

Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Concert Music, 1960-2000

Laurel Parsons, Brenda Ravenscroft



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Over the past 30 years, musicologists have produced a remarkable new body of research literature focusing on the lives and careers of women composers in their socio-historical contexts. But detailed analysis and discussion of the works created by these composers are still extremely rare. This is particularly true in the domain of music theory, where scholarly work continues to focus almost exclusively on male composers. Moreover, while the number of performances, broadcasts, and recordings of music by women has unquestionably grown, these works remain significantly underrepresented in comparison to music by male composers. Addressing these deficits is not simply a matter of rectifying a scholarly gender imbalance: the lack of knowledge surrounding the music of female composers means that scholars, performers, and the general public remain unfamiliar with a large body of exciting repertoire.

Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Concert Music, 1960-2000 is the first to appear in a groundbreaking four-volume series devoted to compositions by women across Western art music history. Each chapter opens with a brief biographical sketch of the composer before presenting an in-depth critical-analytic exploration of a single representative composition, linking analytical observations with questions of meaning and sociohistorical context. Chapters are grouped thematically by analytical approach into three sections, each of which places the analytical methods used in the essays that follow into the context of late twentieth-century ideas and trends. Featuring rich analyses and critical discussions, many by leading music theorists in the field, this collection brings to the fore repertoire from a range of important composers, thereby enabling further exploration by scholars, teachers, performers, and listeners.

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