




A CALL TO ACTION:

Promoting and Preserving Women in the Field of Choral Conducting

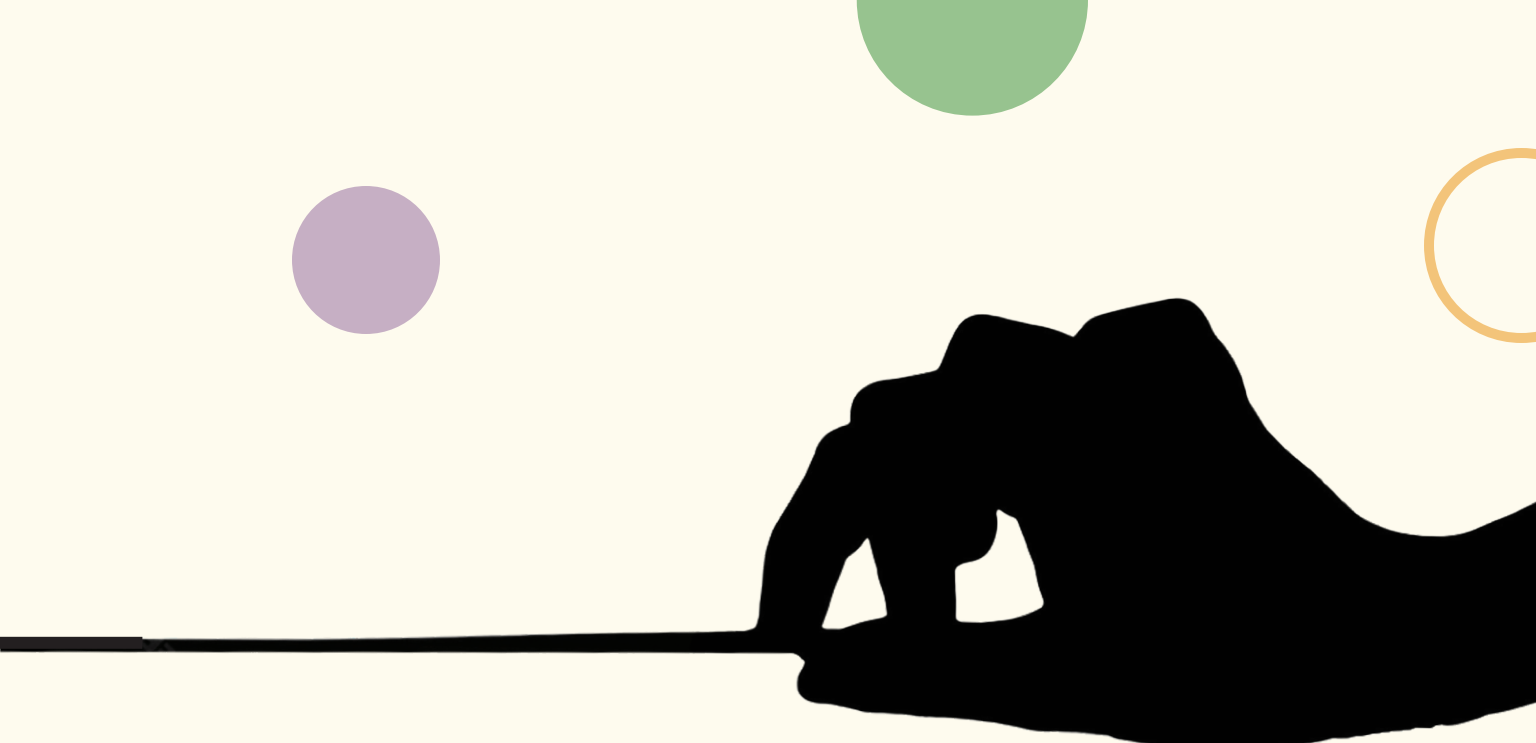
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Women choral conductors¹ are an integral part of the musical community, but despite society’s current emphasis on uplifting marginalized voices, the number of women conductors in the United States continues to decline.² The purpose of this article is to illuminate the existing challenges of the gender equity gap and consider solutions. As of 2024, fewer than 10% of orchestral conductors around the world were women.³ In the United States, twenty-five professional choral ensembles have budgets exceeding \$1,000,000, and of those, 80% are conducted by males⁴ (Table 1 on the next page). In her 2019 dissertation, “‘You Just Gotta Be Great’: Narratives of Experience from Two Women Conducting in the Lutheran Collegiate Choral Context,” Elisabeth Rogers Cherland found that in college music programs in the United States, women comprised just 32% of faculty⁵ (Table 2 on the next page). This disparity is vast, especially considering 48% of doctoral music graduates in the United States are female-identifying.⁶ The percentage of collegiate women conductors of all ensembles is only 8% higher than in 1976⁷ (Table 2); and according to the College Music Society, the number of women conductors of all ensembles at the collegiate level dropped by 7.05% between 2006 and 2020.⁸



In a 2022 interview on the *conduct(her)* podcast, Sierra Farquhar-Wulff discussed her master’s thesis research regarding the current state of gender inequity in the choral profession, concluding, “I take from [these] data that we have not made any progress.”⁹ Farquhar-Wulff also spoke of her dreams to conduct a professional ensemble: “It’s just really discouraging as a woman trying to reach that level to see that the glass ceiling is still there.”¹⁰ Women choral conductors continue to be hired less frequently and receive lower pay than their male colleagues.¹¹ From her research, Farquhar-Wulff concluded:

- 1) Nearly half of the women participants believed that they should be further along in their careers,
- 2) A majority of women have experienced gender bias in their career pursuits, and
- 3) 57% of study participants cite compensation practices as having a negative effect on their careers in the workplace environment.¹²

In her 1998 *Choral Journal* article, “A Missing Chapter from Choral Methods Books,” Patricia O’Toole addressed the education of girls and women in choral programs and how gender roles affect teachers’ expectations and subsequent interactions with students.¹³ Although the article is nearly three decades old, much of the content still resonates in 2025: 1) In primary school, male students are encouraged to be active, while female students are encouraged to be passive; 2) In middle school, expectations related to gender impact the singers’ needs and impact time and attention in rehearsal; 3) In high school, the male voices often determine the difficulty of repertoire.¹⁴

From primary education through professional ensemble experiences, we have a responsibility to reimagine choral structures with a shift toward equity-driven rehearsing and teaching. In her article, O’Toole described a teacher who attempted to promote a gender-fair classroom by calling on boys and girls alternately from her attendance roster. After two days, the boys were outraged, claiming she was unfair. The teacher explained, “Equity was hard to get used to;

Table 1. Women in Professional Conducting Positions (Instrumental & Choral)

	Worldwide*	United States, Top 25 Choirs**	United Kingdom***
Women Conductors	<10%	20%	11.2% (of conductors represented by an agent)

* <https://takialsop.org/about-tacf/the-challenge/>

** Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, “Discounting Our Colleagues.”

*** <https://royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk/performers/women-conductors>

Table 2. Women in Collegiate Music Faculties

	1976 (Renton/Block)	1986 (Renton/Block)	2019 (Cherland)
All ranks (includes part-time and adjunct faculty)	24%	31%	32%

they perceived it as a loss.”¹⁵ Changing habits with long historical roots is difficult at best. We do, however, have the opportunity to enact behavioral changes that will support the next generation of developing musicians.

Research Questions

This article is focused on raising awareness of the significant gender equity gap in the field of choral music *and* presenting practical solutions, skills, and tactics aimed at reversing the decline. For change to occur, there is a need to invest in data-driven and honest conversations regarding family planning, work-life balance, task division, mental load, pay disparity, continuing education, and the interdisciplinary nature of succeeding in music. In her 2016 doctoral dissertation, Claudia Bryan wrote: “Understanding how successful women conductors overcome challenges and achieve a balance between home and work life may offer valuable insight to the next generation of women conductors.”¹⁶ By identifying key areas of concern, we can take result-oriented steps toward sustainability and longevity for women in the field. The current data partnered with responses from the *conduct(her)* podcast interviewees led to two seminal research questions:

- 1) What barriers currently prevent women from employment advancement and musical opportunities in choral conducting?
- 2) How can we develop systems and communities of support to help women choose a career in choral music and stay in the field?

Research Question #1:
What barriers currently prevent women from opportunities in choral conducting?

To help raise awareness of the gender equity gap, the authors of this article (Kyra Stahr and McKenna Stenson) created the *conduct(her)* podcast and choral community in 2021. *conduct(her)* amplifies women’s voices on the podium by sharing the stories of

trailblazers in the field. The first season focused on choral conductors in collegiate leadership. Season two expanded to feature composers, instrumental conductors, and arts administrators. Season three includes panels on specific topics such as trans singers, prison choirs, and entrepreneurship, as well as episodes highlighting K-12 educators.¹⁷ The interviews spark honest conversations on navigating the many obstacles that women face in the choral conducting profession.

Through three seasons of interviews, we have come to recognize that change is critical to sustaining the health, development, and long-term success of women in the field. We created and sent a research survey to *conduct(her)* interviewees, listeners, and industry conference attendees to examine the current climate for women in choral conducting. Questions included basic demographic information, summation of longevity in the field, access to mentors and support or lack thereof, leave policies, acts of exclusion and/or discrimination, and additional career challenges. The results revealed four common barriers discouraging women from a career in choral music. We summarize these four barriers below and include supporting data from additional sources.

- 1) Lack of representation
- 2) Unsupportive family leave policies
- 3) Fatigue from self-advocacy
- 4) Discrimination based on gender

1) Lack of Representation

The indisputable data shows there are not enough women on the podium, particularly evident looking at conductors in higher education, community organizations, and professional choral ensembles. Dr. Mary Murphy, a professor at Indiana University and best-selling author of the book *Cultures of Growth*, has founded her research on shifting cultures of genius to cultures of growth. She has explored why messages about brilliance often undermine women’s interest in certain fields, among them music and academia:

One of the biggest problems that we see with cultures of genius is that we have a specific prototype of who is a genius, a prototype of who's going to be successful in these different environments. What we've seen across decades of our work now is that while these prototypes can vary by industry, we find that most people, when you put in the word *genius* into Google images, the images that come to mind are people like Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison ... Bill Gates, right? This is a pretty homogenous group. When we're in these cultures of genius, we look for people who are going to match our genius prototypes, and these are the people who we seek out, who we hire, and who we promote in different organizations. It's really why cultures of genius often overlook and miss out on identifying and recruiting people from diverse groups.¹⁸

Murphy's "culture of genius" can be applied to our choral community when considering prominent choral icons (e.g., Robert Shaw, Weston Noble, and Joseph Flummerfelt) and looking at our history of guest clinicians. In addition to advocating for women conductors in higher education, community, and professional arenas, it is important to consider who we are bringing in as guest clinicians for local, regional, and national events and what type of ensembles these clinicians are conducting.

William McLean studied all-state conductors for SATB ensembles from all fifty states between 2000 and 2020 and found that women represented only 23.2% of guest conductors for these high-profile events. Of the repertoire programmed, only 7.3% were composed or arranged by women.¹⁹ McLean also discovered that women conductors were 35.24% more likely to program works by women composers than their male counterparts, stating, "the results regarding gender are a sobering indicator that continued inquiry and advocacy are necessary."²⁰ To change these statistics, administrators, event facilitators, and selection committees must collectively advocate for gender equity.

Action Item

In your community, advocate for equal representation by ensuring women are considered as guest clinicians at the same rate as their male counterparts. If you're unable to accept an engagement, recommend a qualified woman conductor. Allyship for women on the podium at the local, regional, and national levels are some of the most effective ways to drive lasting change.

2) Family Leave Policies

In 2021, *The Washington Post* compared paid family leave in the United States to that of other countries. Although the United States is one of the richest countries in the world, "it is one of the few countries to not offer some form of paid family leave for new parents."²¹ In addition to the lack of government support for new families, pregnancy places a significant physical and emotional toll on a woman's body. In the field of choral conducting, sustaining traditional workloads and rehearsal hours can be particularly challenging throughout family planning, pregnancy, and caregiving responsibilities. For women seeking tenure or working with organizations that do not offer maternity leave packages, they are often forced to take unpaid time off and/or return directly to work.

It is also important to assess the quality of advocacy for and communal support for maternity leave. A 2023 study on women professors' experience with maternity leave revealed that "women continued to undertake core academic work duties during maternity leave such as writing grant applications and journal articles, supervising doctoral students, teaching, and responding to emails."²² The authors emphasized that many women relinquish their rights to maternity leave to sustain their academic productivity.²³ For women who are caregivers, these issues may be compounded by the added challenge of balancing family expectations with professional demands, reinforcing the stereotype that women must choose between their careers and family.²⁴ In her 2021 book, *Fair Play*, author Eve Rodsky emphasized the negative impact of women leaving the workforce due to the challenges of balancing a career and family:

Consider the cost to our society, robbed of

valuable productivity and top female leadership and talent, as 43% of highly qualified women with children take a career detour. This includes college-educated women who invested in an education and who presumably never planned to exit the workforce...but many do so anyway, feeling they grossly underestimated the demands and difficulty of combining work and parenting.²⁵

An updated 2024 study found that of the fifty-two institutions in the United States that grant a doctorate of musical arts degree, only twelve have women leading programs.²⁶ Said differently, those seeking to study with a woman conductor at the doctoral level will find that only 23% of institutions currently meet this criterion.

Action Item

If you have a colleague on maternity leave, consider offering to take on additional responsibilities in her absence. This includes not only completing tasks but also ensuring that others in the workplace recognize that you were able to step into this role due to the preparation and groundwork laid by your colleague before her leave.

If you are a dean or administrator, implement policies that ensure women on maternity leave can maintain the same career advancement opportunities and promotion timelines as their male counterparts. Additionally, supporting paternity and family leave policies that enable both parents to share caregiving responsibilities fosters a more equitable work environment. Policies that benefit all employees promote work-life balance, enhance job satisfaction, and support long-term productivity.

3) Fatigue from Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is critical to career success; however, a study by the Indeed employment website showed that “73% of women surveyed expressed fear over how women are perceived when self-promoting.”²⁷ Traits such as passive behavior, not claiming recognition for work, and seeking to stay away from the public spotlight can be detrimental to career advancement. For women to speak up in the workforce, they need to feel safe to self-advocate.²⁸ We know from cultivating a

positive classroom culture that when our students feel safe and valued, they are more likely to take personal and musical risks. The same is true for women in the choral profession.

Women experience fatigue from the mental load of persistent self-advocacy needed in their work, including loss of identity, taxing mental load, underutilized education, and few women role models in leadership positions.²⁹ These barriers often lead many women to feel isolated, developing resentment toward their careers and ultimately resulting in their departure from the workforce.³⁰ As conductor-teachers, we have the responsibility of advocating for students, colleagues, and programs, in addition to ourselves, which often leads to emotional fatigue. The support and development of more equitable avenues where women are seen, understood, and supported will reduce frustration, anxiety, and stress.

“ Women experience fatigue from the mental load of persistent self-advocacy needed in their work.”

Action Item

Advocate for the best workplace practices to ensure that all employees feel valued. Recognize and support your women colleagues who may be engaging in self-abandonment behaviors, such as downplaying their achievements, invalidating their contributions, taking on excess responsibility, or apologizing unnecessarily. Be a considerate colleague by completing your tasks on time, recognizing the work of others, and continually assessing if the workload is equitable. Avoid assuming that you are already doing enough. Ask how you can continue to improve and make a greater impact.

4) Discrimination based on gender

At the end of each *conduct(her)* podcast episode, guest speakers are asked if they are willing to share a time when they faced discrimination based on their gender. For the majority of guests, it takes time to narrow down a specific incident they will speak about because

many come to mind. One of the most common forms of discrimination identified by podcast interviewees and *conduct(her)* survey participants is a buildup of microaggressions. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a microaggression as a “statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group.”³¹ Some of the microaggressions described in our podcast included being interrupted while speaking, assigned tasks based on gender, having competence questioned, and the use of sexist language in the workplace. In a study by the American Psychology Association, professionals who experienced consistent microaggressions were more likely to internalize problems, resulting in depression, anxiety, and negative affect,³² which correlates with career burnout.³³

Action Item

Observe how women are engaged in workplace conversations and meetings. If you notice colleagues being interrupted, acknowledge they were interrupted, invite them back into the conversation, and proceed to model active listening. If a colleague is overlooked, prompt them to participate in the conversation. Gender stereotypes often place the majority of the administrative and organizational load on women.³⁴ Assess how tasks are distributed in your workplace to ensure that both logistical and artistic responsibilities are shared equitably. Speak to colleagues with professionalism, avoiding nicknames or other casual language. Use formal titles and then ask how they prefer to be addressed.

Research Question #2:

How can we develop systems and communities of support to help women choose a career in choral music and stay in the field?

Analysis of past data and the current state of the choral field reveals that while women are entering the profession of choral conducting, they are not remaining over time.³⁵ This trend highlights the significant lack of support systems to help women sustain long-term

careers in the choral arts. Furthermore, women are not being promoted to leadership positions at the same rate as their male counterparts, particularly in higher education and professional choral settings.³⁶ As a choral community, we have a responsibility not only to understand the reasons behind gender disparity but also to develop resources and foster behavioral shifts that can lead to lasting change.

Kimberly VanWeelden analyzed the gender composition of music educators related to grade level, revealing how gender-based perceptions influence career choices in the field:

Sex-type attitudes have also seemingly impacted the gender make-up of our music education teachers. ... These occupational gender trends have been theorized to take place because while music teaching is generally perceived as a feminine occupation, perceptions based upon the gender appropriateness of the musical task, such as type of instruction and/or level of the students, may consciously or subconsciously dictate music teachers' occupational choice.³⁷

As discussed, there is a decline in the number of women in choral conducting, yet there is a widespread misconception that our field is more oriented toward women than men. One example comes from Dr. Renee Wilson's 2014 article, “Batons and Babies: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study of Mothers Who Are Band Directors.”³⁸ Wilson underscores how gender biases shape perceptions of competence and suitability for specific roles in professions where *skill* and *experience* should be the determining factors. She recounts a story from one interviewee who shared that upon applying for a full-time middle school band position, the assistant superintendent and principal remarked that the part-time choral position would be better suited for them.³⁹ This incident reflects deeply ingrained stereotypes about the roles of women in musical leadership.

At the time of VanWeelden's research in 2003, women in choral music outnumbered men by a ratio of 2:1. Interestingly, gender disparity was significantly higher at secondary education levels: the majority of pre-school (85%), elementary (79%), junior high/

middle (66%), and secondary (56%) teachers were females, while male teachers were most prominent in post-secondary grades (55%).⁴⁰ These statistics do not reflect the entirety of gender inequity in choral music. They do, however, provide a snapshot of the broader trend of women being underrepresented in conducting roles in high school, collegiate, and professional organizations, underscoring the need for a more nuanced understanding of how gender perceptions continue to shape career trajectories and demographics at various educational levels. As Cherland noted, “There remains a significant gap between the number of qualified women candidates and the number of women faculty.”⁴¹ Similarly, Dr. Zhen Zeng, a professor in the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, states that while there are enough qualified women for leadership positions, their representation in faculty roles remains disproportionately low, especially in the humanities, psychology, and fine arts.⁴²

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These findings highlight a significant gap in the systems and community support needed to help women begin and subsequently sustain long-term careers in music. Addressing these inequities requires greater awareness and institutional change. For instance, schools and music organizations should actively work to challenge gendered assumptions by creating more inclusive and equitable environments for all musicians, regardless of gender. The impact of gender stereotypes—whether overt or covert—continues to limit opportunities for recognition and advancement of women. Gender discrimination affects the professional psyche of all women in music. Internalized bias, exacerbated by persistent marginalization, can lead to self-doubt, impostor syndrome,⁴³ or even a decision to leave the field entirely.

Community as Catalyst

“I realized that being kind, community-oriented, and supportive of your colleagues is not the short game, but it’s the best game.”

—Carrie Tennant⁴⁴

A strong sense of community in the workplace is essential for everyone, but especially for women, as it fosters confidence, expands networking and mentorship opportunities, and helps to challenge historic gender stereotypes. Within your own community, ask if you are practicing inclusive leadership by providing opportunities for women to collaborate, lead, and build camaraderie. In her *conduct(her)* interview, Amelia Nagoski addressed the importance of developing community in the workplace:

We’re meant to thrive in communities. We’re not built to do big things, or accomplish great things, alone. We’re meant to do them together. The only way we maintain well-being is by having a community that supports everyone’s well-being, by turning toward each other with kindness and compassion, and a sense of moral obligation to care for everyone else.⁴⁵

Fostering collaboration, improving employee well-being, and driving long-term sustainability by creating a supportive environment helps individuals feel valued and motivated to contribute to shared goals. If you are in a position of leadership, reflect on your current practices: Have you assessed your system of organization and leadership? How frequently does your team meet and have the opportunity to evaluate and survey their work environment anonymously?

Tucson Girls Chorus (TGC) artistic director, Marcela Molina, and Jess Edelbrock, director of operations, discussed how the organization created a maternity leave policy when one of their employees became pregnant.⁴⁶ TGC worked to develop best practices to support this employee, creating a parental leave policy that allowed the employee to remain with the organization. An action developed for one person benefits all. This is a model that all arts organizations can and should consider,

regardless of the gender of the policymakers. Workplace communities that prioritize flexibility, inclusivity, mutual respect, and support are key to fostering environments where women can thrive personally and professionally.

Moreover, developing a network exclusively for women is essential for fostering a supportive environment. Forums where women can share experiences, empower one another, and address challenges unique to their gender are integral. In season three of *conduct(her)*, Andrea Ramsey shared, “Tend and befriend, seek out a cohort of women who will be a true support. We will go further together.”⁴⁷ This quote encapsulates a recurring theme among our podcast guests and listeners: we need a network where women celebrate and uplift one another, creating a sense of community previously missing in the choral world. Other support networks for women include the organization Women in Choral Higher Education (WiCHEd), and Jocelyn Hagen’s podcast and composition series, *Compose Like a Girl*.

Historically, the misconception that only one woman can succeed at the top has led to competition rather than collaboration.⁴⁸ This stereotype has, unfortunately, perpetuated cycles where women have been discouraged from lifting each other up. Wilson reported a conversation in her article between two female friends where one remarked, “You can’t be a good band director and a good mom.”⁴⁹ Wilson noted that to the director, the comment was unfounded but still hurtful, and another respondent reported getting more “backlash” from women than men in the field.⁵⁰ Research from the National Institute of Health,⁵¹ Forbes,⁵² and the Harvard Business Review⁵³ validates the power of women supporting each other in the workplace. While both men and women benefit from a network of peers, women experience significantly higher rates of success and career longevity when a network of close female friends is present.

Women trying to rise up into leadership face cultural and systemic hurdles that make it harder for them to advance, such as unconscious bias. The study suggests that a way to overcome some of these hurdles is to form close connections with other women, who can share experiences from women who have been there, done that—from how to ask

for what you’re worth to bringing your unique talents to leadership.⁵⁴

Bonding over shared experiences and creating an environment for open dialogue helps improve individual well-being and strengthens our connections with each other. By addressing issues such as unconscious bias, microaggressions, pay gaps, and the challenges of balancing family and work, we can overcome these cultural hurdles. As Marin Alsop says, “I have never ascribed to the philosophy that it was tough for me so it will be tough for you. My philosophy is, ‘It was tough for me so that I could make it easier for you.’”⁵⁵ Conversations about the sustainability of women in the choral arts are necessary yet lacking. Leaders, particularly our male colleagues, must take action to create an environment where women can thrive long term in choral music, making the path easier for all who follow.

Develop Best Practices and Create Resources

In addition to fostering community, it is essential to develop best practices and create resources that support the long-term success of women in choral conducting. As discussed earlier, one significant barrier to women’s longevity in the field is an ongoing lack of representation. It is crucial to actively listen to the women in your space and ask how you can support them with task management, mental load, and workplace environment. Consider the following questions: Are you part of a committee, an event organizer, or the leader of a student club or chapter? When was the last time you assessed gender representation in your organization? How often do you program music by women composers? Small, deliberate actions to enhance representation—whether through inclusive programming, equitable task distribution, or supporting women in leadership—have the power to drive lasting change. By consistently making space for women in these roles, we enable them to see themselves in positions of influence and ensure their perspectives are valued and their contributions are recognized.

To truly increase the representation of women in choral conducting, the field must take concrete steps to

make the hiring process more equitable. One successful model comes from professional orchestras, where blind auditions—musicians perform from behind a screen—help ensure that the best candidate is selected based solely on their skill without the influence of implicit bias. While it may not be possible to fully replicate this process in choral conducting, there are ways to adapt it to reduce bias in the selection process. For example, one approach could be to redact personal identifiers (such as name, gender, institution, or city) during the initial stages of job interviews or when reviewing curricula vitae and biographies of potential candidates. This would allow decision-makers to focus entirely on qualifications, experience, and expertise rather than being unconsciously swayed by gender or other personal characteristics.

Music, as a field driven by empirical knowledge, often lacks archived resources that support the next generation. Resources are essential tools to foster growth, provide support, and create lasting change. If you see a need for a new resource, create it. The *conduct(her)* podcast began as a platform to share insights from accomplished leaders in the field, evolving into an organization that amplifies the voices of women from the present, past, and future. The podcast offers a growing collection of professional development resources including books, articles, fellow podcasts, and databases to support personal growth.⁵⁶ Ask yourself what you might contribute to the creation of resources in the future, build partnerships with colleagues, and remember that your experiences are unique and valued.

A Call to Action


“The data all point to persistent gender inequity in the choral conducting profession that has not been adequately addressed in any meaningful way.”⁵⁷

This is a call to action for all of us but especially those with the influence and resources to actively empower and champion women. Women will not have the opportunity to serve as long-term stakeholders until there is a meaningful shift in the status quo. The data

are clear: change is needed.

Be the advocate for others that you wish to have for yourself. Apply for jobs even if you do not meet all the requirements. Recognize that rejection is part of the process. Be confident in your worth and expertise and develop a strong network of support. If there is not a community in your workplace, find one online, attend conferences, or reach out to any of the organizations mentioned in this article. Ask questions of yourself and assess situations around you. Is discrimination impacting your career goals and trajectory? Have you seen positive shifts implemented in other organizations that could apply to your current workplace? If an opportunity is lacking, can you be an advocate for inclusivity and diversity on the podium? Educate yourself on your institution’s policies and determine areas where you can be a potential catalyst for change. Oftentimes language has not been changed because there has not been anyone to suggest an edit. Let us unite in our efforts to foster an environment that celebrates and champions the contributions of women in leadership, transforming our industry and ensuring that future generations of women in choral conducting can thrive without barriers.

“**Women will not have the opportunity to serve as long-term stakeholders until there is a meaningful shift in the status quo.**”

Now is the time for change and the time to engage in meaningful conversations about women in the field of choral music. It is easy to assume that what is being done is enough, but it is not. Assess your workplace climate, workload, and the distribution of tasks. Examine company hiring practices, compensation structures, and family leave policies. Use this feedback to adapt and create new policies that provide equitable opportunities for all. 

NOTES

- ¹ For the purposes of this article, the term *women* refers to anyone who identifies as a woman. In order to advance all women's equity, we must ensure that the needs, expertise, and rights of trans women, non-binary, and gender-diverse communities are reflected in our work. However, some of the studies cited in this article use the terms "male" and "female" in their data and do not mention the gender identity of participants.
- ² See: Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, "Discounting Our Colleagues: Gender Inequity in the Choral Conducting Profession," *Choral Journal* 63, no. 8 (2023): 8–21.
- ³ Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship, <https://takialsop.org/>.
- ⁴ Chorus America Member Directory, quoted in Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, "Discounting Our Colleagues."
- ⁵ Elisabeth Rogers Cherland, "You Just Gotta Be Great: Narratives of Experience from Two Women Conducting in the Lutheran Collegiate Choral Context (Doctoral diss., University of Washington, 2019), iii.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ⁷ Barbara Hampton Renton and Adrienne Fried Block, *The Status of Women in College Music, 1976-77: A Statistical Study* (College Music Society, 1980), x.
- ⁸ Joan Cantoni Conlon, ed., *Wisdom, Wit, and Will: Women Choral Conductors on Their Art* (GIA, 2009), 206. Data provided by the national College Music Society office, September 30, 2020. As quoted in Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, "Discounting Our Colleagues: Gender Inequity in the Choral Conducting Profession," *Choral Journal* 63, no. 8 (2023): 8–21.
- ⁹ Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, interview by Kyra Stahr and McKenna Stenson, *conduct(her)*, podcast audio, May 13, 2022. "While great strides have been made for women on the podium, quantitative data and anecdotal evidence clearly show that movement toward equity has been at a standstill for the past decade and a half," Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, "Discounting Our Colleagues," 19.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ Roland J. Kushner, *Choral Conductors Today: An Updated Report, a Comparison of 2017 and 2005 Findings* (Chorus America, 2017). Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- ¹² Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, "Discounting Our Colleagues," 9.
- ¹³ Patricia O'Toole, "A Missing Chapter from Choral Methods Books: How Choirs Neglect Girls," *Choral Journal* 39, no. 5 (December 1, 1998): 8–20.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ¹⁶ Claudia Bryan, "Women choral conductors in the academy: A case study" (Doctoral diss., Auburn University, 2016), 45.
- ¹⁷ Season one guests were selected by the co-hosts. Listeners can submit suggestions for future guests on the *conduct(her)* website.
- ¹⁸ Mary Murphy, interview by Shankar Vedantam, *Hidden Brain*, podcast audio, "Innovation 2.0: Multiplying the Growth Mindset," May 6, 2024.
- ¹⁹ William McLean, "Representation in Choral Music: An Examination of Choral Literature Performed by All-State Mixed Choirs 2000-2020," *Choral Journal* 63, no. 8 (2023): 22–38.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ Ellen Francis, Helier Cheung, and Miriam Berger, "How does the U.S. Compare to Other Countries on Paid Parental Leave?," *Washington Post*, November 11, 2021, accessed August 1, 2024.
- ²² Karen Jones and Alan Floyd, "Women academics experiences of maternity leave in the neoliberal university: Unmasking governmentality," *Gender, Work & Organization* 31, no. 1 (2023): 92–114, doi: 10.1111/gwao.13059
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ Renee L. Wilson, "Batons and Babies: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study of Mothers Who Are Band Directors," *Texas Music Education Research Association* (2014): 52.
- ²⁵ Eve Rodsky, *Fair Play: A Game-Changing Solution for When You Have Too Much to Do* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2021), 35.
- ²⁶ Updated 2024 statistic from the ChoralPlanet website by Kyra Stahr and McKenna Stenson: 1. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Andrea Solya; 2. Michigan State University, Sandra Snow; 3. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Mariana Farah; 4. Louisiana State University, Alissa Rowe; 5. University of South Carolina, Alicia Walker; 6. James Madison University, Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy; 7. West Virginia University, Kym Scott; 8. George Mason University, Lisa Billingham; 9. University of Colorado Boulder, Coreen Duffy; 10. University of Missouri-Kansas City, Jennifer Sengin; 11. University of Arizona, Elizabeth Schauer; 12. University of Southern California, Tram Sparks.

- ²⁷ Jocelyne Gafner, “The Self-Advocacy Gap for Women (Plus How to Overcome It),” *Indeed.com*, May 31, 2024, <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/women-self-advocacy>.
- ²⁸ Caroline Castrillon, “How Women Can Embrace Self-Advocacy at Work,” *Forbes*, June 21, 2023.
- ²⁹ Eve Rodsky, *Fair Play*, 36.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ “microaggression (n.),” in *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2023.
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- ³⁵ Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, “Discounting Our Colleagues.”
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- ³⁷ Kimberly VanWeelden, “Demographic Study of Choral Programs and Conductors in Four-Year Institutions in the United States,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 156 (2003): 21.
- ³⁸ Renee L. Wilson, “Batons and Babies,” 52.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
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- ⁴¹ Elisabeth Rogers Cherland, “You Just Gotta Be Great: Narratives of Experience from Two Women Conducting in the Lutheran Collegiate Choral Context” (Doctoral diss., University of Washington, 2019), 20.
- ⁴² Zhen Zeng, “The Myth of the Glass Ceiling: Evidence from a Stock-Flow Analysis of Authority Attainment,” *Social Science Research* 40 no. 1 (2011): 312–25.
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- ⁴⁴ Carrie Tennant, interview by Kyra Stahr and McKenna Stenson, *conduct(her)*, podcast audio, January 24, 2023.
- ⁴⁵ Amelia Nagoski, interview by Kyra Stahr and McKenna Stenson, *conduct(her)*, podcast audio, July 15, 2024.
- ⁴⁶ Jess Edelbrock and Dr. Marcela Molina, interview by Kyra Stahr and McKenna Stenson, *conduct(her)*, podcast audio, February 28, 2024.
- ⁴⁷ Andrea Ramsey, interview by Kyra Stahr and McKenna Stenson, *conduct(her)*, podcast audio, April 17, 2024.
- ⁴⁸ Shawn Andrews, “Why Women Don’t Always Support Other Women,” *Forbes*, December 10, 2021. <http://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2020/01/21/why-women-dont-always-support-other-women/>.
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- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ The National Institutes of Health Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; “Women Supporting Women in the Workplace, Part 1 of 2: Why We Can go Further Together.” www.edi.nih.gov/the-EDI-pulse-blog/women-supporting-women-workplace-part-1-2-why-women-can-go-further-together
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- ⁵³ Brian Uzzi, “Research: Men and Women Need Different Kinds of Networks to Succeed,” *Harvard Business Review*. February 25, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/02/research-men-and-women-need-different-kinds-of-networks-to-succeed>.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁵ Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship, <https://takialsop.org/>.
- ⁵⁶ www.conductor.com/resources. In addition to compiling these resources for women and women allies, and fostering dialogue for change, we’ve developed opportunities to support personal and career growth such as internships, composition contests, a choral series, and employment opportunities tied to the podcast’s mission.
- ⁵⁷ Sierra Farquhar-Wulff, “Discounting Our Colleagues,” 19.