

become acquainted with the project have commented favorably on this role. In keeping with this function I often provide explications of various feminist theories, which ensure the reader's understanding. If such theories lay in one's principal field, prior acquaintance could be assumed and clarification might not be needed. But given the complexity, diversity, and sheer magnitude of feminist theory – a formidable challenge even for those with longstanding acquaintance – I consider it critical to ground discussions in firm soil.

Despite or perhaps because of the comprehensive implications of canonicity, *Gender and the Musical Canon* is selective in its emphases. It does not pretend to offer an overarching theory of women and their relationship to canon formation, nor does it offer firm conclusions for many of the issues it introduces. In fact, the study probably raises as many questions as it answers. I do not consider this a drawback, however: it invites a more active involvement on the part of the reader. My hope is that the open-endedness of many of the discussions will spark further conversation on these important issues – issues that affect the very future of musicology as it enters the next century.

## CHAPTER I

*Canonic issues*

According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, "canon" traces back through Middle and Old English to Latin, and to Greek "kanon," to denote "ruler, rule, model, standard." Modern meanings basically expand on these definitions. A few entail church practice, including the concepts of "dogma" and a particular type of clergyman. The meanings most pertinent here are "an authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture," and, even more germane, "the authentic works of a writer; *also*: a usually specified group or a body of related works." Another definition entails "a criterion or standard of judgment." From these one can infer that canons are exemplary, act as models, instruct, represent high quality, endure, and embody at least some degree of moral and ethical force.<sup>1</sup>

Secular canons have similar implications. In the sense of a specified body of works in a given field, canons exert tremendous power. By setting standards they represent what is considered worthy of inclusion. Works that do not measure up are excluded, either in the sense of deliberately omitted or ignored and hence forgotten. Canons are therefore exclusive. They represent certain sets of values or ideologies, which in turn represent certain segments of society. Canons self-perpetuate. As models to be emulated, they replicate their encoded values in subsequent exemplars. As canonic values become entrenched over time, the prescriptive and normative powers of canons become even greater. Their tenacity and authority create the ideology that they are timeless. As such it is assumed that they do not change. Yet the main aspect of canons that tends to remain constant is the ideology itself of immutability. In practice, however, the social values encoded in a given canon may change – not daily or monthly but over some larger period of time, perhaps every ten or fifteen years. This would entail overlapping modifications, not some concerted sea change. Individual works might change more fre-



quently, especially with like-minded substitutions. All in all the dynamics of change in canons underscore their social constructedness and their powers of reconstruction. Thus it is vital to explore their workings as contingent entities, and especially with respect to women and their music.

In the present chapter we begin at the beginning, so to speak: an introduction to some basic properties of canons and canon formation. While music of course occupies the center of our discussions, literature functions as an important anchor. Thus many of the properties of canons are framed in terms of literature. This has the advantage of not only informing the reader about a correlate field, but even more importantly placing the behavior of musical canons in sharper relief. In "Properties of canons" I discuss the ontological implications of canons. The distinctions between disciplinary and repertorial types follow, after which I delve into the various kinds of interests that canons represent. The second section, "Canons in music," builds on previous issues. I discuss several types of repertorial canons and link the teaching canon with score anthologies. I explore the role of the public in canon formation, the historical context that led to the emergence of canons, and the impact of format and transmission on Western canonicity. The final section centers on women's relationship with the canon(s) of Western art music. This serves as culmination of the preceding discussions and pivot to the following chapters.

As a whole the chapter is intended as a curtain-raiser: a kind of overture to the book proper, where the main arguments reside. It provides an introduction to what canons are, where they come from, and what they can do. But a rehearsal of these properties in terms of practical application is reserved for the last chapter. In this sense the present chapter serves two roles: it complements the last chapter and provides a backdrop to the intervening discussions on canon formation.

#### PROPERTIES OF CANONS

In conceptualizing canon in the sense of a "specified group or a body of related works" we face the issue of whether it is a pre-existent notion into which one inserts works, or whether canon becomes meaningful only through *ad hoc* application to a coherent and identifiable repertoire. This is both a historical and philosophical

question. In daily usage canon has come to mean a pre-existent entity. Historically, however, the concept of a canon followed the emergence of a repertoire of repeating "classics," which occurred in the nineteenth century. But the question also hinges on the legitimacy of the term itself. Should it be reserved only for *ad hoc* situations? Can we apply it to a repertoire prior to the introduction of the term in music, which occurred only in the last twenty years or so? Joseph Kerman, for instance, believes that "a canon is an idea; a repertoire is a program or action." One is clearly *ad hoc*, the other is temporally ongoing. Furthermore, "repertoires are determined by performers, canons by critics . . ." <sup>2</sup>

In order to avoid a lengthy discussion of these complicated issues I am going to assume the ontology of the category of canon for the purposes of this book – that canon exists as a distinct concept that we can use. In saying this I recognize the problem of taking a modern concept and applying it to processes that antedate its existence. In this case, however, I believe that the advantages to be gained through canon as a powerful analytic tool far outweigh the historiographic difficulty, although it is important to keep the problem in mind. While I appreciate Kerman's distinctions between canon and repertoire and even agree with them to some extent, I do not necessarily retain his usage throughout the book. First, there are many situations in which the differences are ambiguous and the line between repertoire and canon becomes meaningless. Second, the term "canon" is used rather freely in cultural discourse to mean a repertoire, what Kerman calls a canon, or a paradigm or ideal. This semiotic play can be advantageous in many situations, and thus I do not want to restrict its usage here. In addition I find Kerman's characterization of agency simplistic; the dynamics of cultural formation are much too fluid and complex for such a polar categorization.<sup>3</sup> It should also be noted that my acceptance of the ontology of canon in no way means that canon is no longer subject to critique, or that its utility is necessarily being endorsed.<sup>4</sup> What it does mean is that we can move ahead and subject canons, canonicity, and canon formation to analysis.

Like other powerful phenomena, canons have generated internal categories that articulate their behavior. As Barbara Herrnstein Smith notes, the kinds of categories that exist within a convention tell us a great deal about biases. In fact they act as a kind of pre-evaluation process that tends to be overlooked as such because of the



seeming neutrality of the categorical array. Categorization groups like phenomena into the respective categories, but it also excludes those that do not fit. In canonicity the constituent categories are implicitly passing judgment on what sorts of things are culturally acceptable and therefore capable of being pre-canonic, and what sorts of things do not have a chance. Systems of categorization also shape what sorts of activities will be carried out in the future; as Smith points out, category names "foreground certain of their possible functions [and] also operate as signs – in effect, as culturally certified endorsements – of their more or less effective performance of those functions."<sup>5</sup>

As one might expect categories become entrenched, especially within a discipline. Sometimes they create problems. In an analysis of literary periodization, for example, Paul Lauter recalls that period names did not follow any one system of classification but bore either traditional titles or descriptive phrases with a point of view, for example "The frontier spirit." While this seemed inclusive, in practice works that did not fit were ignored. This revealed a major problem in American literature as a whole, but also suggests the problematic nature of periodization in general. In Lauter's view "such divisions are often used less to understand the dynamics of history than as convenient pigeonholes in which to place works in syllabi or anthologies." Being pragmatic he does not advocate the elimination of historical categories, but instead proposes inclusive categories that reflect cultural plurality. He hypothesizes that periodicity may be especially problematic for women because it emphasizes differences rather than continuities among periods. Female activity may depend more on regularity and continuity than does male experience.<sup>6</sup>

Whether or not we agree with Lauter's somewhat essentialist view of women's behavior, his case study suggests the kinds of problems that can arise with categories. A given array of categories tends to be accepted and therefore naturalized, and as such the individual categories assumed to be the only options. They become a basic part of the epistemological framework for dealing with important issues such as valuation. Hence it is easy to see why feminists in particular have been busy investigating the social and theoretical bases behind categories.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, much of this study is concerned with categorical configurations in canonicity: obvious ones like genre and periodization, but also more elusive classifications like creativity and

professionalism. These have played major roles in the ongoing formation of the canons of Western art music.

Before proceeding we should note the existence of the second type of canon, namely the disciplinary canon. This refers to goals, methodologies, research conventions, institutions, social structures, belief systems, underlying theories, audience, language, subjects for study, and various other parameters that shape and define a discipline's self-view of what is standard, acceptable, and even desirable. These characteristics describe normative, prescriptive, idealizing, and excluding functions of canons, and they pertain to both types.

But who decides what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in canons – or more colloquially, what is in and what is out? This suggests the pivotal issue of the participation of interests in canonicity. Canon formation is not controlled by any one individual or organization, nor does it take place at any one historical moment. Rather, the process of the formation of a canon, whether a repertoire or a disciplinary paradigm, involves a lengthy historical process that engages many cultural variables. As a test case, if one took a canonic entity and wished to discover how it became canonic, one would first examine the paradigms constitutive of and reflected by that canon. One would explore various stages of the past to discover its relationship with the underlying paradigms. It would be necessary to go back to the time when the paradigm originated, if that is discernible, or even before, and investigate the conditions that gave rise to its birth. The Gadamer–Jauss ideas on the hermeneutic circle might be helpful in avoiding historiographic dogmatism.<sup>8</sup> But even without this mediation, my explanation may sound circular and is to some extent. For canons simultaneously reflect, instigate, and perpetuate value systems. They encode ideologies that are further legitimated through being canonized.<sup>9</sup> Through that legitimization canons achieve the seemingly wizard-like feat of self-perpetuation. As they bestow longevity upon themselves they tend to replicate themselves, for they now function as the yardstick against which precanonic works are judged. This process of serialized privilege suggests that canons tend to resist change; privileged interests will wish to remain privileged. Fundamental change may occur over an extended period of time, such as some multi-year period, reflecting an ideological shift. In the repertorial model individual members may be replaced more quickly, usually with similar works. Those with



substantive difference might possess marginal status for a while or be accepted only tentatively. Nonetheless, as I suggest in Chapter 6, new works encoding other values have the potential for modifying the terms of discourse of the existent canon.

Agency in canon formation, however, involves real people more than the above might suggest. Canons embody the value systems of a dominant cultural group that is creating or perpetuating the repertoire, although it may be encoding values from some larger, more powerful group. Thus canons arise in a multi-cultural society of disparate power structures, where canons themselves provide "a means by which culture validates social power."<sup>10</sup> These empowered groups can be defined by several parameters, such as class, race, gender, sexuality, age, occupation, nationality, and political orientation. In literature in the twentieth century, for example, the professoriate – mostly white, male, and middle class – has served as the main canon-making group. But the base reaches beyond the ivory tower to incorporate functionaries of the marketplace. Publishers of classroom anthologies wield considerable power. They are not necessarily the principal arbiters of what goes into an anthology, however, unless they are skeptical of the marketability of the selections. As corporate entities publishers are driven by competition and will tend to eschew collections that deviate from their perception of what is canonic in academic literary circles. In other words, publishers assist in the perpetuation of the academy's notion of canonicity, which in turn reflects the professoriate's value systems, which in turn reflect their own training and the myriad social components that make up their world view, and so on.<sup>11</sup> We might more precisely characterize the principal canon-making group in literature as a professional-commercial coalition. But this is still a relatively small group to exercise such power, a concentration not atypical in canon formation.<sup>12</sup> It manages to retain power despite a limited base mainly because of the ideology of what a canon means and the prestige of the academy. Furthermore, as this example demonstrates, the empowered group need not be the principal ruling class; generally not, for instance, the moneyed upper class or the lawmakers, although their values may be mirrored at least in part.<sup>13</sup>

The public has an ambiguous role in the literary canon, and it seems to be more limited than in music. As described thus far, the literary canon pertains to the lists of "classics" utilized in the academy. These are made up mostly of works of the past. The public,

however, tends to concentrate on current literature, especially those books that it helps to make "best sellers." Eventually some may become canonic and be immortalized in educational circles. But in general it is the institutional population and the relatively few independent "highbrows" that support literary classics. The public's fascination with the new, and with what becomes popular, resembles the situation in popular music. In both, currency and what is "hot" count for a lot. These will change relatively quickly – certainly much more quickly than the membership of traditional canons. Through the pocketbook the public influences the kinds of books that get published; public taste is simultaneously shaped by the kinds of books placed on the market. The participation of the public in musical canons will be discussed in some detail in the next section, but suffice it to say here that the public at large, through the standard repertoire, has a fair amount to say about what might become and remain canonic.

In general, the values encoded in a canon affirm a particular cultural group or groups and are not necessarily meaningful for other groups. Thus by virtue of its particularity a canon is not universal. Nor is it neutral. In its representativeness it is partial, and partiality precludes neutrality. In other words, its selectivity translates as a particular point of view. Furthermore, a canon is not invariable. Even though ideological values represented by a canon can be fairly static, individual members can change often. Yet if a work is canonic over a long period of time its supporting values tend to change, resulting in differing works in terms of their meaning. In other words, the work of art as an ontological entity changes as its supporting values change, so that over time it is actually a succession of works rather than one immutable embodiment of value. This is Jane Tompkins's explanation for the phrase "test of time": a work of multiple ontologies based on fluctuating interpretations that reflect (and construct) value systems of various eras.<sup>14</sup> This contrasts with the general understanding of the term: a work that has remained popular over a long stretch of time and thus proven its ability to withstand the vagaries of fashion. It presupposes that a work could be fashionable for awhile but fade when tastes changed. This would occur because its quality was not sufficiently high. Quality, it seems, is at the heart of the matter. It apparently has to be put to a test, and longevity indicates worth. Another tacit assumption is universality: that the best works are those that can speak to people in various



historical contexts, and that traits that can bind people to each other are to be valued. It can imply that people of different eras are responding favorably to the same characteristics, and that there are immutable traits in the work. Perhaps all this stems from liberal ideologies of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of democracy and brotherhood. Translated to later eras it suggests a demographics of unity. While this might seem laudable, it could be construed as an obliteration of cultural difference.

Universality, neutrality, and immutability: difficult myths to counter or even recognize as such, especially since the interests represented in a canon are generally content to let those myths stand. Other cultural groups tend to internalize the immanence of universality to such a degree that they may offer little resistance to the canon and in fact assist in its longevity. In the past twenty years, however, with attention to ethnicity and the inception of a postmodernist climate, several groups have noted their exclusion from particular canons. This results from a growing awareness of the cultural constructedness of canons, and thus it is natural that disenfranchised groups, motivated by self-interest but also concern for a more balanced view of human culture, function as agents of canonic deconstruction.<sup>15</sup> Such muted groups will tend to see canon formation for what it is: a political process with high stakes for shaping discourse and values. Women, blacks, and native Americans have been among the most vocal in this regard.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, my perception as a woman of women's marginalization in musical canonicity is partly responsible for the present study.

#### CANONS IN MUSIC

As in literature, the many canons in music fall into two main categories: disciplinary and repertorial. In musicology, for instance, we can identify such disciplinary paradigms as Western art music, Schenker analysis, sketch studies, archival work, documentation, objectified language, era periodization, historical emphasis, and scholarly journals. With additional thought we would realize that other concepts would probably not fit our list, at least easily, such as slang language, rap music, or MTV.<sup>17</sup> Many of these, however, are being challenged as musicology approaches a new century.<sup>18</sup> Because of the multiplicity of musical disciplines, such as the recording

industry, the music-publishing industry, the music-book publishing industry, and performing-groups organizations, disciplinary canons in music as a whole are difficult to identify. If one were to compare in a systematic way the nature of disciplinary paradigms from one area to another the results would yield some fascinating insights into the sociology of music. What mainly concerns us here, however, is the discipline of musicology, although other musical areas affect the discourse of the canon formation of art music.

Repertorial and disciplinary canons might be easy to define as separate entities, but in practice they interact in flexible and fluid ways. To illustrate: without the accepted disciplinary convention of preparing musical editions, many pieces of early music, for example masses of Dufay, would not be canonic. Similarly, disciplinary paradigms are both shaped and supported by canonic repertoires. For example, sketch studies might not be considered paradigmatic if Beethoven's music were not already deemed canonic.

Repertorial canons exist in many forms. There are canons of works performed by professional groups and individuals, and each performing area has its own canon. Furthermore, there are canons for groups that inhabit a particular historical niche. Early music groups form an important type. Because of their dependence on scholarship for the production of musical scores, early music performers tend to have close ties with the musicological community and its disciplinary paradigms. The other principal type is new-music groups. In the United States these usually flourish in the university, around active composers, or in a few instances as independent groups in large cities. If the group really presents *new* music then one cannot speak of a canon, i.e. a repeating repertoire, for new, previously unperformed music is being emphasized. New compositions, however, can qualify as pre-canonic: they could become canonic at some later stage. In the sense of a disciplinary paradigm, what is "canonic" in this context is that new compositions are receiving a first hearing. If, however, the group takes a chronologically broader view of contemporary music, as a repertoire that is not confined to world premières and can include "classics" such as Boulez and Babbitt, then a repertorial canon, in various stages of formation, is in evidence.

A paradox emerges from the relationship between new music and canons. I suspect that at least some contemporary composers do not believe in the efficacy of repertorial canons. In perpetuating music of the past canons have made conditions that much more difficult for



the creation and acceptance of new music. Yet composers want their music to be performed, and not just at a première. But once repeatability becomes a norm the spectre of canonicity looms as a possibility (although statistically not a very likely one) and historicism takes hold, thus reinforcing the bias against new works. Perhaps composers would wish to have their works performed many times, and perhaps they might say that the war-horses could yield to a model of diversity. That might involve significant changes in patronage, financing, function, and the general position of the composer in society. "Canonic" would not mean what it does now, and perhaps a new vocabulary would have to emerge to reflect the modified structures.<sup>19</sup>

Recordings represent another type of canonic repertoire. They are an important medium for the dissemination of music to the wider public and thus possess potent cultural force. The powerful recording industry controls the production and distribution of who, what, and by whom is recorded. For art music, only one component in the industry, recordings act as a cultural barometer and negotiator. This shows up in which compositions are issued and re-issued, how many different versions exist, and the nature of the promotion. Of course recordings reflect the membership of other repertorial canons. They particularly play off mainstream performing institutions such as symphony and opera, but can reinforce or even instigate membership in other repertorial canons, particularly those of "marginal" areas like early music and new music. Kerman has perceptively noted how the recording has replaced the live performance as the principal performing medium for many pieces of new music.<sup>20</sup> As in the case of scores, this exemplifies the substitution of a tangible, physical object – the physicality of the recording itself – for the more ephemeral phenomenological realization. Another property of recordings is their ability to convert phenomenological experience into a text subject to aural analysis, upon repeated "readings" (i.e. hearings).<sup>21</sup> They can also construct the paradigmatic aural version of a given work.

Another type of repertorial canon occurs in the academic teaching of music, in the classroom. Here I am referring mainly to music history pedagogy.<sup>22</sup> This canon is largely material. Aural renditions occur in the form of recordings and occasional live performances, although recordings can become material upon repeated hearings. Textbooks and anthologies, as the repository of the canon, wield

enormous power as determinants of canonic status. Although theoretically free to use any materials, most instructors rely heavily on published materials for repertorial examples. Textbooks, like anthologies, emphasize specific works and composers, but most provide some latitude by mentioning additional figures. The limitations posed by anthologies, however, can be formidable. Imagine: if one is teaching a survey course and finds none of the anthologies suitable, one is left to cull from hither and yon. This is not only time-consuming but raises the likelihood of copyright infringement, thus creating a legal problem. A more feasible outcome is dependence on an anthology for most of the examples and then either supplementing (somehow negotiating the copyright problems of duplication) or dispensing with scores for a few works. Whatever the compromise, it is not difficult to see how the decisions of a relatively small group of individuals – anthologizers, textbook authors, and the publishers with whom they work – can shape the behavior and tastes of a large population of listeners, performers, composers, and scholars. But we may be too quick in assigning such power to authors and publishers. Their aim, after all, is to sell copies, and that is dependent on giving the target consumers, i.e. the academic community, what they want. So the system operates in both directions. On the one hand, musicologists' tastes and musicological culture at large affect what is offered in pedagogical materials. On the other hand, musicologists' desires as individuals were molded at least in part by textbooks (and also anthologies, for the younger generations), and their current pedagogical practices are shaped by the realities of what is available. But in the past few years, publishers have been responding to fresh breezes of change in musicology, and this has resulted in the inclusion of a few female figures (more in this chapter and Chapter 6). Thus forces of the marketplace and the academy interact in the complexities of negotiating value systems for the present and the future.<sup>23</sup>

Music anthologies intended primarily for the pedagogy of music history and theory began to flourish in the twentieth century. Arnold Schering's *Geschichte der Musik in Beispielen* (Leipzig, 1931) was one of the first, and its title indicates the growing interest in the study of music through actual pieces.<sup>24</sup> Other important collections were the two-volume *Historical Anthology of Music*, edited by Willi Apel and Archibald Davison (Cambridge, Mass., 1946); and *Masterpieces of Music Before 1750* (New York, 1951) and *A Treasury of Early Music* (New York, 1958), both compiled by Carl Parrish (the former with



J. F. Ohl). These collections, once considered historically comprehensive, are devoted solely to music composed before 1800.

Coverage of later music in anthologies did not become routine until the 1960s, and several reasons account for the change. One is the appearance of Donald Grout's landmark study, *A History of Western Music* (New York, 1960). This was perhaps the first major English-language survey to define music history in terms of style. Issued without scores, Grout's text created a need that publishers began to fill. The second reason also concerns the market. Beginning in the late 1960s college populations, at least in the United States, grew dramatically and so did the numbers of students in music courses. Publishers seemed to recognize the power of later music to attract students to the courses and materials. The third reason mirrors general musicological culture: music after 1800 began to be acceptable for serious historical study. The rationale for the delay is that sufficient time had to pass to ensure historical objectivity. But this represents a partial explanation. Perhaps a more telling factor was the modernist embarrassment over the emotional and rhetorical excesses of Romanticism. These may have been linked with the feminine, and through the connection provided yet another motive for extended suppression of the repertoire. Such an attitude reveals a great deal about the power of modernism, of course, but it also suggests a close connection between historiography and gendered discourse in music.

Anthologies have stressed Western art music and generally ignored other idioms, such as folk music, popular music, and world music. Music by women and other "minorities" in Western culture has also been overlooked, and this shows the biases in gender, class, and race that are inherent in the seemingly comprehensive label "Western art music." Like other dominant structures, the *de facto* emphasis on that repertoire has not necessitated that it be culturally specific. In other words, as the assumed repertoire Western art music does not have to identify itself as such. While this may seem convenient, the assumption of the dominant mode implies a false universality. This results in the marginalization of other musics and masks the particular social parameters of the Western tradition. But as we move beyond this dominant-muted issue, the question remains whether Western art music should so consistently occupy exclusive place in broad-based music instruction.<sup>25</sup> This is a major topic of discussion in the *Journal of the College Music Society*. Recent job lists suggest

that universities are eagerly hiring non-Western specialists and responding to cultural diversity on a global level. This is all to the good.

What relationship does the teaching canon have with the so-called "standard repertoire"? This is a complex issue. One challenge involves the definition of standard repertoire. Perhaps a working definition would be that it refers to the repertoire of major performing groups and performing areas, notably the symphony orchestra, opera, standard chamber ensembles, voice, and piano. In practice it pertains mainly to music of the common-practice period and those pieces performed most often. The teaching canon encompasses many if not the majority of its works. One area of difference, for example, might be virtuosic concerti by someone like Wieniawski; these would be in the standard repertoire but not the teaching canon. The teaching canon, however, has greater historical range and stylistic variety. Extending at least as far back as the Middle Ages, it comes fairly close to the present and embraces a wider range of genres. I suspect that the two interact in a variety of ways. For example, they both grow out of a common performance history, which in turn is based on shared ideologies and value systems. The teaching canon, however, has been fashioned most directly by musicologists (analysis anthologies by theorists and composers), and this raises the question of the extent of musicology's relationship with performance structures geared toward the general public. Certainly there is interaction and certainly there is awareness in the discipline of what is being performed. Some research has been catalyst to revisionist performances, such as Philip Gossett's editions of Rossini's operas. Many scholars write program notes and other essays, present lectures or give interviews for the media.<sup>26</sup> But anthologizers often take independent stances from the standard repertoire. Leon Plantinga, for instance, includes scenes from an opera by Meyerbeer, an opera transcription for piano by Liszt, and a scene from Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust* in the anthology that accompanies the textbook *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York, 1984). Plantinga apparently considers these works important, at least for illustrative purposes, even though they might not be viewed as prominent members of the standard repertoire. As for the influence of the teaching canon on the standard repertoire, the most obvious consideration involves the role of university education in shaping the aesthetic values of future professionals as well as audience



members and consumers of music. After all, the values students internalize will underlie their professional choice of repertoire, whether as soloist, ensemble player, conductor, or possibly concert manager or music journalist. As audience members they can contribute to the shaping of the standard repertoire through the power of the purse. Thus the teaching canon, as a major influence on future musical culture, is extremely important. It is this canon, with its increasingly fluid relationship with the standard repertoire, that serves as the main but not exclusive canonic focal point of the book.

The public can play a significant role in canon formation. It provides forms of support and resistance, often with profound consequences.<sup>27</sup> As Henry Pleasants notes in a scathing critique of contemporary music (1955), "Audience taste still determines the selection of the standard repertoire; for it is the standard repertoire that sustains the expensive institutions identified with serious music. Here the public cannot be ignored" (p. 9). Pleasants and several composers sounded the alarm around mid-century because of their belief that the public had become disenfranchised from newly composed music. From our vantage point some forty years later we can see the issue in broader perspective. The public has had its say in what it wants to hear and has often prevailed. This has had an impact on the repertoire and also resonated on living composers and their very reasons for composing. For some it has meant sobering reappraisals of what it means to compose. Furthermore the public has probably had a hand in the movement from modernism to postmodernism – a shift that can be seen as a recognition that music is first and foremost communication between composer and audience. To be precise we should point out that in relation to new music the public does not pass judgment directly on the canon, for that is more of an *ad hoc* concept, but raises its voice about which repertoire is acceptable and hence could become canonic in the future.

Several twentieth-century composers have been forced to recognize the power of the public. Arnold Schoenberg, for example, seems to have had a love-hate relationship with the public. Some of his writings indicate a yearning for public acceptance; many reveal a desire to be part of a venerable historical lineage. While an essay like "Brahms the progressive" is a defensive strategy against charges of radicalism, it is also Schoenberg's way of forging a personal link to the pantheon of acknowledged greats. George Rochberg has speculated that historical self-consciousness had a destructive effect on

Schoenberg's career: he felt overwhelmed by the burden of posterity.<sup>28</sup> It could also be dubbed the tyranny of the canon.<sup>29</sup> Many aspects of Schoenberg's career, however, show a retreat from the public. As he acknowledged in 1930, "Called upon to say something about my public, I have to confess: I do not believe I have one."<sup>30</sup> The process of mutual alienation began earlier. His humiliation at performances such as the London première of the *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, in 1912, led to a defensive posture. Thus the founding of a private society (1919) for like-minded visionaries.<sup>31</sup> Ironically, this rejection of the public in favor of a circle of connoisseurs in some ways marked a return to one of the major social contexts for music before 1750. Yet given the modern time frame the private gathering had a very different meaning. Schoenberg's retreat resulted from the public's perception that his music was too intellectual and abstract, and hence incomprehensible. Even now the public at large considers it difficult. Although many professional musicians deem Schoenberg the most influential composer of the century, it might be fair to say that he has not won a place in the standard repertoire.

Other major figures have also engendered resistance. Like Schoenberg, Elliott Carter sought acceptance in his early years and did not get it. The public's rejection of his First String Quartet (1950), an extremely difficult work, was decisive. As the composer recalls,

From that point on I decided that I would write whatever interested me, whatever expressed the conceptions and feelings that I had, without concern for an existing public. Now I'm aware that these attitudes can lead to "disastrous" results, that you can have terribly angry people and terribly angry performers on your hands – and I have. I'm aware of this when I write my pieces; but I've decided that the fun of composing ... is to write pieces that interest me very much. I don't expect them to be very successful when they're played ...<sup>32</sup>

While elitist tendencies can be read between the lines in Carter's writings, they are mild in comparison with the strong views of Milton Babbitt. A mathematician as well as a composer at Princeton, Babbitt was firmly convinced of the desirability of the withdrawal of the composer from society at large. The university provided the ideal refuge – a paradigmatic affirmation of the "ivory tower." Babbitt saw the composer as a specialist and compared him to the scientist engaged in advanced activities well beyond the ken of the layperson. He advocated "total, resolute, and voluntary withdrawal from this public world" to a private realm "with its very real possibility of



complete elimination of the public and social aspects of musical composition."<sup>33</sup> Babbitt seems to have been granted his wish. His is a name known mainly to specialists, and his importance seems to lie largely in his esoteric writings.

While Babbitt's position was extreme, it nonetheless expresses the climate of alienation around mid-century. Pragmatists like Aaron Copland and Roger Sessions recognized the crisis and wrote about it in several essays addressed to the general public. In 1970 George Rochberg specifically rejected Babbitt's scientific analogy and reaffirmed the centrality of the human element in composition, including the composer himself.<sup>34</sup> The idea that the humanity of the maker is vital to the understanding of the work harkens back to Romantic historiography, of course, but also presages one of the central tenets of the postmodernist aesthetic.

A particular tension characterizes the modernist struggle between composer and public. Rooted largely in expectations, the rhetoric often focuses on the responsibility of each party towards the other. Blame is assigned both ways. Carter and Sessions, and by implication Babbitt, have criticized the public for not being educated enough to understand their music. The onus is on the public to bridge whatever gaps are made evident by the composition. Sessions softens his position by calling for a "willing ear" to understand modern music, and believes that the composer's honest intentions, and not necessarily success in communication, are what makes a work of art meaningful. On the other side, Hindemith and Rochberg have castigated some composers for being too intellectual and composing for themselves while ignoring the public and its needs. It is the composer who must ensure effective communication, not the listener.

Of course the performer plays a major role in the communication with the public. Let us recall Carter's passing remark about resistance to contemporary idioms from performers. Even Carter, whose scores are renowned for their performing difficulties, recognizes that the realities of financing and learning new music render such resistance understandable. In this regard the university is much more congenial for contemporary music than the concert hall. Students (and generally faculty as well) do not have to be paid for rehearsal time and tend to learn new works in a spirit of discovery and cooperation. There are other reasons why the concert hall may not be the most feasible location, for example a problematic fit between style and the performing forces. It should be noted, however, that Carter

has attributed much of the public's difficulty with new orchestral music to bad performances caused by insufficient rehearsal time. Performers then become frustrated over performance quality. That can lead to a chronic case of negativity and eventually structural resistance that can hinder performances of new works.<sup>35</sup>

The public invests a great deal in its aesthetic decisions and the question could be posed why it does so. In other words, what does the public "get" out of the canon? Many of the general stakes in canonicity were laid out in the "Introduction," but here we might discuss them more specifically in terms of music. Perhaps most importantly, the public seems to look to canons for setting standards of taste. If the work is in the canon, assumes a layperson, it must be good and something I should be familiar with. Furthermore, I should "appreciate," if not necessarily like, it and similar works. This can be illustrated by two examples. One is the case of the classical music "expert" on public radio, who over the course of several months presents his list of the basic record library that a music lover should own. The listener tends to take that advice as canonic: the expert surely knows what is good and what is not. The list will guide purchases and how one reacts at concerts. A second example is the situation when one turns on the radio in the middle of a work, does not know its title, and suspends judgment on whether one likes it until the name of the composer is given. This can also happen in a museum when glancing at a painting without knowing the name of the artist. In all these instances, "canonically correct" knowledge confers a kind of moral imprimatur on its possessor. Somehow one is a better person with that erudition. One not only feels ennobled but also identifies with a particular segment of the culture. In the case of Western art music the link is with a European heritage and its elitist cachet. The canon, and especially the standard repertoire, serves as a means of preserving that connection.<sup>36</sup>

As noted, "canon" has only recently been applied to music. But the processes of forming paradigmatic repertoires, which precede more formalized canons, existed some time before. Musical historicism functioned as one of the prime ingredients in creating paradigmatic repertoires. And once repertoires were fashioned, the idea of potential retention of old works and potential incorporation of new works came into existence. Nonetheless, in the early stages, shortly after 1800, composers were still more concerned with a direct than an enduring success for their compositions. Some still considered



themselves craftsmen, although the changed nature of patronage made it less clear why and for whom they were composing. But most probably thought little about some paradigmatic repertoire that would confer exemplary status on their work and ensure its repetition some unimaginable number of times. Perhaps Wagner provided the turning point at mid-century with his artwork of the future: a philosophical ideal implying repetition, longevity, and idealism.

Still, the concept of canonicity lay in the future. If we were to mark its inception we could say it started with the Bach edition in the last half of the century and the other sets of complete works and monuments that followed. Or we could go back to the growing nineteenth-century predilection for repeating works of past composers, especially Mozart and Haydn and then Beethoven, a practice reinforced by their adulation as subjects of numerous essays.<sup>37</sup> Or we could attribute its beginnings to the issuing of musical anthologies, in the second or third decades of the twentieth century. Or we could take heed of which composers and compositions were emphasized when style became the basis of history, especially in Riemann's contributions c. 1900. If we had a broader definition of canonicity we might agree with the ideas of William Weber. He argues that it began in the later eighteenth century, especially in England, after many older works had become part of a repertoire of repeating classics.<sup>38</sup> These are all candidates. A "right" answer might depend on one's precise definition of canon. But I suspect that each represents an important moment in musical canonicity; perhaps one should not worry excessively about exclusive origins. Nonetheless, I see anthologies as markers of one important stage in *ad hoc* canonicity. Anthologies have traditionally devoted themselves to presenting works that the compiler considers worthy of being included, whatever the specific purpose of the anthology and whether or not quality is a stated criterion.<sup>39</sup> This indicates a self-conscious sense of active selection from some larger pool of works the compiler believes exemplary toward the achievement of his or her ends.

Anthologies tend to confer the status of masterpiece on their constituent members. Conversely, once a work is deemed a masterpiece it raises the status of the collection in which it appears. Together they constitute a circularity akin to canonicity itself. Historicism and a growing respect for the past implicitly created the notion of masterpiece: a work worthy of being repeatedly performed, published and written about, eventually acquiring a permanency

comparable to a painting in a museum.<sup>40</sup> Many in the twentieth century have lamented the situation. Aaron Copland, for example, complained that "it leaves a minimum of wall space for the showing of the works of new composers, without which the supply of future writers of masterworks is certain to dry up."<sup>41</sup> In the nineteenth century, repeated works were only individually called masterpieces and even more rarely considered paradigmatic within some defined repertoire of masterpieces. What I am suggesting is that a sense of canon was not possible until individual masterpieces were joined with others in a discrete repertoire and viewed as a group that embodied whatever paradigmatic traits one thought were exemplified by that repertoire. This does not mean that individual works before 1900 were exempt from adulation as masterpieces or great works. We know of many pieces that were considered exemplary or great. But these were mostly individual cases, not part of some larger paradigmatic repertory or canon.

The formation of repertories grew out of a confluence of favorable conditions at the end of the eighteenth century. Social power moved from court and Church to the public arena, and traditional patronage and the functional reasons for writing music began to wane. The careers of Haydn and Mozart typify the vagaries of this gradual changeover. Arguably the most significant shift occurred with the commercialization of music, which was rooted in capitalist ideals of free enterprise and the market-driven economy. Many segments of musical life were shaped by the new mercantile emphasis: music publishing, music magazines, concert series, instrument makers, critics, entrepreneurial composers, and independent performers and performing groups. Behind it lay the Enlightenment notion of the autonomous individual with unlimited potential if unfettered by socio-political restraints. But in practice this universalist ideology pertained mostly to the experiences of the dominant cultural group, namely the white middle- and upper-class male. As we shall see later, women's experiences and talents often flourished in their own kinds of social structures, with their own paradigms.

The music business fed off a growing moneyed class with time and means for the consumption of music. The extent of the commercialism varied. With a strong mercantile tradition, London probably fostered these institutions the most; with a conservative and repressive climate, Vienna tended to absorb the new institutions more slowly.<sup>42</sup> Taking their cue from the influential *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*



(1798–), music magazines were important in promoting music to a growing public: reporting on concerts, reviewing and publishing new music, and presenting articles on miscellaneous topics of interest. Features on earlier composers, theorists, and musical practices were especially significant in creating a respect for the past. This historicizing slant acted as a means of instilling “correct” aesthetic values in the readership – values that could influence taste in the consumption of music. It can be argued, in fact, that historicism in general was motivated by a “concern for the taste of the present.”<sup>43</sup>

Contents of reviews were instrumental in shaping taste, of course. But the very fact of which pieces were selected for evaluation itself advanced a point of view. This was not always an aesthetic matter. Many leading magazines, for example *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* and *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, were owned by publishers of music (Breitkopf & Härtel and Schlesinger, respectively). These provided an obvious vehicle for promoting financial interests in the works chosen for review. Indeed, perhaps it is not unreasonable to suggest that historicism arose partly in response to the needs of entrepreneurs to create viable markets in music – ones that would appeal to the growing middle class. For written media in particular new music may not have sufficed, and thus the past became the repository of additional works and figures to fill up the pages.<sup>44</sup> We should also note that the concert review in the daily newspaper was another means of shaping taste.

As Kerman has suggested, music critics in the early nineteenth century grew out of a literary tradition. Many influential writers, such as E. T. A. Hoffmann, extended their aesthetic outlook to encompass music. This took the form of reviews, but the work was represented by a score rather than a live performance.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps this had something to do with the fact that music was now considered one of the fine arts,<sup>46</sup> and as such might take on some of the tangibility of other art forms. This type of judgment not only constructed an ontology of the score but also reinforced the power of material media to define music. As written documents they acquired enormous weight in their capacity not only to be read and re-read, but preserved for some future readership. Accordingly, composers had to pay more attention to being judged. In earlier days a performance would take place, a patron would assess a work verbally, and the judgment would evaporate and elude permanency. With written criticism, however, the nature of creative accountability changed.

Instead of a direct kind of responsibility, composers were now answerable to an impersonal group known collectively as the public. Were they supposed to please the public, edify the public; was there a moral imperative?<sup>47</sup> Who was the public – was it that large amorphous body or was it really the individuals who dispensed written judgment to and on behalf of the public? It was critics, after all, who were making the kinds of pronouncements that strongly influenced public opinion.<sup>48</sup> Critics were also shaping public taste in their essays on other musical topics. It is interesting that some composers functioned as critics and thus propagandists of their own aesthetic. Perhaps this served as a way of neutralizing the creative anxiety many must have felt *vis-à-vis* the changed dynamic involving the evaluation of their music. On a societal level the ideology of transcendent genius may have functioned as another means of alleviating anxiety. As for female composers, they probably did not experience this kind of creative anxiety to the same degree because many worked in the private sphere, beyond the purview of the critic.<sup>49</sup> In any case, a collective literature began to accumulate. This created its own literary history, and with this the door opened wider to the notion of historicism.

An important factor in the rise of public music was the increased non-functionality of the musical work. In the old system a piece was created for a specific occasion with a specific set of listeners. The composer knew with reasonable certitude the values and ideologies of the listeners, and these generally coincided with the function of the work. But with the gradual dissolution of the traditional reasons for writing music, composers must have begun to feel unsettled about which styles might work. As noted, their livelihood now depended upon acceptance by a public-commercial machinery. I believe that as the century progressed, the various agents in the music business, including the entrepreneurial composer, began looking to previously acceptable stylistic conventions as one means of achieving security. This may explain, for example, the continued vitality of the sonata aesthetic.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps some considered the public fickle and unpredictable, and the idea of repeating a “sure thing” would seem attractive. The social composition of the public, mostly middle class, probably contributed to the standardization of aesthetic values at some median level – this despite a competing ideology of novelty. The standardization could foster audience expectations for stylistic familiarity – not necessarily uniformity – which in turn would



prompt repetition of musical works in performance. Perhaps this desire mirrors larger concerns of the later nineteenth century. It might express a societal yearning for security in the face of the challenges of secular political power, a new reality for much of Europe. Or perhaps it represents a means of social consolidation at a time when colonialism underscored the existence of foreign cultures and hence potential encroachment of a cultural Other. At any rate, historicism served as a strong impetus for repertorialization, and this formed the basis for the notion of canonicity at a later stage.<sup>51</sup>

There is more to be said about repeating classics. Weber believes that they arose as a means of fighting the crassness that accompanied the commercialization of music.<sup>52</sup> It is an interesting theory that ties in nicely with the efforts of Schumann and others to combat philistinism and uphold the good and true in music. But commercialism was more than an impetus for a defensive posture. Indeed, commercial interests seem to have supported the notion of repeating classics: by publishing older music, promoting their performance, and writing about them. While further research would have to be conducted on the details, commercial interests apparently found older music profitable. It was a way to make money. Although seemingly contradictory, the two theories highlight two facets of the musical markets in the nineteenth century. Many kinds of music were available for public consumption, a fact too easily forgotten when we focus on the canon of works handed down to us. I suspect that both processes were underway simultaneously, and this shows the complexities of the interrelationship between aesthetics and economics. The composer, meanwhile, was looking for a means of legitimation in the loosened social structures in which he found himself. The notion of past "masters" provided a sense of identity, and it placed him in a line of descent that could affirm the evolutionary ideas circulating at the time. The public was also involved. Edward Dent has suggested that the public very much wanted to be a collective patron. But it was not able to do so, for two reasons: first, it did not have the financial resources to support new music; and second, the public did not understand what patronage meant. It could support older works, a less expensive proposition, and this was one of the main reasons for its affinity for repeating classics.<sup>53</sup>

Another factor in the movement toward canonicity is the nationalistic tendencies of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As a

purpose, it looked to the past for symbols of its heritage. Music could serve that purpose. I am not implying that this was one of the major reasons for repeating classics. But I do think that it probably figured in the social dynamics that affirmed the past. For example, even as early as the founding of the Paris Conservatoire in 1795, one goal was an aesthetics that replicated the politics of democracy touted in society at large.<sup>54</sup> Across the Channel the Handel Commemoration of 1784 was an important event in the celebration of a specifically English (*sic*) music.<sup>55</sup> Or moving to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we see the beginnings of national collections such as *Denkmäler der deutschen Tonkunst* and *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich*. It is also important to remember that musicology itself is implicated in the process. As we know, it arose as a result of the historicist movement of the nineteenth century. But once established, its own growth helped sustain the trend toward canonicity into the next century. It is hard to imagine the entrenchment of the canon without the historicist work of musicologists. Musicology supplied "scientific" legitimation.

The understanding and meanings of canonicity are bound up with format and transmission. In Western art music textuality has virtually become inherent in compositions.<sup>56</sup> Instead of functioning as visual representations of an aural experience in time, maps to the realization of the piece, or symbols of its essence, scores are often considered first and foremost the pieces themselves.<sup>57</sup> This creates at least two ontologies for any composition: the texted version and the aural realization in performance. The latter, of course, subdivides into a separate ontology for each performance. Musicology has focused mostly on the texted version, using it as the basis of historico-stylistic analysis. Indeed, musicologists and music theorists resemble literary critics in this regard. Literary critics, however, tend to subject the texts to cultural analysis as a matter of course, which is partly explainable by the more obviously narrative content of literature. In any case, traditional musical analysis has remained mostly within formalist discourse. In the academy, where musical analysis occupies such a central pedagogical role, score anthologies resemble literary anthologies. Although there are some significant differences, a score can be read through like a piece of literature. We even talk about notated versions in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and themes. Although we want our students to realize that such technical analysis relates in important ways to actual performance, usually their



principal musical activity, still we might have to admit that the formalist emphasis can create a greater intersubjective space between performer and performed than desirable. It also suggests that the piece exists mainly for its own sake and has little to do with larger social implications. All in all, the emphasis on music-as-physical-object that arose in the early nineteenth century was instrumental in paving the way for the notion of canon.

Canons have a great affinity for a written tradition: they thrive on such visceral data. But writing is not the only means of preservation. In dance, for example, transmission still occurs principally from choreographer to dancer who in turn becomes choreographer. This human sequence bears some resemblance to the human chain of oral tradition, discussed below. Nonetheless, traditional methods in dance have been buttressed by a written idiom in the form of notations that map out the steps. More recently, dance preservation has also begun to depend on filmed or videotaped realizations. Although not literally "written," these visual representations are material, and like material forms of music can be read, held in one's hand, and physically accessed. This visual text performing itself, or being interpreted as performing,<sup>58</sup> has its counterpart in videos of musical works. These kinds of recordings convey the oral-aural dimension, the principal sensory element in music, but reify the visual to a prominent position akin to the dance video. Of course, for certain kinds of musical works on videocassette, such as opera, one could argue that the visual rightfully occupies a prime position and thus its form as a visual text is entirely appropriate. Like its incarnation as aural text in traditional recordings, the musical work as visual text implies permanence because of tangibility and repeatability. These characteristics can define the paradigmatic interpretation that will be emulated by others. This tends to challenge the ontological multiplicity of performances. Whatever the ontological implications, however, the video revolution helps to reinforce the traditional privileging of the visual over the aural in Western culture. Some have argued that this reliance on the visual represents a male epistemological mode, and by implication perhaps a suppression of female experience.<sup>59</sup>

Given that the Western musical canon relies so heavily on written transmission, one might wonder whether canons can emerge in oral traditions. Folk traditions, for example, are mostly oral. Expectedly, their temporal and geographical range of transmission will vary from

work to work. One might be tempted to consider those with greater saturation part of a repertorial canon. Such works, however, might be better categorized as merely popular, important, or highly representative of their cultures. If we had a sense of a coherent and delimited group of pieces we might label them a folk repertoire. In the absence of some tangible record, such as a notated version or even a recording, it would be difficult to consider them part of a canon.<sup>60</sup> Even if there were a notated version, the meaning of the notation in that context would be critical. If, for instance, it were an exemplar of one of many possible versions of a folk song, it would serve mainly a utilitarian or referential function. This would not be *the* definitive version – there would not be one. Instead it would be one of many possibilities and take on a multiplicity that strips away the veneer of moral authority vested in the ontology of the definitive version.<sup>61</sup> The casual status would indicate that oral traditions stress process over material object – written versions are the exception. Similar kinds of problems would arise with recordings. While we cannot take the time to go into these complex issues, we can re-emphasize the material basis of canons and point out that they are most pertinent to cultures or sub-cultures in which writing and literacy are fundamental: in creating, transmitting, reproducing, and allowing reference to a work. This suggests an obvious class bias in favor of the educated, at least in the Western sense.<sup>62</sup>

Another aspect of an oral tradition deserves attention. An oral tradition propagates works that lack a strongly defined sense of an individual creator. The absence of notated versions removes one of the most obvious ways that an author becomes identified: the name on the score. Oral transmission in some cultures seems to promote changes to the work as it gets passed on, and this complicates the question as to what *exactly* constitutes the piece. In effect there are numerous creators: each person in the process who makes changes. The situation bears some similarity to improvised traditions in Western music. Not coincidentally these declined in the nineteenth century as historicism and individualism gained a foothold. The concept of multiple creators, whether specific individuals or community effort, contrasts with the ideology of the individuated composer so valued in the West, at least after 1750.<sup>63</sup> It has become canonic in musicology<sup>64</sup> and in general strengthened the ontology of music as material object: music in the one version created by the composer and then visually reproduced.<sup>65</sup> This ideal, however, is



tempered by the fact that notation can never be absolutely specific, and thus there is always the question of multiple versions. I am talking mainly about an ideology – that somehow a visual representation is definite and precise, and more preservable and reproducible than other media. Such a tangible lineage makes the canonic process more feasible.

It should be noted, however, that there are various theories of oral transmission, as a result of several factors. First, there are many cultures in many eras, and one's hypotheses about trends may apply only to a relatively limited repertoire. Second, there are usually few documents to work with in oral transmission, and this makes the task of conducting historical research more difficult. Third, there is the anthropological challenge of applying a Western mindset to the study of another culture. Another complicating factor can emerge if the culture is in transition and oral and written transmission co-exist. All of these suggest the difficulty in making definitive statements about the relative behaviors of the two modes of transmission.

The relationship between written and oral transmission has been re-theorized in recent years. It has been suggested that the two modes are so intertwined in certain repertoires that it is a distortion to speak of them as distinct processes.<sup>66</sup> Another revisionist theory concerns oral and written modes in Western art music. Specifically, before the advent of written notation in plainchant, oral transmission necessitated the retention of the music in memory. This meant that change was relatively slow. Written transmission, in contrast, has allowed for relatively rapid change because the permanence of the notation eliminates the need for human retention.<sup>67</sup> "Change" here denotes broad stylistic changes over a culture rather than changes to a particular work over time. Indeed, in a very general comparison between the two types of transmission, one could infer that oral transmission tends to promote changes within a given work as it gets passed on; written transmission would keep a given work constant yet encourage a multiplicity of styles within the culture. Written transmission means there are numerous works preserved, each in the definitive version, in potentially numerous styles.

But what lies behind the strong desire in the West for preservation? Why has it become such an ideal, indeed an emblem of high culture? Perhaps it stems from a male wish for self-reproduction, as Suzanne Cusick has suggested.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps it involves the related notion of a narcissistic urge of the male to see himself reflected indefinitely in

institutions and objects. Both provide a comforting sense of immortality. Another factor could be the fear of encroachment by competing groups and ideologies. A means of maintaining control over disenfranchised groups would be exclusion through the reification of writing as the privileged medium for cultural communication. Similarly, the reification of certain values and conventions may have functioned as an effective means of suppressing a female presence in music.

#### WOMEN AND THE CANON

Perhaps the reader misses a female presence in the largely gender-neutral perspective of the previous discussions. Because the semiotics of canonicity and the formation of canons from cohering repertoires have taken place mostly within dominant ideologies, I have had little need thus far to make distinctions in terms of gender. The more obvious reason is that women have exercised minimal power in the formation and semiology of the canons of Western art music. If they had a greater voice in canonicity, then gender would have figured prominently in the narrative. This of course does not mean that women have been silent as composers, performers, and participants in other facets of music. It does suggest that what we might call mainstream canonicity has derived mostly from male structures and conventions, and canons have provided a powerful tool for their self-perpetuation. For a complex set of reasons women have generally been omitted or excluded; thus the canon is still overwhelmingly male in its membership. This is true whether we are referring to the teaching canon, the standard repertoire, or other major canons of Western art music, even though music by women is beginning to affect the values behind current canons and position itself for eventual incorporation into canons with a more pluralistic set of values. This will take time. Meanwhile, the increased presence of women in musicology and the substantial number of studies devoted to women and feminist issues are diverting disciplinary canons away from exclusive focus on male subjects and a positivist approach to history. In particular, the subtle link between musical women in the present and the past should not be underestimated for its potential in effecting change.<sup>69</sup>

As noted, anthologies play an important role in the teaching of music history and can serve as a barometer of canonic culture.



Unfortunately an overview of some standard anthologies yields disappointing results for women composers and their music.<sup>70</sup> Probably the most influential collection, the *Norton Anthology of Western Music* (New York, 1988), which accompanies the fourth edition of the Grout-Palisca *A History of Western Music*, contains only one piece out of 163 by a woman, a *canço* by the medieval composer the Countess of Dia. In addition to the extremely low percentage I am struck by the fact that women are missing from later periods of music, eras in which more composers have been identified and for whom there now exists a relatively rich pool of music. Plantinga's anthology *Romantic Music* is similarly disappointing in this regard, including no works by women, although the accompanying textbook provides brief discussions of two composers, Fanny Hensel and Clara Schumann, and a reference to another, Corona Schröter. The third and fourth editions of *The Norton Scores* (1977, 1984), a series widely used in music surveys for majors and non-majors, include a work by a woman, a movement from Ruth Crawford Seeger's *String Quartet* of 1931 (a different movement in each edition). Although I have not conducted a comprehensive survey, I suspect that the representation cited here is characteristic.

But related materials of more recent vintage offer encouraging signs that the influence of women's increased visibility, historically and professionally, is beginning to pay dividends. Thus the recordings that accompany the sixth edition of *The Enjoyment of Music* (New York, 1991), ed. Joseph Machlis and Kristine Forney, contain a work by Clara Schumann. In addition, two survey textbooks offer greater coverage of women. K. Marie Stolba's *The Development of Western Music: A History* (Dubuque, Iowa, 1990), intended for music majors, discusses women relatively often in comparison to older surveys. These include well-known figures like Hildegard, Schumann, and Seeger; and the "less familiar," such as Barbara Strozzi and Alma Mahler. Intended for the more general student, R. Larry Todd's *The Musical Art: An Introduction to Western Music* (Belmont, Calif., 1991) similarly mentions many women, and accords Schumann and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich fairly extended analytic treatment. Robert Winter's *Music for Our Time* (Belmont, Calif., 1991) also makes a solid effort to incorporate women. I suspect that future texts and anthologies will continue in this direction.

Yet as I applaud the trend – it is crucial to expose students to women and their music – I have some concerns over the basic

approach to women in these materials. It resembles what Karin Pendle has termed "add and stir":<sup>71</sup> the addition of a few new women to the old historiographic recipes, a technique that does not significantly change the batter or the finished product. While Pendle mainly applies the phrase to the need for separate histories of women's experiences, I find it an apt metaphor for the dangers of merely inserting women and their music into existing structures without at least questioning them in terms of gender. While some existent paradigms may be applicable to gender others will probably not, and may in fact reinforce women's position as Other to the mainstream canons of Western art music. Chapter 6 discusses these issues at great length so I will not explore them further at this point. But suffice it to say that it is critical that women's activities be understood in their own terms, and not only with respect to existing categories, conventions, and figures – classifications that play a critical role in canonicity in general. Yet a crucial first step involves identification and analysis of the complexities of these elements in terms of gender.

As we have seen, canonicity is a powerful concept that implicates a multitude of factors rooted in culture and history. How Western society has viewed creativity, that most basic property behind the birth of a composition, provides a good starting point for our study.