



love

“Music is love in search of a word.” We focus, during this month of celebration of love, on women who personified music as love in search of word: women musicians, composers, singers, and conductors. It may be surprising to many readers that although women have long been singers, the music world has been much less accommodating to women in the other roles. Certain instruments were viewed as masculine, women were not welcomed on the podium as conductors and women were not accepted as composers. Let’s learn about some of these fascinating historical musical women.

In 1852 when **Camilla Urso** played her violin in concerts around the U.S., she was breaking new ground. She began taking violin lessons at age six, even though at that time, the violin was considered a masculine instrument; her first recital, at age seven, was such a success that her parents moved to Paris so that she could study. She was the first female to enter the Paris Conservatory.

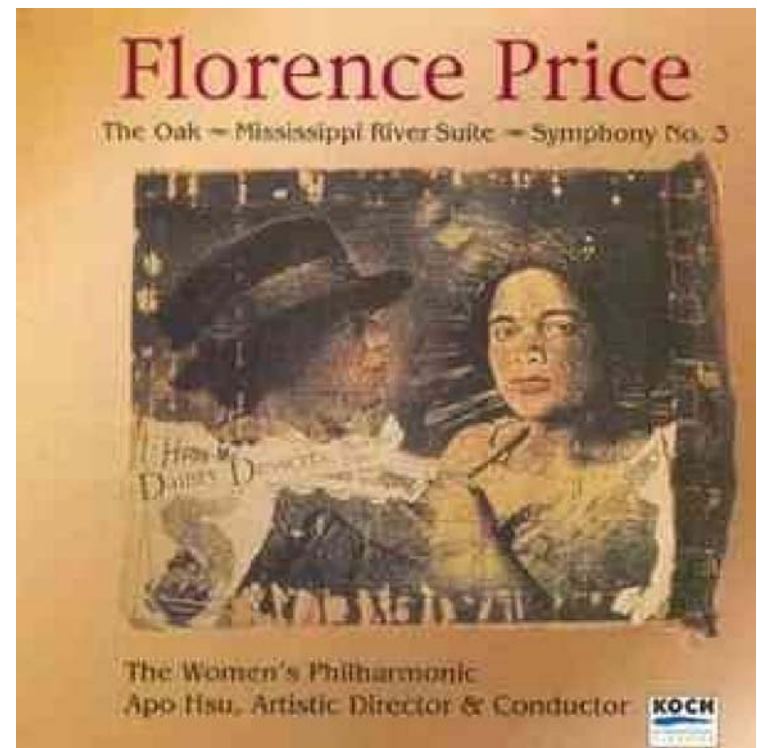
After her arrival in the U.S., Urso gave concerts in New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia. In 1864-1865, she had her own concert company. For the next thirty years, she toured the U.S. Urso was acknowledged as one of the preeminent violinists of her day and her repertoire included both classical and contemporary

works. She taught privately and at the National Conservatory of Music. In her later years, Urso spoke publically to encourage everyone to accept women as members in orchestras of the time.

In 1933, **Florence Beatrice Smith Price** was the first black woman to have a symphony that she composed performed by a major American orchestra. An accomplished pianist, Price's first work was published when she was eleven years old. She attended the New England Conservatory and graduated as an organist and a piano teacher.

In 1932, Price won four prizes, including the top prize for a symphonic composition in the widely revered Wanamaker Competition. The conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra presented her Symphony in E Minor for the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. The critics were unanimous in their raves.

Price composed over three hundred works, and her songs and arrangements were performed by some of the most admired voices of her day, including Marian Anderson. Her symphonies and chamber works were famous for incorporating the melodies from Negro spirituals, and her work is considered an important part of the New Negro Arts Movement.

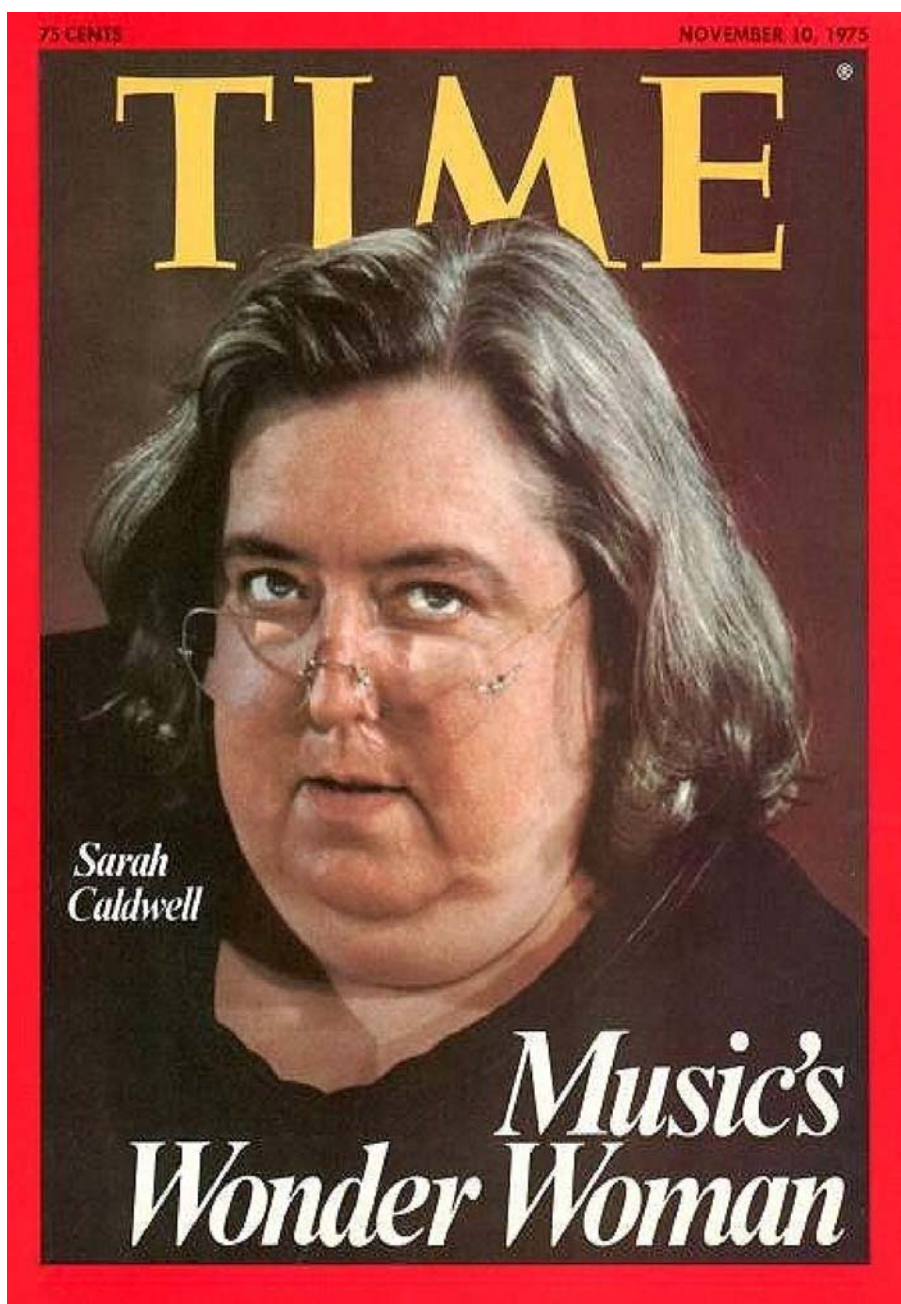


Another incredibly talented woman was contralto singer **Marian Anderson** who in 1939 gave a concert at the Lincoln Memorial that was attended by more than 75,000 people. This venue was selected because the group, Daughters of the American Revolution, had denied her the opportunity to sing at Constitution Hall (because of her race). Their action caused protests from many people, including Eleanor Roosevelt, who resigned from the DAR as a result. Alternative arrangements were made and Anderson sang on a

memorable Easter Sunday.

Growing up in poverty in South Philadelphia, Anderson scrubbed steps and ran errands to earn a few pennies to help her mother. She was able to sing in her church choir – the Union Baptist Church. Members of the congregation raised funds for her to attend music school for a year. In 1925, she entered a contest with 300 competitors. She won first prize – a recital in New York City with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

Anderson toured Europe from 1930 to 1935 and appeared before the royalty of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and England. In addition, she sang at the Salzburg music festival in 1935. Her pure vocal quality and tremendous range made her one of the world's greatest contraltos. The great conductor Toscanini said "what I heard today one is privileged to hear only once in a hundred years."



In 1955, Anderson became the first African-American singer to perform as a member of the Metropolitan Opera of New York City. Even before she sang, she was given a standing ovation. She was made a delegate to the United Nations in 1958, confirming her role as a goodwill ambassador for the U.S. She received many awards during the course of her lifetime including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963.

In 1976, conductor and opera producer **Sarah Caldwell** was the first woman to conduct at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. Caldwell was known for emphasizing the dramatic elements of opera in her productions with innovative stagings that often included spectacular visual effects. She was also known for

performing and staging obscure operas that because of their difficulty were performed rarely. Over her career, Caldwell staged more than seventy-five operas. Her high standards attracted performers of the highest caliber – Beverly Sills sang two of her first operas under Caldwell’s direction.

A child prodigy, Caldwell was performing in public on the violin by the age of ten and graduated from high school when she was fourteen. After studying at the New England Conservatory of Music, she worked with the New England Opera Theater, at Tanglewood, and at Boston University. In 1957, she organized the Boston Opera Group which from 1965 forward has been known as the Opera Company of Boston. In 1975, Caldwell was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine labeled as “Music’s Wonder Woman.” She appeared with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In 1978, she was the first recipient of the Kennedy Center Award for Excellence. In 1996, she received the National Medal of Arts. Caldwell made great efforts to use opera to help countries communicate. This “first lady of American opera” opened doors to the Soviet Union and the Philippines, among others.

Truly, many women have aided in our enjoyment of music. We are pleased to acknowledge their contributions to every phase of its production and their roles in enabling music to be created in every genre and for every taste.



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