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# Women in percussion: the emergence of women as professional percussionists in the United States, 1930-present

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WOMEN IN PERCUSSION: THE EMERGENCE OF WOMEN AS PROFESSIONAL  
PERCUSSIONISTS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1930- PRESENT

by  
Meghan Georgina Aube

An essay submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Doctor of  
Musical Arts degree  
in the Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2011

Essay Supervisor: Professor Daniel Moore

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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D.M.A. ESSAY

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This is to certify that the D.M.A. essay of

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has been approved by the Examining Committee  
for the essay requirement for the Doctor of Musical Arts  
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To all of the women who have inspired me to follow my dreams

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## INTRODUCTION

Historically, the percussion field in the United States has been dominated by male performers and educators, a trend that continues today. It is more common for boys to choose to play percussion as beginners. There are also far fewer female percussionists in college and at the professional level. Some reasons more males than females tend to play percussion include, but are not limited to, gender bias of parents regarding instruments, beginning band teachers' influence, the gender of professional musicians who serve as role models for children, and gender-stereotyping of certain instruments in American culture as a whole.

The majority of university teaching positions, professional orchestra placements, and leadership roles in the Percussive Arts Society, the largest international percussion organization, are held by men. At the time of this writing, the Executive Committee of the PAS is made up of seven members, only two of whom are women: Lisa Rogers, president and Julia Gaines, secretary. The current Board of Directors of the PAS includes twenty-three members; the four female members are Ruth Cahn, Julie Davila, Julie Hill, and Alison Shaw. The seventeen committee chairs, also an important part of PAS leadership, all are men. Of ninety-four members of the PAS Hall of Fame—an extraordinary honor only given to those deemed to have reached the highest levels in the percussion field—only three are women: Keiko Abe, inducted in 1993; Vida Chenoweth, inducted in 1994; and Evelyn Glennie, inducted in 2008.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These statistics were taken from the Percussive Arts Society website, Fall 2010.

The involvement and success of women in the percussion field has grown from the mid-twentieth century to the present, but there is still a significant gap between the number of female college students studying percussion and the number of women in academia and performance. In 2010 the author surveyed 163 universities and colleges about the gender ratio of their percussion studios.<sup>2</sup> Female students per studio averaged 17 percent. Of the 284 graduate students from participating schools, 16 percent were female, 18 percent of the 1,868 undergraduate students were female. There were no past studies found on this subject to compare data. Additional surveys must be conducted in order to generate statistics on the participation of women going in the future. (For complete statistics from the study, see appendix A.)

With percentages of female matriculation into college percussion programs in the teens, it is no surprise that the number of women in college percussion teaching positions is also low. In a study completed in spring 2010, the author researched the 2009/10 College Music Society Directory of college music professors and found that only 105 of the 1,691 percussion professors were women, a total of 6 percent. Of the 105 female percussion professors listed, only twenty-eight (26 percent) were professors, assistant professors or associate professors, while the rest were either adjunct or part time employees. Comparing these figures to past studies by the College Music Society<sup>3</sup>, the percentage of women who are percussion professors has not changed since the 1972/74

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<sup>2</sup> Only universities that offered graduate degrees were included in the survey. One hundred and twelve schools responded for a 68 percent return rate.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Hampton Renton. *The Status of Women in College Music, 1976-77: A Statistical Study*. N.p.: College Music Society, 1980.

study. In that study, the percentage of women percussion professors was 6 percent. In the 1986/87 report the percentage was 6.5 percent.

Similarly, female percussionists hold only a small percentage of percussion and timpani positions in the top two tiers of major symphony orchestras.<sup>4</sup> In a 2010 informal survey of personnel lists of these orchestras, the author found that of the 176 percussion and timpani chairs, only nine (5 percent) were held by women. The percentage of women involved in symphony orchestras has not increased since a 1975/76 study of percussionists in major symphony orchestras prepared by the Percussive Arts Society.<sup>5</sup> This survey discovered that of the 141 percussionists and timpanists, only eight (5.5 percent) were female. Thus it can be shown that the percentage has fallen over the last thirty-five years.

The purpose of this document is to show the emergence of women percussionists and describe the state of women in percussion today. This work highlights women who have been historically significant to the percussion field and also discusses prominent women currently working in the profession. This research topic grows out of the question, “why are there fewer female percussionists than male?” It falls under the feminist music scholarship category, “critique of patriarchy” as described by American Studies historian Betty Ch’maj.<sup>6</sup> Through historical research and interviews with

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<sup>4</sup> The top two tier orchestras in the United States are defined by the American Symphony Orchestra League as orchestras with yearly operating budgets of at least seven million dollars.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Matson, “A Listing of Tympanists and Percussionists Performing in the Major Symphony Orchestras of the United States,” *Percussive Notes* 15 (1977): 32.

<sup>6</sup> Betty Ch’maj, “‘Reality is on our Side’ Research on Gender in American Music,” *Sonneck Society for American for American Music Bulletin* 16 (1990): 55.

prominent women percussionists, this document will attempt to address this question and search for common trends and conceptions held by the interview subjects. The women selected come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. Women who are orchestral percussionists, jazz drummers, marimba soloists, and percussion educators are discussed.

While there is a large body of research available on women as composers, conductors, and brass instrumentalists, there has been very little research in regard to women as percussionists. Due to very limited research on this topic, this paper will serve as an important resource for study of the evolution and current state of women in percussion. It may provide an important reference for young women to discover their connection with past female percussionists and establish their position in today's field. In her book, *When the Drummers Were Women*, Layne Redmond educates readers on the role of women drummers in ancient societies and explains "In Modern times, drummers have been almost exclusively men, but more and more women are rediscovering their ancient birth right."<sup>7</sup> Redmond believes that connecting with predecessors is important for understanding one's own placement in an art form. This work will also serve to document current conditions faced by women percussionists. It may be seen as a snapshot of the state of women in percussion and be used to compare the state of women in percussion in the early twenty-first century with those who follow.

Although research on women in percussion is limited, basic biographical information on important percussionists was collected. This document will consider the

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<sup>7</sup> Layne Redmond, *When the Drummers Were Women* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997), 1.

relationship between these important historical figures and significant professionals of today through discussion of instrument gender biases, the importance of role models, the gap between college level and professional percussionists, and the struggles of competing in a male-dominated profession.

An overview of the historical development of females in the field is compiled in Chapter 1. The historical discussion includes American women percussionists from the 1930s, when women appeared to emerge as professionals in the field, to the present. Chapter 2 includes a review of existing scholarship about instrument gender bias, in which percussion is categorized as a masculine instrument, and an explanation of barriers for women attempting to gain success in a male-dominated field.

This document draws heavily from interviews with twelve professional women percussionists compiled in chapter 3. The interviews discuss the musical background of each interviewee, difficulties they encountered as a woman in percussion, and struggles they faced balancing family and professional life. The importance of interviews to this study places this project in the research field of “phenomenological inquiry” as described by Colleen Conway.<sup>8</sup> Conway explains that such an inquiry can be “a focus on what people experience and how they interpret the world.”<sup>9</sup> In this instance the “people” are women percussionists, the “experience” is the role of being a female in a male-dominated

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<sup>8</sup> A phenomenological inquiry is a research tool used to determine how a particular phenomenon affects a specific group of people. As outlined by Conway, a phenomenon can be an emotion, a relationship, a program, an organization, or a culture.

<sup>9</sup> Colleen Conway, “Gender and Musical Instrument Choice: A Phenomenological Investigation,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 146 (2000): 3.

field, and “how they interpret the world” will be revealed through the interviews with them.

The women selected for interviews were chosen in an attempt to include viewpoints and experiences from a variety of percussionists in the field. This essay is limited to women who have made their percussion careers in the United States. The women are considered to be influential in their field due to their success as professional performers and/or educators. Their opinions are crucial in providing insight into their successes in the percussion field. Differences and similarities between the interview subjects were noted and any commonalities that arose from the discussions were categorized.

The four main topics considered in the study include: the socialization of children, the gender-stereotyping of percussion, the importance of role models for young female percussionists, and matters relevant to the life of a professional woman percussionist. Its consideration of childhood socialization draws on theories of how children form social groups and conform to social pressure. Its discussion of instrument gender bias incorporates the selection process of instruments and why certain instruments are considered to be masculine or feminine. The significance of role models is shown through examples that demonstrate the need for young girls to experience same-gender modeling in the field. Finally, subjects that are known to be concerns for professional women percussionists are discussed. These include their minority role in the field, discrimination, and the dynamics of being both a mother and a professional musician.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PIONEER WOMEN OF PERCUSSION

Important women percussionists can provide historical insights into the gradual acceptance of females working in the percussion field. These pioneer women often faced rejection and discrimination based solely on their sex. Many women discussed in this chapter are unknown to the percussion world and have remained unnoticed by scholars and researchers. For example, several women percussionists have not been included in this document simply due to the lack of available information. Percussionists not incorporated in this document include: Vera McNary Daehlin, Maxine Lefever, Mary Lagerquist, Karen Richie Greer, and Lois Russell. Women percussionists in idioms of jazz, marimba performance, orchestral playing, and academe are discussed in this chapter.

#### Women in Jazz

Women have always fought for their voice to be heard in the male-dominated field of jazz, but the struggle was even more challenging in the 1940s when it was rare to find any woman in a jazz band. Jazz historian James Dickerson wrote, “Throughout jazz history there has been a sexist bias against women.”<sup>10</sup> Men have been active longer in the field of jazz, thus the majority of scholarship has been completed on male musicians while females remain relatively ignored.

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<sup>10</sup> James Dickerson, *Just for a Thrill: Lil Hardin Armstrong, First Lady of Jazz* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), xiii.

Today women are more present in the jazz world; although in 2007, women comprised only 15.6 percent of union jazz members.<sup>11</sup> Numerous difficulties arose for women entering the jazz profession, yet there were several important pioneers that paved the way. Acceptance into the jazz world was even more challenging for women who played traditionally male instruments such as percussion, vibraphone, or drumset. This section will highlight the careers of the women who broke these barriers.

#### Marjorie Hyams—vibraphone

East Coast vibraphonist Marjorie Hyams was very active in the 1940s but enjoyed a career of only ten years. Aside from vibraphone performance, she was also a talented pianist and arranger. Hyams was discovered by jazz clarinetist Woody Herman when he heard her perform in Atlantic City. Herman tried to convince Hyams to start her own band, but she joined his group instead and played with him from 1944-1945.

In 1945, Hyams left the band to form an all-woman trio that performed for three years. With Mary Lou Williams on piano and June Rotenberg on bass, the trio garnered many accolades including a featured concert at Carnegie Hall in 1947.<sup>12</sup> Hyams was thrust into the national spotlight when she joined George Shearing's combo in 1949. While performing in this group, she had many opportunities including the recording of a major record. Yet again her tenure with this group ended after only a year when she quit the jazz world completely to become a housewife.

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<sup>11</sup> Alex Stewart, *Making the Scene: Contemporary New York City Big Band Jazz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 257.

<sup>12</sup> Linda Dahl, *Stormy Weather: The Music and Lives of a Century of Jazzwomen* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 87.



While pursuing her career as a vibraphonist, Hyams explained the difficulty of being a woman in the music profession:

In a sense, you weren't really looked upon as a musician, especially in clubs. There was more of an interest in what you were going to wear or how your hair was fixed— they just wanted you to look attractive, ultra-feminine, largely because you were doing something they didn't consider feminine.<sup>13</sup>

The dichotomy of needing to present femininity while playing in a male domain was an issue that many women faced in the mid-twentieth century and still experience today. The “look” of a performer was deemed equally important as musical ability. As one of the first women vibraphonists, Marjorie Hyams was a percussion pioneer, but unfortunately the career of this talented woman did not last long enough for her to fully impact the percussion and jazz world.

#### Pauline Braddy—drumset

Born in 1922, Pauline Braddy was one of the original members of the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, an all-female band formed in 1937 at the Piney Woods Country Life School.<sup>14</sup> The school, founded in Mississippi in 1909, was one of the first all African-American boarding schools in the United States. The Sweethearts, a popular outlet for creative expression at the school, became nationally renowned as they performed all over the country, including New York City, Chicago, and Washington D.C.

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<sup>13</sup> Dahl, *Stormy Weather*, 79.

<sup>14</sup> D. Antoinette Handy, *The International Sweethearts of Rhythm: The Ladies Jazz Band from Piney Woods Country Life School* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998), 51.

As a woman drumset player, Braddy admitted encountering prejudice. She regularly faced skeptical audiences that exclaimed: “Oh no, not a girl!”<sup>15</sup> In the 1940s and 1950s, Braddy found it difficult to discover other women drummers and instead turned to male role models for guidance, including Ed Thigpen and Gene Krupa.

Braddy finally left the Sweethearts of Rhythm in 1955 at the age of thirty-three. She performed with numerous jazz ensembles until the late 1960s when she stopped drumming completely. Her next performance was as a guest at the 1980 Women’s Jazz Festival in Kansas City, Missouri, a superb honor that was very meaningful to her. Braddy died in 1996. Breaking ground for future women drummers, Pauline Braddy had a very accomplished career, yet regrettably she has remained relatively unknown in the percussion and jazz fields.

#### Dottie Dodgion—drumset

One of the most successful, although unknown, drummers, Dottie Dodgion was born in Brea, California, in 1929. Dodgion originally began her musical career as a vocalist. While her drummer father was not opposed to her becoming a drummer, he never taught her a lesson. Her drumming career began by playing rhythms on magazine covers during her husband’s recording studio sessions. Due to the tardiness of some drummers, she found an opportunity to play. Dodgion remembered, “They’d say, ‘Come on Dottie, play some ‘time’ till the drummer gets here.’ Male drummers were always late!”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Handy, *The International Sweethearts of Rhythm*, 137.

<sup>16</sup> Placksin, *American Women in Jazz*, 236.

Her first husband, bassist Marty Budwig, did not support her as a drummer; he felt that drumming was “un-lady like.”<sup>17</sup> In contrast, her second husband, Jerry Dodgion, encouraged her to stop singing and focus solely on drums. She remembered, “He said I should either sing or play. Otherwise I was going to end up known as a singer who sometimes played drums or a drummer who also sang.”<sup>18</sup> Beginning in the early 1960s, Dodgion performed with many well-known jazz musicians including: Benny Goodman, Billy Mitchell, Al Grey, Wild Bill Davison, Ruby Braff, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, and Richie Cole. Jerry Dodgion did not advocate traditional gender roles and preferred that Dottie meet her potential as a musician rather than be a housewife. “Jerry really wanted me to play. He didn’t want me around the house doing wifely duties. I practiced with the pros. I played with them.”<sup>19</sup>

Gigs did not always come easily for Dodgion, nor did respect from her colleagues. Upon moving to New York in 1959, the realities of maintaining success in a career heavily dominated by men began to arise. Dodgion remembered the frustration of losing gigs based solely on gender. “I was at least accepted by the guys, even though they didn’t hire me for those jobs; many a time a drummer who couldn’t swing half as well as I could would be hired. Those kinds of things used to hurt.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Dahl, *Stormy Weather*, 218.

<sup>18</sup> Hollie West, “A Different Drummer: The Crisp Jazz Beat of Dottie Dodgion,” *Washington Post*, May 18, 1979: B1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, B13.

<sup>20</sup> Placksin, *American Women in Jazz*, 236.

Fortunately, the disappointment of gender-stereotyping did not hinder her career.

The injustice of judgment based on gender made her work even harder to achieve success:

You had to be better than better. All instruments are male-dominated. The way it's looked at, the drums are—pardon the expression—the balls of the band. When a guy turns and sees a lady sitting there, it threatens his manhood some way.<sup>21</sup>

To combat this feeling of sexism, Dodgion would often wear clothing that was not feminine and keep her hair short in order to blend in with men.

Dodgion became accustomed to holding the position as the sole female in the band. She preferred performing with men due to her belief that many women who entered the music business were not serious. Often gender was used by promoters as a device to sell records and gain audiences, and she found that as she aged gigs became even scarcer: “There is no gimmick for selling an old lady. If you're a young woman and have a decent figure, they can sell you like mad.”<sup>22</sup> Regardless of her negative conceptions of all-female bands, Dodgion joined an all-female group with colleague Melba Liston in the late 1970s. This was a career choice common for many women musicians, but Dodgion had resisted for many years because “nobody likes to be sold because of their gender.”<sup>23</sup> She believed that musical instruments were not gender-specific and that performers were doing themselves a disservice by basing their choice of performers on gender.

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<sup>21</sup> Dahl, *Stormy Weather*, 220.

<sup>22</sup> Wayne Enstice and Janis Stockhouse, *Jazz Women: Conversations with Twenty-One Musicians* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 114.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

Dodgion found all her role models in male drummers and did not have women to follow. Her favorite drummers included Billy Higgins, Al (Tootie) Heath and Mickey Roker. She credited Kenny Clarke as the most influential on her drumming. When asked about Buddy Rich she responded, “He plays good for a man.”<sup>24</sup>

As described by jazz historian Linda Dahl, Dottie Dodgion was a “pioneer drummer among women jazz players.”<sup>25</sup> She challenged the gender-stereotyping of drums as a male instrument and struggled with misconceptions as a female drummer throughout her entire career. “As far as acceptance, I don’t think it just opened up all of a sudden. I think it’s been a long, slow process; I think it’s still going on in a lot of cases.”<sup>26</sup>

#### Terri Lyne Carrington—drumset

Beginning a career just as Dottie Dodgion was ending one, Terri Lyne Carrington was proclaimed a child drumset prodigy. Born in 1965 in Medford, Massachusetts, Carrington began playing the drums at the age of five. She explained that Sonny Carrington, her father and a jazz musician, was delighted when he found “I had a natural talent. I could keep time immediately, so my father thought I had talent. He showed me a few things. I progressed and he sent me to a teacher.”<sup>27</sup> Her drumset, the only instrument in a house full of musical instrument that could hold her attention, originally belonged to

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<sup>24</sup> Enstice and Stockhouse, *Jazz Women*, 114.

<sup>25</sup> Dahl, *Stormy Weather*, 224.

<sup>26</sup> Enstice and Stockhouse, *Jazz Women*, 127.

<sup>27</sup> Leslie Gourse, *Madame Jazz: Contemporary Women Instrumentalists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 131.

her grandfather who had been a jazz drummer. Carrington's father was the main motivation for her desired career in jazz. "I couldn't help but be inspired to play jazz, because my father was always playing it."<sup>28</sup>

Success came rapidly for Carrington. At the age of ten, she played for Buddy Rich. At eleven, she was the youngest student to get a scholarship at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. At twelve, Carrington was the youngest musician to ever endorse Slingerland Drums and Zildjian Cymbals. Achievement has followed Carrington her entire career thus far. Her album, "Real Life Story," was nominated for a Grammy in the category of best fusion jazz. While she is still principally a drumset artist, Carrington also writes and arranges.

Jack De Johnette is the drummer she emulates and considers a mentor. As was the case for many female drummers, there were very few women to look to as role models. In an article she wrote on the life of a woman drummer, Carrington recalled, "I got very excited when I saw people like Karen Carpenter on television. At least I was seeing someone who was in some ways like me, which made it feel not quite so strange."<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, women such as Dottie Dodgion and Pauline Braddy were relatively unknown and they did not have an impact on younger female drummers such as Carrington.

Even within her own demographic, Carrington felt that female drummers were outnumbered and under-represented. "For many years I felt like I was in a club by

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<sup>28</sup> Richard Brown, "Terri Lyne Carrington," *Downbeat* 46 (March 22, 1979): 33.

<sup>29</sup> Terri Lynne Carrington, "A View From My Side of the Drumset," *Percussive Notes* 41 (2003): 19.

myself. If I met other young girls that played drums, chances are they lived in other cities, making it difficult to develop camaraderie.”<sup>30</sup> She believed the extreme minority of women in the drumming profession was due to the norms established by American society. The drums are considered a very aggressive and dominant instrument and “women have been socialized not to do things that seem aggressive or male.”<sup>31</sup>

In a 2004 interview with jazz historians Wayne Enstice and Janis Stockhouse, Carrington admitted that problems women in the drumming profession encountered in the past still persist today. “There are a lot of women playing drums right now, and some of them are definitely meeting that type of resistance.”<sup>32</sup> While admitting to the gender stereotyped nature of the drumset that still remains, Carrington explained that she does not find it necessary for women to adopt a masculine persona. “Many women, in the attempt to be viewed as equals, have taken on the personas and developed the attitudes of their male counterparts, which defeats the purpose.”<sup>33</sup> She further explained, “It is precisely the feminine aesthetic that will make our contributions different and bring another perspective to the industry—a perspective needed for balance.”<sup>34</sup> With her success, Carrington has made considerable headway for women in the drumset field. She continues to be a very inspirational role model for young female drummers today.

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<sup>30</sup> Carrington, “A View From My Side of the Drumset,” 19.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>32</sup> Enstice and Stockhouse, *Jazzwomen*, 61.

<sup>33</sup> Carrington, “A View From My Side of the Drumset,” 19.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 19.

### Women in Marimba Performance

In American percussion, the marimba was historically the most readily acceptable instrument for a woman to pursue. The approval of women as marimbists came earlier than that of women as performers on other percussion instruments. George Lawrence Stone, a percussionist from the early twentieth century, published an article in 1923 in which he encouraged women to pursue percussion, but only in certain genres. “To be sure it is rather hard for members of the tender sex to play jazz music . . . but this should not discourage them by any means from the profession of drumming, for there are many other engagements open which are a good deal easier from a physical standpoint.”<sup>35</sup> One of these other engagements that he discussed was marimba performance. In her book on women in American bands and orchestras, D. Antoinette Handy makes a similar observation of early twentieth-century American instrumental performance: “Percussion playing for women was considered as ‘unladylike’ as wind playing, with the exception of keyboard percussion.”<sup>36</sup>

The first and most common outlet for women as marimbists was through marimba ensembles that began to emerge throughout the country. Clair Omar Musser organized one of the first all-women marimba ensembles in 1929. His first group included twenty-five women who performed their only show at the opening of the Paramount Pictures Oriental Theater in Chicago.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> George Lawrence Stone, “For Ladies Only,” *Jacobs Orchestra Monthly* 8 (1923): 91.

<sup>36</sup> D. Antoinette Handy, *Black Women in American Bands and Orchestras* (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998), 204.



Perhaps the most popular marimba ensemble was “Reg Kehoe and His Marimba Queens” organized in 1930. Reg Kehoe of Reading, Pennsylvania, started the group and had to teach each of the female members how to play. The ensemble performed circa 4,000 concerts in thirty-two years. Concert venues ranged from State fairs throughout the country, Broadway performances, radio appearances, and even short films shown to American troops overseas in World War II. The style of music performed was popular music arranged for a marimba ensemble. However, marimba music was not all that a show would entail. It “combined singing, dancing, acrobatics, skits and performances on the accordion.”<sup>38</sup> This ensemble was one of the most successful of its kind. Kehoe credited their success to “smart, good-looking girls, who can play real good music and, at the same time, display good figures and bare legs.”<sup>39</sup> The physical attributes of the women were deemed more relevant than their ability as marimbists.

Another female marimba ensemble that performed during the same era was Arlene Stouder and Her Marimba Band from Bremen, Indiana. This ensemble had limited success and was only popular in the late 1930s. They did, however, maintain numerous engagements including radio, dance, and club gigs.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> David Eyler, “The History and Development of the Marimba Ensemble in the United States,” (D.M.A. diss., Louisiana State University, 1986), 100.

<sup>38</sup> David P. Eyler, “Development of the Marimba Ensemble in North American During the 1930’s,” *Percussive Notes* 34 (1996): 68.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>40</sup> Kathleen Kastner, “The Emergence and Evolution of a Generalized Marimba Technique,” (D.M.A. diss., University of Illinois, 1989).

## Ruth Stuber Jeanne

Ruth Stuber Jeanne established her career as timpanist in the all-woman Orchestrette Classique, but she is probably best known for premiering the first marimba concerto. A Chicago-area native, she began her career on the marimba studying with renowned marimbist and composer Clair Omar Musser in 1933. During the same year she performed in the World's Fair as part of the Century of Progress Marimba Orchestra. Stuber Jeanne explained the importance of her teacher in her life stating, "It is with Musser that I learned real artistry."<sup>41</sup>

In the late 1930s, Stuber Jeanne moved to New York City and became an active freelancer, performing in clubs as a member of a marimba trio and as a marimba soloist. She also started taking lessons with xylophone virtuoso George Hamilton Green. While in New York, she had the opportunity of performing in one of John Cage's first percussion concerts.<sup>42</sup> As a member of Orchestrette Classique, conductor Federique Petrides proclaimed that Stuber Jeanne was the "foremost woman tympani artist in America."<sup>43</sup> Petrides wished to feature Stuber Jeanne and because of her strong background on marimba contacted Paul Creston and requested he write a marimba concerto.

*Concertino for Marimba and Orchestra*, the only piece Paul Creston wrote for the marimba, was also the first in his series of compositions for neglected instruments such

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<sup>41</sup> Sarah Smith, "The Birth of the Creston Marimba Concerto: An Interview with Ruth Jeanne," *Percussive Notes* 23 (1996): 63.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>43</sup> Shirley Hixson, "From Whence Came Paul Creston's Concertino For Marimba and Orchestra Opus 21? An Interview with Ruth Stuber Jeanne," *Percussive Notes* 14 (1975): 22.

as trombone, saxophone, and accordion. Premiered on April 29, 1940, at Carnegie Hall, it was the first appearance of both the marimba and Ruth Stuber Jeanne at this venue. The compositional process was very collaborative, with Creston sending copies of the score to Stuber Jeanne for her input.

The premiere performance was a success, and many reviews contributed only positive comments. Some, however, still brought to light the importance of physical appearance as a female performer. Howard Taubman from the *New York Times* flattered, “Miss Stuber, looking trim and chic in a fluffy yellow gown, was agreeable to behold as well as to hear.”<sup>44</sup> A description of her ability as a performer was seamlessly merged with a review of her couture.

Stuber Jeanne married in 1942, and she later admitted, “I didn’t play much marimba after that.”<sup>45</sup> She moved to Ohio and started an amateur marimba ensemble. It was difficult to find music for the group, requiring her to arrange works for the ensemble. With a career as a marimbist spanning almost ten years, Stuber Jeanne found success as both a soloist and chamber musician. Her most memorable contribution to the percussion field may very well be her contribution as the first performer of a marimba concerto.

#### Doris Stockton

Like Ruth Stuber Jeanne, Doris Stockton was born in Chicago and studied with legendary marimba educator Clair Omar Musser. Stockton was an important student for Musser, and he dedicated his Etude in A flat, Op. 6, No. 2 to her. She became nationally

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<sup>44</sup> Hixson, “From Whence Came Paul Creston’s Concertino,” 22.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, “The Birth of the Creston Marimba Concerto,” 65.

known as a marimba soloist in the 1940s and managed to sustain a career into the 1960s. Her national career allowed her the opportunity to perform as a soloist with orchestras throughout the country. In the 1940s she also formed a marimba duo that traveled throughout the country.

In 1948, Stockton successfully completed a four record set titled “Marimba Classics,”<sup>46</sup> that included transcriptions of classical music for the marimba. An important early performance that aided in launching her career as a marimba soloist was her appearance at Town Hall in New York City in 1945. The recital consisted entirely of transcriptions of classical music for the marimba that Stockton performed with a chamber orchestra of musicians from the New York Philharmonic. In a 1952 recording produced by Life Records, Doris Stockton was promoted as the “First Lady of the Marimba.”

#### Vida Chenoweth

Born in Enid, Oklahoma, in 1928, Vida Chenoweth is possibly the most well known female name among marimbists. She was one of the most influential performers responsible for elevating the marimba to its current status as a serious concert instrument. Percussionist Nancy Zeltsman stressed the importance of Chenoweth in the evolution of the marimba: “Chenoweth’s artistry, musicianship and care with her repertoire resulted in her transcendence of public skepticism about the marimba as a serious medium for expression.”<sup>47</sup> In an article written for *Percussive Notes*, James Strain also explained the

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<sup>46</sup> Rebecca Kite, “The Marimba in Carnegie and Town Hall from 1935-62,” *Percussive Notes* 43 (2005): 51.

<sup>47</sup> Nancy Zeltsman, “Musings on the Marimba and It’s Study,” *Percussive Notes* 35 (1997): 52.

significance of Chenoweth's career: "Chenoweth, perhaps more than any other artist, is responsible for raising the solo marimba to a level of respect equal in stature to violin, piano or guitar."<sup>48</sup>

Chenoweth was fortunate to grow up in a town visited by one of Clair Omar Musser's marimba orchestras which appeared during the Tri-State Music Festival in 1941. While she did not see the ensemble perform, her parents watched the performance and later described it to her.<sup>49</sup> The first instrument she attempted was piano, but was forced to stop playing due to a broken index finger at the age of eleven.<sup>50</sup> Her father was the proprietor of a music store, where she discovered her first marimba. Her initial marimba education was with local music teacher and organist Sydney David in 1941.<sup>51</sup> Prior to college, Chenoweth took lessons from Musser at Northwestern University. She was also a member of Musser's marimba orchestra, which included 200 marimbists and performed in the Chicago area in 1948.

After studying at William Woods College in Missouri for the first two years of her undergraduate degree, Chenoweth eventually received her Bachelor's degree from Northwestern. In 1951, she earned a dual degree in marimba performance and music criticism. Chenoweth then attended the American Conservatory in Chicago where she

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<sup>48</sup> James Strain, "Vida Chenoweth," *Percussive Notes* 31 (1994): 8.

<sup>49</sup> Rebecca Kite, *Keiko Abe: A Virtuoso's Life* (Leesburg: GP Percussion, 2007), 171.

<sup>50</sup> Laura Phillips, "Vida Chenoweth and Her Contributions to Marimba Performance, Linguistics and Ethnomusicology," (D.M.A. diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2000), 8.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

studied marimba with James Dutton and earned a dual Master's degree in percussion and music theory in 1953.

In an interview with marimbist Leigh Howard Stevens, Chenoweth stated, "The peak of my performing career was from 1957 when I was accepted by the concert audiences of Guatemala, through about 1963 during which time success came in New York and Europe."<sup>52</sup> This success included Chenoweth's 1959 premiere of Robert Kurka's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*, a work written specifically for her in 1956. The premiere was with the Orchestra of America at Carnegie Hall. The connection between composer and performer was established through the mutual friendship of Chenoweth's manager who suggested that Kurka write the Concerto for her. She remembered that, "Neither of us had any money, but both of us wanted a marimba concerto."<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, Robert Kurka died of leukemia before the premiere and only heard the Concerto as Chenoweth was learning it. The Concerto was first of many pieces composed for Vida Chenoweth by composers such as Bernard Rogers, Eugene Ulrich, Hal Mommsen, Harry Hewitt, and Jorge Sarmientos.

Chenoweth did not intentionally seek composers for commissions, but they were drawn to her due to her expressive ability and the care she took in preparing the music. Percussionist Kathleen Kastner explained this level of thoroughness, "Vida Chenoweth's influence was extremely significant, in that her diligent pursuit of every detail of the

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<sup>52</sup> Leigh Howard Stevens, "An Interview with Vida Chenoweth," *Percussive Notes* 15 (1977): 22.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

score in spite of its expressive difficulty contributed to a final result which pushed marimba repertoire and performance technique into a new realm.”<sup>54</sup>

Later in life, Chenoweth shifted her focus from marimba to ethnomusicology. “My initial interest in ethnomusicology stemmed from an interest in the history of the marimba—where did it originate—where is it played—by whom—and what music do they play?”<sup>55</sup> The answers to these questions were sought and eventually culminated in her book, *Marimbas of Guatemala* published in 1974. She decided to officially pursue a career in ethnomusicology and received a Ph.D. from the University of Auckland.

Since its inception, Chenoweth has been involved with the Percussive Arts Society and was honored to the highest degree with induction into the Hall of Fame in 1994—the second woman privileged to receive such an honor. According to Chenoweth, a very humble woman, “the news of my being nominated took me by surprise.”<sup>56</sup> She said of her influence in breaking ground for both women in percussion and marimba performers as a whole, “I didn’t know I was pioneering.”<sup>57</sup>

#### Karen Ervin Pershing

Heralded at the peak of her career as “one of the best-known solo percussionists in the United States,”<sup>58</sup> Karen Ervin Pershing was very active and influential as a

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<sup>54</sup> Kastner, “The Emergence of Marimba Technique,” 27.

<sup>55</sup> Stevens, “Vida Chenoweth,” 22.

<sup>56</sup> Strain, “Vida Chenoweth,” 8.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>58</sup> Jim Petercsak, “I love to Play. . . P.A.S. Interview with Karen Ervin Pershing, Solo Percussionist,” *Percussive Notes* 15 (1977): 23.

performer in the 1970s. Born in California in 1943, she began her musical experience on piano in the third grade. Pershing continued to study piano through elementary school and into junior high school. Percussion slowly entered her life as she occasionally played percussion parts in orchestra when not playing piano.

It was not until her senior year of high school that she started to focus on percussion. She admitted, “I really enjoyed playing it and wanted to study percussion seriously; but my parents objected very strongly to the idea of a girl playing percussion. They talked me out of it.”<sup>59</sup> When she finally decided to pursue percussion, she chose the marimba as her principal instrument and doubled violin parts in the high school orchestra. While percussion was deemed unacceptable in the eyes of her parents, the marimba was considered to be an instrument that still allowed an acceptable level of femininity.

She received her Bachelor’s degree in percussion from University of Southern California, where she studied with William Kraft, her greatest influence in music. “His influence on me was primarily as my timpani instructor. However, our lessons were much more involved and dealt with life and the arts and what music means.”<sup>60</sup> She gave up pursuing a Master’s degree in musicology to follow her husband to Virginia. There she made a name for herself internationally as a marimba soloist, placing second in the Concours Internationale d’Execution Musicale in Geneva, Switzerland.

After following her husband back to California, then to Arizona, where she pursued a Master’s in composition, they divorced in 1976. In the same year she began her

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<sup>59</sup> Petercsak, “I love to Play,” 23.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 23.



teaching career as a part-time professor of percussion at California State University, Northridge. From 1976-1980, Pershing was very active as a soloist and clinician, performing roughly thirty concerts and clinics throughout the United States each year.<sup>61</sup> She was also very active in the Percussive Arts Society in the 1970's as a member of the board of directors and as Vice President.

In 1980, Pershing married her second husband, who died of a heart attack within the year. After this staggering event, she turned to writing and published seven romance novels. She also published several solos and method books for marimba including: *Contemporary Solos for 4 Mallets*, *Mallet Duets for the Student and Teacher*, and *Contemporary Mallet Duets*. Pershing eventually began a publishing company, Studio 4, which became part of the Alfred Publishing Company.

Although she did not continue performing past the early 1980s, Pershing continued to teach and inspire her students until her early death in 2004. Ervin Pershing was an excellent role model for young percussionists through her roles as a performer, educator, and leader in the Percussive Arts Society.

### Women in Orchestras

The 1920s saw the expansion of opportunities for women in the American music scene. Starting in the mid-1920s, all-female orchestras emerged throughout the country. At the high point, there were approximately thirty. Although they lacked proper financial backing, resulting in lower pay than major symphony orchestras, they provided

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<sup>61</sup> Kristin Lyman, "In Memoriam: Karen Ervin Pershing," Percussive Arts Society, accessed September 25, 2010, <http://pasic.org/News/memoriam/pershing.cfm>.

performance opportunities for many women. The all-women orchestras were quite popular with the general public yet were seen as “the novelty.”<sup>62</sup> Musicologist Beth Abelson Macleod explained that the popularity of these orchestras was, “their oddity, an oddity derived from the perceived incongruity of women playing instruments usually reserved for men.”<sup>63</sup> At the time, it was considered odd for women to play any instrument in the symphony orchestra, especially wind and percussion instruments.

Prior to the emergence of women’s orchestras, there were no opportunities for women to perform since they were not permitted to join the all-male symphony orchestras. World War II allowed openings for women in these all-male orchestras due to the member’s deployment. During the war, the number of women in orchestras increased from 2 percent to 8 percent.<sup>64</sup> These new positions that women gained were not maintained when the men returned. The first woman to hold a principal position in a wind or percussion section was flutist Doriot Anthony Dwyer with the Boston Symphony in 1952.<sup>65</sup>

The timpani were widely considered masculine by the majority of audiences and critics. In an article written by Raymond Paige for *Etude* magazine in 1952, he supposed that women should not choose to play any instrument. He further clarified, “instruments

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<sup>62</sup> Mary Hinley, “The Uphill Climb of Women in American Music: Performers and Teachers,” *Music Educators Journal* 70 (1984): 34.

<sup>63</sup> Beth Abelson Macleod, “Whence Comes the Lady Tympanist? Gender and Instrumental Musicians in America, 1853-1990,” *Journal of Social History* 27 (1993): 298.

<sup>64</sup> Beth Abelson Macleod, *Women Performing Music: The Emergence of American Women as Classical Instrumentalists and Conductors* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 2001), 140.

<sup>65</sup> Ann Curtis Gilbert, “Women in the Big Five Orchestras An Exploratory Study of the Factors Affecting Career Development” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Akron, 1994), 10.

requiring physical force are a dubious choice, partly because women lack strength for them, partly because the spectacle of a girl engaging in such physical exertions is not attractive.”<sup>66</sup> In saying this, he completely disregarded the possibility of women percussionists.

In the 1950s, women were not valued for their abilities as musicians, but were considered a valuable commodity for the public face of the orchestra. Quaintance Eaton, in an article for *Musical America*, pins the importance of women in orchestras on their capacity for “participating in committee activities and being generally of news value human interest stories, having babies, giving cooking advice, modeling in style shows and so on.”<sup>67</sup>

Even as late as 1962, an article by John Sherman in the *American String Teacher* journal claimed that cello and harp were the most appropriate instruments for women to play because the curves of the instrument match the curves of a woman’s body. As for percussion, he asserted, “women drummers and tympanists scare me. These seem to be the Amazon type . . . It’s just their striking power, and accuracy, to say nothing of their well developed arm muscles, don’t go with moonlight and roses.”<sup>68</sup>

A momentous breakthrough for women was the introduction of screens in the audition process. Beginning in the early 1970s, most major orchestras held blind auditions. The number of women in symphony orchestras rose dramatically, including in

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<sup>66</sup> Raymond Paige, “Why Not Women in Orchestras?” *Etude* 70 (1952): 14.

<sup>67</sup> Quaintance Eaton, “Women Come Into Their Own in our Orchestras,” *Musical America* 75 (1955): 179.

<sup>68</sup> John K. Sherman, “Women Harpist or Cellist is Top Sight at Concerts,” *American String Teacher* 12 (1962): 102.

the percussion and timpani positions. Nonetheless, certain gender stereotypes continued. According to Beth Abelson Macleod, in the 1980s 15 percent of brass and percussion orchestra musicians were women. In contrast, 61 percent of flutists were female.<sup>69</sup>

#### Elayne Jones

Elayne Jones, born in New York City in 1928, began her musical training at the age of six with piano lessons taught by her mother. Jones was fortunate to attend Music and Art High School in New York from 1942 to 1945 and was immediately accepted to Juilliard on a scholarship sponsored by Duke Ellington. While at Juilliard, her percussion teachers were Morris Goldenberg and Saul Goodman.

During her time in New York, Jones performed with numerous ensembles such as: the CBS Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Caramoor Festival Orchestra, the Symphony of the Air, the Boston Women's Symphony, the New Jersey Symphony, the Westchester Symphony, and the Long Island Philharmonic; and she was one of the nine founding members of the Symphony of the New World.<sup>70</sup> Jones broke ground in percussion when she became the first woman to perform with the New York City Opera Orchestra, where she remained for twenty-two years.<sup>71</sup> She was also the timpanist for the American Symphony from its inception in 1962 until 1972.

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<sup>69</sup> Macleod, *Women Performing Music*, 142.

<sup>70</sup> Geary Larrick, *Biographical Essays on Twentieth Century Percussionists* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellin Press, 1992), 137.

<sup>71</sup> Duston Harvey, "People in Percussion- Elayne Jones- Timpanist," *Percussive Notes* 12 (1993): 17.

Founder of the American Symphony, distinguished conductor Leopold Stokowski asserted,

Elayne Jones . . . is a very great artist. I know the timpani players in other countries and some of them are very great; but she is equally great. She is one of the greatest in the world for her instrument, for technique, but particularly for imagination, because timpani parts on the paper sometimes look very dry . . . She has to make it sound; she has to make it suggest certain mysterious things or very powerful things and she does that wonderfully.<sup>72</sup>

Besides her many orchestral performances, Jones maintained several teaching positions.

While in New York City, she taught at the Metropolitan Music School, the Bronx Community College, and the Westchester Conservatory of Music. Throughout her career she was also very active as a clinician and “presented more than 300 solo lecture-demonstrations of percussion instruments in schools and colleges.”<sup>73</sup> All this was accomplished as a single mother of three children.

In 1972, Jones earned the most prestigious position of her career as timpanist of the San Francisco Symphony. Through the difficult audition process, Jones beat forty other people vying for the position. A pioneer for both women and African Americans, she was the first African American to hold a principal spot in a major symphony orchestra.

It’s been a long struggle against two prejudices and it isn’t over yet . . . I had to prove that music could be played by anyone who loves it . . . It’s been a terrible burden because I always felt I had to do

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<sup>72</sup> Leopold Stokowski, “They are Always Nervous,” *Music and Artists* 4 (January 1972): 11.

<sup>73</sup> Larrick, *Biographical Essays*, 137.

better, that I wouldn't be allowed the lapses other musicians have.<sup>74</sup>

Jones served as principal timpanist until 1974 when she was not granted tenure by the orchestra's seven-member players committee. Furious with the decision, Jones sued the orchestra for \$50,000 and demanded tenure "for reasons of racism, sexism and jealousy."<sup>75</sup> She was granted employment for the 1975 season but was again denied tenure by the committee the following season. The conductor, Seiji Ozawa, originally argued that she deserved to receive tenure, but in the 1976 season sided with the committee. The case was dismissed in court in 1977.

Remaining in San Francisco, she played with the San Francisco Opera and taught at the San Francisco Conservatory. Jones was active in the Percussive Arts Society and presented a clinic on "Opera Percussion" at the 1980 Percussive Arts Society International Convention in San Jose, California. With a career that made inroads for women in percussion, it is regrettable that she is most known for her controversy with the San Francisco Symphony. Jones was very passionate about her role as a classical musician, and as D. Antoinette Handy explained, her "object was to bring people into the world of symphonic music and to make music come alive for those who have a mistaken perception of what classical music is and who plays it."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Teresa L. Reed, "Black Women in Art Music," in *Black Women and Music: More than the Blues*, ed. Eileen M. Hayes and Linda F. Williams (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2007), 188.

<sup>75</sup> Handy, *Black Women in American Bands and Orchestras*, 211.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

## Paula Culp

Born in Fort Smith, Arkansas in 1941, Paula Culp was one of the most successful pioneer women percussionists in the orchestral field, yet very little is known about her professional life. She studied percussion and timpani at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, and earned her Bachelor's degree in 1963 from Oberlin, where she studied with Cloyd Duff, and her Master's degree from Indiana University in 1965 under the guidance of George Gaber.

Her career as an orchestral percussionist began directly after graduate school when she won the timpani position with the Metropolitan Opera National Company. After two years with the Opera Company, in 1967 she became principal percussionist with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Remaining with the ISO for only one season, Culp began her long-standing association with the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra in 1968. She was associate principal timpanist and assistant principal percussionist with the symphony until retirement in 1992.

In addition to performing, Culp was very active as a teacher. She taught percussion at DePauw University as a part-time professor from 1964 to 1966, as well as at the University of Minnesota for an unknown period of time due to lack of employment records. Joni Sutton, a retired middle school band director from Minnesota and student of Culp's from 1971 to 1976 at the University of Minnesota, shared the impression of her teacher:

Paula Culp was a percussionist's percussionist. She worked hard, she played with meticulous attention to detail, and she seemed to have no ego in spite of her great talent and accomplishment. As a teacher, she demanded the best from her students, and worked hard at her instruction. Lessons were all business, with no time wasted on socializing. As a young woman, I found her inspiring, but a bit intimidating. I respected her so much that I had to get beyond my

own self-consciousness of playing in front of her. When I studied with men, they seemed to think I was “really good for a girl.” With Paula, she recognized that there was nothing odd about a woman wanting to be a percussionist, and the goal was to be “really good” whatever one's gender.<sup>77</sup>

It is very regrettable that more is not known of this historically significant woman in percussion. Unfortunately it is no longer possible to learn about Paula Culp's life directly from her, she died at the age of sixty-six in St. Paul, Minnesota.

### Women in Academe

Success for women as college music professors has been challenging to achieve, particularly in the field of percussion. Women have more often filled the areas of voice, piano, introductory courses, and music appreciation, while men have historically been found in areas such as orchestral conducting, composition, music theory, percussion trombone, and trumpet.<sup>78</sup> Incongruously, women have remained the minority in these fields even though the number of women earning advanced degrees has grown. In 1970, 47.6 percent of M.A. degrees in music were awarded to women; 16.3 percent of Ph.D.s and D.M.A.s were earned by women. In a 1985 report, a rise in the completion of advanced degrees can be noted where 50 percent of M.A.s and 35.9 percent of the Ph.D.s and D.M.A.s were awarded to women.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Joni Sutton, e-mail message to author, February 13, 2010.

<sup>78</sup> Rhea Jezer, “Women in Academe: A Qualitative Study of Women in Music Departments,” (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1995), 4.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.



Curiously, there is a large gap between the degrees being earned by women and the number of women holding university level percussion teaching positions. In a review of tenure-track percussion positions from 1972 to 1974, 6 percent of applied percussion positions were held by women. This number increased insignificantly in the 1986 report, which showed that 6.5 percent of women in percussion tenure track positions were women.<sup>80</sup> The report also found that there were more women in string and wind areas and fewer in brass and percussion. “This suggests that the sex-stereotyping of instruments continues, a process that often begins in grade school.”<sup>81</sup> This phenomenon will be examined further in Chapter 3.

#### Charmaine Asher-Wiley

Charmaine Asher Wiley grew up in the Louisville, Kentucky area and became one of the first female percussion professors. She received both her Bachelor’s and Master’s in percussion from the Eastman School of Music, studying with professor Bill Street. According to one of her students, percussionist Rebecca Kite, before beginning her career as a professor “she toured as a marimba soloist and was the timpanist of the New Orleans Symphony.”<sup>82</sup> Kite also stated that Asher-Wiley was a member of the Kansas City Symphony, but the author was unable to obtain her dates of tenure for these orchestras.

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<sup>80</sup> Adrienne Fried Block, “The Status of Women in College Music, 1986-87: A Statistical Report,” in *Women’s Studies/Women’s Status* (Boulder, CO: The College Music Society, 1988), 91.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>82</sup> Rebecca Kite, interview with Meghan Aube, November 10, 2010, Indianapolis, Indiana.

As a marimba soloist, Asher-Wiley performed throughout the country at many universities and appeared with symphony orchestras under the direction of conductors such as Leopold Stokowski, Howard Hanson, Percy Grainger, Isler Solomon, Harry John Brown, Victor Benjamin Swalin, Skitch Henderson, Jose Iturbi, Federick Fennell, and Victor Borge.<sup>83</sup> Stokowski exclaimed, “In my opinion she is first-class as a marimbist. I can recommend her from a musical standpoint without reservation.”<sup>84</sup>

Asher-Wiley was an active educator and the first professor of percussion at the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC), where she taught from 1959 to 1992. Early in the program there were very few percussion majors, yet she was very creative in involving students from outside the Conservatory of Music. Kite explained that while the percussion studio typically included eight to ten students, the percussion ensemble included over twenty-five students. “There were people from dental school or going to med school that played in the ensemble, and some of them were great players.”<sup>85</sup> During her time at UMKC, she established one of the first marimba chamber ensembles and the first dance drum quintet in the country.<sup>86</sup> In addition to her roles as educator and performer, Asher-Wiley was a composer. Her compositions include *Divertimento for Percussion*, *Rudimental Cavalcade*, *Caprice for Five*, *Improvisations for Dance Drum Quintet*, and *Artistry for Five*.

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<sup>83</sup> Sheri Baker, “Charmaine Asher-Wiley,” University of Missouri Kansas City Archives, 1.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>85</sup> Kite, interview.

<sup>86</sup> Baker, “Charmain Asher-Wiley,” 2.

In a time where there were very few women in the percussion field, performance image and femininity were carefully scrutinized. Director of the Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Schweiger, touted Asher-Wiley's ability as a musician but also placed importance on her appearance.

"Charmaine Asher is an extraordinary musician who combines a fine talent with a charming personality. Her attractive appearance and unfailing musicianship win her friends the moment she steps on stage."<sup>87</sup>

#### Nancy Mathesen

Raised in Beaumont, Texas, Nancy Mathesen grew up listening to her mother teach private piano lessons. She was immediately drawn to the rhythm in music and reminisced, "I was so crazy about rhythm, I marched chickens around the chicken house beating on a pie plate with a stick."<sup>88</sup> Mathesen's first instrument was the violin. When girls were finally admitted into her school's band program in 1952, she immediately jumped at the chance to play percussion.

Her first introduction to percussion was not a traditional one. She explained, "I didn't even get to practice with the band. He [the band director] put me in the uniform storage closet with a music stand, a practice pad, a pair of 2B sticks, and my Haskel Harr book, and he said, 'do what it says.'"<sup>89</sup> This was the only formal instruction in percussion she would receive until college.

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<sup>87</sup> Baker, "Charmaine Asher-Wiley," 2.

<sup>88</sup> Nancy Mathesen, interview by Meghan Aube, August 10, 2010, Hernando, Mississippi.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

Even though Mathesen's early years in percussion were not ideal, she managed to teach herself enough to pursue music in college. She graduated from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. Upon graduation she married, began teaching primary school music, and eventually earned her Master's in Music from the University of North Texas. After the completion of her second degree, she learned that she was pregnant.

Shortly after the birth of their first child, Mathesen's husband took a job at the University of Tennessee, Martin. When they arrived, there was not a professor of percussion position, and the only instruments available were an "old Jenco xylophone, chimes, and a very old set of Slingerland timpani."<sup>90</sup> After the director of the music department at UTM heard a community performance by Mathesen she asked her to begin teaching percussion. In 1966, she started with only one student and "the longest title on campus: Professor of Music on a Temporary and Part-Time basis."<sup>91</sup> She was one of the first women college percussion professors in the United States.

Mathesen admitted that she had not always wanted to be a teacher, and at the beginning of her career, "I wanted to play, but I got married."<sup>92</sup> When her children were small she would attempt to return to school to practice in the evening, however, with the responsibilities of marriage and children, she was not able to pursue her interest in performance. She considered the timpani to be her primary instrument, on which she gained most of her performance experience in symphonic settings.

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<sup>90</sup> Mathesen, interview.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Through her dedication as a teacher, the percussion studio grew and flourished. One of her goals as a teacher was to expose students to what was occurring in the rest of the percussion world. She would regularly take students to the Percussive Arts Society International Convention so they would encounter new experiences not available to them at UTM. One of her past students and her successor at UTM, Dr. Julie Hill, explained the influence Nancy had on her life: “The thing I’m most proud of is that she always said she never taught anybody like her, but she said teaching me was like looking in a mirror. That was one of my proudest moments.”<sup>93</sup>

Kevin Lambert, who served as director of the music department while Mathesen was a professor, said:

Students left her studio with excellent technique, a high level of musicianship, a tremendous work ethic, and true regard for their art and their vocation. And Nancy was somehow able to get these results while still maintaining a caring, even loving relationship with her students, who reciprocated the feeling. In my thirty-five years in education, Nancy is among the finest teachers I have ever worked with. Her heart, her skill, and her care were limitless and unparalleled.<sup>94</sup>

Professor Mathesen was a very influential role model to many of her students and, as one of the first female percussion professors, advanced the progress of women in the field.

This chapter has demonstrated that many American women have been historically significant to the percussion. While many gaps in the research remain, common challenges these women faced include: the selection of percussion against established

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<sup>93</sup> Julie Hill, telephone interview with Meghan Aube, September 24, 2010.

<sup>94</sup> Kevin Lambert, e-mail message to author, September 30, 2010.

gender-biases, the lack of women as models, discrimination in a male-dominated career, and the difficult choice between professionalism and domesticity. All of these issues are present in the research cited in Chapter 2 and will be further developed through study of interviews with living professional women percussionists in Chapter 3.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to relate the historical emergence of women in percussion to the current state of women in percussion through common trends and issues. The common issues that arise are socialization of children, gender-stereotyping of instruments, the importance of role models for young female percussionists, and matters relevant to the life of a professional woman percussionist. The function of this chapter is to review the existing literature and research that contributes to this discussion. The connection between these issues and the experiences of current women percussionists will be made in Chapter 3.

#### Childhood Socialization

The social development of children can be traced to the way in which adults interact with one another. Adult interaction is an important facet to discuss in the minority role of women in specific careers. The categorization of female-suitable professions and the characteristics that are deemed appropriate for women are elements of society that are experienced in early childhood.

Gender roles and attributes are learned early in life. In his article on childhood gender roles, John Archer argued that during these early years the views and beliefs of a culture are adopted. The pressure to match established gender roles has proved more difficult for male children. He described three different stages of male development: “avoidance of femininity, the physically-based role of boyhood, and the achievement-

based role of adults.”<sup>95</sup> In contrast, the main transformation for young girls consists of an amplification of femininity as they reach puberty.

At a young age, it is still suitable for girls to have male friends, be involved in masculine hobbies, and be a “tomboy.” Archer found the role of a tomboy is considered a favorable position among young girls and places them at a higher status due to their interactions with boys. “Feminine behavior entails a loss of status for a boy whereas masculine behavior entails an increase in status for a girl.”<sup>96</sup> In certain situations, acceptance into male circles is accomplished through tomboy behavior.

As girls age, however, the emphasis on femininity increases. There is a “drastic decrease in the tolerance of tomboyish activity, and a lessening in the value of sporting activities and academic achievement. Instead, interest becomes focused on dating, attractiveness, and future marriage plans.”<sup>97</sup> Girls are pressured to fit the traditional female stereotypes and focus on their roles as future mothers and partners in marriage.

This phenomenon was also discussed by Eleanor Maccoby in her book on child development. She discovered that girls were more accepting of masculine games and activities while boys were generally not interested in activities intended for the opposite sex. In addition, girls with tomboy characteristics were not chastised by other girls for their fascination with male activities or playing with boys. The responsibility of socialization and child development was placed on the parents. “Parents operate from

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<sup>95</sup> John Archer, “Childhood Gender Roles: Social Context and Organization,” in *Childhood Social Development*, ed. Harry McGurk (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992), 31.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.



stereotyped knowledge and beliefs about what is appropriate for a child of a given sex, and train their children accordingly.”<sup>98</sup> These adopted norms are what the culture as a whole feels to be acceptable for either sex. Maccoby goes on to state that “parents react more positively when they see their children behaving in ‘sex-appropriate’ ways.”<sup>99</sup>

### Instrument Gender Bias

A variety of studies and research have been completed on the instrument gender bias of students, parents, band directors, and American society at large. The word “gender” has a different meaning than the term sex. According to the American Psychological Society, gender is the way that society labels someone as a woman or a man and how a characteristic is labeled as either feminine or masculine. The word sex is used to describe physical characteristics. The words male and female refer to a person’s biological sex.<sup>100</sup>

For the purpose of this document, the term gender will be used to define a social characteristic that is normally perceived as masculine or feminine. When discussing musical instruments, the term gender is applied to the still-present belief that some instruments are masculine or feminine. A gender stereotype arises when the majority of people who play an instrument are either women or men.

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<sup>98</sup> Elanor Maccoby, *The Two Sexes: Growing Up Apart, Coming Together* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 118.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>100</sup> Howard Glasser and John Smith “On the Vague Meaning of ‘Gender’ in Education Research: The Problem, Its Sources and Recommendations for Practice,” *Educational Research* 37 (2008): 348.

Beth Abelson Macleod discussed the gendered origins of musical instruments in her article “Whence Comes the Lady Tympanist.” For centuries in Western culture, women’s performance on many instruments, aside from primarily piano, was seen as inappropriate outside of the home. During the beginning of the twentieth century, flute became the first wind instrument acceptable for women. Flute was tolerable because the embouchure did not disfigure the face to the extent that other wind instruments did. The flute is still considered feminine today and is one of the most popular choices for young girls. Percussion in Western music, however, has long held the tradition of being a masculine instrument.

Although some instruments were considered feminine and others masculine, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the role of music educator was dominated by women. Researcher Vicki Eaklor argued, “Music was given the ‘female’ role in American society as duties were divided severely along gender constructs.”<sup>101</sup> This created conflict with the domination of men as professional musicians. Eaklor described the confusion that is still found in the way music is viewed today. Teaching music is often defined as a feminine role, but conducting band and orchestra is considered masculine. In her book, *Women Performing Music*, Macleod corroborated that music gender-stereotypes present in the early twentieth-century remain in the twenty-first. “Gender still plays a major role in determining the instrument a woman is likely to play,

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<sup>101</sup> Vicki Eaklor, “The Gendered Origins of the American Musician,” *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* 4/5 (Winter 1993/Spring 1994): 43.

the nature of her acceptance as an instrumentalist or conductor, decisions about marriage and motherhood, and her onstage presentation of self.”<sup>102</sup>

Macleod explained the early entrance of women into American symphony orchestras in the early twentieth-century and the increase of women’s participation in these ensembles during World War II. She clarified that although women became more involved as performers, the particular instruments that were acceptable to be performed by women did not change. As cited earlier, she claimed that in the 1980s fewer than 15 percent of women employed by symphony orchestras were brass or percussion players, yet 61 percent of females in orchestral positions played the flute.<sup>103</sup>

Scholar Lucy Green held the music education system responsible for the current instrument gender biases. She argued that the organization of music in public schools “overwhelmingly associates active engagement in popular music, such as playing electric guitar and drums, with boys and masculinity. Whereas classical music practices such as singing in the choir and playing the flute are linked with girls and femininity.”<sup>104</sup> She further stated that instruments are categorized by the teacher’s perception of success based on gender. The students’ perceived self-ability on an instrument will also be determined by the gender assigned to the instrument and whether or not the student matches it.

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<sup>102</sup> Macleod, *Women Performing Music*: 140.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>104</sup> Lucy Green, “Music Education, Cultural Capital, and Social Group Identity,” in *The Cultural Study of Music*, ed. Martin Clayton et al. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 269.

There have been many studies conducted to determine whether specific reasons outside of socialization lead a student to choose an instrument. These studies focused on the instrument preferences of the students while also taking into account the influence of parents, teachers, role models, and peers. The first study of this nature was conducted in 1978 by Harold Ables and Susan Porter. The researchers were concerned that “stereotyping is particularly a problem when it is based on characteristics irrelevant to the function of a group of objects, such as the association of maleness with playing drums and femaleness with playing violin.”<sup>105</sup> Student subjects involved in the study ranked the flute as the most feminine instrument and the drums as the most masculine. They found that as students progress through their adolescence, females continually move toward the female spectrum of instruments and lose favor for masculine defined instruments. Further, if there is a demonstration of the instruments for the beginning music student, the sex of the demonstrator influenced the choice of the student.

Studies conducted by Philip Griswold and Denise Chroback in 1981, Caroline Holt in 1991, Judith Delzell and David Leppla in 1992, Susan Trankowski in 1993, Patrick Fortney, David Boyle, and Nicholas DeCarbo in 1993, Susan O’Neill and Michael Boulton in 1996, and Anne Harrison and Susan O’Neill in 2000 discovered similar results. All of the researchers in these projects explained that gender associations of instruments did not change and that until there are more non-stereotypical role models in the music profession, the gender perceptions of students will not alter. The initial presentation of the instruments was believed to be crucial. When instruments were

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<sup>105</sup> Harold Ables and Susan Porter, “The Sex-Stereotyping of Musical Instruments,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 26 (1978): 65.

demonstrated by both female and male performers, the instrument selection of the students was proven to be more gender-neutral. Other factors that influenced students' instrument selection included images viewed on television or other media, as well as the instrument's size and sound, and the perceived strength required to play it.

Research in this field was still being conducted as recently as 2009. Thirty years after the first study, Hal Abeles felt that there were far-reaching implications in the continued gender-bias regarding instruments. The perceived lack of choice because of an instrument's assigned gender troubled him due to the resulting limitation of a child's possible career choice. Three time periods, 1978, 1993, and 2007, were compared to demonstrate the most common instrument choices for middle school students. In the three decades spanning research in this field, the association of an instrument as either masculine or feminine has remained unaltered. Girls still selected flute, violin, and clarinet, while boys preferred drums, trumpet, and trombone. The reasons given by Abeles for students' choices were the sound of the instrument, the size of the instrument, and the influences from peers, teachers and parents. He suggested that it may ultimately be the job of music educators to intervene at a higher level in order for gender-stereotyping to change.

### Role Models

The importance of role models has been debated by several sources and is a relevant topic in the discussion of women in percussion. Many researchers have analyzed the critical nature of replication and identification based on gender. The function of a role model is to set the examples and norms that are expected by the society as a whole.

An article on the gender biases of instrument selection by Susan O'Neill and Michael Boulton highlighted the importance of a role model in the instrument choice of a student. The authors ascertained that young students' views of what instrument is appropriate were often determined by the adults they witness playing the selected instruments. Reasons cited that students choose a certain instrument included, "you never see a boy play the flute," and "only men play guitar and drums."<sup>106</sup> In another article, Susan O'Neill considered role modeling as one of the most important factors determining whether a student will begin learning an instrument.

Gender roles are learned through exposure to males and females in the 'real world,' in stories, and through media. In music, both children and adults share culturally defined views. Gender stereotyped beliefs reinforce the idea that particular types of music, instruments, or occupations are "masculine" or "feminine," influencing gender differences in education, experience, opportunity, and even levels of aspiration.<sup>107</sup>

Researcher Sarah Maidlow confirmed this when she wrote, "Each sex appears to have a strong tendency to look to people of their own sex, as well as their own instrument, from whom to gain support, encouragement and models of ambition."<sup>108</sup> A gap was found between females in high school and college who are involved in music and women who have made professional careers in music. Maidlow discovered that the under-achievement of female students compared to male may be due to the gender of the

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<sup>106</sup> Susan O'Neill and Michael Boulton, "Boys and Girls Preferences for Musical Instruments: A Function of Gender?" *Psychology of Music* 24 (1996): 181.

<sup>107</sup> Susan O'Neill, "Gender and Music," in *The Social Psychology of Music*, ed. David Hargreaves and Adrian North (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 47.

<sup>108</sup> Sarah Maidlow, "The Experiences, Attitudes and Expectations of Music Students from a Feminist Perspective," *British Journal of Music Education* 15 (1998): 43.

role models they witness. She explained that females dominate the music education system at both the high school and undergraduate levels, but do not maintain such a prominent position in the professional music world. She also discovered that most female students' future goals included becoming band directors while male students were more likely to express interest in becoming performers or composers.

Professional musicians witnessed by students have a considerable influence on their choices, since children decide what is appropriate based on observations of other musicians. Kenneth Cramer, Erin Million, and Lynn Perreault speculated that students may not have the freedom to choose the instrument they most desire to play for fear of criticism in not following typical gender roles. To argue this point the authors discuss Social Role Theory which states, "Gender stereotypes are derived from exposure to differential membership by males and females in various roles, occupations, or even behaviors."<sup>109</sup> Acting outside of prescribed social roles can lead to accusations of deviant behavior and social criticism. This is a large problem for students since "individuals who choose to play an instrument atypical to their gender (e.g. a male flutists or a female drummer) are likely to be judged negatively."<sup>110</sup>

In a study that observed the significance of female role models, Susan Basow and Karen Glasser-Howe found that role models were very important to the development and choices of female students. The authors summarized the two processes involved in a role

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<sup>109</sup> Kenneth Cramer, Erin Million, and Lynn Perreault, "Perceptions of Musicians: Gender Stereotypes and Social Role Theory," *Psychology of Music* 30 (2002): 165.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

model/student relationship: interaction and identification.<sup>111</sup> Interaction includes the connection between the role model and student, whether it is through education, occupation or personal relations. Identification is how the student recognizes the similarity between self and the model, how they choose to either emulate or refute the model, and the incorporation of the model's beliefs and traits into their life. Women teachers and professors "are particularly important for female college students in their career decision."<sup>112</sup>

### Women in Careers

Currently the percussion field is undeniably male dominated. As discussed in the introduction, there are fewer female university percussion professors and members of major symphony orchestras than men. It is less common to see female performers in any percussion medium than it is to see male performers. Within the body of research on percussion there has not been an investigation into the reason for the gap between the student and professional level. However, within the broader realm of research that covers the discussion of women as professionals; several challenging aspects were examined by numerous sources. One of the difficulties for women who wish to pursue a professional career is the struggle in balancing both a domestic and professional life.

This issue has been relevant since the early 1900s when women appeared to be the most active in entering the professional world. Discussion on this topic can be found

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<sup>111</sup> Susan Basow and Karen Glasser Howe, "Role Model Influence: Effects of Sex and Sex-role Attitude in College Students," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 4 (Summer 1980): 559.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 571.



as early as a 1926 article by Eunice Barnard where she elaborated on the difficulties of maintaining a career and a family life and quoted the president of Smith College, “The problem that confronts almost every educated woman today: how to combine a normal life of marriage and motherhood with a life of intellectual activity, professional or otherwise.”<sup>113</sup> That there has not been change and that this dilemma still remains for women of today can be seen in more recent scholarship.

Amy Cuddy, Susan Fiske, and Peter Glick conducted a study to determine the perceived level of competence for female professionals with children, male professionals with children and childless women professionals.

When working women become mothers, they trade perceived competence for perceived warmth. Second, working men don’t make this trade; when they become fathers, they gain perceived warmth and maintain perceived competence. Third, people report less interest in hiring, promoting, and educating working moms relative to working dads and childless employees.<sup>114</sup>

The authors also claimed that “women are typically respected or liked but not both.”<sup>115</sup> They argued that while women who stay at home are thought to be warm and domestic, women professionals are thought of as cold. Their status may invoke respect that is forced and a hidden bitterness may be felt from other employees.

The effect of children on professional women is further discussed in the article “Higher Education and Motherhood” by Lisa Wolf-Wendel and Kelly Ward in regard to

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<sup>113</sup> Eunice Fuller Barnard, “Home—Job— or Both? The Women’s Problem,” *The Nation* (June 1926): 601.

<sup>114</sup> Amy Cuddy, Susan Fiske, and Peter Glick, “When Professionals Become Mothers, Warmth Doesn’t Cut the Ice,” *Journal of Social Issues* 60 (2004): 701.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 705.

women in university faculty positions. They stated that there are differences in the ways children affect the careers of women and men in academia. The authors shared that pioneer women in the field of academia chose not to have children in order to succeed just as “today women faculty are far more likely than their male counterparts to be single and have no children.”<sup>116</sup> At the time of this article, 31 percent of junior women faculty and 49 percent of full time women faculty had children. In comparison, 70 percent of male faculty, all ranks included, were fathers.<sup>117</sup>

Wolf-Wendel and Ward believed that institutions do not ease the burden for professional mothers because in the past it was not necessary for universities to make special accommodations due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of faculty were male. The traditional expectations for university employees are not always realistic for women who wish to have both a career and a family. “In the academic profession the ‘ideal worker’ is one who, in essence, is ‘married’ to his work leaving little time for bearing and raising children.”<sup>118</sup> Tenure-track positions are still more convenient for the traditional male employee who does not choose to engage in the additional difficulties of raising a family. The “second shift,” or domestic responsibilities that are completed outside of the work day are still the work of more women than men. Wolf-Wendel and Ward found that women who work at smaller institutions and community colleges are more satisfied and are able to balance both professional and domestic lives.

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<sup>116</sup> Lisa Wolf-Wendel and Kelly Ward, “Higher Education and Motherhood: Variations by Institutional Type,” *Higher Education* 52 (2006): 490.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 487.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 489.

Julia Wilson found similar inequalities in the tenure system at universities and in the uneven distribution of domestic responsibilities between husband and wife. She stated that male faculty members who are married and have children are among the most likely candidates for tenure-track positions, while women who are married and have children are least likely to fill these positions. Women are also more willing to abandon their career aspirations in order to take on domestic responsibilities. In the average marriage partnership, women are responsible for two-thirds or more of housework.<sup>119</sup>

Due to the smaller number of women in academia, there is an observable minority of women in the percussion field. Women who wish to pursue careers that are male-dominated often face struggles associated with their minority status. Some women face prejudice in their positions, while others simply do not receive the same opportunities as their male counterparts.

The necessity to abandon femininity in order to succeed in a male dominated career field was discussed by Bernice Sandler in “The Campus Climate Revisited.” She explained that in some instances it is essential for women to assume a masculine style of discourse to achieve success, because on many occasions people are more comfortable talking to others of the same sex. It was further argued that when women act in an assertive nature they are often considered aggressive since their actions do not fit traditional feminine behavior.

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<sup>119</sup> Julia Wilson, “The Mommy Track Versus Having it All: The Reality of the Modern Workplace,” in *You’ve Come a Long Way Baby: Women, Politics and Popular Culture*, ed. Lilly J. Goren (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 180.

Another point Sandler made is that to the outside observer, the struggle for equality in the academic setting is practically over. This is perceived due to increased numbers of women in graduate school and as faculty members. However, the more prominent the positions, the fewer women there are to be found. A pyramid effect is created due to the increasing enrollment of female undergraduate and graduate students. Sandler clarified this issue by stating “The hiring and promotion of women faculty and administrators has lagged far behind the enrollment of women students, who now constitute the majority of undergraduates and an increasing proportion of graduate and professional students.”<sup>120</sup>

The gender gap between female college students and female professors was explained by Judith Glazer-Raymos. In 2005 she researched the report from the National Center of Education Statistics which revealed that at all universities, 57.2 percent of undergraduates and 59.8 percent of graduate students were female. At this same time the faculty statistics were startlingly different. At two-year colleges, 50 percent of faculty were women; at four-year colleges and schools with Master’s programs, 41 percent of faculty were women; and finally at research universities, 33 percent of faculty were made up of women. Not only were the number of women holding faculty positions unbalanced, the amount of money the opposite gender earned also differed. “In 2005, the average

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<sup>120</sup> Bernice Sandler, “The Campus Climate Revisited: Chilly for Women Faculty, Administrators, and Graduate Students,” in *Women in Higher Education: A Feminist Perspective*, ed. by Judith S. Glazer, Estela M Bensimon, and Barbara Townsend (Needham Heights: Ginn Press, 1993), 176.

salary of women faculty across all ranks was 82 percent of their male colleagues.”<sup>121</sup>  
This discrepancy has not changed since a similar 1974/75 study.

When examining the circumstances of women in music faculty positions, the situation is similar. Studies have been conducted regarding the role of female college music faculty members since the mid-1970s. Several reports were issued by the College Music Society on the status of women faculty in college music programs; the first was in 1976/77. In 1976, the percentage of women involved in all fields of music was 24 percent while women who held positions as university percussion instructors was only 7 percent. Women in percussion increased slightly to 7.5 percent in 1977.

A second report was presented in 1986-87. The editor, Adrienne Fried Block, explained a new problem in academia: the number of full-time professor positions had decreased. This had become especially problematic as the number of qualified applicants for these positions increased, along with an increase in women earning doctoral degrees. The number of women involved in all music fields had increased since the previous study, with 31 percent of music faculty comprised of women. A trend was noticed by the editor that most of the new positions held by women were in woodwind and string instruments.

Women who held positions as college-level tenure-track percussion professors decreased one percentage point from the 1977 study to 6.5 percent. The decrease in full-time faculty positions coincided with the increase in non-tenure track and part-time

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<sup>121</sup> Judith Glazer-Raymos, “The Feminist Agenda: A Work in Progress” in *Unfinished Agendas*, ed. by Judith Glazer-Raymos (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 5.

positions. The percentage of women percussion professors as non-tenure or part-time professors was 8.7 percent.

Previous studies on the four categories of childhood socialization, instrument gender bias, role modeling, and career difficulties specific to women demonstrate that inequities continue for women. Through the studies presented, these issues were proven to be crucial for determining the success of women entering a male-dominated career. The four trends are observable in the discussion of historically significant American women percussionists in Chapter 1. Further connections between the research found in this chapter and its relevance toward women percussionists are made in Chapter 3.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE STUDY

There is clear historical evidence of male dominance in percussion in the United States. For the purpose of discovering why this dominance exists, twelve women who have become professionally successful in their respective percussion fields were interviewed. Ten of the twelve interviews were conducted in person. The two remaining interviews were performed over the telephone due to conflicts in travel. Questions posed to the women focused on early childhood and musical background, experiences in college, and negative or positive incidents they encountered as women in the percussion field. Analysis of the interviews and study of their musical background and career lend insights to the current state of women in percussion.

The twelve women were chosen based on their achievements in the percussion profession and their willingness and ability to contribute varying opinions. Interview subjects make up a range of ages and levels of experience. As can be surmised from the list of participants, seven of the twelve women hold college teaching positions. Today the most common way for a professional musician to make a living is to be associated with a university. A large number of university professors are included in this study; however, the expertise of each woman is different. The women who participated include Julia Gaines, percussion professor at the University of Missouri; Vicki Jenks, private percussion teacher and Wisconsin Youth Symphony Director; She-e Wu, percussion professor at Northwestern University; Gwendolyn Burgett Thrasher, percussion professor at Michigan State University; Julie Davila, percussion performer and educator; Laura Franklin, percussion professor at Brevard College, North Carolina; Kathleen Kastner,

percussion professor at Wheaton College, Illinois; Rebecca Kite, percussion scholar, performer and teacher; Julie Hill, percussion professor at the University of Tennessee-Martin; Vida Chenoweth, marimba soloist; Lisa Rogers, percussion professor at Texas Tech University; and Sherrie Maricle, drumset artist and band leader. All of the women have achieved a great deal of success within their field. Complete biographies for each interviewee can be found in Appendix B.

There were many commonalities among the women including similar backgrounds, life experiences, and opinions on certain matters. A very important element that may lead to a child's success in music appears to be the influence of parents. Aside from Jenks and Wu, all of the interview subjects had at least one parent who had been involved with music. Jenks and Gaines shared very interesting anecdotes on how they began playing percussion, both had mothers who were the catalyst for their start in percussion. Gaines recalled that when she first considered joining band she was convinced to pursue the clarinet by her father, who owned one of his own. She had not considered percussion until her mother exclaimed, "You know, drums would be really fun."<sup>122</sup> Gaines continued by saying that her mother had "always wanted to play percussion and that she lived vicariously through me her whole life."<sup>123</sup>

Jenks explained that when she was a young child she was constantly "playing or hitting anything she could reach." When it came time for her to choose an instrument in beginning band, Jenks remembered, "It was my mother who said, 'I think instead of

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<sup>122</sup> Julia Gaines, interview by Meghan Aube, May 12, 2010, Columbia, Missouri.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.



having her destroying the pots and pans at home, let's have her play the snare drum.'"<sup>124</sup> She believes that her parents didn't realize that percussion had a gender association and were proud of her for her choice to become a musician, regardless.

To pursue a career in music is in itself a daunting task for many people, and music is perceived to be a difficult profession to enter. The parents of musicians also play an important role in supporting their children in the life decision to become a musician. Most of the women interviewed felt that their parents were very supportive in their career choice, even if they might have initially doubted its feasibility.

A very strong connection between the interview subjects is that they all played another instrument before committing to percussion, piano being the most common. Nine of the twelve women interviewed began on piano and were also exposed to other instruments. Maricle, Rogers, and Gaines played clarinet; Thrasher and Kite played violin; Kastner played accordion; and Davila played guitar. The length of time spent on the beginning instrument varied from woman to woman. The piano experience that was shared by almost all of the women contributed to their migration to the marimba. From Keiko Abe—the first female inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame—to a marimba-playing Miss America, Carrie Lee Davis, the instrument is largely considered in pop culture a “feminine” instrument.

Whether or not they began as marimbists, most of the women eventually focused on marimba as their principal percussion instrument. Kite, Wu, Davila, Jenks, and Hill all had a common interest in a non-melodic percussion instrument when they were younger,

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<sup>124</sup> Vicki Jenks, interview with Meghan Aube, May 15, 2010, Wild Rose, Wisconsin.

such as drumset, snare drum, and timpani. As they progressed through school and their careers, they were pushed toward mallet instruments. Rogers, Kastner, Franklin, Chenoweth, and Gaines always found themselves on the mallet percussion instruments and were comfortable on these instruments because of their background in piano. The typical role of “sole female” in the percussion section was held by the majority of women in the study whether in elementary school, junior high school, high school, or college. This position of being almost exclusively among males continued into their lives as professional percussionists. Many of the women admitted they do not have many relationships with other women in the field, and some said that as students they were not aware of any other women pursuing the same career goals. These corresponding relationships will be discussed further in the larger context of the interviews.

Four broad categories that will be discussed are: 1) childhood socialization, their familiarity either witnessing interactions between male and female students, and their direct experiences; 2) instrument gender bias, trends they have witnessed in the selection process of instruments based on gender, and the choices of instruments that they have been encouraged or discouraged to pursue due to gender; 3) role modeling and mentoring, the people that have been most influential in their lives, as well as the responsibility they now feel to serve as role models for the next generation of female percussionists; and 4) the professional life of a woman in percussion, including the significant gender gap between levels of education and professionalism, as well as issues that arise for a women, such as the choice to have a family as well as a career.

### Childhood Socialization

Boys and girls develop in very different ways. From a very young age we are given examples of activities and interests that are appropriate for boys or girls. In the United States, percussion is an art form that is typically perceived as a male domain. As most percussionists are male, there are a limited number of role models for girls. In order for a female student to become a percussionist, she has to be willing to cross a clearly established gender barrier.

When starting percussion in the seventh grade, Gaines described her reluctance to sign up for the percussion section. With a father who pushed her toward clarinet and a mother who wished for her to play drums, “Mom signed me up for the drum class and they were just going through the roster asking, ‘what are you going to play, what are you going to play?’ It got to me and no girl had said drums, and so I said, ‘clarinet.’”<sup>125</sup> Finally the last girl was called and signed up for percussion. Upon the assurance that there was to be one other girl in the section, Gaines signed up for percussion as well.

Jenks noted the tendency for girls and boys to find security in being around the same gender:

The boys will run to the front right away and the girls will almost always stay back in a little grouping of other little girls. Pretty soon I think there comes a time when they have to decide, ok, how much do I really want to do this? So how much of a boy do I have to become? Or, should I stay as a little girl, doing girl stuff?<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Gaines, interview.

<sup>126</sup> Jenks, interview.

Percussion is still perceived by children as an instrument for boys and not girls. Jenks said, “Girls tend to defer to boys”<sup>127</sup> and do not establish the aggressive characteristics necessary for competing with boys.

Another personality trait that Jenks has found among many young percussionists is the desire to be heard. “There’s a personality that says ‘will you please listen to me? I really need to be listened to now and this is the way to be listened to. I can pound things. I can really be heard if I have this instrument.’”<sup>128</sup> This hunger for attention is observed in many children who wish to play percussion.

Through her experience working with high school drumlines, Franklin had the opportunity to examine different ways male and female students interact and approach percussion. “It seems like middle school and high school guy percussionists have this jock attitude. Like they’re the jocks of the band, and they’re so cool and so awesome. I think you have to have a pretty strong constitution as a female to kind of put up with that.”<sup>129</sup> She further explained that male students will eventually grow out of this phase, but that a girl “to even be drawn to percussion initially, and to know that this is what you’re going to have to put up with, instead of the nice sweet girls that inhabit the flute section,”<sup>130</sup> must have a very strong desire to play percussion. Several of the

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<sup>127</sup> Jenks, interview.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Laura Franklin, interview with Meghan Aube, August 12, 2010, Brevard, North Carolina.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

interviewees, however, said they felt comfortable being among boys in the percussion section.

### One of the Guys

The aspiration to be different and stand out among their peers is a common characteristic for females who choose to play percussion. Their need to be different often resulted in tom-boy characteristics in most of the women interviewed. Hill remembered her initial introduction to percussion was when watching her older brother play clarinet in a sixth grade band concert. The clarinet her brother played did not appear to her to be a very stimulating instrument, but the chimes were unforgettable. “I remember hearing the chimes—and they get to stand up—they are so much cooler than everyone.”<sup>131</sup> The distinction of being one of the few to stand up was ingrained in her memory as it drew time for her to choose an instrument.

While attending the beginning band night to select an instrument with her mother she was instantly steered toward the flute because of its compact size and ease of transportation. Hill, however, still wished to play percussion and convinced her mother with, “They all sit down and you won’t be able to tell which one I’m playing. I want to be different.”<sup>132</sup> She believes that there is a common trait between female percussionists in particular “with wanting to be special in some way,”<sup>133</sup> and that most find themselves “a

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<sup>131</sup> Julie Hill, interview with Meghan Aube, November 11, 2010, Indianapolis, Indiana.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

little bit on the tomboy side of things.”<sup>134</sup> In her childhood she was most comfortable playing with boys and “tagging along behind her brother.”<sup>135</sup> She adamantly stated that she would have been “ashamed to even own a Barbie doll.”<sup>136</sup>

The desire to be one of the boys was also shared by Maricle as a child. When selecting an instrument she wanted to play the trumpet, but was told that “girls didn’t play the trumpet.”<sup>137</sup> She instead began to play clarinet and cello in the fourth grade and eventually gravitated toward drumset. In seventh grade, when a performance by Buddy Rich “changed her life,”<sup>138</sup> she switched her focus to percussion. Like Hill, she considered herself a tomboy as a child and believed that this stemmed from her wish “to be taken seriously as a drummer and percussionist in pursuing what I loved, not to be viewed in any way as a ‘girl drummer.’ I spent a lot of time, as many of my colleagues do, trying to blend in and be one of the boys.”<sup>139</sup> Maricle stated that she also never had much interest in “playing with Barbie dolls.”<sup>140</sup>

Similarly labeling herself a tomboy, Franklin grew up with a summer job as a tractor driver and, like Hill and Maricle, claimed to never have owned a Barbie doll. It is interesting to note that the subject of Barbie dolls was not introduced by the author, yet

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<sup>134</sup> Hill, interview.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Sherrie Maricle, telephone interview with Meghan Aube, January 17, 2011.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

three of the interviewees emphatically declared they had never owned one. This suggests that neglecting the idealized doll is a symbol of the desire to break gender barriers.

Franklin continued by sharing that her ability to interact with boys is an element of her personality she has been able to use in her teaching. “I’m a totally different type of instructor with those guys than I am with those girls. It’s a different personality when you’re mostly with guys versus when you’re mostly with girls.”<sup>141</sup> Franklin shared that “being one of the guys”<sup>142</sup> is a trait she uses when interacting with male musicians.

The capacity to utilize masculine characteristics for the ease of fitting in is an aspect of Davila’s personality. As a child all of her friends were males and she “always felt a little more comfortable being around guys than girls. Even in high school, I didn’t have a lot of girl friends, I was always hanging out with the guys.”<sup>143</sup> Part of this need to fit in with males was due to her desire to be a percussionist. “I think in that time period you almost felt like you had to be that to be a percussionist. Because it was a guy’s thing so you had to be tough. You couldn’t be a feminine percussionist.”<sup>144</sup> Davila has found it challenging to interact with most women. “It’s an uncomfortable world for me.”<sup>145</sup>

With similar childhood characteristics, Kite did not always follow the conventional role of many girls. On shopping trips with her family, Kite remembered, “my mother and sister would go shopping for clothes and cosmetics and things like that

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<sup>141</sup> Franklin, interview.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Julie Davila, interview with Meghan Aube, August 11, 2010, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

and I would go to the music store and look for drumsticks and music in the racks.”<sup>146</sup>

Kastner also felt different growing up and was often treated as “a little bit of a novelty.”<sup>147</sup> She was always aware of her unusual role as a woman percussionist and believes that many of her choices are “a little bit different than other people.”<sup>148</sup>

In working with male and female students, Wu also feels there is a different method of communication with each gender. She recalled conversations with female students that are more personal and sensitive in nature, “but I have to speak to a male student in a slightly different tone. I don’t know why, that’s just the truth; somewhat of a different tone.”<sup>149</sup> The different conversation styles necessary for interaction with male and female students requires a teacher who is aware of both stereotypical masculine and feminine characteristics.

Although the tomboy trait is a common trend between many of the women, it is not the case for all. Rogers explained that she was always a “girly-girl”<sup>150</sup> and never had difficulty interacting with females. She finds ease in developing relationships with other women percussionists and even expressed, “it feels more comfortable talking to them”<sup>151</sup> at percussion conventions. Rogers’ dissimilarity in personality traits may be related to her late entry into the percussion world. As a junior in high school she switched to percussion

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<sup>146</sup> Rebecca Kite, interview with Meghan Aube, November 10, 2010, Indianapolis, Indiana.

<sup>147</sup> Kathleen Kastner, interview with Meghan Aube, August 16, 2010, Wheaton, Illinois.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> She-e Wu, interview with Meghan Aube, May 26, 2010, Evanston, Illinois.

<sup>150</sup> Lisa Rogers, telephone interview with Meghan Aube, November 24, 2010.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.



from clarinet due to an allergy she developed to cane reeds. Her identity as a female had already been formed in comparison to most of the women who began percussion in the fifth or sixth grade. She admitted there are certain personality traits most percussionists have in common, but she “definitely was more at home, personality-wise, on clarinet.”<sup>152</sup>

While not all of the interviewees felt the need to fit in with the boys in the percussion section, this basic instinct of most young female percussionists to exhibit masculine characteristics stems from the labeling of instruments as either masculine, feminine, or gender-neutral. Though some instruments have managed to alter the perception of appropriateness for a specific gender, percussion is still identified as a masculine instrument as the studies in Chapter 2 illuminated.

#### Instrument Gender Bias

The association of a specific gender with an instrument is harmful to the perception of those who wish to play it and to society as a whole. The women involved in this study have witnessed this trend first hand, some experienced it during their instrument selection process. Several of the women interviewed were initially pushed away from percussion by a parent or educator, or were compelled to play a percussion instrument that was deemed more appropriate for women. Rogers, with her piano background, found mallet percussion instruments to be a natural fit, but, if she had desired to play the drums her father would not have approved. “He didn’t think I should

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<sup>152</sup> Rogers, interview.

play drumset, girls didn't do that."<sup>153</sup> Her focus on mallet instruments was later a disadvantage in college because of her minimal experience on snare drum.

The forced assignment to mallet instruments also affected Franklin. When beginning sixth grade band, all students were required to be interviewed by the band director to determine which instrument they would play. When Franklin boldly declared she wished to play percussion, the band director quickly told her "'Well, that's not really a girl instrument.' And I said, 'Well, I don't want to play a girl instrument.' He said, 'Well, what's your second choice.' I said, 'Trombone.' And he said, 'What's your third choice,' and I said 'Tuba.' He said, 'OK, you can play percussion.'"<sup>154</sup> Despite her teacher's acquiescence, Franklin was still relegated to mallet instruments while her male counterparts "played the snare drum and bass drum."<sup>155</sup> Although she enjoyed playing mallet instruments, she never had the opportunity to play anything else. Franklin believes the entrance of females into percussion relies heavily on music educators' guidance.

Without a lot of real intentional and specific guidance from a band director, kids are going to self select. The boys are going to want to play the things that are loud and that are kind of an immediate gratification type of instrument, because that's a middle school boy. The girls are going to be ok with playing something that goes ding, ding.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Rogers, interview.

<sup>154</sup> Franklin, interview.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

Actively working with high school and college drumlines, Davila has also observed this tendency to delineate masculine and feminine percussion instruments. “I think there’s still that stereotype, particularly with high school band directors, that the girls play mallets and the boys are the snare drummers and the drumset players.”<sup>157</sup> She further believes females may not be attracted to certain elements of percussion due to the physical nature of the instruments.

Unlike Franklin, Davila focused heavily on the drumset and snare drum throughout her school years and later in college. She remembers feeling like a commodity in junior high school because of her status as “the girl who plays drums.”<sup>158</sup> Until her start in percussion, a female drummer would not have existed in her community. Nonetheless, several problems with her male colleagues did arise. “I had a couple of boys who were jealous because I got to play in swing choir and jazz band and do some things that they didn’t get to do. There was a little bit of animosity at times.”<sup>159</sup>

A similar instrument selection process was experienced by Kastner. At the very young age of six, she began to study the marimba. When first introduced to the instrument, she had no intention of playing other percussion instruments, but as she progressed through junior high and high school she realized that skill on other percussion instruments would become necessary. Upon entering high school, the percussion section was divided by gender, with the boys playing drums and cymbals while she was relegated

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<sup>157</sup> Davila, interview.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

to timpani and mallet instruments. “I had no experience over there, and nobody suggested that I do anything otherwise. My band teacher said, you should start to learn to play snare drum, but he wouldn’t let me play snare drum and made me play on the table top.”<sup>160</sup> It is important to note that her band director was aware she needed to become proficient on the snare drum in order to be competitive, but social mores of the time or community would not allow her that option. As a young student she felt isolated from the rest of the section and discovered later in college that she was behind in snare drum and drumset.

Just as Franklin and Davila detected, Kastner also noticed an instrument gender bias of males to percussion instruments. “I think generally speaking, low brass and percussion are generally a male domain, or it’s perceived to be that way . . . certain things are perceived to be male.”<sup>161</sup> She speculated this may be due to the desire to use physical force which is more often described as a male characteristic.

Gaines was not forced to take up certain percussion instruments, but she feels there is a reason certain instruments are chosen by boys and others by girls. “I think it goes to our basic instincts of loud drums! Guys want to play that and the nice lighter feminine things, the girls play that. I think it’s just the stereotype.”<sup>162</sup> Chenoweth expanded on this concept when speculating that boys “like to hit. They like to hit things. And it’s good, I’m glad they’re hitting the marimba instead of each other! [laughs]”<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Kastner, interview.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Gaines, interview.

<sup>163</sup> Vida Chenoweth, interview, November 13, 2010, Indianapolis, Indiana.

She believes boys choose percussion for the aggressive tendency of the instrument, but she does not understand why girls pick percussion because she “chose the marimba, not percussion.”<sup>164</sup> A very interesting point arose when Chenoweth explained that she did not choose percussion. In her opinion, the marimba is not in the same category as drums. When Chenoweth was a child, the concept of total percussion, which is very common now, did not exist. Today it is more likely that a student who wishes to play percussion will be exposed to all percussion instruments and will not typically have the option of playing only one.

Comparable to Chenoweth’s experience, Thrasher also began her percussion education with the melodic instruments. She recalled that her first introduction to percussion was through the bells. While she began playing snare drum and drumset in private lessons, her primary role in band was the “bell player, then the timpani tuner.”<sup>165</sup>

Through her many years running a large private percussion studio, Jenks witnessed the same percussion education philosophy among her female students that Thrasher experienced. In a studio of approximately ninety-two students at its largest, she estimated that 65 to 75 percent of her students were male. When speaking of her female students, she hypothesized, “a lot identified with mallets because a lot came from piano instruction so it was really a natural thing.”<sup>166</sup> She went on to share that some of her

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<sup>164</sup> Chenoweth, interview.

<sup>165</sup> Gwendolyn Burgett Thrasher, interview, May 27, 2010, Lansing, Michigan.

<sup>166</sup> Jenks, interview.

female students would rebel from their assignment to the “feminine” percussion instruments and fight to play drumset rather than vibraphone in jazz band.

The pressure to progress in a particular manner within percussion was not avoided by Jenks. As a beginner she was an avid snare drummer but as she continued through school she focused more on mallet percussion, which eventually led to her parents’ purchase of a marimba. Her husband was also a percussionist, but instead of a marimba, his parents bought him a drumset. This realization made Jenks question, “Why didn’t John get a marimba when he was a kid? Why did he get a drumset? Why did Vicki when she was a kid make the decision to get the marimba?”<sup>167</sup>

The transformation of percussion instrument focus was similar for Wu who is widely known as a marimba performer, but did not always favor that instrument. As a young child, Wu was extremely attracted to timpani and did not begin playing marimba seriously until her college career at the University of North Texas. She suspects that “if you give girls a choice between piano, violin, flute and drums, [it is] less likely they will pick drums first.”<sup>168</sup> She believes this is because of the connection between drums and their use in popular music which has primarily been a male domain.

As a young girl attracted to drumset and not mallet instruments, Maricle was often encouraged to adopt a more feminine approach to percussion. “I’ve had people say, ‘girls play the xylophone [or], you should play the bells,’ ‘this instrument is too physical for

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<sup>167</sup> Jenks, interview.

<sup>168</sup> Wu, interview.

you, you're not macho enough.”<sup>169</sup> Faced with these disparaging remarks, Maricle had to make a difficult decision that her passion for the drumset was strong enough to withstand years of negative criticism.

Kite believes that the assignment of gender to an instrument is a byproduct of the socialization instilled by the parent. She conjectured that parents and culture give children stereotypes such as “you wear pink and you wear blue. Boys do this, girls do that.”<sup>170</sup> Additionally, she expressed her opinion that “if a child doesn't have those experiences when they're growing up, if they're not given that sexist upbringing, then they don't perceive instruments as belonging to any gender.”<sup>171</sup>

Hill also shared her view on instrument gender bias,

I think that still there is a trend with parents and music educators to maybe steer their students or children, if they're female, into something other than percussion. I know that the band directors in our region are becoming more receptive to that, but I think that when parents go in they just don't think of their girls as playing percussion.<sup>172</sup>

Along with assigning responsibility for established instrument gender biases to parents and educators, Hill acknowledged that traditional stereotypes are “broken daily by female percussionists.”<sup>173</sup> The simple fact of her existence as a professional percussionist who

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<sup>169</sup> Maricle, interview.

<sup>170</sup> Kite, interview.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Hill, interview.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

happens to also be a female proves it is possible to break the barrier of traditional instrument gender association.

### Role Modeling

In order for the obstacle of instrument gender bias to be broken, a greater number of professional female percussionists to serve as role models and to demonstrate the possibility of a career in the field will be necessary. The perception of the gender of an instrument is influenced heavily by the gender of the most visible professionals who play the instrument. Percussion will continue to have strong associations as a masculine instrument while the majority of the most distinguished percussion performers and educators are male.

Several of the women involved in this study discussed the importance of same-gender role models. Davila expressed her opinion that “Any time women are more in the public light and doing more at a high level where other girls are seeing that, then they think, ‘ok, I can do this.’”<sup>174</sup> She felt observing professional women as performers would assure young girls that percussion is an acceptable instrument to play. Rogers felt similarly that, “the more they see [women percussionists], the more likely they see that those types of things are possible.”<sup>175</sup> Until that point, percussion may only seem possible for boys and atypical girls.

Watching professional women percussionists from a young age may lead to the termination of the perception of percussion as appropriate for males only. As an active

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<sup>174</sup> Davila, interview.

<sup>175</sup> Rogers, interview.



percussion performer, educator, and mother of two, Gaines is an example of a professional percussionist for her children. “When Zach (my son) was about four, I asked him fairly casually if he was going to be a drummer when he grew up. And he said, ‘Mom, drums are for girls!’ It just showed me how his paradigm was different from most any other drummer’s kid!”<sup>176</sup> In this instance, Gaines did not attempt to convey percussion as a feminine instrument. However, in a form of “gender imprinting,” her son observed his mother playing percussion and deduced that it was an instrument fit for girls.

The significance of role models was further expanded upon by Jenks, who believes the reason there are more young boys beginning percussion than girls is due to the exciting role models that are available to boys. Jenks explained that when a boy chooses to play percussion he thinks “this is really cool because look at all those guys who drum, I’m going to be just like this guy, just like this person.”<sup>177</sup> Unfortunately for young girls, there are not as many women to emulate.

Kastner also believes that the distinction of percussion as a masculine instrument is partly due to the lack of professional women percussionists. “Isn’t it self-predicting? You see your role models up there are mostly men. You do see some women drummers, but you don’t see them [often] and I think that message gets communicated in some

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<sup>176</sup> Gaines, interview.

<sup>177</sup> Jenks, interview.

way.”<sup>178</sup> Although she did not have women percussion role models, Kastner finds herself in a position as a role model for younger women percussionists.

#### Where are the Women Percussionists?

Finding women percussionists to look to as role models and for guidance was very important for some of the women in this study. Rogers recalls primarily searching for women percussionists as her professional role models, including Evelyn Glennie, Keiko Abe, and Karen Ervin. “Strangely enough, and I don’t know if that was just subconsciously that I gravitated to those performers that were female.”<sup>179</sup> She also found a role model in a woman included in this study, Kathleen Kastner. “I wanted to teach college percussion, and I wanted to keep performing. She was a role model to see how that all works.”<sup>180</sup> The ability to observe another woman in her field aided Rogers in her professional development.

While Rogers sought Kastner for guidance, Franklin found inspiration in Rogers as a woman percussionist. “I just remember thinking, A) it was really cool that she was a female and doing percussion, and B) she was just always so nice and so helpful, always willing to help. She was one that I remember looking up to as a youngster.”<sup>181</sup> They both attended Texas Tech University during the same period of time, Franklin as an

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<sup>178</sup> Kastner, interview.

<sup>179</sup> Rogers, interview.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Franklin, interview.

undergraduate and Rogers as a graduate student. Through such regular interactions, Franklin was able to find a positive role model within the same school.

Many of the women sought professional female role models, but the oft repeated list of names is very small. Keiko Abe and Vida Chenoweth were often cited as examples of female percussion role models. “I was a teenager and I first got a copy of Vida Chenoweth’s LP and I listened to it and I thought it was wonderful, and here is a woman playing the marimba. . . She was a marimba player and a woman. I think that was very formative.”<sup>182</sup>

While examples were given of women serving as percussion role models, a few of the interviewees were not aware of other female percussionists and still find it difficult to list influential women in the field. As a child and a percussion student Davila stated, “I don’t remember [being aware of] any women to be honest.”<sup>183</sup> She does, however, recall that when she finally became a member of the Percussive Arts Society (PAS), more women percussionists were revealed to her. Jenks also attributed her knowledge of other women percussionists to the PAS: “You would occasionally see an article in the *Percussive Notes*, and it would say, ‘Women in Percussion.’ Or they would have a listing of how many women were in symphony orchestras, or how many were in university jobs and you’d notice there weren’t a heck of a lot of them.”<sup>184</sup> Even with the important

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<sup>182</sup> Kastner, interview.

<sup>183</sup> Davila, interview.

<sup>184</sup> Jenks, interview.

educational and networking resources of PAS, women percussionists were not often in the spotlight.

### Role Models for the Next Generation

As a result of the lack of female percussionists available as role models, the interviewees have taken their responsibility as role models for the next generation of female percussionists very seriously. While all of them serve as role models to both young male and female percussionists, most have encountered instances where they were directly informed of their importance as a role model to their female students. Many have also felt that as teachers they tend to attract more female students than their male counterparts because of their gender.

In the course of her career as a drummer and band leader of the all-woman jazz band, Diva, Maricle has been in a position to inspire many young women who wish to pursue both drumset and jazz. “We’ve had young girls write to us and say that we changed their lives, just because they saw us doing something at such a high level of excellence.”<sup>185</sup> Young females participating in male-dominated fields find motivation in observing professional women in the career for which they are striving. As Maricle found, when a young girl watches her ensemble perform they realize, “If they can do it, I can do it.”<sup>186</sup> While working as the first professor of percussion at New York University, she recognized that she attracted more female students than her male colleagues. Maricle

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<sup>185</sup> Maricle, interview.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

speculated that this may have been because they were “less intimidated working with a woman.”<sup>187</sup>

The all-female percussion trio, Caixa, is an inspirational example of the ability of women to achieve success in percussion. The Caixa Trio performs at festivals, workshops, and days of percussion throughout the country and internationally. The trio, consisting of Julie Hill, Julie Davila and Amy Smith, formed in 2000 when all three women serendipitously found themselves in the small Southern town of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Davila explained that as a member of the trio, her role as a positive example for young female percussionists is crucial. “I think all three of us, because we didn’t have any type of female role models that were really present at the time we were coming through, I think we do feel a sense of responsibility, if we can, to be that for somebody else.”<sup>188</sup> While the trio endeavors to serve as role models for young girls, Davila stated that their performances are also informative to young boys and band directors who may perceive percussion as a masculine instrument.

It’s been interesting sometimes to go to a percussion festival and watch high school and junior high boys who haven’t been exposed to girls being aggressive and then playing not like a girl. That’s kind of fun, and we’re hoping that kind of changes their perspective a little bit. I think for some band directors it might change their perspective about what a girl is capable of doing and they don’t need to just push her towards mallets. Because that’s what tends to happen still.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Maricle, interview.

<sup>188</sup> Davila, interview.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

During her experience in competitive drum and bugle corps, Davila has also found a low representation of women in these ensembles and is aware of her responsibility as a role model. She has been involved in drum and bugle corps as both a student and a judge and has witnessed growth in the number of female participants. She feels that “If I can be any kind of a positive example in their life, that’s really important to me. That they’re seeing a female judge sitting down in the seat, maybe they’ll get to think, one day I want to do that.”<sup>190</sup>

As a member of the Caixa Trio, Hill also realizes the impact of the ensemble on both female and male students and their vital role in conveying the ability for success of women in percussion. “It’s good to inspire young females but also for young boys to see us do this and do it well. So we just figure it works on both sides of the spectrum. I’m proud of that, and I hope it does let young girls know that they can aspire to play percussion if they want to. They can do whatever they want to do!”<sup>191</sup>

As the eighteenth—and first female—president of the Percussive Arts Society, Rogers is aware of the impact that her presence in such a prestigious position has made. “There’s a part of me that realizes that and understands that, and accepts that responsibility as the first for all of us and feels very strongly about that.”<sup>192</sup> But she also clarified this is not something she thinks about regularly. She further stated that it is an

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<sup>190</sup> Davila, interview.

<sup>191</sup> Hill, interview.

<sup>192</sup> Rogers, interview.

honor to be the first woman in this pivotal role and she will “proudly carry the torch for all of us.”<sup>193</sup>

Many of the women interviewed who serve as educators are made aware of their influence as women percussionists by young female students. Jenks, while retaining a low ratio of female students in her studio, has clearly noted her role as a female percussionist. “I’ve had many teenage girls that have said, ‘Mrs. Jenks I want to be just like you when I grow up because you make music through drumming. In my school, it’s usually guys that do that. My band director is a guy.’”<sup>194</sup> Franklin is also familiar with students sharing their joy of finding a woman to emulate. “I’ve had my students tell me that they thought it was really cool to find a school with a female percussion instructor and that was a draw for them.”<sup>195</sup> The sense that students seek out their university percussion professor because of their gender has become apparent with several of the women interviewed.

Hill is conscious of an increase in female percussion students at the University of Tennessee, Martin. “You can tell that there are people making an extra effort to look at my program because I’m a woman.”<sup>196</sup> Although this has not been her intention, she also said she “doesn’t want to disregard the trend.”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Rogers, interview.

<sup>194</sup> Jenks, interview.

<sup>195</sup> Franklin, interview.

<sup>196</sup> Hill, interview.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

Thrasher has also noticed a rise in the number of female students at Michigan State University since she first started when there were none. While at Rutgers University and Northwestern University, Wu found that typically 25 percent of her studio would be comprised of female students. However, at one time, she maintained a studio where eight of the eighteen member studio were female.

As percussion professor at Texas Tech University, Rogers has been told she is an inspiration to female students and noticed a higher ratio of female students than is typical. She attributed the high number of female students to the presence of both a male and female percussion professor at the school. “Sometimes the ratio has been almost half and half. I don’t know if that’s because those going into it want to go some place where there is a male and female.”<sup>198</sup> Rogers does not often place importance on her gender as a musician, but has had several occasions where the impact of being a female percussionist has been important to a student. While auditioning incoming freshman, she was once confronted by a female student who exclaimed, “I’m just so excited to meet you, it’s just so inspirational to see a female, a woman teaching percussion, and I just want to come here.”<sup>199</sup> Rogers recognizes the need of her female students to have a woman as a role model, and explained, “It’s different being a female in whatever career you do than being male. Sometimes the students will talk to me about that.”<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Rogers, interview.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.



### Gender Gap

There will always be a shortage of women role models in the percussion field while the gap in the number of female students who become professionally successful remains low. Although the number of female college students at both undergraduate and graduate levels has been rising every year since the 1970s, the number of female percussion professors and members of professional orchestras has remained stagnant. All of the women included in this study have become professionally successful as educators, performers, or both. Their experiences with gender discrepancy and their stances on the small number of women in their ranks lend insight into the current minority state of women in percussion.

In Texas, Rogers surmised that there may be issues with retention of female percussion students from junior high school to high school because of the instruments they are required to play. During this period marching band and drumline become a very important part of the curriculum, which may be undesirable for female students. She further explained, “There might be some issues in that area, just because of the physical strength. It’s still kind of difficult in terms of carrying the instruments, holding the instruments for some of them.”<sup>201</sup> The requirement of strength for the drumline may also explain why girls are more often found in the front ensemble.

In contrast, Gaines has noticed an increase in the number of female students involved in high school drumlines. She believes the problem isn’t their involvement, but showing them that percussion can be a career choice, not just a pastime.

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<sup>201</sup> Rogers, interview.

You look at our high schools right now and a high school [drum] line could be half and half. But that's because no one is choosing it as a profession. It's just a nice activity in high school. People are in Spanish club and drama club and it doesn't mean that that's what they're going to do for the rest of their life. You start to get to college and then we start talking about what you are going to do for the rest of your life. That's the difference there, it sure is a fun activity, but I'm not sure it is going to be my profession.<sup>202</sup>

She suspects that many female students involved in percussion at a young age do not envision a future profession in the field.

### The Only Woman

Not only do they witness the increasing minority of female percussion students, many of the interviewees were also one of the only female percussionists in their own grade school, high school, or college experiences. Franklin found herself in the increasing minority as one of the only girls in the percussion section. She admitted there were a limited number of other females playing, but that number became less as she progressed through school and into professional life. Jenks had a similar experience as a camper at the International Music Camp. When she was young, the ratio of female to male students would “sometimes be fifty-fifty. When I went on to college, then it changed, then it was definitely less women.”<sup>203</sup>

The decrease in female percussionists was also observed by Maricle. While there were several other females in her high school section, upon entering college she was the only woman percussionist. The decline in female colleagues is also a trend she has

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<sup>202</sup> Gaines, interview.

<sup>203</sup> Jenks, interview.

noticed while progressing in music. “The more you pursue it professionally and seriously, the less women are involved in it.”<sup>204</sup>

Many of the subjects in the study were either the only female in their college percussion program or among a very small minority of women. Hill remembered, “At UTM I was the only girl. . . It was me and a bunch of boys which I always loved. They were really kind and supportive, they never seemed threatened.”<sup>205</sup> Both Rogers and Gaines recalled being minorities during their college education, and Wu stated that out of the 175 percussion majors at the University of North Texas while she was a student, only twelve were female.

Attending three diverse universities gave Franklin insight into the distribution of gender in university percussion programs. As an undergraduate student at Texas Tech University (TTU) and a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), Franklin was in studios with four females in a studio of twenty-five. However, when she worked on her Master’s degree at the New England Conservatory (NEC), there were no other female students. She speculated that the incongruity of gender ratios between schools was due to the type of institution and the goal of the graduates. At both TTU and UNCG, there is a strong emphasis on music education, while at NEC most students plan to enter the performing field as orchestral percussionists. As a student she found that “The environment at NEC was much more

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<sup>204</sup> Maricle, interview.

<sup>205</sup> Hill, interview.

competitive and cut-throat, with far less emphasis on collegiality or collaboration, than TTU or UNCG.”<sup>206</sup>

She suspected that female and male percussion students are attracted to different programs and females are less likely to attend a school that focuses on music performance. Very interesting arguments are presented by Franklin, but it is also important to consider that the gender ratio of particular universities also reflects heavily the attitude of the professor. Many percussion studios that are run by male percussion professors maintain high levels of female participation, as is shown in the college gender ratio study in Appendix A. In many instances, percussion studios with male professors contain more female students than studios with women professors.

Although there are more women graduating with degrees in percussion, there are only a small minority who establish a career in this field. As discussed in Chapter 2, the number of women earning music degrees in the United States since the 1970s has increased. However, the number of women percussionists in professional orchestras and university teaching positions has remained the same. Through working with other women percussionists, the interviewees made several observations as to why these women do not continue.

#### Discrimination against the “Girl Drummer”

Discrimination due to gender was an issue discussed in numerous interviews. Several of the women interviewed felt they were never discouraged from becoming percussionists, but that it must happen to some since the number of women in percussion

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<sup>206</sup> Franklin, interview.

is so low. Jenks recognized the unequal number of female percussionists. “I never felt any, well you’re a girl so you can’t do it. But let’s face it, when I would go to PASIC or I would go to clinics, you would just look around the room. That’s all you have to do.”<sup>207</sup> Teaching a majority of male students, she usually did not have issues as a woman teacher. Although, she remembered an instance when, “A mom called me one time and said, ‘Vicki, my son really needs a man to teach him,’ and I said, ‘Well, I don’t have any plans for changing.’ [laughs]”<sup>208</sup>

The orchestral realm of percussion is dominated by male performers. One of Thrasher’s aspirations was to become a member of one of these prestigious organizations. After many auditions she finally made it to the final round of an audition for a European orchestra and was not selected.

I think it was because I was a girl and because I was really young, and they just were not having that. I don’t know if I actually lost anything because of gender, but it definitely made me wonder. It kind of made me feel like something out of my control made me not get that job. That was the first time I ever felt like that, and it was a big shock.<sup>209</sup>

Private screens for the audition process are now common for most American symphony orchestras. In Thrasher’s experience, there was no screen in the final round to hide her gender. As other issues of discrimination have arisen during the course of her young

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<sup>207</sup> Jenks, interview.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Thrasher, interview.

career she wondered “if it is because I’m a woman, or because I’m young, or maybe a combination of the two.”<sup>210</sup>

Sometimes discriminatory comments can inspire people to reach a higher level and achieve success. Davila shared just such an experience that arose while working on her undergraduate degree at the University of North Texas (UNT). When explaining her relationship with her teacher, Robert Schietroma, Davila said, “I remember him saying that he would never have a girl march on his snare line or a left hander, and I’m both of those. I’m competitive, so that just made me want to do it more. I was like, I’m going to prove him wrong.”<sup>211</sup> Davila did prove him wrong through her ability on the instrument and ended up becoming a member of the UNT snare line.

Kite also experienced discouragement from playing certain percussion instruments by her college instructor. During her undergraduate degree, Kite studied percussion with Charmaine Asher-Wiley at the University of Missouri Kansas City. Asher-Wiley had to face the challenges of a woman in percussion, but ironically there were some elements of the instrument she considered unacceptable for female students. “She thought I shouldn’t be playing cymbals, I guess because women have breasts and can’t hold cymbals up there, it’s just too masculine.”<sup>212</sup> Along with crash cymbals, Kite was also discouraged from playing drumset, which was deemed a masculine instrument.

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<sup>210</sup> Thrasher, interview.

<sup>211</sup> Davila, interview.

<sup>212</sup> Kite, interview.

As a graduate student at the University of Illinois, Kite also felt discrimination while not receiving the same education and opportunities as the male students. “Things just became much more subtle. So you wouldn’t hear about opportunities, or not get the type of opportunities you needed to learn the repertoire, the experiences you would need, the guys would get those.”<sup>213</sup> Kite believed she did not receive the experiences necessary to achieve her goal of becoming a timpanist in a symphony orchestra. She felt that it was impossible to account for the missed skills and compete with the males in the field. Further inequality was experienced when applying for percussion performing positions. “I’ve applied for jobs and auditioned for jobs and had people tell me things and it was clear that they had not read my resume.”<sup>214</sup> The denial of a job based on gender is a form of discrimination that Kite struggled with. When describing sexism that occurred, she explained, “It’s hard to pin down but when it happens to you and you know it when it happens because you have this gut connection to it.”<sup>215</sup>

Chenoweth was performing actively in a period where women were more often found in a domestic setting than on a concert stage. She remembered that during her performing career she did face sexism, but that it usually dissipated “once they heard me play.”<sup>216</sup> When asked if people judged her based on gender she suspected that they did,

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<sup>213</sup> Kite, interview.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Chenoweth, interview.

but it was “usually hush-hush, it was not to my face.”<sup>217</sup> Typically, she recalled being in the position of a novelty, both as a marimbist and a woman in music.

Although it did not occur often, Maricle felt discrimination based on gender as well, and she shared two instances of rejection due to her gender. After winning the audition and joining comedian Rodney Dangerfield’s trio, she was fired and told, “Rodney doesn’t want any women in the band because he thinks you’ll cry if he swears at you.”<sup>218</sup> She also earned the position as drummer for famous pianist Bobby Short. After she perfected the show and was ready for the first performance she was dismissed because “Bobby can’t share the stage with a woman.”<sup>219</sup> The fact that she is described as a woman drummer has always bothered her. Maricle explained, “technically I am a woman player, but I don’t know why that’s always attached as an adjective or qualifier. I’m a drummer, and I’m a percussionist first. It’s just our social conditioning that makes woman be an important part of that.”<sup>220</sup> The negative implications that are associated with being a “girl drummer” are still perceived today and are faced by Maricle on a regular basis.

During the course of her career, Maricle has taken the responsibility for recording the histories of other women drummers and jazz musicians who have not been considered important because of their gender. Growing up as a young drummer, she was not aware

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<sup>217</sup> Chenoweth, interview.

<sup>218</sup> Maricle, interview.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.



of many other women drummers. She has actively studied the women that preceded her and uncovered many she did not previously know. When asked why she believes the lives of these important women have not been documented, she explained,

Because it's the same reason that women are left out of any kind of historical document in general. It's because the way our society is, men wrote the history books, men took credit for most of the work, and men thought work women did was not as important as the work they did.<sup>221</sup>

For an example, she cited the all-female ensemble Darlings of Rhythm who performed actively in the 1930s and 40s. Although the ensemble played at the Apollo Theater more than any other band in history, they are not mentioned in the definitive history of the theater.

Another element that women encounter are the negative perceptions that arise while being a female leader. Hill experienced situations as a college professor that many men would not find to be a problem:

If a guy is in a position of administration they're thought to be organized and in control, but if a woman is in that position, they're thought to be bitchy. I think I'm viewed as stern sometimes, just because that's what it takes to get the job done. I'm no more stern than a man would be, it's just because I'm a woman and I'm supposed to be all soft and sweet.<sup>222</sup>

She shared that in many instances her students will confuse her concentration and focus with being “in a bad mood,”<sup>223</sup> a trait stereotypically assigned to the female sex.

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<sup>221</sup> Maricle, interview.

<sup>222</sup> Hill, interview.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

Discrimination in male-dominated professions is a reality for women today. There are, however, instances where being a minority can be used to one's advantage. When Gaines was first nominated for the PAS Board of Directors, she was doubtful of success since she was fairly unknown in the percussion world. To her shock she was elected and explained, "Here's where I think the female card helped out. Because they want a balanced board, but the percentages are so low, and they see a woman's name. Oh, who am I going to go with, a woman or five men? I think the female card played there to my favor, for once."<sup>224</sup>

### It's Who You Know

Very often achievement in the professional world is determined through connections and networking. Women and men tend to be connected to people of the same sex. In a profession heavily dominated by males, it may be difficult for women percussionists to be aware of professional opportunities and advancement. Kite has suffered professionally at times due to a lack of necessary associations.

One of the main ways that people get jobs is through networking and their friends. Music isn't the kind of field like sports where if you're really good you'll get on the team. You can be really good in music and you might not be able to get a job because you don't have the right connections.<sup>225</sup>

Establishing professional relationships that lead to a career can be difficult for women as minorities in percussion.

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<sup>224</sup> Gaines, interview.

<sup>225</sup> Kite, interview.

The all-woman jazz band Diva led by Maricle has given opportunities to many women in jazz that were not readily available. When the idea of the ensemble was first proposed to her in the early 1990s, she was skeptical, as she had never wished to play in an all-woman group. However, she trusted the band's founder, Stanley Kay, and has been involved ever since. One of the most important things the band has accomplished is "creating opportunities that aren't in the main stream of society, which is dominated by white men."<sup>226</sup> The establishment of this band gave opportunity to women who may not have otherwise been able to establish a career alone.

### The Image Conundrum

Both Maricle and Kite shared the belief that image is an important component of a woman musician. Kite believes she has faced obstacles in obtaining performances due to her dissimilar appearance from other performers. "It's really hard for me to be in a band where there are men and it's because it doesn't fit the image if it's a rock group; it doesn't look right."<sup>227</sup>

The "correct" image that women are forced to portray in certain musical settings was also mentioned by Maricle. With a focus on jazz, she has found that at times the "look is more important than the way you play. A woman could play her brains out and be spectacular, but oh, you're too fat, we don't like your hair."<sup>228</sup> She fears that women are in the unfortunate predicament of needing to appear a certain way, however, if they

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<sup>226</sup> Maricle, interview.

<sup>227</sup> Kite, interview.

<sup>228</sup> Maricle, interview.

“choose to dress, let’s say very sexy, or with a short dress, or show a lot of cleavage, I believe that when someone looks at that, their impression is they can’t play. They’re trying to sell themselves.”<sup>229</sup> Music is heavily connected to a performance on stage and in many instances people tend to “listen with their eyes.”<sup>230</sup>

### Too Dear a Dedication

The issues that arise with marriage and family life were discussed at length with all of the women in the study. Of the twelve women interviewed, only three have children, and five are married. The choice to marry and have children is often a hindrance for women who wish to have a career as a professional in any field. The life of a professional musician can be even more difficult than other professional fields due to the additional hours needed for practice, travel, networking, and promotion. Franklin believes that the time required as a professional musician makes the family and career balance more complicated for musicians than for people in other fields. “The work-life balance is a big struggle for any working parent, in music particularly. It’s a real challenge.”<sup>231</sup> The challenge of raising children and maintaining a successful life in music is faced daily with Franklin, who has two children.

As a student of Clair Omar Musser, Chenoweth was often among other women marimbists in college and while performing in his marimba orchestras. She speculated that many of the women who played with her did not continue to pursue the marimba as

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<sup>229</sup> Maricle, interview.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Franklin, interview.

she did. “Some went off into choral conducting, and some just quit, did something else, or got married. They just went into the atmosphere somewhere. It was too hard. It was too dear a dedication. It had to come first, and everything else came second. It’s sacrificial.”<sup>232</sup> Most women were not willing to make the commitment and sacrifice that she committed to her craft. When discussing percussionist Ruth Stuber Jeanne, Chenoweth wondered why she didn’t maintain her career as a marimba performer, but assumed that “She probably just got married.”<sup>233</sup> Chenoweth’s supposition was correct; Stuber Jeanne married and did not attempt to pursue a career as a professional marimbist.

Gaines also suspects that many women who earn degrees in percussion do not progress in the field due to marriage and domestic responsibilities.

I think we get married and have kids, and who stays home? Mom stays home. Especially when she has a music degree and she happens to meet CPA dad, or lawyer dad. Especially a lot of women who become band directors, as soon as they get married they’re home, or they’re doing adjunct work, or part-time work.<sup>234</sup>

The lifestyle of a professional who is a mother can be extremely challenging. Although it is managed successfully by several of the women in the study, they are not the norm, and it is more likely that some women find it to be an insurmountable obstacle.

A further struggle exists with the complexities found as a working mother in a very time intensive career such as music. With her two children, Gaines has experienced how time-demanding the life of a musician can be.

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<sup>232</sup> Chenoweth, interview.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Gaines, interview.

You have to realize that I'm not just in a job, but in a career. It's not like I just go home at five and work is done, not even close. I'm in a career that I want to be successful in and advance, and get my name out there. So, it's not necessarily the working mom life of a bank teller who is done at five.<sup>235</sup>

As she points out, a job that allows a more flexible schedule and requires fewer hours for achievement would lessen the difficulties that arise as a professional musician with children.

A position as a college professor is deemed to be especially incompatible with motherhood.

Academia and the tenure system is definitely not easy on someone who has to go pick up the kids from school and take care of them. If you are doing that then you aren't practicing for two hours where someone else is, or you're not teaching for two hours.<sup>236</sup>

The life of a professional musician with children was described as difficult for both parents, but many of the interviewees explained that the majority of responsibilities as a parent fall on the mother. Although she is not a parent, Wu has witnessed many situations where the mother in the family shoulders the majority of the burdens of raising a child. "I think the female takes the bigger hit, no matter how one slices it."<sup>237</sup> She observed that often the child will want their mother, and no matter how great a father may be, they cannot fulfill the mother's role.

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<sup>235</sup> Gaines, interview.

<sup>236</sup> Thrasher, interview.

<sup>237</sup> Wu, interview.

While discussing the differences between a mother and a father as a professional percussionist, Gaines cited examples of percussionists who are male and have children. She demurred, “I look at Michael Burrit (percussion professor at Eastman) and he’s not mom, he’s dad, and that’s a completely different role.”<sup>238</sup> She believes that having a brand new baby does not affect the father as much as it does the mother. “Kevin [Bobo] (percussion professor at Indiana) just had a baby, but he’s not the one at home nursing now, he goes to practice.”<sup>239</sup> This inability for women to achieve success and be a parent is a reason Gaines gave for why there are fewer women in the percussion field. Admittedly, Gaines’ opinion is from the viewpoint of a professional and a mother and there are professional male percussionists who manage to be committed to both their career and their role as a father.

#### Difficult Decisions

In order for a marriage and family to thrive, Gaines believes that usually one of the parents will need to sacrifice their career. She has found that often the mother will choose to support her family and not follow her career goal:

So who is the one who steps aside, well, mom because what is she going to do? It’s just the natural progression of life. Moms just have to make those decisions which affect their futures. And it affects our profession significantly. Why are there so many men [in these positions]? Well women get to chose between two options, men don’t have an option, they go to work.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Gaines, interview.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

Jenks made a similar observation of the choice many women are forced to make when they decide to have children. She explained the inequality of motherhood, “You don’t think, well he’s a dad, how is he going to balance being a dad and having a career? No, that never comes into the equation.”<sup>241</sup> Jenks continued by pointing out when a woman wishes to become a mother the immediate question is whether they can manage motherhood and remain in the profession.

Searching for examples of women professors who have children, Thrasher said she does not have any female colleagues at Michigan State University who are in charge of an instrumental studio and have children. However, “There are a lot of men who do, and I notice that their wives are kind of like their secretaries.”<sup>242</sup> She shared that her husband would not want to be her secretary, and she would never desire that.

Many women in the study gave the time commitment involved as a reason for choosing not to have children. Kastner said, “I don’t know how I would do it if I were married and had kids.”<sup>243</sup> The freedom of being single and childless has enabled her to have a flexible schedule and devote most of her time to her students and career. Hill also does not have children and does not see how it is possible for other women in her field to do so: “I don’t know how they do it.”<sup>244</sup> Caixa Trio member Davila explained that with two members who have children, the trio has needed to slow down at times because of

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<sup>241</sup> Jenks, interview.

<sup>242</sup> Thrasher, interview.

<sup>243</sup> Kastner, interview.

<sup>244</sup> Hill, interview.



the challenges that arise with motherhood. The issue of time was also discussed by Thrasher who believes there is not enough time to be a mother and a college professor.

I think it would be really difficult because of how much work I do now, and I try to imagine how much work that would be to have kids. I'm not sure how it would work because I honestly haven't seen many women do it. It may be something that our generation has to figure out if we want to do it.<sup>245</sup>

Speaking with the experience of someone who has made the choice to be a mother, Franklin clarified that it is possible for a woman to have a career and be a mother. "When you have kids, your life just adjusts, you adjust. The kids are part of your life, they're part of the crazy busy."<sup>246</sup> She admitted that it is certainly challenging to be in her profession as a mother. Franklin speculated that not many women attempt her lifestyle, and more often tend to pick either the career or the family path.

Choosing the same direction, Davila has found herself very fortunate to have a husband who is willing to assist with the responsibilities of raising a family. "I was just really fortunate because Lalo has always been really super supportive of what I do too."<sup>247</sup> While she declared that children can be very time consuming, she believes the only way it has been possible for her to maintain a career and have children is because of the more equal partnership with her husband.

As women who chose to have children and pursue the profession they are passionate about, Davila and Gaines have been faced with the decision of modifying their professional goals due to their commitment to family. Davila said that it was always a

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<sup>245</sup> Thrasher, interview.

<sup>246</sup> Franklin, interview.

<sup>247</sup> Davila, interview.

goal of hers to work on a doctoral degree in music but that she has never had the chance because of her choice to raise a family. She shared that when she had children they naturally became her main focus. Gaines also has come to the realization that certain achievements in her career are not obtainable with a family: “You have to take that step back and say, I’m ok not being on the PASIC roster as a showcase concert. I’m ok that not everyone in the country wants to come to Mizzou. I’m ok not being Florida State, University of Texas, Indiana.”<sup>248</sup> While she admits that these aspirations might not be possible, she feels confident in the decisions that she has made.

#### When Family Life Takes the Back Seat

Having both a family and a professional career can be very time-intensive, and when attempting both, compromises often have to be made. Sacrifices to family life are made just as often as sacrifices to the career. Hill has always been very career driven and thought that she would never get married because of the taxing profession she entered. She has been married for two years, and her husband is willing to support her and occasionally take a back seat to her career: “He has said to me a number of times that he feels like I put my job first, and I probably do some. I love it, I live it, it doesn’t feel like a job.”<sup>249</sup> Hill’s passion for her profession has led to a “slight amount of marital strain.” As her husband is a history professor, the life of a musician can seem strange to him and he does not always understand its demands.

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<sup>248</sup> Gaines, interview.

<sup>249</sup> Hill, interview.

In order to achieve success, some women have put their marriages at risk to further their careers. It is very rare to find a woman who will jeopardize her marriage to follow a career dream. Jenks faced this tough decision during her first year of marriage. She was separated from her husband by many states in 1976 when she accepted a job that required her to move from Wisconsin to Texas, but her career aspirations were strong enough that she followed her goal: "I wouldn't suggest it to many people, but it seemed absolutely right at the time."<sup>250</sup> The separation only lasted a year, and the couple has remained married for thirty-five years.

Faced with the same challenging decision, Wu moved from New Jersey to Illinois for a job she "could not pass up."<sup>251</sup> She explained, "I told my husband, I have to go, I'm sorry. So I moved. He's not very happy."<sup>252</sup> He is a dean at Rutgers University, she is the percussion professor at Northwestern University; both are very career-oriented. In order for Wu to achieve a higher level in her profession, she had to risk her marriage. She believes that she will never be able to have children because of her focus on a life in music. "I don't think I could have children. Not if I want to keep playing. Not if I want to keep the intensity like this. I'd have to give that up. I can't do it."<sup>253</sup> Wu fears that if she had a family she would have to give up her performing aspirations, which is something she is unwilling to do.

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<sup>250</sup> Jenks, interview.

<sup>251</sup> Wu, interview.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

Making sacrifices in their career to have a family was a common concern for most of the women interviewed who did not already have children. Hill explained that she will not have children for this very reason. She stated, “We’ve just decided not to have children, and some of that is definitely related to my work.”<sup>254</sup> Hill feels that having children would take away from the career that she has strived so hard to build. Thrasher also fears that she would have to forgo an element of her career in order to have a family: “I’ve realized that something would have to go if I wanted to have a family, and I’m just not sure what that would be.”<sup>255</sup> She is not willing to give up her love for teaching or performing, and believes that she would have to abandon one or the other in order to have the necessary amount of time for raising a family.

Early in her career, Jenks and her spouse decided that it would not be possible to have children. “I was absolutely passionate about the career. The career for me came first, and I couldn’t see myself doing both and doing both well. I wanted to do both extraordinarily well.”<sup>256</sup> She suspects it is not feasible to evenly divide time between parenthood and a career, and that ultimately one will “face the consequences.”<sup>257</sup> Jenks also speculated that her decision not to have children was based on a deeper instinct. She never wanted to entertain doubts wondering if she could have achieved more in her career without the limitations of family.

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<sup>254</sup> Hill, interview.

<sup>255</sup> Thrasher, interview.

<sup>256</sup> Jenks, interview.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

Driven by What You Love

Women studying percussion are confronted with numerous issues daily in their careers. The women in this study have managed to overcome many obstacles, from the perception of percussion as a masculine instrument to the difficult choice between career and family life. Throughout the course of the interviews, there was an undercurrent of concern about whether or not this topic is an issue to discuss.

Jenks recalled a Percussive Arts Society conference she attended in the 1980s in which a clinic was presented on women in percussion. She remembered that some women were outraged by the notion that such a clinic would even be proposed. However, she felt that it was a topic worthy of conversation and wondered, “What is the difference? Is there a difference? Should there be? Why are we making an issue about this? We need to be on the same footing, what’s going on? We need to talk about this.”<sup>258</sup> While all of the women interviewed were very eager to be part of the study and offer their views, two women who were invited declined an interview. One of the women who did not wish to be included felt that this is a topic that should not be addressed, because there are no concerns for women in percussion. “My general feeling about being a woman in percussion is that gender shouldn’t matter . . . whenever women are singled out they are in some way seeming like they need to prove something they shouldn’t have to prove.”<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Jenks, interview.

<sup>259</sup> Nancy Zeltsman, e-mail message to author, September 22, 2010.

Even though the interviewees did not dwell on the difficulties they have encountered as percussionists, through conversation it is evident that many challenges have arisen. The twelve women have not all achieved the same level of recognition or fame, but they have each found a niche in the percussion world that is fulfilling to them. Whether they opted to have a family or chose to focus primarily on their career, they have established a career-life balance they are content with. As the baby-boomer generation later discovered, Gloria Steinem's promise that women could "have it all," proved to be unrealistic. Women today believe that a practical balance between career and motherhood is imperative to pursue a professional life, and as in many fields, difficult choices must be made in order to pursue a life in music.

While tests to their will to be a percussionist were faced, the common thread that binds these women together is their passion for their art form. They chose to pursue percussion and were willing to withstand the obstacles that are encountered daily by women in percussion. As Maricle explained "it's something that you don't really pay attention to, because you can't, you are too driven by what you love."<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Maricle, interview.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Through the examination of historically significant women percussionists, existing research, and interviews conducted with professional women percussionists of today, several common factors and issues arose repeatedly in this study. Women have historically accomplished great feats in percussion, but their contributions have been ill-reported or, in some cases, completely neglected. These women fought against stereotypes and prejudice to find success, yet most never experienced the same successes as their male counterparts. Many of the women discussed in Chapter 1 were previously unknown to the author, just as they might also be unfamiliar to readers of this document.

The question remains unanswered: do these women continue not to be celebrated simply because of their sex? Women percussionists of today are optimistic that this is changing, but change remains to be seen. This document reports many statistics showing women's participation in music in general and percussion in particular. Further analysis must be completed in the future to measure actual change. As statistics for professional positions in both academia and symphony orchestras have shown, there has been no significant change over the last three decades. Studies completed by many scholars on instrument gender bias have also shown there to have been little change.

The solution given by many, while a noble one, is itself a paradox. Many of the studies of role models, and the women interviewed for this project, have expressed that in order for the number of girls in percussion to increase, the number of visually present professional women percussionists needs to rise. This appears to be somewhat illogical

since the only way for there to be more women role models is for more girls to begin percussion.

As the history of women has proven, it is not hyperbole to claim that the struggle for women to gain success in the percussion field was extremely difficult. Fighting against discrimination and lack of opportunities, women percussionists have somehow managed to establish and maintain professional careers. These women deserve to be recognized for their contributions and should no longer remain overshadowed by their male counterparts. It is crucial that research into these women's lives be conducted before they, and the people who know them, are no longer present. Unfortunately, several important women are missing from this document due to the lack of information available.

A common axiom held by most every woman in the interview process was that attitudes are changing; conditions are getting better for women in the percussion world. This paper is not attempting to argue that men are to blame for the current state of women in percussion. It simply aims to shed light on the historical neglect that women in percussion have faced, and highlight that, statistically speaking, change is still very slow. The goal, as mentioned at the beginning of this document, was to find why there are fewer women in percussion than men. While this question remains quite challenging to answer, some conclusions might be drawn.

Societal pressures and conceptions about what is appropriate for either gender are heavily influential in the instrument choice a child will make. Studies in this area began in the 1970s and are still conducted today. All of the studies presented in this document hold that the perception of percussion and drums as "male" instruments by children,



parents, teachers, and society is a significant factor in choosing instruments that has changed very little over the past thirty-three years of research. Images and examples presented to children are dominated by men playing percussion. It has been confirmed through the research examined in Chapter 2 that girls are most likely to gravitate toward traditionally female activities, while boys will find comfort in activities that seem the most masculine. Percussion remains in the boy's domain of instruments.

The instrument selection process proves to be even more difficult to determine than whether an instrument is perceived to be male or female. The characteristics of the instrument confirm what attracts a child most to the instrument. The aggressive nature that is said to be found in many young boys appears to naturally lend itself to the physical exertion required for playing percussion. From interviews with women who have spent much of their careers working with students, they have also corroborated that boys tend to have an innate attraction to percussion, while girls do not portray the same intrinsic desire.

Another reason for the small number of women in percussion is discrimination limits the opportunities females are given in order to succeed. The interviews in Chapter 3 show the discrimination faced by many women in percussion. Although most of the women declared they had not faced sexual discrimination, its presence was still in existence. The only change was that it had become much more subtle. Opportunities for performing and teaching are not as readily available for women as they are for men. One hypothesis for this is that when giving recommendations, people typically turn to those of their own sex for social networking. Due to the overwhelming majority of men in professional percussion positions, men are more likely to be recommended and hired.

Aside from discrimination, the minority of women in percussion is also suspected to be partially due to the choice women make to have families. The bulk of domestic responsibilities, including child rearing, still exist as a woman's role. A huge societal swing would need to occur in order for this to change. With the challenges of raising a family and taking care of the home, a career as a professional musician can seem unrealistic. This was seen as an important topic for the interviewees as most women wished to discuss it at length. While several of the women have managed to establish a career and be a mother, the majority of the women consider that path to be illogical and limiting to their success. The desire to have a family and raise children is not likely to dissipate. In order for this to be less difficult for women, spouses may have to be willing to sacrifice some of their own career goals in order to create an equal partnership. Institutions must also become more supportive of the family system and the time it entails.

Finally, a critical element that was argued both in the research presented in Chapter 2 and the discussion of interviews in Chapter 3, is the crucial nature of role models. As explained above, many people offer this as a solution to ending the minority status of women in percussion. Role models are believed to be critical for any increase in the number of females in the field. The professionals that are observed by both adults and children are one of the primary reasons that percussion continues to be considered a male instrument. The hope of many is that an increase in professional women performers will lead to an altered perception of percussion.

Further study needs to be undertaken to determine why more boys chose percussion than girls. There have been many studies completed to prove that this is the

case, but they do not tell us why. A survey of the gender ratio in college percussion studios that include graduate programs was completed by the author. The results only presented the current state of females and did not yield any information on whether there has been any measureable change. There must be follow-up surveys on this topic to verify that the number of females earning degrees in percussion has increased.

In conclusion, this essay has attempted to illustrate the current state of women in percussion. With this document the author hopes to encourage others to examine this topic more closely and push other women to find their female roots in the percussion world. Dealing with similar issues as a woman percussionist, it is the author's personal aspiration to inspire dialogue among others rather than leave the present circumstances unquestioned.

APPENDIX A  
COLLEGE PERCUSSIONIST GENDER STUDY

<i>School</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Studio</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Appalachian State	Robert Falvo	21	3 (Undergrad)	14%
Arizona State	J.B. Smith	28	2 (1 Grad)	7%
Ball State	Erwin Mueller	50	6 (1 Grad)	12%
Baylor University	Todd Meehan	12	0	0%
Belmont University	Chris Norton	48	3 (Undergrad)	6%
Bowling Green	Roger Schupp	27	7 (3 Grad)	25%
Butler University	Jon Crabiel	20	4 (1 Grad)	20%
California State	Artie Storch	6	1 (Undergrad)	16%
CA State, Fresno	Matthew Darling	34	13 (2 Grad)	38%
CA State, Long Beach	Michael Carney	39	6 (1 Grad)	15%
Campbellsville U.	Chad Floyd	9	4 (Undergrad)	44%
Central Michigan	Andrew Spencer	20	3 (Undergrad)	15%
Central Washington	Mark Goodenberger	17	5 (Undergrad)	29%
Eastern Kentucky	Jason Koontz	25	1 (Undergrad)	4%
Eastern Michigan	John Dorsey	16	2 (Undergrad)	12%
Emporia State	Tracy Freeze	10	2 (Undergrad)	20%
Florida International	Andrew Proctor	2	0	0%
Florida State	John Parks	24	7 (1 Grad)	29%
George Mason	John Kilkenny	13	4 (1 Grad)	30%
Georgia Southern	Matthew Fallin	16	2 (1 Grad)	12%
Georgia State	Stuart Gerber	16	4 (Undergrad)	25%

<i>School</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Studio</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Howard University	William Richards	7	0	0%
Indiana U. Of PA	Michael Kingan	30	7 (Undergrad)	23%
Ithaca College	Conrad Alexander	28	5 (1 Grad)	17%
James Madison	William Rice	25	6 (Undergrad)	24%
Kansas State	Kurt Gartner	17	5 (Undergrad)	29%
Kent State	Ted Rounds	12	2 (Undergrad)	16%
Louisiana State	Brett Dietz	18	3 (Undergrad)	16%
Mansfield University	Conrad Alexander	13	1 (Undergrad)	7%
Mercer University	Marcus Reddick	6	1 (Undergrad)	16%
Miami University	William Albin	20	5 (Undergrad)	25%
Michigan State	Gwen Thrasher	28	5 (1 Grad)	17%
Middle TN. State	Lalo Davila	34	4 (Undergrad)	11%
Missouri State	Scott Cameron	12	2 (Undergrad)	16%
New Mexico State	Fred Bugbee	24	3 (Undergrad)	12%
Northern Arizona	Steve Hamphill	19	7 (Undergrad)	36%
Northern Illinois	Greg Beyer	21	4 (Undergrad)	19%
Northwestern	She-e Wu	20	5 (1 Grad)	25%
Ohio University	Roger Braun	20	4 (1 Grad)	20%
Oklahoma City	David Steffens	18	1 (Undergrad)	5%
Oklahoma State	Wayne Bovenschen	17	5 (Undergrad)	29%
Penn State	Dan Armstrong	18	3 (Undergrad)	16%
Pittsburgh State	James Clanton	10	1 (Undergrad)	10%
Portland State	Joel Bluestone	8	1 (Grad)	12%
Radford University	Rob Sanderl	12	3 (Undergrad)	25%

<i>School</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Studio</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Rowan University	Dean Witten	14	4 (Undergrad)	28%
Sacramento State	Daniel Kennedy	13	6 (Undergrad)	46%
S. IL, Carbondale	Ron Coulter	8	0	0%
S. IL, Edwardsville	Jerry Bolen	6	2 (undergrad)	33%
Southern Methodist	Jon Lee	10	1 (Undergrad)	10%
Stephen F. Austin	Scott Harris	20	5 (1 Grad)	25%
SUNY, Fredonia	Kay Stonefelt	36	7 (1 Grad)	17%
Syracuse University	Michael Bull	8	2 (1 Grad)	25%
Temple University	Glenn Steele	20	2 (1 Grad)	10%
The Hartt School	Ben Toth	17	6 (2 Grads)	35%
Truman State	Mike Bump	21	5 (Undergrad)	23%
University of Arizona	Norm Weinberg	23	6 (1 Grad)	26%
U. of Arkansas	Chalon Ragsdale	25	4 (Undergrad)	16%
U. of Central FL	Thad Anderson	18	6 (Undergrad)	33%
U. of Central MO	Michael Sekelsky	26	6 (Undergrad)	23%
U. of Central OK	David Hardman	13	1 (Undergrad)	7%
U. of CO, Boulder	Douglas Walter	20	3 (Undergrad)	15%
U. of Connecticut	Haruka Fujii	14	2 (Grad)	14%
U. of Delaware	Harvey Price	18	2 (Undergrad)	11%
U. of Denver	John Kinzie	7	0	0%
U. of Florida	Kenneth Broadway	19	6 (1 Grad)	31%
U. of Houston	Blake Wilkens	28	10 (Undergrad)	35%
U. of Illinois	William Moersch	29	2 (Undergrad)	6%
U. of Iowa	Dan Moore	16	4 (1 Grad)	25%

<i>School</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Studio</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
U. of Kansas	Ji Hye Jung	16	2 (Undergrad)	12%
U. of Kentucky	Jim Campbell	23	3 (1 Grad)	13%
U. of LA, Lafayette	Troy Breaux	25	3 (1 Grad)	12%
U. of Louisville	Jeff Luft	9	2 (Undergrad)	22%
U. of Miami	Svetoslav Soyarov	18	2 (Undergrad)	11%
U. of Michigan	Michael Udow	26	2 (Undergrad)	7%
U. of Minnesota	Fernando Meza	21	3 (Undergrad)	14%
U. of MN, Duluth	Gene Koshinski	10	0	0%
U. of MO, Columbia	Julia Gaines	16	4 (Undergrad)	25%
U. of Missouri, KC	James Snell	13	4 (1 Grad)	30%
U. of NE, Omaha	Tomm Roland	18	1 (Undergrad)	5%
U. of NV, Las Vegas	Dean Gronemeier	20	3 (Undergrad)	15%
U. of Nevada, Reno	Andrew Heglund	12	0	0%
U. of New Hampshire	Nancy Smith	13	4 (Undergrad)	30%
U. of NC, Greensboro	Kristopher Keeton	25	6 (Undergrad)	24%
U. of North Dakota	Michael Blake	9	3 (Undergrad)	33%
U. of Northern CO	Gray Barrier	23	5 (1 Grad)	21%
U. of Northern Iowa	Josh Armstrong	16	3 (Undergrad)	18%
U. of North Texas	Mark Ford	107	12 (5 Grads)	11%
U. of Oklahoma	Lance Drege	25	5 (Undergrad)	20%
U. of South Carolina	Scott Herring	23	4 (Undergrad)	17%
U. of South Florida	Robert McCormick	23	3 (1 Grad)	13%
U. of Southern CA	Erik Forrester	14	4 (1 Grad)	28%
U. of Southern MS	John Wooton	28	1 (Undergrad)	3%

<i>School</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Studio</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
U. of TN, Chattanooga	Monte Coulter	11	4 (1 Grad)	36%
U. of TX, Arlington	Michael Varner	26	2 (Undergrad)	7%
U. of TX, El Paso	Larry White	33	7 (Undergrad)	21%
U. of TX San Antonio	Sherry Rubins	21	3 (Undergrad)	14%
U. of Utah	Douglas Wolf	20	1 (Undergrad)	5%
U. of WI, Madison	Anthony Di Sanza	17	6 (1 Grad)	35%
U. of Wyoming	Steve Barnhart	7	2 (Undergrad)	28%
Utah State	Jason Nicholson	18	1 (Undergrad)	12%
Valdosta State	Paul Campiglia	12	2 (Undergrad)	16%
Wayne State	Keith Claeys	4	1 (Undergrad)	25%
West Carolina U.	Mario Gaetano	17	4 (Undergrad)	23%
West Chester U.	Christopher Hanning	39	5 (1 Grad)	12%
West Virginia U.	George Willis	24	3 (1 Grad)	12%
Western Illinois U.	Rick Kurasz	17	3 (Undergrad)	17%
Wichita State	Gerald Scholl	10	3 (Undergrad)	30%
Winthrop U.	B. Michael Williams	19	3 (1 Grad)	15%
Youngstown State	Glenn Schaft	15	1 (Undergrad)	6%



APPENDIX B  
BIOGRAPHIES OF INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

Gwendolyn Burgett Thrasher

With a musical mother, Gwen Thrasher's experience in music started at the very early age of two. She began her musical studies with piano and violin. When it came time to pick an instrument for beginning band she chose the flute. Her introduction to percussion began later when her band needed a bells player and she eventually switched completely to percussion while attending Interlochen Arts Camp. Thrasher realized that a career in percussion was what she most desired early in high school. She studied at the Eastman School of Music for her Bachelor's degree with John Beck; a Master's degree from the Peabody Conservatory; and a DMA from Yale University, studying with Robert Van Sice at both institutions. Marimba performance and orchestral percussion are Thrasher's percussive specialties. As an orchestral percussionist, she has been a member of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, and the Solisti New York Orchestra. Her honors in marimba performance include most notably the Keiko Abe award at the second World Marimba Competition in Okaya, Japan. Thrasher resides in Lansing, Michigan, where she is the professor of percussion at Michigan State University.

Julie Davila

Playing music was always a regular occurrence in Julie Davila's childhood home in Indiana. She first attempted to play guitar in third grade, but quickly moved to percussion in fifth grade after attending her older brother's jazz band concert, where she fell in love with drums. Throughout her early music education Davila primarily concentrated on snare drum and was very active in marching percussion in high school. Her talent in mallet percussion did not blossom until she began college at Missouri Western studying with Bob Minet. Her first two years of college were spent in marching

her ability on mallet percussion to her already high level on drums. She transferred schools in her third year to the University of North Texas (UNT) where she earned a Bachelor's degree in percussion with Robert Schietroma. At UNT, her focus on marching percussion continued as a member of the snare drum line. Her reputation in the percussion world has principally been as a marching percussion specialist. She was a member of the Phantom Regiment front ensemble and is now on the adjudication team for Winter Guard International. Davila is skilled in many aspects of percussion and is a member of the all-female percussion trio, Caixa, which has established an international status. She is an active composer writing many works in the marching percussion genre. As a leader in the percussion community, Davila served as the chair of the Percussive Arts Society Marching Committee for ten years and is currently on the PAS Board of Directors. She teaches at many local high schools where she resides in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and is a part time professor at Middle Tennessee State University. Davila is very athletic, and if she ever finds enough time and money she would like to take up golf.

#### Laura Franklin

Laura Franklin's musical experience began with piano lessons in second grade in Abernathy, Texas where she was born and raised. While practicing piano was tedious for Franklin, percussion was an exciting new endeavor when she began sixth grade band. Her parents were always very supportive, and when she was in ninth grade, bought her a marimba, which is her primary percussion instrument. She began college as an agricultural economics major, but quickly switched to music when she could not shake the desire to spend all her free time practicing. As a student, Franklin earned her Bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University studying with Alan Shinn, her Master's degree at the New England Conservatory with Vic Firth, and her DMA from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) under the guidance of Cort McClaren. Since attending UNCG, her focus has been on percussion pedagogy. She is a

member of the Board of Advisors of the National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy. Franklin has taught percussion at Brevard College in North Carolina since 1998 where she is also the Music Department chair and the Teaching and Learning Coordinator for the entire college. Franklin specializes in orchestral and chamber music. As an orchestral percussionist she has played with the Boston Philharmonic, the New England Philharmonic, the North Carolina Symphony, and is currently the principal percussionist of the Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra. Aside from percussion, Franklin loves hiking with her husband and two children in the mountains of North Carolina.

### Julia Gaines

Beginning percussion in seventh grade, Julia Gaines discovered an instrument that would become the focus of her professional life. Gaines is well versed in many percussion genres including drum corps as a member of the 1989 Santa Clara Vanguard; orchestral skill in the Missouri Chamber Orchestra and the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra; and expertise on marimba in solo and chamber settings. As a student, Gaines earned her Bachelor's degree from the Lawrence Conservatory of Music, her Master's degree and performance certificate from the Eastman School of Music, and her DMA from the University of Oklahoma. Her principal percussion teachers have included Dane Richeson, John Beck, and Richard Gibson. Immediately after graduate school at the age of twenty-seven, Gaines secured a position as professor of percussion at the University of Missouri, Columbia in 1996, where she has worked since. She is highly involved with the PAS, an organization that she was first introduced to by earning the Ludwig PASIC Scholarship. Gaines has held leadership positions in PAS as a member of the Board of Directors. She is currently the secretary of the executive committee. In addition to her busy professional life, Gaines is married and the mother of two children, aged seven and four.

### Julie Hill

Martin, Tennessee, is the hometown and current residence of Julie Hill. Although music was not present in her family, Hill began taking piano lessons in first grade and started her percussion education when joining sixth grade band. She always had a natural ability for music, but did not decide to pursue it as a career until her senior year. In 1989 she began taking lessons with Nancy Matheson and attended her first PASIC. After high school, Hill decided to stay in Martin to work on her Bachelor's degree and continue study with Matheson at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Her graduate education included study at Arizona State University, where she earned a Master's degree under J.B. Smith, and the University of Kentucky, where she worked on her DMA in percussion with James Campbell. Her doctoral dissertation was about an all-woman ensemble in Brazil research that she continues today. Hill has researched and traveled extensively throughout Brazil; she performs Brazilian music and lectures frequently on the culture and their use of percussion. As a performer, Hill has been most active with her all-woman percussion trio, Caixa, which has performed all over the United States and commissioned many new works for the ensemble. She is very active as a leader through her involvement on the PAS Board of Directors and as Tennessee PAS vice president. Hill is professor of percussion at the University of Tennessee, Martin, and is a specialist in contemporary and world percussion. Learning new languages is one of her passions; she is fluent in Portuguese, and is presently working on Japanese. In addition, she loves to travel and garden with her husband of two years.

### Vicki Jenks

As a second grader born and raised in North Dakota, Vicki Jenks was confident that she would become a teacher. She was introduced to music through piano lessons in third grade and later through percussion in sixth grade. Initially, Jenks explored her talent for percussion with the snare drum and started attending the International Music Camp at

the age of twelve, where she has taught for the last thirty-two years. In high school her percussion emphasis shifted to the marimba and timpani. As a student she earned her Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, and her Master's degree at Baylor, studying with Larry Vanlandingham. Upon graduation, Jenks remained in Texas and founded the percussion program at the University of Texas, El Paso in 1976. She then moved to Madison, Wisconsin, in 1980. Five years later, she started the Jenks Music Studio. The percussion studio quickly became the largest in the state with ninety-two students at its maximum size. In addition to teaching, Jenks has performed actively as a percussionist with the Madison Symphony Orchestra and served twenty-two years as the principal timpanist with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. Jenks is also a passionate conductor and conducts the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra. She was recognized for her contribution to percussion education when presented with the PAS Lifetime Achievement Award in Education in 2009. Jenks is currently retired, with her husband John, and volunteers for many local charities in Wild Rose, Wisconsin.

#### Kathleen Kastner

The marimba has been a love of Kathleen Kastner's since she started playing at the age of six. As a young girl growing up outside of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she took two lessons on the accordion before gravitating towards percussion. She picked up the marimba very quickly and performed her first solo performance at the Wisconsin State Fair at ten. Through high school her focus was on marimba and timpani, and she did not play snare drum until college. Although there was not a percussion teacher there, she attended Wheaton College in Illinois for her Bachelor's degree and studied percussion outside of the college with Chicago marimbist Jim Dutton. Upon graduation she was asked by the director of the music department to be the college's first percussion teacher. In 1972, Kastner founded the percussion ensemble at Wheaton College. While teaching she completed her DMA at the University of Illinois, where she took percussion lessons

with Thomas Siwe. In addition to her percussion degree, she also completed an ethnomusicology minor. As she continued to teach, her course load has grown and she now teaches music history and world music classes. Kastner has been very active in the percussion community throughout her career. She served as president of the Illinois Chapter of the PAS, a member of the PAS Board of Directors, chair of the PAS Scholarly Research Committee, and PAS Historian. Ethnomusicology has always been an important focus in Kastner's percussion studies. She is now actively studying African music and recently had the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of the Tanzanian culture during a trip to East Africa.

#### Rebecca Kite

Born in Mississippi and raised in Nebraska, Rebecca Kite is known for her contributions as a percussion scholar, educator, and marimbist. Music was always present in her childhood home where she began violin at age nine. When starting band in fifth grade, Kite wished to play the trumpet or French horn, but when it was time for her to choose an instrument, they had already been claimed. Her band director suggested she play percussion, and Kite's initial focus was on the snare drum. She completed her Bachelor's degree in percussion at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, with Charmaine Asher-Wiley, and her Master's degree at Indiana University under the guidance of George Gaber. In college her primary focus shifted to timpani and orchestral studies. She did not gravitate toward the marimba until after she was thirty. She currently resides outside of Washington, D.C., where she works as a freelance percussionist, private lesson teacher, and composer. Kite has garnered a reputation as a percussion scholar through her many published articles on percussion pedagogy, percussion history, and her definitive biography of marimba virtuoso, Keiko Abe. Her hobbies include building timpani and spending time re-learning the violin.

### Sherrie Maricle

Jazz drummer, band leader, educator, and composer are all aspects of Sherrie Maricle's career. Maricle was born in Buffalo, New York, and moved to Endicott, New York, at the age of five. She originally aspired to learn the trumpet, but instead was forced to settle on the clarinet and cello. In seventh grade she attended a Buddy Rich concert that inspired her to become a drummer. As a student, Maricle worked on her Bachelor's degree at Ithaca and SUNY Binghamton and completed her Master's degree and Ph.D. at New York University. While studying at NYU, Maricle started the percussion program and became the school's first percussion professor in 1986, where she taught for fifteen years. She has been the drummer with the DIVA Jazz orchestra, an all-woman big band, since its inception and became the band leader in 1993. Maricle is very active as an educator through her position as Director of Education of the New York Pops (an ensemble she also plays in). She is a jazz faculty member of the New York State Summer Music Festival. Composing is also a passion for Maricle, and she has composed many percussion ensemble pieces and big band charts. Maricle is a very active drumset historian and records the lives of historically significant women drummers. Many of her pastimes include physical activity such as cycling, hiking, and running a marathon.

### Lisa Rogers

A native Texan, Lisa Rogers found her passion for percussion at a later age. As a young child growing up in Port Lavaca on the Gulf Coast, she began her musical studies in piano and clarinet. During her senior year of high school Rogers switched to percussion due to an allergy to cane reeds. Some elements of percussion came naturally to her because of a strong background in piano, such as marimba and vibraphone. However, the snare drum was very challenging. Rogers was aware of her desire to become a teacher from a very young age, and when she started her undergraduate degree at Texas Tech University (TTU) she was a piano major training to become an elementary

music teacher. Early in her college career, TTU percussion professor, Alan Shinn, convinced her to study percussion. After earning her Bachelor's degree, Rogers remained at TTU to work on her Master's degree in order to become a college percussion professor. She completed her DMA at the University of Oklahoma under the direction of Richard Gipson, and after he retired was his temporary replacement until she was asked to return to TTU as a faculty member. With an emphasis on vibraphone, Rogers has commissioned many pieces for the instrument and has released two solo recordings. She has been very active with the PAS since attending her first conference in St. Louis in 1987. Her initial leadership experience began with membership in the Scholarly Research Committee, and she was later elected to the Board of Directors. She has also served as both secretary and vice president of the executive committee. Rogers is now the eighteenth—and first woman—president of the organization. In her spare time she enjoys running and is actively training for 5K races.

#### She-e Wu

Born and raised in Taiwan, She-e Wu began her musical training at a very young age. She began studying piano at three and a half, but she eventually gave up piano for timpani at the age of six. Wu had an innate ability in timpani and at ten experienced her first professional orchestral performance. She left home at the age of thirteen to further her study in percussion. Wu left Taiwan for the United States at seventeen to attend the University of North Texas (UNT). Serious focus on marimba, the instrument for which she is now widely known, did not begin until her first year of college when she studied under the direction of Robert Shietroma. At UNT, she earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees while working as a percussion teaching assistant. Immediately after graduation she became professor of percussion at West Virginia University (WVU), a job that only lasted a year. Wu left WVU in order to become professor of percussion at Rutgers University, where she stayed for ten years. Wu is currently percussion professor



at Northwestern University. She is an acclaimed marimba soloist, performing in conventions and festivals all over the world, including the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, National Percussion Convention of Spain, and the International Percussion Convention. Among her many talents, she is also an active composer with works being performed worldwide. Wu also studied with Leigh Howard Stevens, Ed Soph, and Tzong-Ching Ju. In her free time Wu loves to watch movies, and her secret desire is to one day become a chef.

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