
INTRODUCTION

When I taught my first Western classical music theory courses in 2016, I was disheartened by the dearth of musical examples by women and people of color active during the Common Practice Period (c. 1600–1920) in undergraduate textbooks and anthologies.¹ This persistent and widespread omission perpetuates the false historical narratives that either (1) women and people of color were not writing music before the twentieth century or (2) the music they composed is not worthy of serious study. I was determined to begin correcting the narrative in my own courses and started collecting musical examples by historical women and people of color from Western Europe and the Americas. Those examples form the core of this anthology, and since 2016 I have used them at a regional public university with a liberal arts emphasis, a private Research 1 university, and a major conservatory. When we analyze each example in class, I also share a brief biography and image of the composer to further deepen my students' engagement with these historical figures. Broadening the representation of compositional voices is tremendously impactful to many students today, as evidenced by a study I conducted in 2021. The majority of participants aged eighteen to thirty-five indicated that studying Western classical music by a historical composer who shared an underrepresented aspect of their identity was a critical, career-defining moment.²

This anthology contains 255 musical examples organized by Western classical music theory topics and specifically curated to be used in Advanced Placement courses, the undergraduate core curriculum, elective courses, and graduate review courses. Most of the sixty-seven composers whose works are featured in this anthology have not previously had their music included in a Western classical music theory textbook or anthology. In particular, I have incorporated a number of examples by women of color

1. The term *Common Practice Period* is problematic because it can imply that music from any other time or place is somehow “uncommon.” It is not my intention for this anthology to promote such an idea. However, Common Practice Period remains the most well-known term in our field for describing the type of music found in this anthology—specifically music written in the Western classical style from c. 1600 to 1920.

2. Paula Maust, “Racism and Sexism Remain Pervasive in Western Classical Music Instruction,” *Journal of the International Alliance for Women in Music* 27 no. 1 (Spring 2021): 21–23. This study was inspired in part by Philip A. Ewell’s groundbreaking “Music Theory and the White Racial Frame,” *Music Theory Online* 26 no. 2 (September 2020).

and composers from the Americas. I have also purposefully included a significant number of vocal works and pieces from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, since many music theory textbooks predominantly utilize instrumental examples written between c. 1730 and 1900. Finally, the known professional accomplishments of each composer are highlighted in biographies at the end of the anthology, each of which is accompanied by an image of the composer. For composers with no definitive surviving image, I have instead featured the cover page of one of their musical scores. Further musical examples can be found at <https://www.expandingthemusictheorycanon.com>, an open education resource I launched in January 2021 with users in sixty-nine countries.

A canon is by definition exclusive, and it is certainly not possible to study the music of every historical composer in an undergraduate core curriculum. Expanding the canon to include a more diverse array of voices does not mean that the works of already established canonical composers need to be erased. Rather, we can teach works from the canon alongside works such as the ones in this anthology, thereby giving our students a much more well-rounded and accurate educational experience. The sixty-seven composers in this anthology represent a small subset of the countless women and people of color who were writing Western classical music during the Common Practice Period. Indeed, there is an expansive wealth of music waiting to be uncovered for use in performance as well as scholarly and pedagogical settings. As the field of Western classical music evolves in the twenty-first century, we need audience members, composers, ensemble managers, conductors, scholars, and performers who are able to advocate for a more equitable and expansive discipline. Perhaps this anthology can be a small step in that direction.