

Gender, Sexuality, and Music Reflection Questions

Why are we reflecting?

1. Typical worksheet, drill-and-memorize, and test preparation approach to classroom teaching actually makes it difficult to retain the myriad bits of information you encounter during the school year. More effective is an instructional method that requires you to use important information repeatedly in complex and meaningful ways such as writing papers or completing projects.
- 2) to articulate and verbalize what you are learning—helps better digest and apply what you are learning in the course.
- 3) self-reflection enhances learning and deepens connections and understanding with and between you & your colleagues.
- 4) helps ME get descriptive feedback that I can use to improve my practice and the course itself.

Overview:

- These were a graded assignment completed in class in the last week of the semester.
- The questions were as follows:
 1. Reflect on how you thought about music/gender/sexuality before you took this course and how you think about it now that the course is (almost!) over. What's **ONE** thing that changed for you?
 2. Name **one** thing that **surprised** you about our music/gender/sexuality topics.
 3. If you had to pick one of the class topics to research for a longer project, what would you pick and why? (SEE HANDOUT to review these).
 4. If you could pick one musical example to add to this curriculum, what would you pick and why?
 5. What is one thing that you learned in this class (or at least thought about in relation to this class) that connects with other work that you do? (this might include performing, teaching, scholarship in other disciplines, etc))

Anonymized student responses:

Student 1:

1. The main thing that changed for me when thinking about gender sexuality and music, is how those topics are not exclusive to lgbt people. Every piece can and probably is influenced by someone's gender or sexuality, even if they are cis and straight.
2. The thing that surprised me in the class was all of the history before stonewall. I hadn't really heard of queer issues that started before stonewall and to hear that we haven't been progressively getting better day by day was concerning.

3. If I had to pick one topic to research more about, it would be the way people gender instruments because some of the stuff with a piano I didn't relate to. Like when they called the piano Liszt was making the piano his mistress.
4. I would add some rock based examples. In particular, Twisted Sister and the culture of cross dressing in that era.
5. I wanna make video games, so the thing that stuck out to me was the topic of exoticism. It helped me rethink some of my concepts in the soundtracks and made me think "Is this just a stereotype that I'm building on? Should I change my representation of an area?"

Student 2:

1. I actually never really thought about gender and sexuality within music. That being history, how it all connects, my own experiences with music and sexuality. It never crossed my mind very often until this class. The one thing that has changed about me is that I now actually think about gender and sexuality when I listen to music. I dive so much deeper into the lyrics, the sounds, the context, connections to gender and sexuality, topics we talked about in class, and such.
- 2: The one thing that certainly surprised me is how so many genres of music had been started by women and girl groups and also how so many of them have been erased from history and books. It's also saddening how so many women and their accomplishments have been wiped and continue to be unnoticed!:(
- 3: I would most definitely pick the topic about voices and accents. I absolutely want to learn more about accents and people's experiences with their own voices and accents and how they are seen/treated due to their accents!
- 4: I think we should have a topic regarding video game music into this class!!! Or maybe a section where students choose what to learn about!
- 5: I learned so many things but the one thing that really connects with me and my personal and professional life is the subject of ethics of care-loving music or loving people? Specifically learning to care about people rather than music. I am an anthropology major and a lot of what I do is always people oriented especially with looking at people through multiple perspectives and giving them grace and understanding. Which is why this subject really hits me because it reminds me that as much as I care about music or how much people's opinions may oppose mine. There is usually no opinion that makes someone better or worse than another person.

Student 3:

1. I got to learn more about how things were for people in different marginalized groups/ during different time periods, which has given me different perspectives while thinking about gender and sexuality that are useful.

2. I ended up in more shock over some of the things we have done historically (which is always what happens when you learn more history), like how the church treated the nuns, and the fact we were purposefully castrating boys to keep their voices higher.
3. I really enjoyed all the topics covered, but if I had to pick one to research for a longer project, I think maybe making a zine that's music and gender or sexuality related (based off the riot grrrl era fanzines) would be fun.
4. I think maybe looking into glam metal could be cool, I don't know much about it personally, but they went against masculine fashion norms, and sang in a way higher pitch than typically practiced (also the religious perspective of it being the devils work is always interesting).
5. All the course material connects to my major (sociology), but what I was/am really interested in learning more about the sociological / psychological aspects of our feelings towards our own voices, I think because I am less familiar with that then other topics we have covered.

Student 4:

- 1) I thought about gender, sexuality, and music all separately before this class. I now realize that the three very commonly go side by side. So much is expressed through music, and so much gender and sexuality is expressed, too. Something that's changed for me is how most songs relate to gender or sexuality, even if it's not extremely obvious.
- 2) One topic that surprised me in this class was the topic of stereotypes of the voice. I knew these stereotypes existed, but I never thought about it as much as I do now.
- 3) I would discuss the voice. I would discuss how people assume what people look like by the sound of their voices, and vice versa. I would have a lot to say on this topic.
- 4) I love Reneé Rapp and for my final podcast, I will be focusing on her song "Pretty Girls". I think I would've used this as an example in class of gender and sexuality in music. It is a more contemporary, while still informative example.
- 5) Something I learned about in class that connects with something else I do is, again, the stereotypes of the voice. My goal is to become a choir teacher and I might assume a student's singing voice might sound a certain way. This could possibly lead to a poor relationship with the student because if I am wrong, I might offend them. It is crucial to not assume someone's voice because of their looks, or their looks because of their voice.

Student 5:

1. Something that changed for me was that i started to really analyze the music i listen to deeper for meaning and the audience that its directed to and who picks up on these kinds of music. Ive noticed that its true how everything is involving gender in some way even in the smallest details that we might not pick up on.

2. I was surprised that music had such a deep history with gender and sexuality because that's not something we really talk about in our normal music history classes.
3. If I had to pick something to do deeper research on it would be the exoticism topic because it was the most interesting part to me and I really enjoyed talking about it.
4. I'd want to add more about videogame music. Especially newer games like Genshin Impact and how they convey music of certain cultures and different regions.
5. I think that virtuosity and how certain instruments are connected to gender is very connected to me because of my playing in band and the instruments I've played and things I've been told such as "Girls like you don't play in my jazz band"

Student 6:

1. One thing that changed for me in thinking about gender and sexuality in relation to music was how ingrained many of these norms and ideas truly are, even in our music. I spend a lot of time reflecting on how my own gender and sexuality determine how I live my life, but this class has given me a lot more to think about specifically when it comes to my taste in music. I think it's really interesting to identify the aspects of music that create shared experiences between groups, specifically women and queer people.
2. I was surprised by how much depth there is to every topic we discussed. In high school, I think it's pretty common to get used to having a general overview of things instead of getting deeper into history. Specifically, what surprised me the most was New York City. There's a lot of information that isn't discussed whether that's because it's uncomfortable for people or something else, but I didn't really think about how much history New York City has.
3. I would love to look into queer spaces and histories in New York more. I thought what we talked about was super interesting, but I would especially like to look at more queer women. I think New York City and the music that was popular there in the 20th century is so fun and I think it would be really fascinating to also look at how queer women fit into that puzzle.
4. I am very biased in this answer, but I adore Cabaret. It is one of my favorite musicals of all time, largely because I absolutely love the way it interacts with queer culture and gender norms. In high school, my musical theater class did two weeks on Cabaret because there is so much to be said about it, but I think it could be really interesting to dive deeper into those discussions.
5. I work as a peer tutor in the writers' block, so thinking about vocal pitch has been really interesting. I know when I speak to people I speak at a higher pitch and make an effort to seem as un-intimidating as possible. After we talked about voices associated with women, I started to think a lot about how I approach my sessions. I didn't do any extensive experiments but I did make a point to not raise my voice as much in some sessions. Since I work with new people just about every day, I can't really say if I noticed a difference, but I did notice a difference with one particular person. I have been

meeting with this client a few times because we get along pretty well. I definitely started our sessions with my higher voice, but I've noticed that when I lower my pitch because I'm more comfortable with her, she also becomes more comfortable. Again, not any kind of serious experimentation going on, but I still thought it was really cool!

Student 7:

1. Before I took this class, I never connected music to gender as much as I do now. I knew that songs could be about activism in relation to gender and sexuality but the nitty gritty of the topic is much larger than I originally thought. Things like voices and queer readings were things I had never investigated as much before this class but I'm grateful to have been educated on these topics in this class.
2. One thing that surprised me in this class is the amount of activism movements, safe spaces and music in America was created by black people. Most safe spaces during the movements for gay rights were run and created by black Americans, such as disco, jazz clubs and more. I knew these types of music originated from black culture, but I didn't know to the extent black people had in creating such influential art forms. Today, the history they worked hard to make is erased and credited to white people.
3. If I could pick one topic to research longer it would be queer readings of Broadway musicals, specifically between two women characters taking a break to sing a duet about how awful or great men are.
4. If I could pick a musical example to add, I'd talk about the musical *Rent* when talking about AIDS. It's a very influential musical in the LGBTQ community and in spreading awareness of the disease.
5. I'm a music student, so learning anything about music and how it affects other people benefits me and my work. Learning about women and people of color and queer people in music and who have influenced music is very valuable to me.

Student 8:

1. I had already known about a lot of intersectional topics such as intersectional feminism and gender/sexuality stereotypes and it was really interesting to take a deeper dive into these subjects. I did not know as much of the history behind New York specific musical events and some of the more iconic virtuosos that we covered during class. It was also very different for me to explore further connections through my own research like we did for the group projects, it made me really curious about just how many minority groups are overshadowed or which stereotypes existed throughout the past and present.
2. I was surprised at just how many topics can be related back to gender, sexuality, and music because there are so many connections throughout history to these topics. I was intrigued by the wealth of information that I had never really been taught about

and it was really refreshing to get a more inclusive and historically accurate account of the intersectional histories and people involved in different movements.

3. If I were to further research a topic from this course I would probably choose gendered voices. I find it extremely important to break down the stereotypes of vocal range and timbre and it would really interest me to do further research on ways to remove bias and expectations from people's perception of the voice.
4. I would probably add a bit more coverage of specific queer artists in modern day as well as previous generations. This course does a very good job of being inclusive of minority groups and topics but maybe a few more queer artist examples would be helpful to the course.
5. A lot of the topics covered in this course relate to my future as a prospective music educator as I wish to make my classroom a more inclusive space and to recognize music history themes as part of that. I really want to create a safe space that is accepting of all humans and allows for creativity and understanding policies.

Student 9:

1. I knew that queer folks existed pre-1960, but I came into this class knowing very little. Understanding the events that lead to people forgetting about queer history was incredibly interesting as well.
2. I came into the class thinking it would be mostly about gay people and forgot about the other facets of gender and sexuality besides queerness.
3. I would love to do deeper research into 1920's queer culture in New York but also generally throughout the US, just because it is very interesting to me.
4. Discussions on countertenor voice and the way we perceive it. We talked a lot about castrati but I think the way we perceive countertenors presently often brings up arguments about masculinity that were not present for castrati.
5. One thing I learned was mostly concerning castrati and timbre of voices which I think helped inform some things as I worked on my level this semester.

Student 10:

1. I always knew that there was lots of misogyny in music, but I don't think I had a grasp of just how deeply rooted it was and continues to be. As a woman in music I have reflected on my own experiences in classical music and how I chose the instrument that I chose, and how many of the guys around me had much easier experiences finding support and success. My own high school band director once had a full conversation with me about what he deemed appropriate for female conductors to wear. The rulebook is just completely different.

2. I was constantly shocked at how blatantly obvious oppression is in all of music, but especially classical music and opera. Once you see it, it is really hard to not see it everywhere.
3. Interestingly enough, the topic we got to last. A better understanding of the modern-day question "what is music" and do we choose music over people? This is an incredibly prevalent conversation that needs to be had in more spaces.
4. As a big Beyonce fan, I think a class on her would be really fascinating. Her newest album "Cowboy Carter" opens lots of conversations about people being "allowed" to participate in certain genres. Also, the fact that she is probably one of the best visionaries, musicians, and performers of our time but people don't take her seriously because she is a black woman that isn't afraid of embracing sexuality.
5. As a woman perusing a degree in performance, this class has validated many thoughts I have had about "belonging" in classical music, and most of the imposter syndrome symptoms that I have felt were manufactured for me. This is a system developed by men, for men but I can still force my way in.

Student 11:

1. This course showed me that there are so many more different ways to claim either an identity or historical event through music than I previously thought. I mostly used to just think about LGBTQ+ coded lyrics because that was all I personally knew of that I felt I could relate to. I especially like some of the songs we covered that were considered "avant-garde" as their performers avidly defied the norms of what many think are agreeable to hear for the purpose of urging listeners to empathize with or take accountability for the subject of the song. They don't sound all that pleasant compared to what we're all used to, but some slight audio discomfort is absolutely nothing compared to what the performer and many others went through that inspired this music.
2. I was surprised to discover just how many random biases we have about the performers we envision when we hear music coming from a voice or instrument we can't see. I largely associated these mental images with my personal exposure to these mediums, but I see now that it goes far deeper than that.
3. For a longer project, I would choose to research soundscapes. I'm interested in the connections that can be made between sound maps of large areas, the cultures of these places, and the mental or physical well being of the people living there. I imagine starting with this idea would lead me down a pretty cool rabbit hole.
4. I'm curious about the electronic music scene. This largely stems from the fact that I've finally come to terms with the fact my current music taste is songs that combine EDM and pop (maybe there's a word for this I just don't know about). As I find new songs through my music app's recommended mixes, I find myself attracted to particular treble or light voice timbres that seem quite frequent for how many different artists or

producers I imagine I'm listening to. I've never considered looking into both the history of this industry and the people working in it, and I'm wondering how much diversity (or lack thereof) is involved.

5. One thing I learned in this class that connects with other work I do is our discussions about virtuosity and what qualifies as "virtuous". I feel like I can make a lot of connections between the aspects of performing that the audience views as impressive versus what is actually optimal for playing. In piano studio this semester I learned a lot from Dr. Sato about how little work is actually required from our muscles to play the keys, which tells me that a lot of dramatic flair subsequently ranges from unnecessary to downright detrimental to our playing. I constantly have tension in my body when I'm playing piano and in working towards removing it, I'm starting to realize that the most "virtuous" way I can perform is by doing absolutely no "performing" at all.

Student 12:

1. The biggest thing that changed for me is just the fact that I'm more aware of how gender, sexuality, and music are interconnected. This class showed me how much history and society depend on music for connection, empowerment, and more.
2. The biggest surprise was how much there is to talk about gender, sexuality, and music. I knew it was a vast topic before this, but now I know there is virtually no end.
3. I'd probably want to research more on queer history in New York City through a musical lens.
4. I would like to look at video game music more in general if it is possible to integrate that into this class.
5. Group work and public speaking in this class helped me improve my communication with others and my ability to articulate myself clearly and concisely. This will help me in many of the disciplines listed and more.

Student 13:

1. At first I was sort of wondering how these things had anything to do with each other. Now that we're at the end, I can see from different angles and in different ways how they all connect together in society.
2. The wide variety really surprised me, I didn't think there could be so much about it and aspects we would need to understand.
3. If I had to do a longer project, I would probably pick our New York Take 3 about the waves of feminism. I just think it's a very broad topic and there's so many things you could include or even different directions to focus on.
4. I would pick to add in some emotional connection pieces. I think emotion and feelings is just as important as the connect to gender and sexuality, they even go hand in hand with one another. I don't know too much classical music pieces we've talked

about in this class but I would recommend so more modern examples to add more to the topics

5. One thing I learned was to be able to identify or seek out specific sounds. I never really focused on things like that before, and now I do it all the time.

Student 14:

1. Before this class I obviously knew that gender and sexuality did have strong connections to music, but now that I have taken this class I feel like I just think about it more. It's something that I find really interesting and something that I actively look out for.

2. One thing that surprised me is just the amount of content and different directions of content for the New York unit. I never thought of there being so many different connections to gender and sexuality in NY.

3. If I had to pick a class topic to research for a longer project, I would probably pick the ethics of care because I think there is so much to it and it's not something that I have really thought about before. I feel like there are so many different directions that you could go in researching this topic and it connects to so many other disciplines like psychology, for example.

4. If I could add something to this curriculum, I would maybe choose a topic relating to music business/industry. We definitely touched on it a little bit as it connected to some other topics we discussed, but I think gender and sexuality as related to music business and such could be cool.

5. I think that overall this class has indirectly taught me a lot about teaching. I think this class brought up many important things to keep in mind in potential future classrooms of mine. Just some history of gender and sexuality in music as a whole and then the deeper and more relevant topics addressed in this class such as the ethics of care.

Student 15:

1. When I thought about gender, sexuality, and music before I took this class, I did not realize how deeply connected all three of these things are. After doing the project about women struggling in orchestras it really opened my eyes to the amount of difficulty they faced in music.

2. I was surprised when you taught us about coded lyrics. I honestly just did not really expect it to be something in music and when you showed us the examples in some of the songs during week 8, I was pretty surprised. At face value you just look at music as just music but sometimes there are deeper meanings behind all of it, such as these coded lyrics.

3. If I had to pick one topic for a longer research project I would do women in orchestra again. However, I would not want to limit it to just New York, I would like to

look at other states and even countries because women were affected by this all over the world so I think learning about their experiences in all different places would be interesting.

4. If I could pick a musical example to add to this curriculum I would pick more modern rap. I would do this because it can relate to the coded language, there can be a lot of meaning behind what rappers are saying in their music and some of it is really interesting because you can not just take it at face value, and you may have to read in between the lines.

5. One thing I learned in this class that connects with other work I do is playing/learning instruments. I am a music education major and learning that some instruments are sexist make logical sense. Men have bigger hands than women and it makes it easier for them to play instruments like the violin or piano because of the reach they have from this physical advantage. This is something I have been recently thinking about after learning it in this class.

Student 16:

1. I guess I never really dove deep into how gender and sexuality was impacted by music. Now, I think I understand the history of music and how gender and sexuality have been impacted by music. Also, how the acceptance of gender and sexuality has been reflected in music over time.

2. One thing that surprised me was how a lot of things we talked about I knew, I just never really thought deeply about it.

3. I would 10000000% pick Broadway. I love Broadway and I think it's so interesting to see how it's changed over time. And how gender roles have changed. Also, how sexuality has evolved in musicals over time.

4. One musical example I would pick is maybe more modern pop, like how differently female singers or rappers are treated vs. male singers or rappers.

5. One thing I learned in this class that connects to other work that I do is anything! As a Crane student, I think I will use the things I have learned in this class in many other things that I do. I also just think this information is good to know and will be beneficial when I am a teacher.

Student #17:

1. Before class, I never thought about the concept of exoticism. Now I can look at pieces, plays, etc through a different lense.

2. One thing that surprised me was our recent discussion on voice. I think it is an interesting and useful topic that applies to more areas than just music.

3. I would choose to research freedom songs. I would love to dive deeper into why and how music was used during times of struggle.

4. One musical example I would add to this class is a unit on women classical composers. I think it is a broad topic that could be explored.
5. One useful thing that I learned is the different types of outlines and way to prep for speeches. As a future educator, I must get used to public speaking, and the textbook information will be useful for my lesson planning.

Student #18:

- 1) I thought a lot about music and gender as it pertained to me, namely instrument stereotypes, women in orchestras, and “the canon” type stuff before this class. I’ve enjoyed adding super niche music history things to enrich those lines of thought. I kind of didn’t spend a ton of time thinking about music and sexuality (as an asexual person it just isn’t on the forefront of my mind, I guess) but I’ve liked getting some more perspective on that.
- 2) I was surprised by/am curious about the manner in which gender expression was less dichotomous before the Victorian era, and then again around the turn of the century, before nuclear family ideas were super pervasive. We didn’t get too much into it specifically, but it was kind of alluded to at multiple points, or was used to contextualize more specific examples from those time periods.
- 3) The discourse on voices was kinda wild. That day struck a nerve with me because I was a mythology (and subsequently Classical Greece) girlie before, during, and after it was cool but also like I truly despise Classical Greece for so many reasons. I’d probably pass away from emotional distress trying to research voice and gender in that time period but I’d do it.
- 4) Du Pre’s Elgar Cello Concerto definitely made it onto the soundtrack early in the semester, but elaborating would be cool? I don’t know how well it would tie into the content.
- 5) I don’t know how much I got out of this class WAYS-wise (public speaking-wise) but I definitely have enjoyed and appreciated the hyper-specific music history things. My music tastes are also like, super insular and limited by genre, so it was cool to get a taste of some of the best examples of genres I know nothing about.

Student #19:

- 1) When I first thought of this class, I pictured music and how it connects to queer people. That was definitely a huge part of this class, but I wasn’t expecting to talk about exoticism and queer readings of musical theatre, as well as hip hop and various other emergences of genres.
- 2) Partially covered in the last question, but definitely wasn’t expecting to talk about Riot Grrrl (although I should’ve) and how seemingly unconnected genres connect to gender and sexuality.

- 3) Most likely gendered biased of voices. I think I connect to this topic personally as a trans woman. There's a big culture around trans women voice training to sound more feminine. As someone who doesn't currently do this, there's always a big imposter syndrome like effect to it for me where I feel like I'm not "trying hard enough" to be a woman. I've also experienced such biases myself, when playing online video games with voice chat people can and will entirely judge based on voice. This is mostly not much of a problem for me but it was when I still played those games (I stick to single player stuff and fighting games pretty much exclusively now). I could go on, which is probably the point since I probably could have done a project on it.
- 4) Definitely check out Left at London and her "Transgender Street Legend" set of EPs. I was a big fan of the topics in this class overall but I think there could have been a larger discussion of trans people. I also think you can do some interesting stuff talking about Nirvana but that's mostly just because I'm a big fan.
- 5) Definitely connects to music for me and how much I'll be using my voice daily in this career path.

Student #20:

1. Honestly, before taking this course, I don't think too much on how gender and sexuality was tied to music. Through taking this course, I saw music genres that were tied to gender and sexuality which surprised me, so now when listening to any kind of new music, I think of the potential connection it has to gender and sexuality.
2. One thing that really surprised is how intertwined sexuality and gender truly is to music. Like I said before, I don't really give it that much thought, so seeing how it truly connects to everything was cool and a bit shocking.
3. If I had to pick a topic to research longer, I would pick Hip-Hop. I've listened to Hip-Hop for the majority of my life so I would have interest in delving into it more, and if I had to pick a topic that was restricted to NYC and New York State I would try and correlate A Tribe Called Quest into my research topic. They are a rap group from Queens that I really like.
4. Honestly, what you said at the beginning of class doesn't sound like too bad of an idea to add, K-Pop. I personally think it would be cool as it's music I'm not really familiar to, so it would be cool to learn about it and how it correlates to Gender and Sexuality.
5. Reading the chapters on speech actually helped me in giving speeches in other classes. I felt more confident in giving my speeches and I really utilized the presentation skills and helpers it mentioned.

