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***Genderfluid fin-de-siècle: Feminist and queer reflections on Finnish art music, gender and canon formation***

The paper discusses from a feminist and queer perspective the professional lives of Finnish women composers at the turn of the 20th century and their exclusion from the institutionalized music history writing. In 19th century and early 20th century several Finnish women pursued music studies at Helsinki Music Institute and Orchestra School, Saint Petersburg Conservatory and abroad (e.g. in Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig), and practiced composing thereafter. Prominent examples are Ida Moberg (1859–1947), Agnes Tschetschulin (1859–1942), Betsy Holmberg (1860–1900) and Greta Dahlström (1887–1978).

However, these women who fought against the gender norms and lived as composers (and conductors and instrumentalists) have usually been left out of the music history books and media representations even in the 21st century Finland. Though feminist researchers have analyzed this exclusion generally as a matter of patriarchal canon formation that aims to keep women out of the music history and professional field of composing (e.g. Irjala 1992; Moisala & Valkeila 1994; Kauppala [Sivuoja-Gunaratnam] 1994 & 2003; Björkstrand 1999; cf. Citron 1993), more detailed research is needed especially on the basis of (1) primary biographical and archive materials about women composers (cf. Saari 1997; Eila Tarasti 1998; Wenzel 2009; Holsti-Setälä 2015; Markus Virtanen 2017; Marjaana Virtanen & Heikkilä [forthcoming]), and on the basis of (2) queer and transgender theories that focus on the manifold spectrum and fluidity of gender.

I argue, that the exclusion of the fin-de-siècle women composers from the canonized and institutionalized Finnish music history needs to be analyzed in the light of the fact that many of these women were unnormative in terms of gender and sexuality, and lived lives that in contemporary terms would be described as lesbian or transgendered. This consideration not only makes more space for women, lesbian and genderqueer composers in the history of Finnish music, but also forces to think of the significance of male homosexuality as well in the history of Finnish music – an area of research which is even more unexplored than the Finnish women composers.

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