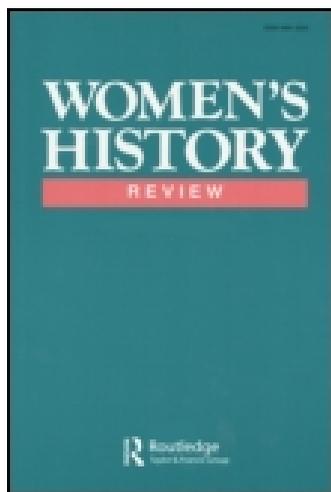


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The Spectacle of Woman as Creator: representation of women composers in the French, German and English feminist press 1880–1930

Amanda Harris

The period 1880–1930 saw women composers achieve unprecedented prominence as composers of large-scale works. This success coincided with the first wave of feminist movements in England, France and Germany. This article views the junctions where these two groups of women met through the vehicle of the feminist press, documenting the tensions and misunderstandings that occurred between emerging women composers attempting to be taken seriously as creative entities and feminists seeking to improve the political, social and professional lot of women. The pervasive aesthetic of male musical genius remained unquestioned by many feminists in spite of examples of female creative brilliance.

In feminist newspapers at the turn of the twentieth century, there was a single section that focused not on women, but on the work of men. While other news articles introduced readers to prominent and emerging female writers, artists, political agitators, scientists, doctors and actors, the section which reported on music (if it existed at all) focused almost exclusively on male composers and performers.

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This strange state of affairs has its origins in a complex set of circumstances. As directors of musical institutions, orchestras, chamber music groups and opera companies were generally men, and women's music had rarely been published in performance copies available to ensembles, there was little to report on in a nation's musical life that involved women. And yet, the commonalities between feminists and those women musicians struggling to be recognised in their field are not hard to identify. The similarities are highlighted by Karen Offen's definition of feminism as 'the name given to a comprehensive critical response to the deliberate and systematic subordination of women as a group by men as a group within a given cultural setting'.¹

The transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century was an important era for the proliferation of talented and successful female composers. These composers were not the first of their kind; women had been known to compose music as far back as the twelfth century. However, in this period far greater numbers were successful in having their works publicly performed and were becoming known chiefly and professionally as composers. The coincidence of this phenomenon with the rise of ever-more vocal, militant and visible movements for the rights of women is something which has been surprisingly little investigated in historical literature on music and women's history.² This article investigates the intersections and interactions between women seeking to make a career of composing music and those engaged in political movements agitating for the rights of women.³ I take a sweeping look at writing in the feminist press between 1880 and 1930 in France, England and Germany and seek to discover what this particular representation of the aims and preoccupations of first-wave feminism can tell us about the place of musical women in these movements. Although the period of the two important historical shifts discussed here spans a period of fifty years, the changes in musical women's relationship with feminism do not progress in a linear fashion, but rather fluctuate in a pattern of ebb and flow across the three nations that are the subject of this discussion.

Broadly, the turn of the century feminist periodicals to be dealt with here fall into several discrete categories. I have classified these in gradations of their explicitly political content in order to make sense of the relationship of each to the other. The first category could be characterised as the radical feminist press, a set of publications largely concerned with militant feminism, which often reported on events in the movement locally and abroad, and focused, almost exclusively, on legislature, political actions, enfranchisement of women and lobbying of politicians. A second, broadly focused category of the feminist press might be characterised as the moderate press, a set of publications which attempted to make their focus relevant to a broad sector of women and, in addition to overtly political articles, also contained sections on arts and literature, biographical depictions of prominent (usually female) personalities, and occasionally fashion. A third category espoused vaguely feminist politics, or perhaps more generally women's politics, and promoted the interests of women in a depoliticised context. In this more populist genre, the pros and cons of feminism, particularly those of militancy, were debated without especial feminist conviction, and issues deemed to be of

interest to women were discussed. These issues frequently included fashion, arts, family issues and biographical depictions of personalities of interest (not necessarily women).

As this article demonstrates, the radical feminist press often disregarded the arts as peripheral to the political struggle. When the radical press did take an interest in musicians it was in those who were politically aware and whose struggle was for the greater good of women. However, these feminists also mocked or, at the very least, disregarded the upper-class 'amateur' musician/composer who possessed little feminist consciousness. It was in the second, moderate category of press that publications most often engaged with women's struggles in the music world, although the writers' objectives were not always in accord with those of musical women. Populist feminist publications, by contrast, discussed music frequently without necessarily acknowledging that women could play a part in professional creativity or that they might be relevant to the music world as anything but listeners or at most interpreters.

Table 1 lists the publications dealt with in this article, organised by the categories already summarised.

These distinctions between different branches of the feminist press can be seen across all three countries. However, there were cultural differences between the nations, in particular in regard to the timing of the press's reaction to women

Table 1. List of feminist publications.

Radical feminist publications	Moderate feminist and women's issues	Popular women's press with feminist leanings
<i>Shafts</i> (1892–1900)	<i>Neue Bahnen</i> (1864–1919)	<i>La Fronde</i> (1897–1904) ^a
<i>La Femme de l'Avenir</i> (1897–1901)	<i>Le Droit des Femmes</i> (1869–91)	<i>Femina</i> (1901–17)
<i>The Common Cause</i> (1909–13)	<i>The Woman's World</i> (1888–90)	
<i>Le Combat Féministe</i> (1913–14)	<i>Journal des Femmes Artistes</i> (1890–1901)	
<i>La Suffragiste</i> (1911–20)	<i>Die Frau</i> (1893–1944)	
<i>Urania</i> (1916–40)	<i>Die Frauenbewegung</i> (1895–1919)	
	<i>Les Droits de la Femme</i> (1900–1905)	
	<i>La Française</i> (1906–40)	
	<i>The Englishwoman</i> (1909–21)	
	<i>The Vote</i> (1909–33)	
	<i>The Suffragette</i> (1912–15)	
	<i>La Vie féminine</i> (1916–19)	
	<i>Time and Tide</i> (1920–79)	

^a*La Fronde* was not so much a popular paper as a daily newspaper; I have included it in this category as its focus was not necessarily women's issues, but general news. The daily administration of the paper certainly had a feminist agenda (it was staffed entirely by women), even if its content was not exclusively feminist.

in music. As I will show, while in Germany some early feminist journalists (in the 1880s) wrote about selected women composers including Ingeborg von Bronsart and Luise Adolpha Le Beau, in France and England it was not until much later (around 1909–13) that women were discussed in relation to music at all. This may reflect more than anything the status of major German cities, especially Berlin and Leipzig, as important centres for musical life to which composers and musicians from other parts of Europe were frequently drawn for study and to partake in the rich networks of active musicians. Several important feminist journalists in Germany were also connoisseurs of the latest music being performed in concert halls around the country and were therefore exposed to the newest performances of Bronsart, Le Beau and others. However, there are also trends that can be observed across the three nations, and the approaches to writing about women in music display little variation overall. The first of these trends is the tendency for feminist journalists to profile an individual female composer as exceptional rather than exemplary of the female sex. In Germany, Le Beau received the most attention as the 'first' of her sex to compose serious music on a grand scale, just as in England, Ethel Smyth, and in France, Augusta Holmès occupied this exalted position among feminists.

In comparison to the wider readership of more general-interest women's publications, which ranged from affordable magazines read by working-class women and servant classes to ladies' magazines priced for a more affluent reader, the audience for feminist journals was relatively small, and indeed, as Pamela Langlois has pointed out, it was largely a case of preaching to the converted.⁴ However, Langlois has also demonstrated that, particularly in England, the ideas of the feminist press had significant purchase beyond its pages, and indeed that many of the writers of feminist propaganda wrote across a range of women's magazines, introducing their politics to a wider audience.⁵ Langlois' comprehensive survey of the women's press in England and France followed the work of Li Dzeh Djen as early research into the mouthpiece of women's movements and the female populace of those two countries more generally.⁶ More recent feminist historians such as Susan Foley and Karen Offen have also documented the role of the feminist press, particularly in France, as a part of their research into the role of feminist movements.⁷ However, while other kinds of creative artists, in particular writers and to some extent painters, have been included in these historical studies, musicians have rarely featured in the scholarly work on this period. As I will discuss, the inconsistency with which women musicians appeared in the feminist press may be the primary reason for this.

Increasingly, especially since the 1980s and 90s, scholars in musicology and music history have also turned to the history of women and have to some extent linked the efforts of women composers with those of feminists in the same period. Two key authors who give a thorough assessment of women composers in England and France respectively, are Sophie Fuller with her *Pandora Guide to Women Composers* (1995) and PhD thesis, *Women Composers during the British Musical Renaissance, 1880–1918* (1998) and Florence Launay in *Les Compositrices en France au XIXe Siècle* (2006).⁸ However, while Launay has explored the feminist

writings of the composer Armande de Polignac, and Annegret Fauser has pointed to the probable links between Nadia and Lili Boulanger's musical ambitions and feminist consciousness, a comprehensive examination of the interrelations of these two movements of women has not previously been carried out.⁹ This article, aims to build on the work of feminist historians by documenting the points at which the aims of musicians and those of politically active feminists intersect.

It is perhaps most informative to begin this survey with the wing of the feminist press which took the least interest in music in general and remained, therefore, unconcerned with women's contribution to it. The priorities of the radical press rendered such frivolities as artistic pursuits irrelevant to their cause. Papers such as *The Common Cause* (founded in 1909 as an organ of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies [NUWSS] in the north of England), *Le Combat Féministe* (founded in 1913 by Arria Ly, Hubertine Auclert and Nelly Roussel) and *La Femme de l'Avenir* (founded in 1897) were explicit in their focus on working-class women, female suffrage, the fight against prostitution, and polemic around militant and non-militant campaign strategies. The only mention in these papers of women in the arts was promotions for the plays of vocal feminists Cicely Hamilton and Edith Craig in *The Common Cause* and discussion of the negative connotations for women of connections with the theatre in *La Femme de l'Avenir*.¹⁰ The differences between these papers and those of the moderate press are highlighted especially in England where the tensions between the NUWSS and its paper *The Common Cause* and the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and *The Suffragette* have been well documented.¹¹ While the WSPU embraced the composer Ethel Smyth and her commitment to women's suffrage and adopted a song composed by her as the anthem of the movement, music is conspicuously absent from the publications of the NUWSS.¹²

At the other end of the spectrum from these radical publications were the more populist, feminist-leaning papers where music was a frequent topic of discussion and review. Women were, however, rarely the subject of these articles. On the occasions when these papers did discuss women musicians, the ambivalence of the writer's attitude towards feminism was emphasised, as in Max Rivière's 1902 article for *Femina*. Rivière wrote about the composer Juliette Toutain's attempts to be admitted to the important French composition prize, the Prix de Rome, and interviewed various women composers then active in the music world, including Toutain, Augusta Holmès, Cécile Chaminade, Jane Vieu, Cécile Dufresne and Wanda Landowska (who was more usually known as a harpsichordist rather than as a composer). Several of the composers, such as Holmès, Toutain and Vieu, discussed their specific views on the usefulness of the prize to women's careers. However, Rivière emphasised that while, for Jane Vieu, being an artist was important, her first priority was still her role as mother and wife. Rivière's commentary on Vieu therefore distanced her from 'feminism' while, confusingly, emphasising her belief in a woman's right to work:

Moreover, Mademoiselle Jane Vieu is not a 'feminist' in the true sense of the word. She holds very intelligent views on feminism: she is content to reclaim for women the right to work. She adds that it is their duty to work, and that working should never prevent them from being good wives, good mothers and homemakers. 'Let us not seek to compete for distant composition prizes [Prix de Rome]', she concludes; 'there are more interesting occupations in life. What is important for women is to work. So let's work'.¹³

This excerpt is interesting in the way that it distinguished Vieu's belief in women's right to work from feminism 'in the true sense of the word'. This distinction seems in fact to have been Rivière's rather than Vieu's, whose own words only urged women to work. Rivière's paraphrasing of Vieu's scepticism about composition prizes converted it into a reassurance that Vieu did not neglect her duties as a wife and mother. Indeed, he (and perhaps by association *Femina*) seems anxious to assert that Vieu is not *too* feminist.

Jane Vieu's portrayed remoteness from feminism was reflected in other writing about musicians, particularly in the music press. An article by A. de Sivry in *Le Monde Musical* of 1904 addressed an issue, contentious at the Paris Conservatorium at the time, that the number of women students in string instrument classes was due to be restricted to no more than 10% of the class numbers. This article was one of several on this topic which appeared in feminist and musical periodicals, disputing the justification for these new rules and asserting that selections should be made on the basis of skill and not on gender. Following de Sivry's articulation of the arguments against the new restrictions, the author distanced herself from 'feminism', apparently differentiating the fairness and equality she was calling for from other demands of the feminist movement. She seems to have equated being 'feminist' with arguing in particular for female suffrage, an association which suggests that the author wanted to distance herself from the visible, militant Suffragettes in England, rather than the French women's movement:¹⁴ 'We are not excessively feminist; we have no wish to see voters in skirts; but we try hard to be fair, and it appears to us that, should a woman be a talented violin player, it is not equitable to place obstacles in the way of her talent, as unconnected as they are, and under whatever false pretences'.¹⁵

This same issue was raised in *La Fronde* in 1904. *La Fronde*, founded by Marguerite Durand in 1897, was a daily newspaper until 1903 when it became a monthly. It was run with a feminist structure, being staffed exclusively by women, and its content aimed to present the issues of the day like any other daily paper, rather than focusing on specifically feminist issues.¹⁶ On 1 April 1904, the front page announced the discrimination against women occurring at the Conservatorium and accused that institution of protecting male privilege rather than giving opportunity to the most talented candidates.¹⁷ A subsequent issue in May continued the debate, publishing protests from the *Groupe Français d'Etudes Féministes*.¹⁸ And yet, while these isolated issues received considerable coverage, women in music did not often feature in *La Fronde* and significant events such as the entry of the first woman into the composition section of the Prix de Rome in 1903 were not reported.¹⁹

If these radical and populist categories of feminist periodical failed to identify commonalities between women musicians and feminists, the moderate press was only the occasional meeting point of these two groups. In the moderate category of paper, music was often discussed under one guise or another, although women were only inconsistently discussed in relation to it. When individual female composers were profiled, they were often singled out as exceptional and groundbreaking, rising above the limitations of their sex. *Les Droits de la Femme*, whose issues from 1900 onwards frequently included music reviews and articles on music, mainly focused on reviews of men's work in music, probably because this was what was primarily being performed at the time. The editors were, nevertheless, evidently aware of the existence of female composers and in 1900, Augusta Holmès was profiled by the paper. The anonymous author claimed that Holmès was an exception to the general trend of women's lack of participation in music, and especially their failure to exhibit original creativity in the form of musical composition. Holmès was portrayed as the only woman to command the forces of the Opera House, a fact which, according to the author, was the result of Holmès' own abilities and not of the kind of indulgent kindness normally accorded to women.²⁰ S/he did not give a reason why Holmès should be singled out in this way from the more mediocre majority of women. This portrait of Holmès is interesting not least for the anti-feminist approach to praise of her work which depended on the belittling of other women's contributions. Perhaps even more significantly, it was actually representative of the way in which female creative brilliance was depicted in the feminist press at this time, namely as exceptional to women's general musical mediocrity.

Media reports on the composer Luise Adolpha Le Beau's life and career are a good example of this depiction of exceptionality. They followed a formulaic structure comprised of several key elements: inevitably, a given author commented that although readers were accustomed now to hearing about female authors, painters, sculptors, singers and even instrumentalists, s/he was about to introduce readers to the first woman composer of note. This woman did not compose simple parlour songs like so many women of leisure, but had ventured to compose in genres hitherto untouched by women, composing for orchestra and even opera (not operetta). Typically the author moved on to report on her prodigious musicianship as a child, the many illustrious teachers she had studied with and the fact that these factors had contributed to the exceptional ability now observable which was so remarkable as to be almost masculine. This trope of novelty was not only reiterated in media biographies of Le Beau, but it featured repeatedly in accounts of most of the women whose careers were suddenly 'discovered' by the press.²¹ The implications of this for music history will be discussed more fully later in this article.

Growing Awareness of Women as Creators

The Englishwoman was a feminist paper the early issues of which dealt exclusively with men in relation to music. In later volumes, the notion that women also played

a role in the production of music was gradually introduced. This journal was aimed towards a female audience not already convinced of the case for women's suffrage, and attempted to justify the point with soundly argued articles about women's issues. *The Englishwoman's* founding objectives outlined its aim to take into account both women and men while privileging the female point of view.²² In the first issue of the monthly journal in 1909, John Powell published an article lamenting the lack of English opera in comparison to German, Italian and American opera.²³ Powell did not mention any English opera composers at all and was apparently unaware that an opera by Ethel Smyth had been performed in 1902 at Covent Garden. In the following year this began to be rectified in an article which not only celebrated a musical renaissance in England, but also named Smyth as a part of it.²⁴ Following this later article by Stanley Levy Bensusan, praising Smyth simply as a composer (not emphasising her exceptionality), a further article was published by the same author on the difficulties faced by women attempting to enter the music profession.²⁵ This very sympathetic article outlined many of the difficulties for women in earning a living as musicians and contrasted these difficulties with the ease with which men were able to navigate this profession. The articles dealing with musicians in this journal were nevertheless few and far between and, particularly following the outbreak of war, became less of a feature altogether, with two significant exceptions in 1918 by Ethel Smyth and musicologist Annie Patterson.²⁶ The article by Smyth was particularly indicative of *The Englishwoman's* intention to acknowledge women musicians, as the paper had specifically solicited a piece which dealt with women's emancipation from the point of view of a musician.²⁷

Louise Otto's writing in German periodicals in the 1880s is an example of the kind of moderate feminist publication which dealt with music while discussing mostly men's participation in it.²⁸ Otto was a novelist, poet, editor of the long-running feminist journal *Neue Bahnen* and a music lover with reasonably expert knowledge on music. In *Neue Bahnen*, she published articles on women's issues, such as women's work in factories, and her novels also dealt with women's rights; her second novel, *Kathinka*, celebrated the first female doctor to qualify through the University of London.²⁹ The only article which Otto published on music in *Neue Bahnen* profiled Lina Ramann, a music writer who had recently published a biography of the male composer, Franz Liszt.³⁰ In this article Otto recounted aspects of Liszt's life and praised Ramann's career achievements, positively reviewing the book. In 1886 Otto had also published her musical memoirs, remembering the role of music in her life and career and discussing some of the trends of music of the nineteenth century.³¹ However, the memoirs focused solely on male composers of importance and did not feature women. For Otto, feminist politics and music seemed to be matters which did not intersect. Even though Otto did not write about music in *Neue Bahnen*, women musicians and composers appeared occasionally in articles by other authors for the paper, usually focused around particular time periods. In 1884 a range of articles included another profile of Lina Ramann and her music school for women, discussion of Amalie Felsenthal's compositions, a composition prize for women in the

housewives' magazine *Fur's Haus* and a report on a female professor at the St Petersburg conservatorium of music.³² Later articles profiled the composer Luise Adolpha Le Beau and in 1898 a profile of the composer Ingeborg von Bronsart was published. In the late 1880s an article appeared promoting the new book by A. Michaelis on women composers.³³

These sudden floods of interest in women can in some cases be explained by the writing of a particular music enthusiast who wrote consistently about music, ensuring its inclusion in the paper. If this writer also had contact with specific women musicians, they were more likely to feature in the publication. Any writing on women composers which did appear was often sparked by the recent success of a particular composer that initiated a subsequent wave of discussion on women in music. It seems to have been the sudden success of performances of Luise Adolpha Le Beau's works at a concert in 1884, for example, that caused German feminists to swiftly become aware of her existence. In her memoirs, Le Beau noted that following one of these concerts she was approached by the feminist writer Luise Hitz, who expressed great enthusiasm for Le Beau's works. She then requested that Le Beau provide her with some notes in order that Hitz might write a profile of her for the *Neue Musikzeitung*.³⁴

The composer Ethel Smyth, who took two years out of her musical career to devote herself to the fight for female suffrage, was one of several contributors to *The Suffragette* who wrote about the arts. *The Suffragette*, founded by Christabel Pankhurst in 1912, combined radical militant politics and articles of general interest to women. Interestingly, Smyth's articles on music and her articles on politics, approximately equally represented in her early writing in this paper, were distinct and separate, and her writing only crossed into the politicisation of women in music late in 1913.³⁵ Other writers, however, took up the cause of Smyth's struggle in music as one which would be of interest to militant feminists in general. An anonymous article in 1912 celebrated the positive reception of several of Smyth's orchestral works by Viennese audiences. The author went on to describe Smyth's address to an organisation for women's suffrage in Vienna at which not only feminists, but also numerous representatives of the music world, were present. Smyth's musical success was lauded as a triumph for women: 'Who did not feel the significance of the spectacle of a woman receiving as a creator, not, as so often before, as an interpreter in the realm of music, the homage of the public?'³⁶

Following the end of the First World War and the award of the right to vote for a selection of British women over the age of thirty, certain changes can be seen in the way Smyth's achievements were framed by the feminist press. While still claiming the exceptionality of Ethel Smyth's achievements, some optimistic journalists took them to be indicators of the wider potential of the female sex rather than the transcendence of its limitations. In *Time and Tide* in 1921, a weekly paper founded in the previous year, Ethel Smyth was featured in an article on 'Personalities and Powers'. The author, Philippa Senlac, contended that the public realised Smyth could not be criticised with the normal feminine criticisms when her *Mass in D* was performed in 1893. Following the feminist intentions of the paper, Senlac

held Smyth up as an example, designed to encourage women and show that such 'exceptions' need not condemn the majority of women to mediocrity: 'the contention of men that she is a brilliant exception has a sufficient critical germ of truth in it to rouse women's pride to make the exception less rare'.³⁷

This tradition was continued by Christopher St John (born Christabel Marshall) when she became music reviewer for *Time and Tide*. St John went on to become somewhat preoccupied with Smyth and was appointed her literary executor and biographer upon Smyth's death. In an earlier review of a performance of Smyth's works by the London Symphony Orchestra in *The Suffragette*, St John had directly linked Smyth's musical efforts with the struggle for women's rights, donning her: the 'composer whom every fighter in the great liberative war of women calls by the name of "Comrade"'.³⁸ In *Time and Tide*, St John's writing on music consistently and pointedly targeted women's role in the art form, as well as giving a broader survey of music which also included articles on male musicians. As a result of her contribution, *Time and Tide*, while being often quite broad in focus and considered by some to be less politicised and women-focused than some of its competitors, was nevertheless an ardent defender of women in the arts.³⁹ While many other publications of a similar focus and scope included music sections which seemed more committed to a survey of the mainstream of (male) musical practice, *Time and Tide* remained a dedicated promoter of women in music. At various times while St John was on leave from her position with this publication, she was replaced by a male music reviewer who did not focus his attention on women, a fact which occasioned considerable debate from readers, many of whom were active supporters of Ethel Smyth.⁴⁰

In France, equivalent attention had been given to women in music by *La Française*, a weekly paper first published in 1906. It was an overtly political paper whose appeal was nonetheless broad due to its inclusion of articles on a wide range of topics of interest to women. *La Française* even organised a regular salon, beginning in October 1908, whose programme was to include political discussion, the performance of musical works and the display of artworks.⁴¹ In a development from these earlier salons, from January 1909 onwards, a weekly Friday chamber music salon was held at the home of two of *La Française's* supporters, Monsieur and Madame Gabriel Lefeuvre. *La Française* was explicit about the educative intentions of its events, referring in October to the continuation of these musical matinéés as being in aid of the 'Musical Education of Women'.⁴² Interestingly however, for the first five months of *La Française's* salon's activity, all the compositions included in the programme were composed by men. While this may seem odd, it was in fact in keeping with reporting on music in the paper's columns. The regular music column of the inaugural year of the paper written by Marguerite Levadé focused solely on male composers, mentioning only the occasional female performer in passing. Of course, the subjects of Levadé's reviews were bound to be dependent on who was performing what in Paris at the time, but she also made no comment, in her report of *La Française's* salon in February 1909, on the fact that no women composers were included.⁴³ The semi-regular

music column by salon host, Gabriel Lefeuve, which had appeared in the paper during 1908, was also solely focused on male composers.

Indeed, it was not until March 1909, three years after the first edition of the paper, that *La Française's* music articles began to focus on women. In an article from that month, Gabriel Lefeuve wrote about Gabriel Grovlez, whose concert programmes regularly featured such women composers as Mel Bonis, Hélène Fleury Roy and Mme Van den Boom. The author took this opportunity to announce that after Easter of that year, his own salon programmes would be devoted to the compositions of women.⁴⁴ Accordingly, the first women's works appeared on the salon's programmes in May 1909. The salons on 9 and 16 May featured works by Mel Bonis and Cécile Chaminade respectively. From June that year onwards, the musical salons were only sporadically reported in the paper and seemed now to regularly include women. However, the music section appeared only irregularly and the arts reviews continued to review women's work only rarely.

Perhaps as a result of the inclusion of women's music in the salons, in subsequent years, women composers began to feature more prominently in the general articles (as distinct from the music and arts columns) of *La Française*. From the end of 1911, women's works were frequently reported on, starting with Renée Caillé's report on a concert of women's works held by the *Union des Femmes professeurs et compositeurs de musique* (the Union of Women Professors and Composers of Music) in December, and continuing with regular notices under the heading 'les œuvres de femmes dans les concerts' (the works of women in concert), including performance notices of the works of Mademoiselle Bourdeney and Mademoiselle Alice Sauvrezis.⁴⁵ In March 1912, Hélène de Callias announced the third concert of the women's orchestra organised by the *Union des Femmes professeurs et compositeurs* in which Nadia Boulanger would be participating. This fresh interest in women composers culminated in an ongoing series beginning in March 1913 and continuing weekly until March 1914. Under the heading 'Les Femmes Françaises Auteurs Dramatiques', Mireille de Mongival traced a history of female writers and composers of dramatic works from Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre in the seventeenth century up to Marguerite Olagnier and Augusta Holmès in the years immediately preceding the article. De Mongival's emphasis seemed to be on the feminist project of educating women about their own history and encouraging them to follow in a tradition of creative pursuits that many women may not have been aware of. She prefaced her series with the observation that of the members of the *Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques* (Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers), only four were women (as of May 1912).⁴⁶

This remarkable ongoing historical account of women composers made *La Française* exceptional among contemporaneous feminist papers. While *La Française* shifted seamlessly into this new realm of women in music, similar feminist publications continued to exclude musical women from their pages. Although from the 1880s, German feminist journalists had reported on individual women composers, a trend that can be observed around the late 1890s and early 1900s

in France and in the 1910s in England, this kind of inclusive, broad-ranging study which acknowledged not just the success of an individual woman but documented a continuous and ongoing history of women's music was unprecedented. The case raises a number of questions about women's role in music. Firstly, it is worth wondering why, early in the twentieth century, it would be acceptable for a feminist journalist to write only about men in any one discipline in a feminist paper. What were the conditions of music performance at the time that led to this occurrence? Were there indeed no women composers to speak of at this time? And what occurred to occasion the change in direction of journalists of this important French feminist publication? To address these questions, I turn to an exploration of some conflicting discourses on women musicians' relevance to broader concepts of feminism, and then examine what publications existed at this time on women's contribution to creative musical life, outside of the feminist press. I wish to explore the extent to which women's efforts to break into the music world, in some ways a parallel struggle with that faced by feminists in other domains, was perceived and supported by feminist movements.

Criticism of 'Ungrateful' Women

The omission of women musicians from the feminist press may in part be explained by an underlying disapproval from feminists about musicians' lack of engagement with the movement. The more politicised factions of the feminist press, including papers in both the moderate and radical categories, often levelled criticism at women whose actions may have advanced women in their own professions, but who did not acknowledge the debt they owed to the greater movement. In 1907, a debate was played out in two moderate feminist newspapers in Germany, *Die Frau* and *Die Frauenbewegung*, which, while not specifically about women musicians, sets the scene for how women who did not directly engage with the political wing of feminism were regarded by those who did. In 'Die "undankbaren" Studentinnen', Helene Lange responded to Minna Cauer, whose article in *Die Frauenbewegung* had criticised female students.⁴⁷ Cauer had written that students indulged in high-minded idealism and argued that they possessed no social conscience; in other words, that they were not engaged in the women's movement. Lange's view, in contrast, was that the actions of women students not actively involved in the movement nevertheless brought different things to women in general:

It is a very correct instinct that tells the [female] students that it is not their responsibility to take an active part in the agitation of the women's movement. The women's movement can be divided into two stages: a stage of preparation and one of realisation, an era of agitation and an era of action. In the first, the structure must be erected, in the second it must be enacted for the sake of those for whom the structure exists.⁴⁸

A comparable example from the French press appeared slightly later in *La Suffragiste*. In this article, radical feminist Madeleine Pelletier criticised Marie Curie,

who distanced herself from feminist politics in a way that Pelletier found unacceptable. Nevertheless, Pelletier understood that Curie wanted to be taken seriously as a scientist and not seen only as an agitator for women's rights:

Madame Curie has always declared that she was not a feminist; (understand that if you can, but that is how it is). In response to congratulations sent to her from diverse groups on her appointment by the Sorbonne, she responded with a scornful silence. I know well that in her situation, she would do herself a disservice to appear an ardent militant; her adversaries and those jealous of her would rush to declare that she was nothing but a politician and was no scientist . . .

The members of feminist organisations are not all Doctors of Science, but it is nevertheless their agitation which has created the environment from which Mme Curie has benefited. She entered through the side entrance, as the wife of Pierre Curie; a girl, she would have stagnated in the depths of an obscure laboratory and would have had to defend her work waiting for someone to plagiarise it. But this side entrance, opened to the poor widow of the tragically departed genius, would have been closed to her forty years ago, as would the main entrance, at a time when feminism was not as it is today . . .

Mme Curie is probably semi-emancipated, like many others; she believes that feminism is irrelevant at her level and she takes no notice of it. She also believes that she needs to stay feminine and lay no claim to prominence. Existing in the shadow of a man, husband or lover, these limited surroundings are the most worthwhile. Well then, one must not accept the professorial chair; one must kill oneself like Mme Lafargue or remarry.⁴⁹

I quote this passage at length because of its poignant relevance to the women composers, who, while less prominent than Marie Curie, found themselves in exactly the circumstances here criticised. Herself a working-class woman who had struggled greatly to become educated and practise as a doctor,⁵⁰ Pelletier demanded that women, whose careers were largely enabled by the existence of the activists with whom they preferred not to be associated, acknowledge the political origins of their freedom. Far more radical than many other feminist journalists, her argument also identified some of the reasons why many women may have been reluctant to align themselves with politics out of fear of compromising their recognition as viable professionals able to compete in a world of men.

Another author for *La Française* attempted to explain why women in certain professional positions distanced themselves from feminism. In questioning why academic women were not feminists, the anonymous author suggested that, because many female academics were still single, they would not empathise with their married sisters who had now lost many of their rights. She suggested that female academics saw feminists as ridiculous because they understood them little, seeing only that: 'feminists are all viragos with short hair, masculine clothing, running through the streets and organising public meetings'.⁵¹

An interesting exchange in *Le Droit des Femmes* on this topic gives a clearer indication of exactly what kind of 'ungrateful' women feminists within the movement resented. *Le Droit des Femmes*, published between 1869 and 1891, was a highly political paper which reported on local and international feminist movements, carried discussions about women, family and marriage, and profiled women's

achievements in various professional fields.⁵² In a brilliantly cutting article of 1891, Eugenie Potonié-Pierre sketched a verbal portrait of the kind of semi-emancipated decadents whom she and other feminists begrudged. The painter Louise Abbéma, whom the author recognised as one of the top women painters of her day, was derided in a series of quotes which revealed her anti-feminism and sense of superiority. Potonié-Pierre's criticism was chiefly based on the fact that Abbéma declined to exhibit her works in an exhibition of women artists (*l'Exposition des Femmes peintres et sculpteurs*) which the paper was to report on later that year. Abbéma believed that exhibiting in women-only exhibitions sent the message to men that women were not worthy of competing in mixed-sex contexts.⁵³ Potonié-Pierre's response challenged Abbéma on whether she really thought that men would let her compete on an equal footing. She also considered Abbéma's assertion that many women's organisations had implored her to join them an example of how Abbéma was 'on the wrong track' in not aligning herself with them. In retaliation, Potonié-Pierre wrote: 'Mademoiselle Abbéma does not have very clear notions of the law, of justice and of the future of the human race. She studies nothing but drawing.'⁵⁴ The criticism of Abbéma's pretension to her own emancipation was finally encapsulated in the following paragraph:

She smokes cigarettes, loves fencing and bodily activity, rides a horse, wears clothing that gives her a slight masculine air and claims to be and to want to appear very womanly. In contrast, emancipated women, her pet hate by the way, do not smoke, for the most part—because to inhale a repugnant poison is neither necessary nor wittier than anything else—devote themselves to the propaganda of justice rather than fencing and horse riding which are otherwise healthy and restorative, and wear practical clothes, not because they are masculine, but because they are convenient and becoming.⁵⁵

Later articles in this paper in 1891 confirmed that it was not artists as such that the feminists considered irrelevant, but rather those artists who refused to cultivate solidarity with other female artists and did not take part in such women's events as the *Exposition des Femmes peintres et sculpteurs*. In a review of the exhibition, an anonymous author lamented the lack of variety in the works on display and attributed this to the fact that the great women artists, Abbéma, Muraton and Lemaire, reserved their works for the 'grand salon'.⁵⁶ Later still in the same year, in an article which defended women artists from the allegation that they had no really strong or original works to offer, Potonié-Pierre referred again to Abbéma's refusal to exhibit with her female colleagues, while nevertheless citing her as an example of the potential for future greatness amongst women artists.⁵⁷ The example hints at the tension here between the desire of political movements to express the aims of their struggle through the arts and the desire of artists to preserve a distance from politics in their artworks.

The feminist movement certainly did not take a unified stand on criticism of artists. A book published in Germany in 1909 demonstrates the view that women's advancement in music could be seen in itself as a triumph for the movement, regardless of female musicians' alignment with any particular cause. The Swedish author, Ellen Key, aligned herself with moderate feminism and was critical

of radical feminists.⁵⁸ Key believed that the success of female singers and instrumentalists in Germany should be celebrated and went so far as to suggest that women's success as performing musicians had contributed more to the feminist movement than it had benefited from it. Key's romanticised view of the easy triumph of women musicians is no less interesting for being inaccurate in its depiction of their difficulties:

The absolute finest effects of the women's movement—which are too many imponderables to count or discuss—have been achieved by our fellow women through lines, movement, rhythm, intonation, through the timbre of a voice, the gesture of a hand, the blink of an eye, the tone of a violin. These women have been included without any arguments about the pre-eminence of men or women interfering in how they have been received. In other areas, the reception of women's artistic creations has been affected by such arguments. But in this area—long before the advent of the purposeful women's movement—women indisputably convinced the world of the absolute equality of women with men. These women who have succeeded through beauty have done more for the women's movement than it has done for them.⁵⁹

Another article of 1909, in *La Française*, supported the idea that women musicians were advancing the cause of feminism. On 7 August 1909, in the regular 'Musique' section of the paper, there was a report on the most recent Friday salons held in conjunction with the paper (discussed earlier). The anonymous author quoted extensively from Armand Silvestre's writing on Cécile Chaminade from 1901:

the works of a woman artist, as admirably talented and marvellously hard-working as Mme Cécile Chaminade, do more for the real emancipation of women and are more threatening to the lengthy autonomy of men than all the talking about it.⁶⁰

This quotation was printed without further commentary on the author's own opinion of Chaminade and her contribution, implying a tacit endorsement of Silvestre's views.

Women's Struggle in the Music World

While many feminists demanded that any professional woman should acknowledge the roots of her increased opportunities in the professional sphere, women musicians continued to struggle to be recognised at all as a viable presence in music. The frequent claims of music journalists that women's contributions to the history of music were insignificant went largely unquestioned by many feminists. Those women whose works were performed were indiscriminately portrayed by feminists as the first of their kind to achieve such a feat. If these portrayals seem to have lacked a critical analysis of women's marginalised status in the music world, this can perhaps be attributed to women's exclusion from canonic definitions of the important trends of music history. Women's history could not trace a linear progression of musical forebears and predecessors. Rather, women

were caught in a constant state of rediscovery in which the story of women composers' history had to be reinvented each time it appeared.⁶¹

Yet, in contrast to the journalistic writing claiming each female composer as the first of her kind and in spite of the lack of a continuous historical record in music histories, articles and books were published at this time retelling the history of women in music. These articles give an indication not only of the fact that this subject could be read about in the popular press but also that the history of women's composition was accessible knowledge; that the resources existed for researchers to discover the details of this history. These articles were not only published in the feminist press (as in the weekly series in *La Française* already discussed), but also in mainstream musical publications. Even though it was claimed, often in the same publications, that there had never been a woman composer before the late nineteenth century, in fact, the material was sufficient for several books to have been published on this topic by 1905 in both Europe and the USA (about European composers).

In Germany, in 1888, an encyclopaedic book had been published by Alfred Michaelis which included short paragraphs on more than seventy women composers across Europe, among them Louise Farrenc, Louise Hérítte-Viardot, Luise Adolpha Le Beau, Clara Schumann and Pauline Viardot-Garcia. Michaelis acknowledged the difficulties faced by women in having their works heard. He suggested that the difficulties were such that in his view any manifestation of women's talent could be taken as evidence of the strength of women's natural ability.⁶² A further book was published five years later by Anna Morsch on living German women musicians and musicologists. Morsch drew on the women she had met at the World Expo in Chicago to put together a collection of short biographies of living women engaged in music.⁶³

In 1895, Eugène de Solenière published *La Femme Compositeur* (The woman composer) and placed a call in *Le Monde Musicale* on 30 June 1904 for any women composers who had not already been interviewed to contact him for the *Histoire de la composition musicale* (History of musical composition) which he was preparing.⁶⁴ A more extensive listing of women composers was published by Otto Ebel in 1902 in the USA which included both North American and European composers.⁶⁵ In both Solenière and Ebel's volumes, the authors used the preface to assert what they saw as the good reasons why women had not yet been prominent in music, and expressed their hopes that this situation was changing. In 1904 Arthur Elson published his *Woman's Work in Music* in which he emphasised women's support role to great musicians and summarised the history of women opera writers and current female composers, applying a sweeping music criticism to their works.⁶⁶

Aside from these full-length monographs, shorter articles were also published around this time which pointed to knowledge of a tradition of women composers, although not all were consistent in the scope of data they presented. In Robert Hughes's article in a US magazine on current women composers of 1898, he seemed unaware of any history of women composing in large forms and declared that 'a few' women had composed in the largest forms, and that their works were

of 'excellent quality and still better promise'.⁶⁷ Hughes offered some encouragement for women composers. He wrote that in view of the current state of musical activity, women should have a better chance at success than one might think: 'For, now that Brahms is dead and Grieg has almost ceased to write, there are not many men to be justly preferred above the best of these [women]'. Even though Hughes's encouragement is lukewarm at best, he does seem to have been making a genuine attempt to promote women's abilities to his readers: 'Once it is granted that certain women can compose better than the average man, I do not see how it is logically possible to deny the sex musical capability'.⁶⁸

Conclusions: exceptionality and legacy

Considering the significant number of books and articles in the music press recording the history of women composers, the feminist press was a tardy follower of women's advances in music. Feminists' ignorance of composing women is indicative of the efficacy of accepted notions of the gendered nature of creative musical brilliance. Discussions of Le Beau's works and performances in the late 1870s in music periodicals were only echoed in the 1880s by *Neue Bahnen* (although this feminist paper did precede the encyclopaedic volumes on women composers by Michaelis [1888] and Anna Morsch [1893]). In France, while Solenière had already published a compendium of women composers in 1895, *La Française* only caught up with this development in 1909. Even in England, where Smyth's direct involvement with the suffragettes ensured the appearance of women musicians in their papers, musical compendia had preceded the 1910 feminist press articles, with Ebel's and Elson's volumes already having appeared in 1902 and 1904 respectively.

It is worth investigating why the trope of exceptionality which characterised individual women as the first of their kind to compose music of serious quality was reiterated not only in music writing but also in the feminist press, in spite of the documented long history of women composers. The key is in the optimism and excitement that accompanies the reporting of the victories of women in music. There is a sense that now that the example of proficiency had been laid before the public, the onset of recognition for women's capabilities would be just a matter of time. With a belief in some kind of natural justice, the hope was often expressed in the press that true talent would achieve true recognition; that is, that women with real talent need not struggle against prejudice because veritable creativity must eventually be acknowledged:

It will be of good augury for the sex and for music when some pioneer woman arises, who, having mastered the power of musical expression, consults her own nature and not the productions of men, when determining what to say and how to speak.⁶⁹

Or as this description of Armande de Polignac indicates, some distance from the history of women's failures seemed to be needed to justify the current optimism:

Up until now, women in music have been limited to writing light works. We are happy to see that one amongst them is tackling the great stage. Her talent will assure the success that is warranted by her labour.⁷⁰

That the discovery of each woman of talent came as a surprise to so many writers is indicative of the existence of a false equation between talent and success. As a result of innumerable factors of discrimination faced by musical women in this period, their success and long-lasting recognition was by no means assured by the display of superior talent in the way it might have been in other creative disciplines. Christopher Wiley's study of the Master Musicians Series provides some interesting insights into why the question of genius was so fraught where women composers were concerned. The Master Musicians Series was a series of composer biographies written by various authors, published between 1899 and 1906 and overseen by George Grove. The biographies, the subjects of which included Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Chopin, Schumann, Brahms and Mendelssohn, followed a formulaic model which differentiated these individuals from mere mortals and justified their inclusion in the great canon of masters. Wiley identifies a set of paradigms contained in the biographies which were part of what he sees as the establishment of a canon of master composers. The paradigms he identifies are as follows: Genius in Ancestry; Precocity in Childhood; Industrious Study as the Path to Genius; Strength through Suffering; Love and Marriage: The Woman as Muse; Death as Apotheosis; Death and the Maiden: The Woman as Muse (*bis*); and Religion as Artistic Motive.⁷¹

Wiley's repetition of the role of 'Woman as Muse' indicates that this was a prevalent theme recurring in the biographies. He emphasises that it also presented one of the largest stumbling blocks for women aspiring to genius.⁷² If a composer needed a woman as muse, and the composer was a woman, then the path to genius must necessarily be treacherous.⁷³ As the writer Marie de Saverny expressed it in 1876, 'Woman is not *action*, she is *influence*'.⁷⁴ The very parameters of the existence of genius meant that the Master Musicians Series could, by necessity, only focus on male masters, in spite of the fact that the biographers themselves were not exclusively male.⁷⁵

The Master Musicians Series is just one series of books, but is indicative of the wider exclusivity of the musical canon. Marcia Citron has explored the tensions faced by women composing before 1950, who could only relate to a tradition of musical composition that was exclusively male:

how could a woman composer feel validated psychologically if she had no history, no precursors? . . . Only by marking herself as different from what patriarchy considered inferior or by being perceived that way could she hope to gain acceptance. Symbolically this might resemble an inverted Oedipal killing: woman killing the female culture she came from.⁷⁶

As Citron's analysis suggests, in promoting themselves as composers, women often sought to emphasise that they were different from their predecessors, that while other women had been excluded from the male canon, their works should be recognised as exceptional. These portrayals clearly filtered through to the feminist press.

Christine Battersby's discussion of the application of the title of 'genius' to male creative artists and not to females is also relevant here. Battersby points to a paradox within understandings of femininity and masculinity as they related to creativity, and argues that it was not necessarily femininity that was devalued in music history, but femaleness.⁷⁷ She shows that male geniuses were seen to embody both masculinity and femininity from which they could draw for their creative expression. Females, on the other hand, were seen as incapable of transcending the limitations of their innate femininity. This meant that in the celebration of femininity that was a feature of nineteenth-century musical aesthetics (the tradition inherited by the composers in this study), ironically, women were excluded.⁷⁸

This association of the feminine with music may also have inhibited feminists from recognising a career in music as a site for radical activism. As feminists struggled to open up women's access to tangible education, especially admission to study sciences and classical languages, musical performance represented the domesticated female. Middle- and upper-class women of the early twentieth century had inherited nineteenth-century conventions which saw music as part of a traditional, well-brought-up woman's education. That the large-scale orchestral compositions and opera that women like Le Beau, Holmès and Smyth composed were a very different kind of musical participation from the parlour songs of the everyday was a fact which feminists were slow to recognise. The radical potential of women taking the stage as composers of large-scale works to be played by what were at the time almost exclusively male orchestras could be considered on the scale of other radical shifts in women's participation in public life in the early to mid twentieth century.

The cases presented here seek to explain the extent to which first-wave feminists too were a product of entrenched thinking about women in music history engaged in extremely limited portrayals of female creativity. Even while arguments were being convincingly made for women's right to participate in public life and have a voice in national politics, gendered notions of musical genius remained insurmountable for many feminist thinkers and writers at the turn of the twentieth century. While a minority of feminist journalists reported on women as creators of music and even documented their legacy in previous decades and centuries, most feminist writers of the period maintained some separation between the politics of their writing and their documentation of the musical life of their region.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- [1] Karen Offen (2000) *European Feminisms 1700–1950: a political history* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), p. 20.

- [2] Some important exceptions include Florence Launay (2006) *Les compositrices en France au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Fayard) and Annegret Fauser (1998) 'La Guerre en dentelles': women and the 'Prix de Rome' in French cultural politics, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 51(1), pp. 83–129.
- [3] I am deliberately not dealing with female performers in this article, as the issues raised by performers and composers present two different sets of historical problems, which could be reduced to the difference between creators and interpreters, the elaboration of which is beyond the scope of this article.
- [4] See Langlois' study for a broad survey of these other women's magazines and their readership: Pamela Frances Stent Langlois (1979) *The Feminine Press in England and France* (PhD thesis, University of Massachusetts), p. 9.
- [5] Langlois *The Feminine Press*, pp. 151–152.
- [6] Li Dzeh Djen (1934) *La Presse féministe en France, 1869–1914* (PhD thesis, Université de Paris).
- [7] Offen, *European Feminisms*, Susan K. Foley (2004) *Women in France since 1789: the meanings of difference* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- [8] Sophie Fuller (1995) *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States 1629–present* (London: Pandora); Sophie Fuller (1998) *Women Composers during the British Musical Renaissance, 1880–1918* (PhD thesis, King's College London); Florence Launay (2006) *Les Compositrices en France au XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Fayard). Several less extensive studies have documented women composers in Europe and elsewhere across history, rather than focusing on the period of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in particular.
- [9] Launay, *Les Compositrices en France*; Annegret Fauser (1993) *Femme Fragile: Zu Lili Boulanger's Opernfragment La Princesse Maleine, Vom schweigen befreit: 3. Internationales Komponistinnen-Festival Kassel* (Kassel: Internationales Forum "Vom Schweigen befreit"), p. 86.
- [10] An announcement about Hamilton and Craig's involvement with the Pioneer Players was included in *The Common Cause*, 7 February 1913; Mademoiselle Dubarreau (1899) *La Femme au Théâtre, La Femme de l'avenir*, 1 March.
- [11] Jill Liddington & Jill Norris (2000) *One Hand Tied behind Us: the rise of the Women's Suffrage movement* (London: Rivers Oram Press).
- [12] For discussion of Smyth's engagement with the suffragettes see Amanda Harris (2010) 'Comrade' Ethel Smyth in the 'great liberative war of women': an English musical feminism, in Cornelia Bartsch, Rebecca Grotjahn & Melanie Unseld (Eds) *Rock Blaster, Bridge Builder, Road Paver: the composer Ethel Smyth* (Munich: Allitera), pp. 70–83.
- [13] 'Mlle Jane Vieu n'est d'ailleurs pas une "féministe" au sens précis du mot. Elle a sur le féminisme des opinions très raisonnables : elle se borne à réclamer pour les femmes le droit au travail. Elle ajoute que c'est leur devoir de travailler, et que jamais le travail ne les empêchera d'être de bonnes épouses, de bonnes mères et des femmes d'intérieur. "Ne cherchons pas à concourir pour de vagues prix de Rome, conclut-elle; il y a dans la vie des besognes plus intéressantes. L'important pour une femme, c'est de travailler. Donc travaillons.'" Max Rivière (1902) *Nos Musiciennes et le Prix de Rome, Femina*, 15 April, p. 116.
- [14] First-wave feminism encompassed a wide range of political priorities which varied both across and within European nations. The militancy of English suffragettes was a form of feminist activism specific to England and one which was not echoed to any great extent in France or Germany, nor was it the only form of feminist activity in England. In France, feminism was characterised more by a preoccupation with achieving legal and economic equality than with the vote, although certain individual feminists such as Hubertine Auclert and her paper *La Citoyenne* were also chiefly concerned with female suffrage. Issues of importance to French

- feminists included women's right to work, to be educated and to be protected from the impacts of prostitution and child abuse on women and children. In Germany 'feminism' was not a term that was taken up uniformly by activists for women's rights in this period. Rather, these German women saw themselves principally as part of a 'women's movement' (Frauenbewegung). Richard J. Evans (1987) *Comrades and Sisters: feminism, socialism and pacifism in Europe 1870–1945* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf), p. 38; Offen, *European Feminisms*, p.185; Barbara Caine & Glenda Sluga (2000) *Gendering European History* (New York: Leicester University Press).
- [15] 'Nous ne sommes pas féministes à outrance; nous ne souhaitons pas voir des électeurs en jupons; mais nous nous efforçons d'être justes et il nous semble que la femme étant fort bien douée pour jouer du violon, il n'est pas équitable d'opposer à son talent une barrière, si éloignée soit-elle et sous quelque faux prétexte que ce soit.' A. de Sivry (1904) La Question Féministe au Conservatoire, *Le Monde Musicale*, 15 April, pp. 105–106.
- [16] Susan Foley has pointed to the importance of *La Fronde* in creating an image of women as politically aware and knowledgeable. Foley, *Women in France*, p. 148.
- [17] J. Hellé (1904) Les Femmes et le Conservatoire, *La Fronde*, 1 April.
- [18] The letter had been originally published in an article by Arthur Pougin (1904) Le Violon, Les Femmes et le Conservatoire, *Le Ménestrel*, 3 April and was reproduced in *La Fronde* (1 May 1904).
- [19] Women's admission into the Prix de Rome was later reported in other papers. Lucienne Heuvelmans' admission to the prize for sculpture in 1908 was reported in some feminist publications including *Le Féministe*, 5 May 1908 and her success in the prize in 1911 in others, for example *Die Frauenbewegung*, 15 October 1911 and *La Française*, 12 November 1911.
- [20] 'elle peut se flatter de le devoir à l'énergie de ses efforts et non pas à la bienveillance'. Anon. (1900) Augusta Holmès, *Les Droits de la Femme*, 15–30 April.
- [21] This narrative also appears in the following articles: Anon. (1886) Luise Adolpha Le Beau. Biographische Skizze, *Neue Musik-Zeitung*, 7(5), p. 53; C(yrill) K(istler) (1887) Biographisches. Luise Adolpha Le Beau, *Musikalische Tagesfragen*, 4(7), pp. 121–125; Anon. (1884) Luise Adolpha Le Beau, *Allgemeine Moden-Zeitung*, 21 April, p. 297. See also a much more recent portrayal of Augusta Holmès which suggested that unlike in literature and other art forms, there had never been a female composer to be considered 'great' (including Holmès). Rollo Myers (1967) Augusta Holmès: a meteoric career, *The Musical Quarterly*, 53(3), p. 366.
- [22] See *The Englishwoman's* first issue in February 1909.
- [23] John Powell (1909) Opera in England, *The Englishwoman*, February, pp. 79–86.
- [24] S[tanley]. L[evy]. Bensusan (1910) The Renaissance of Music in England, *The Englishwoman*, March, pp. 146–160.
- [25] S[tanley]. L[evy]. Bensusan (1910) Women and the Musical Profession, *The Englishwoman*, September, pp. 179–188.
- [26] Annie Patterson (1918) Woman's Future in Music, *The Englishwoman*, April, pp. 22–23.
- [27] Ethel Smyth (1918) Women as Orchestral Players, *The Englishwoman*, March, pp. 170–171.
- [28] Otto published books and articles over a wide period from the 1840s until the 1890s; I am focusing only on the period relevant to this article.
- [29] Louise Otto (1885) Frauenarbeit in Fabriken, *Neue Bahnen: Organ des allgemeinen Deutschen Frauenvereins*, 20(2). *Kathinka* was summarised in *Neue Bahnen*, no. 18, 1884. Louise Otto-Peters (1844) *Kathinka: ein Roman* (Leipzig: Wienbrack).
- [30] Louise Otto (1894) Lina Ramann als die Biographin Franz Liszts, *Neue Bahnen*, 29(14), pp. 105–108.
- [31] Louise Otto (1886) Musikalische Erinnerungen, *Deutsche Revue*, 1, pp. 100–106, 228–234.

- [32] These articles appeared in nos 10, 13, 14 and 19 respectively of *Neue Bahnen* (1884).
- [33] These appeared in issues 6 (1889) and 11 (1898) respectively.
- [34] Luise Adolpha Le Beau (1999) *Lebenserinnerungen einer Komponistin* (Gaggenau: Verlag Willi Bauer), p. 77.
- [35] Smyth's early articles on music in 1912 and early 1913 included musical reviews of Richard Strauss and Schönberg's new works and political writing on the hypocrisy of male Members of Parliament and the 'Cat and Mouse' Act in relation to the arrest of Emmeline Pankhurst. See her articles in editions of *The Suffragette* on 8 November 1912, 14 February, 14 March and 30 May 1913. It is perhaps worth noting that Smyth had already written several letters to *The Times* about both English music and later women's suffrage published on 6 January 1909, 16 September 1911 and numerous dates throughout 1912 including 28 February, 2 March, 19 April and 24 June.
- [36] Anon. (1912) Composer and Suffragist: Dr Ethel Smyth in Vienna, *The Suffragette*, 15 November, p. 66. *The Vote* also celebrated Smyth, 'the greatest British composer of the day', on 8 April 1911.
- [37] Philippa Senlac (1921) Personalities & Powers, *Time and Tide*, 21 January, pp. 57–58.
- [38] Christopher St John (1913) Review, *The Suffragette*, 27 June, 612.
- [39] Dale Spender argues that while *Time and Tide* began as an openly feminist paper, it later drifted towards an arts and literature review. While I agree with this in part, I consider it significant that the arts and literature which formed the focus of *Time and Tide* were women's arts and literature at a time when this was not widespread in feminist publications. Dale Spender (Ed.) (1984) *Time and Tide Wait for No Man* (London: Pandora Press), p. 24.
- [40] Francis Toye's series on English opera in 1925, for example, provoked virulent debate when he omitted Smyth from his list of opera composers. This debate was initiated by Lady Betty Balfour and Edith Somerville (friends of Smyth's), who wrote letters in response to the article in October and November of the same year, and continued by Smyth herself in a retaliatory article on 13 November. Toye eventually defended himself from the onslaught in a response on 20 November 1925.
- [41] This event was announced in the 25 October 1908 issue of *La Française*.
- [42] Anon. (1909) Éducation Musicale des Femmes, *La Française*, 2 October.
- [43] *La Française*, 28 February 1909.
- [44] Gabriel Lefeuvre (1909) M. Désiré Inghelbrecht. M. Gabriel Grovlez, *La Française*, 21 March. The Lefeuvres' initial call for participation had nevertheless explicitly requested anything concerning the works of women composers, an announcement calling for correspondence concerning the salon in the edition of 10 January 1909, included the following italicised phrase: 'ainsi qu'à tout ce qui peut concerner les dames compositeurs de musique'.
- [45] These notices appeared on 4 February and 3 March 1912 respectively in *La Française*.
- [46] Mireille de Mongival (1913) Les Femmes Françaises Auteurs Dramatiques, *La Française*, 29 March and weekly until 14 March 1914.
- [47] Minna Cauer's article had appeared in *Die Frauenbewegung* in 1907.
- [48] 'Es ist ein ganz richtiger Instinkt, der den Studentinnen sagt, daß es nicht ihre Aufgabe sei, an der Agitation für die Frauenbewegung tätigen Anteil zu nehmen. Die Frauenbewegung kann in zwei Stadien zerlegt werden: ein Stadium der Vorbereitung und eines der Erfüllung, eine Epoche der Agitation und eine Epoche der Tat. In der ersten galt es, das Gerüst aufzuschlagen, in der zweiten, den Bau aufzuführen, um dessentwillen das Gerüst da ist.' Helene Lange (1907) Die 'undankbaren' Studentinnen, *Die Frau*, October, p. 41.
- [49] 'Madame Curie a toujours déclaré qu'elle n'était pas féministe; (comprenez qui pourra, mais c'est ainsi). Aux félicitations que divers groupes lui ont adressées lors de sa nomination à la Sorbonne elle a opposé un silence dédaigneux. Je sais bien que dans sa situation, elle se serait faite tort en se montrant une ardente militante; les adversaires et les

jaloux se seraient empressés de déclarer qu'elle n'était qu'une politicienne et non une scientifique . . .

Les membres des groupes féministes ne sont pas toutes docteurs es-sciences; mais c'est quand même leur agitation qui a créé l'état d'esprit dont Mme Curie a profité. Elle est entrée par la petite porte, parce que femme de Pierre Curie; fille; elle aurait croupi au fond de quelque obscur laboratoire et en aurait contesté ses travaux en attendant qu'on les plagie. Mais cette petite porte, ouverte à la pauvre veuve du savant tragiquement disparu, lui aurait été fermée tant comme la grande il y a quarante ans, alors le féminisme n'était pas ce qu'il est aujourd'hui . . .

Mme Curie est probablement [sic] une demi-émancipée, comme tant d'autres; elle croit que le féminisme n'est pour rien dans son élévation et qu'elle n'a pas à en tenir compte. Elle croit aussi qu'il faut rester féminine [sic], ne pas prétendre à la personnalité. Être dans l'ombre de l'homme, mari ou amant, celle dont l'ambiance restreinte murmure la haute valeur. Alors il ne fallait pas accepter de chaire professorale; il fallait se tuer comme Mme Lafargue ou se remarier.' Madeleine Pelletier (1912) A Propos de Mme Curie. Les demi-émancipées, *La Suffragiste*, January.

- [50] Steven C. Hause & Anne R. Kenney (1984) *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), pp. 48–49.
- [51] 'les féministes sont toutes des viragos aux cheveux courts, aux vêtements masculins, parcourant les rues, organisant des réunions publiques'. Anon. (1908) L'Université et le Féminisme, *La Française*, 18 October.
- [52] This paper was considered by Pamela Langlois to be the most important feminist journal of the late nineteenth century. Langlois *The Feminine Press*, p. 212.
- [53] This sentiment was echoed by Virginia Woolf some years later when she was embarrassed to receive the literary prize of the women's paper *Femina Vie Heureuse*, seeing it as a mark of mediocrity. Catherine Clay (2006) *British Women Writers, 1914–1945: professional work and friendship* (Aldershot: Ashgate), p. 23.
- [54] 'a fait fausse route'; 'n'a pas de notions bien claires du droit, de la justice et de l'avenir des races humaines. Elle n'a appris que le dessin'. Eugénie Potonié-Pierre (1891) Exposition Féminin, *Le Droit des Femmes*, 3 May.
- [55] 'Elle fume la cigarette, adore l'escrime et les exercices de corps, monte à cheval, porte un vêtement qui lui donne un petit air masculin et prétend être et vouloir paraître très femme, contrairement aux émancipatrices, ses bêtes noires du reste, qui elles, pourtant, ne fument pas pour la plupart,—car s'ingurgiter un poison répugnant n'est ni nécessaire ni plus spirituel qu'autre chose,—qui s'adonnent à la propagande de la justice plus qu'à l'escrime et aux courses à cheval, lesquelles d'ailleurs sont hygiéniques et fortifiantes, et qui cherchent un costume rationnel, non parce qu'il serait masculin, mais parce qu'il serait commode et seyant.' Ibid., pp. 99–100. There appears to be a tacit criticism of Abbéma's sexuality in this statement, especially in reference to her masculine clothing, as it echoes Havelock Ellis's descriptions of inverted women. Ellis had written that there was a taste for smoking in inverts and 'a very pronounced tendency among sexually inverted women to adopt male attire when practicable. In such cases male garments are not usually regarded as desirable chiefly on account of practical convenience, nor even in order to make an impression on other women, but because the wearer feels more at home in them'. Havelock Ellis & John Addington Symonds (1975) *Sexual Inversion* (New York: Arno Press), pp. 95, 97. Abbéma had a passionate lesbian affair with the American choreographer Loïe Fuller. Giovanni Lista (1994) *Loïe Fuller, Danseuse de la Belle Époque* (Paris: Stock), p. 554.
- [56] Une visiteuse (1891) L'Union Des Femmes peintres et sculpteurs, *Le Droit des Femmes*, 15 March, p. 67.
- [57] Eugénie Potonié-Pierre (1891) Les Femmes Artistes, *Le Droit des Femmes*, 6 September, p. 197.

- [58] Key's book was initially published in Swedish in 1909 and, in addition to German, was later translated into English with a preface by Havelock Ellis, who favourably contrasted Key to the 'well-intentioned but ignorant fanatics who fancy that the vote is the alpha and the omega of Feminism.' Ellen Key (1912) *The Woman Movement* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons), p. xv.
- [59] 'Die allerfeinsten Wirkungen der Frauenbewegung—lauter Imponderabilien, die man nicht aufzählen oder diskutieren kann—haben die Mitwelt durch Linie, Bewegung, Rhythmus, Tonfall erreicht, durch den Timbre einer Stimme, durch die Geste einer Hand, durch den Blick aus einem Auge, durch den Ton einer Geige. Und sie sind aufgenommen worden, ohne daß irgendein Streit über den Vorrang der Frau oder des Mannes die Rezeptivität gestört hätte. Auf anderen Gebieten wird noch oft die Empfänglichkeit für die Kunstschöpfungen der Frau durch den erwähnten Streit getrübt. Auf den genannten haben die Frauen—lange vor Beginn der zielbewußten Frauenbewegung—ohne alle Argumente die Welt von der vollen Gleichstellung der Frau mit dem Manne überzeugt. Und all diese durch die Schönheit siegenden Frauen haben mehr für die Frauenbewegung getan als diese für sie.' Ellen Key (1909) *Die Frauenbewegung* (Frankfurt am Main: Rütten & Loening), pp. 50–51.
- [60] 'L'œuvre d'une femme artiste, admirablement donnée, merveilleusement laborieuse comme Mme Cécile Chaminade, fait plus pour l'émancipation réelle de la Femme et est plus menaçante pour notre longue automonie [sic] masculine que tous les discours.' Anon. (1909) Mme Cécile Simon, Mme Mel Bonis, Mme Cécile Chaminade (Conférence posthume d'Armand Silvestre), *La Française*, 7 August.
- [61] In arguing this I am indebted to Gerda Lerner's depiction of women's history as either not recorded, or denigrated to such an extent that a constant state of rediscovery has been necessary. Gerda Lerner (1993) *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: from the Middle Ages to eighteen-seventy* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 249–272.
- [62] Alfred Michaelis (1888) *Frauen als schaffende Tonkünstler* (Leipzig: A. Michaelis), p. v.
- [63] Anna Morsch (1893) *Deutschlands Tonkünstlerinnen. Biographische Skizzen aus der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Stern & Ollendorff).
- [64] Solenière died before this later work could be finished. Eugène de Solenière (1895) *La Femme Compositeur* (Paris: La Critique).
- [65] Otto Ebel (1902) *Women Composers; a biographical handbook of woman's work in music* (Brooklyn: F. H. Chandler). This publication was also translated into French in 1910. Otto Ebel (1910) *Les Femmes Compositeurs de Musique* (Paris: Paul Rosier).
- [66] Arthur Elson (1904) *Woman's Work in Music* (Boston: L. C. Page).
- [67] Rupert Hughes (1898) *Women Composers*, *Century Magazine*, LV(5), March, pp. 769–770, quoted in Cécile Tardif (1993) *Portrait de Cécile Chaminade* (Montréal: L. Courteau), p. 136.
- [68] Hughes, 'Women Composers', p. 779.
- [69] Anon. *The Musical Times*, 1882. Quoted in Sophie Fuller (1995) *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States 1629–present* (London: Pandora), p. 22.
- [70] 'Les femmes, jusqu'ici, en musique se sont bornées à écrire[sic] des œuvres légères. Nous verrons avec joie l'une d'elle aborder la grande scène. Son talent lui assure un succès que son labeur mérite.' Germaine Albert-Dulac (1908) Mme Armande de Polignac, *La Française*, 16 February.
- [71] Christopher Wiley (2003) 'A Relic of an Age Still Capable of a Romantic Outlook': musical biography and the Master Musicians Series, 1899–1906, *Comparative Criticism*, 25 ('The Lives of the Disciplines: comparative biography'), pp. 166–179.
- [72] *Ibid.*, pp. 167–168.

- [73] Of course the discourse of woman as muse had wider applications than just in the music world. Susan Foley has pointed to the relevance of this characterisation of women as muse on the periphery of Republican politics in France. Foley, *Women in France*, p. 140.
- [74] ‘*La femme n’est pas une action, elle est une influence.*’ Quoted in Ruth Solie (2004) *Music in Other Words* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 85.
- [75] Wiley notes that Annie Patterson, a writer and researcher of Irish folk music, penned the volume on Schumann. Wiley, “A Relic of an Age”, p. 163. Patterson’s article in *The Englishwoman* on the emergence of women in music has already been discussed.
- [76] Marcia J. Citron (2000) *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Urbana: Illinois University Press), pp. 67–68.
- [77] Christine Battersby (1989) *Gender and Genius: towards a feminist aesthetics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p. 8.
- [78] *Ibid.*, p. 23.