered the life of an artist to be the equivalent to "going on the streets" as a prostitute. In 1877, after Ethel refused to leave her room for any reason for a length of time, her father finally consented to let her go to Leipzig and study. She later wrote that she thought part of his reluctance was due to his hesitance to spend money on an unmarried daughter, who might be a failure and a continuous financial drain on him because of not being able to find a husband (1987:49)

Ethel spent most of the next 13 years in Germany, first as a student, and then as a professional musician. She found life in Germany increasingly difficult as a woman living alone, and returned to England in 1890 feeling defeated and ready to give up music. This sense of sacrifice found voice in a Mass composed in 1891, which was her first large-scale dramatic work and a turning point in her career. In 1891 her mother died, and in 1894 her father died. After his death, when she was 36, she finally acquired her own home.

She had one important relationship with a man, Harry Brewster, which began as a friendship during her early days in Leipzig. He wrote or co-wrote the librettos for many of her six operas, and played an important role in broadening her cultural horizons. In 1895, after the death of his wife and of her father, they became lovers. Although he asked her to marry him, she refused. Ethel also had many passionate attachments with women, which, according to St. John, were not overtly sexual until later in life.

In 1908 Brewster died. In 1910, Ethel agreed to devote two years of her life to the Women's Suffrage Movement. She says that she didn't get involved earlier in part because "As a composer I wanted to keep out of it. It seemed to me incompatible with artistic creation" (St. John 1959: 144). During her involvement, she wrote an anthem for the movement. She also spent three weeks (of a two-month sentence) in jail for throwing a brick through the window of a Cabinet Minister as part of an organized protest.

By 1913 she had begun to develop hearing problems which were to greatly curtail her career. In 1915 she spent time in France as a volunteer radiographer. Because it was not possible to get performances during the war, she began to write prose. Her first autobiographical writings, Impressions That Remained, were begun during this period.

After the war, her professional career picked up, and by the 1920s she was successfully conducting her own pieces internationally. Her last major work, The Prison, a symphony with soloists and chorus based on writings of Henry Brewster, dates from 1929-30. After this point, her hearing was so bad that she was unable to compose any more. She continued to write prose until her death in 1944.

Ethel was always very sensitive to slights or perceived slights due to her sex. It is clear that she did experience discrimination as a composer. St. John (1959) states that her sex was one reason she had difficulty getting her music played in England (49). He also gives that as the reason that she was not included in a volume called History of English Opera, even though she had had five operas produced in

England before its publication (88). There had not been a great tradition of opera in England, and her contributions are substantial. Her best opera, The Wreckers, has been compared favorably to Britten's Peter Grimes, with which it shares themes of the sea and of social outcasts.

St. John also makes the point that life for an English composer during this period was difficult for men as well. There was much greater interest in importing foreign artists and composers; French music, especially, was the "in" thing. The fact that she had studied abroad did not help. Since her professional life was based largely in Germany, it was therefore frequently interrupted by political matters and general German prejudice against the English, which was increasing during this period.

Ethel was financially dependent on other people for most of her life. She had ardent supporters and adequate financial support, but dependence in any aspect is never a good thing for an artist. Later in life she talks about the great expense involved in being a composer -- copying scores and parts, music engraving, paying for publication, paying expenses to mount an opera. Although she had wealthy benefactors, it was difficult for her to continually be asking for money. She felt that it was due to her sex that her music was not performed, and not being performed meant no royalties and no performing fees, no recordings, and not being published.

Ethel was frequently reviewed in terms of the sexual aesthetics mentioned earlier, as the following excerpts reveal. Her violin sonata, performed in Leipzig in 1887, was pronounced "deficient in the feminine charm that might have been expected of a woman composer." St. John (1959) goes on to say that this is the first time that she had to "face the fact that her sex might prevent her compositions being judged solely on their merits" (54).

Even praise was gendered, as is seen in the following review of her Mass, which was premiered in 1893,

"The work definitely places the composer among the most eminent composers of her time, and easily at the head of all those of her own sex. The most striking thing about it is the entire absence of the qualities that are usually associated with feminine productions; throughout it is virile, masterly in construction and workmanship, and particularly remarkable for the excellence and rich colour of the orchestration" (St. John 1959: 86).

Some of the difficulties Ethel had in getting operas produced would have been mitigated if she had been able to conduct herself, but at the time it was not acceptable for women to conduct (1898-1910). Her involvement in the Women's Suffrage movement paved the way for her conducting career. When she conducted her own pieces during the 1920s, they were generally well received.

The first real crisis in Ethel's life was precipitated by her gender. In 1889, she was unable to find lodgings in Berlin because only prostitutes rent rooms. Women, to be respectable, must rent apartments and must have servants. Because her budget did not allow for the extra expense, she had no place to live. She was evicted from her first lodgings after the landlord discovered she was a single woman. Already physically ill, she was forced to move from one place to another, each noisier and less conducive to work than the last. Finally, ill and defeated and resigned to a life of sacrificing all she held dear -- namely music -- she returned home. She knew she would be unable to write at home because of the perpetual conflict between her and her mother. Part of her impulse towards self-sacrifice found expression in the Mass. However, if her mother had not died the following year it is unlikely that Ethel would have been able to continue as a composer. This crisis proved to be a turning point in her career, and pointed her in the direction of the large-scale dramatic works with which she had the most success.

Although she clearly experienced prejudice in getting performances, she was also able to use the novelty of being a woman composer writing in large genres to get opportunities for performances. She sparked the interest of the exiled Empress Eugenie, who introduced her to the British royal family, and who frequently paved the way for performances.

I think, however, that the two things that hindered Ethel's career the most were her inadequate education, and her fondness for the middle class sporting life in which she grew up. Benjamin Bloom (1985) talks about the time it takes to develop a talent - a minimum of a dozen years. Ethel was prevented from going off to study music until she was 18. This was partly due to the strong reaction on the part of her parents to such a disreputable profession; but it is also due to her acceptance of societal roles of daughter and a seeming unrealisation of what was involved in her undertaking. Years later she deeply regrets those "lost years" between the time she decided to study music and the time she argued her way out of the house and into the Conservatory. Her composing career was cut short by her early deafness. It is probable that if she had had training from childhood, she would have been able to develop the kind of inner ear that enabled Beethoven to compose after his deafness.

Her early schooling provided an inadequate cultural background for the kind of literary pieces that she was interested in. In addition, her studies at Leipzig provided an inadequate musical background. She had no instrumentation classes, and only limited training in theory. She was directed towards chamber works -- a genre considered more suitable for woman -- rather than towards the dramatic, large-scale pieces which were her forte.

In 1908, upon hearing a well-conducted performance of one of her pieces, she commented, "I now knew, once for all, that if properly conducted my music would always sound exactly as I had meant it to" (Smyth 1987: 275). This is very late for a realization such as this. If a composer does not have confidence in her ear, she can be inhibited by too much caution or can be too much affected by other's criticism. Yet this confidence can only be acquired through years of immersion in music.

In relation to Heilbrun's list of factors which produce an achieving woman, Ethel shows the last two most strongly. She perceived her mother as being an unstable, thwarted individual; a woman of great natural intelligence and talent who had been forced by convention to a life not suited to her. She modeled herself after her father as a sportsman, and he was clearly proud of her physical athleticism. Even though she had to fight with him over her vocation, she had a great deal of respect for him throughout her life.

She seemed to think that her vocation required her to choose not to be a woman in some ways. She clearly felt that marriage was out of the question because it would ruin her artistic freedom:

"A woman whose life is based on the denial of one fundamental instinct of womanhood, the tendril-like instinct, who has to say to herself: 'Let me stand alone' has already enough work on hand. Some productive men even are incapable of further effort, and if they make it bring disaster on themselves, their wives, or the social fabric -- witness Carlyle and Goethe, and as an instance of a woman who, being too timorous to stand alone, married and spoiled her work by this renunciation of freedom, G. Eliot." (St. John 1959: 72)

This quote reveals a view of womanhood as being too dependent, which has often been the case. Her fear was partly based on her observation that,

"Every day I become more and more convinced of the truth of my old axiom, that why no women have become composers is because they have married, and then, very properly, made their husbands and children the first consideration" (Neuls Bates 1982: 165).

I find it significant that she seems to accept that married women ought to think first of their husbands and children. If this is the condition for marriage, then she is right -- it would have made it impossible for her to continue her career.

She was very much afraid of becoming emotionally dependent on a man. She clearly believed that she had to make a choice between her work and marriage, as the following passage shows,

"the most perfect relation of all must be the love between man and woman, but this seemed to me, given my life and outlook, probably an unachievable thing. Where should be found the man whose existence could blend with mine without loss of quality on either side? My work

must and would always be the first consideration. . . . I have found in women's affection a peculiar understanding, mothering quality that is a thing apart. Perhaps too I had foreknowledge of the difficulties that in a world arranged by man for man's convenience beset the woman who leaves the traditional path to compete for bread and butter, honours and emoluments -- difficulties honest men are more aware of, perhaps, than she of the sheltered life.... I saw good, brave women obliged because of their sex to give way before dullness, foolishness or brutality" (Smyth 1987: 113-114).

This perception about relationships to men did not open her eyes to the effects of some of her intense relationships with women on her work. And the single-mindedness towards her work seen in the above passage did not prevent her from getting sidetracked by sports or travel, even though many friends warned her against both possibilities. Later she also seemed to be distracted by her literary occupations. So it seems that the very aspects of her personality--being her father's "son"--which enabled her to overcome the obstacles against being a woman composer also inhibited the full development of her abilities as a composer.

She seemed to feel that it was necessary to be masculine to create, particularly because of the genres in which she was writing, as the following assessment suggests:

"she (Smyth) broke convention by deciding to devote herself to the composition of opera, a bold decision for her time, nationality, and gender. Smyth broke gender conventions in other ways. Her dress was as much masculine as feminine, and she liked to smoke cigars. . . . Through autobiographical writings, including several books and numerous articles, Smyth revealed in a forthright manner her shrewd understanding of gender conventions as they affected women's attempts to attain success in a man's world" (Pendle 1991: 138).

Or, as another modern critic states it,

"Indeed, both in her music and in her life-style many of the qualities usually associated with the male predominate: she was a born fighter, quite fearless both physically and morally, and a keen sportswoman, with riding, tennis and golf her major preoccupations. Perhaps she felt it necessary to adopt certain masculine characteristics so that her music would be viewed more seriously" (Hyde 1984: 138).

Another interesting aspect of her life is her relation to the Women's Suffrage Movement. St. John (1959) explains her early indifference to the struggle for women's rights in terms of her lack of first hand experience of the inferior status of women due to growing up in a family predominantly female and growing up able to hold her own against boys in sports. He says these experiences, combined with her success in forcing her father to allow her to study music, led her to believe she could compete with men in intellectual fields as well (36-37).

As mentioned earlier, Ethel herself claims that she did not want to be distracted from her art, and so avoided the Women's Movement. But it was fairly common for successful women to feel that the movement was unnecessary. Heilbrun (1979) writes,

"In the past those women who have made their way successfully into the male-dominated worlds of business, the arts, or the professions have done so as honorary men, neither admiring nor bonding with other women, offering no encouragement to those who might come after them, preserving the socially required "femininity," but sacrificing their womanhood." (29)

I think this is true of Ethel. Although she was aware of the struggles facing her as a woman, she was doing what she wanted to do, and had a general attitude that anyone could. She had no sense of the solidarity necessary for real change to take place in the position of women. Indeed, many of her comments reveal a lack of respect for women in general for allowing themselves to be forced to conform to societal roles.

I thought it appropriate to end this section with some of Ethel's own commentary about women in music.

"As things are today it is absolutely impossible in this country for a woman composer to get and to keep her head above water; to go on from strength to strength, and develop such powers as she may possess. . . . Nowadays, in all departments of human effort, the first necessities are, a thorough training, followed by untrammelled opportunities for exercising the trade you have learned. . . . In order to master music as a trade more than that (training) is necessary; you have to be right down in the rough and tumble of music life, and no sooner did a woman leave college than she became aware of men's firm intention to keep her out of that arena" (Neuls Bates 1982: 281-2).

"In the meantime, our sex being admitted only on sufferance as it were to the outskirts of the musical scene, all the really interesting and educative jobs in our institutions, such as the training of choruses, stage management, conducting, the manipulation of the electric light, etc., etc.-- exercising which people learn the meaning of the word authority and how best to use it -- all these jobs, I say, fall automatically into the hands of youthful males. . . . There is not at this present moment (1933) one single middle-aged woman alive who has had the musical education that has fallen to men as a matter of course, without any effort on their part, ever since music was! . . . so much for the training of musical maidens who fondly believe they have something worth saying to say, and ask but one thing: a chance of hearing their work in public and finding out whether or no they are harbouring illusions. For until a work is publicly performed, it is impossible even for the composer to form a true judgment on its merit" (285-6).

"Note for instance how differently the Press reacts in the case of men and of women. Once I had grasped that it would take all one's courage to keep going at all, I gave up reading Press notices. . . for aught I know reviewers are not more unsympathetic to our work than they are to men's. But the reaction on the composer's future is different. If you are going *with* the stream, as men do, and barge up against an obstacle, very often the impact will shoot you right out into the current and actually help you on your way. But if you are swimming *against* the stream, which is the privilege of the female, such an impact can but send you spinning back ... back .. yards and yards in the wrong direction" (294).

Toward the Future

As we have seen, composers are historically gendered male. Even though maleness is the "unmarked" universal category, the social construction of the concept of artist/genius requires a male body. Women composers have been faced with the problem of finding a way to define themselves as women at the same time that they insist on their right to be composers alongside, and on the same terms as, men. Historically they have often found themselves in a vestibular space - they no longer fit the category of "woman" they grew up with, but neither are they part of the "man's" world of high art. Historically they have been asked to choose between these mutually exclusive social roles. To be fully accepted as artists they must deny their femaleness and become "honorary males"; To keep their "womanhood" they must give up their creative ambitions.

This conflict has been analyzed through the lives of these two women composers from different countries, different family backgrounds, different cultural attitudes toward art, and different historical contexts. They both responded to the internalized societal message that a woman could not be a composer. Clara Schumann's response was to fulfill the female roles of wife, mother, and interpreter of music, meanwhile denigrating and denying her own creativity. Ethel Smyth's response was to masculinize her behavior and to denigrate other women until her personal relationship with Pankhurst led to her brief period of activity in the Women's Suffrage movement.

In the lives of both women we have seen the importance of family structure. Both come from families with dominant fathers and absent or weak mothers. Identifying with their fathers, they gained strength, but they also internalized negative attitudes about women and womanhood. To provide children of both sexes the same opportunities for individuation and communion and to place them on an equal psychological footing in terms of self-esteem and competitiveness it is necessary that family structure change. Heilbrun (1979) suggests "a family structure in which both parents care for the children in equal turns" (193).

The core of the problem is the binary structure of feminine/masculine categories, which are too easily mapped onto female/male bodies. Creativity and procreativity have been mapped onto men and women, respectively. I think it is necessary to replace the binary structure with a model of multiplicity. The concept of gender as a constantly re-performed process (Butler: 1990) opens up new possibilities for combining and recombining roles and identity in a way that can blur gender boundaries and create more "grey" space in which we all can operate. Essential to this process are role models and womens' awareness of themselves in community with other women. Without that community, a woman may be able to change her specific circumstances, but the underlying problems will not be touched.

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