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# A gender analysis of composers and arrangers of middle and high school choral literature on a state-mandated list

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to compare the percentage of male and female composers and arrangers of mixed, treble, and tenor-bass choral literature listed on the 2016-2017 Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL) Prescribed Music List (PML). Compositions by women comprised 10% of the mixed choir, 15% of the treble choir, and 10% of the tenor-bass choir repertoire. Arrangements by women included 12% of the mixed choir, 23% of the treble choir, and 17% of the tenor-bass choir repertoire. A categorical analysis of the choral literature on the PML by difficulty level—Grade 1 (least difficult)—Grade 6 (extended works)—revealed that the higher percentages of compositions by female composers were found in the least difficult categories. These percentages sharply declined in the most advanced categories. A total of 144 women composers had works listed in the PML. A majority of the women (83%) had 5 or fewer compositions listed, and roughly half (73) of the women only had one work listed. The 5 most frequently listed women composers included: Emily Crocker (63), Alice Parker (37), Laura Farnell (25), Dede Duson (23), and Earlene Rentz (22). Suggestions are provided for inclusion of women composers in choral curriculum.

### Key Words:

*Women composers, Contest literature, Music education, Choral programming*

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Although women have composed music throughout the history of Western art music, composition remains a male-dominated field. In Gates' (1994) overview of the various psychological theories surrounding the dearth of women composers, he presented causal factors related to innate intelligence, musical creativity, education in theory and composition, motivation to achieve, physiology of the brain, socialization, and ascribed gender roles. Gates said the misconception that only men possess the gift of musical creativity has been perpetuated due to the lack of focus on woman composers in music textbooks and curriculum. He posited that the only way to “dispel the persistent and damaging myth of woman’s innate creative inferiority in music” (Gates, 1994, p. 32) is to educate students about the existence of woman composers throughout history and the societal restraints that precluded their larger compositional output. While women have made great strides in acquiring visibility as composers in the 20th and 21st centuries, they remain in the shadow of their male counterparts (Glickman & Schleifer, 2003).

Historically, musical composition was not considered an appropriate career path for women (Dunbar, 2015; Hinely, 1984). Women were denied admission into composition programs in conservatories and universities until the end of the 19th century (Dunbar, 2015; Jezic, 1994). Prior to that time, only three groups of women had access to adequate musical instruction: nuns, daughters of noble and wealthy families, and those fortunate enough to be born into a family of musicians who nurtured equally the creative talents of their daughters and sons (Artesani, 2012; Gates, 1994; Jezic, 1994). Tick (1993) described the period between 1890 and 1930 as one of

extraordinary changes . . . in both American musical life and the socioeconomic status of American women. The growth in institutions of classical music (such as orchestras and conservatories), combined with the movement of women out of the home and into the work force, challenged the old ideologies defining music as a feminine “accomplishment” confined to the parlor. (p. 90)

Amy Beach, who was largely self-taught, paved the way for female composers of large-scale works when she published her groundbreaking *Gaelic Symphony* in 1896. Another milestone for female symphonic composers was achieved almost a century later in 1983 when Ellen Taaffe Zwilich won the Pulitzer Prize for Composition for her *Symphony No. 1*. She represented the 20th-century school of women composers whose admission to higher education opened doors of opportunity (Dunbar, 2015).

In the 21st century, although women have access to coursework in music theory, composition, and orchestration, they continue to face barriers and biases that leave them underrepresented in terms of publications, performances of their works, and awards. Hirsch (2008) described female composers’ ongoing struggle for gender equality as follows:

In trying to establish themselves as composers, women have dealt with the same problems they have faced whenever they enter male-dominated fields: institu-

tional bias, outright exclusion, sexist attitudes and behavior by individuals, lack of opportunities, sexual harassment, and isolation... That was then, and this is now, you might think—but women composers must still deal with these issues. (para. 6)

Data from the League of American Orchestras (2017) indicated that during the 2012-2013 season, among the 301 composers represented, only 14 (4%) were female and out of the 933 compositions performed, only 17 (2%) were written by women. Additional analysis revealed that among 66 US composers, only three (4%) were women. One might think this underrepresentation is due to the historical nature of the orchestral repertoire, but an examination of contemporary composers and works (written within the last 25 years) showed that only 3 out of 32 composers (9%) were female and 11 out of 75 works (14%) were written by women.

An examination of the prestigious music composition awards, conducted by Ambrose (2014), revealed that women have been recipients only 9% of the time. She provided a notable example, the Pulitzer Prize for Music, which has been awarded to a woman only five times (7%) since its inception in 1943. Ambrose further disclosed that only three women (11%) have received the Grawemeyer Prize, which was established in 1985, and since the founding of the Nemmers Award in 2004, there has been one female recipient.

A parallel gender imbalance appears to exist among university composition faculty. In 2014, Ambrose compiled data from the top 20 music schools in the US (Kelly, 2011) and discovered that women held 20 of the 151 (15%) current composition faculty positions. Further, over half of the top music schools had no female composition faculty and only Curtis Institute in Philadelphia had a female composition department chair. Giebelhausen (2015) collected data from the 2012 websites of both the Top Ten institutions and the 10 top-ranked US music schools (US News and World Report, 2004) and found similar results. Across the Top Ten institutions, 18% of the music composition faculty were women and across the 10 top-rated music schools, women comprised 10% of the music composition faculty.

Concern about the marginal presence of women in the field of music composition prompted Stempel (2008) to ask leading US women composers about their views on the contributing factors leading to the persistent gender imbalance, and their insights and ideas for affecting a change. During Stempel's interview, Augusta Read Thomas pointed out that the prestigious universities of Harvard, Yale, and Cornell have never had a woman composer on their faculty. Thomas observed that the gender imbalance among university composition faculty not only penalizes women, but "results in a lack of exposure to different approaches, styles, and training for students and faculty, male as well as female" (Stempel, 2008, p. 171). She postulated that the greater presence of female senior faculty would alter the choice of music selected for performance in favor of women composers.

In response to Stempel's (2008) query, Libby Larsen asserted that aspiring female com-

posers of choral music face additional barriers for placement into a university composition program due to the nature of entrance examinations, which have inbuilt biases against individuals who do not have an orchestral background or training in technology. She explained:

To learn to compose at a world-class professional level, a young composer must be able to pass the entrance exams of a fine conservatory. These exams favor students who are trained on orchestral instruments, and, in these days, are also trained in technology. I've noticed that historically the pool of entry for young women composers often comes through the vocal world or the performance art world. These worlds are quite different in their training than the orchestral instrumental world. So quite often a terribly gifted young composer, female, who has been able to find her compositional voice through performance art or song is excluded from study in college by dint of the entrance exam. (Stremmel, 2008, p. 170)

Larsen went on to state that vocal music should be considered “the intellectual and artistic equal” of instrumental music (Stremmel, 2008, p. 170). The bias in favor of orchestral musicians is further exacerbated by the persistent underrepresentation of female instrumentalists in American orchestras. A study of the gender makeup of 13 major orchestras in America in 1990 revealed that 36% of the membership were female (Allmendinger & Hackman, 1995); whereas in the 2009–2010 season, women represented 35% of the membership in America’s top 15 orchestras (Phelps, 2010). This 20-year trend, extending into the 21st century, points to an ongoing problem of gender inequity in America’s major orchestras.

Glickman and Scheifler (2003) outlined the evolution of acceptable genres for women composers. They explained that the earliest extant music composed by women was Gregorian chant written by nuns for the church during the Medieval period. In the ensuing years, women composers’ genres expanded to include madrigals, monody, cantatas, operas, sonatas, and music for small ensembles. However, in the 19th century, composition was categorized as a “‘masculine,’ unladylike activity,” which discouraged women’s participation, particularly after marriage (Glickman & Scheifler, 2003, p. 10). Fanny Mendelssohn, a gifted, 19th-century composer, received the following missive from her father on her 23rd birthday: “You must become more steady and collected, and prepare more earnestly and eagerly for your real calling, the only calling of a young woman—I mean the state of a housewife” (Neuls-Bates, 1996, p. 144). Clara Schumann, whose husband, Robert, was a leading Romantic period composer, reflected: “I once thought that 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?” (Lindeman, 1992, p. 56).

Edwards (2012) described the residual effects of the social mores set forth during the 19th

century as follows: “The Victorian notions of separate spheres and biological determinism were integral parts of American culture, and they influenced attitudes about so-called appropriate genres for compositions by women” (Edwards, 2012, p. 9). In the post-Victorian era, women composers were restricted to “feminine” genres. An early 20th-century composer, Mary Carr Moore shared her perspective in a 1935 interview:

So long as a woman contents herself with writing graceful little songs about springtime and the birdies, no one resents it or thinks her presumptuous; but woe be unto her if she dares attempt the larger forms! The prejudice may die eventually, but it will be a hard and slow death. (as cited in Smith & Richardson, 1987, p. 173)

Although acceptance of women composers began to grow in the 20th century, it has been a slow process (Glickman & Scheifler, 2003). Lindeman (1992) stated that throughout her musical training, grade school through college, she never had a music teacher or band, orchestra, or choir director talk about a woman composer, nor did she perform any of their music. Kelly (2013) reported a similar omission in her education, resulting in her belief that few women were musically gifted and a marginal number of women’s musical scores were available. Lindeman (1992) insisted that “this educational cycle cannot continue” and that women composers, conductors, and performers need to be included in the music curriculum to provide females with role models (p. 56). Allen and Keenan-Takagi (1992) added: “If your students have never sung serious works by women, you may be perpetuating the prejudicial attitude implied by these questions—do women composers exist for your chorus?” (p. 48).

Forbes (1998) investigated the repertoire selection process of 104 US high school choral directors from a five-state area, including Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. He compared responses of high school directors identified as outstanding (nominated by university choral faculty) and the high school directors not nominated regarding genre of selected repertoire (four categories), source of repertoire (21-item checklist), and criteria used for selecting repertoire (24-item checklist). Gender of composer was not included in the selection criteria checklist. Forbes asked the directors to provide the title of one classical and one popular choral work they were currently rehearsing. Respondents provided a list of 83 classical selections, only two of which were composed and/or arranged by a female (Alice Parker) and 90 popular selections, four composed by women and seven arranged by women. Wahl (2011) maintained that “we should be encouraging our female singers to be strong, confident women with a passion for music, and yet we tend to provide them with so few female role models in our repertoire choices,” (p. 55) primarily programming music composed by men, based on texts written by men.

On the other hand, Wahl (2011) posited that when a choral conductor programs music by women composers or poets, it serves as a demonstration that women can be equally

successful as their male counterparts, and “is a significant step in providing personal, professional, and artistic role models to our singers” (p. 56). Music teachers play an important role in either perpetuating or dispelling male or female stereotypes (Palmer, 2011) and shaping students’ attitudes toward the music composed by women (Mabry, 2009). Strepel (2008) affirmed:

If voice teachers (and other performance faculty) routinely include works by women, living and deceased, not as a token gesture, but rather as a matter of course, they foster a vibrant visibility that powerfully demonstrates both viability and validity of music by women composers. (p.170)

Strepel concluded that failure to include literature written by women composers implies that their music is inconsequential and unworthy of inclusion in the curriculum.

Watson’s (2017) analysis of the mixed choir repertoire on 20 state contest lists revealed that among the seven selections that appeared on 17 or more state lists, only one was composed by a female (*Three Madrigals* by Emma Lou Diemer). No females were included on the list of nine composers who had the most appearances on the lists. Four (2%) compositions by females appeared on Watson’s list of recommended choral works ( $n=208$ ), based on the frequency of their appearance on the various state repertoire lists. While some composers ( $n=121$ ) had multiple selections on the recommended list, the four (3%) female composers each had one work. Watson also compared his compiled state festival list with composers found in four widely-used music textbooks, and among the 21 composers in common, no females were included.

Rentz (1996) examined the repertoire performed by mixed choirs ( $n=541$ ), treble choirs ( $n=693$ ), and tenor-bass choirs ( $n=207$ ) in the 1995 UIL Concert/Sightreading Contests across the state of Texas. She developed rank-ordered lists of the most frequently performed selections in each of the choral categories and of the composers whose works were performed most frequently. Of the 41 composers who had 11 or more selections on the mixed choir repertoire list, nine (22%) were female. Similarly, the treble choir repertoire list contained 41 composers with 11 or more selections, and nine (22%) were female. Of the 25 composers who had five or more selections on the tenor-bass choir repertoire list, five (20%) were female. Rentz pointed out that the compositions in the least difficult categories, Grade 1 and Grade 2, appeared with greater frequency due to the large participation of inexperienced choirs, which, in turn, may have influenced the rank order of composers. In spite of the strides that women have made in choral composition over the last century, researchers have found that women tend to focus on less complex genres appropriate for amateur choirs (Edwards, 2012; Smith & Richardson, 1987). This trend is influenced both by marketability of compositions and ingrained cultural expectations of women’s compositions.

An analysis of required repertoire lists for state music contests provides a microcosm of

the inroads women composers have made into the canon of choral music. Repertoire on a state-mandated list is generally considered to be representative of the highest quality literature and is graded according to difficulty level. Thus, it provides a measuring stick of how many compositions by women are regarded as eminent, the names of the representative composers, and the predominant categories of difficulty containing women's compositions. Although researchers have conducted studies of the most frequently selected choral literature and the most recommended choral works on state prescribed music lists, none have analyzed the gender makeup of the composers and arrangers. The purpose of this study was to compare the percentage of male and female composers and arrangers of mixed, treble, and tenor-bass choral literature listed on the 2016-2017 Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL) Prescribed Music List (PML). Choral literature on the state-mandated list was analyzed categorically by difficulty level—Grade 1 (least difficult)—Grade 6 (extended works).

## Methodology

The Prescribed Music List (PML) is the repertoire guide for approximately 3,800 performing organizations and 500,000 music students in the state of Texas (University Interscholastic League, 2017). Additionally, it is one of two lists used most frequently in other state-level contests across the US (Jones, 2005). The State Director of Music appoints three seven-member committees (band, choir, orchestra) to select the music placed on the PML. Texas music educators can petition for a selection to be added, deleted, or placed in a different level of difficulty, by submitting a request to their division's PML Selection Committee between September 1 and December 1. New selections are limited to current year releases or publications from previous years that have not submitted recently. Any changes to the PML will appear in edition released the following fall (University Interscholastic League, 2017).

The PML is graded according to difficulty level, ranging from Grade 1 (least difficult) to Grade 6 (extended works). The ensemble's requisite Grade of repertoire is based on their school size (by conference), grade level (middle school, junior high, high school), and skill level (varsity, non-varsity). In UIL choral concert competition, groups are required to perform three selections, two of which must be from their school's designated Grade level on the PML, while the third selection can be from "any source" (University Interscholastic League, 2017).

For purposes of this study, I retrieved repertoire lists for mixed chorus, treble chorus, and tenor-bass chorus from the 2016-2017 Texas UIL PML (University Interscholastic League, 2017) and exported them into Excel spreadsheets for analysis. Information contained on the list included the UIL code number, voicing, title, composer, arranger, publisher, grade, and specification (language, instrumental accompaniment, solos). I created a separate Excel workbook for mixed chorus, treble chorus, and tenor-bass chorus, and each included a separate sheet for each of the six grade levels of difficulty.

Only the last name of each composer and arranger was provided by the PML, thus I ascertained the gender of unfamiliar composers and arrangers by accessing their biography on the publisher's website. Upon identifying the gender of the composers, I calculated the total number of females, males, and titles with composers listed as anonymous or traditional and converted the totals to percentages. After categorizing arrangers by gender, I computed the total number of females and males and converted the totals to percentages. I further analyzed the data by the six levels of difficulty. I reported the data in eight tables, sorted by composers and arrangers, voicing of literature, and difficulty level.

## Results

A collective analysis of the choral compositions on the PML ( $n=2,757$ ) reflected a trend across all voicings regarding the gender distribution of composers (see Table 1). Male composers were predominant (66%), traditional/anonymous compositions were next in frequency (22%), and female composers were in the minority (12%). Male composers maintained the largest majority (78%) in mixed voicing, whereas female composers peaked at 15% in treble voicing. The highest percentage (39%) of traditional/anonymous compositions was in tenor-bass voicing. An examination of the choral arrangements ( $n=1,370$ ) on the PML revealed similar findings, with males representing 78% of arrangers (see Table 1). The highest percentage of male arrangers (84%) was in mixed voicing, as compared to female arrangers comprising their highest percentage (29%) in treble voicing.

A total of 144 women composers had works listed in the PML, with 83% having five or fewer compositions listed, and roughly half (73) of the women only having one work listed.

**Table 1. Gender of Composers and Arrangers of Choir Literature on the UIL PML by Voicing**

	Voicing of Choral Literature			Total
	Mixed	Treble	Tenor-Bass	
<u>Composers</u>				
Male	750 (78%)	735 (65%)	333 (50%)	1,818 (66%)
Female	80 (8%)	172 (15%)	73 (11%)	325 (12%)
Trad./Anon.	137 (14%)	221 (20%)	256 (39%)	614 (22%)
Total	967	1,128	662	2,757
<u>Arrangers</u>				
Male	406 (84%)	339 (71%)	328 (80%)	1,073 (78%)
Female	77 (16%)	137 (29%)	83 (20%)	297 (22%)
Total	483	476	411	1,370

The five most frequently listed women composers included: Emily Crocker (63), Alice Parker (37), Laura Farnell (25), Dede Duson (23), and Earlene Rentz (22). Only four historical women composers were listed in the PML: Rafaela Aleotti (2), Vittoria Aleotti (1), Clara Schumann (1), and Hildegard von Bingen (2). Emma Lou Diemer (2) and Crystal LaPoint (1) were the only women composers with works included on the Grade 6 (extended works) list.

### Mixed Choir Repertoire

Male composers dominated the mixed choir literature with an average of 78% across all six difficulty levels. It follows that anonymous/traditional (14%) and female composers (8%) had their lowest average percentages in the mixed choral voicing. The percentage of women composers was highest in Grade 1 (20%), the least difficult level, and tended to decrease as the difficulty level increased, ending with 0% in Grade 6, extended works (see Table 2). Conversely, males comprised 100% of composers of Grade 6 literature, then gradually decreased their percentage, ending with 56% in Grade 1. Traditional/anonymous compositions exceeded the percentage of female composers in every difficulty level except Grade 6, where both had 0%. Females arranged 16% of mixed chorus music for Grades 1, 2, and 3, slowly diminishing to 0% for Grade 6 (see Table 2). The percentage of male arrangers ranged from 100% in Grade 6 to 84% in Grades 1, 2, and 3.

**Table 2.** Composers and Arrangers of Mixed Choir Literature on the UIL PML by Difficulty Level (Grade 1 – Least Difficult and Grade 6 – Extended Works) and Gender of Composer

	UIL PML Grade Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Composers</b>						
Male	33 (56%)	88 (72%)	219 (77%)	188 (74%)	151 (77%)	71 (100%)
Female	12 (20%)	19 (15%)	24 (8%)	10 (11%)	15 (8%)	0 (0%)
Trad./Anon.	14 (24%)	16 (13%)	43 (15%)	35 (15%)	29 (15%)	0 (0%)
Total	59	123	286	233	195	71
<b>Arrangers</b>						
Male	31 (84%)	58 (84%)	124 (84%)	139 (88%)	50 (90%)	4 (100%)
Female	6 (16%)	11 (16%)	24 (16%)	19 (12%)	17 (10%)	0 (0%)
Total	37	69	148	158	67	4

## Treble Choir Repertoire

An investigation of treble choir literature showed that the percentage of male composers steadily climbed from 45% in Grade 1 to 87% in Grade 6 (see Table 3). The percentage of women composers was variable across difficulty levels, ranging from 5% in Grade 5 to 23% in Grade 2. Treble literature is the only category in which women composers appeared on the Grade 6 (extended works) list. The percentage of traditional/anonymous compositions began with 38% in Grade 1, and progressively declined to 0% in Grade 6. An examination of the arrangers of treble choir literature indicated that males had their lowest percentage (59%) and females had their highest percentage (41%) in Grade 2 (see Table 3). Male arrangers gradually increased to 100% in Grade 6, while female arrangers declined to 0% in Grade 6. In total, females represented 29% of treble choir arrangers for Grades 1–6, with males comprising the remaining 71%.

## Tenor-Bass Choir Repertoire

An analysis of the tenor-bass literature revealed some anomalies among percentages of composers (see Table 4). An equal number of males and females (24%) composed Grade 1 literature, with the majority (52%) falling in the anonymous/traditional category. The percentage of anonymous/traditional compositions continued to exceed those by male and female composers in Grades 2 and 3. The percentage of male composers eventually

**Table 3.** Composers and Arrangers of Treble Choir Literature on the UIL PML by Difficulty Level (Grade 1 – Least Difficult and Grade 6 – Extended Works) and Gender of Composer

	UIL PML Grade Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Composers</b>						
Male	77 (45%)	117 (52%)	182 (65%)	172 (74%)	167 (86%)	71 (100%)
Female	29 (17%)	52 (23%)	47 (17%)	27 (11%)	14 (7%)	0 (0%)
Trad./Anon.	65 (38%)	58 (25%)	50 (18%)	34 (15%)	14 (7%)	0 (0%)
Total	171	227	279	233	195	71
<b>Arrangers</b>						
Male	59 (63%)	67 (59%)	88 (73%)	71 (85%)	50 (82%)	4 (100%)
Female	34 (37%)	46 (41%)	33 (27%)	13 (15%)	11 (18%)	0 (0%)
Total	93	113	121	84	61	4

reached to 100% in Grade 6, while the percentage of female composers steadily decreased as the difficulty level increased, culminating to 0% in Grade 6. Upon calculating the total across six grade levels, women were found to comprise 11% of composers, vastly outnumbered by the percentage of anonymous/traditional compositions (39%) and male composers (50%). Males comprised the majority of arrangers of tenor-bass literature, ranging from 72% to 87% in Grades 1-5 (no Grade 6 tenor-bass arrangements were on PML) (see Table 4). Female arrangers in Grades 1-5 ranged from 13% to 28%, with women comprising 20% of all arrangers.

### Additions to 2017-2018 PML

An examination of the selections that were added to the 2017-2018 PML shows that females composed 13 (34%) of the 38 works added, distributed among the voicings as follows: 3 out of 10 selections on the Mixed Choir list, 4 out of 10 selections on the Treble Choir list, and 6 out of 18 selections on the Tenor-Bass Choir list. The 13 selections composed by women were evenly distributed among the various categories of difficulty, with two works added to Grades 1, 3, and 4 and three works added to Grades 2 and 5 respectively. No works by females were added to the Grade 6 (extended works) list.

### Discussion

Results indicate that percentage of female composers was consistently lower than both the percentage of male composers and the percentage of composers listed as anonymous/

**Table 4. Composers and Arrangers of Tenor-Bass Choir Literature on the UIL PML by Difficulty Level (Grade 1 – Least Difficult and Grade 6 – Extended Works) and Gender of Composer**

	UIL PML Grade Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Composers</u>						
Male	18 (24%)	40 (29%)	66 (41%)	80 (63%)	119 (80%)	10 (100%)
Female	18 (24%)	28 (20%)	22 (14%)	3 (2%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)
Trad./Anon.	39 (52%)	72 (51%)	72 (45%)	44 (35%)	29 (19%)	0 (0%)
Total	75	140	160	127	150	10
<u>Arrangers</u>						
Male	32 (73%)	60 (72%)	91 (87%)	74 (86%)	71 (77%)	0 (0%)
Female	12 (27%)	24 (28%)	14 (13%)	12 (14%)	21 (23%)	0 (0%)
Total	44	84	105	86	92	0

traditional on the six difficulty levels among the three genres of choral literature on the PML. Likewise, the percentage of female arrangers was consistently lower than the male arrangers. Examination of the distribution of male and female composers and arrangers by voicing revealed that, while remaining firmly in the minority, slightly higher percentages of women were found in the treble choir genre; however, the difference was negligible.

Given the slow advancement of women composers in the US (Giebelhausen, 2015; Strempele, 2008) it is not surprising that the percentage of male composers exceeded females in every category. However, it is interesting to note that percentage of anonymous/traditional selections exceeded those composed by women by six percentage points in the mixed choir literature, five percentage points in the treble choir literature, and 28 percentage points in the tenor-bass literature. Women composers were only marginally represented in the various categories (ranging from 10% to 23%). The percentage of women arrangers of mixed choir, treble choir, and tenor-bass choir literature exceeded the percentage of women composers.

An analysis of the percentages of women composers and arrangers distributed across the various difficulty levels of the mixed, treble, and tenor-bass choral literature revealed that their works tended to be concentrated in the least difficult categories (Grades 1 and 2). The concentration of women composers in the least difficult categories may be a reflection of the ongoing societal concept that women should be relegated to writing in simpler genres, more in keeping with their abilities (Edwards, 2012; Smith & Richardson, 1987). Female composers are underrepresented in the advanced repertoire on the PML, with only Emma Lou Diemer and Crystal LaPoint having compositions on any Grade 6 list. Because the more complex choral works would seem to require greater compositional skill and knowledge of theory, and because a relatively small percentage of women are enrolled in graduate composition programs (Strempele, 2008), the likelihood of finding an advanced composition by a woman may be more limited.

The most recent additions to the PML (2017-2018) reflect a potentially positive trend towards the inclusion of women composers. Selections composed by women comprised one third of the added repertoire and were evenly distributed across the Grades 1 - 5 levels of difficulty. The additional Grade 6 selections did not include a female composer, however. Compositions by women were included on the supplemental repertoire in all three voicings: Mixed Choir (30%), Treble Choir (40%), and Tenor-Bass Choir (34%). When compared with the overall average percentage of female composers in the various voicings, women show a substantial gain in representation on the supplemental list: Mixed Choir (+20%), Treble Choir (+25%), and Tenor-Bass Choir (+24%). An analysis of the gender of composers of selections added in subsequent years will determine if this tendency toward the inclusion of more works by women is enduring.

Projection of increasing visibility of female composers should be viewed with caution, however. Although selections by female composers appear on the PML, it does not follow that they will be performed. Rentz's (1996) study of the 1995 UIL choral competition re-

vealed that, in spite of the availability of women's compositions, they made up only 21% of the choral works performed across all choirs.

## Recommendations

Publication and performance of music by female composers continues to be eclipsed by that of their male counterparts, in spite of their extended educational opportunities and diminished societal restrictions (Ambrose, 2014; Giebelhausen, 2015; Strempel, 2008). How can greater parity be achieved? Mabry (2009) suggested a paradigm shift:

We must stop approaching this subject with an attitude of regret that there "should" have been a piece by women on a given concert. We shouldn't feel "grateful" to see such a piece listed or think that it was "nice" to have it there. Instead we should "expect" women to be represented on mainstream programs by students, artists, major symphonies, and other organizations. This attitude change can make a great deal of difference to the proliferation of works being presented. (p. 612)

Hirsch (2008) maintained that the solution to raising the prominence of female composers was to capture young girls' interest in composing. She stated that young musicians need to perform and listen to women's compositions in order to acquire role models and to be able to visualize themselves writing music. Hirsch went on to stress the importance of prospective composers receiving training in theory and composition at an early age, along with having ready access to musicians, so they can hear a performance of their music. Hirsch concluded with the need for access to technology, due to the current trend of composers self-publishing and recording and the reticence on the part of many females to investigate hardware. Giebelhausen (2015) stressed the need for more creative activities in K-8 music education, using arranging as a stepping stone to composing, and offering non-performance-based music classes. She also maintained that composers needed to partner with music education practitioners and researchers to inspire and nurture potential music composers in all grade levels.

Because choral conductors are responsible for selection of performance repertoire, they are in a position to actively promote the music of women composers. Interestingly, Texas Music Educators Association (2018) membership records revealed that among choral directors who reported their gender, 71% of middle school and 55% of high school directors were female. Although women hold the majority of the secondary choral music jobs in Texas, they do not appear to have used their influence to endorse women composers. Wahl (2011) stated that conductors have a responsibility to their choral ensemble to not only model with their voices and actions, but also model with their repertoire selections by including women composers and women authors. Mabry (2009) offered several suggestions for raising awareness of women composers and their compositions:

- 1) Program works by women composers on each concert. Include an accompanying lecture to introduce the composers to the audience.
- 2) Incorporate the topic of women composers in music history and music literature classes and assign a work by a woman composer to every student taking applied lessons.
- 3) Encourage students to research women composers.
- 4) Be steadfast and enthusiastic about raising awareness of music written by women.
- 5) Incorporate music by women composers into concert programs on a regular basis, rather having a special focus concert and solely featuring women's works.
- 6) Invite local women composers to speak to your classes and encourage female student composers by including their music on recitals, as appropriate.
- 7) Seek to develop collaborative partnerships for promoting music by women.
- 8) Launch an initiative to inform students about women composers, no matter how insignificant it may seem.
- 9) Select works by women composers that you enjoy to energize your program and stimulate your creativity.
- 10) Use your influence to encourage conductors and artists to include women's works on concerts.

Mabry (2009) concluded that the goal is for women's music to become "mainstream and a natural part of America's musical fabric," rather than a novelty that is placed on a program to demonstrate inclusion (p. 611).

Additional research is needed to determine if the marginal inclusion of women composers on state-mandated choral music lists is limited to Texas, or if there is a similar trend throughout the nation. Since several of the composers who had multiple works on the list are based in Texas, it would be helpful to see how well-received their compositions are in other areas in the US. A national survey of the gender of choral composers who have works on state contest lists could assist in ascertaining if the Texas list is representative of the entire nation, or if it contains regional bias. Replicating this study for the UIL PML for orchestra and band might provide some interesting data for a comparison of the gender imbalance among composers of various genres.

The paucity of women composers on the PML may negatively affect a young woman's view of the possibility of becoming a composer. It is the responsibility of music educators to include the repertoire of women composers and to encourage their state governing board to broaden the number of works by women on their contest literature list. Because the UIL PML is designated as an approved list for various states across the US, its influence extends beyond the Texas borders (Jones, 2005). Therefore, if Texas music educators launched an initiative to advocate for greater gender parity among composers included on the PML, they could potentially lead other states to follow, and thus provide role models for future female composers. As Wahl (2011) asserted, "Be they the composers, the authors, or our own performers, the literal and figurative voices of women deserve to be heard" (p. 57).

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