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Sexual Sonorities: Gender Implications in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Viola da Gamba and Violoncello Performance Practices

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Introduction

Associations between music and gender, which are evident not only among different types of music but also concerning instruments, have been present from the early days of musicology, and indeed influence our perceptions and practice of music today. This can be seen by examining the rosters of major American symphony orchestras. Typical gender distinctions show that more women than men play the violin and the flute, and more men than women tend to play the viola, cello, double bass, percussion, and brass instruments.[1]

These gender discrepancies reflect the age-old tradition in Western society that certain activities are more appropriate for a particular gender than for the other (as determined by men from the upper classes). In Victorian England, for instance, team sports, bicycling, and horseback riding were considered pastimes that boys and men should participate in, whereas women were expected to remain in the home to raise children and keep a tidy household. Domestic leisure activities were limited to those by which women could maintain their feminine grace and charm, such as needlework or reading. Music-making was also encouraged in the home, so long as it reinforced quietude and enhanced the musician's attractiveness as a cultured being. Such instruments as the piano and the lute were quite acceptable for a woman to play because their performance did not require much physical effort and they produced gentle sounds. Instruments which endangered a woman's attractiveness and repose, such as loud brass instruments that forced a woman to contort her face, were entirely unacceptable for a woman to pursue. These restrictions did not affect men in the same way; the physical exertions and contortions which inevitably occur while performing virtuosic music had no negative influence

[1] Analyzed from the orchestra rosters of Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Phoenix Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, and St. Louis Symphony.

upon society's perceptions of a man, and in fact would probably have brought him praise for playing with exceptional vigor. Furthermore, just as woman was expected to remain inside the home, a man's place was primarily in the public sphere, and as a result public performances by male musicians were common and expected. The idea of a woman playing music outside of her social arena was most improper.

Composers of the nineteenth century were well aware of these cultural divisions, and wrote music to fit into the private and public performance venues. There was a clear distinction between intense virtuosic solo performance music, meant to be performed by men in concert halls or by accomplished women in the privacy of their own homes; and "parlor songs," which were simple, gentle pieces for women in the home to entertain small groups of family and friends. The music which was performed often had an effect upon the reception of the performer. Regardless of gender, if a musician played a piece of solo repertoire well (such as a Beethoven piano concerto or a violin caprice), he or she would likely be described in masculine terms. A 1906 review of the pianist Minnie Coons commented on how her "slight stages of virility in the fortissimo movement undoubtedly enhanced the refreshing delicacy of her pianissimo touch."[2] Pianist Olga Samaroff once remarked, "[A]t least eighty percent of my press reviews either stated that I played like a man, or alluded to my playing like a woman. When the critic said I played like a woman, it meant that he did not like me at all."[3] In contrast, when someone played parlor music, they were expected to play it with a feminine grace—Lisa Cristiani (1827-1853), who was known for her performances of salon pieces, was described as

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[2] "Minnie Coons," *Musical Courier,* January 31, 1906, p. 24, quoted in Beth Abelson Macleod, "Whence Comes the Lady Tympanist?," *Women Performing Music: The Emergence of American Women as Instrumentalists and Conductors* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2001): 11.

[3] Olga Samaroff Stokowski, "Women in Music," *Music Clubs Magazine* 17 (September-October 1937): 7-9, 12, quoted in Macleod, 11.

playing sympathetically and elegantly.[4] The critics seemed to wish to avoid insulting the composer or perhaps even the music itself by categorizing the way in which it was performed in a manner contrary to that which was expected.

Though gender divisions at the beginning of this Victorian era were as drastic as they had ever been, Western society began to experience important changes during the end of the period and into the early twentieth century. In Britain, women earned the right to vote; it became acceptable for women to ride horses and bicycles in the straddling position; and musical instruments which were originally reserved for men began to be played by women on a more regular basis. The violin, which today is played in symphony orchestras overwhelmingly more frequently by women than by men, was originally considered to be a masculine instrument because of the strain it placed on the performer in order to play it well and the contorted facial expressions the player would invariably make during a performance. The flute was also associated with men, because of its phallic shape—it would be inappropriate for a woman to play such an instrument. As Western attitudes began to liberalize, women's choices of instruments expanded and began to cross traditional gender boundaries.

Perceptions of playing the violoncello have undergone a particularly interesting transformation from the time of its creation to the present day. As with the earlier viola da gamba, an instrument of the viol family that was similar to the cello in size and appearance, cellos were viewed as masculine instruments because of the position in which they were held. *Da gamba* refers to the fact that this bass viol was held between the legs—the cello adopted this same playing position. It would have been inappropriate for a woman to play either of these instruments, because it was necessary that the musician support the instrument between the legs

[4] Lynda MacGregor, "Cristiani, Lisa," *Oxford Music Online* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06832 (accessed April 2, 2013).

during performance. The shape of the instruments—a "waisted" body shape and a long, slender neck—was reminiscent of that of a woman; for a woman to cradle such an instrument between her legs would have invited further scandal (even male gambists were occasionally mocked with these sexual connotations). Finally, the same arguments made against female violinists were put forth here, that too much physical strength and facial contortions were necessary to play the instrument well.

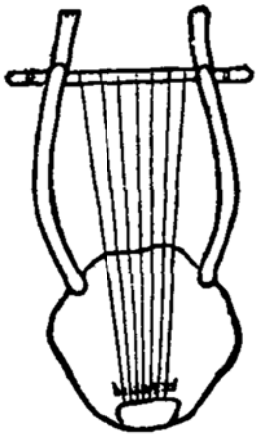
Female cellists did not enter the public spectrum in any great numbers until the turn of the twentieth century, but when they did, their numbers increased dramatically. Though not all were as lucky as the famous performers May Mukle, Beatrice Harrison, and Guilhermina Suggia, who were known throughout the world, many more women began to enter conservatories and orchestras as cellists. This was due largely in part to the increased awareness of a mechanism which had been around since the 1600s, but was not put into common use for solo performances until the last half of the nineteenth century—the endpin. This device allowed women to adopt alternative playing positions in which they could maintain their feminine grace, and as a result they could perform in public spaces without tarnishing their reputations.

Chapter 1

History of the Development of the Violoncello

When asked to call to mind an "early cello," one likely imagines a viola da gamba or another member of the viol family being played in a Renaissance court. However, bowed string instruments have a rich and lengthy history going back thousands of years in many parts of the world. Ironically enough, the precursor to plucked stringed instruments was likely the bow itself—rather, a hunting bow. In ages past, it was found that when the tightly drawn string was plucked, a pitch was produced.[5] Naturally, it must have been discovered that bowstrings of varying thickness, length, and tautness produced different pitches when plucked. Further experimentation upon this principle led to the application of multiple strings to a single instrumental body, and thus the earliest stringed instruments came into being.

Most early bowed stringed instruments were variations upon the lyre, a plucked stringed instrument with Middle Eastern origins dating from the third millennium BCE (Figure 1). All lyres share some basic characteristics—two bars or "arms" extend upwards from the resonating body of the instrument, and a cross bar connects them at the top of the instrument. The strings, which could be plucked either with the fingers or a plectrum to alter the timbre of the sound, extend downward from this crossbar and are attached to the bottom of the resonator. All of the strings are the same length, yet are of varying thicknesses to create distinct pitches. The number of strings on a

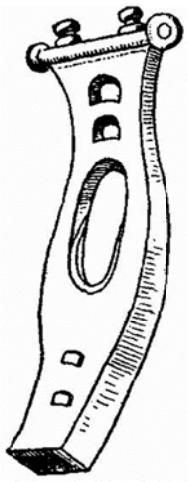


ıncient Greek
drawing on a
British
ılfred J.
ncyclopaedia
(1911).

[5] Kathleen Schlesinger, *Instruments of the Modern Orchestra & Early Records of the Precursors of the Violin Family* (London: William Reeves, 1969), 252.

lyre was generally determined by the tastes of the region in order to accommodate the preferred musical mode—Dorian, Phrygian, etc. Some later lyres featured an accessory resembling a tail-piece called *hypolyrios,* which acted rather like a modern bridge lifting the strings off the body of the instrument while simultaneously securing them in place.[6]

The kithara was the first plucked stringed instrument whose body was constructed of a front and a back connected by sides of equal width (Figure 2); this is a characteristic of the instruments in the modern violin family, and was unique to the kithara among its contemporary instruments. What would have been the "arms" of the lyre now simply extended from the sound-chest, and the cross bar was affixed between them. We learn from Plutarch that the box-tailpiece, another attribute of modern string instruments, was added to the kithara around the seventh century BCE.[7]



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Music was an essential part of Greek life, as is evidenced by the inclusion of musical instruments in multiple forms of iconography. Though both lyres and kitharas are featured in mythological settings, paintings and sculptures show us that each instrument belonged to a different portion of society. Their distribution may reflect some of the first documented evidence we have of gender stratification in the Western musical world. Lyrists are depicted in common dress, and men and women are equally shown as performers. Lyres were invariably lighter than kitharas, as the bodies of the instruments were made of less material than kitharas, required less skill to play, and produced a soft and calming sound. This is not to say that they were thought unworthy of appreciation; such well-known figures of the day as Sappho and

[6] Ibid., 290-291.
[7] For further reading on kithara construction, see Ibid., 290-296.

Pythagoras often played upon them.[8] Lyres were often used as teaching tools, at domestic gatherings, or to provide background music at banquets.

In contrast, kitharas were larger and louder than lyres, making them more suited to professional settings such as the national games. They also required a higher degree of skill to learn well; as such, kithara players (*citharœdes* if singing or *citharistas* if not) garnered much more respect than lyrists. Kitharas were used both as an accompaniment to vocal music and as solo instruments.[9] The type of performance demanded determined the method with which the instrumentalist played. If he intended to accompany himself whilst performing a vocal piece, the *citharœdus* would pluck the strings with his fingers to produce a slightly dampened sound, so that his voice might be heard above the instrument. If performing a solo instrumental piece, however, the *citharista* plucked the strings with a plectrum, creating a louder and more percussive sound.

References to female *citharistas* or *citharœdes* are few and far-between.[10] One of the Muses is occasionally depicted with a kithara.[11] However, it is conceivable that the Muses might only play the kithara because of their elevated status as goddesses in Greek mythology; or perhaps because of their association with Apollo, the god of music and poetry, who was said to play the kithara himself.[12] There is also a record of Hedea, a daughter of Hermesianax, winning a kithara-singing competition at the Sebasteia in Athens. Yet it is also mentioned that the latter

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[8] Ibid., 301-302
[9] Ibid., 296-297.
[10] "The kitharode or singer to the kithara, a highly trained or professional musician, *always male*, who wore a distinctive formal costume…" (italics added) For further reading on kithara performance practices, see Martha Maas, "Kithara," *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/15077 (accessed February 24, 2013).
[11] Warren Anderson and Thomas J. Mathiesen, "Muses," *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19396 (accessed February 24, 2013).
[12] Schlesinger, 300.

competed in the *paides* (boys) category.[13] The case of Hedea reflects the all-too-familiar story of a young female protégée competing in what is clearly marked as a man's field. Though her talent is unmistakable—enough for her to win the contest—the fact that there were not enough women to merit their own category of competition suggests that pursuing a career as a *citharista* or *citharœdus* was less strongly encouraged for young women in Greek society than it was for men.

As the inhabitants of the Mediterranean world proliferated throughout Europe over roughly the next thousand years, so too did their traditions and their musical instruments. The resultant permutations of the originals are just as numerous as the cultures with which they came into contact. During the 11th century AD, the use of the bow was introduced to the players of stringed instruments from Islamic Spain and Byzantium. These early bows were always convex, harkening back to their hunting-bow origins, and strung with horsehair or a comparable material. The use of the bow likely came into fashion in order to facilitate a need for a drone accompaniment to the voice and/or other instruments. Early bridges on string instruments were mostly flat, so this would have been an easy task. As the need arose for a melodic line to be played upon bowed instruments, instrument-makers began to create bridges that were more curved.[14] This allowed strings to be played either simultaneously or individually.

Most early bowed instruments were collectively called "fiddles," though today we think of that term to essentially refer to violins. Such instruments include the rebec and the Welsh crwth.[15] Though the members of the viol family certainly evolved from some fiddle-type

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[13] Matthew Dillon, "Did Parthenoi Attend the Olympic Games? Girls and Women Competing, Spectating, and Carrying out Cult Roles at Greek Religious Festivals," *Hermes* 128. Bd., H. 4 (2000): 462-463, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4477389 (accessed February 24, 2013).
[14] Werner Bachmann et al, "Bow," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03753 (accessed February 25, 2013).
[15] Mary Remnant, "Fiddle," *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09596 (accessed February 25, 2013).

instrument, the exact nature of the evolution of these instruments remains unclear. I will discuss some of the possible paths of development of these instruments, but as I will later be discussing violoncello performance, I will attempt to highlight the immediate precursors of the viola da gamba, specifically.

First, let us follow one of the paths of the lyre from the Mediterranean. There is artistic evidence of people playing lyres in Austria and Hungary from as early as the sixth century BCE. The spread of the Germanic peoples northwards to the British Isles led to the development of the crwth in Wales. This instrument, though originally plucked, was played with a bow from about the 11th century AD, one of the first of its kind in Britain. It resembled the modern violin in several ways. Unlike the lyre and kithara, the crwth had a distinct neck, meaning the player could press down on a string to alter the pitch at will. It also has a tailpiece to which the strings are attached, and a bridge by which they are suspended over the body of the instrument.[16] Arguably the way in which the crwth most resembled modern string instruments was in the construction of the body of the instrument itself. Like the kithara, the crwth had all the same "body parts" as a violin—"a back and a belly held together by the ribs."[17] However, the crwth itself was really only ever a standard in Wales itself, and by the 18th century had even lost popularity there in favor of more widespread European bowed instruments.[18] It is therefore unlikely that it is a direct ancestor of the viol family, though it can without question be accepted as a "cousin."

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[16] Bethan Miles and Robert Evans, "Crwth," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52977 (accessed February 25, 2013).
[17] Edmund S.J. van der Straeten, *History of the Violoncello, the Viol da Gamba, their Precursors and Collateral Instruments: With Biographies of all the most Eminent Players of Every Country* (London: William Reeves, 1969), 3.
[18] Lyn Davies et al, "Wales," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/41108 (accessed February 25, 2013).

The rebec was a contemporary of the crwth in Western music (Figure 3). A descendent of the Arab "rabāb" and the Byzantine "lyra," the rebec was shaped rather like one half of a pear. The flat top half of the instrument was fixed to a hollow bottom half, which gave it its elongated shape. The average rebec had three sheep-gut strings, though any number of strings between one and five was not unusual. Early playing positions mirrored the modern conception of holding the instrument at the shoulder, though later on it became customary to hold the rebec on the chest or under the armpit.[19] An alternative way of holding the rebec was *a gamba,* or resting between the knees or on the lap. Interestingly, by the 14th century this playing position for bowed instruments had fallen out of style in most of Europe, except in Aragon. This playing style reemerged two centuries later on Renaissance viols.[20]

rebec by
(2009).

The sound of the rebec has been described as "reedy and harsh," yet rebec players were often employed by noble households. This may simply be due to the fact that the sound of the instrument carried well, and thus could more easily be heard in a performance outdoors or in a crowded room. There is evidence to suggest that the rebec was viewed on the whole as being a lower class of instrument. An edict in France forbade the use of viols in taverns because the viol was so highly esteemed an instrument, whereas there was no such rule regarding the rebec.[21] The viol was clearly the preferred instrument of higher musical society, and is the basis for the whole viol family from which our modern bowed instruments emerged. However, we must

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[19] Mary Remnant, "Rebec, Fiddle and Crowd in England," *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association* 95th Sess. (1968-1969), 19, http://www.jstor.org/stable/765914 (accessed February 25, 2013).
[20] Ian Woodfield and Lucy Robinson, "Viol," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29435 (accessed February 25, 2013).
[21] Schlesinger, 233.

acknowledge the Aragonese rebecs if for no other reason than their existence preserved the tradition of playing *a gamba,* leading to the viola da gamba and ultimately the violoncello.

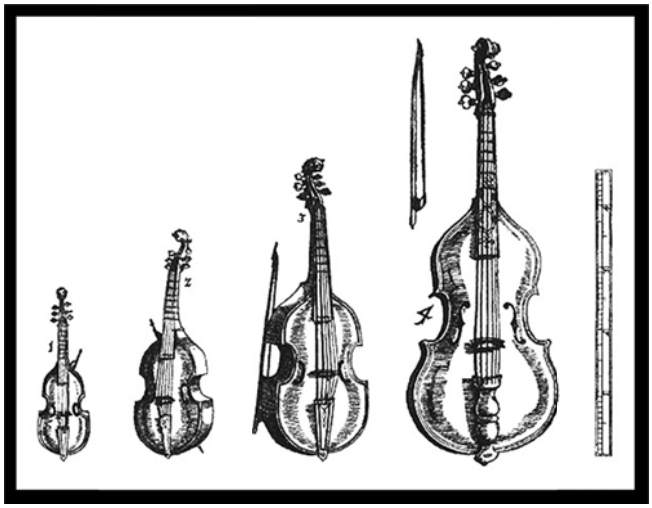
Now we are left with the difficult question of the origins of the viol family itself. Kathleen Schlesinger presents an interesting and effective argument for the origin of viols. She suggests the kithara as their most likely ancestor, not only because it bears striking resemblances to them in terms of construction, but also, she argues, because they share etymological roots. In her analysis, she presents the following evolutionary tree: The kithara, also sometimes known as the fidicula, spread out from the Mediterranean to the rest of Europe. Naturally, it assumed different names and different forms between regions, while retaining some of its original characteristics. In England and Germany, the fidicula became the fidel, fidula, or fiddle. Two variants developed in Spain—that which was plucked (the guitarra, eventually the Spanish guitar) and that which was bowed (Spanish viguela). This latter instrument, in turn, was adopted by the French as the vielle or viole, and finally emerged in Italy as the viola or violino.[22] Each of these instruments shares the characteristic body construction of the kithara, a front and a back piece attached by two ribs of equal width. Yet the musical needs of each of these cultures precipitated varying performance practices and unique styles of music, resulting in several distinct, important instruments.

Early Spanish viols depicted in fifteenth-century iconography resemble a combination between a violin and a guitar. They have long, narrow necks, lateral tuning pegs, thin ribs, soundholes, and have a "waist" but with marked corners. The neck of this instrument had frets, and a central rose on the body of the instrument beneath the strings, which are attached to a bar on the belly of the instrument. Regardless of the size of the instrument, most viols had six strings tuned in such a way that the interval between the two middle strings was a major third

[22] From a table in Ibid., 245.

and between all the other strings a perfect fourth. The curved bridge characteristic of modern stringed instruments was not present; rather, the strings passed over a straight bar which was affixed to the belly of the instrument. As such, these instruments were well-suited to accompany solo instruments or voices, but could not hold their own as distinct voices melodic voices in a polyphonic texture. However, the instrument underwent an important change in 17th-century Italy: a curved bridge was added. This added a great versatility to the instrument, as it could now function as a solo voice *or* as a drone, and ultimately led to the creation of the viol consort. Throughout its history the viol was made in many sizes, but the consort typically only consisted of a treble, tenor, and bass viol. All viols were played in an upright position; a treble viol was small enough that it could be held on the lap of the performer, but tenor and bass viols generally needed to be supported on the calves. As the viol consort became more well-known as a performing entity, it became necessary to differentiate between the sizes of viol, which had previously all been simply called "viols." Though all viols were held in an upright position, treble viols were small enough that they could be held on the performers lap, whereas the tenor and bass viols needed to be supported on the calves. [23] It is this latter playing position, known as *a gamba* (as previously used for some Spanish rebecs), that led to the labeling of the tenor and bass members of the viol formally as *viola da gambas.*

[23] For a further discussion of viols see Woodfield and Robinson.



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The viol da gamba has a bridge, fingerboard, tailpiece, tuning pegs, soundholes, and a "waisted" body shape with pointed corners. Like other members of the viol family, the fingerboard of the gamba is fretted.[24] The six strings of the gamba are tuned in the same intervallic pattern as the rest of the viols (mostly in fourths with one third in the middle). Gambas were built in four different sizes (Figure 4), which had different standard tunings in different registers, viz.: bass—D, G, C, E, A, D'; tenor and alto—G, C, F, A, D', G'; treble—D, G, C', E', A', D".[25]

De Machy called the viola da gamba the best imitator of the human voice in his preface to the *Pièces de Violle* (1685).[26] Feminine words are often used to describe its sound, as *"lieblich"* was used by Praetorius in 1619; in this instance, *lieblich* may be taken to mean "lovely," "charming," "pleasing," or "sweet." He also described them as having "a far lovelier resonance than the…instruments which are held on the arm."[27] This sound was quite pleasant when heard on its own, and also worked well as an accompanying voice in duos or ensembles. Yet over time as the violin overtook other treble solo instruments such as the cornet and the viola in consorts, a desire arose to have a stronger solo voice in the bass section to match it, a role the

[24] Elizabeth Cowling, *The Cello* (London & Sydney: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1975), 54.
[25] Ibid., 19-21.
[26] John Rutledge, "How Did the Viola da Gamba Sound?," *Early Music* 7, no. 1 (January 1979): 63, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3126385 (accessed February 26, 2013).
[27] Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum,* II. *De organographia* (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), facsimile (Basel & New York, 1963), quoted in Rutledge, "How Did the Viola da Gamba Sound?," 63.

gamba could not properly fill in its current iteration, being too weak in tone and capacity in comparison to the violin.[28]

It is now important to bring into discussion the violins, a family of instruments quite closely related to the viols. This group of instruments, though similar to the viols and developed almost contemporaneously with them, were meant to be solo instruments, and thus took a slightly different evolutionary pathway. Like the viols, the bodies of these instruments have a waisted shape with pointed corners. They also consist of a back and a belly joined by two ribs, though whereas the front and back pieces of viols are typically flush with the ribs, those of the violins extend slightly beyond the ribs.[29] Viols were often described as having a moderate, pure, resonant, tender, and delicate sound; in contrast, violins were made to sound sharp and dazzling, and were therefore much better suited to performances in concert halls. This distinct timbral difference is likely due to the tension of the strings being much higher on a violin than on a viol.[30] Violins were frequently associated with traveling dancing masters, who would accompany their pupils as they practiced with simple melodies which they often composed themselves. These teachers were in high demand throughout Europe by members of the upper and middle classes, though the masters themselves may have come from any social background.[31] Bridges on viols were nearly flat so that multiple strings could be played at once, facilitating the instruments' use as a backing drone. The bridges of violins, however, are

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[28] Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski, introduction to *The Violoncello and its History* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), 37.
[29] Ibid., 39.
[30] Hubert le Blanc, *Défense de la Basse de Viole coutre les enterprises du violon et les pretentions du violoncelle* (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1740; Geneva: Minkoff, 1975), quoted in John Rutledge, "Hubert Le Blanc's Concept of Viol Sound," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* 17 (1980), 33.
[31] David D. Boyden et al, "Violin," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/41161pg1 (accessed April 7, 2013).

significantly more curved so that the strings may be played individually. This was done so that violins could more easily play a melodic line, and therefore be successful as solo instruments.[32]

The violoncello is the bass member of this family of instruments. Though very clearly a violin in structure, it shares some roots with the viol family, specifically with the viol da gamba (Figure 5). To begin with, the cello is held in the *a gamba* position between the legs resting on the calves. The instrument was initially known as the bass violin, but the name present name "violoncello" literally translates from Italian to "small large viol."[33] This results

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from the 16th-century usage of the word "violone" to refer to the bass members of the viol family.[34] Though cellos typically have four strings, the five-string cello was not unheard of; such prolific composers as J.S. Bach occasionally wrote with the five-string in mind. As on early string instruments, cellos had strings made of gut, but the lowest string was occasionally wound with wire to create a louder sound.[35]

Though meant for different methods of performance in different settings, the viola da gamba and the cello remained contemporaneous instruments into the eighteenth century. Gambas were typically used in group performance settings as backing instruments; if they were

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[32] Wasielewski, 40.
[33] Stephen Bonta et al, "Violoncello," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44041 (accessed February 27, 2013).
[34] Tharald Borgir et al, "Violone," *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29478 (accessed February 27, 2013).
[35] Bonta et al.

used in a solo capacity, it was in a smaller space where its softer tones might have been easier to hear. In contrast, the louder and more striking sound of the cello was better suited for larger, more public performance spaces. These differences in sound and typical performance venues reflect the kinds of people associated with each instrument. Cellos performed upon in public spaces would have been utilized by members of society who frequented those areas; until the twentieth century, this was almost entirely limited to men. In contrast, because the gamba was commonly used in more private settings, it was not unheard of for women to play this instrument. In the following section, I will discuss the social position and implications of female gambists in Europe until the eighteenth century.

Chapter 2

Female Gambists in Europe through the Eighteenth Century

The viola da gamba was immensely popular throughout Europe from the time of its inception until it was ultimately usurped by the violoncello in the late 1700s. It was to be found in all types of performance settings, from being used as a solo instrument to contributing to the bass sections of orchestras. The gamba was praised for its versatility as a solo and ensemble instrument, as well as for its pleasant timbre. Though they are from different families of string instruments, the gamba is often thought of as the precursor to the cello, and indeed the gamba's influence is clearly apparent in the younger instrument. It resembled the modern cello in appearance—it had a long, slender neck and a waisted body shape. The two instruments occupied similar places in the bass sections of string consorts, although the cello has a louder sound and a more soloistic tonal quality. As its name suggests, the most common method for playing the viola da gamba was to place the instrument between the legs and rest it either on the ground or on the calves, a position which the cello would later adopt. This playing position, rare among instruments, caused moral complications for some musicians; for us, these highlight important issues of conservatism and gender stratification in Renaissance (and eventually Victorian) society.

Because the instrument was shaped rather like a woman and because of the way it was held, the gamba was frequently associated with sexual innuendo, which is preserved in bawdy poetry and plays. While the chief purpose of these innuendos was of course to amuse the audience (and perhaps to shock some of the more prudish theatre-goers), the connotations of the viola da gamba were occasionally used to comment upon the position of women in English

Renaissance society, particularly regarding musical prowess. Being able to play a musical instrument was considered an excellent skill for anyone to have, and it was expected that respectable young gentlemen and ladies would learn to play an instrument. However, for young women, music-making was seen as vehicle through which they might enhance their sexual attractiveness. Renaissance social conventions dictated that women should not hold that kind of power, and certainly not in public settings. As a result, though musical education for women continued throughout this period, public musical performance by women was discouraged.[36]

As early as the 1550s, Italian poet Giovan Francesco Straparola included a riddle in his work *Le piacevoli notti* which the speaker claims to be about a viola da gamba, yet upon a first reading might just as easily be about sexual congress:

> Gentle dames, I go to find
> What aye to me is blythe and kind,
> And having found it, next I ween
> I set it straight my knees between;
> And then I rouse the life that dwells
> Within, and soon its virtue tells.
> As to and fro my hand I sway,
> Beneath my touch sweet ardours play -
> Delights which might a savage move,
> And make you faint through too much love.[37]

Straparola's stories quickly spread throughout Europe, and were adapted by authors in several countries. Larivey's 1572 interpretation reveals that a similar opinion of the nature of the gamba was held in France. His reiteration of this riddle, now constructed as a sonnet, is in some ways even more graphic than the original Italian; in the last few lines he describes the gambist using two fingers instead of one to accomplish her pleasure, which may be taken to mean either the desired sound of the instrument or achieving sexual release:

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[36] Linda Phyllis Austern, "'Sing Againe Syren': The Female Musician and Sexual Enchantment in Elizabethan Life and Literature, *Renaissance Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 431, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2862078 (accessed March 8, 2013).

[37] Translation taken from Giovanni Francesco Straparola, *The Facetious Nights of Straparola*, trans. W. G. Waters (London: Privately Printed for Members of the Society of Bibliophiles, 1901), e-book in SurLaLune Fairy Tales, http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/facetiousnights/ (accessed March 6, 2013).

> Et si par fois son nerf devient lasche et s'abaisse,
> Avecques les deux doigts si bien je le redresse,
> Que plus qu'auparavant j'en tire du plaisir.[38]

Lewd comments and witty remarks were a literary staple in many parts of Europe at the time; Renaissance playwrights were particularly fond of these conventions. William Shakespeare had a go at the gamba in his famous play *Twelfth Night,* when Sir Toby Belch says of his companion Sir Andrew Augecheek that he "plays o' the viol-de-gamboys, and speaks three or four languages word for word without book, and hath all the good gifts of nature."[39] In the context of the play, the audience is aware that this "commendation" is meant ironically, but when examined with contemporary views of the viola da gamba, we see more specifically that with his mention of the instrument that perhaps Sir Toby is implying that Sir Andrew is sexually inadequate and so must play on a gamba in place of having a real lover. Thomas Middleton, a contemporary of Shakespeare's, also wrote a number of plays in which the viola da gamba is used in instances of double entendre. In his 1606 play *A Trick to Catch the Old One,* the character Onesiphorus speaks thusly regarding his niece's preparation for matrimony: "She now remains at London…to learn fashions, practise music; the voice between her lips, and the viol between her legs; she'll be fit for a consort very speedily."[40] One may, of course, take his comment at face value: this is, of course appropriate training for a young lady intent on joining a musical ensemble (consort). However, another primary definition of the word "consort" is "spouse." When read in this context, Middleton is referencing the physical position of holding a viola da gamba and the way in which it resembles the sexual embrace. Beyond that, he even

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[38] French text found in Gustav Ungerer, "The Viol da Gamba as a Sexual Metaphor in Elizabethan Music and Literature," *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 20, no. 2 (1984): 82.
[39] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night,* act 1, scene 3. Quoted in Ibid., 79.
[40] Thomas Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One,* act 1, scene 1, in Chris Cleary's Homepage, http://www.tech.org/~cleary/tcoo.html (accessed March 8, 2013).

suggests acts of foreplay when Onesiphorus speaks of "the voice between her lips;" one may assume that Middleton means to imply more than her vocal readiness.

Middleton and co-author Thomas Dekker use the viola da gamba to comment on social conventions of the time in their play *The Roaring Girl.* This work, written ca. 1611, focuses on the life of Mary Frith, sometimes known as "Moll Cutpurse." Moll was quite well-known in London in her day; this was partially due to her frequent involvement in criminal activities including the selling of stolen property and holding the legal but questionable office of a brothel madam, but mainly because she frequently dressed and acted as a man. It is likely that Moll was trained in music as a young girl, being expected to use it in polite, private company as a means by which to demonstrate her good breeding. However, by her early twenties, Moll was already making a name for herself in the public sphere by going out in men's clothing and performing music and making speeches onstage.[41] Middleton and Dekker bring out Moll's masculine attributes in *The Roaring Girl* in several ways, including giving her a pipe, putting her in masculine dress, and having her play the viola da gamba. This was an improper instrument for a woman to play during this time, as Moll is reminded by the character Sebastian in Act 4: "There be a thousand close dames that will call the viol an unmannerly instrument for a woman and therefore talk broadly of thee…" Moll is clearly unperturbed by this knowledge, and comments that she doesn't care what such people think, "and thus I dream." In this case, "dreaming" is analogous to the act of performing music. This is evidenced as Sebastian requests to hear Moll's dream, and she begins to play and sing. This brings forth further comment on the physical position required for playing the viola da gamba. Upon finishing the song, Moll references the dream imagery again to refer to her playing: "Hang up the viol now, sir: all this while I was in a

[41] For further information on Mary Frith, see Valerie Frith, "'Never was any Woman Like Her': Mary Frith, Commonly Called Mal Cutpurse," in *Women & History: Voices of Early Modern England,* ed. Valerie Frith (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1995), 239-242.

dream; one shall lie rudely then, but being awake, I keep my legs together."[42] Here, Moll makes a distinction between the states of playing music and being regularly awake. Just because she must sit in this suggestive position to play her instrument does not mean that she is "open" in any other sense of the word. It may be that Middleton and Dekker simply included this as an excuse for more sexual puns. However, it is apparent to me that Moll is reclaiming the instrument for female musicians, and is making one of the earliest stands for women's rights and independence in England.

Shortly after the turn of the seventeenth century, we see more evidence of young ladies playing on the gamba, though it is likely that they were still primarily confined to performances in the home. The rise of the Stuarts to power in England truly brought forth the age of the viol in England. It became customary for the English household to have a "chest of viols" from which visitors to the home might partake, and all would participate in music-making. It seems likely that such a custom was only practiced by families who were more financially secure. To purchase enough viols to form a full consort was no doubt a rather expensive venture. Thus, while female gambists may have gained ground among the upper crust of society, they probably kept their place as the butt of sexual jokes in the lower classes. Nevertheless, the fact that there are mentions of praiseworthy lady gambists in Stuart England demonstrates not only a growing appreciation for the instrument, but for female musicians as a whole. [43]

Female gambists prospered throughout the seventeenth century not only in England, but also in mainland Europe. Dutch paintings from the seventeenth century represent relatively

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[42] Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl,* act 4, scene 1, in Cleary, http://www.tech.org/~cleary/roar.html (accessed March 10, 2013).

[43] For more information on lady gambists in Stuart England see Jeffrey Pulver, "The Viols in England," *Proceedings of the Musical Association,* 47th Sess. (1920-1921): 10, http://www.jstor.org/stable /765680 (accessed March 5, 2013).

equal numbers of men and women playing the instrument.[44] There also seems to have been a veritable explosion of popularity with the instrument in the French courts. Straeten mentions no fewer than eleven prominent lady gambists in association with the French court and important families, including lady gambists in the royal private music, one of the daughters of the most renowned violist of the time Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe, and even Princess Marie Adélaïde, the sixth child of King Louis XV.[45] High fashion conventions of the period dictated that ladies wear voluminous hoop skirts which concealed the shape of the lower half of the body.[46] It would be easy for a woman wearing such an outfit to passably play a viola da gamba; their posture (and undergarments) would easily be concealed, and so there was little fear of indecent exposure. Again, this was likely a more common practice among those who could afford it. Women in the lower classes who could not afford such extravagant clothing would not have been found playing upon the gamba in the public sphere.

As England approached the age of the cello at the end of the eighteenth century, the number of female gambists—particularly those performing outside the home—began to dwindle, although two particularly prolific women are certainly worth noting. Mrs. Sarah Ottey was known to have given several concerts in the early 1720s, and played not only the viola da gamba but also the harpsichord and the violin. To play three instruments well enough to give a public performance is an impressive feat for any performer, but especially for a woman during this time

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[44] Ian F. Finlay, "Musical Instruments in 17th-Century Dutch Paintings," *The Galpin Society Journal* 6 (July 1953): 57, http://www.jstor.org/stable/841717 (accessed March 5, 2013).

[45] For more female French gambists see Edmund Sebastian Joseph van der Straeten, *History of the Violoncello, the Viol da Gamba, their Precursors and Collateral Instruments: [with Biographies of all the most Eminent Players of every Country]* (London: Travis & Emery, 1969), 109-110.

[46] See Stella Blum, *Eighteenth-Century French Fashion Plates in Full Color: 64 Engravings from the "Galerie Des Modes," 1778-1787* (New York: Dover Publications, 1982), 27-33.

in English history. Though the location and date of her first performance remains unknown, her final public performance was at the Theatre Royal in February 1723.[47]

One of the final well-known English gamba players was Ann Ford. Her case is an excellent study of the growing cultural restrictions surrounding public performance by female musicians during the last half of the eighteenth century. Well-bred ladies were still expected to be accomplished in music, and yet their performances were increasingly limited to the privacy of the home. It was expected that a woman be entirely dependent upon her husband's livelihood; if it appeared that she could have a career of her own without relying on a man, in music or otherwise, this would be a demonstration that she was unwilling to conform to domestic standards, giving the impression that she was "out of control." If a woman did anything more than raise children and oversee the household, she would most certainly be accused of disrupting social boundaries.[48]

Ford is a prime example of a woman who strove to test these limits. She was quite an accomplished musician by any standards, being proficient in singing and in playing the English guitar, musical glasses, and viola da gamba. She had a strong desire to perform in public, yet her father insisted that she abide by social norms and restricted her performances to private gatherings at their home. Vocal performances by women were considered acceptable; however, because she desired to perform on her viola da gamba, she was in danger of crossing the boundaries of propriety.[49] In eighteenth-century England, the gamba was considered a man's instrument, because of the position involved in its performance, its suggestive shape, and the

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[47] F.G.E., "Lady Violinists," *The Musical Times* 47, no. 764 (Oct. 1906): 662, http://www.jstor.org/stable/903021 (accessed March 10, 2013).
[48] Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-cultural Formation in Eighteenth-century England,* (Cambridgeshire: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 39-40.
[49] Michael Rosenthal, "Thomas Gainsborough's *Ann Ford," The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 4 (Dec. 1998): 649, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3051317 (accessed March 5, 2013).

physical exertion believed necessary required to play it well.[50] Despite these conventions, Ford was persistent in her efforts to perform on her instrument, and repeatedly sought to give public concerts in London in the late 1750s and early 60s. She was eventually successful, giving her first public concert in March 1760, but not before her father had her arrested twice in order to prevent her from appearing in public.

Ford could have gotten by without her music had she so chosen. Her private performances captivated many a worthy suitor who would have been more than willing to support her financially in exchange for her fidelity and subservience. Most notably, the earl of Jersey offered her £800 per year to be his mistress. This was beneath Ford's moral code, however, and rather than prostitute her body to this man, she decided instead that she could make a perfectly acceptable living on her own giving musical performances. In an attempt to sabotage this plan, Lord Jersey organized an event on the same evening as one of her concerts to attempt to draw the attending crowd in a different direction. Unfortunately for him, this had little effect on the popularity of the performance, as Ford made £1500 in profits from the event, and proceeded to write a strongly-worded (and widely-circulated) letter to his Lordship regarding her mistreatment at his hand. Lord Jersey wrote a reply, to which Ford responded, and so on, until a massive scandal developed around the whole affair. It is likely that these events were in large part responsible for the popularity of Ford's concerts, rather than her musical ability alone.[51]

Thomas Gainsborough's *Ann Ford,* a portrait of the musician (who likely had some say in certain aspects of the piece), reveals this young woman's strong-willed attitude and her willingness to cross the bounds of domesticity. She bears the outward appearance of a well-bred lady, wearing an appropriate dress and holding an English lute, which was played almost

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[50] Simon McVeigh, *Concert life in London from Mozart to Haydn*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 87.
[51] Rosenthal, 652-653.

exclusively by women in the eighteenth century. However, there are several aspects of the portrait that indicate her rebellious nature. She seems to be embracing the instrument, rather than holding it in a playing position; this is an evocative, romantic posture. She also sits with her legs crossed at the knee—an improper posture for women. Finally, her preferred performance instrument, the viola da gamba, is present in the picture yet in the background and somewhat masked in shadow, as if to suggest the questionable position she held when she played on it in public.[52]

Over the course of the gamba's history, lady gambists were often viewed as curiosities, and though many were quite talented their skill on the instrument tended to come as a shock to members of the general public. Gainsborough himself said that Miss Ford was "partly admired & partly laugh'd at at every Tea-Table;"[53] it seems that those who saw her perform were impressed, but were rather unsure what to think of her playing in public on such an instrument. As in the case of Mrs. Ottey, if a woman gave a public performance during which she played on a wide variety of musical instruments she would be considered a spectacle, though certainly this would have been the case with male musicians as well. Regardless, there was certainly a double standard for male and female gamba players. Perhaps this was a good thing for female gambists in the grand scheme of things. If they could find a way to perform in public, their concerts would be highly attended for the sheer novelty of it. Though this is, admittedly, the wrong reason that a person should be known for skill on an instrument, at the very least it would allow the performer to be recognized and publicized. For a woman to be known for her musical prowess outside of the home—in the man's domain—was an impressive achievement; but she would have to be careful in the manner in which she presented herself, lest she bring unwanted

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[52] For a full analysis of Thomas Gainsborough's *Ann Ford,* see Ibid., 654-656.
[53] Mary Woodall, ed., *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough* (London: Lund, Humphries, 1963): 115, quoted in Rosenthal, 658.

notoriety upon herself and her family. These views towards women continued with little change until almost the end of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 3

The Social Position of Women and Female Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Europe

The nineteenth century was a time of prosperity for the United States and many European countries. Many of the economic, political, and social conventions of the time can be connected with the ideals of Victorian England. Situated at the close of the Industrial Revolution, this was a time of economic growth for the upper and middle classes. Though society as a whole certainly prospered during this era, women continued to experience oppression in many facets of their lives. Yet as growing numbers of women entered the workforce, ideas about women's liberation began to spread and women challenged their social position. Emerging from the lower ranks of society, this group fought against gender-based discrimination laws and in favor of the right to vote.

Upper- and middle-class Victorian women were not expected to earn an income after they were married. Rather, they were to depend upon their husband's salary, and spend the rest of their lives as faithful members of the Cult of Domesticity fulfilling the ever-important duties of subservience to their husbands, bearing and raising children, and maintaining the household.[54] During economic downturns, a woman might take in domestic jobs such as sewing or laundry; however, these activities would be hidden from the neighbors, as any display of a married woman doing work would bring disgrace upon her household.[55] If a married woman did leave the home, she could engage in such benign activities as attending church, visiting friends, and engaging in philanthropy. Victorian wives held the interesting social position of essentially being confined to domestic duties and thus not being able to realize her full potential, while

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[54] Marilyn Yalom, "Victorian Wives on Both Sides of the Atlantic," *A History of the Wife* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2001): 181.

[55] Rachel G. Fuchs and Victoria E. Thompson, "Working for Wages," *Women in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): 61.

being highly respected for maintaining a well-kept household and being a good, obedient wife. This often included satisfying the husband sexually, whether or not the woman desired intercourse; she could be sued for refusing him his "conjugal rights." Further, British law allowed a man to beat his wife, and it was very difficult if not impossible for a woman to escape an abusive marriage unless the beatings endangered her life. An 1855 pamphlet written by Mrs. Caroline Sheridan Norton, who was attempting to gain full separation from her husband, contained the following information on the status of nineteenth-century marriage laws:

> An English wife may not leave her husband's house…
>
> If her husband take proceedings for a divorce, she is not, in the first instance, allowed to defend herself…She is not represented by attorney, nor permitted to be considered a party to the suit between him and her supposed lover, for "damages."
>
> If an English wife be guilty of infidelity, her husband can divorce her so as to marry again; but she cannot divorce the husband…however profligate he may be.[56]

This document was an important step toward marital reforms, and in 1857 the Divorce Act or Matrimonial Causes Act provided *slightly* more divorce rights for a woman—specifically, she could divorce her husband on the grounds of adultery, if she could prove that it was aggravated by desertion, cruelty, rape, "buggery," or bestiality; this was a double standard, as men could still divorce solely on the grounds of adultery, and was not remedied until 1929. If a woman was successful in obtaining a divorce, however, this Act allowed her to regain all the property rights of an unmarried woman. This did not change the life of women trapped in potentially dangerous marriages, but it was a step in the right direction.[57] The double standards between women and men in the domestic sphere were common in many areas of Victorian life, including the economic sector, which will be addressed shortly. It was economically advantageous for a

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[56] The Hon. Mrs. Norton, *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage and Divorce Bill* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855): 9-11, quoted in Yalom, 187.
[57] For more information on the marital issues life of Victorian wives, see Yalom, 175-225.

woman to marry; yet in doing so, she gave up her rights, her independence, and—in the worst-case scenarios—her own safety.

Single women in the lower and middle classes worked for wages outside the home in increasing numbers during the nineteenth century, often entering the workplace as early as the age of seven. As more and more men entered the worlds of business and finance, the growing amounts of mass-production factories in cities required an increase in the labor force. Children and unmarried women were an excellent resource to fill this need, as societal standards allowed them to be paid less than men. Most jobs for women, though they were outside the home, reflected common household duties that a married woman might be expected to perform. Weaving and participation in the textile industry were typical factory jobs for women; outside the factories, women often entered domestic service, the responsibilities of which ranged from cooking, to cleaning, to caring for the paying family's children. One could almost view this as "training" for when a woman entered into married life. Most women performed unskilled work for very low wages.

These forms of menial labor were the most common for lower- to middle-class women of the time. However, some middle- and upper-class women were lucky enough to enter careers that allowed them to choose how often and sometimes even where they worked, for comparatively good pay. Journalism was a unique opportunity for a woman to voice her opinions in public, whether they were on the latest fashions or political events. Women could do this from home if they desired, and often were able to submit their publications by disguising their identity through pen-names or only providing their initials. Female journalists who publicized their work under their own name and left the home to do their work emphasized their femininity by practicing perfect proper behavior and wearing fashionable clothing. Journalism

also occasionally allowed women to gain access to places that were generally off-limits to women, such as the stock exchange.[58]

Women's magazines were a launching point for the seeds of feminist ideas to take root and begin to circulate, even if they were not immediately recognized as such or acted upon. Whether in the factory or out in the field as a journalist, a woman being able to go to work and support herself on her own was certainly a step in the right direction towards female independence. However, life was still significantly more difficult for a single woman than for a single man.

While musicianship was a more liberating occupation than was working in a textile factory, it by no means allowed a woman all the same freedoms as did careers such as journalism, and it was certainly a much more difficult career for a woman to achieve on her own. Female musicians in England and America were placed in a difficult position during the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the physical and mental exertions required to give an interesting public performance on an instrument were viewed as much too difficult for gentlewomen to handle, and as a result this was not an acceptable career path for respectable women to pursue. On the other hand, the better qualities of music were often described in rather the same fashion as those qualities which were most highly desired in women—music was the "interpreter and the language of the emotions…It inspires, …saddens, cheers, and soothes the soul…and performs its loftiest homage as the handmade of religion."[59] It was generally believed that due to their more sensitive and delicate natures, women were by nature quite well suited to music-making. Yet any sort of performances by women outside of the home were strongly

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[58] For more information on the working woman in 19th-century Europe see Fuchs and Thompson, 61-83.
[59] George P. Upton, *Women in Music: An Essay* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1880): 18, quoted in Beth Abelson MacLeod, "'Whence Comes the Lady Tympanist?' Gender and Musical Instruments," *Women Performing Music: The Emergence of American Women as Instrumentalists and Conductors* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2001): 9.

discouraged; even if a woman was quite talented on her instrument and esteemed by her family and friends for her skill, bringing that into the public sphere was impossible without at least some level of social scrutiny. This problem was compounded by class issues of the time. A female musician of the upper class would have found it difficult to launch a career because of restrictive Victorian standards confining her to the home, but if she was able to bypass these barriers she would have been able to afford promotions of her performances. Though a lower-class woman would have found it easier to perform in a public setting (as the lower classes were less confined by the social rules of the upper crust), she would have had to rely on word-of-mouth advertising, and as a result may have only found significant recognition amongst her social and economic peers.

Certain performing situations did allow for female musicians to find a place in society. Luckily for lady vocalists, female voices are impossible to replace (with the exception of countertenors), so these performers were rather widely accepted.[60] Not only were the great prima donnas adored all over the world for their talent, self-confidence, and skill with languages—a necessary aptitude if one is to perform music from a wide variety of composers—but they were also the wealthiest non-royal women of their time. They often soared to the heights of their fame as opera stars in the grand opera houses, but would also give performances in smaller concert venues, and performed religious music in churches and/or in the context of oratorios. These women were adored by the general public, who saw their faces in shop-window posters and newspapers, by opera critics, and even by poets. The term *diva,* which came into

[60] Macleod, 9-10.

popular usage with regards to these women during this time, translates from Italian as a female deity. These women were quite literally viewed as "goddesses of voice."[61]

In contrast, female instrumentalists had a much more limited range in terms of what was considered an acceptable performance domain. Firstly, there was the issue of which instruments were and were not deemed "ladylike." Keyboard instruments, guitars, lutes and harps were within the range of instruments that ladies could play, because the instruments were generally higher in the register and produced softer sounds, reflecting the female voice; minimal physical exertion was required; and women could retain their modesty and grace while demonstrating their musical proficiency. Instruments that required more energy and concentration to play, such as brass instruments and members of the violin family, were not thought to be suitable instruments for ladies even though they also sounded higher in the register. This was in part due to the fact that women were not believed to be physically capable of handling the strain that playing these instruments would place upon them, and also because the facial and muscular contortions which women would experience in the act of performance would be unseemly.[62]

Though Victorian societal restrictions regarding gender are more obvious with respect to women, it is important to note that men were also somewhat limited in their musical instrument choices. While it is true that they had a wider range to choose from than did women, there were certain instrument, such as the piano, that were viewed as "too feminine" for men to play. Male piano virtuosos were certainly common in the symphonic setting, but to see a man playing parlor music in the home would have been a most unusual sight. Even ladies would comment on how unusual it was to see a male pianist.[63] Women were inarguably more limited than men, but in

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[61] For further information on female vocalists in late Victorian England see Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000): 141-187.
[62] MacLeod, 10.
[63] Gillett, 82.

this case it seems to be more of an issue of keeping men and women in separate spheres, rather than repressing women entirely. Parlor music was part of the woman's domain, and any man who crossed into it was in danger of diminishing his masculinity.

There were, however, certain instances of musical-instrument gendering that would seem rather absurd to a modern audience. In England, the violin in particular was deemed so inappropriate for women to play that an informal "ban" was placed on women's playing of the instrument. Though the primary reason given for this ban was that it made the woman—whose purpose was to look beautiful all the time—appear awkward and distorted, Gillett suggests that in reality, an incredibly gendered perception of the instrument itself and its close association with the devil and the macabre in general led to the extremely negative reactions to female violinists in Victorian morality.[64] The violin was also strongly associated with traveling dancing masters;[65] the thought of a woman fulfilling anything close to this independent, itinerant, public, male role would have been absolutely ghastly in the eyes of Victorian society. This is not to say that there were no female violinists in England; but they were certainly few and far between, and any praise that they received was met with just as much disapproval. Critics themselves could not provide an adequate reason as to why they so strongly condemned female violinists—in 1860, *The Spectator,* a British conservative magazine, wrote that "Female violinists are rare, the violin being, we do not know why, deemed an unfeminine instrument." Fortunately for women, perceptions began to change as more women (likely from the lower classes) began to play the instrument despite social standards. Women began to progress in such a way that the first female violin student was admitted into the already coeducational Royal Academy of Music in 1872.[66]

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[64] Ibid., 77-80.
[65] David D. Boyden et al, "Violin," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/41161 (accessed April 7, 2013).
[66] Quoted in Gillett, 81.

If nothing else, this brief period of expressed displeasure with women violinists was a Victorian construct to maintain the already stark separation between the male and female spheres.

Women began to combat these gender stratifications with the formation of ladies' orchestras. Musical groups of ladies were not unheard of in the 1850s, as one account of a concert given by the young women of Madison Female College in 1853 demonstrates (although admittedly, the reviewer was rather shocked by the presence of female string players).[67] Professional, independent ladies' orchestras originated in the German-speaking countries of Europe, though at the point of their inception they garnered about the same level of recognition as circus troupes and were viewed primarily as "novelty" orchestras. In the beginning, these groups of musicians were most often the families of successful male musicians and instrument-makers, who would occasionally participate in the orchestras and would have been helpful in handling any matters of business. The participating musicians received education from a variety of sources, including being self- or family-taught, taking private lessons, or even in some cases having gone to conservatory. Because of the demanding nature of participating in orchestras at the time, it was required that the musicians have incredible sight-reading skills, stamina, and previous experience—it was not always possible to rehearse before a performance, and the music was often very technically demanding. These groups were deemed sub-par by contemporary male orchestras if they had fewer than 500 works in their repertoire. They strove to present themselves as artists with high standards, not merely as groups of entertainers.

Instrumentation obviously depended greatly upon the repertory performed and the size of the orchestra. String consorts with piano accompaniment were common, but so were wind and even brass ensembles. Salon music was the most common type of music requested from ladies' orchestras, though in an effort by the groups to maintain their artistic integrity these short,

[67] Macleod, 9.

simple, "popular-music" pieces were frequently mixed with more substantial works. Reception of ladies' orchestras often varied depending upon the audience. They were expected to play demure, domestic salon music, which they played well and for which they received high praise. However, the true test lay with their presentation of symphonies and other larger, more impressive works. The responses given to ladies' orchestras performing this music varied from admiration at their technical skill and ability to play different kinds of music, to discomfort that women were acting outside of their designated social realm. In most cases, these women were viewed first as women—the sexual objects of men—and only secondarily as musicians. Sometimes women of these orchestras used this to their advantage, highlighting their feminine attributes in order to attract audiences.

Ladies' orchestras were an important step towards merging masculine and feminine social spheres. The most common location in which these orchestras performed was restaurants, which at the time were seen as being a part of the male sphere. Though often initially met with skepticism, upon hearing the professional quality of music these women produced, they were generally met with approval and even acceptance. Whether because they were viewed as a novelty or because spectators actually appreciated their musical abilities, ladies' orchestras managed to achieve fairly widespread popularity, and became as popular as men's orchestras through the early 20th century.[68]

Even if female instrumentalists performed admirably and received praise from critics, their musical ability was almost always described in terms of the degree to which they expressed masculine attributes in their playing. Men were believed to naturally be better at giving

[68] For more information on European ladies' orchestras see Margaret Myers, "Searching for Data about Ladies' Orchestras, 1870-1950," in *Music and Gender,* ed. Prikko Moisala and Beverly Diamond (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000): 189-213; Myers, *Blowing Her Own Trumpet: European Ladies' Orchestras & Other Women Musicians 1870-1950 in Sweden* (Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet, Avdelningen för musikvetenskap, 1993).

interesting public performances because they could play with the necessary vigor and strength. Women, who were supposed to exhibit grace, poise, and delicateness in all situations, gave audiences quite a shock if they played with the appropriate energy for a public concert. Despite feminine views regarding keyboard instruments, because men were stronger and more disciplined, they could be more precise in their playing and were thought to make the best virtuoso pianists. Critics did not know how to evaluate female concert pianists in feminine terms, because at that time being "feminine" was incongruous with being an impressive musician. As a result, reviews came out sounding rather confused, attempting to include positive remarks on the woman's demonstration of masculine and feminine qualities. A late 19th-century review of Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler read: "The wonder of the little woman is that she can be both woman and man in the illustration of her art…The marvel of her playing is that she commands so much virtuoso strength with such an abundance of feminine delicacy and subtlety of expression."[69] This trend continued into the early 20th century, and female musicians themselves began to comment. As pianist Olga Samaroff remarked: "During all the years of my career as a woman pianist at least eighty percent of my press reviews either stated that I played like a man, or alluded to my playing like a woman. When the critic said I played like a woman, it meant that he did not like me at all."[70] These double standards of performance are perhaps the most typical representation of the gendered view of what it meant to be a public musician—it was clearly meant to be a man's world, and a woman trying to enter it was making an attempt to be something she was not.

Music offered an escape for women in the Victorian era, whether it was pursued simply as a hobby in the home, as a group activity, or even in some cases as a solo career. It was also a

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[69] "Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler," *Musical Courier,* December 28, 1898, 40, quoted in MacLeod, 10-11.
[70] Olga Samaroff Stokowski, "Women in Music," *Music Clubs Magazine* 17 (September-October 1937): 7-9, 12, quoted in Macleod, 11.

pleasant leisure activity for both sexes, though it tended to be a more relaxing pastime for women than for men, who would have been encouraged to learn more difficult, impressive pieces for public performances. Some instruments, like the piano and lute, were well within the spectrum of "appropriate" instruments for women to play; with such instruments as these, women began to enter into the world of public solo instrumental performance. On the other hand, some instruments were almost barred to women entirely, as was the case with the violin. Like most of the obstacles women have faced throughout history, these restrictions were eventually overcome. One instrument stands out among those that women were discouraged from playing in the 19th century, and it is that instrument which will be the focus of the remainder of the present paper. Women did not find acceptance in performing on this instrument by blatantly crossing societal bounds, but rather found a way through a new addition to the instrument to maintain their ladylike grace by playing the instrument in an entirely different fashion than it was played by men. I am, of course, referring to the addition of the endpin to the violoncello.

Chapter 4

The Results of the Addition of the Endpin to the Cello on the Reception of Female Cellists

Though the use of the endpin did not rise to common practice until the end of the nineteenth century, iconographic evidence shows the use of wooden spikes and other associated devices for elevating the cello—including stools, platforms, boxes, barrels, the player's foot or some combination thereof—from as early as the 1500s (Figure 6).[71] Many types of spikes and endpins were employed over the course of the cello's history, including wooden spikes built on to the bottom of the instrument (Figure 7), some which could be attached or removed with a screw mechanism, wooden spikes with a metal tip to aid in stability, and (just before the turn of the twentieth century) the retractable metal endpin. The type of endpin used was often dependent upon individual taste; while the metal endpin was thought to be less likely to slip during a performance, some believed that wooden spikes were better for the transmission of sound.[72] Adjustable endpins are not mentioned in the literature until the late 1890s; this innovation arose from the need to accommodate not only young students as they grew over the years, but

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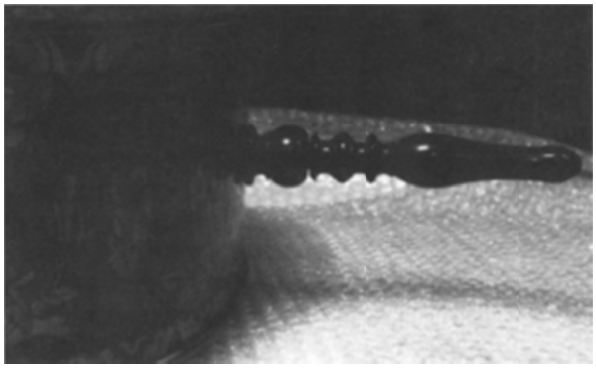

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[71] Tilden A. Russell, "Endpin," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/08788 (accessed March 30, 2013).
[72] Brenda Neece, "The Cello in Britain: A Technical and Social History," *The Galpin Society Journal* 56 (2003): 109, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30044410 (accessed March 27, 2013).

also the unsure seating conditions for professional performers. A cellist using a fixed endpin would need to bring a seat with him that would bring him and his instrument to the correct height, count on the fact that such a seat would be present at the performance venue, or be willing to set the cello and the endpin atop a stand to bring the instrument to the correct height.[73]

In modern practice, the conventional way of playing the cello is to straddle the instrument in a seated position, with the cello being supported by an endpin. However, one of the most common uses of the endpin during the eighteenth century was to support the instrument while the performer took a standing position. This method was most often employed by orchestral cellists, who found it awkward to be the only seated members of an ensemble. For a time this was an effective way to perform, as ripieno parts in music tend to require less shifting than do the melodic lines; even though the instrument rested only on the endpin, limited movements by the musician did not threaten the instrument's stability. However, as more solo repertory was written for cellos and more drastic hand movements became necessary to accomplish the melodic line, this standing position became impractical because the instrument was too unstable and often shook when held in this manner. As a result, the standing position fell out of fashion, and the traditional seated position without the endpin became the standard and remained so over the next century.[74]

Though the endpin in all its variations had been in use since the seventeenth century, it was not generally accepted as an integral part of the instrument until the end of the nineteenth century. Robert Crome's *The Compleat Tutor for the Violoncello* (1765) suggests that the spike be used to improve stability when *learning* to play the instrument, but not necessarily during performance. This remained the standard for the next century or so, as is evidenced in method

[73] T.A. Russell, "New Light on the Historical Manner of Holding the Cello," *Historical Performance,* vi/2 (1993), 74-75.
[74] Ibid., 73-75.

books such as Kummer's *Violoncell-Schule für den ersten Unterricht,* Op. 60 (1839), which recommends a playing position without an endpin (Figure 8). However, later editions of this book from the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries reflect changes in the conventions associated with performing on this instrument.

Figure 8. From Kummer, *Violoncello School*, ed. A. Piatti (1877).

Figure 9. A similar illustration from a later, American edition of Kummer, *School for the Violoncello,* ed. A. Davenport (1898).

The American edition by Ambrose Davenport in 1898 retains the original text (with no suggestion of an endpin), yet contains an illustration which appears to be taken from the original work but altered so as to show a musician playing an instrument with an endpin (Figure 9). The next edition, by Leo Schulz, appeared two years later and contains the original instructions, but contains an addendum which reads, "This manner of holding the instrument is nearly obsolete; it is now usually supported below by a prop or standard…But I consider it absolutely necessary, in order to learn to hold the instrument properly, to practice without any prop for the first year." Subsequent editions maintain that the endpin is used in common performance practice, but also

encourage learning to play the cello using only the legs for support, in order to learn good posture.[75]

Several advantages and disadvantages of the use of the endpin mechanism have been enumerated. Gerard E. Hodgkin, an opponent of the device, addressed some of these issues in the May 1897 issue of *The Strad*. First, while it was argued that the endpin was a useful addition to the instrument because, when it was employed in the seated position, it allowed for a greater freedom of movement and less effort to be expended in the act of holding the cello. Hodgkin countered that there were a great many accomplished cellists who played quite well in the traditional fashion (without the endpin); however, he did concede that the endpin could provide a respite for orchestral musicians who played several pieces in succession for an extended period.

A second argument on behalf of the endpin was that it could help to stabilize the instrument on the ground. Hodgkin countered that the endpin itself could slip or loosen and retract while playing if it was adjustable. The instrument was said to be made freer to resonate if an endpin was being used, as the player's legs would not be gripping it so firmly. According to Hodgkin, if the instrument were being held in the correct fashion then this should not be an issue even without the endpin (as only the right edge of the top and the left edge of the bottom of the instrument would be in contact with the player's legs).

Hodgkin admitted that opinions were still quite divided on the subject, and no satisfactory conclusion was reached in his discourse.[76] The pros and cons of the endpin would have been weighed carefully by most cellists, and whether or not the endpin was used often varied by context and personal taste; soloists tended to stay with tradition and play without an endpin, but ripienists adopted it so that they might play for longer periods with less effort.

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[75] Ibid., 75-76.
[76] Gerard E. Hodgkin, "Use of the 'Cello Peg," *The Strad* 8, no. 85 (1897): 14-15, quoted in Russell, "New Light," 75.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the endpin had changed the manner in which male cellists performed on their instrument. Even more significant, however, is the role the introduction of the endpin had in bringing women into the performance sphere. The only solo female cellist of note before the endpin came into common usage was Lisa Barbier Cristiani (1827-1853). Born in France and of Italian descent, Cristiani played on a Stradivari cello from 1700, which is now named after her. She performed in many successful concerts throughout Europe, giving the first public cello recital by a woman in 1845, and was loved by many for her beauty, charm, and novelty as a female cellist. She was known for her repertory of salon pieces, which she performed "sympathetically and elegantly, with small tone but precise intonation."[77] To be sure, Cristiani's presence on the public stage performing on a cello was enough to generate a certain level of astonishment to audiences of the time, yet the fact that she played music normally associated with respectable ladies in the home kept her within the socially acceptable spectrum.

Cristiani also associated with some of the great male composers of her day. Felix Mendelssohn accompanied her at her 1845 concert in Leipzig, and dedicated his *Song without Words* op. 109 no. 38 to her shortly thereafter. Her reputation spread throughout mainland Europe, and she was even appointed "Chamber Virtuosa" by the King of Denmark. It remains uncertain whether Cristiani used an endpin to support her cello. Cristiani died of cholera during a concert tour at the young age of 26 in 1853;[78] no doubt she would have accomplished much for the community of female musicians had she been able to perform for even another ten or twenty years.

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[77] Lynda MacGregor, "Cristiani, Lisa," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06832 (accessed March 31, 2013).
[78] MacGregor.

Cristiani was met with popular and critical acclaim, but the fact remains that she was unique among female cellists. Victorian morals implied that the cello was socially unacceptable for women to play because it was meant to be held between the legs, much as straddling a horse or riding a bicycle was considered unseemly. A large part of Cristiani's popularity was due to her novelty as a female cellist; the fact alone that she was allowed to leave the house and perform in public whilst straddling her instrument would have been enough to draw a crowd of considerable size. With the introduction of the endpin into widespread playing practice, however, methods of playing that allowed a woman to maintain her modesty became available. In his 1898 methods book *The Technics of Violoncello Playing,* Edmund van der Straeten recommended the following positions for ladies to employ while playing the cello:

> The first and best [position] is to turn both legs to the left, bending the right knee and placing it under the left one. The left edge of the back should rest against the left knee, and the instrument against the chest, in a slanting position.
> The second is, to rest the right knee on a cushion or stool concealed by the back of the instrument, the latter leaning against the left knee.[79]

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In essence, the endpin enabled women to play "side-saddle," a position which allowed them to maintain their modesty yet was unattainable without such a device (Figure 10). While diverting from the straddle position was certainly an option for female cellists at the start, using the endpin while sitting in the straddle position permitted a more relaxed posture and made it easier to reach the outer strings. Because it made the instrument "easier" to play, the endpin for a time was associated with beginners and women cellists. As a result, some male professionals avoided its

[79] E.S.J. van der Straeten, *The Technics of Violoncello Playing* (London, 1898): p. 18, quoted in Valerie Walden, "Technique, style and performing practice to c. 1900," *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello,* ed. Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 181.

use because they did not want these associations. It might be said that though the endpin had already been in use for centuries, it was women who brought it into the solo performance sphere at the end of the nineteenth century.[80]

Women cellists began to appear with increasing frequency shortly after the wholesale adoption of the endpin. Five of the musicians mentioned in *Violoncellisten der Gegenwart in Wort und Bild,* an anonymous work published in 1903 discussing 100 well-known cellists of the period, were women, indicating that by the turn of the twentieth century women were able to make names for themselves as solo cellists. Each of these women came from a different country: Josefine Donat was Viennese; Agga Fritsche, Danish; Kato van der Hoeven, Dutch; Lucy Müller-Campbell was born in Kentucky but trained in Germany; and Elsa Ruegger was Swiss. Three of these women are pictured in the book with their instruments, and it is clear in each of these that the cello is supported by an endpin.[81] Van der Straeten identified more than twenty female cellists in Europe and America in his 1914 *History of the Violoncello and the Viols,* reflecting the surge of female cellists in the public spectrum at the start of the twentieth century.[82] Some of the most well-known were May Mukle, Beatrice Harrison, and Guilhermina Suggia.

May Mukle (1880-1963) is sometimes called the pioneer woman cellist. Born in England into a well-known musical family, she started taking cello lessons at the age of four and began her concert career at age nine. A prodigy, Mukle entered the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) when she was thirteen years old, and won every cello prize offered there. She quickly gained international recognition, and gave musical performances on five continents. Mukle is

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[80] Anita Mercier, *Guilhermina Suggia: Cellist* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008): 2-3.
[81] Elizabeth Cowling, "A Selective Group of Twentieth-Century Cellists," *The Cello* (London: Batsford, 1975): 180.
[82] Edmund S.J. van der Straeten, *History of the Violoncello, the Viol da Gamba, their Precursors and Collateral Instruments* (London: William Reeves, 1914).

associated with numerous works by well-known composers, having premiered Holst's *Invocation* (1911) and Vaughan Williams's *Six Studies in English Folk Song* (1926). In addition to her solo performances, she also played in chamber groups and duos, teaming up with such musicians as Maud Powell, the American violinist, and Edward Lloyd, the English tenor. The May Mukle Prize, founded by Rebecca Clarke and friends in her memory in 1964, is awarded to a cello student at the RAM every year.[83]

Beatrice Harrison (1892-1965), a contemporary of Mukle's, was known for making some of the earliest recordings of several notable English works for cello. Harrison, the child of a British army colonel based in India, learned to play the cello in the straddle position using an endpin, as is evidenced by photographs of her as a child (Figure 11).[84] Harrison studied at the Royal College of Music in London and made her debut in that city at the age of 16 at the Queen's Hall performing the Saint-Saëns A-minor Concerto with conductor Sir Henry Wood. She soon began studying with the famous cellist Hugo Becker in Berlin, where she was the first cellist and the youngest competitor to win the prestigious Mendelssohn Prize.

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She toured extensively, becoming the first female cellist to appear in Carnegie Hall in 1913, and the first to perform with the Chicago and Boston symphony orchestras. She formed close professional relationships with the composers Frederick Delius, who wrote his Double Concerto for her and her sister, May, who was a violinist; and with Edward Elgar, whose cello

[83] Margaret Campbell, "Mukle, May," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42235 (accessed April 1, 2013); Cowling, 180-181; Margaret Campbell, "Masters of the Twentieth Century," *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello,* ed. Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 78; Van der Straeten, *History,* 520-521.
[84] Neece, 110.

concerto she recorded. Her most famous recording was that of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Chanson Hindou,* which she performed in duet with a nightingale in the woods near her home and was broadcast internationally by the BBC. She was a strong supporter of contemporary music, and was not only a household name throughout the world but considered to be one of the greatest female cellists of her day.[85]

Guilhermina Suggia (1888-1950) was an accomplished cellist from Portugal. At the age of seven, she gave her first public performance after learning to play the instrument from her father, and by the time she was twelve she was the principal cellist of the Oporto City Orchestra. She is most famous for studying with Spanish cellist Pablo Casals, who was her teacher from 1906-1912. She was erroneously thought to have been married to him and was sometimes billed as "Mme P. Casals-Suggia," but they never married. After studying with Casals she moved to London, where she performed regularly for many years and became a music teacher, promoting Casals's teaching methods.[86]

Each of these talented, internationally-recognized female cellists made her debut at the turn of the twentieth century at a very young age. This would not have been possible for them had the endpin not been an option for them by the time they began taking lessons, at least not without a considerable amount of scandal. Women's liberation movements were beginning to take shape at this time, and women began to spend more time in the public sphere in traditionally "masculine" activities, such as horseback riding and bicycling. They were slowly but surely taking the first steps towards approaching a social equality with men.

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[85] Margaret Campbell, "Harrison, Beatrice," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12441 (accessed April 1, 2013); Campbell, "Masters," 79-80.

[86] Robert Anderson, "Suggia, Guilhermina," *Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27085 (accessed April 1, 2013); Campbell, "Masters," 83.

In a small way, the use of the endpin by female cellists was also a reflection of this new attitude towards women's activities. While its use reflects the need for women to abide by moral standards of the time, it also gave them an opportunity to participate in a way that had been denied them before. The endpin was not often used by professional male cellists unless they were members of an ensemble, had a specific physical need for it (as in the case of Servais), or were just beginning to learn the instrument. In contrast, women were essentially required by the moral standards of the time to use the endpin when they performed in public in order to maintain a graceful appearance while playing, even past the learning stage. Even though using the endpin during public performances might have made a woman appear as though she were still learning, anyone watching a skilled female cellist would disregard such associations because of her audible talent. By convention, female cellists used the endpin in order to maintain a graceful appearance while playing, but by choosing to sit side-saddle and thus avoid putting the instrument between their legs they bypassed moral issues outright. However, this latter position sacrificed a significant amount of control over the instrument; it is unlikely that women who adopted this playing position performed very many pieces more involved than parlor songs, which were already traditionally reserved for the female world. The female performer was able to concentrate more on appearing graceful in her upper body and less on supporting the cello with her legs, and as a result could still appear feminine while playing the instrument. The endpin and the female instrumentalist brought each other into the public eye. Both were present yet not incredibly well-known, but by the middle of the twentieth century, neither was an uncommon sight in the musical community.

Conclusion

Women historically experienced social restrictions in terms of marriage, careers, and independence. Music-making provided an important leisure activity for both women and men, and gave women an opportunity to advance themselves in a particular skill even though they were chiefly limited to the home. Victorian moral codes dictated what sorts of instrument were appropriate to play. Any musical instrument which threatened to distort a woman's natural beauty and grace were strictly off-limits to them, just as instruments or musical settings that diminished masculinity were frowned upon for men. Changing attitudes led to the slow progression of women's rights and equality, but certain instruments remained firmly gendered. When many doors began to open for female soloists, that of playing instruments such as the cello remained closed. However, through the use of the cello endpin, female soloists were able to compromise with the standing social order and enter into the public performance sphere.

The endpin has become a common sight on cellos in the modern era, and is used by both male and female cellists. Up until the early twentieth century, however, it remained in relative obscurity. Though it was used as a teaching tool for young cellists, it was rarely used by professionals, with the exception being cellists in symphony orchestras who would have played several pieces in a row in long concerts. Male soloists avoided the use of the endpin because it was associated with amateurs and with women; it would seem that a part of their virtuosity was demonstrated by overcoming the challenges presented in playing the instrument.

Female soloists employed the endpin to circumvent the moral boundaries of the time. The endpin allowed performance in a "side-saddle" position, avoiding the issue of opening the legs in public. Alternatively, female soloists could use the endpin while playing in the traditional

straddle position. The latter option would still have invoked disapproval from some of the more conservative members of society, yet would have permitted the musician to maintain a semblance of feminine grace by removing the strain of supporting the instrument between the knees.

With the rise of female soloists in the public sphere, male soloists would certainly have begun to observe the advantages of using an endpin. Over time, it would have become apparent that more concentration could be put into the act of playing the instrument if some of the effort was removed from holding the cello in the traditional straddle position without the aid of an endpin. Not only did the endpin help female cellists enter the public performing sphere: the advantages of the common playing position that we see of nearly all cellists today—straddling the instrument which is supported on an endpin—were demonstrated to the world by women cellists. Thus, the widespread use of the endpin in cello performance can be credited to the influence of these accomplished and pioneering ladies.

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