

ELKINS, CHRISTINA WILLIAMSON, D.M.A. Conducting Her Destiny: The Making of a Maestra. (2008)

Directed by Dr. Welborn E. Young. 72 pp.

Women are relative newcomers to the traditionally male profession of conducting. To acquire a professional position, they first have to overcome lingering stereotypical attitudes about their gender, attitudes that only clutter and complicate the challenges normally faced on the road to any musical podium. As a result, only a few women have achieved significant positions in the field of conducting. Why, in an enlightened age, when numerous gender barriers have been overcome, do female conductors still struggle to reach the 'top' of the profession?

The information provided in this document examines the emergence of women in music and the challenges they faced when entering the profession of conducting. This document will not include a detailed history of women in all aspects of music, only those which propelled women forward in their status, such as important women patrons, ensemble singers, and conductors. Women conductors in this document include: Margaret Hillis, Sarah Caldwell, Antonia Brico, Judith Somogi, Ethel Leginska, and Gena Branscombe. Each of these women was a first in their field: the first to conduct a major symphony, first to conduct an American orchestra, and first to conduct a major opera.

The status of women in society has changed dramatically over the last century, but changing attitudes in professional organizations have been slow to develop. Society has accepted women as being capable of navigating space and administering in government rather than capable of leading a professional orchestra, choral ensemble, or

operatic production. Changing attitudes, coupled with the work pioneered in the last twenty years by conductors such as JoAnn Falletta, Marin Alsop, and Alice Parker, have encouraged and enabled women to pursue conducting and enter the profession. As stated in a journal by Alan Rich, there are many reasons for not pursuing a career in music, but by today's standards, being female is no longer one of them.

CONDUCTING HER DESTINY:
THE MAKING OF A
MAESTRA

By

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A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty at the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Greensboro
2008

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CHAPTER I

A VIEW FROM THE PODIUM

Women are relative newcomers to the traditionally male-oriented field of conducting. Historically, women were limited in their opportunities to perform music professionally. “Of all the areas in music, the one in which it has been most difficult for women to gain acceptance has been conducting, for the obvious reason that it connotes the ultimate in forcefulness, leadership, and control.”¹ To attain a professional conducting position, women have had to overcome lingering stereotypical attitudes, attitudes that complicate the typical difficulties of conducting. As a result, few women have been able to achieve significant positions in the field of conducting. This dissertation examines the emergence of women in conducting music and the challenges they faced when entering the profession.

The information provided in this document examines women’s achievements in conducting as well as explore their participation in music, including singing, playing instruments, patronage, and composition from c. 500 B.C. to the present. This document does not include a detailed history of women in all aspects of music, only those who significantly elevated the status of women, such as important women patrons,

¹ Beth Abelson MacLeod, *Women Performing Music: The Emergence of American Women as Instrumentalists and Conductors* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1997), 18.

ensemble singers, and conductors. Women conductors in this document include: Margaret Hillis, Sarah Caldwell, Antonia Brico, Judith Somogi, Ethel Leginska, and Gena Branscombe.²

Chapter I provides an overview of the document. Chapter II outlines the history of women in Western music. Included in this section are the accomplishments of specific women recognized in composition, patronage, participation in opera, education, and conducting. The achievements of women, divided into time periods, demonstrate the evolution of women in music. Chapter III emphasizes the primary focus of this document. Contained in this chapter is the ever-changing status of women in European and American music, specifically conducting. This chapter also investigates significant events in history that created changes in standards and includes brief accounts of extraordinary women, but does not contain full biographies.

Chapter IV focuses on the myths associated with women in conducting. Included within this chapter are challenges for women, such as: authority, separation of public and private life, budgetary concerns, appearance, the language of music reviews, lack of female role models, minimal access to training, and the limited availability of conducting positions. The women and their triumphs discussed in this chapter include specific women, such as Marin Alsop, Gena Branscombe, Sarah Caldwell, Ethel Leginska, Antonia Brico, Alice Parker, and Judith Somogi. Chapter V is a summary of the information researched within this document.

² Each of these women was a first in their field: the first to conduct a major symphony, first to conduct an American orchestra, and first to conduct a major opera.

Procedures

This compendium centers primarily on information gleaned from books, studies, journal articles, and published interviews. The historical emphasis of this document presents a current examination on the future status of women in conducting. Within this document are tables displaying current women conductors leading professional and amateur operas, choruses and orchestras. Although listed are a number of women, these numbers represent a statistically lesser percentage than those of their male counterparts.

Status of Research

Several sources provide information related to this topic, such as Christine Ammer's book, *Unsung, Women Making Music* by Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, and Sophie Drinker's book, *Music and Women*. While these sources include information concerning the history of women in music, little information relates to the history of women in conducting. Additionally, relatively few studies examine the challenges women faced when entering a male-oriented profession or the challenges associated with this field. Hilary Apfelstadt's article, "Practices of Successful Women Conductors," explores techniques and suggestions for women leading choirs as a guide for rehearsal and performance.³ Barbara Hampton's⁴ study, "The Status of Women in College Music," includes a survey of women in college music and examines factors that affect women such as tenure, position, education, and training providing insight into elements regarding

³ Apfelstadt, Hilary, "Practices of successful women's choir conductors." *Choral Journal*, vol. 39 (Dec 1998): 35-41.

⁴ Hampton, Barbara Renton, *The status of women in college music, 1976-77: A statistical Study* (Binghamton, N.Y.: College Music Society, 1980).

stereotypes. Although her study offers useful information regarding stereotypes, Hampton does not include information relative to the history of women in conducting. Marietta Nien-hwa Cheng's article, "Women Conductors: Has the Train Left the Station?" provides insight into the lives of particular female conductors and their particular journey to the podium.⁵ The information in this article includes current conductors and experiences, but fails to include the achievements women have made.

In addition to these articles, a number of books convey related information. Many books focus on one aspect of women and music like composition, opera, and education, but few examine the histories of women who conduct, like Paula Gillett's book, *Musical Women in England*, Lucy Green's book, *Music, Gender, Education, A History of Music Education in the United States* by James Keene and Mona Mender's book, *Extraordinary Women in Support of Music*. Additionally, a comparable collection of books concerns the role of women in music, specifically as singers, composers, patrons, educators, and instrumentalists. Limited sources mention women as related to their role in conducting.

Continued research about women in conducting should include interviews of women in current conducting positions throughout the country. A vast disparity exists between the number of men and women employed in professional conducting. To implement changes, an acknowledgement of the past must be made. By recognizing the achievements of former generations of women, aspiring young conductors can establish their own careers. The following chapter briefly explores the evolution of women in

⁵ Nien-hwa Cheng, "Women Conductors: Has the Train left the Station?" *Harmony*, vol. 6 (April 1998): 79-90.

music through participation in vocal ensembles, achievements in composition, patronage, operatic roles, and education.

CHAPTER II

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

To understand the significance of women in conducting, a brief examination of the achievements of women in Western music history is warranted. This chapter explores the participation of women in music from ancient Greece to the present. The information briefly mentions remarkable women who established prominent careers. Although the information included is not a complete account of women in music, referenced in this chapter are significant locations, people and events.

Ancient Greece

Music was essential to the pattern in ancient Greek life, as an important feature at cultural events, banquet gatherings, weddings, religious rites, festivals and competitions. Music was an important part of education in ancient Greece. In addition to physical remains of musical instruments, vase paintings and sculptures also depict women performing on musical instruments including the lyre, kithara, and the aulos.⁷ Both men and women played these instruments, although most boys trained to play an instrument with competency, and to sing and perform dances, women made music at home.⁸

⁷ A lyre was a stringed musical instrument well known for its use in antiquity and later. A kithara was a musical instrument in the zither family. An aulos or tibia was an ancient Greek musical instrument considered part of the reed family.

⁸ "Music of Ancient Greece," *Timeline of Art History*, 2008, (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), www.metmuseum.org, accessed on 5 April 2008.

At religious ceremonies and other festivities, there were musicians, dancers, and choirs for plays. Women's choruses played a visible role in various ceremonies supported by a body of evidence on Athenian vase paintings. Due to the popularity of women's choruses, women participated in music festivals and competitions.⁹

Plato (427-347 BC) suggested a link between aesthetics and gender. He insisted men perform music with virile and forceful melodies while women perform modest, submissive songs.¹⁰ Plato believed that gender influenced the musical aesthetics of a performance and warned that men be wary of songs which induce effeminacy. In the second half of the 4th century BC, Alexander the Great seized control of Greece. Between 323-146 BC, Roman troops became a permanent presence.¹¹ Under Roman rule, dancing, singing, and playing instruments were viewed as undignified activities, effeminate for men and corrupt for women.¹²

1st century to 1500

Women assumed many roles in European music: amateur and professional singers, dancers, instrumentalists, composers, educators, and copyists. In the 1st century, women's singing associated with two important events: birth and death. Women sang at rituals to celebrate births and mourn deaths. Women were also participating in chorea, an

⁹ Judith Tick. 'Women in Music,' *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [5 April 2008]), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹⁰ Benjamin Lowett, trans., "The Republic," Plato, (360 B.C.E.) Book V, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic>, accessed on 31 March 2008.

¹¹ N.S. Gill, "Ancient Greece – Hellenistic Age," *The New York Times Company*, 2008, www.ancienthistory.about.com, accessed on 26 March 2008.

¹² Karin Pendle, *Women in Music*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001), 23.

ancient Greek circle dance.¹³ Women were often the dance leaders in this dance form, accompanied by a chorus.

The establishment of convents during the monastic movement,¹⁴ formalized in the 6th century, played a significant role in the lives of women musicians during the Middle Ages. St. Benedict (530) established both convents and monasteries throughout Europe. Although monasteries were more powerful and wealthier than convents, convents permitted the musical training of women. The first surviving music by a female composer originated in a convent.¹⁵

The most noteworthy achievement by a female belongs to Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179).¹⁶ A leading figure in the 12th century, she established a convent in Germany where her musical works were performed. She composed the largest body of monophonic chant in the Middle Ages.¹⁷ Although Hildegard has not been canonized, she created discussion between musicologists and historians concerning her place in history.¹⁸

¹³ Lena Patsidou, "Antiquity/Origin of Dance," 2004, www.annaswebart.com/culture/dancehistory.html, accessed on 5 April 2008.

¹⁴ The monastic movement was a reaction to the policies of Constantine, ruler of the Roman Empire. St. Benedict provided order to the movement by establishing rules for monastic communities.

¹⁵ Stanley Sadie, ed., "Women in Music," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 27, (Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 522.

¹⁶ Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) was a remarkable woman and a first in many fields. Her writings on theology accorded her respect in a time when few women wrote.

¹⁷ Ian D. Bent and Marianne Pfau. 'Hildegard of Bingen' *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [5 April 2008]), <http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹⁸ Kelly Wittman, "Hildegard von Bingen," *Essortment*, 2002, (Accessed [26 March 2008]) www.essortment.com.

As women continued to participate in various aspects of music, they further explored composition. Between 1000 and 1500, numerous musical compositions by women appeared.¹⁹ Few chansons by women have survived, although numerous women troubadours wrote and performed Western secular music.²⁰

In addition to participation in choirs and composing, prominent women were also benefactors of music. Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204) had substantial political power and with the assistance of her two daughters, influenced the cultural climates of their courts.²¹ Another powerful patron, Isabella d'Este (1474-1539) played a formative role in the employment of professional women singers.²² She married Francesco Gonzaga who was the Prince of Mantua. After his death, d'Este ruled Mantua alone. She promoted the arts and afforded women the opportunity to separate themselves from the traditional role of women in society. D'Este became known as the "First Lady of the Renaissance."²³

1500-1800

Although women participated in various aspects of music, their involvement in ensembles created the most radical change. In the 1580s, Italian female vocal ensembles

¹⁹ Tick, "Women in Music," *Grove Music Online*.

²⁰ Theodore Karp, "Troubadours" *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [5 April 2008]) <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

²¹ Pendle, 10.

²² Isabella d'Este was marchesa of Mantua and one of the leading women in the Italian Renaissance. She was a notable patron of the arts and allowed artists, writers and poets to exchange their ideas in her home.

²³ Edith P Meyer, *First Lady of the Renaissance A Biography of Isabella d'Este* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970).

offered a novel option for women interested in pursuing singing. The Ferrara ensemble, a virtuoso vocal ensemble at the Ferrara court in Italy, accelerated the music of women's voices.²⁴ Changes in Italian vocal music occurred in madrigals, then in opera where women played important roles.

Opera first emerged during wedding celebrations of Italy's wealthy 16th century families, its popularity spreading from Florence throughout the rest of Italy and then to France. In France, women gained notoriety through opera as composers. The opera is considered to be the first product of musical activity by Parisian women in the late 17th century.²⁵ In the late 17th century, English composers began developing their own form of opera.²⁶ Many female singers began appearing on professional stages throughout Europe. Opera afforded women roles previously occupied by men.

Although opera created more equality for women, several decades passed before mixed ensembles emerged. In 1771, Johann Hiller founded a singing school in Leipzig open to women.²⁷ In his coeducational school, women learned a variety of subjects, including solfege, diction, technique, Italian, and keyboard. In various countries, the development of coeducational schools emerged. In Germany, the *Singakademie*, founded in 1791 by C. F. Fasch (1736-1800), a conductor and composer, was a parallel venture to

²⁴ Alastair Ross, "Concerto delle Donne," *The Early Music Network*, (Accessed [10 March 2008]) <<http://earlymusic.org.uk>>

²⁵ John J. Church, "May-Flower Blooms in November," *Opera America*, 2005 www.operaamerica.com, accessed on 5 April 2008.

²⁶ "Early Opera," *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th ed. (Columbia University Press, 2007), (Accessed [26 March 2008]) www.infoplease.com

²⁷ Aryeh Oron, 'Johann Hiller,' *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [10 March 2008]) <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

the singing schools founded by Hiller.²⁸ In America, singing schools, the first musical institution, originated in the Northeastern United States in the 18th century.²⁹ The purpose of these schools was to foster musical skills in students. In Italy, *ospedale*, a convent, orphanage and music school, provided the first formal music education for women in Italy. These ospedali offered women musicians a new venue for training and performance.³⁰ Such renowned composers of the time, such as Hasse, Porpora, and Vivaldi composed works commissioned specifically for the ospedale.³¹ In addition to singing schools, the establishment of salons offered a new venue for performing.³² The success of salons quickly spread throughout Europe. The careers of many professional musicians, such as Scarlatti and Corelli, began in salons.

1800 - 2008

Although significant developments occurred prior to the 19th century, the emerging feminist movement improved the possibilities for education in music after the 19th century. Influenced by the emerging feminist movement, women considered education to be a central priority. As women enrolled in music schools, they were

²⁸ Aryeh Oron, "Weiner Singakademie," *The Singing Revolution*, (March 2001), www.bach-cantatas.com, accessed on 5 April 2008.

²⁹ David Warren Steel, "Shape-Note Singing," *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, (University of Mississippi, 1989), www.arts.state.ms.us, accessed on 26 March 2008.

³⁰ Hayley Reep, "The Rare Voice of Women in Music History: Females Singing Tenor and Bass Lines," *The People's Media Company* (December 11, 2006): 1, www.associatedcontent.com, accessed on 5 April 2008.

³¹ Reep, 2.

³² Salons originated in France and were urban gatherings in the public spaces of private homes outside the court.

afforded equal educational opportunities as men. Emma Williard (1787-1870) founded the Troy Female Seminary in 1821 in Troy, New York. She established the first permanent seminary in America for the advanced education of women.³³ In 1837, Emily E. (b. 1811-n.d.) and Marietta Ingham (n.d.) founded the LeRoy Female Seminary in LeRoy, New York. Also known as Ingham University, it was the first university exclusively for women in the United States. Although the school claimed to be the first to provide education to women, its academic standards were not as rigorous as Williard's school.³⁴ Throughout the 1800s, several colleges opened to women, such as the Barleywood Female University in Rochester, New York, and the Genesee College in Lima, New York.³⁵

By the mid-1800s, women struggled to alter societal attitudes; female instrumentalists challenged their exclusion from orchestras, and female composers demanded admittance into competitions like *Prix de Rome*.³⁶ With the emergence of women in various aspects of music, women gradually pursued the podium, won awards, and graduated from prestigious universities with advanced degrees. The admittance of women into conservatories, such as the University of Rochester in 1852, marked a

³³ "Emma Hart Williard," *History's Women: The Unsung Heroes*, 2005, www.historyswomen.com, accessed on 26 March 2008.

³⁴ Nancy Woodhull and Tennessee Watson, *Upstate New York and the Women's Rights Movement*, (University of Rochester, 2006), www.lib.rochester.edu, accessed on 10 March 2008.

³⁵ Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan Poulson, *Going Coed*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), 56.

³⁶ Lili Boulanger became the first woman to win the *Prix de Rome* in 1913 for her cantata, *Faust et Helene*.

significant change for women.³⁷ Many conservatories accepted women but offered separate educations. An example, the Leipzig Conservatory, founded in 1843 by Felix Mendelssohn, offered a three-year course in music for boys, while girls were only provided education for two years.³⁸ The music education women received provided knowledge for pursuing careers in music; however, upon graduation, they were limited by exclusion from orchestras, conducting posts, professional university positions and leadership positions within the church. Because of these limitations, the formation of female chamber ensembles and lady orchestras, originating both in Vienna and Berlin, provided new venues for women.³⁹

Although women's ensembles provided nominal conducting opportunities for women, female instrumentalists sought equality in mixed orchestras. In 1903, discrimination against women musicians lessened when the Musical Union of New York became affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. These organizations combined to form the National Women's Trade Union League (WTUL), established as an advocate for improved wages and working conditions for women.

In the late 1800s, male conductors accepted women as members of their orchestras, reluctantly. Josef Stransky, conductor of the New York Symphony, once stated that for a woman to be employed in his orchestra, she would have to be a better

³⁷ Nancy Woodhull, *Upstate New York and the Women's Rights Movement*.

³⁸ Robert W. Wason, "Musica practica: Music Theory as Pedagogy," *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, Thomas Street Christiansen, (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 64.

³⁹ Shelley M. Jagow, "Women Orchestral Conductors in America: The Struggle for Acceptance—An Historical View from the Nineteenth Century to the Present," *College Music Symposium*, vol. 38, (2005): 3.

player than the men.⁴⁰ These attitudes confirmed that women needed to create their own venues for performing. This led to the foundation of music clubs as a means of self-improvement and to further their careers. The earliest of these clubs, The Rossini Club,⁴¹ was established in 1869 in Portland, Maine with the motto “to provide a forum to study and perform.”⁴² Through the organization of music clubs, female musicians found creative ways to satisfy their musical aspirations.

The first national convention for women’s amateur music clubs appeared at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.⁴³ Music clubs developed an ally in the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC) chartered in 1898, which placed an emphasis on the foundation of new clubs.⁴⁴ The Society of Women Musicians, established by Gertrude Eaton in 1911, was a British organization established to provide a focal point for women composers and to provide opportunities performers to assemble.⁴⁵ By the end of the first year, the society established both a choir and an extensive library, and two years later, organized its first orchestra.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ The Rossini Club, the oldest performing American music group, was an ensemble of musicians who present a yearly concert series of classical music. The group includes professional performers as well as teachers and other skilled performers. This ensemble is still performing yearly with a concert series beginning in September of 2005.

⁴² Ralph Locke and Cyrilla Barr, ed., *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 66.

⁴³ George Thornton Edwards, *Music and Musicians of Maine*, (Read Books, 2007), 149.

⁴⁴ The NFMC is a non-profit organization dedicated to music education and the promotion of creative and performing arts in America. It is one of the largest music organizations chartered by the Congress of the United States and the only music organization member of the United Nations.

⁴⁵ Sophie Fuller, ‘Society of Women Musicians,’ *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [10 March 2008]) <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

These organizations not only afforded women opportunities to perform, but influenced a new trend in history, the feminist movement. The Women's Rights movement marked July 13, 1848, as its beginning. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902), while at a tea with friends expressed her annoyance at the limitations placed on women in America.⁴⁶ Following the first women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls, New York on July 19 and 20, 1848, support for the movement increased with winning the right to vote as its central issue. The movement continued to gain strength until women finally earned the right to vote in 1920.⁴⁷

Following the women's movement, World War II also impacted the career of women in music. During the war, women maintained careers outside the home; however, as men returned from the war in 1945, many women were forced out of their jobs. In 1961, John F. Kennedy (1917-1963), President of the United States (1961-1963), along with the assistance of his secretary of labor, Esther Peterson (1906-1997), established a "Commission on the Status of Women" to develop a plan to aid women in the fulfillment of both their personal and professional roles.⁴⁸ The National Organization for Women (NOW) formed in 1966 maintained the goal of earning equality for women in society. Appendix B is a statement issued by the National Organization for Women adopted on

⁴⁶ Shulamith Firestone, "The Women's Rights Movement in the U.S.A.: New View," *Notes from the First Year*, (New York: The New York Radical Women, 1968), www.cwluherstory.com, accessed on 5 April 2008.

⁴⁷ Martin Kelly, "Seneca Falls Convention," *The New York Times Company*, 2008 (Accessed [26 March 2008]) www.americanhistory.about.com.

⁴⁸ Cynthia Harrison, "From the Home to the House: The changing role of women in American society," *US Society & Values*, June 1997, 11.

October 29, 1966 at its first conference in Washington, D.C.⁴⁹ This statement represented the thoughts of women in America and their belief that: women should be true equals, every girl should be educated and discrimination should be eradicated.

In the decade between 1970 and 1980, the emergence of women's musical organizations occurred. These organizations were unlike the music clubs of previous years in that they encouraged the promotion of music rather than offering a performance venue. In 1975, Nancy Van de Vate (b. 1930) founded the International League of Women Composers (ILWC).⁵⁰ In 1976 the American Women Composers, Inc. established a second organization specifically for women composers. These organizations worked not to the exclusion of men, but for the purpose of providing support to many women composers. The ILWC and the AWCI in conjunction with the International Congress on Women in Music (1982) produced the International Alliance of Women in Music (IAWM), a clearing-house for many individual national societies and internet research websites. Appendix C features a letter from William Jefferson Clinton (b. 1946), President of the United States (1993-2001), written from the White House in May of 1997, recognizing the importance of improving the lives of American women.

Although professional opportunities for women have increased, relatively few have established successful careers as conductors. Antonia Brico (1902-1989) and Ethel Leginska (1886-1970) relied on women's orchestras for conducting positions. In the 1930s, Brico was appointed the conductor for the newly-founded Women's Symphony

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Nancy Van de Vate is one of the most recorded living composers of orchestral music.

Orchestra, which later became the Brico Symphony (1939).⁵¹ She was one of few women to acquire reasonably steady employment, conducting various orchestras throughout the United States. Brico continued to pursue conducting opportunities, through guest appearances, such as the San Francisco Symphony, Hamburg Philharmonic, and the Musicians' Symphony Orchestra.⁵²

Leginska, like Brico, aggressively pursued conducting posts. She established for herself a pioneering role in conducting when women conductors were a rarity. This resulted in the foundation of her own women's orchestra, the Women's Symphony of Boston.⁵³ In 1935, Leginska was the first woman to conduct her own opera, *Gale*, in a major opera house, one of several notable firsts.⁵⁴ Leginska and Brico are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Leginska and Brico are among a list of notable orchestral conductors. Successful women in both choral music and opera also have established prominent careers. Margaret Hillis (1921-1998) known best for her work in choral music, conducted several well-known orchestras, including the Elgin Symphony Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She also guest conducted with the Milwaukee Symphony, the National Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Hillis

⁵¹ Allan Kozinn, "Antonia Brico, 87, a Conductor; Fought Barriers to Women in 30's," *New York Times*, (August 5, 1989).

⁵² Kozinn.

⁵³ Anya Laurence, "History of English Women Composers: Successful Female Composers of the 19th Century from England," *Women of Notes: 1000 Women Composers Born Before 1900* (New York: Richards Rosen Press, Inc, 1978), www.classical-composers.suite101.com, accessed on 5 April 2008.

⁵⁴ Marguerite and Terry Broadbent, *Leginska: Forgotten Genius of Music*, (England: North West Player Piano Association).

is acknowledged most notably for her work with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, the first American professional symphony chorus.⁵⁵ In addition to her work with choirs, she taught choral conducting at Juilliard School and Union Theological Seminary. Furthermore, Hillis formed the American Choral Foundation, an organization which sought to raise the standards of choral performances.⁵⁶

Eve Queler (b. 1936), similar to Hillis, established an outstanding career in opera. She is not only internationally renowned for her ground breaking work as music director of America's leading opera organization, the Opera Orchestra of New York, but also for her extensive guest appearances of opera and orchestral repertoire.⁵⁷ Queler received one of the highest awards presented by the French government in 2003 when she was named a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French minister of culture for her commitment to opera. She also received the Touchstone Award presented by Women in Music, Inc. in recognition of her vision as one of the women who make a difference.⁵⁸

As revealed in this chapter, women participated in various aspects of musical life. They sought and created opportunities to contribute in music. Their journey in music as singers, instrumentalists, patrons and benefactors created new prospects. As women gained acceptance in each area of music, they experienced success in their careers and

⁵⁵ Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 2001), 203.

⁵⁶ Allan Kozinn, "Margaret Hillis, 76, Conductor, Led Chicago Symphony Chorus," *New York Times*, (February 6, 1988).

⁵⁷ "Eve Rabin Queler," *The New York Times Company*, 2008, www.womenshistory.about.com, accessed on 26 March 2008.

⁵⁸ Eve Queler, *EveQueler*, 2007, www.evequeler.com, accessed on 10 March 2008.

encouraged the next generation of women to pursue a career in music. The subsequent chapter continues to focus on the journey of women in music, with a specific examination of women in conducting.

CHAPTER III

THE MAKING OF A MAESTRA

Although women have been involved in the performance of music through composition, education, and patronage, from ancient times to the present, women have often been undervalued in their conducting achievements. Women struggled to receive equality in conducting, a typically male-oriented profession. Outlined in this chapter is the development of women in conducting and the accomplishments they achieved. Included are brief biographies of select women conductors. Women mentioned were selected based on their prominence as a conductor as well as their achievements.

Although disparity exists between the men and women conductors, dramatic changes occurred in the early 20th century. Federal laws, such as the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923, established equal treatment for women in the workplace and schools. “To be equal does not mean you have to be the same.”⁵⁸

Although dramatic social, economic, and political changes occurred in the United States, women have continued to experience great difficulty entering male-oriented professions. As stated in chapter II, women actively participated in various aspects of music including composing, teaching, singing, playing instruments and conducting.

⁵⁸ General Eva Burrows, “Words of Wisdom,” www.wic.org, accessed on 26 February 2008.

Women such as Tarquinia Molza (1542-1617) organized and conducted their own ensembles during the Renaissance. Molza directed an all-women's ensemble in the Italian court of Ferrara.⁵⁹ An Italian singer and poet, she was considered a great virtuoso and known for her involvement with *Concerto Delle Donne*, a group of professional female singers renowned for their technical and artistic virtuosity.⁶⁰

As stated, conducting positions for women were incredibly limited. While women found occasions to conduct, many conducting positions for women were irregular and not fully established. Since most orchestras offered membership only to men, the formation of women's orchestras occurred throughout Europe. One of the earliest women's orchestras was the Vienna Ladies Orchestra organized in 1867 by Josephine Weimlich (1867-n.d.).⁶¹ The popularity of women's orchestras spread throughout Germany, spread to England, and finally arrived in the United States. The most prominent and longest surviving female orchestra in the United States, the Fadette Lady Orchestra, formed by Caroline B. Nichols in 1888 provided employment for herself and other female musicians.⁶²

While women's orchestras provided opportunities for women to conduct, women conducting all-male orchestras, while rare, was another option. One of the earliest

⁵⁹ Alastair Ross, "Concerto delle Donne," *The Early Music Network*, <http://earlymusic.org.uk> accessed on 10 March 2008.

⁶⁰ Laurie Stras, "Tarquinia Molza," 2002, www.soton.ac.uk, accessed on 24 February 2008.

⁶¹ Carol Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996), 192, in "Vienna Lady Orchestra," *New York Times*, (September 13, 1871), 5.

⁶² Shelley M. Jagow, "Women Orchestral Conductors in America: The Struggle for Acceptance—An Historical View from the Nineteenth Century to the Present," *College Music Symposium*, vol. 38, (2005): 2.

examples of this was Marie Gruner. As early as 1860, Gruner, a Viennese violinist, received an appointment as conductor of the Ludwig Morelli Orchestra.⁶³ Another example of a female conducting an all-male orchestra occurred nearly a century later, when Veronika Dudarova (b. 1916) was appointed chief conductor of the Moscow Symphony Orchestra.⁶⁴ Her career centered primarily in Europe, although she traveled for guest appearances. A third example, Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), in 1893, gained recognition in England through her conducting.⁶⁵ Table 1 lists the number of early women's orchestras performing in the early 1900s, employing women conductors, the date of their foundation and the women who conducted them. The small number of women listed represent the limitations of women conductors.

⁶³ Anita Mercier, "Pioneers of the Podium," *The Julliard Journal Online*, vol. xx, no. 6, (March 2005), www.juilliard.edu, accessed on 24 February 2008.

⁶⁴ Vera Ivanova and Mikhail Manykin, "Legendary Female Conductor Veronika Dudarova," *Garant-InfoCentre*, 2006, www.russia-ic.com, accessed on 26 March 2008.

⁶⁵ Cheryl Friendman, "Dame Ethel Mary Smyth," *Women's Resource Project*, 1994, www.ibiblio.org/cheryb/women/dame-ethel.html, accessed on 26 March 2008.

TABLE 1
WOMEN'S ORCHESTRAS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1925-1945

Orchestra	Founded	Conductors
Los Angeles Women's Orchestra	1893	Ruth Haroldson
Chicago Women's Symphony Orchestra	1924	Elena Moneak
Women's Symphony Orchestra of Chicago	1924	Ethel Leginska Gladys Welge
American Women's Symphony Orchestra	1924	Elizabeth Kuyper
Long Beach Women's Symphony Orchestra	1925	Eva Anderson
Boston Women's Symphony Orchestra	1926	Ethel Leginska
National Women's Symphony Orchestra	1932	Ethel Leginska
Portland Women's Symphony Orchestra	1934	D'Zama Murielle
New York Women's Symphony Orchestra	1934	Antonia Brico
Cleveland Women's Little Symphony Orchestra	1935	Ruth Sandra Rothstein
Stockton Women's Sinfonetta	1936	Virginia L. Short
Women's Concert Ensemble of Chicago	1936	Fanny Arnsten-Hassler
St. Louis Women's Symphony Orchestra	1937	Edith Gordon
Women's Chamber Orchestra of New York	1937	Jeannette Scheerer
Women's Symphony of Mason City	1937	Marjorie B. Smith
Commonwealth Women's Symphony Orchestra	1937	Ruth Kemper
Pittsburgh Women's String Sinfonetta	1938	Gwen Treasure
All-Feminine Ensemble of Pittsburgh	1938	Margaret Horne
Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra	1940	Ethel Stark

Mary Davenport Engberg (1881-1951) performed in and organized her own orchestra.⁶⁶ She studied music for five years in Germany and Copenhagen after her marriage to Henry Christian Engberg. Engberg made her musical debut as a solo violinist, performing with several symphony orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony, and the Copenhagen Symphony. In 1914, she organized the Bellingham Symphony Orchestra in Bellingham, WA with the help of the Bellingham Ladies' Music Club. For this, Engberg became known as the first woman in the world to conduct a symphony orchestra.⁶⁷

As stated above, women found occasions to conduct; however these instances were through guest appearances rather than an established position. The first emergence of professional female conductors occurred in the early 20th century with the development and popularity of all-female orchestras. It was during the 1920-30's that women received greater professional conducting opportunities in America.⁶⁸ Antonia Brico, a Dutch-born American conductor and pianist, emerged in Berlin as the first woman professional conductor of an orchestra. Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) also experienced great success as a conductor. She became the first woman to conduct orchestras in New York, Boston, Paris, London and Philadelphia, prior to World War II.⁶⁹ Boulanger was the principal composition teacher of diverse and outstanding musical

⁶⁶ Whatcom Museum of History and Art, *Seattle Times* (January 24, 1951) www.whatcommuseum.org, accessed on 11 March 2008.

⁶⁷ Holly Hartman, *Girlwonder* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 197.

⁶⁸ Jagow, 5.

⁶⁹ Brad Foust, "Women of Music History, Part III – Nadia Boulanger," (August 24, 1999) www.suite101.com, accessed on 11 March 2008.

personalities such as Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Quincy Jones, Phillip Glass, and Virgil Thomson. In 1936, Boulanger was the first woman to conduct the London Philharmonic Orchestra.⁷⁰

By the late 1930s, female conductors gained recognition through their positions with women's orchestras. As women instrumentalists earned acceptance, they began demanding inclusion in mixed gender orchestras. Once the mixed orchestra became more common, all-women's orchestras declined and many did not survive.⁷¹

First Wave Conductors

The first wave of female conductors, were pioneers in their fields. These women significantly influenced the acceptance of females in conducting. Gena Branscombe (1881-1977) originally pursued a career in composition.⁷² She moved to the United States where she lived and worked throughout her adult life. Branscombe attended the Chicago Musical College and studied piano with an emphasis in composition. In 1909, she went to Europe to study composition with Engelbert Humperdinck (b. 1859). The following year, Branscombe married John Ferguson Tenney. She relocated to New York in order to pursue a professional career. In 1921, after the birth of four daughters, she became interested in choral conducting and enrolled at Juilliard School. Following her

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Neuls-Bates, "American Women Demand 'Mixed' Orchestras," *Women in Music*, 251 in *Women Making Music* "Women Musicians Urge Equal Rights," *New York times* (May 19, 1938), 24.

⁷² Kathleen Shimeta, "The Gena Branscombe Recording Project," www.kathleenshimeta.com, accessed on 4 April 2006

studies at Juilliard, Branscombe began actively pursuing a professional career in conducting.⁷³

In 1934, she established the Branscombe Chorale, a mixed ensemble that traveled extensively throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe.⁷⁴ She served as its conductor, composer, organizer, and fund-raiser for nearly twenty years. Branscombe was selected in 1941 by the General Federation of Women's Clubs to conduct a national chorus consisting of 1000 voices, in a celebration of women's achievements, held both in Atlantic City and New Jersey.⁷⁵ Branscombe's successful career established her as a pioneer in her field.

Ethel Leginska, like Branscombe, established a successful conducting career despite much criticism. Leginska guest conducted with several all-male orchestras such as the Dallas Symphony, London Symphony and the Havana Philharmonic. She was known for her outspokenness and ridiculed the idea that certain careers, such as conducting, were improper for young girls. Born in Hull, England as Ethel Liggins, Leginska changed her name after being told a foreign sounding name was more acceptable.⁷⁶

⁷³ Kathleen Shimeta, "The Gena Branscombe Recording Project," www.kathleenshimeta.com, accessed on 4 April 2006.

⁷⁴ Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 2001), 210.

⁷⁵ Keillor, accessed on 4 April 2006.

⁷⁶ Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 2001), 109.

Leginska's studies in music began with piano. She was considered a child prodigy, and by the age of six, was performing publicly.⁷⁷ Her talents attracted the attention of Mary Emma Wilson, who later financed her musical education.⁷⁸ Leginska continued her studies at Hoch's Conservatory in Frankfurt, then in Vienna under Theodor Leschetizky. In 1912, she arrived in the United States, debuting in New York as a concert pianist. In an interview, Leginska stated, "The only way a woman could succeed as a concert pianist was to stand on her own feet and emulate a man in her dress and hairstyle."⁷⁹ When asked why she dressed this way, Leginska said it was to eliminate gender from her performances.⁸⁰ The element of appearance as related to women in conducting is discussed further in chapter IV.

Leginska was a virtuoso pianist when she pursued conducting in the early 1920s. After training in London, she served as a guest conductor for orchestras in Munich, Paris, London and Berlin. Her American conducting debut was on January 9, 1925 at Carnegie Hall in New York and was the first time a woman had conducted a major American orchestra.⁸¹ In the 1920s and 1930s, she conducted operas in Boston and New York. Leginska stated, "Men have never been put off with such an unreasonable reasoning, they wouldn't stand for it. ... We will never be original, do great work, until we get some

⁷⁷ "Leginska, Ethel," *Naxos Digital Services, Ltd.* 2008, www.naxos.com/artistinfo/bio36390, accessed on 5 April 2008.

⁷⁸ Beth Abelson MacLeod, *Women Performing Music: The Emergence of American Women as Instrumentalists and Conductors* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1997), 95.

⁷⁹ Ammer, 109.

⁸⁰ MacLeod, 101.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

courage and daring, and trust our own way instead of the eternal beaten paths on which we are always asked to poke along.”⁸²

With such notable successes, Leginska was asked to guest conduct the London Symphony, Havana Philharmonic, and the Dallas Symphony. In the mid-1930s, she faced several successive failures with her orchestras. Facing an uncertain future, Leginska moved to Los Angeles in 1940 to teach piano, ironically at a time in history when American orchestras were flourishing. Leginska’s notoriety helped aspiring women conductors gain acceptance in their professional endeavors.⁸³

Antonia Brico followed a similar path as Leginska. Born in the Netherlands in 1920, she was placed with a foster family when her parents were financially unstable. In 1906, Brico moved to California, and began playing the piano, studying with a young neighbor girl.⁸⁴ By the time she was thirteen, she began accompanying music groups at her school, and work in local stores to earn money for an education. After high school graduation, she registered at the University of California at Berkeley.

As an undergraduate at Berkeley, Brico studied conducting and received a scholarship to attend master classes. At the suggestion of a teacher, she enrolled in the Master School of Conducting at the Berlin Academy of music and became the first American to graduate.⁸⁵ Following graduation, she served as a guest conductor for major

⁸² Mercier.

⁸³ MacLeod, 122.

⁸⁴ Ammer, 111.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

orchestras in San Francisco, Berlin, Paris, and London. “Despite the support of artists such as conductor Bruno Walter, composer Jean Sibelius, and pianist Arthur Rubinstein, orchestra boards would not engage her, managers would not accept her, artists refused to work with her solely because she was a woman.”⁸⁶

Despite criticism, Brico formed the New York Women’s Symphony with the financial backing of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.⁸⁷ Because of its unprecedented success, the organization surprisingly received recognition and positive music reviews. In 1936, Brico changed the name to the Brico Symphony and began admitting men into the organization. This was the first time men were seeking professional engagements under the direction of a woman conductor. Brico used her fame and success to fight prejudice against women in the orchestral world.⁸⁸

Similar to Leginska and Brico, Margaret Hillis conducted several orchestras. She is, however, best known for her work as a choral conductor. Hillis studied music at Indiana University, Juilliard, and privately with Robert Shaw. In 1957, she served as the music director of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, the first American professional symphony chorus, where she served as principal conductor. The Chicago Symphony Chorus was later recognized as one of the world’s most famous choral organizations, conducted by Hillis nearly 600 times and producing 45 recordings.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ibid., 113.

⁸⁷ Allan Kozinn, “Antonia Brico, 87, a Conductor; Fought Barriers to Women in 30’s,” *New York Times*, (August 5, 1989).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ammer, 207.

Hillis was born in Kokomo, Indiana, with aspirations of orchestral conducting; however, with the field predominately male, she was urged to pursue choral conducting instead.⁹⁰ During her undergraduate studies, Hillis conducted her first choral performance. She attended the Juilliard School studying choral conducting with Robert Shaw and Julius Herford.⁹¹ In addition, Hillis organized and established the Tanglewood Alumni Chorus, later known as the American Concert Choir and Orchestra.⁹² Hillis' experience and accomplishments encouraged hopeful women conductors to pursue their dreams.

Sarah Caldwell (1976-2006) is perhaps one of the most recognized female opera conductors. Born in Maryville, Missouri, Caldwell began studying the violin and piano. Following high school, she went to Boston to attend the New England Conservatory for violin performance. In 1947, Caldwell became an assistant to Boris Goldovsky, head of the opera department at the conservatory.⁹³ This experience proved to be invaluable to Caldwell, providing her with a foundation upon which to build a career.

In the late 1940s, Serge Koussevitzky named Caldwell a faculty member of the Opera Workshop at Tanglewood. In 1952, she joined the Boston University Opera

⁹⁰ Cris Crone, "Margaret Hillis, Chorus Symphony Founder, dead at 76," *Center Stage* (May 2001), <http://centerstage.net/music/articles/hillis.html>, accessed 20 October 2005.

⁹¹ Allan Kozinn, "Margaret Hillis, 76, Conductor, Led Chicago Symphony Chorus," *New York Times* (February 1998), <http://querynytimes.com>, accessed on 24 January 2008.

⁹² Ammer, 212.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 165.

department.⁹⁴ Five years later, Caldwell established her own opera group with limited finances. She “displayed her peculiar acumen in building up an operatic enterprise with scant musical and financial resources.”⁹⁵ By 1978, the opera company operated with a \$1.5 million budget. She became the artistic director for the New Opera Company of Israel in 1983. Caldwell’s financial prowess contributed to her prominence in opera as well as her undeniable talent.⁹⁶

Second Wave Conductors

After tremendous success, many first wave women conductors experienced remarkable changes in their careers. The dramatic shift from notoriety to anonymity represented the fates of many women conductors. After World War I, opportunities for women appeared promising. Although women conductors had not gained significant acceptance, audiences grew accustomed to seeing a woman on the podium. The conclusion of World War II quickly altered women’s positions as men returned to their jobs as instrumentalists and conductors.

In the 1980s, a second wave of women arrived at the podium. Women conductors of this generation, like their predecessors, created their own opportunities without the advice of experienced women. Alice Parker (b. 1925) established herself early in choral music securing her own career in the field. Born in Boston, Massachusetts Parker was a

⁹⁴ Judith Lang Zaimont, ed. *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective*. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 240.

⁹⁵ Slonimsky, 285.

⁹⁶ Anthony Tommasini, “Sarah Caldwell, Indomitable Director of Opera Company of Boston, Dies at 82,” *New York Times* (March 2006): 25, www.nytimes.com, accessed on 29 March 2006.

composer, conductor and teacher.⁹⁷ She began composing quite early, completing her first composition while in high school. Parker graduated from Smith College with degrees in music performance and composition, later receiving her master's degree from Juilliard where she studied conducting with Robert Shaw.⁹⁸

Parker continued to compose and arrange music, including folksongs, hymns and spirituals with the assistance of Robert Shaw. She was commissioned by the Vancouver Chamber Chorus, Atlanta Symphony Chorus, and Chanticleer to write works for their programs. In 1985, Parker established Melodius Accord, a non-profit chorus whose purpose it is present professional choral programs and workshops. In addition, she served on the board of Chorus America and has published numerous books on melodic styles and choral improvisation.⁹⁹

Acclaimed by the *New York Times* as one of the finest conductors of her generation, JoAnn Falletta (b. 1954) was appointed Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in the fall of 1998, the highest orchestral appointment for a woman in the United States.¹⁰⁰ Falletta established a reputation for conducting works which were artistically important, but rarely performed. She was the first American

⁹⁷ *Alice Parker, A Brief Biographical Note*, 2007, <http://aliceparker.com>, accessed on 25 January 2008.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ *Melodious Accord-Alice Parker*, United Singers International, 2006, <http://www.singers.com/choral/melodiousaccord.html>, accessed on 25 January 2008.

¹⁰⁰ *Biography, JoAnn Falletta*, Genevieve Spielberg, Inc., 2007, www.joannfalletta.com, accessed on 22 January 2008.

woman to lead regional orchestras, such as Long Beach Symphony and the Virginia Symphony.¹⁰¹

Born in Queens, New York, Falletta began her musical training with guitar lessons.¹⁰² Her parents cultivated in her a great love of the symphony by taking her to concerts. Falletta, like Hillis, had aspirations of conducting, but was urged to pursue another career. Despite the urging of family and friends, Falletta continued to pursue conducting. She received her undergraduate degree from the Mannes School of Music in New York and both her master's and doctoral degrees from Juilliard.¹⁰³ Falletta understood that preconceived ideas of gender in conducting affected women often forcing women to pursue alternate careers.

Falletta's first experience with an orchestra occurred during her membership in the cello section of the Long Island Symphony. While performing in this orchestra, she developed many ideas about conducting through observations. In 1985, she won first prize in the Leopold Stokowski Conducting Competition.¹⁰⁴ For these accomplishments, she is highly regarded as a successful female conductor.

A landmark event occurred in classical music when Marin Alsop (b. 1956) was appointed music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in 2005. With that

¹⁰¹ Edward Yadzinski, "JoAnn Falletta: Brings New Perspective to the Philharmonic," *Living PrimeTime*, (August 1999), www.livingprimetime.com, accessed 5 April 2008.

¹⁰² Karin Pendle, *Women and Music: A History* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 248.

¹⁰³ *Falletta, JoAnn*, Naxos Digital Services, Ltd., 2008, <http://www.naxos.com/conductorinfo/bio30435.html>, accessed on 22 January 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Pendle, 249.

position, she was the first woman to conduct a top twenty-five American orchestra.¹⁰⁵

This appointment followed her guest appearance in England conducting the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Born in New York, Alsop's parents were both professional musicians. She attended Yale University but transferred to Juilliard earning bachelors and master's degrees in violin performance.¹⁰⁶

In 1989, Alsop won the Koussevitzky Conducting Prize at the Tanglewood Music Center. For twelve years she was the conductor of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra (1993-2005). In 2005, Alsop was the first conductor, male or female, to receive the MacArthur Fellowship, an award given to those who show exceptional merit and promise for their creative work.¹⁰⁷

“Conductor Gisèle Ben-Dor confirms the growing belief that a woman's place is on the podium.”¹⁰⁸ Conductor Laureate of the Santa Barbara Symphony, Ben-Dor led numerous symphonies throughout the United States, Europe, Australia and Latin America. Her conducting of *Rigoletto* with the Israeli Opera received rave reviews.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Elaine F. Weiss, “Marin Alsop Breaks the Glass Baton,” *Christian Science Monitor* (September 2007), www.csmonitor.com, accessed on 23 January 2008.

¹⁰⁶ *Marin Alsop, Music Director*, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, 2007, www.bsomusic.org, accessed on 23 January 2008.

¹⁰⁷ *Marin Alsop*, MarinAlsop.com, 2007, www.marinalsop.com, accessed on 23 January 2008.

¹⁰⁸ Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 2006, www.giseleben-dor.com, accessed on 23 January 2008.

¹⁰⁹ *Gisele Ben-Dor, Conductor*, Gisele Ben-Dor, 2006, www.giseleben-dor.com, accessed on 24 January 2008.

Born in Uruguay, the daughter of an accountant, Ben-Dor is a proponent of Latin American music and regarded one of the most dedicated experts of this music.¹¹⁰

Ben-Dor studied piano and taught herself to play the guitar, performing primarily Latin American folk music. By the age of twelve, she was the musical director at her school and by fourteen was paid to conduct. Following graduation, her family relocated to Israel. She studied at the Rubin Academy of Music in Tel-Aviv and the Yale School of Music. After being observed by Leonard Bernstein, she was brought to the Tanglewood Young Artists' Orchestra to refine her talents.¹¹¹ Ben-Dor continues to conduct and accept invitations to be a guest conductor with the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, as well as many other orchestras throughout the United States.¹¹²

Third Wave Conductors

Women have attained prominence in nearly every other area of classical music. Accomplished female instrumentalists participate in American orchestras. Many conservatories and music departments report that while a greater percentage of their students are female, fewer study conducting. While conducting is certainly becoming more accessible to women than ever before, there remain fewer current women conducting professional orchestras. Table 2 is a list of women who hold current

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ *An Electric Conductor from Israel*, Israel21c staff, 2004, www.israel21c.org, accessed on 24 January 2008.

¹¹² "Gisele Ben-Dor," *All Music Guide*, 2008, www.answers.com, accessed 27 March 2008.

conducting positions with orchestras throughout the United States. This information was researched through the League of American Orchestras.

TABLE 2
CONTEMPORARY FEMALE ORCHESTRA CONDUCTORS

Orchestral Ensembles	Conductors
Key West Symphony, Conductor	Alfonso, Sebrina Maria
Eugene Symphony Orchestra; Conductor Laureate Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Music Director	Alsop, Marin
Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston; Conductor Emerita Santa Barbara Symphony, Conductor Laureate	Ben-Dor, Giselle
Bowling Green Philharmonia; Music Director	Brown, Emily Freeman
Kenosha Symphony Orchestra, Conductor	Burns, Miriam
Los Angeles Philharmonic , Assistant Conductor	Carneiro, Joana
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, assistant conductor	Chen, Mei-Ann
Nashville Symphony; Assistant Conductor	Corcoran, Kelly
Hershey Symphony Orchestra; Music Director	Dackow, Sandra
Phoenix Symphony Orchestra; Assistant Conductor	Dan, Kayoko
Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Music Director	Deal, Karen
North Shore Symphony Orchestra; Music Director/Conductor	Deaver, Susan
Connecticut Chamber Symphony; Music Director	Eckstein, Leslie
The Virginia Symphony; Music Director The Women's Philharmonic; Music Director Honolulu Symphony, Conductor Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Conductor	Falletta, JoAnn
St. Joseph Symphony; Music Director & Conductor	Freedman, Deborah
Music of the Baroque, Music Director	Glover, Jane
Southwest Florida Sinfonetta, Conductor	Grant, Nanette
Kennett Symphony Orchestra; Conductor & Music Director	Green, Mary Woodmansee
Greenwich Symphony Orchestra, associate conductor	Handy, Patricia

Orchestral Ensembles	Conductors
New World Chamber Orchestra; Artistic Director	Kitterman, Susan
Goucher Chamber Symphony; Music Director Frederick Symphony; Music Director	Koehler, Elisa
Nova Vista Symphony, Music Director	Krinitzky, Ann
Seattle Symphony; Associate Conductor	Kuan, Carolyn
Opera Orchestra of New York	Queler, Eve
Music Sacra Chamber Orchestra, Music Director	Sailer, Catherine
DuPage Symphony Orchestra; Music Director	Schubert, Barbara E.
Maryland Symphony Orchestra, Conductor	Schulze, Elizabeth
Pikes Peak Philharmonic Orchestra, assistant Conductor	Shea, Linda
Chamber Orchestra of the South Bay, Music Director	Steiner, Frances
Boston Symphony Orchestra, Assistant Conductor	Sung, Shi-Yeon
San Jose Chamber Orchestra, Music Director/Conductor	Turner, Barbara Day
Wartburg Community Symphony, Music Director/Conductor	Wade, Janice
North Arkansas Symphony, Music Director/Conductor	Wagar, Jeannine
Norwalk Symphony Orchestra, Music Director	Wittry, Diane
Sioux City Symphony Orchestra, Music Director/Conductor	Zhang, Xian

As seen in table 2, 83 orchestras employ women conductors. This number only represents less than 5 percent of the 1800 symphony orchestras registered with the League of American Orchestras.¹¹³ The information from the table above developed through research of symphony orchestras throughout the country.

¹¹³Sametz Blackstone Associates, "About the League," *League of American Orchestras*, www.americanorchestras.org, accessed on 12 March 2008.

While orchestral conducting has been the most difficult career for women to make achievements, the profession of choral conducting, on the other hand, has afforded greater opportunities to more women. Comparatively, more women are choral conductors. Table 3 lists the choirs which currently employ female conductors.

TABLE 3
CONTEMPORARY FEMALE CHORAL CONDUCTORS

Choral Ensembles	Conductors
Colorado Women's Chorale, Music Director	Adams, Charlotte
Cincinnati Chorale Society, Assistant Director	Adams, Jodi
Southern Arizona Women's Chorus, Music Director	Ashbaugh, Terrie
Amadeus Chorale, Music Director	Bair, Darla
Chorale Connecticut, Music Director	Barnhart, Dorothy
Cantate Chamber Singers, Music Director	Becker, Gisele
Women in Harmony, Music Director	Beller-McKenna, Catherine
Colorado Mormon Chorale, Assistant Conductor	Bement, Kristie
Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble, Music Director	Beorger, Kristina
Bel Voce, Music Director	Bowers, Teresa R.
The Choral Art Society, Conductor	Buckley, Danica
Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, Music Director	Burleigh, Betsy
Dublin Singers, Music Director	Cassidy, Mary Fran
Fort Myers Mastersingers, Music Director	Cobb-Lippens, Nancy
Bella Voce Singers, Music Director	Corbin, Jessica
Canadian Chamber Choir, Artistic Director	Dauids, Julia
Columbia Pro Cantare, Music Director	Dawson, Frances M.
San Diego North Coast Singers, Music Director	Dean, Sally Husch

Choral Ensembles	Conductors
Moore County Choral Society, Music Director	Dorsey, Anne
Angel City Chorale, Music Director	Fink Sue
Boston Secession, Music Director	Frank, Jane Ring
Philadelphia Chamber Chorus, Music Director	Garcia, Raquel
Rochester Oratorio Singers, Assistant Conductor	Gassler, Gwendolyn
Buffalo Choral Arts Singers, Conductor	Giambrone, Marcia A.
Brookline Chorus, Music Director	Graham, Lisa
Gold Coast Concert Chorus, Music Director	Helms, Elizabeth
Kansas City Women's Chorus, Music Director	Henry, Stephanie
Hopewell Valley Chorus, Music Director	Herman, Marjorie K.
Chicago Symphony Chorus, Assistant Conductor	Hill, Cheryl Frazes
Carolina Festival Singers, Conductor	Hill, Donna
NoteAbility, Conductor	Hinds, Kristin
Cheyenne Chamber Singers, Music Director	Iverson, Jane M.
New York City Master Chorale, Music Director	Kano, Thea
Chapel Hill Community Chorus, Conductor	Klausmeyer, Sue T.
Albuquerque Civic Chorus, Conductor	Kleinhenz, Verallen
Choralis, Music Director	Kuhrmann, Gretchen
Arundel Vocal Arts Society, Music Director	Kulesza, JoAnn
Seraphim Singers, Music Director	Lester, Jennifer
Durango Choral Society, Music Director	Mack, Linda
Bravo! Vancouver, Assistant Conductor	Manzo, Maria
Amadeus Chorale, Assistant Director	Marin, Sally
Harmonium Choral Society, Conductor	Matlack, Anne
The Coast Chorale, Music Director	Mehrtens, Joy
South Bend Chamber Singers, Conductor	Menk, Nancy
Boston City Singers, Conductor	Money, Jane

Choral Ensembles	Conductors
Inland Master Chorale, Assistant Conductor	Morrison, Melva
Oakland Symphony Chorus, Music Director	Morrow, Lynne
Boston Chorale, Assistant Conductor Boston Women's Chorale, Director	Needham, Kimberly
Handel Choir of Baltimore, Music Director	O'Neal, Melinda
Central Maryland Chorale, Conductor	Otal, Monica
Melodious Accord, Music Director	Parker, Alice
Cantate Carlisle, Music Director	Parsons, Cheryl
Cantori Domino, Music Director	Phillips-Thornburgh, Maurita
Williamsburg Women's Chorus, Conductor	Porter, Ann
Circle Singers, Music Director	Proctor, Sondra Goldsmith
Chorus North Shore, Music Director	Pryor, Sonja Dahlgren
Denton Bach Choir, Assistant Director	Quist, Amanda
Eugene Concert Choir and Vocal Ensemble, Music Director	Retallack, Diane
Schola Cantorum, Assistant Conductor	Reyen, Dawn Horst
Long Island Philharmonic Chorus, Music Director	Roberts, Frances C.
Quincy Symphony Chorus, Conductor	Roberston, Phyllis
MUSE, Music Director	Roma, Catherine
Musicians of St. Clare, Music Director	Romano-LaMorte, Carma
Minnesota Chorale, Music Director	Romey, Kathy Saltzman
Long Beach Chorale, Music Director Orange County Women's Chorus, Music Director	Rubenstein, Eliza
Cantabile, Music Director	Scott, Rebecca
Tapestry Singers, Music Director	Schelleng, Anne
SingersMarin, Music Director	Schiff, Jan Pederson
Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus, Conductor	Shangkuan, Pearl
Decatur Civic Chorus, Music Director	Sharp, Mary Anne
MUSE, Assistant Director	Shegog, Lois
Princeton ProMusica, Music Director	Slade, Frances Fowler

Choral Ensembles	Conductors
Con Brio Choral Society, Assistant Director	Stamm, Donna Breen
Greenville Chamber Chorale, Director	Stockard, Lisa
Colorado Vocal Arts Ensemble, Music Director	Teske, Deborah Jenkins
Seattle Pro Musica, Music Director	Thomas, Karen
Chesapeake Chorale, Assistant Director	Webster, Dianne
Alamo City Men's Chorale, Music Director	Whatley, Jennifer
Canticle Singers of Baltimore, Music Director	Wickham, Wendy
Masterworks Chorale, Music Director	Wipfli, Donna T.
Durham Chorale, Music Director	Zentner, Melody

As listed above, women are equal in conducting positions between choirs and orchestras, the percentage is greater. Currently, there are 356 professional choirs registered with Chorus America, women representing around 25 percent of conductors. This quote by Doris Kosloff in her article, "The Woman Opera Conductor," simply states the hope for aspiring opera conductors.

For women, the podium is more attainable than ever before. The more genuinely talented women conductors there are that can handle the challenge, the more acceptable it will become to an increasing number of opera houses to hire women. This is already happening now in America faster than anywhere else. I see no reason at all why the word “maestra” shouldn’t soon become a familiar one in opera houses across America.¹¹⁴

Many women continue to pursue conducting. There is a slow, yet gradual appearance of female conductors contracted by professional opera, choruses, and orchestras. Table 4 lists the current positions held by women in opera houses throughout the country.

¹¹⁴ Kosloff, 1987, 243.

TABLE 4
CONTEMPORARY FEMALE OPERA CONDUCTORS

Theater	Conductors
Amato Opera House, co-director	Amato, Sally
Lyric Opera of Chicago, assistant conductor	Bullock, Pamela
Toledo Opera House, artistic director	Conlin, Renay
Kitsap Opera, Conductor	Cottrell-Adkins, Leone
Opera San Jose, general director	Dalis, Irene
Spokane Opera, artistic director	Halvorson, Marjory
San Diego Opera, Resident conductor Anchorage opera, principal conductor	Keltner, Karen
Opera Idaho, executive and artistic director	Kilgrow, Julie
Florida Grand Opera, assistant chorus director	Kozak, Katherine
Opera Plus, artistic director	Manzo, Anne
Off-Center Opera Company, music director	McDaniel, Susan
Royal Opera House, Opera Director	Padmore, Elaine
Opera Pacifica, principal conductor	Simpson-Jones, Claudia
Opera Factory, General Director	Sloman, Sally

As evidenced, the number of women in opera houses as conductors is highly limited. Of the 144 opera houses listed with *OperaGlass*, less than 15 percent employ women as their music or artistic directors.

Conductors today, the third wave, have more opportunities than previous generations. Third wave conductors have female role models unlike first and second wave conductors. As described above, women who have been most influential in changing perceptions about women conductors have taken significant risks in their

careers and consequently have had strong personalities. The current wave of aspiring female conductors is as outspoken and fierce as their predecessors. With continued acceptance of women, fourth wave conductors may one day achieve full equality with their male colleagues.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAESTRA MYTHS

To secure positions in the male-oriented career of conducting, women faced many challenges. Many myths involve women and their capabilities as a conductor. This chapter describes several of these myths as well as offers examples of women whose careers dispelled these myths. Among challenges and myths are issues with: authority, separation of personal and professional life, budgetary concerns, appearance, music reviews, and the lack of female role models, limited access to education, and the availability of positions.

Authority

Socialized behaviors imposed on women throughout history required a submissive demeanor, a demeanor contrary to the authoritative character of the conductor. Women had to break with these social expectations to overcome the “authority” myth.

Addressing female assertiveness, Marin Alsop stated:

My main problem is being assertive enough - that's why I admire Catherine Comet, says Miss Alsop. You have to be sensitive, but not vulnerable. My goal used to be, let's all have a good time. It's not any more. I'm really proud when someone is being obnoxious and I can deal with it. I used to say I'm sorry when somebody played a wrong note. To be able to say, You're wrong, fix it, is hard.¹¹⁵

Alsop's appointment as principal conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) was a significant milestone for women conductors and provided an opportunity to dispel the "authority" myth. Although musicians of the BSO rejected her appointment, Alsop met with the orchestra and presented a strategy to reinvigorate the BSO.¹¹⁶ As a conductor, she established herself as an authority through mutual respect and musical trust. In a statement by Joyce Johnson, conductor of Oakland Symphony Orchestra, men are judged to be competent until and unless they prove otherwise, while women are viewed as incompetent until they can prove themselves.¹¹⁷

Separation of Public and Private Life

Another challenge women encountered was the ability to separate their private and professional lives. Could a woman juggle a career, marriage, children and more? The duties of the home were often considered the primary responsibility of women. As women became accepted outside the home, they faced even more difficulties separating

¹¹⁵ Heidi Walson, "Music, Maestra, Please," *New York Times* (April 1989) www.nytimes.com, accessed on 12 January 2008.

¹¹⁶ Elaine Weiss, "Marin Alsop breaks the glass baton," *Christian Science Monitor* (September 26, 2007), www.csmonitor.com, accessed on 26 March 2008.

¹¹⁷ Carol Ann Feather, "Women Band Directors in American Higher Education," *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective*, v.ii, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984-1985), 389.

their personal lives, family, marriage, PTA meetings, and athletic events, from their professional engagements.¹¹⁸

Simone Young, music director of the Hamburg State Opera and Hamburg Philharmonic, recalls a time when she conducted while eight-months pregnant. Many times she wanted to stop conducting and rest; however, this would have been perceived as a lack of stamina, further contributing to stereotypes about women conductors. While pregnancy and motherhood slowed the careers of many women, most continued their careers while balancing motherhood.¹¹⁹

Another woman who learned to balance both a career and family was Gena Branscombe. As an award winning American conductor she established her musical career before marriage, and afterward, balanced her work with an active family life. Branscombe originally pursued a career in composition but relocated to New York City, after marriage, to pursue conducting. She organized the Branscombe Chorale in 1934 and remained its conductor for 20 years. Throughout her life, she credited her husband for his constant support and assistance with their four daughters.¹²⁰

Budgetary Concerns

Concerns over the financial and administrative elements of an orchestra caused the fiduciary bodies of these organizations, the boards of directors, to ask: Could a

¹¹⁸ Marietta Nien-hwa Cheng, "Women Conductors: Has the Train Left the Station?" *Harmony*, vol. 6 (April 1998): 83.

¹¹⁹ Janine Perrett, "Simone Young, Conductor," *ninemsn* (April 5, 1998), www.sunday.ninemsn.com.au, accessed on 27 March 2008.

¹²⁰ Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 2001), 216.

woman music director handle budgetary issues? Would she be charismatic and attract the community?¹²¹ Most boards expected the conductor to be experienced and maintain a distinguished career. “The obstacles for women conductors are often concrete – symphony management, boards, donor, artist agents, critics, and teachers – but the reasons are often cultural or ideological.”¹²² Financial concerns often influenced employment. An orchestra struggling financially was less likely to risk hiring an inexperienced conductor.

One woman who validated her success as both a businesswoman and conductor was Sarah Caldwell. She demonstrated her ability to manage budgetary issues by building an operatic enterprise with meager musical and financial resources.¹²³ Caldwell founded what would become the Opera Company of Boston with \$5,000.¹²⁴ Because of her tremendous organizational and budgetary skills, she became a leading American conductor of opera.

Appearance

The female conductor, as the most visible individual in an organization, raised a sudden awareness of appearance. Harold Schoenberg, a former critic for the *New York Times* commented on the attire of women conductors. “As for women conductors, a

¹²¹ Weiss, 3.

¹²² Jose Antonio Bowen, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 233.

¹²³ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, Centennial ed., (New York: Schirmer Books, 2001), 400.

¹²⁴ Richard Dyer, “Sarah Caldwell, impresario of Boston opera, dead at 82,” *Boston Globe* (March 25, 2006), www.boston.com, accessed on 27 March 2008.

musician knows when the upbeat starts, because that is when the slip starts to show.”¹²⁵

This statement expressed the condescending attitude of society toward women as conductors. Marin Alsop, in an interview with the *New York Times*, stated that perhaps boards are unwilling to hire women because they are unable to meet the conventional image of maestro; powerful, strong, and aggressive.¹²⁶

Aware of her ability to impress, Ethel Leginska experimented with different ways of presenting herself in a male-oriented field. She occasionally performed in a feminized version of male concert attire – a dark dress or skirt and jacket with a touch of white at the neck. Leginska stated “that the only way a woman could succeed as a concert pianist was to stand on her own feet and emulate a man in her dress and hairstyle.”¹²⁷ She pushed the boundaries of convention in both her personal and professional life, perhaps further than any other female of her generation.

Antonia Brico, like Leginska, adopted a feminized version of male concert attire. She felt this attire offered freedom to conduct and did not deter musicians and audiences from a pleasing experience.¹²⁸ Laura Jackson, assistant conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, sought advice from conductor, Marin Alsop, regarding appropriate

¹²⁵ Schoenberg, Harold. *The Great Conductors*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967.

¹²⁶ Valerie Scher, “Despite gains, women conductors aren’t exactly crowding the podium,” (October 16, 2005).

¹²⁷ Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 2001), 109.

¹²⁸ Ammer, 182.

conducting attire. Jackson stated she wears one of two women's tuxedo suits as replacement for skirts after catching her heel in the dress.¹²⁹

Language of Music Reviews

The language of music reviews and critiques presented another barrier for women. The language used in written reviews reinforced stereotypes about women. In written reviews of male conductors, terms such as "virile" and "masculine" were applied, while "enthusiastic" and "unusual" were the expressions depicting women. In an 1898 review of Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler (1863-1927), critics marveled at her ability to play the piano with "masculine strength" and "feminine delicacy" at the same time.¹³⁰ A 1906 review of Minni Coons, another pianist, expressed wonder at her virile, yet delicate touch.¹³¹ Antonia Brico witnessed patronizing language in several of her reviews, one stating, "Yankee Girl Startles Berlin Critics."¹³² While the language of these reviews did not directly prevent women from pursuing conducting, these critiques continued to reinforce stereotypes about women and conducting.

Lack of Female Role Models

The lack of active women role models prevented many women from entering the profession. Although many women studied with talented conductors, few of these role

¹²⁹ Janice Berman, "Conducting a Career," *San Francisco Classical Voice*, (March 2008), www.sfcv.org, accessed on 31 March 2008.

¹³⁰ MacLeod, 11.

¹³¹ Ibid., 10.

¹³² Walson, *New York Times*.

models were women. Ethel Leginska and Alice Parker studied conducting with notable male conductors and mentors. Frequently women were discouraged from conducting. Instead, they were encouraged to pursue other areas of interest.

Conductors in training today have the advantage of a more diverse range of expertise to draw upon. Given the physicality of conducting, veteran women may have specific advice to offer female students. They have the opportunity to train, compete, and prove themselves, and they can look to older women in the field as role models.¹³³

Limited Training

Limited training, as previously mentioned, discouraged women from pursuing conducting. “Until the development of public institutions of music making in the late eighteenth century, classical music was cultivated in the private institutions of church and court by persons holding positions of power.”¹³⁴ Opportunities for young girls to study music came from Europe’s music conservatories. Between 1865 and 1905, in America, music schools were established, a few of which were Oberlin, Peabody, Boston, Cincinnati and Juilliard. Juilliard received \$3 million dollars in grant money to establish training programs for American conductors.¹³⁵

In 1946, Sarah Caldwell, at age eighteen, became the first female conducting student at Tanglewood.¹³⁶ When Serge Koussevitzky, a male professor on staff at

¹³³ Anita Mercier, “Pioneers of the Podium: A Women’s History Month Special,” *Juilliard Journal Online*, vol. XX, no. 6, (March 2005), www.juilliard.edu, accessed on 3 November 2005.

¹³⁴ Karin Pendle, *Women and Music: A History* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 483.

¹³⁵ MacLeod, 130.

¹³⁶ Ammer, 153.

Tanglewood, became impressed with her, he appointed her to the faculty one year later. Another woman who earned a degree in conducting was Victoria Bond. As a scholarship student at Juilliard School, she studied conducting. After winning the Victor Herbert Award, Bond became the first woman to earn a doctorate degree in orchestral conducting in 1977.¹³⁷

Availability of Positions

One final challenge facing women conductors was the limited availability of professional conducting positions. When conducting first emerged as a profession, it was from the instrumental ensembles. Men often accepted these leadership positions given that they were also instrumentalists in the ensemble. To gain employment, a woman served frequently as a guest conductor for single events in time. Transferring from group to group presented complications for women with a full private life. Many female conductors began their careers conducting collegiate and university ensembles prior to seeking employment in professional organizations. Lorna Cooke de Varon (n.d.), conductor of the New England Conservatory Chorus, moved from Radcliffe College to Bryn Mawr College before becoming the chair of the choral department at New England Conservatory of Music.¹³⁸

Women not only conducted numerous organizations to further their careers, but also started their careers in ancillary positions for the ensemble such as: rehearsal

¹³⁷ Sam Di Bonaventura, Barbara Jepson and Adrienne Block, 'Bond, Victoria,' *Grove Music Online*, (Accessed [11 March 2008]) <www.grovemusic.com>

¹³⁸ "Lorna Cooke deVaron, Conductor." Sonora Productions, 1999, www.sonoraproductions.com, accessed on 4 April 2006.

accompanists or vocal coaches. Judith Somogi (1941-1988), while achieving tremendous success with the New York City Opera, began her career as a rehearsal accompanist, spending many summers as an assistant conductor.¹³⁹ From her achievements in these positions, she was able to utilize her successes to establish a principal conducting career.

Karen Keltner (n.d.), currently the director of the San Diego Opera, worked various posts in music until presented with the opportunity of an apprenticeship at the National Opera Institute. Realizing there was no apprenticeship in conducting, Keltner drafted a proposal to establish the program. Upon approval, she received the first conducting apprenticeship. In 1982, a position with the San Diego Opera as resident conductor and music director became available. Keltner accepted the position and remains in the post.¹⁴⁰

Anne Manson (b. 1961), like Keltner, sought various part-time conducting positions with several orchestras to further her career. Her career began in 1988 when she became the music director of the Mecklenburgh Opera, an appointment she held for eight years.¹⁴¹ Manson was one of few women appointed music director of a leading American symphony orchestra. She achieved a historic milestone when she became the first woman to conduct the Salzburg Festival in 1994, leading the Vienna

¹³⁹ Bernard Holland, "Judith Somogi, 47, a Conductor; among first women on podium," *New York Times*, (March 26, 1988), 1.

¹⁴⁰ John Patrick Ford, "Karen Keltner," *FanFaire*, (1999), 16.

¹⁴¹ "Anne Manson," Schwalbe and Partners, (2006), www.annemanson.com, accessed on 11 March 2008.

Philharmonic.¹⁴² Manson has led concerts with the London Philharmonic, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Symphony, Singapore Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Her engagements with opera companies throughout the United States are as extensive. Manson's success comes from multiple appearances with professional organizations rather than a single permanent position.¹⁴³

Breaking stereotypes is arduous. Barriers based on gender rather than talent has diminished within the last two decades. "Today women can step up to the podium with more support, self-confidence, and prospects for success than ever before in history. But there are still far fewer women than men choosing to make a career of conducting, and it remains a male-dominated field."¹⁴⁴ The myths or barriers discussed in this chapter demonstrate the hardships faced by women in their pursuit of a career in conducting.

Changing attitudes, coupled with the work pioneered in the last twenty years by conductors like Eve Queler and Judith Somogi, have encouraged and enabled women to study conducting and enter the profession. Margaret Hillis stated succinctly, "Conducting is an extremely competitive and difficult field for either gender to succeed in, and it is imperative that society begin to recognize, value, and support talented women conductors in a profession still harboring discrimination and the burden of tradition."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Anthony Tomamasini, "A Rising Star to Shine Briefly in New York," *The New York Times* (November 15, 2006, www.nytimes.com, accessed on 26 March 2008).

¹⁴³ Tomamasini.

¹⁴⁴ Mercier.

¹⁴⁵ Shelley M. Jagow, "Women Orchestral Conductors in America: The Struggle for Acceptance—An Historical View from the Nineteenth Century to the Present," *College Music Symposium*, 12.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The profession of conducting has for centuries been a viable career path for men that until the last half of the 20th century has deviated to allow women to participate more fully. Until recently, women who wanted to conduct generated their own opportunities. The art of conducting is steeped in tradition; therefore slow to change. To implement change, an acknowledgement of the past is warranted. As presented in chapter II, women actively participated in nearly every aspect of musical life. The women's movement hastened the awareness of gender studies and helped establish women's programs and organizations. As musicologists continue to research the role of women in music, they discover "new" composers, instrumentalists, and conductors. A most prominent example is studies that reveal the life of the visionary Hildegard von Bingen.

The journey of women in music was arduous. Chapter II revealed the history of women in music and the achievements of specific women. Many women began careers in music as accompanists, instrumentalists, singers, educators, and patrons before focusing on conducting. After studying conducting, many women pursued careers in choral or instrumental music education because education is traditionally a familiar career field for women. Boulanger began her career as a teacher of composition, training well-known personalities such as Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, and Philip Glass. Branscombe attended college to pursue piano studies with an emphasis in composition.

Leginska established a fairly successful career as a pianist, debuting in New York.

Caldwell attended the New England Conservatory to study violin performance. These women succeeded and obtained notoriety as instrumentalists, composers, singers, educators, and patrons which ultimately aided their pursuit of a conducting career.

A woman on the podium no longer evokes outrage and disbelief from audiences.

Chapter III outlined the emergence of women as professional conductors. Brief

biographies of conductors such as Sarah Caldwell, Ethel Leginska, Antonia Brico,

Margaret Hillis, and Marin Alsop demonstrated the career paths of women conductors.

While women instrumentalists have made great strides in professional orchestras, women conductors still account for five percent of all professional conductors in the orchestra field. Additionally, women comprise less than 25 percent of all choral conductors and less than 10 percent of all opera conductors. Though we live in an era that espouses equal opportunity and political correctness, the assumption still persists that a conductor will be male.

The most successful and most influential women conductors were those who managed to demonstrate their authority and assertiveness in the music profession.

Assertive and authoritative are qualities still perceived as positive male characteristics but perceived as negative characteristics for women. Women such as Marin Alsop and JoAnn Falletta transferred their positive qualities to the podium. Chapter IV outlined the myths surrounding women and their abilities as conductors. Challenges concerning authority, separation of personal and professional life, budgetary concerns, appearance, music reviews, the lack of female role models, limited access to education, and the

availability of positions were presented. Women such as Marin Alsop (American), Simone Young (Australian), Gena Branscombe (Canadian), Sarah Caldwell (American), Ethel Leginska (English), Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler (Austrian), and Anne Manson (American) utilized their talents to dispel these myths.

As evidenced in this document, the current role of the woman conductor emerged slowly over centuries and with definitive changes in perceptions of women as leaders. Historical challenges based on gender influenced women in their career choices. Margaret Hillis wanted to pursue orchestral conducting from an early age, but since the field was entirely male at the time, she was advised to pursue choral conducting.¹⁴⁶ The feats women achieved in music since ancient Greece allowed women to experience success in their careers and encouraged the next generation of women to pursue a career in music as well.

Conducting, regardless of gender, is a demanding profession. Women conductors may be a vision of the future; they are not, at present, a reality. Changing attitudes, coupled with the work pioneered in the last twenty years by conductors such as Marin Alsop and JoAnn Falletta, encouraged women to pursue conducting. Society has accepted women as being capable of navigating space and administering in government rather than capable of leading a professional orchestra, choral ensemble or operatic production.

¹⁴⁶ Cris Crone, "Margaret Hillis, Chicago Symphony Chorus founder, dead at 76," *Centerstage*, (May 4, 2001), www.centerstage.net, accessed on 5 April 2008.

Although the profession of conducting originated as long ago as 2800 BCE, women have traditionally been excluded from participating. The profession of conducting for women has only existed since the beginning of the 20th century. Conducting is a novelty as a profession for women. Fifty years from now may bring dramatic changes in perceptions about women as leaders. Marin Alsop offered advice to aspiring female conductors. She suggested female conductors persevere and “use every rejection as an opportunity to improve yourself.”¹⁴⁷ As women continue to gain favorable reception from audiences, orchestras, choirs, opera houses, and male colleagues, the genderless term conductor will replace the term “woman” conductor.

¹⁴⁷ Lucia Maro, “Conducting is her calling,” *Chicago Tribune*, (August 24, 2005), www.chicagotribune.com, accessed on 12 March 2008.

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APPENDIX A: NOW 1966 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We, men and women who hereby constitute ourselves as the National Organization for Women, believe that the time has come for a new movement toward true equality for all women in America, and toward a fully equal partnership of the sexes, as part of the world-wide revolution of human rights now taking place within and beyond our national borders.

The purpose of NOW is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.

We believe the time has come to move beyond the abstract argument, discussion and symposia over the status and special nature of women which has raged in America in recent years; the time has come to confront, with concrete action, the conditions that now prevent women from enjoying the equality of opportunity and freedom of choice which is their right, as individual Americans, and as human beings.

NOW is dedicated to the proposition that women, first and foremost, are human beings, who, like all other people in our society, must have the chance to develop their fullest human potential. We believe that women can achieve such equality only by accepting to the full the challenges and responsibilities they share with all other people in our society, as part of the decision-making mainstream of American political, economic and social life.

We organize to initiate or support action, nationally, or in any part of this nation, by individuals or organizations, to break through the silken curtain of prejudice and discrimination against women in government, industry, the professions, the churches, the political parties, the judiciary, the labor unions, in education, science, medicine, law, religion and every other field of importance in American society....

WE BELIEVE that it is as essential for every girl to be educated to her full potential of human ability as it is for every boy -- with the knowledge that such education is the key to effective participation in today's economy and that, for a girl as for a boy, education can only be serious where there is expectation that it will be used in society. We believe that American educators are capable of devising means of imparting such expectations to girl students. Moreover, we consider the decline in the proportion of women receiving higher and professional education to be evidence of discrimination. This discrimination may take the form of quotas against the admission of women to colleges, and professional schools; lack of encouragement by parents, counselors and educators; denial of loans or fellowships; or the traditional or arbitrary procedures in graduate and

professional training geared in terms of men, which inadvertently discriminate against women. We believe that the same serious attention must be given to high school dropouts who are girls as to boys....

WE BELIEVE THAT women will do most to create a new image of women by acting now, and by speaking out in behalf of their own equality, freedom, and human dignity - - not in pleas for special privilege, nor in enmity toward men, who are also victims of the current, half-equality between the sexes - - but in an active, self-respecting partnership with men. By so doing, women will develop confidence in their own ability to determine actively, in partnership with men, the conditions of their life, their choices, their future and their society.

APPENDIX B: LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CLINTON



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 1997

It is time for us to recognize a simple but profound truth: by improving the lives of American women, we are making a vital investment in America's future. By investing in women, we enable them to reach their fullest potential as individuals and as members of our society. When women thrive, their families thrive. When families thrive, communities flourish, and our nation reaps the benefits.

We must value the contributions women make in every aspect of life: in the home, on the job, in their communities, as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, learners, caregivers, workers, citizens, and leaders. Today, 60 million American women are in the work force, comprising 46 percent of all U.S. workers. Almost every woman will work for pay sometime during her life. It isn't easy. Women still make only 73 percent of what men make in comparable jobs. Each day, women working outside the home must balance job responsibilities with family responsibilities. They struggle to arrange and pay for quality child care. They must be effective on the job and still find time to help their children with homework, to attend parent-teacher meetings, to take their children to doctors' appointments and school events. We must pursue policies that help women to be successful in the workplace and in the home.

My Administration is committed to helping women achieve that success. We have initiated strong, practical measures to improve women's economic and educational opportunities, to provide quality health and child care, to prevent violence on the streets and at home, and to make sure that women's voices are heard at every level of our government. The unprecedented number of women I have appointed to my Cabinet and to positions of leadership throughout the federal government reflects my belief that women should be full partners in decisionmaking.

But we must do more. We have a historic opportunity -- and a solemn responsibility -- to lead the world in our efforts to better the lives of women. In 1995, at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, the First Lady joined tens of thousands of women from around the globe in addressing issues vital to American women and families -- personal and economic security, access to education, health care, jobs, and credit, and the chance for every boy and girl to live up to his or her potential. My Administration is working hard to address these concerns.

I ask you to join me in our work to improve the lives of women and families in our nation and around the world. The challenges are great, but the rewards are even greater for us all.

Bill Clinton