

Women Composers at CMNC Mills College, October 3, 2015



Arrieu, Claude
Suite en trio for oboe, clarinet and bassoon
Wind quintet in C

Claude Arrieu (French, 1903-1990) was the pen name of prolific composer Marie Louise Simon. We've been playing Arrieu for years and most of us never knew she was a woman! This YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJJ7yCNS8zs> is of her Wind Quintet in C played by the Bellavente Wind Quintet, with coach Alicia Telford on horn.



Bacewicz, Grazyna
String Quartet no.4

Grazyna Bacewicz (Polish, 1909-1959) was a virtuoso violinist and composer who was concertmaster of the Warsaw Radio Symphony, where she played many of her compositions. She wrote seven violin concertos, a viola concerto, two cello concertos and two piano concertos, seven string quartets and four symphonies, as well as ballets, film scores, songs and much more.



Bolz, Harriett

Lyric sonata, flute, clarinet, bassoon and string quartet

Harriett Bolz (American, 1909-1995) was an important regional composer who composed music for piano, chorus, solo instruments, and instrumental ensembles from duos to full orchestra. Clara Lyle Boone of Arsis Press describes Bolz's music as "gentle, delicate and highly accessible," and "thoroughly contemporary." This piece is the one that Terrie Baune rescued from some orphan music after the Women's Philharmonic disbanded. Her son has told us that the piece survives only because Terrie saved it.



Callaway, Ann

Memory Palace, Trio for clarinet, cello and piano

Ann Callaway (American, b. 1949) has written chamber music as well as larger pieces including a concerto for bass clarinet and a tone poem, *Amethyst*. This YouTube is of Memory Palace performed at the Hillside Club in Berkeley in 2010.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpdTm628n8s>



Carreño, Teresa
String quartet in b minor

Teresa Carreño (Venezuelan, 1853-1917) had an amazing career as a singer, pianist, composer and conductor, in North and South America and in Europe. The Teresa Carreño Cultural Complex in Caracas is named after her, as is a crater on Venus. She composed at least 40 works for piano, two for voice and two pieces of chamber music. She wrote a hit song, *Tendeur*, and recorded 18 pieces for the reproducing piano Welte-Mignon.



Coleman, Valerie
Afro-Cuban Concerto (wind quintet)

Composer and flutist Valerie Coleman (American, born 1970) is a distinct voice in a new generation of African-American artists who combine African-American heritage and urban culture to contemporary music. Hear her Afro-Cuban Concerto here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONUjiCWwzKw>



Dalberg, Nancy
String quartet no. 2, op 14 in g minor

Nancy Dalberg (Danish, 1881-1949) was discouraged from taking up a career in music, but did so anyway, studied with Carl Nielsen, and became the first Danish woman to write a symphony. She wrote three string quartets. The one CMNC owns is tonal and very rewarding to play. Her name is also spelled Dahlberg, sometimes both ways on the same piece of music.

Dare, Marie
Fantasy Quintet (cello quintet)

Marie Dare (Scottish, 1902-1976) was a virtuoso cellist and double bass player. Her compositions are attractive and idiomatic, and include solo and choral vocal works, both secular and liturgical; piano pieces; and a quantity of orchestral and chamber music. Terrie Baune donated this piece to CMNC, another of her amazing finds. If someone finds a photo of her please let me know.



Diemer, Emma Lou

Sextet, flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, cello and piano

Emma Lou Diemer (American, born 1927) has a compositional style, which has varied from tonal to atonal, from traditional to experimental. She has written works for non-professional and professional performers, originally under the "Gebrauchsmusik" philosophy. The piece being played today is a challenging one, not readily accessible. We hope the brave players taking it on come to appreciate it- we will see!



Dring, Madeleine

Trio, flute, oboe and piano

Madeleine Dring (English, 1923-1977) was a composer and actress who was married to an oboist. Her style has been called "light and unpretentious." Many of her compositions were for the stage, where she often sang and played the piano. This, along with the Farrenc nonnette and the Clara Schumann piano trio, is among the few pieces being played today that most of us are familiar with. It is delightful. I would have loved to have heard her sing! The picture is from the cover of a book written about her in 2000, which also includes drawings from her notebooks.



Farrenc, Louise
Nonetto, Fl, Ob, Cl, Hn, Bn, Vn, Va, Vc, Db
Trio, clarinet, cello and piano

Louise Farrenc (French, 1804-1875) was the only female professor at the Conservatory in the 19th century, but for the first ten years of her tenure, her salary was always less than that of her male counterparts. Following the successful premiere of her Nonette in 1858, with the young Joseph Joachim performing, she demanded and finally received equal pay. Way to go, Louise Farrenc.



Holst, Imogen
String quintet with two cellos

Imogen Holst (English, 1907-1984) was the daughter of Gustav and the musical assistant of Benjamin Britten. She was also a composer, arranger, conductor, teacher and festival administrator. Her output of compositions, arrangements and edited music is extensive but has received only limited critical attention, perhaps because so much of her energy was devoted to the talents of others, including her famous father. We are always happy to find more quintets for two cellos, so this and the Marie Dare cello quintet are important pieces for CMNC.



Larsen, Libby
Four on the floor, violin, cello, bass and piano

Libby Larsen (American, born 1950) is a frequently programmed American composer. Along with composer Stephen Paulus, she is a co-founder of the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composers' Forum. Her music is noted for its "energy, optimism, rhythmic diversity, colorful orchestration, liberated tonality without harsh dissonance, and pervading lyricism."



Maconchy, Elizabeth
Clarinet quintet

Elizabeth Maconchy (English-Irish, 1907-1994) wrote 13 string quartets are regarded as the peak of her musical achievement. She also wrote prolifically for orchestra and solo instruments. Her clarinet quintet is hard to find (no YouTube) and not easy to play but I like it (this is my Saturday assignment). She was one of a group of English women composers that also included Imogen Holst.



Mendelssohn-Hensel, Fanny
String quartet in e flat

Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel (German, 1805-1847), the sister of Felix Mendelssohn, was a pianist and composer. She and Felix both had great talent, but Fanny was limited by prevailing attitudes of the time toward women. Her father wrote to her in 1820 "Music will perhaps become his [i.e. Felix's] profession, while for *you* it can and must be only an ornament."



Pejačević, Dora
Piano quartet in d minor, op. 25

Dora Pejačević (Croatian, 1885-1923), a member of the Croatian nobility, is considered a major Croatian composer. She left behind a considerable catalogue of 58 opuses including 106 compositions, mostly in late Romantic style, ranging from songs, piano works, chamber music, and several compositions for large orchestra.



Schumann, Clara
Piano trio

Clara Schumann (German, 1819-1896) was associated with two geniuses, her husband Robert Schumann and her lifelong friend Johannes Brahms, and was herself a genius of a high order. The premiere pianist of her generation, her piano trio and piano concerto are a window through which we can imagine her as “one of the most soulful pianists of the day.”



Shaw, Caroline
Punctum (string quartet)

Caroline Shaw (American, born 1982) is a New York City-based violinist, singer, and composer. She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2013 for her piece “Partita for 8 Voices.” The jury citation praised the composition as “a highly polished and inventive a cappella work uniquely embracing speech, whispers, sighs, murmurs, wordless melodies and novel vocal effects.” She is the great great granddaughter of Chang Bunker, and great great grandniece of Eng Bunker, the famous conjoined twins from then-Siam. This seems of doubtful relevance to her composing, but Wikipedia mentions it so I thought I would pass it on.



Smyth, Ethel

String quartet in e minor

String quintet with two cellos

Variations on Bonny Sweet Robin for flute, oboe and piano

Ethel Smyth (English, 1858-1944) was a prolific, famous composer who later became a leader in the movement for women's suffrage. She is also an entertaining memoirist whose writings on Brahms, among many others, are highly illuminating. We love Ethel Smyth and think she should be much more famous-hence she is the only composer of whom we are playing three works!



Walker, Gwyneth

Braintree quintet for winds

Gwyneth Walker (American, born 1949) has written over 300 compositions for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus, solo voice, and individual instruments. Her work, while appealing to modern sensibilities, is traditional and accessible in the unadorned style of American composers such as Aaron Copeland and Charles Ives.



Zwilich, Ellen Taafe
Divertimento, flute, clarinet, violin, and cello

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (American, born 1939) is the first female composer to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music. . Her early works are marked by atonal exploration, but by the late 1980s she had shifted to a post-modernist Neoromantic style. She has been called "one of America's most frequently played and genuinely popular living composers."

--- Compiled by Elizabeth Morrison