**An examination of the challenges faced by female brass musicians in Britain, 1870-1920**

**Submitted September 2021**

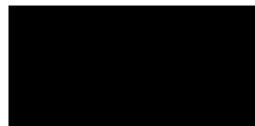
**Sarah Crowe**

***A thesis submitted to the University of Gloucestershire in accordance with the requirements for the degree MA by Research in the School of Education and Humanities***

# DECLARATION

***DECLARATION: This dissertation is the product of my own work and does not infringe the ethical principles set out in the university's Handbook for Research Ethics.***

***I agree that it may be made available for reference via any and all media by any and all means now known or developed in the future at the discretion of the university***



***Sarah Crowe***

***September 2021***

doi: 10.46289/44TR55KS

# ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges facing female brass players in Britain between 1870 and 1920. In order to do this, it analyses several different areas of the lives of these women including their everyday experiences living in a patriarchal society, the difficulties of cumbersome Victorian clothing, and the judgement and scorn aimed at women who performed on the public stage. It also considers the upheaval brought about by the Industrial Revolution which created uncertainty around women's 'place' and increasing freedoms. By bringing together these separate strands of scholarship concerning women and female musicians, this thesis explains why female brass players emerged in such low numbers. Essentially, this study shows that the set of challenges faced by female brass musicians was uniquely constraining and difficult to overcome, and when examined in combination as they have been here, they comprehensively demonstrate why so few women took up these instruments at this time.

Of equal importance is the discussion surrounding those few musicians who did manage to break through the prejudice and perform. What has been revealed through this research and analysis of case studies is much commonality in their experiences in terms of familial or group support, and the embracing of wearing looser-fitting uniforms and costumes to circumnavigate the impractical clothing of the day. This study shows that women faced limitations in every area of their lives at this time. However, it also reveals a small number of female brass musicians were able to overcome these hurdles with support, courage, and sartorial imagination.

**Word count 30,949**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family and friends for their continued encouragement and faith in me, and also for their vital proof-reading skills! My husband Neil was an invaluable help in formatting and helping to add in the numerous images. Also, I really appreciated the unwavering support I received from my supervisors Dr. Vicky Randall and Dr. Christian O’Connell. Both were unfailingly quick to respond to my many questions, and the feedback I received from them both was absolutely invaluable. I really felt they believed in me and my work, and constantly pushed and challenged me to produce my best possible writing. I absolutely could not have completed this project without them.

# CONTENTS

**Introduction ..... 1**

Literature review ..... 2

Methodology ..... 10

The structure of this thesis ..... 14

**CHAPTER I: 'The more things change, the more they remain the same' ..... 17**

Acts, laws and ways in which women's lives were positively impacted at this time ..... 18

An overview of the everyday lives of women in patriarchal fin de siècle Britain ..... 27

'If you compete with us, we shall not marry you': women seen as competition and threat ..... 31

The application of 'New Science' in the restraint of women and female musicians ..... 37

**CHAPTER II: Challenges faced specifically by female musicians and performers on the 'public' stage ..... 45**

Societal reactions to, and expectations of, women who wished to perform in public ..... 45

The sexualization of female musicians and the voyeuristic nature of male audiences and concert reviews ..... 57

What was so scandalous about a woman blowing a brass instrument? ..... 66

**CHAPTER III: The constraining nature of Victorian and Edwardian women's clothing, and why it was not conducive to brass playing ..... 73**

Restriction of women's freedoms and the formation of the Rational Dress Society ..... 74

The physical dangers of restrictive fashions ..... 92

Women's responses to the practice of corset wearing ..... 103

The effects of constrictive clothing specifically on female brass players, their breathing, and lung-capacity ..... 110

An examination of the good breathing techniques required for brass playing, and the challenges they would have presented to corset-wearing women ..... 117

**CHAPTER IV: The ones who got away: women who became brass musicians against the odds ..... 125**

Musical women from musical families: the importance of familial support ..... 125

Opportunities afforded to female musicians in the areas of music for worship and patriotism ..... 146

Uniforms and costumes: ways in which women dressed less restrictively ..... 154

**Conclusion ..... 164**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 169**

Primary sources ..... 169

Primary sources: images ..... 171

Secondary sources ..... 182

# LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: *Lady Harberton* ..... 22

Figure 1.2: Ridel, L., *Last Flowers* (1900) ..... 29

Figure 1.3: *Armorel of Lyonesse: A Romance of Today* (1890) ..... 36

Figure 1.4: *Craniology measure.* ..... 39

Figure 1.5: *Image showing sections of the skull corresponding to different mental traits* (1830s) ..... 40

Figure 1.6: Blumenbach, J. F., *Race classification of skulls* ..... 40

Figure 1.7: *Jean-Martin Charcot demonstrating hysteria in a hypnotised patient at the Salpêtrière.* Etching by A. Lurat, 1888, after P.A.A. Brouillet, 1887. ..... 42

Figure 2.1: *Multiples of increase in selected professional groups, England and Wales 1861 - 1911* ..... 50

Figure 2.2: *Ratios of Male/Female Actors/Musicians, England and Wales 1861 - 1911* ..... 50

Figure 2.3: Hughes, A., *The Home Quartet: Mrs Vernon Lushington and Her Children* (1883) ..... 52

Figure 2.4: Long, E., *The Proposal* (1868) ..... 59

Figure 2.5: Alma-Tadema, L., *Pleading* (1876) ..... 60

Figure 2.6: *Trade card for Ball's Corsets* (1880s) ..... 61

Figure 2.7: F. S. Muschamp, *Scarborough Spa at Night* (1879) ..... 61

Figure 2.8: du Maurier, G., *The Fair Sext-tett* ..... 63

Figure 2.9: *Bugler Girl* (1908) ..... 69

Figure 2.10: *Girl Blowing Chanter* ..... 69

Figure 2.11: *Petticoat Quartette* ..... 72

Figure 2.12: *Domestic Joys of Parents Whose Daughters take part in Women's Orchestras* (1865) and Figure 2.13: *The Serpent starting to Tempt the Women Once Again* (1865) .......... 72

Figure 3.1: *Metal corset* .......... 75

Figure 3.2: *The Pretty Housemaid Corset* .......... 77

Figure 3.3: *Sporting costumes* .......... 78

Figure 3.4: *Advertisement for child's corset* .......... 79

Figure 3.5: *Madam Warren corset advertisement* .......... 80

Figure 3.6: *W. B. corset advertisement* .......... 81

Figure 3.7: *High-waisted dress* .......... 82

Figure 3.8: *Crinoline dress* .......... 84

Figure 3.9: *Crinoline cage* (c.1860) .......... 84

Figure 3.10: *Fashion plate,* from *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1865) .......... 85

Figures 3.11 and 3.12: *Crinolette and Bustle* .......... 86

Figure 3.13: *A portrait, possibly of Libby Miller, in her pantaloons* .......... 89

Figure 3.14: *Pope Manufacturing Company bicycle advertisement* .......... 90

Figure 3.15: Dickinson, Dr. R. L., *Diagrams published by Dickinson to illustrate liver deformity with tight-lacing* (1887) .......... 93

Figure 3.16: *The Mode and the Martyrs,* from *Puck*, (c.1877) .......... 94

Figure 3.17: Baer, G., *Fine taille, horribles detales*, from Witowski, Dr. G. J., *Tetoniana*, (1898) .......... 95

Figure 3.18: *The Man and the Woman of Tomorrow* from *Les Elegants*, (1904) .......... 95

Figure 3.19 von Sommerring, S. T., *Diagrams of corseted and un-corseted bodies* (1793) .......... 98

Figure 3.20: Royal College of Surgeons, *Diagram of the rib cage* .......... 99

Figure 3.21: Royal College of Surgeons, *Contents of the Thorax and Abdomen* ..... 99

Figure 3.22*:* O'Followell*,* Dr. L., *Radiographic operating table and equipment* ....... 100

Figure 3.23: O'Followell*,* Dr. L., X*-ray of the thorax, Radiography of the line corset (front) and X-ray of the arched corset in front (back*) .......................................... 101

Figure 3.24: O'Followell*,* Dr. L., *Radioscopy drawing* ............................................ 102

Figure 3.25: Gau*,* C. R., *19" and 13" waist circumferences*.................................... 103

Figure 3.26: *Advertisement for the W. B. Reduso corset*, (c. 1900) ....................... 106

Figure 3.27: *Advertisement for straight-front corset,* (c. 1903) ............................... 108

Figure 3.28: *Princess Louise, Duchess of Fife, at her Scottish home Mar Lodge* (1889) ......................................................................................................... 109

Figure 3.29: Bulwer*,* J., *The Artificiall Changling* (1653)......................................... 111

Figure 3.30: Carjat, E., *'Alphonse Sax Junior transforms himself into a sylphide, the better to convert the fair sex to the holy principals of morality and brass instruments!'*, (1862) ....................................................................................... 111

Figure 3.31: Wilberforce-Smith*,* W., *A Comparison of Lung Capacities (*1888)...... 113

Figure 3.32: Dickinson*,* Dr. R. L., *Pressure bag under corset with bulb and gauge'* (1887) ......................................................................................................... 114

Figure 3.33: King and Showers, *Diaphragm Positions During Inspiration and Expiration* ........................................................................................................ 116

Figure 3.34: Ridgeon, J., *Diagrams of diaphragm and rib muscles* ........................ 119

Figure 3.35: *Miss Incorrect Breath (inflated)* ......................................................... 121

Figure 3.36: *Costal, Diaphragmatic, Inflation and Deflation* .................................. 122

Figure 3.37: *Correct Chin Contraction*.................................................................... 123

Figure 4.1: *The Bramusa Family Band*.................................................................. 127

Figure 4.2: *The Seven Bramusas: Music Afloat* ..................................................... 128

Figure 4.3: *The Seven Bramusas*............................................................................ 129

Figure 4.4: *Dan, the Intoxicated Canine playbill* ...................................................... 130

Figure 4.5: *The Shepard Family Band*.................................................................... 131

Figure 4.6: *The Shepard Family Band on strings and banjos*................................. 132

Figure 4.7: *The Shepard Family Band 2*................................................................. 133

Figure 4.8: *Vintage image of unknown brass-playing child* .................................... 133

Figure 4.9: *Gertie and Flossie Edgcombe: the world's youngest cornet and violin duettists*.................................................................................................................. 134

Figure 4.10: *Florrie Horsfield*.................................................................................. 135

Figure 4.11: *Greta Kent*........................................................................................... 136

Figure 4.12: *The Kent Family poster* ...................................................................... 138

Figure 4.13: *Nellie Baldwin*...................................................................................... 139

Figure 4.14: *The Anglo Saxon Ladies' Band* (c.1880) ............................................ 139

Figure 4.15: *Aunt Hilda*............................................................................................ 140

Figure 4.16: *Grandfather Kent*................................................................................. 140

Figure 4.17: *Greta's mother and aunts, brass section, unknown orchestra* (c.1900) ................................................................................................................................ 141

Figure 4.18: *The Biseras* ......................................................................................... 142

Figure 4.19: 'Abdy's Canine Circus', *Leicester Evening Post,* 17 September 1906 143

Figure 4.20: 'The London Coliseum', *Music Hall and Theatre Review* 10 May 1908 ................................................................................................................................ 143

Figure 4.21: *The Biseras 2* ...................................................................................... 145

Figure 4.22: *The Austral Lasses* ............................................................................ 149

Figure 4.23: *Home from the trenches!* from *The Social Gazette* (6 January 1917) 150

Figure 4.24: *The gentler sex* from *The Illustrated London News* (21 November 1914) ..... 152
Figure 4.25: *The Church Nursing and Ambulance Brigade* ..... 153
Figure 4.26: *Salvation Army uniform* ..... 154
Figure 4.27: *Helen May Butler* ..... 155
Figure 4.28: *Military-style dresses* (1885 and 1888-9) ..... 156
Figure 4.29: *Cora Youngblood Corson* ..... 156
Figure 4.30: *Louisa Helm* ..... 157
Figure 4.31: *Mary Munro* ..... 157
Figure 4.32: *Cora Reiter* ..... 157
Figure 4.33: *The Biseras in costume* ..... 158
Figure 4.34: *The Seven Bramusas in costume* ..... 158
Figure 4.35: *Mattie Beding, the 'Cowgirl Cornettist'* ..... 159
Figure 4.36: *Cora Youngblood Corson – Cherokee costume* ..... 160
Figure 4.37: *Rose Sanderman* ..... 161
Figure 4.38: *Rose Bower* ..... 161

# Introduction

This thesis presents the reasons why female brass players emerged in Britain in such low numbers between the years 1870–1920, by analysing in detail a combination of both the lives of women in Britain during this period and the challenges faced specifically by female musicians. Viewed together, it is evident that the hurdles faced by female brass musicians in particular were both unique, and uniquely constraining. However, this study also demonstrates that there were a small number of women who 'broke through' to become brass musicians, and that in many cases there are at least some areas of commonality in their experiences and some of the methods they employed to overcome the challenges they faced.

One aim of this study is to examine the hostility, sexual objectification, judgement and even ridicule faced by female musicians, and it is demonstrated that these reactions were magnified when it came to women who wished to take up brass instruments. Mouth instruments, with their phallic connotations and potential for distorting the facial features, were viewed as being particularly shocking for women to play. In addition to this, women were expected not to venture into the public world of work (either as professional musicians or in other capacities), but to remain in the domestic, private sphere. This was still a deeply patriarchal era.[1] Therefore, the everyday experience of living at this time is considered through the analysis of case studies, as women entering the workplace came to be viewed as competition and

[1] The concept of Britain being a patriarchal society is a strand of feminist theory which is woven throughout this thesis. Walby demonstrates its appropriateness in this context, defining it as 'a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women' emphasising, in the way it is discussed here, that it was the societal 'structure which was in place in order to attempt this'. Sylvia Walby, 'Theorising Patriarchy', *Sociology*, V23 N2, (1989), p. 214.

threat to male employment and were increasingly encouraged out of employment and back into the home.

Women were expected to wear cumbersome, or even dangerous fashions. This thesis presents research showing that garments such as the corset were particularly challenging for female brass players to have worn while attempting to employ the good breathing techniques required for playing brass instruments. The numerous medical studies into corset wearing examined here, alongside analysis of good breathing techniques featured in leading brass playing pedagogy, clearly highlight these difficulties. Ultimately, many female musicians overcame these challenges by embracing the use of potentially more loose-fitting and comfortable costumes or uniforms for performing on stage, and their experiences are presented in this study. These different areas of discussion have been brought together to present a full and compelling picture of the unique set of circumstances faced by musical women of the era. In combination they help to explain why female brass players emerged in such low numbers, and highlight what it was that the women who did manage to become brass players had in common, such as familial and group support and the embracing of costumes and uniforms for on-stage performance

## Literature review

The idea for this thesis on turn of the century female brass musicians came about initially from some early research on the origins of the brass band movement in Britain. Women were involved in almost non-existent numbers, and, upon further inspection, appear to still be involved in much lower numbers than men, and rarely in principal seats.[2] Volumes by brass band academics Roy Newsome, Violet and

[2] According to the websites of the top three ranked brass bands in Britain, the current membership is

Geoffrey Brand, Trevor Herbert and Arthur Taylor are all consulted here and are still the most highly-regarded and widely used resources regarding the history of brass bands - a key genre which has been examined in this study of women's brass-playing experiences.[3] All books yield almost identical results – no sections or chapters of women in the movement, no mentions in the index, and generally very few references indeed.[4] Even today, women largely appear to be precluded from playing brass instruments, taking them up in a fraction of the numbers of their male counterparts. The reasons for this are analysed in Anthony E. Kemp's study *The Musical Temperament*, which discusses the fact that there is still a 'gendering' of instruments which happens to children from a young age.[5]

An examination of changing social conditions in patriarchal nineteenth century Britain explains why this was a time of the emergence of women's rights, and which also witnessed the emergence on the public stage of a small (but gradually increasing) number of female musicians.[6] Ultimately, it became clear that one of the initial, most basic reasons that so few female musicians emerged at this time was due to the pressures and constraints surrounding women living within this male-dominated society. Literature in this area such as *Suffer and be Still* by Martha Vicinus *and The*

---

divided in the following numbers: Cory – nine women out of thirty members, Brighouse – five women out of twenty-five members, and Black Dyke – six women out of twenty-nine members. <https://coryband.com/>, <https://brighouseandrastrick.com/> and <https://www.blackdykeband.co.uk/> [all accessed 16 June 2021].

[3] The books consulted were: Roy Newsome, *The Modern Brass Band From the 1930s to the New Millennium* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2007), Violet and Geoffrey Brand, *Brass Bands in the Twentieth Century* (Letchworth, Egon Publishers Ltd., 1979), Trevor Herbert (ed.), *Bands: The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991) and Arthur R Taylor, *Brass Bands* (St Albans: Granada Publishing Ltd., 1979).

[4] Any mentions of women were almost entirely regarding their inclusion of the 'youth bands' which began to spring up from the 1960s onwards.

[5] Anthony E. Kemp, *The Musical Temperament: Psychology and Personality of Musicians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 115.

[6] Some of the emerging acts and laws to benefit women will be discussed in chapter one.

*Victorian Woman* by Duncan Crow outline the enormous pressure on, and societal expectations of, nineteenth century women.[7]

The reasons for the significance of the time period 1870-1920 in women's music history are discussed in chapter one. Feminist writers specialising in Victorian and Edwardian music culture which are referenced here regarding this point include Paula Gillett, who examines the steep rise in the number female wind (which term includes the brass family of instruments) players finally beginning, around this time, to gain access to training and tuition at some of the top conservatories.[8] The growth in numbers of female composers from the Late Romantic period of classical music (1850-1900) through to the Early 20th century (1900-1960) who emerged as a result of gaining access to this professional instruction is also clear to see.[9] Gillett discusses female musicians and composers increasingly benefitting from good-quality instruction and teaching, along with the fact that this increase in the numbers of women being trained led inevitably to a growth in the number of professional female instrumentalists, composers and conductors. She also points out, however, that due to the continued lack of opportunities for women in established orchestras which is discussed in chapter one, this training led to what she describes as a 'glut' of talented, professionally trained women musicians, who often set up their own female-only ensembles in order that they gain playing or conducting experience, or that their compositions be performed.[10] Many of these ensembles accepted less

---

[7] Martha Vicinus, *Suffer and be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973) and Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971).

[8] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914 "Encroaching on All Men's Privileges"* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), p. 193.

[9] Oxford Music on-line, *Women Composers by Time Period* at: <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/page/women-composers-by-time-period> [accessed 14 February 2021].

[10] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914,* p. 190.

prestigious engagements such as at tea rooms and restaurants, where they pay was almost universally lower than male musicians would have received, but did at least mean that women were increasingly able to carve out careers in the music profession.[11]

Sophie Fuller's works are also consulted regarding the changing professional status of female musicians at this time. She examines the importance of the Society of Women Musicians which was formed in 1911 and is discussed in chapter one, for instance.[12] This is an example of the type of organisation which was vital in order to enabling women to organise together and support one another.[13] Fuller is another feminist music academic who discusses the importance of increasing opportunities for training and development in the emergence of women embarking on professional careers in music during this era, confirming the importance of this time period in terms of this study.[14] Further to this, Katharine Ellis is referenced in both chapters two and three, regarding her work on the establishment of a ladies' brass band by Adolphe Sax in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[15] She comments on the importance of his commitment to offering training and instrument tuition to women who would not have had the opportunity before, as well as societal reactions to this group of female musicians. Ellis is also helpful in providing clarity regarding the term the 'male gaze' when applied to Victorian and Edwardian female musicians and their audiences. She presents evidence of it in action in the *Punch* cartoon *The Fair Sex-*

---

[11] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914,* p. 192.
[12] Sophie Fuller, *The Society of Women Musicians* <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-music/articles/the-society-of-women-musicians> [accessed 2 July 2020], p. 1.
[13] Sophie Fuller, 'Women in Composition before the Second World War' in: Laura Hamer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Women in Music Since 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 13.
[14] Ibid., p. 3.
[15] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax: Women, Brass-Playing and the Instrument Trade in 1860s Paris', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, V124 N2 (1999), p. 236.

*tette* (see figure 1.3). Ellis further describes the male gaze 'feasting itself' on the the band put together by Sax, and discusses 'the voyeuristic potential of women brass-players remain[ing] undiminished'.[16] This gaze and the voyeuristic nature of audiences is analysed in greater detail in chapter two.

Phyllis Weliver enriches discussion on professional musicians and their evolving status at this time, producing a list of those active, and who taught or could be considered role models, as well as the social class they belonged to and their family situation.[17] She also describes professional singers (who had been viewed as somewhat 'disreputable' in parts of Europe due to their links to the stage which is discussed in detail in chapter one) beginning to see public perceptions of them and their choice of career changing during this time period.[18] Weliver, too, recognises the importance of educational reform and the increasing availability of tuition to women of all classes as being the catalyst which enabled more women to choose to enter the world of professional music between the years 1870 and 1920.[19]

As has been mentioned, the great majority of women in Victorian and Edwardian Britain who considered a career as a professional musician, or even wishing to make music at an amateur level, faced inequality, exclusion, objectification, opposition and even scorn. Understanding the day-to-day challenges faced by female musicians is

---

[16] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 234. Stephen Kern defines the gaze as used in this context as 'a term I apply strictly to a way of looking that serves an erotic purpose […] men own the gaze: women are passive erotic objects, while men are active erotic subjects', and further explains of his definition of this term, more usually used with regard to art works, that 'over twenty-five years variants of that basic argument have been put to use in studies of art, cinema and theatre'. Stephen Kern, *Eyes of love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels 1840-1900* London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1996), p. 10. 'The 'male gaze' in a musical context is analysed further in chapter two and both Gillett and Ellis make multiple references to the use of the term in a musical setting (see for example Gillett, pp 7, 106-8,110, 111-15, 177 and 185 and Ellis p. 234).

[17] Phyllis Weliver, *Musical Women in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.41-2.

[18] Ibid., p. 47.

[19] Phyllis Weliver, *Musical Women in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900*, pp. 27-28.

vital, and this thesis draws together this knowledge with discussions surrounding the societal limitations on women, the fact that women musicians began to be regarded as a 'threat', and the often scandalized reaction women received when they announced that they wished to stray into the male-dominated arena of the 'public stage'. As Maura Goodrich Dunst suggests, genius and musical talent were still viewed as exclusively male-traits.[20] Karin Pendle and Cyril Ehrlich's volumes both outline these many barriers in the way of women in terms of performance, such as the focus on women's looks in performance reviews, lack of performance opportunities in mixed-sex settings and judgement surrounding their performance or composition output purely linked to their gender.[21] As well as highlighting the importance of musical tuition and education for women mentioned above, Lucy Green also enriches this discussion on the difficulties women faced in becoming musical performers in her book, by outlining the myriad reasons why women blowing mouth instruments was seen as particularly shocking at this time, for example the potential for facial distortions or looking generally 'indecorous' while playing.[22]

Crow also touches upon the restrictive nature of Victorian and Edwardian women's clothing, which is a rich and untapped area of research.[23] The constraining nature of items such as the corset would, on top of any societal and performance limitations, have hampered the efforts of any woman wishing to take up a brass or woodwind instrument at this time. This is an area which has received little academic attention, yet the link between female brass players emerging in lower numbers than

[20] Maura Goodrich Dunst, "*Such Genius as Hers": Music in New Woman Fiction* PhD thesis University of Cardiff (2013), p. 26.
[21] Karin Pendle, *Women and Music: A History* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1991) and Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century* (Wotton-under-Edge: Clarendon Press, 1985).
[22] Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[23] Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman.*

musicians on other instruments, and the restrictive and physically damaging effects of these items of clothing (particularly of the corset on the middle and upper torso and ability to breathe) is worthy of further investigation. The medical journals mentioned below clarify the dangers of corset wearing, as did the more modern study by Collen Ruby Gau (1998).[24]

The difficulties which Victorian and Edwardian dress would have caused female brass players are further explained in the study by Erkal Melis Mulazimoglu, who outlines the physical damage caused by these items, as well as providing a detailed history of them.[25] There was also much commentary on clothing practices of the time, such as the *British Medical Journal* (1879) which discusses death from tight-lacing and *Le Corset,* (1908) by Dr. Ludovic O'Followell, which contains x-ray photographs of women's bodies damaged by the wearing of tight corsets.[26]

The constraining nature of clothing and corsets is further discussed in literature such as the volume by Lucy Johnston, which was produced by the Victoria and Albert Museum and contains photographs of clothing and details of the construction of various garments.[27] Further to this, Alison Gernsheim's book contains a multitude of contemporary photographs of women wearing the types of dresses discussed in this thesis and some pictures from both of these volumes have been reproduced, where necessary within this study, to demonstrate the challenges associated with these fashions.[28] Valerie Steele outlines the historical and cultural significance of the corset

---

[24] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives of Corseting and Two Physiologic Studies With Reenactors*, PhD, Iowa State University, 1998.

[25] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset and Gendered Body in Social and Literary Landscapes', *European Journal of Language and Literature Studies* V3 N3 (2017).

[26] British Medical Journal V1 N954 (April 1879) p. 559 <https://jstor.org/stable/25250678> [accessed 16 April 2020] and Dr. L. O'Followell, *Le Corset* (1909). <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Le_Corset_%281908%29> [accessed 16 April 2020].

[27] Lucy Johnston, *19th-Century Fashion in Detail* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2016).

[28] Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion a Photographic Survey* (New York: Dover, 1981).

in her book, and also touches upon the dangers of wearing them, such as disruption to beathing and organ displacement.[29] The importance of case studies in lending weight to the argument regarding the impracticality of women's clothing at the centre of this thesis is also recognised in this section on fashion. *The Rational Dress Society Gazette* (1889) is referenced here, along with first-hand accounts of women's experiences of actually wearing these items of clothing such as the experiences of Charles Darwin's granddaughter, Gwen Raverat.[30]

Several widely used brass playing manuals discuss good breathing technique, the most notable being that by John Ridgeon, which teaches the best breathing techniques required by brass players.[31] Although it was published over forty years ago, this is still a revered and much referenced tome in the world of brass bands. This literature shows the physicality of the breathing required for successful brass playing. The aim has been to demonstrate what a mammoth challenge the wearing of these garments would have been for female brass musicians, and how their breathing would have been hampered, particularly by the wearing of corsets.

This thesis, through a combination of extensive case study analysis, examination of the experiences of women and performers, and exploration of the impractical clothing of the day, links together the current, separate strands of scholarship discussed above to form a cohesive and compelling argument outlining the unique set of challenges which female brass players faced, and some of the steps they took in order to overcome them. Furthermore, by referencing feminist academics with

---

[29] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

[30] *The Rational Dress Society Gazette* (1889) <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-rational-dress-societys-gazette> [accessed 25 April 2020] and Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece* fourth edition (London: Faber and Faber, 2002).

[31] John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It. A Book of Lip Building and Flexibility Exercises* (London: Belwin Mills Music, 1976).

specialisms in musical culture and women's musical education such as Weliver, Gilllett, Ellis, Fuller and Green this study confirms the importance of the years 1880-1920 in women's musical history, as they discuss the growing numbers of female musicians who were at last able to consider careers in the music profession because of increasing access to good quality training and tuition. This research elaborates on and enriches what is documented of women's experiences by teasing out narratives of female brass players of the era, which can tend to have been given less attention academically.[32]

## Methodology

Research for this study involved qualitative textual, pictorial and documentary analysis. Biographical materials and individual case-studies are also referenced in order to examine the experiences of the small number of female musicians who managed to 'break through' despite the odds stacked against them. For example, Greta Kent's *A View from the Bandstand* details her experiences as a female musician in turn of the century Britain, and includes many photographs, which are reproduced here as clear examples of a female group embracing the wearing of costume for performance.[33] Analysis of her memoirs revealed numerous references to Greta's brass-playing mother and paternal aunts, the latter of whom were members of a successful touring female brass group, 'The Biseras' who were active in the first decade of the twentieth century.[34] Through further researching this group (and others) in the British Newspaper Archives, it was clear that many of their

---

[32] For example, Gillett begins a discussion on the women of the Salvation Army and the movement's efforts towards gender equality in its ranks but falls short of detailing any of the women musicians involved. This is just one area of women's music history which this study enhances through its discussion on Salvation Army women and those in other worship bands in chapter four. Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, 1987-1914, p. 200.

[33] Greta Kent, *A View from the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983).

[34] Greta Kent, *A View from the Bandstand*, p. 39.

playing careers were long and successful. However, the voices of players such as those discussed in Kent's memoirs are rarely heard and are in danger of being forgotten, which is why it has been so vital to include and examine them in this study in such detail. Discussion surrounding this group was part of an examination of what linked the few women who did forge successful careers as brass players at this time. Areas of commonality which emerged included the importance and prevalence of familial relationships, and the costumes that these family groups often wore on stage.

Female memberships of the Salvation Army and other religious organisations are also examined, as some organisations encouraged their members to take up brass instruments, particularly during the First World War.[35] Photographs of these groups have also been included, where possible, to demonstrate the wearing of practical and less cumbersome uniforms for performing and marching. The majority of these materials have been reviewed on-line, due to the Covid pandemic. This has been achieved by applying the appropriate archival techniques required for accessing on-line archives and digitised documents, and being mindful of the possibility for limitations in terms of available documents, an awareness of the potential for documents having been tampered with during the digitization process, and difficulty accessing archives generally at the current time.

Concepts of Feminist Theory such as Patriarchy and Separate Spheres have also been applied to this exploration of the experiences of female musicians and women generally during this period, as they were the most appropriate and useful theory

[35] Trevor Herbert (ed.), Bands: *The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, p. 49. What is discussed further in chapter four is both the wearing of less-restrictive uniforms, and the fact that, crucially, these women were not playing for themselves, but as a form of worship.

strands to apply when addressing subject matter of this nature. Feminism and Feminist Theory are, of course, collective terms, which encompass an assortment of areas of women's lives, but the concepts of Patriarchy and Separate Spheres are entwined throughout and fundamental to this thesis, and are examined in particular detail in chapter one.[36]

By way of acknowledging the limitations of a study of this nature (and by the very nature of the subject material) it is worth noting that this is, by and large, a study into women from two distinct social classes. The first, as discussed by Phyllis Weliver in chapter one, are those from the upper classes who came from wealthier backgrounds and had access to music, tuition and instruments. [37] Crucially, women at this level of society were generally encouraged to learn music in some form in order to add to their arsenal of social accomplishments and seduction techniques. What is further examined in this chapter is the choice of instrument which these women were expected to take up.[38] Due to the 'un-genteel' perception of brass instruments as a choice for women to play, women from the upper classes would have been much less likely (although there are always exceptions to the rule) to have selected them as their instrument of choice.[39]

Musical skill was also valued and invested in, in terms of time, rather than financially, by the second group of women discussed here - women involved in the family bands examined in chapter four, who broke through to become performers. It can be seen that brass instruments feature much more frequently as a choice for middle or lower-

[36] Mitchell, Juliet and Anne Oakley (ed.), *What is Feminism* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1992), p. 173.
[37] Phyllis Weliver, *Musical Women in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 1.
[38] Chapter two outlines what would have been the more suitable choices for women – for example piano or singing.
[39] For further discussions on brass instruments and bands being linked with the working classes in public perceptions, please see pages 26 and 67 of this thesis.

class musicians who would be more likely to be performing out-doors or in larger performance spaces. It will be demonstrated that these women spanned, in the main, the lower-middle and upper (or 'skilled') working classes and were taught as part of a family group of musicians by other family members, with the aim that they gain the skills which would enable them to earn money to supplement the family income.[40] The majority of musical women discussed here (in both these settings) tend to be single and childless, particularly when receiving their training, which often happened from a young age. However, in the family bands in particular, women, out of necessity, often continued playing beyond marriage and motherhood, as they were just another member of the family or performing troupe. Ultimately, two very different – but equally important – groups of musical women, from very different class backgrounds, are discussed in chapters one and four. Their experiences have been included in order to provide as comprehensive an overview as possible of the lives of women musicians at that time, as it would in no way have been a 'one size fits all' experience. Therefore, ideas of women's 'class' and place in society are woven throughout this thesis.

Another hurdle has been that there has been, historically, far less documented on the activities and achievements of women, making detailed analysis of any sources consulted a necessity in order to discover hidden narratives. This is a point which is particularly worth bearing in mind when analysing the case studies and the various photographs included here. There is inevitably the challenge of, as is mentioned in

[40] Francois Bedarida, (trans. A. S. Forster and G. Hodgkinson), *A Social History of England 1851-1990, 2nd edition* (London and New York: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1991), pp. 52-60. Bedarida clarifies that the lower middle class would have included such professions as 'small employers, shopkeepers, bank clerks, office workers, minor civil servants, schoolmasters, travelling salesmen, railway staff and so on', a grouping which perfectly summarises the types of professions and people discussed by, for example, Greta Kent or the Bramusa (Johnson) family whose experiences are analysed, amongst others, in chapter four.

the discussion on Greta Kent in chapter four, the majority of evidence available to researchers having been largely recorded, documented and selected for archival storage by men.[41] Ellis refers to this as 'the inescapability of male-engendered evidence', suggesting that scholars of women's history have to look harder, further and in different places for evidence of women's experiences.[42] Ellis suggests that history:

> has dealt female performers a double blow in its preference for conserving the artefacts of male creators rather than female vessels. In their studies of women, scholars without access to family archives frequently have no option but to rely on documentary accounts written by men which […] frequently transforms women's history into study not so much of women themselves as of male perceptions of, conditioning of, and behaviour towards them.[43]

Finding some of the hidden voices and stories of female brass musicians has been perhaps the biggest challenge of this study – and is precisely the reason why continuing to discover and document them is so vital going forward.

<u>The structure of this thesis</u>

Each chapter of this thesis focuses on a separate challenge facing female brass musicians. Following on from the examination of the everyday lives of women in patriarchal Victorian and Edwardian Britain which takes place in chapter one, the chapter then outlines some of the laws and acts introduced at this time which positively impacted on the lives of women. There is a discussion of the resultant

---

[41] Greta Kent's publishers – Sheba Feminist Publishers – make a point of saying in her book just how important memoirs such as hers are, in helping to redress this balance.
[42] Katharine Ellis 'The Fair Sax: Women, Brass-Playing and the Instrument Trade in 1860s Paris' *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, V.124, N2 (1999), pp.222-223.
[43] Ibid., p. 222.

anxious masculinity which stemmed from notions of this emergent, independent, 'New Woman', and the fact that these laws inevitably led to women gradually having more opportunities available to them. Following this there is an examination of the reactionary tightening up of patriarchal controls which limited, once again, the opportunities for women and female musicians at this time. Chapter two looks specifically at the experiences of female musicians, how they were perceived, and analyses some of the unique challenges they faced - for example, the voyeuristic nature of audiences, sexualized view of female performers, and reviews of their concerts which were largely based on their physical appearance and clothing.

In chapter three there is a discussion surrounding a key area in which women experienced this 'control': the policing of ways in which women dressed. The corset and constraining nature of Victorian and Edwardian fashions were particularly problematic (and potentially dangerous) for musicians, which will be further highlighted by the section on good breathing techniques for brass players which purposefully follows this discussion on clothing. Chapter four then presents some case studies of female musicians who managed to break through to become performers at amateur or professional level and looks at some areas of commonality in their experience, such as familial support, membership of religious organisations and the embracing of more practical uniforms and costumes for performing in.

The conclusion ties together these individual, separate strands of hardship faced by both women, and female musicians, at this time. Ultimately, Victorian and Edwardian female musicians faced a unique set of challenges which, when examined in combination as they are here, explain why it was so hard for them to take up brass instruments and play them on the 'public' stage. This is why so few of them managed

to do so, and for those who did, it has been demonstrated here that they often had familial or group support in common.

# CHAPTER I:
# 'The more things change, the more they remain the same'[1]

This chapter will first establish that Britain in the period 1870-1920 was still a deeply patriarchal society, but will suggest that there were changes taking place societally which were unprecedented, for example surrounding the question of women's rights and the upheaval caused by the Industrial Revolution, and will examine in detail these changes and this forward momentum. This will be done in order to build a full and complete picture of the challenges faced by female brass musicians, by discussing each challenge they faced in detail, including the ones faced by all women at this time in their everyday lives. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate an improving picture in terms of musical (and other) opportunities for the women of Britain which left men feeling increasingly threatened and saw them embracing methods old and new to return women to what was seen as their rightful place – the private, or domestic, sphere.

There will first be an examination of some of the major acts and laws concerning women which were brought in at this time, as female musicians would also have benefitted from (and their opportunities been affected by) them. These will be discussed alongside other pertinent ways in which the lives of women in Britain were positively impacted, for example surrounding education, musical tuition, and rising literacy rates. Following this, there is a section which examines the 'anxious masculinity' resulting from the growing freedoms for women due to these acts, laws, and societal changes, as women were increasingly seen as threats or rivals in the

[1] Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr (1808-1890).

musical or creative workplace.[2] The final discussion of this chapter analyses the 'new science' which was employed by men in an attempt to re-constrain the emerging 'New Woman' at this time. There are many examples of the application of or reference to this 'science' which would have had a direct and devastating impact female musicians wishing to perform in any public capacity.

Virginia Woolf famously observed men's reactions during this time period which saw women begin to rise up and assert themselves, musing, 'and when one is challenged, even by a few women in black bonnets, one retaliates, if one has never been challenged before, rather excessively'.[3] It will be demonstrated that the rhetoric and methods men employed in this 'retaliation' were particularly challenging for aspiring musicians.[4] Paula Gillett, discussing the unique set of challenges faced by female musicians, suggests that the entire time period covered by this thesis 'was characterized by continuous discussion and debate over women's nature, capacities and proper sphere' and that crucially, 'the efforts of musically gifted women to widen their choices and advance their prospects should be understood within this context'.[5]

<u>Acts, laws and ways in which women's lives were positively impacted at this time</u>

Many acts and laws with a direct impact on women were passed just prior to and during the time period covered by this study - for example, the Divorce Act of 1857, the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s, and the Married Women's Property Acts

[2] Alexandra Shepherd, writes of the 'anxious masculinity' in early modern England, which was still evident in the Victorian period, that it could be defined by 'anxious patriarchs: men dogged by fears that they would fail to achieve patriarchal expectations' *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 5.

[3] Gail Finney, *Women in Modern Drama: Freud, Feminism and European Theatre at the Turn of the Century* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 12-13.

[4] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[5] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914 "Encroaching on All Men's Privileges"* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), p. 3.

of 1870, 1882 1886 and 1893.[6] The ground-breaking Guardianship of Infants Act of 1886 put the welfare of the child to the fore, meaning women's chances of gaining custody of their children increased.[7] Furthermore, fifty years before women were granted the right to vote in general elections in Britain, women could, from 1869, vote in municipal elections.[8]

Erkal suggests a link between the 'educated, independent career females' who emerged as a result of the 1870 Education Act, (which saw women serve on School Boards for the first time, controversially proving themselves worthy of positions within public administration and demonstrating their first tentative steps onto the 'public' stage) and the forward strides in the suffrage movement at the turn of the century.[9] However, although literacy rates rose constantly throughout the nineteenth century, women's literacy rates consistently lagged behind men's.[10] Adult schools grew rapidly in popularity at the start of the twentieth century, with around 1,900 such schools in existence in the years 1909-1910.[11] A staggering 42 percent of the 80,000 students were women.[12] By 1897 there were still only 844 women in British universities; however, at least women were making headway into these institutions, even if their tentative entry into higher education and the medical profession was met

---

[6] Kerry Powell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 227.

[7] Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Virago, 2001), p. 7. and Deans R. Storry*, The Law of Parent and Child, guardian and ward, and the rights, duties, and liabilities of infants: with the practice of the High Court of Justice in relation hereto* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1895), pp. 143-146.

[8] Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain Since 1880* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), p. 15.

[9] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset' p. 112, and <https://www.parliament.uk/about/livingheritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact/> [accessed 7 May 2020].

[10] June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991), p. 20.

[11] Ibid., p. 36.

[12] Ibid., p. 36.

with ‘bitter hostility’ and ‘riots’.[13] Crucially for this study, one area of education in which women experienced increasing opportunities, and which in certain areas even exceeded those of men, was in the area of musical education. It was deemed appropriate, even a necessary accomplishment, for refined middle-and-upper class women to receive tuition and then to display their talents only in the safe, non-competitive environment of the home, with just family and friends as her audience.[14] This will be discussed in detail later in this chapter and in chapter two.

One particularly important development to benefit aspiring female musicians was the formation, in 1911, of The Society of Women Musicians (SWM), which aimed to expand the opportunities of female performers and composers.[15] As well as offering financial assistance to female musicians who found themselves in financial difficulties and helping to fight against the prejudices levelled at them, the organisation also endeavoured to ‘provide a space for women to meet to discuss musical matters and receive help with the business aspects of a musical career as well as giving concerts, bringing composers and performers together’.[16]

Other areas of progress regarding women’s growing freedoms include emerging opportunities in other areas of work where, increasingly, women could expect to find clerical or charitable roles, or in the medical profession as nurses.[17] Florence Nightingale, for example, campaigned tirelessly for nursing to become regarded as a profession.[18] Lesley A. Hall points out, however, that the value of the vast number of

[13] Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, p. 7 and Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 18.
[14] Phyllis Weliver, *Musical Women in Victorian Fiction*, p. 1.
[15] Sophie Fuller, *The Society of Women Musicians* <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-music/articles/the-society-of-women-musicians> [accessed 2 July 2020], p. 1.
[16] Ibid., p. 1.
[17] Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 15.
[18] Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Nursing for Labouring Classes* (London: Harrison, 1876).

women's voluntary philanthropic ventures which were undertaken during this time-period, largely by the middle and upper-classes, tended on the whole to be largely underestimated, unappreciated, and unpaid.[19]

Another relevant development in women's lives at this time was the freedom afforded them by the increasing popularity of the bicycle. This seemingly innocuous invention led to freedoms hitherto unknown, as independently minded working or philanthropic women could transport themselves wherever they needed to go, without having to be reliant upon a man.[20] Ardent proponent of a more rational form of dress and keen cyclist Lady Harberton can be seen wearing her trademark (rather scandalous for the time) knickerbockers while cycling in Figure 1.1.[21] Often linked to the rise of the 'New Woman' discussed in chapter two, the bicycle craze reached its peak in the mid-1890s.[22] The crucial upshot of owning and being able to transport yourself around by a bicycle was, as one female cyclist from 1895 puts it, that you were 'unhampered by chaperone or even more dispiriting male admirer'.[23]

---

[19] Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 16.
[20] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 112.
[21] <https://helenrappaport.com/footnotes/rational-dress/> [accessed 19 March 2021]. Lady Harberton was often barred from food and drink establishments if she turned up in this particular outfit.
[22] Eva, Chen, 'It's Prohibitive Cost: The Bicycle, the New Woman and Conspicuous Display', *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture,* V64, N1 (April 2017), p. 1.
[23] Ibid., p. 1.

Figure 1.1: *Lady Harberton*

<https://helenrappaport.com/footnotes/rational-dress/> [accessed 19 March 2021].

The main aspect of the experience of these women cyclists which links them with the plight of female musicians is regarding the reforms in the type of dress (as seen in the above image) which occurred through necessity, in order that the strenuous act of riding a bicycle become physically feasible for late nineteenth century women. The resulting ‘rational dress’, popular with middle-and-upper-class ‘New Woman’ cyclists, was a much more practical outfit and will be discussed in further detail in chapter three, alongside the discussion on corsets and other restrictive fashions.[24] Ultimately, the beginnings of clothing reform spearheaded at this time by the Rational Dress Society, which originated from the emancipating, self-empowering

[24] *The Rational Dress Society Gazette* (1889) <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-rational-dress-societys-gazette> [accessed 25 April 2020].

cycling 'craze' of the 1890s, was another leap forward in the condition of women, but was an area of women's lives which prompted considerable unease around issues of 'feminine decorum'.[25]

This thesis recognises some notable forward-momentum in the area of women's rights and freedoms during this time period, and this will be a major point of discussion. The birth of the suffrage movement towards the end of the nineteenth century, set against a backdrop of unprecedented societal turbulence, saw women 'beginning to challenge their rightful rulers', as patriarchal Britain still viewed men to be.[26] Confirming this to be a momentous period in women's history, Gail Finney writes that 'European Feminism achieved its greatest strength in the forty years around the turn of the century and hibernation after 1920'.[27] In discussing the experiences and increasing numbers of female musicians at this time, Green also notes the importance of this period for study, stating that 'from around the 1870s to the 1930s, musical life reached a peak in terms of performance opportunities […] and women were more active than ever before'.[28]

The turn of the twentieth century was a time of extraordinary change in Britain. At the beginning of the time period in question – 1870 – the Industrial Revolution was well established, and the lives and lifestyles of the people of Britain continued changing along-side with alarming rapidity. The active, working woman, integral to the home production and cottage industries which had been a feature of British life up until the nineteenth century, had been gradually replaced as the decade progressed, with a

---

[25] Eva Chen, 'It's Prohibitive Cost', p. 1.
[26] Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 64.
[27] Gail Finney, *Women in Modern Drama*, p. 7.
[28] Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, p. 60.

‘female ideal with little role or function in society’.[29] She had been supplanted with society’s new ideal – that of a woman dependent on men financially and in every other way - as Victorians and Edwardians, in the course of establishing the ‘separate spheres’ of everyday life which will be discussed later in this chapter, increasingly came to defend and rely upon the calm and restorative ‘hearthside’ of the family home as an escape from the harsh realities of working life.[30] This also came to be known as the ‘cult of domesticity’.[31]

From the latter half of the nineteenth century, reforms can be seen to have begun taking place in women’s education, which although still vastly different to the standard of education offered to boys at this time did, nonetheless, begin to undergo a degree of improvement.[32] This was a time, also, which is notable for introducing the term ‘New Woman’ – a figure who broke through particularly in literature, and was characterised as being, rather than ‘frail and helpless’, more ‘intelligent and independent’, and pointing, controversially, to women’s limitations as ‘social rather than biological’.[33]

It will be demonstrated that it was also a time of change and forward movement for women in Britain in a musical sense. Alongside general improvements in literacy rates and the beginnings of educational reform, there was greater demand for music teachers, making this an increasingly viable career option for women – although some musicians were forced down this path as last resort when they could not become performers.[34] The numbers of women gaining admission to the growing

---

[29] Martha Vicinus (ed), *Suffer and be Still*, p. ix.
[30] Ibid., p. xiii.
[31] Debora Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1982), p. 4.
[32] June Purvis, *A History of Women’s Education in England*, pp. 73 and 97.
[33] Maura Goodrich Dunst, “*Such Genius as Hers”*, pp. 2 and 21.
[34] Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 9.

number of musical conservatories was increasing, and by the end of the nineteenth century, women were being admitted to the Royal Academy of Music on woodwind instruments, which would have been virtually unheard of only a few years earlier.[35] Further to this, operatic singing was now starting to be viewed as an 'appropriate' career.[36] An example of this change in attitudes towards female singers at the end of the nineteenth century is provided by Gillett. Even as late as 1878, Contralto Jessie Bond still had to do much soul-searching before accepting employment from the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, wondering 'would not such a change in my life mean social downfall, and would not my parents think I had gone to perdition? I dared not tell them of Carte's offer'.[37] Certainly, women had been professional singers throughout the nineteenth century, but this example clearly demonstrates the social unease regarding the 'appropriateness' of a professional singing career for women which lasted well into the 1870s. A shift in public attitudes, however, can be seen in an article by Annie Glen in *Woman's World* (1890), which demonstrates that twelve years after Bond anxiously considered the implications of accepting a singing role, 'Dramatic Singing as a Career for Women' was finally starting to be viewed with, according to Gillett, a 'remarkable change in respectability'.[38]

Musical female role models began to emerge in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, most notably violinists Marie Hall and Lady Halle.[39] Sir Henry Wood, too, would make the momentous decision of employing six female violinists for his Queen's hall orchestra in 1913, who he insisted on paying equally with the men, and

[35] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914*, pp. 11 and 29.
[36] Ibid., p. 6.
[37] Ibid., p. 103.
[38] Ibid., p. 202. The reasons for the increasing number of trained female musicians and singers moving into the professional world of music from the turn of the century are discussed in further detail both this chapter, and in the introduction to this thesis.
[39] Bennett Zon (ed.), *Musical Performance Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Temperley* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p. 18.

for whom he provided a separate, appropriate changing room.[40] Although, due to lack of professional opportunities (as will be examined later in this study) many Ladies' orchestras sprung up around this time, some mixed-sex amateur orchestras and bands began to be established.[41] Further to this, the Industrial Revolution and increased mechanisation saw a greater proliferation and production of better-quality musical instruments.[42] These developments, in addition to printed sheet music becoming more affordable and widely available, go some way to explaining the increase in numbers of musicians and opportunities at this time.

The leisure industry which sprung up alongside the new and vastly different industrial and heavy manual, largely factory-based working conditions is another important consideration regarding the popularity of musical entertainments and hobbies. Good, morally wholesome, healthy pastimes - particularly among the working classes, who were generally regarded as 'requiring improvement' - were encouraged, and largely embraced.[43] Unprecedented expansion of the railways meant that people could travel in their (albeit in many cases limited) free time, plus there was increased interest in the music hall, concerts and sporting activities.[44] The popularity of open-air concerts at this time, for example, saw a huge surge in the numbers of brass bands and other amateur music groups and orchestras, whose performances would be attended by large numbers of the general public in parks and other open spaces.[45]

---

[40] Cyril Ehrlich, *Music Profession in Britain,* p. 161.
[41] Bennett Zon (ed), *Musical Performance Culture,* p. 19.
[42] Trevor Herbert (ed), *Bands: The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, p. 23.
[43] Trevor Herbert (ed), Bands: *The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, p. 21.
[44] Pamela Horn, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Victorian Britain* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p. 1.
[45] Trevor Herbert (ed), *Bands: The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries,* p. 49.

Despite these positive changes in the lives of women in Britain, the country was (as will be demonstrated) still a patriarchal society, which saw female performers struggle to break into so many areas of public performance - leading Simone de Beauvoir later in the twentieth century to describe women's 'invisibility' in the majority of 'historical and socially significant contexts'.[46] It can be seen that the Victorian era is a rich period of musical history - it produced, for example, Edward Elgar (1857-1934), Richard Strauss (1864-1949) and Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900) - yet genius, musical or otherwise, was still viewed as wholly and completely a male trait.[47] It is important to examine exactly how society viewed women and what was 'expected' of them, alongside some of the ways this message was disseminated to the turn-of-the-century masses if this study is to present an accurate picture of *all* the challenges faced by female brass musicians.

An overview of the everyday lives of women in patriarchal fin de siècle Britain

To fully understand the challenges that female brass musicians faced, it is helpful for this study to first discuss some of the barriers and limitations which would have affected the lives of all women in Britain at this time. The first of these is the ideology of 'separate spheres' which was entrenched in British and North American society and is the notion of women's place being in the quiet tranquillity of the family home, while men were expected to go out into the arduous 'public' world of work.[48] It can be seen that the idea of separate spheres was cultivated in order to bring some much-

[46] Pirkko Moisala and Beverly Diamond (eds), *Music and Gender* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), p. 205.
[47] Maura Goodrich Dunst, "*Such Genius as Hers"*, p. 26.
[48] For example, Dina M Copelman writes that middle-and-upper class Victorian women were seen as 'guardians of a separate, domestic, female sphere divorced from the male, public world of work' in: 'A New Comradeship Between Men and Women: Family, Marriage and London's Women Teachers, 1870-1914' in: Jane Lewis (ed.) *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family 1850-1940* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 175-176.

needed order into peoples' lives in the face of the unprecedented upheaval brought about by the Industrial Revolution.[49] Crucially in terms of this study, with women's rights and freedoms increasing, and female musicians and performers subverting the notion of separate spheres by increasingly encroaching on the male-dominated public stage, this ideology became 'the period's most ingenious mechanism for restraining insurgent women'.[50]

There was also the widely held belief that women should be subservient to men. The Industrial Revolution, which had removed many women from a setting of home working, had naturally made them more dependent on the 'bread winning' male.[51] Feminine traits seen as 'virtuous' at this time increasingly included 'meekness, helplessness and innocence'.[52] This would, inevitably, have included a desired sexual innocence alongside an increasing tendency to idealise the purity of women's naturally nurturing nature, as depicted in Coventry Patmore's enduringly popular work *Angel in the House* (1854).[53] It was also the case that society tended to value the 'consumptive' or weak and feeble looking woman - the very opposite of the type of physicality needed for blowing a brass instrument. Describing the increasing habit of middle and upper class Victorian women to practice this 'invalidism as a pursuit', Bram Dijkstra, writing of the many references to this practice in art of the era, observes that 'for many a Victorian husband his wife's physical weakness' was a

---

[49] Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds), *Sexuality and Subordination* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 2-3. They further describe it as a 'new way of ordering society, by sex', p. 5. Deborah Gorham agrees, stating that, in the face of all this change, Victorians 'sought refuge' in the home, and that the 'cult of domesticity' was born. Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal,* p. 4.

[50] Martha Vicinus, *Suffer and be Still,* p. 123.

[51] Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2002), p. 46.

[52] Susan Edwards, *Female Sexuality and the Law* (Oxford: Martin Robertson and Company Ltd., 1981), p. 25.

[53] Ibid.*,* p. 26. Edwards describes 'Patmore's portrayal of the domestic saint'.

sign of ‘her physical and mental purity’.[54] With images such as Louis Ridel’s *Last Flowers* being produced and disseminated for them to emulate, for women wishing to become involved in a physical or cerebral pastime or profession such as playing a brass instrument, the odds continued to be stacked against them (see Figure 1.2).[55]

Figure 1.2: Ridel, L., *Last Flowers* (1900)

Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-De-Siecle Culture,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) p. 25.

Further to this, there was a general feeling that educating girls in the same way as boys, musically or otherwise (for example in the subjects of maths and the sciences) was completely unnecessary, suggestions even being postulated that attempting to educate women to the same level as men ‘would not only fail, but seriously injure women’s health’.[56] Women’s efforts to gain admission to lectures at Oxford and

[54] Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity,* pp. 25 and 27.
[55] Ibid*.,* p. 25. Ridel’s *Last Flowers* ‘romanticizes the notion of woman as a permanent, a necessary, even a ‘natural invalid’, pp. 25-26.
[56] Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds), *Sexuality and Subordination,* p. 209.

Cambridge were met with 'strong opposition', and they were generally barred from medical schools .[57] Increasingly at this time, even in the face of all this opposition, women were beginning to claim their 'right to live up to the full measure of [their] capacities' artistically, intellectually and, of course, musically.[58] Dijkstra's description of this era's anxious masculinity fuelled 'war on women […] leading to a mass grave of human creativity' ties in with Virginia Woolf's famous creation 'Shakespeare's sister'.[59] This imagined but plausible, equally talented sibling of a successful creative man, was consigned to footnotes of history if she was lucky - and more often written out entirely.[60] A real-life example of this is Clara Schumann, wife of Robert, who, despite being a celebrated performer and composer herself, saw herself after her marriage as simply 'an interpreter, not a maker', uncreative, just an imitator.[61] Hall concludes, therefore, that the increasingly-turned-to and successful notion of separate spheres outlined in this introduction was an 'ideological tool' for reformers who were struggling to curtail the increasing freedoms and opportunities in performance and elsewhere at this time, and would surely have been yet another barrier faced by women looking to take up a brass instrument.[62]

---

[57] Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Virago, 2001), pp. 7 and 29.

[58] Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds), *Sexuality and Subordination,* p. 228.

[59] Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity,* p. vii.

[60] Woolf Imagined this 'extraordinarily gifted sister', who could get 'no training in her craft' and that, in all probability, 'men laughed in her face' when she attempted to follow the same career path as her celebrated brother in: Virginia Woolf*, A Room of One's Own* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2012), p. 61.

[61] Anna Beer, *Sounds and Sweet Airs: The forgotten Women of Classical Music* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2016), p. 240.

[62] Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 15.

‘If you compete with us, we shall not marry you’: women seen as competition and threat

The above quote was made by Professor Alfred Marshall (1842-1924) around 1894, as he believed that women were, in his words, ‘subordinate beings’.[63] Duncan Crow utilises this quotation in order to demonstrate that ‘it was obvious that pressure for greater opportunities for women should arouse enmity and awaken old fears in men’ who definitely ‘had no wish to see women as equals’[64] Further to this, Marshall also insisted that women should not develop any talents or traits which men might view as ‘unpleasant’, explaining that, for example, ‘strength, courage, independence’ were particularly unattractive in a woman’.[65]

The number of women involved in the fight for women’s rights was relatively small at the end of the nineteenth century, yet the ‘amount of frightened attention’, they were given was disproportionately enormous.[66] Ultimately, women’s increasing calls for opportunities and emancipation at the turn of the century fostered a culture of anxious masculinity – and nowhere was this anxiety more keenly felt than in the workplace. A term originally associated with scholarship focused on the early modern period, there is wide-ranging literary and other academic scholarship which demonstrate its relevance it in the time period covered by this study. Outlining what anxious masculinity had come to mean by the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Tracey Teets Schwartze, in her examination of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*

[63] Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman*, p. 339. He explains, ’marriage was a sacrifice of masculine freedom and would only be tolerated by the male creatures so long as it meant the devotion, body and soul, of the female to the male’.
[64] Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman,* p. 339.
[65] Ibid., p. 339.
[66] Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, p. 215.

(which was set in 1904 and published in book form in 1922) confirms that at this time:

> definitions of manhood and masculinity fluctuated and evolved in response to various social challenges to patriarchal authority; such challenges led to the formation of a masculine discourse subtended by an anxious awareness of its own instability.[67]

Schwartze describes *Ulysses* featuring among its themes 'deep-seated themes of emasculation'.[68] Similarly, the term is applied by Teodora Tomodor when analysing Ernest Hemmingway's *Mr and Mrs Elliot*, which was published as a short story in 1925.[69] She writes of what she describes as Hemmingway's 'life-long dilemma' regarding masculinity and manliness, his struggles with women moving into the public sphere which had led to perceptions of 'society becoming feminised' from the turn of the century and that men increasingly 'struggled to keep the masculine qualities they cherished'.[70] This anxiety can be seen to manifest itself in the resultant backlash against women who were gradually emerging in the world of professional music and also in other workplace settings.

---

[67] Tracey Teets Schwarze, '"Do You Call That a Man?": The Culture of Anxious Masculinity in Joyce's "Ulysses"', *European Joyce Studies v.10, Masculinities in Joyce: Postcolonial Constructions* (2001), p.113.

[68] Ibid., p. 113.

[69] Teodora Domotor, 'Anxious Masculinity and Silencing in Ernest Hemmingway's "Mr and Mrs Elliot", *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)* v.9 n.1 (Spring 2012), pp. 121-122.

[70] Ibid., pp. 121-122. Other academics to have examined anxious masculinity in their works covering this time period include John Tosh, who makes the link between masculine anxieties and struggles and the preservation of the term's 'early modern origins as an external code of conduct, policed by one's peers' in: 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800-1914', *Journal of British Studies* V44, N2 (April 2005), p. 335. Another example would include the analysis of a publication from 1891, Frank Widekind's *Spring Awakening,* by Stephanie E. Libbon, in which she examines 'the marginilization of the ordinary male through characters who either express, reject, or combat the feminine dangers they perceive threatening their already precarious manhood' in: 'Anxious Masculinity in Frank Wedekind's Spring Awakening', *Culture, Society and Masculinities; Harriman* V2 N2 (Fall 2010) p. 165.

Alongside mounting criticism of women in other branches of the arts such as increasing derision of female novelists and their works, who earlier in the century had largely been admired, female bands and orchestras faced growing hostility and judgement.[71] Formed in the main due to the lack of opportunities for or acceptance of women into the major symphony orchestras, ladies' orchestras became numerous – and popular – at the turn of the century, numbering as many as 300 at the beginning of the 1900s.[72] Descriptions of them in the press, however, ranged from heated discussions of their breathing and 'physical charms', to the orchestras themselves being variously dismissed as 'poor quality and vulgar'.[73] These assessments of women musicians proliferated as men became 'sensitive and uncertain of their status in the eyes of the world'.[74] The general feeling towards this increasing number of highly-trained and able female musicians at this time was that by employing them, musical organisations were robbing male musicians of their livelihoods.[75]

Articles in the press, such as one by violinist Wallace Sutcliffe prompted by the fact that a sixty-piece ladies' orchestra had been employed to perform at Covent Garden, included such opinions as, 'the average lady is inferior to the average male player for all orchestral purposes' and were fairly commonplace.[76] However, it is interesting to note that, although the appointment of this 'female orchestra' caused outrage, Ehrlich describes them as 'a sixty-piece ladies' orchestra, with only two cornets, two trombones and euphonium manned by men'. [77] In other words, it had an

[71] Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, p. 17 and Pirkko Moisala, and Beverly Diamond (eds.), *Music and Gender*, p. 192.
[72] Pirkko Moisala, and Beverly Diamond (eds.), *Music and Gender*, p. 190.
[73] Pirkko Moisala, and Beverly Diamond (eds.), *Music and Gender*, p. 206. Sexualised descriptions of female performers are discussed further in chapter two.
[74] Ibid., p. 192.
[75] Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain,* p. 158.
[76] Ibid., p. 158.
[77] Ibid., p. 158.

entirely male brass section. This point will be returned to in chapter two of this study, which examines which instruments were deemed particularly 'inappropriate' for women to play, and why.

The *Orchestral Association Gazette* suggested that they knew of 'many orchestral musicians who are very sore at heart on the ladies' orchestra question', confirming that women were, indeed, 'unwelcome competition in a field already difficult for men'.[78] Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of women who by sheer force of will managed to obtain positions in professional orchestras, were 'let go' after both World Wars, on the grounds that orchestral managers were seeking what they described as 'unity of sound'.[79]

The rhetoric that women were only suited to making music at home was endlessly employed in these attempts to prevent them encroaching on professional orchestras of the turn of the century. Once again, Wallace Sutcliffe, writing in the *Gazette,* had an opinion on the subject, suggesting that 'light concert work, soirees, at homes, etc' were the only venues and types of musical performance suitable for 'ladies'.[80] Tracy C. Davis notes that, quite deliberately, the many girls who were encouraged in music and other skills in a parlour setting were advised 'that their partial mastery of skills left them ill-suited to compete in the professional marketplaces of art, music and theatre.[81] However, Phyllis Weliver points to this musical tuition in order to equip them for these 'soirees and at homes' being positive for women, even if there was an

---

[78] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England,* p. 192. Tellingly, the *Gazette* also goes on to state that they saw female musician's attempts to join professional orchestras 'as an egregious manifestation of the excesses of the women's movement'.
[79] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 224.
[80] Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain*, p. 159.
[81] Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as working Women*, pp. 46-47.

expectation that they would not take their musical training to any kind of professional conclusion, a fact which is discussed at length in chapter two.[82]

Reactions towards musical women wishing to utilise their musical or artistic talents on the public stage changed from around 1860 onwards.[83] Up until this time they had been tolerated in an amused, indulgent way, but public feeling began to shift, in line with women's increasing freedoms and the anxious masculinity this triggered, into something more akin to fear and disgust.[84] Although the general feeling was that women performing music in the home were 'angelic', once that performance was moved to the public stage, or the woman was viewed as wishing to perform music for personal reasons they were viewed as provocative and 'demonic', or more like men.[85]

When examining the reasons why many middle-and-upper class women were tutored to play music in a domestic setting, ultimately, there was tacit agreement that parlour music could be deployed as part of women's arsenal of techniques to attract or 'ensnare' a husband.[86] This vision of the musical woman as a provocative 'siren', using music to ensnare men, was disseminated in conjunction with images of 'dangerous' musical women wishing to perform in public to suggest that this display element of their performance made them unattractive 'deviants, deserving of severe censure'.[87] Figure 1.3, for example, shows the type of illustration which was published at this time which conveys this feeling.[88] The sub-title for this image reads, 'And how they marvelled while the music delivered its message – which is different

---

[82] Phyllis Weliver, *Musical Women in Victorian Fiction*, p. 1.
[83] Ibid., p. 1.
[84] Ibid., p. 1.
[85] Phyllis Weliver, *Musical Women in Victorian Fiction*, p. 6.
[86] Ibid., p. 17.
[87] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 22.
[88] Ibid., p. 106.

for every soul', with Gillett suggesting that the picture 'shows the intense response generated by the female violinist'.[89] In this way, the rhetoric that a woman becomes less desirable and feminine if she is seen to compete with men, that her gifts should be cultivated, but only for the pleasure of the men around her, and that she should remain 'within the limits God has imposed upon her' also falls in with the teachings of the (still extremely influential) Church at this time.[90]

Figure 1.3: *Armorel of Lyonesse: A Romance of Today* (1890)

Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 106.

Woolf argues forcefully on behalf of female musicians in her ground-breaking essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Acknowledging that, by the time she is writing, women novelists and writers have managed to begin obtaining a degree of success, she turns to musicians and points out they are continually told 'you are incapable of doing that', suggesting that for them in particular the ideology is still 'active and

[89] Ibid., p. 22, image p. 106. This image, suggests Gillett, appears to show the female violinist casting 'an almost hypnotic spell on all her male listeners'.
[90] Pirkko, Moisala and Beverly Diamond (eds.), *Music and Gender*, p. 206.

poisonous in the extreme'.[91] She then quotes from a well-known music book which she has consulted, in the hope it is more positive about women, only to discover the following (oft-re-appropriated to suit the occasion) passage, 'Sir, a woman's composing is like a dog's walking on its hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all'.[92] Further to this, much was made of Charles Darwin's assertion in *The Descent of Man* (1871) that women's powers of 'imitation are more strongly marked than in a man', meaning, therefore, that, in the words of Dijkstra, woman was regarded as 'inherently an imitator, not an originator.'[93]

Authoritatively demonstrating this belief in women's inferiority became the order of the day. Finding methods to officially disseminate the message that, 'rivalry from women need not be feared as the female mind is weak in reasoning and deduction' became paramount.[94] Late Victorians would achieve this 'authority' by employing methods of what came to be regarded as 'New Science'.

<u>The application of 'New Science' in the restraint of women and female musicians</u>

Two main strands were followed in the 'science' which was vigorously applied in an effort to get women out of the workplace and back into the home sphere. Firstly, the 'fact' that they had smaller brains and were therefore less intelligent, and secondly that biologically, due to the fact that they were 'reproducers' with their bodies, they could never be rational creators of anything original. With regards to the first of these points, there was what Gillett describes as 'powerful scientific packaging' of Darwinian evolutionary theory which was utilised in 'proving' 'women's intellectual

[91] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, p. 66.
[92] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own,* p. 66. The book which was consulted by Woolf was: Cecil Gray, *A Survey of Contemporary Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 246. The award-winning composer to which Grey was referring was Marcelle Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983), who was a contemporary of Poulenc and Milhaud.
[93] Bram, Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, p. 120.
[94] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 28.

inferiority'.[95] It was thought that the naturally lower brain weight of women inevitably meant lower intelligence.[96] Dr. Withers Moore, addressing The British Medical Association in 1886, strongly advised that 'competitive brainwork among gifted girls can hardly but be excessive, especially if the competition be against the superior brain-weight and brain-strength of man'.[97] The overriding message stemming from this advice was that education would drain women's reproductive capacity.[98] Dijkstra describes a proliferation of 'poorly digested and partially understood new knowledge which was contributing to the dissemination of some of this ideology.[99] As a consequence, he suggests that this 'war on women' inevitably led to a 'mass grave of lost human creativity'.[100]

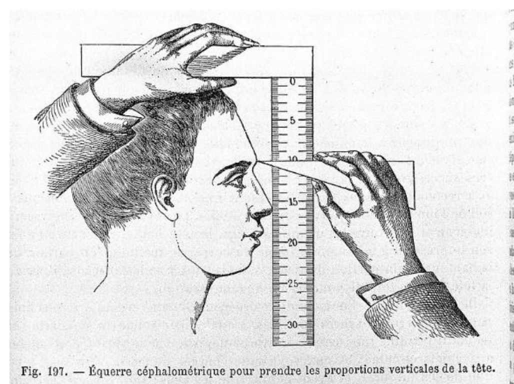
The application of skull measurement, or 'craniology', was one such area of new science which was used to demonstrate not only the superiority of men over women, but was used in an attempt to identify the inferiority of different races (see Figure 1.4 for the measuring implement used in this practice).[101] It was not only 'the tool with which to scientifically demolish female pretensions' as women tried to assert themselves in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, but it was used, in an official capacity, to reinforce ideological divisions within society.[102] Craniology was essentially the study of the size, shape and characteristics of the human skull, with a

---

[95] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*,  p. 18.
[96] Ibid., *England*, p. 18.
[97] June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England*, p. 3.
[98] Ibid., p. 3.
[99] Bram, Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, p. vii.
[100] Ibid., p. vii.
[101] Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds.), *Sexuality and Subordination*, p. 134. Image: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paul_Topinard,_Craniology._Wellcome_L0002708.jpg> [accessed 18th March 2021].
[102] Elizabeth Fee, 'Nineteenth-Century Craniology: The Study of the Female *Skull' Bulletin of the History of Medicine, The John Hopkins University Press* V53, N3, Fall 1979), pp. 419 and 433.

particular focus on 'human difference'[103]. It was believed that 'brain size indicated mental ability' (see Figure 1.5 for the areas of the brain linked to different mental traits).[104] Carl Vogt (1817-1895) concluded in his *Lectures on Man,* that 'The type of female skull approaches that of the infant and still more that of the lower races'.[105] Much early work was done on classifying skulls and races into five distinct groups by German anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) – see Figure 1.6 for his diagram of this classification.[106] Later, through works such as those of Vogt, the 'science' of craniology increasingly found female skulls to be 'infantile', and studies eventually led to conclude that women who were found to have large brains were predisposed to becoming mentally ill.[107]

Figure 1.4: *Craniology measure.*




<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paul_Topinard,_Craniology._Wellcome_L0002708.jpg> [accessed 18th March 2021].

---

[103] Elizabeth Fee, 'Nineteenth-Century Craniology: The Study of the Female *Skull' Bulletin of the History of Medicine, The John Hopkins University Press* V53, N3, Fall 1979), p. 419.

[104] Ibid., p. 420. Image can be found at: <https://pages.vassar.edu/realarchaeology/2017/03/05/phrenology-and-scientific-racism-in-the-19th-century/> [accessed 19 March 2021].

[105] Elizabeth Fee, 'Nineteenth-Century Craniology', p. 419.

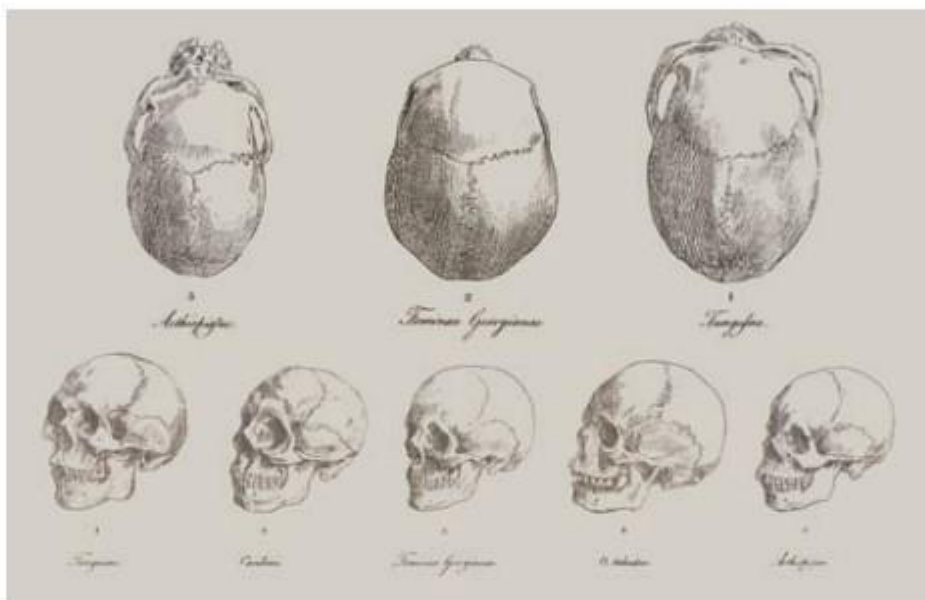
[106] <https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/the-geometer-of-race> [accessed 19 March 2021]. His five groups were: Caucasian/white, Mongolian/yellow, Malayan/brown, Ethiopian/black and American/red. As Gould points out, Blumenbach himself believed in the 'mental and moral unity' and 'equal status' of all humans, but nonetheless 'created a hierarchy or implied worth that has fostered so much social grief ever since'. Image can be found at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2151154/> [accessed 19 March 2021].

[107] Elizabeth Fee, 'Nineteenth-Century Craniology', p. 428.

Figure 1.5: *Image showing sections of the skull corresponding to different mental traits* (1830s)

<https://pages.vassar.edu/realarchaeology/2017/03/05/phrenology-and-scientific-racism-in-the-19th-century/> [accessed 19 March 2021].

Figure 1.6: Blumenbach, J. F., *Race classification of skulls*



<https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/335/7633/1318.full.pdf> [accessed 28 March 2021].

This ‘predisposition to mental illness’ rhetoric gathered momentum as the century progressed to its conclusion, and women gained more independence. For many middle-and-upper class women, stuck at home in the domestic sphere and prevented from working, (which would include, in the case of this study, becoming professional musicians) it is clear that many cases of illness or ‘nervous disease’

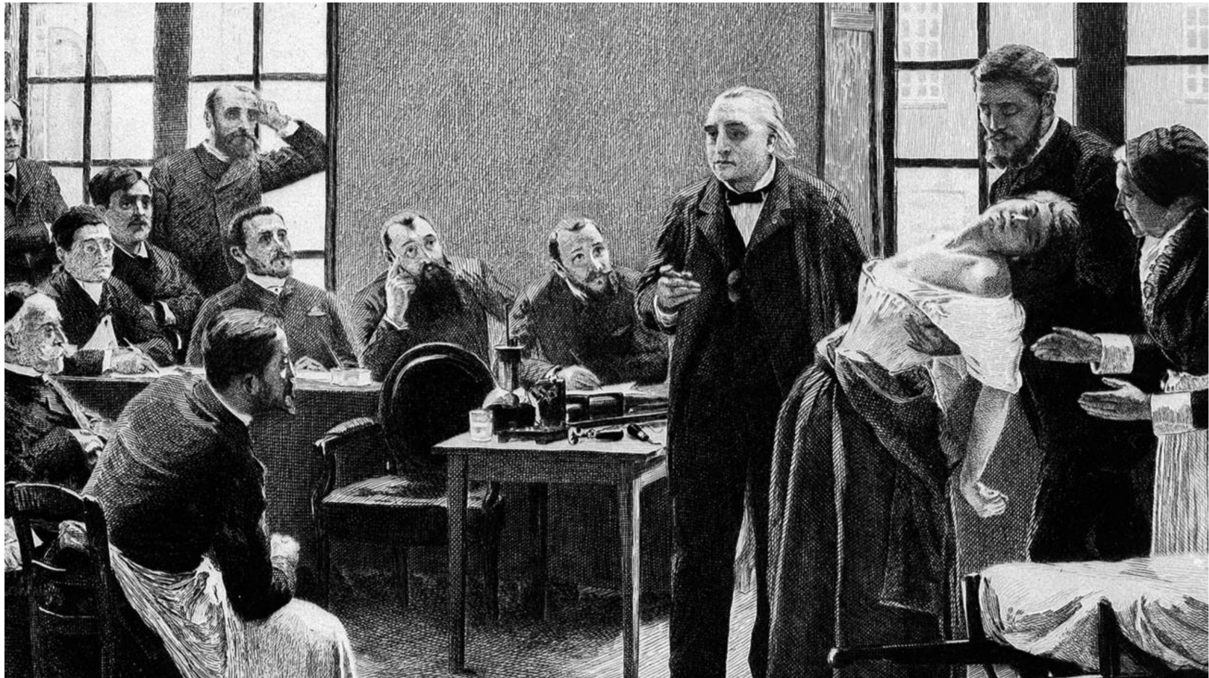
were in fact something of a cry for help or declaration of defeat, when all other avenues of escape were lost. This illness and restraint will be explored further in chapter two which discusses clothing and its effects on health.[108] Ultimately, the very idea of educating women, due to perceived 'biological differences' was purported to be dangerous for them mentally for these reasons.[109]

One 'medical term' given to the increasingly popular study of women's inferior mental capacity and 'passionate' reactions was 'Hysteria'.[110] Frequently discussed in Victorian gynaecological literature as being linked to menstruation, much of the discussion concluded that, particularly at times during the menstrual cycle, the female was 'periodically predisposed to hysteria and other complaints'.[111] The term hysteria was used to describe what was termed as 'ungovernable emotional excess' and in all probability covered such conditions now identified as epilepsy, personality disorders and even schizophrenia (see Figure 1.7).[112] In Freud's 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' (1905) he discusses 'women's susceptibility to hysteria', and this time-period saw a huge jump in the number of diagnosed cases.[113]

---

[108] Gail Finney, *Women in Modern Drama*, p. 8.
[109] Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds), *Sexuality and Subordination,* p. 209.
[110] C. Tasca, M. Rapetti M. G. Carta and B. Fadda, 'Women and Hysteria in the History of Mental Health' *Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health* N8 (2012), pp. 119-10. 'Hysteria' was first discussed by the ancient Egyptians, and it was generally believed, right up until the end of the nineteenth century, that the womb moved around the body.
[111] Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds.), *Sexuality and Subordination* Sexuality and subordination, p. 197.
[112] Michael Beattie and Penny Lenihan *Counselling Skills for Working with Gender Diversity and Identity* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018), p. 83 and E. Slater 'Diagnosis of "Hysteria"', *British medical journal* V1, 5447 (1965), p. 1396. Image can be found at: <https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/W89GZBIAAN4yz1hQ> [accessed 19 March 2021].
[113] Gail Finney, *Women in Modern Drama*, pp. 7 and 10.

Figure 1.7: *Jean-Martin Charcot demonstrating hysteria in a hypnotised patient at the Salpêtrière.* Etching by A. Lurat, 1888, after P.A.A. Brouillet, 1887.



<https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/W89GZBIAAN4yz1hQ> [accessed 19 March 2021].

This links made between hysteria and sexuality (psychiatry and gynaecology) at this time were no accident. Increasing freedoms for women resulted in an explosion of interest in gynaecology, and although there was a lot of scientific work done in this area, the results of this research were very much kept from women themselves.[114] Women were to be kept sexually innocent. Indeed, leading doctors of the day, such as Dr. William Acton, put forward the opinion that 'women were not troubled with

[114] Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds), *Sexuality and Subordination*, p. 12.

sexual feeling' anyway.[115] Sexual feeling was seen as a basic, animal instinct and women's menstrual cycles frequently compared to an 'animal in heat'.[116]

There was a clear association made between the insistence that women suppress sexual, emotional feelings and the very real fears of the medical profession of the day that music was 'a potentially dangerous force because its influence on the body, mind and emotions, was so very strong'.[117] Musicologist Susan McClary suggests that music was viewed as having the potential to cause listeners to lose physical control of themselves, as music was seen as 'the medium most capable of engaging the body'.[118] It was the potential for physically 'engaging of the body', so feared and cautioned against by the medical profession, which became a very real barrier for many women who wished to take up certain types of instruments at this time. The actual physical aspects of playing brass instruments which were so particularly unacceptable and shocking will be covered in detail in chapter three.

Ultimately, during the time period covered by this study, women were increasingly being made to return to a sedentary, non-mentally stimulating life in a domestic setting, and ways were being sought to assist men in putting women back into their 'rightful' place. Many of these methods have been discussed here in order to best

---

[115] Gail Finney, *Women in Modern Drama,* p. 3. This school of thought does assist in understanding how women were perceived - for example Dijkstra quotes, amongst others, Proudhon, who declared in 1858 'woman does not at all dislike to be treated a bit violently, or even raped', Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, p. 120. Dijkkstra can be seen here to embrace the more recent, nuanced definition of 'misogyny', as utilised in recent years by academics such as S.P. Wrisley and Kate Manne, who analyse its increasing fluidity within the concept of patriarchy. Manne examines the thinking which appears to have motivated many of the negative behaviours of men towards women which are presented in this thesis, and asks, 'what would be a natural basis for hostility and aggression directed towards women […] which makes sense of misogyny as a facet or manifestation of patriarchal ideology?' and also, 'What could be a more natural basis for hostility and aggression than defection from the role of an attentive, loving subordinate? Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (London: Penguin, 2018), p. 49 and S. P. Wrisley 'Feminist Theory and the Problem of Misogyny' *Feminist Theory* (13 October 2021), pp. 4-6.

[116] Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds), *Sexuality and Subordination*, p. 12.

[117] Phyllis Weliver, *Musical Women in Victorian Fiction*, pp. 5-6.

[118] Ibid., p. 6.

build the most comprehensive picture of the complicated set of challenges faced by women wishing to take up brass – or, indeed, any instrument - at this time. It has been demonstrated that the first hurdle they had to overcome was simply being a woman living a life of limited opportunities in a deeply patriarchal time period.

# CHAPTER II:
# Challenges faced specifically by female musicians and performers on the 'public' stage

This chapter examines the experiences of women who performed on the public stage during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and also analyses societal reactions to those women whose ambition it was to embark upon a career in public performance, or even to simply play an instrument in an amateur setting. The aim is to demonstrate that the issues addressed elsewhere in this study, such as the general experiences of women living at this time with the patriarchal notion of 'separate spheres' and the impractical – and at times dangerous – nature of women's clothing, do not represent the full picture in terms of the difficulties faced by female musicians. It will be shown that they had their own, very specific, combination of challenges to overcome. This thesis will argue that societal and familial reactions to the 'horrors' of a woman or female relative who was interested in a career on the stage, the sexualization of female musicians, and the voyeuristic nature of the audiences watching and reviewing female performances were further barriers for brass-playing women to navigate. Analysis of what it was particularly about brass instrument playing as a pastime for women which was so shocking and inappropriate will also take place in this chapter.

## Societal reactions to, and expectations of, women who wished to perform in public

Taking into consideration all the ways in which women's lives were limited and controlled in late Victorian Britain which were discussed in chapter one, Deborah Rohr suggests that 'attitudes towards women in the musical profession paralleled all of the contradictions inherent in contemporary views of women in society'. In other words, women's narrow (or non-existent) prospects in music, reflected a similar lack

of opportunities in everyday life.[1] With this in mind, she goes on to describe the associated wide-spread familial 'horrors' experienced by many who had the misfortune to have a female family member who wished to go into public performance.[2] The mortification felt at the prospect of having a female relative who wished to pursue a career on the stage was very real, is much documented, and came about for a number of reasons. As will be demonstrated, influential female writers of the era such as Mrs Ellis (whose work will be referenced later) and Matilda Pullen cautioned against too much musical instruction for young ladies, particularly for the 'wrong reasons'. Pullen (1819-1862) asked, in her pamphlet *Maternal Counsels to a Daughter* (1855) 'who would wish a wife or daughter, moving in private society, to have attained such excellence in music as involves a life's devotion to it?' and suggests women should not be devoted to frivolous pastimes of their own (such as musical performance), but to their families - a common theme in both these 'conduct' books, and the public conscience.[3]

One such relative appalled at the thought of a female member of the family making their living through music was the father of composer, author and suffragette Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944).[4] When she announced to her father that she wished to pursue a career in music, she recalled, 'it is no exaggeration to say that the life I proposed to lead seemed to him equivalent to going on the streets'.[5] Her father remained vehemently opposed to her career choice, but remarkably she did go on to become a critically acclaimed composer of many works, including the suffragette

---

[1] Debora Rohr, 'Women and the Music Profession in Victorian England: The Royal Society of Female Musicians, 1839-1866', *Journal of Musicological Research*, V18, 1999, p. 309.
[2] Ibid., p. 309.
[3] Matilda Pullen, *Maternal Counsels to a Daughter* (London: Parton and Co., 1855), p. 81.
[4] Sophie Fuller, Smyth, Dame Ethel, *Grove Music Online* at: <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026038 > [accessed 3 February 2021].
[5] Maura Goodrich Dunst, *"Such Genius as Hers"*, p. 1.

anthem *March of the Women*.[6] However, her works were often criticised for being too masculine 'for a lady composer', and other critics suggested that her more reflective pieces lacked spirit in comparison with the compositions of her male counterparts.[7] As Goodrich Dunst observes of Smyth's experience, her family's 'intense resistance' to her choice of career would not have been unusual.[8]

The main reason for these strong reactions to female relatives wishing to go into a career on the stage stemmed from lingering notions from puritanical times that public entertainment was somehow 'immoral' and that female performers in particular were somehow 'soliciting from the stage'.[9] Davis, too, makes this link between female performers and prostitution, pointing out that both actresses and prostitutes were seen to consent to 'be 'hired' for amusement by all who could command the price'.[10] The belief, entrenched in society right up until the final decades of the nineteenth century and beyond, in the 'scarlet woman' displaying herself inappropriately on the public stage, originates with the aristocracy, who, historically, selected its mistresses from the stage, and old habits (and prejudices) still lingered.[11] Women on the stage or indeed embarking on any career or profession in the public eye were viewed as loose women, and seen as 'fair game'.[12]

---

[6] A performance of Ethel Smyth's *March of the Women* by the Glasgow University Chapel Choir can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnMjOAxktS0> and the sheet music at: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/smyth-march-of-the-women#> [both accessed 8 February 2021].

[7] Rachel Lumsden, "The Music Between Us": Ethel Smyth, Emmeline Pankhurst, and "Possession", *Feminist Studies* V41 N2 (2015), pp. 335-336.

[8] Maura Goodrich Dunst *"Such Genius as Hers*", p. 1.

[9] Julie Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre*, (London: Hachette Digital, 1981), p. 1870.

[10] Tracy C. Davis 'The Social Dynamic and 'Respectability'' in: Lizbeth Goodman and Jane de Gay (eds), *The Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 70.

[11] Gail Finney, *Women in Modern Drama*, pp. 16-17.

[12] Pirkko Moisala and Beverley Diamond (eds) *Music and Gender*, p. 207. This will be demonstrated in the experiences of the brass group 'The Biseras', whose case study is included in chapter four this study.

Society was cautioned from all sides regarding the motives of women who wanted to perform, with these warnings coming in the form of popular and classical literature, plays and, of course, the 'sexually encoded' songs which were performed in music halls, which in combination ensured all classes understood the potential perils involved in this type of lifestyle.[13] Furthermore, enormously popular 'fallen women' plays dominated theatres in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.[14] An example of this type of play would be *Les Aviaries* by Eugene Brieux from 1917, upon which the 1919 film *Damaged Goods* was subsequently based.[15] Meanwhile, literature in this tradition included George de Maurier's best-selling novel *Trilby* (1894).[16] It features a vocally gifted yet, apparently, tone deaf heroine (de Maurier implies that she is merely a female vessel, who channels the works of talented male composers), who only shines when manipulated by the men around her, such as her evil mentor, Svengali.[17] Trilby is depicted as wasting away, 'tuneless and insane' due to being the 'conduit' for Svengali's gifts, and being shown as being increasingly 'pure' the closer to death (and beyond) that she gets – a desirable view of women which is examined elsewhere in this study.[18] George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) is another example, depicting the prodigiously musically talented Contessa Maria Alcharisi, giving up custody of her son (the Daniel of the title) to her lover to be raised, presenting 'freedom, at least in the musical realm, and motherhood as

---

[13] Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 65. A famous example of such a song, sung steeped in sexual innuendo (and which includes the clearly encoded warning 'and suppose it makes you fat?!') was Marie Lloyd's *A Little of What You Fancy Does You Good,* which can be heard here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aq6LKARJYZc> [accessed 22 June 2021].

[14] Kerry Powell (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 222.

[15] Rachael Low, *History of the British Film, 1918-1929*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971, p. 140. The play delt with the controversial subject of venereal disease.

[16] George du Maurier, *Trilby* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1894).

[17] Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, pp. 34-35.

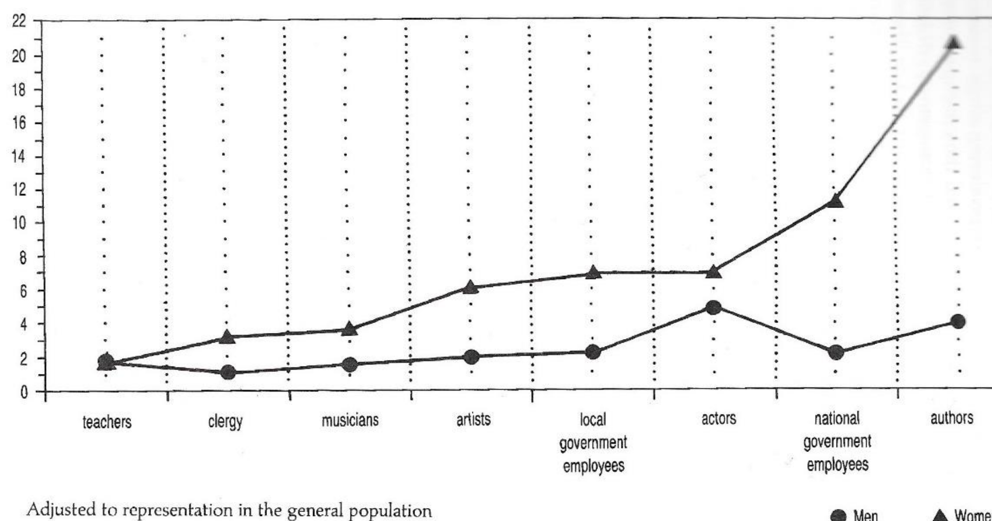
[18] Ibid., p. 36.

mutually exclusive'.[19] Ultimately, the musically talented heroine must sacrifice motherhood – she cannot expect to be a mother and pursue a musical career, and the fact that this book was written by a female author demonstrates the deep seated nature of this rhetoric[20]

Societally, the view remained that 'actresses lived and worked beyond the boundaries of propriety'.[21] By and large, female musicians were regarded in the same way. There was, for many years, a very real stigma attached to women performing music and singing on stage; particularly in music halls, for example.[22] Davis observes that the growth in the number of female musicians emerging at this time did not keep pace with the number of actresses, and suggests that there were several reason for this (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2 for a table containing increases in numbers of different professions and ratios of Male/Female Actors/Musicians at time).[23] These included a lack of role models for women at the turn of the twentieth century, general doubts continuing to persist that it was possible for women to master instruments to the same degree as men, and the fact that women were discouraged from performing music outside the home. Further to this, as will be examined in more depth later in this chapter, 'certain instruments were "off bounds" to women', as being deemed inappropriate for them to play.[24]

[19] Maura Goodrich Dunst, *"Such Genius as Hers"*, p. 38.
[20] Ibid., p. 38. 'George Eliot' was the pen name of author Mary Ann Evans (1891-1880).
[21] Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, p. 3.
[22] Ibid., p. 6.
[23] Ibid., pp. 8-9.
[24] Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, p. 9.

Figure 2.1: *Multiples of increase in selected professional groups, England and Wales 1861 - 1911*




Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, p. 8.

Figure 2.2: *Ratios of Male/Female Actors/Musicians, England and Wales 1861 - 1911*

| | *Acting* (Female:Male) | *Music* (Female:Male) |
|---|---|---|
| 1861 | 67.96:100 | 56.92:100 |
| 1911 | 101.05:100 | 96.32:100 |

Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 9.

The lingering notion of the inappropriate ‘display’ element of public female performance, be it acting or musically, continued to be a factor which hampered any woman wishing to perform in a way which was beyond the realms of being considered a home-based ‘hobby’.[25] In her pamphlet *Maternal councils*, Matilda Pullen advised female musical performance only ever be ‘a means of home enjoyment’ and never ‘a medium of display’.[26] Some commentators took this even further, insisting that the teaching of music to girls in order to entertain only their family, also meant that their playing could provide ‘that domestic comfort they were

[25] Maura Goodrich Dunst, *“Such Genius as Hers”*, p. 28.
[26] Deborah Goreham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1982), p. 104 and Matilda Pullen, *Maternal Counsels to a Daughter* (London: Parton and Co., 1855).

by provenance designed to promote'.[27] Paula Gillet points to the feeling of the time, that music (performed in the home) could be viewed as the perfect, sanitised way for women to express their emotions, and discusses the enormous popularity of the sheet music of Chopin's pieces for parlour piano performances for just such a purpose.[28] Sarah Stickney Ellis, another author of women's conduct books, had strident opinions on women and their musical talents remaining in the family home, stating that if daughters utilised their musical accomplishments simply 'to soothe the weary spirit' of her father returning home from the world of work, all was well, when utilised for this 'noble purpose'.[29] If, however, she refused to play for her family but insisted on performing publicly for 'strangers' or guests, this would be, suggested Ellis, most 'disappointing' for those parents who have funded the girl's tuition with good (or at least, very different) intentions.[30]

The debate surrounding the education of women and girls at this time, as mentioned in chapter one, is worth referencing here, with regards to the level of musical education and opportunities available to the different sexes. Even contemporary publications such as the *Musical Times* (1882) acknowledged the issue, quoting (along with ridiculing) Mrs Fanny Raymond Ritter who, in what they describe as her 'brochure' entitled *Woman as a Musician,* suggested that a lack of education was the main hurdle for women musicians.[31] The *Musical Times* disagreed with Ritter, and also suggested that the majority of the list of female musicians presented by her as

[27] Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (eds) *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 87.
[28] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914 "Encroaching on All Men's Privileges"* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 2000), p. 5 She explains the view that the performance of music such as Chopin's was 'the ideal outlet' for the 'pent-up emotions, unsettling in their intensity', felt by female performers limited to home-performances only.
[29] Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Daughters of England* (London: Fisher, Son and Co., c. 1845), p. 61.
[30] Ibid., p. 62.
[31] 'The Feminine in Music', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, V23 N476 (1 October 1882), p. 522.

examples of talented women who have been successful in the world of music in the 'brochure' is 'quite pathetic in its hopelessness'.[32] Suggesting that more equal education lessens the divide between the sexes, Gillett also highlights the fact that in Victorian England boys could generally choose to play any instrument they wanted to, whilst girls were continually restricted to singing or 'seated, modest' instruments such as the piano or, later, the violin. See Figure 2.3 for the painting *The Home Quartet: Mrs Vernon Lushington and Her Children* (1883) which demonstrates that even female cellists were forced to sit in an impractical, uncomfortable way, due to the potential for this instrument to be considered 'indecorous'.[33]

Figure 2.3: Hughes, A., *The Home Quartet: Mrs Vernon Lushington and Her Children* (1883)

Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914*, p. 110.

[32]'The Feminine in Music', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, p. 522. Fanny Ritter was in fact a highly regarded musical academic, composer, organist and pianist herself, and had been published in, amongst other things, the *Woman's Journal* and the *New York Weekly Review* – what is dismissively described as a brochure here is, in reality, a richly detailed and well-researched piece, charting the history of women in music.

[33] Paula Gillett, Musical Women in England, pp. 3, 26 and 110.

These limitations in terms of both musical education and choice of instrument would hamper the progress of female musicians for generations. There were no female brass players allowed into the Pittsburgh Orchestra, for example, until a female French Horn player was appointed in 1937.[34] Desmond Charles Sergeant and Evangelos Himonides suggest that this pattern continued into relatively modern times and point to the fact that the Vienna Symphony Orchestra did not employ women until 1987, and then only under duress.[35] A very real and debilitating consequence of this unwillingness to allow women into orchestras, was that the increasing number of female musicians graduating from the newly emerging music colleges towards the end of the nineteenth century were unable to gain any 'real world' playing experience or employment.[36] Rohr explains that female composers also remained limited in professional opportunities 'since they were excluded from orchestras, conducting posts, university and church musical activities'.[37]

In the face of this opposition from musical organisations, one way in which these newly qualified female musicians and composers got around this need for gaining playing experience was to set up their own, female-only groups. Until 'blind auditions' (where the player stands behind a screen, their identity hidden from the auditioning panel) became more commonly practiced when auditioning orchestral musicians towards the end of the twentieth century, women continued to be excluded from professional orchestras.[38] As discussed in chapter one, this was largely due to

---

[34] Desmond Charles Sergeant and Evangelos Himonides, 'Orchestrated Sex: The Representation of Men and Women in World-Class Symphony Orchestras', *Frontiers in Psychology* V10 (August 2019), p. 2. The horn player's name was Elen Bogoda and she was, in fact, appointed to the position of principle horn with the orchestra.

[35] Desmond Charles Sergeant and Evangelos Himonides, 'Orchestrated Sex', p. 2.

[36] Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain*, p. 158 and Debora Rohr, 'Women and the Music Profession', p. 324.

[37] Debora Rohr, 'Women and the Music Profession', p. 324.

[38] Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education,* p. 72 and Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, p. 9

anxious masculinity and men beginning to see these emerging female musicians as professional rivals.[39] Davis describes female musicians of the time as being 'ghettoized in minor performances or "at homes"', in reference to women's instrumental performance only being viewed as suitable as entertainment for family in the private, domestic sphere, and certainly not something which could be considered a suitable profession.[40]

As a result of these increasing numbers of newly trained female musicians leaving musical training who found themselves banned from orchestras and groups setting up their own female only organizations, ladies' orchestras began to grow in popularity, reaching a peak at the beginning of the twentieth century.[41] Often, however, these 'ladies' orchestras had male brass sections, due to the shocking and 'unfeminine' nature of brass instruments in particular (a theme which will be explored further later in this chapter).[42] There was much discussion regarding these female groups, with women's musical performances of the time variously described as 'lacking in tone […] or firmness of attack'.[43] One observer speculated that their innate unsuitability for being musicians stemmed from the very quickly disproved 'fact' that women had one muscle missing from their arms, which lead to deficiency in skill in comparison to their male counterparts.[44] Despite the clear medical inaccuracy of this claim, it is typical of the type of language and ideas being proliferated in the music

[39] Paula Gillett discusses this at length, as mentioned earlier, in: *Musical Women in England*, p. 192.
[40] Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, p. 9.
[41] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England* p. 220. Gillett goes as far as to suggest a 'trend' towards ladies' orchestras.
[42] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 236.
[43] Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain,* p. 158.
[44] Ibid., p. 158. This fabrication of women's 'missing bone' is just one example of 'pseudo-science' used to discredit talented female musicians and women in general – further examples were discussed in chapter one.

press at this time in reaction to increasing numbers of women pursuing professional music careers.

Female instrumental soloists (on some instruments) were becoming marginally more accepted towards the end of the nineteenth century, even if just for their novelty value.[45] However, Green explains just how much more troubling the presence of female musicians was when they were to be found amongst the ranks of the orchestra itself, observing that,

> Unlike her soloist colleagues […] she does not engage in a relatively feminine act of solo, virtuoso display, and therefore cannot so easily be presented as a 'sexy image' that compensates for the threat of the instrument. A woman player sitting in the ranks, particularly when she is a minority, must behave like and indeed be like 'one of the men''.[46] […]

A further worrying aspect of female musicians joining the ranks as 'one of the men' was the women's inevitable 'demonstration of fine-motor control as teamwork alongside men' in this situation. This flew uncomfortably in the face of the aforementioned popular opinion that women could not master instruments as well as men.[47] Add to this 'her departure from the private sphere into a male stronghold' and it can be seen that this teamwork was regarded by Victorian and Edwardian society as a particularly troubling and 'unfeminine' type of musical performance - far more so than a solo performance by a female musician.[48]

[45] Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, p. 68.
[46] Ibid., p. 68.
[47] Ibid., p. 69.
[48] Ibid., p. 69.

This view of female public performance as unfeminine is, of course, connected to the overwhelmingly patriarchal ideologies of the day and as will be discussed, there were vigorous efforts within the male-dominated world of music to reinforce stereotypes of female inadequacy, frailty, and unsuitability when it came to making and performing music (as well as in women's every-day lives). Linking what was the accepted way of things throughout British society at this time to how genders were viewed within the music industry, Green used the phrase 'musical patriarchy' to describe the challenges faced by female musicians.[49] She further suggests that women were complicit in this, as they were with the separate spheres ideology which was interwoven through the fabric of society.[50]

In order to dissuade women in their private, domestic sphere from any kind of public musical performance, there was much discourse in the music press which tended towards criticism of women as musicians and descriptions of ways in which they 'lacked' ability and creativity. Gillett acknowledges this 'prevailing prejudice against women's creative powers' as part of her chapter on the lack of musical education for girls and women, demonstrating that they were prejudiced against from the start of their lives.[51] Much was made, as has been mentioned, of the notion of greatness being linked almost exclusively to men with an article in the *Sketch* from 1898 discussing women's lack of creativity, saying that they could not be credited with the creation of any great works.[52] It states that 'woman remains bound, restrained, cribbed, cabin'd and confined. She has never composed the music of the world'.[53] As

[49] Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education.*, p. 15. She continues the definition as, 'the division of musical work into a largely male public sphere and a largely female private sphere', echoing the 'separate sphere' ideology which was prevalent at the time.
[50] Ibid., p. 57.
[51] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 1.
[52] Maura Goodrich Dunst, *"Such Genius as Hers",* pp. 26-27.
[53] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

Goodrich Dunst wryly notes, the language used here is far more revealing than was the original intent of the author – all these ways in which women were constrained was precisely what prevented them from being able to be creators, or to have their creations recognised as their own.[54]

As Rohr suggests, ‘doubts’ were regularly expressed about the ability of women ‘to endure rigours of professional life’ and that for many women, any profession, including one as a musician would surely prove, it was suggested, to be ‘too laborious’.[55] In the face of this relentless repression of their talents, many creative women of this period reported feeling ‘strangled’, and increasingly labelled hysterical, or even insane.[56] This was due to, in Dijkstra’s words, ‘the male world’s resolute refusal to recognise the creative intelligence of women’.[57] When added to his discussion surrounding the desire at this time for an almost consumptive, weak, helplessness in women which was mentioned in chapter one, it can be observed that whether on or off stage, in Fin de Siècle Britain, the role of ‘inferior’ women was to please, be pleasing and ultimately subservient to, the creatively superior men who dominated the patriarchal society in which they lived.[58]

<u>The sexualization of female musicians and the voyeuristic nature of male audiences and concert reviews</u>

During the time period covered by this study, even the seemingly straightforward act of public music performance brought with it for women its own set of challenges, which can be added to a growing list of hurdles already in the way of female brass

[54] Maura Goodrich Dunst, *“Such Genius as Hers”,* pp. 26-27. The extent to which women of the time were ‘bound and constrained’ will be discussed further in chapter three of this study.
[55] Debora Rohr, ‘Women and the Music Profession’, p. 309.
[56] Bram Dijksra, *Idols of Perversity*, p. 37.
[57] Ibid., p. 36.
[58] Julie Holledge, *Innocent Flowers*, p. 1868 and Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, p. 3.

musicians. Continuing on from the belief of the time that actresses were generally sexually available, advertising their 'wares' from the stage, Gillett describes the societal backdrop against which female musicians were trying to assert themselves. She writes that the entire period 'was characterized by continuous discussion and debate over women's nature, capabilities and proper sphere'.[59] Concerns regarding women performing (musically or otherwise) in public included questions such as 'does the self-display of public performance make women unfit for marriage and motherhood?' and 'is expressiveness suited to a girl destined to a life of self-restraint?'[60]

When Adolphe Sax set up a ladies' brass band in 1862 in France as will be further discussed in chapter three, one of the first hurdles he had to overcome, he realised, were deeply ingrained prejudices of both men and women regarding the level of propriety which was involved with female public performance.[61] Set up to help with women's physical and moral health, Sax was aware that the members of his band would, nonetheless, be 'presented first and foremost as a public spectacle, their bodies coming under closer scrutiny than their musicianship'.[62]

It is the scrutiny of audiences observing the female performer which caused the most societal consternation, with the fear that women subjecting themselves to the male gaze jeopardised their respectability.[63] However, it could be  suggested that the female performer was clearly complicit, as, 'display is not so much a single act by a

[59] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 3.
[60] Ibid., p. 3.
[61] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', pp 224 and 236.
[62] Ibid., p. 253.
[63] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 7. The 'male gaze' in this context is defined in both the literature review of this thesis and later in this section, with reference to the works of Ellis, Kern and Gillet and the images in figures 1.3 and 2.8, where it can be seen in a musical setting.

displayer as a relationship, an exchange which is mutually constructed by both the displayer and an onlooker'.[64] It was this complicity and exposure to/awareness of the mainly male audiences gaze which are depicted in the numerous 'proposal pictures' of the era, and demonstrate the controversy surrounding women's public performance and display (see Figures 2.4 and 2.5 for examples of proposal paintings which depict this 'male gaze').[65]

Figure 2.4: Long, E., *The Proposal* (1868)

Stephen Kern, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels, 1840-1900*, p. 8.

---

[64] Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, p. 21.
[65] Stephen Kern, *Eyes of love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels 1840-1900* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1996), p. 9 and <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/search?keyword=last&keyword=appeal>[accessed 16 February 2021].

Figure 2.5: Alma-Tadema, L., *Pleading* (1876)

Stephen Kern, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels, 1840-1900*, p. 9.

The gaze in this context is defined by Stephen Kern as, 'a term I apply strictly to a way of looking that serves an erotic purpose […] men own the gaze: women are passive erotic objects, while men are active erotic subjects'.[66] Joseph A. Kestner also writes about the nature of the Victorian man's gaze, emphasizing 'the woman's to-be-looked-at-ness'.[67] Steele refers to corset advertisements which were produced for the male gaze such as the one for Ball's Corsets from the 1880s in which the viewer is instructed to place a card along the line and place his nose on the card in order for the woman in her frilly underwear to appear to be wearing the black corset which the card is advertising (see Figure 2.6).[68] F. S. Muschamp's painting *Scarborough Spa at Night* (1879) is another example of artwork from the era which

[66] Stephen Kern, *Eyes of love,* p. 10.
[67] Ibid., p. 13.
[68] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 132.

depicts women being subjected to ‘the gaze’ and unwanted male attention (see Figure 2.7).[69]

Figure 2.6: *Trade card for Ball’s Corsets* (1880s)

Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 132.

Figure 2.7: F. S. Muschamp, *Scarborough Spa at Night* (1879)

Stephen Kern, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels, 1840-1900*, p. 41.

[69] Stephen Kern, *Eyes of love,* p. 41.

The male fascination with the female form which began to be documented or described as the 'male gaze' is demonstrated in cartoons, artwork and the language of concert and performance reviews of the time. One cartoon frequently referenced in literature surrounding this subject featured in *Punch* in 1875.[70] *The Fair Sex-tett (Accomplishments of the Rising Female Generation)* depicts a group of six female musicians (three violinists, a cellist, a double bassist, and a woman playing an enormous, unlikely hybrid of several brass instruments) standing on the stage of a theatre or music hall, performing for an enraptured, entirely male, audience (see Figure 2.8).[71] Katharine Ellis discusses 'the voyeuristic potential of women brass-players remain[ing] undiminished' and described this image thus:

> few cartoons convey so pithily the allure of a female brass-player's chest […] for the concert-going bourgeois male, who is even prepared to pay for an entire box in order to be able to ogle, undisturbed, whereby ensuring sole possession of this particular vision.[72]

Ellis also notes the 'demure' demeanour of all but the brass player in the group, observing the way she engages 'directly with a member of the audience […] fixing her eyes on him as if daring him to continue […] although her unwomanly behaviour makes her no less fascinating to her audience, it is at the expense of her dignity'.[73]

[70] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 234.
[71] Ibid., p. 234.
[72] Ibid., p. 235.
[73] Ibid., p. 236.

Figure 2.8: du Maurier, G., *The Fair Sext-tett*

Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 234.

Indeed, Sax found that critics used language to describe his female musicians as such as embonpoint, or 'healthily plump', which in the nineteenth century 'related to the swollen ripeness of fruit'.[74] One particular critic, 'Le Cuisinier de Monsieur', reviewed a concert of the group during which cornet player Salle Hertz performed a virtuoso solo piece. He went on to suggest, (having been a party to the discussion regarding the health benefits to ladies' breathing and chests inherent in taking up brass playing), that 'Sax should post 'before' and 'after' pictures in his shop window of his lady brass players, to demonstrate the physical benefits of brass-playing for women'.[75] The sexually explicit language being utilized here blatantly shifts the emphasis away simply from a discussion of health to focusing attention on the women's upper torsos.[76]

[74] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 233.
[75] Ibid., p. 233.
[76] Ibid., p. 233.

Two of Sax's cornet players, the aforementioned Hertz, and Emilie Lacroix, appear to have been outstanding musicians, yet their performance reviews were frequently 'tinged with erotic delight'.[77] Language such as the women's 'strength of chest, the expansive development of the respiratory organs', their 'phrasing benefit[ing] from long breath-spans which add[s] a particular charm to the musical effect' and that the entire sextette 'played at the top of their lungs' were commonplace in reviews of the group from the time.[78] Even Sax himself, champion of these female musicians as he undoubtedly was, inadvertently described his band in similar terms on occasion, telling his audience that they could be presented with '40 or 50 of the ugly sex' but that instead, his band presented to them 'the same number of charming little female faces' offering, in Ellis' words, 'an opportunity for the male gaze to feast itself on several "pretty faces" […] all at once'.[79]

Goodrich Dunst agrees that, regarding female musicians, the focus of reviews tended to overwhelmingly be on physical appearance when performing.[80] Davis concurs, writing that actresses on the stage were subjected, as with other performers of the time, to 'widespread objectification of the female body'.[81] An example of the type of review of female performance which demonstrated the fact that female performers 'were seen first as women, the sexual objects of men, and only second as musicians' would include one by George Bernard Shaw who, in 1885, was a music critic.[82] Shaw begins by describing the attractive nature of the outfits (and in particular the skirts) of these musicians 'of the other sex'.[83] He then singles out the

---

[77] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 232.
[78] Ibid., p. 232.
[79] Ibid., p. 251.
[80] Maura Goodrich Dunst, "*Such Genius as Hers",* p. 28.
[81] Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, p. xv.
[82] Pirkko Moisala and Beverley Diamond (eds) *Music and Gender*, pp. 202-203.
[83] Ibid., p. 203.

clothes worn by the (female) conductor for particular descriptive attention, writing of her ‘black silk skirt, and sleeves made somewhat shorter and wider than the others, so as to give free play to a plump wrist and arm’.[84] Whilst he enjoys their performance, he is at pains to point out that they are obviously ‘inferior to the Strauss band in precision and perfection of detail’, but he however finds ‘the effect of the “Lady Orchestra” is very novel and pleasant’.[85]

Contrast the above review with the performance descriptions of leading male trumpet players of the day, and the difference is quite stark. For example, Ernest Hall (1875-1962) was regularly mentioned in the music press, with everything from the brand of trumpet he played (a Mahillon) to the types of trumpet he had mastered (both B-flat and F varieties, as well as the cornet) getting a mention, along with descriptions of his playing, such as the fact he played with a ‘very direct, unwavering sound’.[86] Reviewers did not, however, deem it necessary to describe his breathing, its effect on his facial features, the appearance of his chest or, indeed, what Mr Hall was wearing.

As these contrasting examples demonstrate, reviews which focussed on the desirable appearance of female musicians rather than any musical skills which they possessed were commonplace, and have been presented here as another example of a hurdle faced by all female performers and musicians of the era, and which female brass musicians in particular, as will be demonstrated, would inevitably have to fight to overcome.[87]

---

[84] Pirkko Moisala and Beverley Diamond (eds) *Music and Gender, p.* 203.
[85] Ibid., p. 203.
[86] Paul Leonard Nevins, *Trumpet in Transition: A History of the Trumpet and its Players in the United Kingdom Through the Music and Relationships of Edward Elgar* PhD, Birmingham City University (Birmingham Conservatoire), 2017, pp. 33 and 123.
[87] Pirkko Moisala and Beverley Diamond (eds) *Music and Gender*, p. 203.

What was so scandalous about a woman blowing a brass instrument?

For many reasons, Victorian and Edwardian society viewed as taboo brass instruments as a choice for women to take up and play in public. Indeed, right from the very outset of instrument selection, there was, and to an extent still is, a clearly discernible 'gendering' of instruments as being perceived as being more suitable for girls/women or boys/men to play. Reflecting thought processes at the time, but demonstrating that these ideas are still current, Kemp observes 'people's perception of particular instruments as being endowed with gender-related connotations', noting that:

> these beliefs and attitudes appear to be well in place in primary school children and right up into adult life. They will certainly influence the patterns of children's instrumental choice, and instruments such as the violin and flute may, as a result, be avoided by boys, and trumpets and trombones by girls.[88]

As part of her discussion regarding the types of instrument played by women in a nineteenth century parlour setting such as the piano or harp, it is interesting to note that even Green, modern scholar of music education as she is, singles out the trumpet as the most extreme instrumental counterpart to the above examples, writing that 'a female trumpet player would have incurred radically different display-delineations, and in fact was quite unheard of'.[89] Further to this, Davis confirms that certain instruments, brass among them, were 'off bounds' to women at this time.[90].

Unfortunately, potential female brass players of the era for discussion in this study were burdened with the double challenge of not only the perception of brass

[88] Anthony E. Kemp, *The Musical Temperament: Psychology and Personality of Musicians*, p. 115.
[89] Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, p. 52.
[90] Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, p. 9.

instruments and music as being masculine, but also that mouth instruments, or those considered to have 'phallic' connotations were deemed ultimately taboo for women to play.[91] Kemp has characterized the posture adopted by trombone players, for example, as a "phallic stance"'.[92] He describes the 'manly perceptions', even today of orchestral brass players and explains that this impression of them is compounded by the fact that it takes the power of comparatively few brass instruments to 'totally obliterate the sounds of the rest of the orchestra', so hardly gentle and 'feminine' in their output.[93]

The above school of thought regarding brass instruments having manly associations stemmed from a 'disbelief at women's attempt to control man-made technology', and inevitably heavy, loud, technically engineered brass instruments would therefore be precisely the type of instruments from which women have historically been 'most vehemently discouraged or banned'.[94] At this time, a person's gender and choice of instrument were closely linked, which tended to rule out, for female musicians, taking up any instrument which could at the time be viewed as 'sexually suggestive'.[95] 'Parlour' instruments such as the keyboard, which originated in a genteel, domestic, middle or upper-class setting and could be played seated in a decorous manner, were viewed as far more suitable for women to be associated with, than brass band instruments, forever linked with the north of England and the working classes.[96]

---

[91] Anthony E. Kemp, *The Musical Temperament,* p. 144.
[92] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 198.
[93] Anthony E. Kemp, *The Musical Temperament*, pp. 144 and 158.
[94] Lucy Green, 'Musical Meaning, and Education', *Philosophy of Music Education Review,* V2 N2 (Fall 1994), p. 101.
[95] David H. C. Wright, *The Royal College of Music and its Contexts: An Artistic and Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 59.
[96] Ibid.*,* p. 59. Trevor Herbert has written extensively on the working classes being encouraged to take up 'wholesome' pastimes such as banding (see the discussion in chapter one) and the fact that the overwhelming majority of bands in the early days of the formation of the movement were based in the north of England. He states, 'the absolute heartland of the pre-1914

As mentioned above, reviews focused very much on the appearance of female musicians, and as well as the sexual undertones of some female musical performance reviews which was covered earlier, even promoter of female brass musicians Alphonse Sax Jr. was moved to apologise for the 'bizarreness' of the appearance of lady brass players and their inevitable 'loss of gracefulness of face'.[97] Such was the unsuitability of any facial distortions in women, that often they were depicted 'playing' brass instruments, but with the instruments themselves not actually placed onto their lips correctly, or at all. In the suffragette poster *Bugler Girl* (1908), she shows 'no evidence of facial distortion due to indelicate blowing', which was a deliberate decision in the creation of this poster as it was deemed controversial enough without it also depicting female facial distortions.[98] The poster can be seen in Figure 2.9, where the Bugler Girl appears almost to have the instrument not pressed to her lips, but actually in her mouth, like a recorder, chanter, or something along those lines. Figure 2.10 shows a comparative view of how the chanter is blown, which is more akin to the technique depicted on the *Bugler Girl* poster.[99]

movement was undoubtedly formed by the West Riding of Yorkshire, especially the textile district, and industrial Lancashire', Trevor Herbert, *Bands*, p. 60.

[97] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 236.

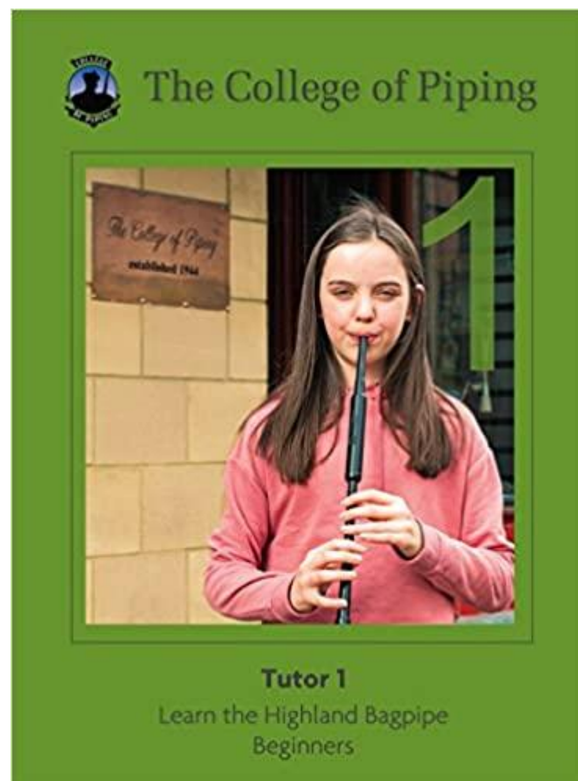
[98] Paula Gillett, Musical Women in England, p. 223.

[99] Ibid., p. 223 and Seumas MacNeill and Thomas Pearson*, The College of Piping Tutor 1* (Glasgow: The College of Piping, 2017), front cover.

Figure 2.9: *Bugler Girl* (1908)

Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 223.

Figure 2.10: *Girl Blowing Chanter*




Seumas MacNeill and Thomas Pearson, *The College of Piping Tutor 1*, front cover.

Sergeant and Himonides also discuss the taboo of instruments being blown and contorting women's facial features, suggesting that 'conventions of respectability and appropriateness regarding feminine manners and appearances and attitudes to the female body decreed that some instruments were unsightly for women to play, interfering with appreciation of the female face or body'.[100] Gillett, too, observes 'the taboo of female performance on mouth instruments was commonly attributed to the dislike of distended and ruddy cheeks and other facial distortions'.[101] Demonstrating this appearance-obsessed language and thought, Green quotes some orchestral conductors interviewed in a 1904 edition of *Musical Standard,* who stated that 'women cannot possibly play brass instruments and look pretty, and why should they spoil their looks?' and 'woman, lovely woman, is always to be admired, except when she is playing in an orchestra'.[102]

Indeed, public perceptions of female brass-players tended to group them with common street performers, and women playing brass instruments were generally depicted in a less-than-flattering light, such as the comical, puffed-out-cheeks of the players shown in the cartoon *Petticoat Quartette*, which appeared in the *Strand Magazine* in 1892. (see Figure 2.11).[103] This *Strand* article describes street musicians of the day, as either 'tolerable' or 'intolerable' with the strong suggestion that the group of lady brass players falls into the latter group.[104] Other cartoons of this time period to mock the appearance and efforts of brass-playing women include

[100] Desmond Charles Sergeant and Evangelos Himonides, 'Orchestrated Sex', p. 2.
[101] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 193.
[102] Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, p. 67.
[103] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 194, and <https://www.victorianvoices.net/ARTICLES/STRAND/1892A/S1892A-StreetMusicians.pdf> [accessed 20 January 2021].
[104] The article can be found in its entirety here: <https://www.victorianvoices.net/ARTICLES/STRAND/1892A/S1892A-StreetMusicians.pdf> [accessed 20 January 2021], and demonstrates the other types of 'tolerable' and 'intolerable' groups to which they were being compared.

*Domestic Joys of Parents Whose Daughters Take Part in Women's Orchestras* and *The Serpent Starting to Tempt the Women Once Again,* from 1865 (see Figures 2.12 and 2.13).[105] Ellis suggests that these cartoons 'both played on the idea of the grotesque, presenting images of fashion-conscious and tightly corseted women whose normally decorous posture is contorted by attempts to play instruments that are too heavy […] or to play them while seated'.[106] Ellis is suggesting that they are being made to look ridiculous for having the temerity to even attempt to play brass instruments in the clothing that they are wearing, and that their breathing would clearly be restricted were they to attempt such a ridiculous pastime as the playing of a brass instrument – a view which is further explored in the next chapter which focuses on the impracticalities, discomfort and potential dangers of women's clothing of the era.[107]

This chapter has explored the experiences of female musicians on the public stage at the turn of the century, and discovered that they often faced challenges from the very beginning of their experience of selecting an instrument. It has been shown that there was a clear 'gendering' of instruments, that women were encouraged to perform only in the home 'domestic' sphere, and then just on a suitably decorous instrument, such as the piano. Furthermore, women performing on the public stage were largely viewed unfavourably, and often reviews of their performances contained overtly sexualised language, focussing on their appearance rather than ability. Add to this the societal view that mouth instruments were particularly controversial for

[105] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 240.
[106] Ibid., p. 242.
[107] Ibid., p. 242.

women to consider taking up, and it can be seen that the list of challenges faced by female brass players at this time was continuing to grow.

Figure 2.11: *Petticoat Quartette*

Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England*, p. 194.

Figure 2.12: *Domestic Joys of Parents Whose Daughters take part in Women's Orchestras* (1865) and Figure 2.13: *The Serpent starting to Tempt the Women Once Again* (1865)

Katharine Ellis, *'The Fair Sax'*, p. 240.

# CHAPTER III: The constraining nature of Victorian and Edwardian women's clothing, and why it was not conducive to brass playing

The restrictive nature of Victorian and Edwardian women's clothing is well documented with clothing of the time, in particular the corset, being said to have 'functioned as a coercive apparatus through which patriarchal society controlled women and exploited their sexuality'.[1] Styles that were fashionable changed as the nineteenth century progressed, and continued to evolve in the Edwardian era. The corset, however, remained central to, and constant in, the design of these garments and will be the primary focus of this chapter.

The history and development of the corset and Victorian and Edwardian dresses will be the first area of discussion here, and will be followed by a section which analyses the general dangers to the physical health of late nineteenth and early twentieth century women which came from wearing corsets. This overview of the overall effects on women's health by the wearing of these garments has been included in order to provide a comprehensive view of the potentially dangerous nature of this clothing. This will demonstrate that it was not just women's breathing which was adversely affected by constriction of the torso. There will then follow a discussion on restriction of the chest and the diaphragm, which examines in detail the aspects of corset-wearing which would have impeded the breathing of female brass players. However, the wearing of corsets presented greater physical challenges than simply detrimentally restricting the wearer's breathing, and that contemporary pressures to

[1] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 109.

wear them (despite increasing awareness of the risks) added to a growing litany of societal and physical pressures on would-be female brass musicians at this time.

The corset had been a wardrobe staple for hundreds of years before Queen Victoria acceded the throne in 1837, going through various design changes and worn by women throughout society. There was always a 'controlling' aspect to this garment, and this will be examined here, along with the changing nature of this need for control as the century progressed. As the reasons for 'constraining' women changed, or increased, so women's fashions evolved along-side. The restrictive nature of these garments, ultimately, fits perfectly with societal expectations of women, which were 'modesty, piety, passivity and frailty'.[2] Case studies involving women who actually wore the garments in question have therefore been included in this chapter to demonstrate the truly uncomfortable - or even dangerous - nature of these items. These experiences show how this clothing would have impeded the everyday activities of any woman of the era, particularly if they wished to undertake a physical pursuit such as brass playing.

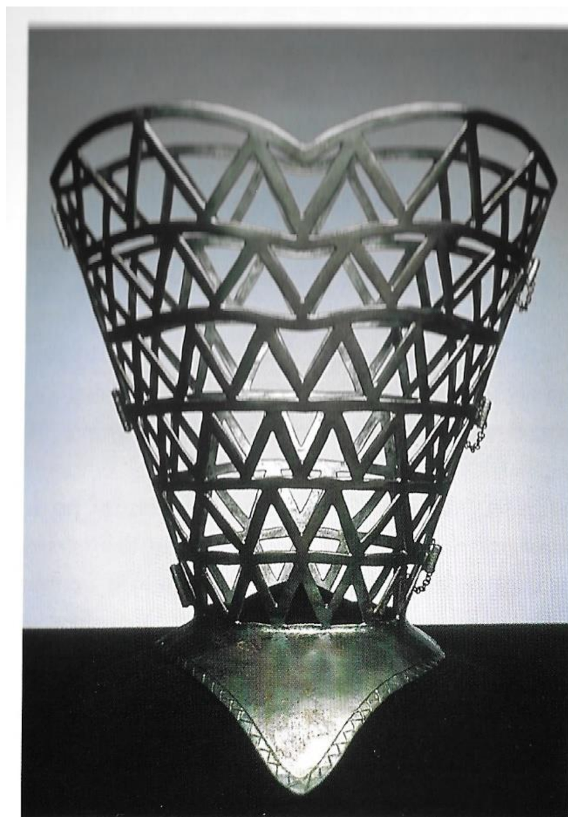
<u>Restriction of women's freedoms and the formation of the Rational Dress Society</u>

Worn by women for hundreds of years, the corset could be described as 'probably the most controversial garment in the entire history of the western world'.[3] It is thought that the origin of corsets could be traced as far back as ancient Greece or Minoan Crete, although Steele disputes this, describing the more basic and fluid nature of clothing at that time, and suggesting that documented evidence of the wearing of corsets can be observed more from the sixteenth century in Europe, very

[2] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset' p. 111.
[3] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 1.

possibly originating among the Spanish or Italian aristocracy.[4] Oscar Wilde's wife Constance Mary Wilde (1859-1898) was a leading member of the Rational Dress Society mentioned later in this chapter. Wilde himself was moved to comment on the 'tyranny of tight-lacing' while discussing the metal corsets worn by Catherine de Medici in the sixteenth century, describing them as 'a torturous device of steel' (see Figure 3.1).[5]

Figure 3.1: *Metal corset*



Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 5.

[4] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 111, and Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 4 and 7. Before this, 'fashionable' ladies wore figure-enhancing dresses which laced closed.

[5] Oscar Wilde, *The Philosophy of Dress* <https://www.readingdesign.org/philosophy-of-dress/> [Accessed 4 April 2020], Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 111 and Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History,* p. 5.

Steele questions whether the surviving examples of such 'torturous devices' largely found in museums today are truly representative of the types of garment worn in a fashionable context, suggesting that many of these are possibly medical devices designed to treat spinal abnormalities.[6] Indeed, corsets were often promoted as improving posture, and tended to be first worn in childhood from as early as two years of age for girls, to promote a good waist and bust, and in the case of boys, they were worn until 'breeched' at the age of six so that they grew straight-backed and tall.[7] The original name for corsets, 'stays', which meant at the time 'support', could conceivably be 'implying that the female body was naturally weak'.[8] This would certainly fit with the patriarchal and class divided narrative of the time which valued the 'upright' stance of those at the top of society, which distinguished them from the lower, working classes, who were stooped from hours of manual labour.[9]

Technological advancements of the Industrial Revolution meant that the corset began to be mass-produced, more widely available and affordable as the century progressed.[10] No longer were they the preserve of the aristocracy, who started to find it harder to 'differentiate themselves through fashion'.[11] Working class women in Britain were more likely than their French counterparts to wear them, and one affordable range which was produced for this market, called 'The Pretty Housemaid Corset' came in more practical colours (such as Khaki) for women involved in

[6] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 5.

[7] Ibid., p. 12. Conversely, in Elizabethan society, the corset was used to disguise a woman's femininity 'focusing more on the divine implication of the female body', visible in the dress styles of Queen Elizabeth, the 'Virgin Queen', Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 111.

[8] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History,* p. 16.

[9] Ibid., p. 15. Regarding the wearing of corsets at this time, there would of course not have been an 'across the board' experience which was the same for all women. However, most women would have faced similar social pressures to conform in terms of the way they dressed.

[10] Ibid., p. 47.

[11] Ibid., p. 47.

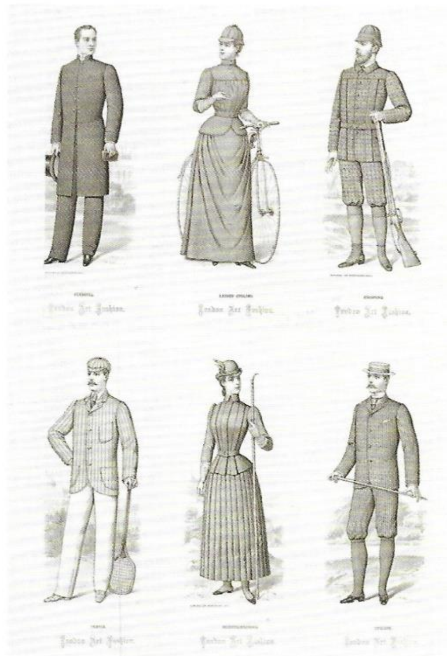
manual labour (see Figure 3.2).[12] The latter decades of the nineteenth century saw the introduction of "Health Corsets" and "Sporting Corsets" which, while still tight and restrictive, were made 'with elastic panels, cotton netting and ventilation' and these began to be offered alongside the initial constructions of Iron, Whalebone and silk (see Figure 3.3).[13] These changes came about due to the growing importance of exercise, and in particular the increasing popularity of the bicycle in the 1880s and 1890s which will be discussed later in this chapter.[14]

Figure 3.2: *The Pretty Housemaid Corset*

Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 48.

[12] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 48.
[13] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 111.
[14] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 143, and Eva Chen, 'It's Prohibitive Cost', p. 1.

Figure 3.3: *Sporting costumes*



Lucy Johnston, *19th Century Fashion in Detail,* p. 13.

From the earliest societal pressure urging mothers to lace their daughters into corsets from a very early age so that 'they have the perfect body when they grow up', the clear and consistent message disseminated to women for many hundreds of years was that, at every stage of your life, the wearing of these garments made you more attractive and therefore 'marriage-able'. [15] The pressure was on Victorian mothers, and they were only too well aware that their daughters would most likely have no acceptable way of financially supporting themselves. It was a mother's duty to get their daughters marriage-market ready, in order to guarantee for them any kind of future prospects. (see Figure 3.4 for an example of how children's corsets were advertised).[16] Crow, as part of his discussion of patriarchal Victorian Britain, quotes Dr. C. Willet Cunningham, who described tightly laced corsets as 'a happy

[15] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 111.
[16] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 49.

contrivance […] to inflame the passions of one sex while restraining those of the other'.[17] Erkal agrees, suggesting that the aim of encouraging your daughters to wear tightly-laced corsets 'was to achieve sexual desirability in young girls and at the same time deny or repress sexual desire in their bodies'[18]

Figure 3.4: *Advertisement for child's corset*

Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 49.

The picture in Figure 3.5 of an advertisement from the 1880s is typical of the time, and culminates with the 'happy result' of the woman featured wearing The Madam Warren corset being finally made presentable enough by the advertised garment to secure a husband.[19] Advertising was often duplicitous, describing corsets as 'comfort' or 'health' models, and making all kinds of promises to the reader, such as them being 'unbreakable' or having 'adjustable sides' (see for example the advert for W. B. Corsets in Figure 3.6).[20] The repeated message was that the wearing of corsets made you attractive, and disguised anything remotely unsightly, for this would never do for a woman. Commenting on the potentially unattractive qualities of

[17] Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman*, p. 336.
[18] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 111.
[19] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 134.
[20] Ibid., p. 56.

a normally sized, potentially un-corseted Victorian woman's body, French 'beauty writer' Ernest Feydeau wrote in 1874 that '"thick, large" waists are "simply hideous…to a man of taste"'.[21]

Figure 3.5: *Madam Warren corset advertisement*

Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 134.

[21] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 53. Steele also points out, however, that 'a big belly was associated with English cultural nationalism, at least when it was a man who was fat', p. 38 and <https://www.britannica.com/topic/John-Bull-English-symbol> [Accessed 8 May 2020].

Figure 3.6: *W. B. corset advertisement*

Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 56.

It can be seen that fashions changed dramatically throughout the nineteenth century up to the time of focus for this study. Throughout the course of the century there was a move away from the relatively comfortable late eighteenth/early nineteenth century ladies fashions which featured high waistlines (see Figure 3.7 for an example of this high-waisted type of dress).[22] The late eighteenth century 'empire line', based on Greek and Roman Classicism, evolved from around 1815, through the beginnings of the increasingly restrictive and highly adorned styles of the 1820s-1830s, to the corsets and high necklines of the 1850s  and crinolines of the 1860s eventually to the tight skirts and bustles of the 1880s onwards.[23] One of the main reasons for fashion moving away from the 'empire line' high waisted dresses of the turn of the

[22] Lucy Johnston, *19th Century Fashion in Detail.* p. 24.
[23] Ibid., pp. 6, 7. 9 and 11.

nineteenth century was the style's increasing associations with Revolutionary France, chaos, and societal turmoil.[24] Therefore corsets, along with their connotations of control and order, were back gaining popularity once again by 1815, as the beleaguered country sought to restore some equilibrium after the turbulent Napoleonic War years.[25]

Figure 3.7: *High-waisted dress*

Lucy Johnston, *19th Century Fashion in Detail*, p. 24.

Changes in clothing styles for men and children were nowhere nearly as marked as they were for women.[26] Gernsheim remarks that the varied, but in different ways equally constricting, women's fashions of this era encouraged invalidity and a sedentary lifestyle for women mentioned in chapter one, and 'underlined women's inactivity, which made possible such fantasies of dress'.[27] At mid-century, crinolines,

[24]Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 33.
[25] Ibid., p. 33.
[26] Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion*, p. 23.
[27] Ibid., p. 22.

crinoline cages and enormous skirts dominated fashion alongside corsets (see Figure 3.8).[28] Crinoline was originally the name of the horsehair widely used in the manufacture of petticoats, but the term eventually came to be used to describe petticoats in general.[29] The crinoline cage (invented in 1856) replaced these increasingly heavy layers of petticoats, and was a band of connected steel, rubber or whalebone circles which was worn beneath the dress of the wearer, and swayed as she walked (see figure 3.9 for a crinoline dress with constricting sleeves and 3.10 for an example of a typical crinoline cage).[30] These items, again worn across the classes, rapidly built up a reputation for being dangerous to the wearer - Figure 3.10 shows how large these skirts had become.[31] Ultimately, brass playing women would not have been immune from the pressure to dress 'appropriately' just because of their pastime or profession, and several images in chapter four of the Bramusa and Shepherd family bands show the female members of the family wearing the tight-fitting, cumbersome fashions of the day for publicity shots (see figures 4.1, 4.5 and 4.6). What will be discussed in detail in chapter four is that when actually performing, however, many of these women embraced the wearing of costumes and uniforms in order to circumnavigate the impractical, constricting dress code of the time.

[28] Lucy Johnston, *19th Century Fashion in Detail*, p. 182.
[29] Norah Waugh, *Corsets and Crinolines* (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 181.
[30] Lucy Johnston, *19th Century Fashion in Detail*, p. 188, and <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/corsets-and-crinolines-in-victorian-fashion/> [Accessed 26 March 2021].
[31] <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/corsets-and-crinolines-in-victorian-fashion/> [Accessed 26 March 2021].

Figure 3.8: *Crinoline dress*

Lucy Johnston, *19th Century Fashion in Detail*, p. 182.

Figure 3.9: *Crinoline cage* (c.1860)

Lucy Johnston, *19th Century Fashion in Detail*, p. 188.

Figure 3.10: *Fashion plate,* from *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1865)

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/corsets-and-crinolines-in-victorian-fashion/> [Accessed 26 March 2021].

Florence Nightingale was just one of the contemporary commentators to write about the dangers of crinolines, suggesting that 630 women died between 1864-1865 due to the over-sized crinolines they were wearing.[32] The crinoline was eventually replaced by the smaller 'crinolette' and then the bustle (see Figures 3.11 and 3.12).[33] Societal change and 'progress', as marked by the Great Exhibition of 1851, was moving apace, and with it came the anxious masculinity mentioned earlier in this study. Although the crinoline cage was undoubtedly 'freeing' in terms of the fact that it liberated women from being weighed down by layers of heavy horsehair petticoats, women were nevertheless, across the classes, increasingly confined to these

[32] Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Nursing for Labouring Classes* (London: Harrison, 1876), p. 42. That this work is aimed at the 'labouring classes' is telling, and evidence of these fashions being prevalent at all levels of society. Nightingale particularly warns her trainee nurses not to stand near open fires, as deaths in this way were not uncommon.

[33] Lucy Johnston, *19th Century Fashion in Detail*, pp. 10 and 11.

‘cages’.[34] It is worth remembering the ground-breaking acts and laws concerning women which were coming into place around this time (as discussed in chapter one), and that the era also saw the publications of ground-breaking works such as JS Mill’s hugely influential *The Subjection of Women* (1869) and his wife Harriet Taylor Mill’s *The Enfranchisement of Women*, which was published in the *Westminster Review* in 1851.[35]

Figures 3.11 and 3.12: *Crinolette and Bustle*

Lucy Johnston, *19th Century Fashion in Detail*, pp. 10 and 11.

The end of the nineteenth century saw a move towards the ‘S-shape’ fashion, where new flat fronted corsets pushed women’s spines out behind, causing the torso to bend into the famous S shape (the corset used for this ‘look’ is discussed later in this chapter). This new design, teamed with tighter, figure-hugging skirts, the tightness of which rendered walking almost impossible for the wearer, as seen in the above

[34] <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/corsets-and-crinolines-in-victorian-fashion/> [Accessed 29 March 2021].
[35] Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion*, p. 83.

image, and extra padding to re-emphasise the waist, show even more constraining garment ensembles becoming fashionable for women at the century's end, as women's suffrage began to gain some traction.[36] Steele and Erkal both concur with these increasingly impractical fashions being representative of a reinstatement of control brought about by anxious masculinity. Erkal notes that because 'women were getting stronger politically, they had to be restrained physically'.[37] Steele agrees that during this period of upheaval, 'some traditions, especially those surrounding women, were all the more anxiously retained' and that, significantly, 'the tightly corseted female torso was the site on which a variety of fears and desires were mapped'.[38]

It can be seen that constricting items of clothing such as the corset, crinolines and bustle which emerged at various points in the nineteenth century went some way towards creating 'the idealized (female) image as a cultural construct in Western society'. [39] Erkal discusses this link with fashions and the need for society to re-constrain women at this time, suggesting 'emphasis on the corseted feminine figure was a sign that women should give up labour which they had taken from their husbands when males were at war', saying it is clear that the corset and other restrictive fashions emphasise the doctrine of 'separate spheres' and that this 'ideology co-operates with fashion'.[40] She also states that 'the corset is believed to have functioned as a coercive apparatus through which patriarchal society controlled the female body and exploited women's sexuality'.[41]

---

[36] Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion*, p. 83.
[37] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 112.
[38] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, pp. 51 and 109.
[39] Melis Mulazimoglu Erkal, 'The Cultural History of the Corset', p. 109.
[40] Ibid., p. 112, and p. 116.
[41] Ibid., p. 113. Erkal explains that woman became 'an exquisite slave', p. 113.

There was a feeling that loose clothes meant ‘loose’ morals. This was a reference to middle and upper-class women attempting to distance themselves from the working classes many of whom would, out of necessity, have to wear looser garments to work. However, ‘ladies of leisure’, who were supported financially by their husbands, and could be as ‘straight-laced’ and decorous as they liked.[42] Thus these, in the words of Oscar Wilde, ‘wicked dresses’ continued to be worn, encouraged and praised by society – despite the fact that French ‘sutlers’ (first aid assistants) had appeared on the battlefield during the Crimean war in ‘Military-style bloomers and short skirts’ and Libby Miller, inventor of the short-lived and much derided bloomer (or ‘pantaloons’ - see Figure 3.13) declaring ‘women have been and are slaves, while man in dress and all things is free’.[43]

[42] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 35.
[43] Helen Rappaport, *Women in Trousers – From Bloomers to Rational Dress* (2018) <https://helenrappaport.com/footnotes/rational-dress/> [Accessed 1 July 2020].

Figure 3.13: *A portrait, possibly of Libby Miller, in her pantaloons*

<https://helenrappaport.com/footnotes/rational-dress/> [Accessed 1 July 2020].

Although at the time much criticism of corsets and tight-lacing was, ultimately, criticism of women and their purported 'vanity', there was the beginnings of some stirrings of rebellion - particularly linked to the 'New Woman' and the freedom of movement required for those involved in the bicycle craze of the final decade of the nineteenth century which was touched upon in chapter one. Once again, it was the technical innovations of the Industrial Revolution which, with the introduction of the 'safety bicycle' in the 1880s, made bicycles safer, more affordable and more widely available.[44] Advertisers quickly caught on to the fact that their product was gaining popularity with women and went to great lengths to advertise their goods with feminine imagery, as symbols of self-empowerment and to promote the hobby in a

[44] Eva Chen, 'Its Prohibitive Cost', p. 1.

‘less mannish’ way (see Figure 3.14).[45] Thus, by the mid-1890s, the bicycle reached new heights of popularity, granting women freedoms, status and crucially for the brass-playing women who are the subject of this study, they were a ‘tool for sartorial reform’.[46]

Figure 3.14: *Pope Manufacturing Company bicycle advertisement*

<https://oldbike.wordpress.com/vintage-bicycle-adverts-1900-1920/> [Accessed 26 March 2021].

Founded in 1881, The Rational Dress Society sought to, in the words of the *Rational Dress Society’s Gazette* from January 1889, protest against ‘the introduction of any fashion in dress that either deforms the figure, impedes the movements of the body or in any way tends to injure the health. It protests against the wearing of tightly

[45] Eva Chen, ‘Its Prohibitive Cost’, p. 1. Image at:< https://oldbike.wordpress.com/vintage-bicycle-adverts-1900-1920/> [Accessed 26 March 2021].

[46] Eva Chen, ‘Its Prohibitive Cost’, p. 1. Once the Bicycle had become affordable enough for the working classes, the ‘New Woman’ and upper classes lost interest for two reasons: it no longer set them apart, and their attention was taken by the advent of the motor car.

fitting corsets […] as rendering healthy exercise almost impossible'.[47] Ultimately, female brass players of the time would have been afflicted by the problems and impracticalities encountered by all women of the era regarding the types of fashions society expected them to wear in order to remain 'decorous'. Women who wished to partake in physical exercise or exertion of any kind, whether that was riding a bicycle or playing an instrument which required deep breathing and arm movement, would have been similarly hindered by restrictions of their torso, ribcage, arms, and neck.

The *Gazette* goes on to bemoan cloaks and other garments 'impeding movement of the arms' stating that the 'weight of clothing now worn by women is damaging their constitution', leading to 'half the population withering away' and indeed, these items would, too, have been a hindrance to musicians.[48] The Rational Dress Society held talks and lectures and also set up a depot in London, with the aim of distributing items of 'rational' dress, and also championed the 'bifurcated trouser'.[49] A major goal of the Society, despite continual 'cold, determined opposition' was to educate women as well as men in the benefits of rational dress, lamenting in women their 'servile nature deficient in self-respect'.[50] The Society were baffled by a general 'lack of interest in anatomy', concluding that restrictive clothing continued to be popular due to 'habit and prejudice'.[51] By dragging its heels in embracing Rational Dress and bifurcated trousers for women, the Society noted the fact that Britain lagged quite considerably behind America.[52] This study, in endeavouring to find evidence of

[47] *The Rational Dress Society's Gazette* (London: Hatchard's, January 1889) at: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-rational-dress-societys-gazette> [accessed 25 April 2020].
[48] Ibid.
[49] Helen Rappaport, *Women in Trousers*, and OED on-line <https://www.lexico.com/definition/bifurcate> [Accessed 26 March 2021]. Definition of bifurcate; 'Divide into two branches or forks'.
[50] *The Rational Dress Society's Gazette.*
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

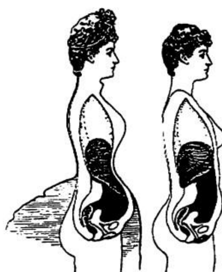
female brass players from this period, discovered many more who were active in the US at this time. There appears to be more acceptance by Americans of the idea of women performing in less constricting clothing (and even trousers). This forward-thinking attitude possibly fostered a more conducive atmosphere for women looking to take up brass instruments, and many examples of women in such outfits and costumes can be seen in chapter four of this study.[53]

The physical dangers of restrictive fashions

The potential dangers of corset wearing were well documented at the time, but often hyperbolised. The garment was held responsible for many disorders which modern medical developments have since proved unlikely, or ruled out completely, such as corsets 'causing' cancer and what was referred to by the medical profession of the day as 'congestion of the blood'.[54] However, genuine illnesses, and even deaths, were frequently discussed in medical journals and by physicians, such as Dr. Robert Latou Dickinson (1861-1950), who wrote at length on damage which he felt was caused to the liver by tight-lacing (see Figure 3.1 for his published diagrams on 'distortion of the liver').[55]

[53] Gavin Holman, *Soft lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018) <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020], p. 21. Cora Youngblood Carson is an excellent example of this, and is discussed in chapter four.
[54] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 75.
[55] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives of Corseting and Two Physiologic Studies With Reenactors*, PhD, Iowa State University, 1998, p. 127.

Figure 3.15: Dickinson, Dr. R. L., *Diagrams published by Dickinson to illustrate liver deformity with tight-lacing* (1887)



Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives of Corseting and Two Physiologic Studies With Reenactors*, PhD, Iowa State University, 1998, p. 127.

Much reference was made in nineteenth and even early twentieth century medical journals to a very early, and ground-breaking medical study on the effects of tight-lacing by Samuel Thomas von Sommerring which was published in 1793.[56] This richly detailed and illustrated study demonstrates that serious discourse on the subject of tight-lacing had already been taking place amongst the medical community for many years, and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

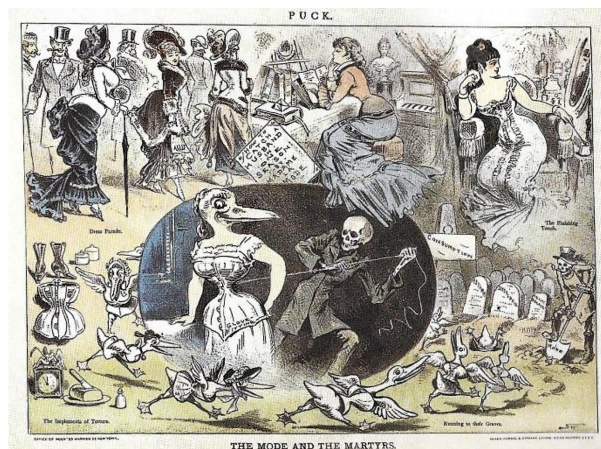
One area generally agreed upon by physicians was the danger posed to pregnant and nursing women by the tight lacing of corsets. Luke Limner wrote in 1874 that, among a long litany of other complaints, the wearing of corsets during pregnancy caused 'inability to suckle' due to the amount of pressure on the breasts, along with miscarriages and 'sterility'.[57] Forceps deliveries, too, became more commonplace during the period during which tight-lacing was most popular.[58] Gau suggests, however, that the surge in discourse on tight-lacing at this time was at least in part linked to notions of 'Social Darwinism', and that concerns actually centred around

[56] Samuel Thomas von Sommerring*, Über die Wirkungen der Schnurbruste (On the Effects of the Corset)*, (Berlin: Neue Auflage, 1793).
[57] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 67.
[58] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 133.

‘sterility, miscarriage and deformed foetus’ stemming from perceptions of declining birth-rates, rather than fears for women’s health.[59]

These societal fears linking women’s clothing ‘choices’ and changing place in society to declining birth rates can be seen reflected in contemporary satirical cartoons, such as *The Mode and The Martyrs* from *Puck* (1877), Gil Baer’s *Fine taille, horribles detailes* (1898) and *The Man and Woman of Tomorrow* (1904). While the first two pictures depict the way that the practice of tight-lacing was beginning to be thought of in disparaging terms, taking aim at women’s ‘vanity’, *The Man and Woman of Tomorrow* is an example of one of the many contemporary images which clearly represent fears surrounding women’s shifting place in society (see Figures 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4).[60]

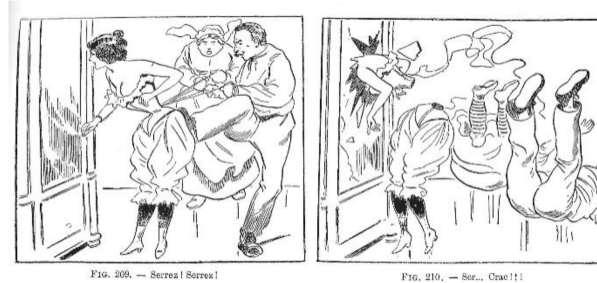
Figure 3.16: *The Mode and the Martyrs,* from *Puck*, (c.1877)




Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 68.

[59] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 14.
[60] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 68, 107 and 60. The reasons for European birth rates declining at this time are varied, with Birsdall suggesting the move from rural living and working to an urban setting, and the introduction of ‘child labour laws and the rising importance of education’ both had an effect. Ultimately, raising a child became, amongst other things, more expensive. Nancy Birdsall, ‘Fertility and Economic Change in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Europe: A Comment’, *Population and Development Review*, V.9 N.1 (March 1983), p. 121.

Figure 3.17: Baer, G., *Fine taille, horribles detales*, from Witowski, Dr. G. J., *Tetoniana*, (1898)




Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* fifth edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 106.

Figure 3.18: *The Man and the Woman of Tomorrow* from *Les Elegants*, (1904)

Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History,* p. 60.

These images were an expression of the anxious masculinity discussed in chapter one which, when it filtered into everyday discourse, saw condemnation of women, the nation's 'vessels of reproduction' thinly disguised as concern regarding of the practice of tight-lacing.[61] The medical profession relentlessly, and anxiously, reminded women of their responsibilities regarding 'national fertility'.[62] John Bulwer's

[61] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 83.
[62] Ibid., p. 83.

*Artificiall Changling* (1653) is an early example of this condemnation, approaching the subject of tight lacing – and mothers' encouragement of it in their daughters - as an attack on the vanity of women.[63] Bulwer writes of 'the folly of mothers, who while they covet to have their young daughters bodies so small in the middle as may be possible, pluck and draw their bones awry and make them crooked'.[64]

Early American feminist Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (1844-1911) wrote in 1873 of the stalling of the Dress Reform Movement.[65] She refers to its links in the public imagination with 'Atheism […] female suffrage, "an opium-fed baby, and a dinnerless and buttonless husband"', her observations evidence of the mounting societal fears surrounding women's changing position in the latter nineteenth century, discussed in chapter one.[66] Even the *British Medical Journal's* condemnation of the dangers of tight lacing continued to echo Bulwer's opinions of 200 years before, describing women as vain 'encased caricatures'.[67] Other medical papers of the time continued to hold mothers responsible for putting their daughter's posture (via the use of corsets) before their health, despite there being equal pressures on mothers to introduce corsets in exactly this way.[68] It was a no win situation for women, with Steele suggesting 'the tight-laced mother was an easy target' for the societal anxieties of the day.[69]

Much early medical opinion was based on little more than conjecture, and there was little actual scientific basis for the majority of the early discourse which took place

---

[63] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History,* p. 15.
[64] Ibid., p. 15.
[65] Ibid., p. 60.
[66] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 60.
[67] 'Tight-lacing', *British Medical Journal*, 12 April 1879, p. 559.
[68] Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On the Ill Effects of Insufficient Exercise, Constrained Positions and Tight Stays on the Health of Young Women* (London: Charles Knight, 1833) p. 78 and Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On Voluntary Distortions of the Human Figure by Artificial Compression* (Edinburgh: S.N., 1832), p. 4.
[69] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 83.

around tight lacing and corsets. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century some more informed, academically robust studies began to take place. In 1890 Surgeon William Wilberforce-Smith, as will be discussed later, examined the lung capacity of corseted and non-corseted individuals.[70] For this experiment, he used a spirometer, which had been invented in the 1840s by the English Surgeon, Dr. John Hutchinson.[71] In 1887, Gynaecologist Dr. Robert Latou Dickinson, concerned with potential damage to the chest and soft tissue caused by corset wearing, conducted a study by inserting a blood pressure reading instrument between the garment and the skin of wearers.[72] Dr. Dickinson's study also considered that the wearing of corsets may cause, as mentioned above, harm to the liver as well as bowel damage, and there were many cases of uterine prolapses due to corset wearing in, and immediately after, pregnancy.[73] A Dr. Stockman, researching 'Chlorosis' (a late nineteenth anaemic type of sickness suffered almost exclusively by adolescent girls) and its potential links to corset wearing, experimented on dogs by encasing them in corsets and restricting their diets. He reported that the dogs 'developed the same symptoms fainting, weakness, sickness etc seen in the young women he treated'.[74]

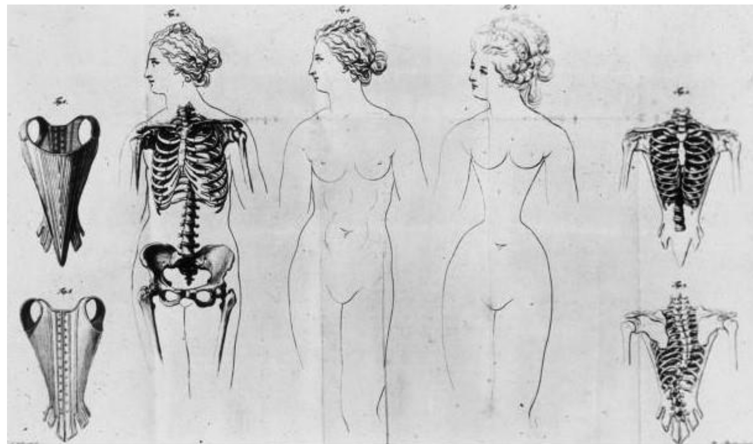
Other health issues associated with the tight lacing of corsets which have been discovered through more modern studies include the back pain which was experienced by seven of the subjects in Gau's study, when they were asked to complete their daily chores.[75] Indeed, the harmful effects to the spine and back muscles of long-time corset wearers was widely known and discussed from as early

[70] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 2.
[71] Ibid., p. 2.
[72] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives,* p. 2.
[73] Ibid., pp. 127 and 131.
[74] Ibid., p. 108.
[75] Ibid., p. 174.

as 1833, where the 'laced waistcoats' used in girls' boarding schools to improve posture were noted to 'weaken back muscles'.[76]

The medical community had long documented their findings on the effects of corset wearing in the form of diagrams, and later, as will be demonstrated, X-rays and photographs. An early example of this is the aforementioned essay *On the Effects of the Corset* (1793), by physician and anatomist Samuel Thomas von Sommerring. Suggesting that the corset was a health hazard, he held it responsible for many ailments including scoliosis of the spine, due to the garment 'compressing the ribs and other organs'.[77] His illustrations, for example, compared a natural figure with a corseted one (see Figure 3.5).[78]

Figure 3.19 von Sommerring, S. T., *Diagrams of corseted and un-corseted bodies* (1793)

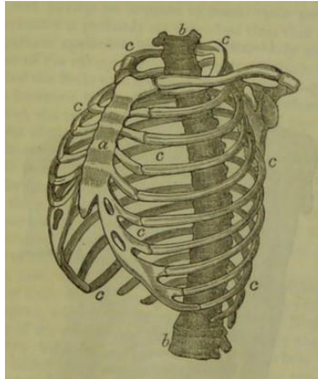


S. T. von Sommerring, *Über die Wirkungen der Schnurbruste* (Berlin: Neu Auflage, 1793).

[76] Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On the Ill effects of Insufficient Exercise*, p. 79.
[77] Samuel Thomas von Sommerring*, Über die Wirkungen der Schnurbruste.*
[78] Ibid*.*

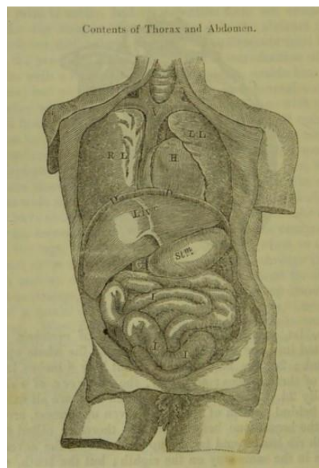
In 1832 the Royal College of Surgeons published *On Voluntary Distortions of the Human Figure by Artificial Compression*, which featured detailed diagrams of both the rib cage and the internal organs (see Figures 3.6 and 3.7).[79]

Figure 3.20: Royal College of Surgeons, *Diagram of the rib cage*



Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On Voluntary Distortions of the Human Figure,* p. 5.

Figure 3.21: Royal College of Surgeons, *Contents of the Thorax and Abdomen*




Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On Voluntary Distortions of the Human Figure*, p. 6.

However, as was common in these early medical reports, as well as the usual litany of hyperbolised ailments attributed to the corset such as the wearer 'vomiting blood' and suffering 'depraved digestion', the authors also suggest that the garments caused 'squeamishness', 'melancholy, hysteria and many diseases peculiar to the female constitution'.[80] Surgeon and anatomist William Henry Flower compared the

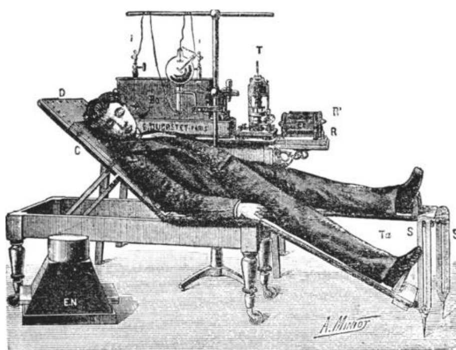
---

[79] Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On Voluntary Distortions of the Human Figure*, pp. 5-6.
[80] Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On Voluntary Distortions of the Human Figure*, p. 10.

‘folly of constraining the chest via the tight-lacing of corsets’, to the crippling custom of Chinese foot binding in his 1881 essay *Fashion in Deformity*, *as illustrated in the Custom of Barbarous and Civilised Races’*.[81]

The invention of x-ray technology in 1895 meant that French doctor Ludovic O’Followell was able to produce a ground-breaking set of x-ray photographs depicting what was actually happening to the ribcage beneath a corset, which he published in his editions of *Le Corset* in 1905 and 1908 (see O’Followell’s x-ray table in Figure 3.8).[82]

Figure 3.22*:* O’Followell*,* Dr. L., *Radiographic operating table and equipment*



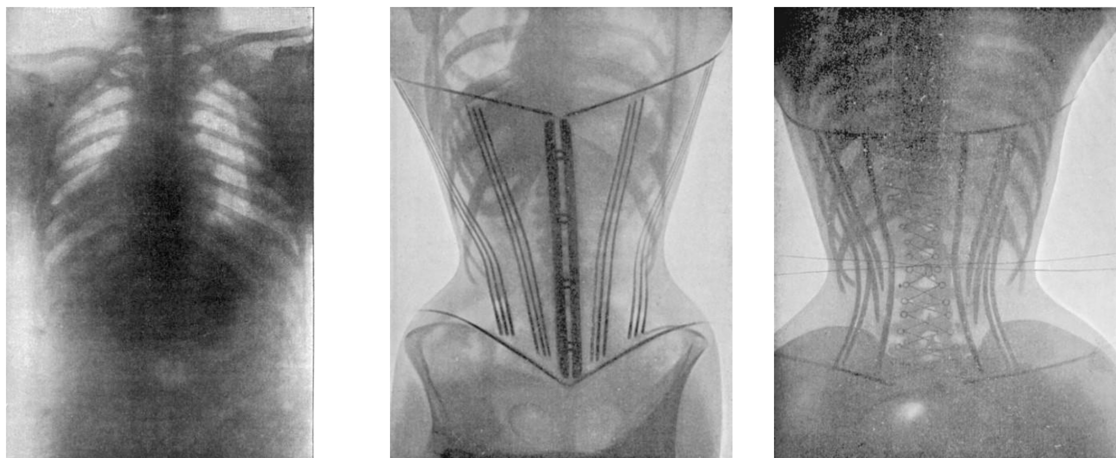

Dr. Ludovic O’Followell *Le Corset (The Corset)* (Paris: A. Maloine, 1905 and 1908), p. 43.

He makes it clear throughout his research that he is advising modification to, rather than eradication of the corset, and his hope was to educate people on the effects that the garments were really having on the body via the use of his x-rays. His main reason for this was, he points out, that the hyperbole surrounding the diseases ‘caused’ by corsets was problematical – he wished to present a true and balanced

[81] William Henry Flower, *Fashion in Deformity, as Illustrated in the Customs of Barbarous and Civilised Races* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1881), pp. 60-62.
[82] Roentgen’s Discovery of the x-ray, <https://www.bl.uk/learning/cult/bodies/xray/roentgen.html#:~:text=In%201895%2C%20the%20invention%20of,to%20cut%20into%20the%20flesh> [accessed 19 August, 2020], and Dr. Ludovic O’Followell *Le Corset (The Corset)* (Paris: A. Maloine, 1905 and 1908), p. 43.

picture of the harm they were causing, without making any wild claims.[83] In exaggerating the dangers of wearing corsets in the way that they had been, O'Followell felt that the medical profession had a tendency to go 'beyond the goal' and suggested that this approach was 'not the way to reduce the drawbacks attached to their use'.[84] His extensive study includes chapters on the respiratory system (which will be examined further later in this chapter), digestion, circulation, kidneys and the reproductive system.[85] There is a wealth of diagrams, photographs and x-ray photographs in O'Followell's study, but the effect on the constriction of the torso can be seen most clearly in the comparison between the pictures of the female body without corset and the images of the corset from different angles (see Figure 3.9).[86]

Figure 3.23: O'Followell, Dr. L., X-*ray of the thorax, Radiography of the line corset (front) and X-ray of the arched corset in front (back*)

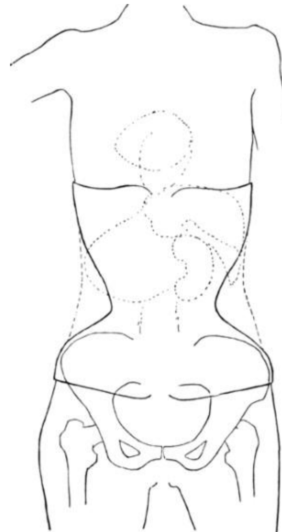


Dr. Ludovic O'Followell *Le Corset,* pp. 50, 53 and 54.

[83] Dr. Ludovic O'Followell*, Le Corset*, p. 27. The type of literature he was referring to, making more exaggerated claims, would have included the Royal College of Surgeons' *On Voluntary Distortions,* as mentioned above.
[84] Dr. Ludovic O'Followell, *Le Corset*, p. 27.
[85] Ibid., throughout.
[86] Ibid., pp. 50, 53 and 54.

His image radioscopy drawing of organ displacement taken from an x-ray also visibly demonstrates the disruption caused by a human body and its internal organs when they are compressed by a tightly laced corset (see Figure 3.10).[87]

Figure 3.24: O'Followell, Dr. L., *Radioscopy drawing*

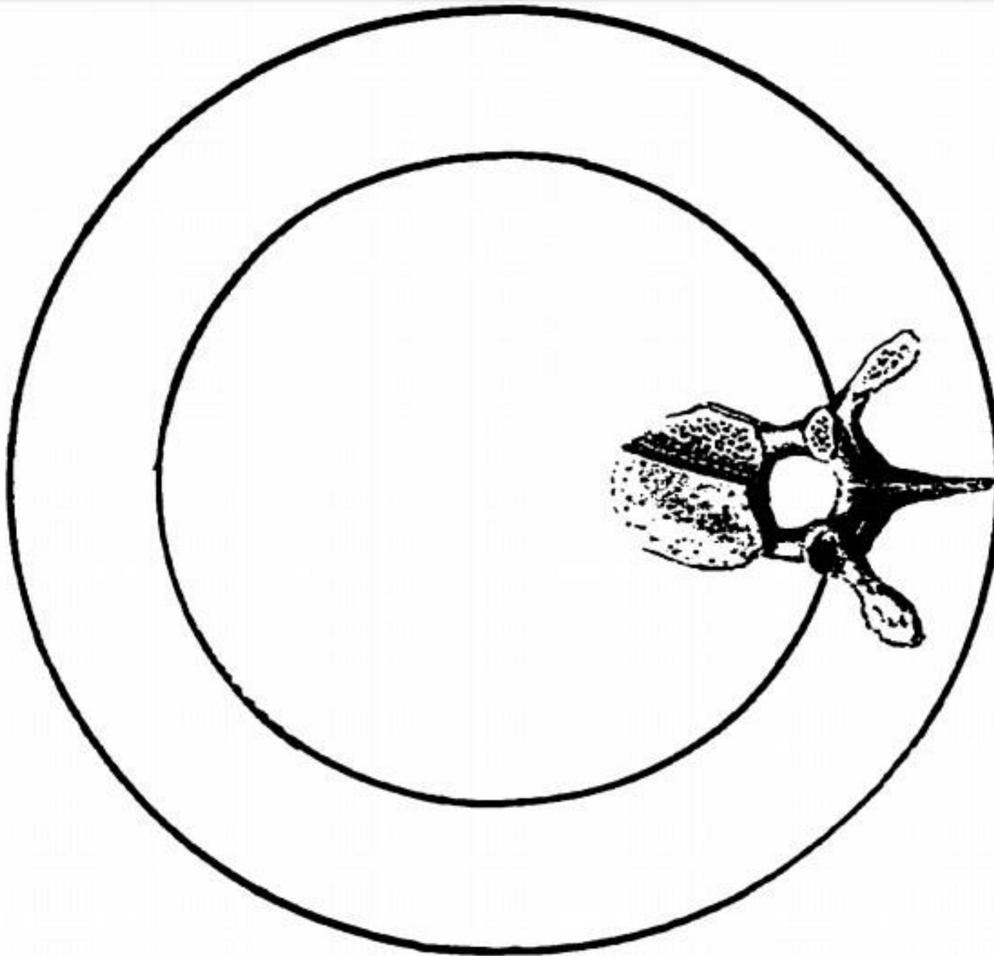


Dr. Ludovic O'Followell, *Le Corset*, p. 44.

With the benefits of O'Followell's x-rays, it was possible to see – rather than hear by speculation and conjecture – what was genuinely happening to the bodies of women who wore corsets in an attempt to achieve what was societally regarded as the 'desirable' waist size of twenty-one (or certainly no more than twenty-five) inches.[88] Even a waist of nineteen inches was considered 'normal' by Victorian beauty standards – the circumference of which can be seen in Figure 3.11.[89]

[87] Dr. Ludovic O'Followell, *Le Corset*, p. 44.
[88] Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman*, p. 297.
[89] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 64. The smaller pictured measurement of 13 inches would have been described as 'severe' and can be seen with the vertebrae also, in order to demonstrate how little space there would have been for the vital organs within waist circumferences of this size. For context, 19" 'is the circumference of a standard saucer'.

Figure 3.25: Gau, C. R., *19" and 13" waist circumferences*



Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 64.

## Women's responses to the practice of corset wearing

Many women still chose to 'tight lace' their corsets to the prescribed measurements outlined above. However, despite these societal pressures to conform to a prescribed, desired image, and perhaps partially in response to this new-found knowledge of the damage caused by corset wearing, there are documented instances of women complaining about, and openly rebelling against, wearing them. Charles Darwin's granddaughter Gwen Raverat recalls in her memoirs that despite being 'outnumbered and outflanked' by governesses and parents, she 'did rebel

against stays' by repeatedly refusing to wear them.[90] Once she had removed them, she then recalls 'enduring the row that ensued' before being 'forcibly re-corseted'.[91] Raverat goes on to describe corsets as 'real instruments of torture; they prevented me from breathing, and dug deep holes in my softer parts on every side'.[92] Ultimately, the few female brass players who 'broke through' and did manage to perform at this time (who will be discussed in chapter four) generally, as has been mentioned, had to be inventive in the ways that they dressed in order to both avoid the discomfort described here and be acceptably attired, often by embracing uniforms and costumes on stage.

Writers in *The Rational Dress Society Gazette* of 1889 variously describe the attire of the day as 'impeding movement', making physical exercise practically impossible, and being generally 'so heavy that 'the weight of clothing now worn by women is damaging their constitution', with the result that 'half the population is withering away'.[93] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, who was a champion of women's dress reform, wrote in 1873 'it has ceased to be a metaphor that [woman] *is dressed to kill* […] could your father or your husband live in your clothes?...Could he conduct his business and support his family in your corsets'?[94] As well as health concerns, and documented personal discomfort, dress reformers felt increasingly that the use of corsets and other restrictive garments continued to play a crucial part in the continuing inequality between men and women. [95]

[90] Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece*, p. 259.
[91] Ibid., p. 259.
[92] Ibid., p. 259.
[93] *The Rational Dress Society's Gazette* (London: Hatchard's, 1889), p. 1.
[94] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 59.
[95] Ibid., p. 59.

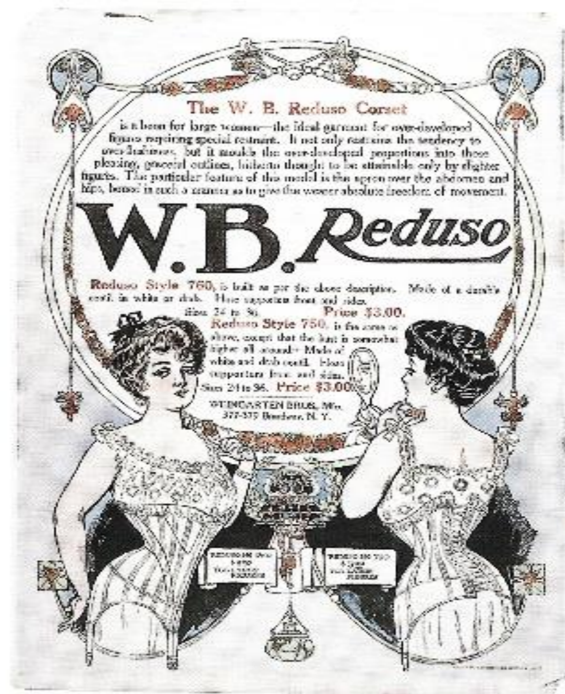
Ultimately, however, despite this growing discourse on, and discontent with restrictive fashions women still, in the main, continued to wear them and the reasons for this are complicated. Steele dismisses what she terms the general, modern argument that 'women were oppressed by the fashion system, which is usually perceived as an instrument of patriarchy and capitalism', suggesting that the complexities of gender politics were further complicated by the fact that there was not one 'across the board' experience for all women, from all classes.[96] Much as there were attempts at sweeping dress reforms, they were never successful across the board. The biggest, most enduring changes to women's fashions did not actually take place until the need for more practical attire arose from women entering the workplace during the first world war. [97]

Much as today, Victorian society condemned evidence of weight gain, which would result in the later twentieth century 'hard body' achieved through punishing exercise, which came to replace the 'hard corset'.[98] Both corsets and exercise achieved the desired effect of making women's figures look more acceptably youthful and lithe, and the widespread adoption of these methods demonstrates the pressures felt by women to conform in looks through the ages. [99] The unrelenting pressure related to this societal desire for slimness is demonstrated in the writings of 'beauty expert' Henry Fink, who informed women in 1887 that 'There is one horror which no lady can bear to contemplate, viz. being fat.[100] Similarly to today, women were bombarded with this message from all sides – from advice books written by so-called

[96] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 2.
[97] Ibid., p. 62.
[98] Ibid., pp. 163-5.
[99] Ibid., pp. 163-5. It is also notable that workouts such as the type produced by Jane Fonda, gained enormous widespread popularity in the 1970s, with the demise of 'control garments' (such as girdles) in the wake of the rise of the Feminist Movement of the late 1960s and 1970s.
[100] Ibid., p. 64.

‘beauty experts’, to the radiant women in corset advertisements who suggested that slimness reflected youth, and corsets which were produced, in the wording of the advert pictured below, for ‘over-developed figures requiring special restraint’ (see Figure 3.12).[101]

Figure 3.26: *Advertisement for the W. B. Reduso corset*, (c. 1900)




Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural history*, p. 64.

As one dress reformer mused, ‘slender forms are usually praised, and chiefly because they are associated with the litheness and undeveloped graces of youth’.[102] The relentless pressure on women to achieve and then maintain this desirable, youthful appearance, was a primary reason that corsets remained popular, despite the public becoming more aware of the risks involved with tight-lacing.[103] It is telling that even the deeply unhappy and rebellious Gwen Raverat, discussed earlier in this

[101] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural history*, p. 64.
[102] Ibid., p. 65.
[103] Ibid., p. 65.

chapter, also eventually found societal pressure regarding the subject too great, explaining that there was no way out and that ‘in those days nearly everyone accepted their inconvenience as inevitable’.[104]

Under the guise of ‘reforming’ corsets so that they became more ‘healthy’ and ‘comfortable’, the design and fashionable style changed towards the end of the nineteenth and into the beginning of the twentieth century. Madame Inez Gaches-Sarraute, a corsetiere with a medical degree, felt along with many medical professionals that the inward curving busks on corsets were harmful as they ‘forced organs downwards’, but that her straight-busk would ‘add to the effects of nature’.[105] In reality however, this new design of corset caused, if anything, even greater discomfort to the wearer and brought about the ‘s-bend’ figure in which ‘the abdomen [was] pushed back, the breasts thrown forward, and the back arched’ (see Figure 3.13).[106]

[104] Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece*, p. 258.
[105] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History,* p. 84. Steele describes the busk as ‘a piece of wood, metal, or some other hard material [which] was inserted in a slot down the centre front of the corset’ […] to ensure that the wearer maintained an erect posture’, p. 10.
[106] Ibid., p. 84.

Figure 3.27: *Advertisement for straight-front corset,* (c. 1903)

Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural history*, p. 84.

In Gau's study, she analysed the experiences of volunteers wearing both 'hourglass' (original) and 'straight-fronted' (health) corsets, and she:

> found the straight-fronted corset to be deleterious to the psychological performance and capacity for exercise than the hourglass style when tight-laced to the same degree. In addition to the poor psychologic performance when wearing the straight-front corset, subjects complained of balance difficulties, increased back pain and problems with gait adjustment.

Of the development of the straight-fronted corset, Steele writes 'after decades, indeed centuries, of medical advice and appeals by dress reformers, women in 1900 had finally obtained…a more uncomfortable corset.[107] The introduction of the straight-fronted corset was due to the move away from relatively flattering full skirts and crinolines to much tighter fitted skirts towards the end of the nineteenth century, when 'corsets became longer, encasing not only the waist but also the abdomen'.[108] Longer, straight-fronted corsets and tighter skirts came into fashion at the end of the

[107] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 85.
[108] Ibid., p. 46.

century, along with bustles, higher necks and 'tight, long sleeves [which] emphasized the elegance and weakness of the wearer'.[109] The encumbrance of overly tight sleeves which demonstrated the weakness of the wearer would have, without a doubt, been another challenge for female brass players to overcome – particularly when combined with the high-necklines which would have almost certainly affected breathing and movement, as seen in the example in Figure 3.14.[110]

Figure 3.28: *Princess Louise, Duchess of Fife, at her Scottish home Mar Lodge* (1889)

Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic* Survey (New York: Dover Publications Ltd., 1963), image 157.

The development of these tighter skirted and sleeved fashions from between 1870 and 1900 can be seen to occur in conjunction with the growth of the suffragette movement, and alongside what Weliver describes as society's 'changing perceptions of women' as their freedoms increased during this time period, as discussed in detail in chapter one.[111]

[109] Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman*, p. 339.
[110] Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion*, image 157.
[111] Phyllis Weliver, *Musical Women in Victorian Fiction*, p. 8.

The effects of constrictive clothing specifically on female brass players, their breathing, and lung-capacity

The general, physical dangers inherent in the wearing of corsets and restrictive styles of clothing have been discussed, however it was their effect on the wearer's breathing which would undoubtedly had the greatest negative impact on brass players' ability to perform. Ultimately, the fashions of the day, in particular the corset, greatly restricted the chest, lungs, and respiration of the wearer. This impediment, and just how difficult brass playing would have been while wearing a corset, will be further highlighted by analysis of good breathing technique for brass musicians which happens at the end of this chapter.

When examining the detrimental effects that these fashions would have had on female brass players, it is worth noting that from early times there was some knowledge, and discussion of, the importance of good breathing technique and lung health. These discussions continued, aided by increasing anatomic knowledge, into the period covered by this study and beyond. John Bulwer's *The Artificiall Changling* (1653) whilst criticising the vanity of women who laced their daughters into corsets, also referenced the negative physical side effects of wearing the garments, by suggesting that the girls became 'Astmatik, the Lungs and Muscles…being pressed together' (see Figure 3.15).[112]

[112] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 15.

Figure 3.29: Bulwer, J., *The Artificiall Changling* (1653)

The Artificiall Changling. 339 Small Waſtes perniciouſly affected.

ſelves to attaine unto a wand-like ſmalneſſe of waſte, never thinking themſelves fine enough untill they can ſpan their Waſte. *By which deadly Artifice they reduce their Breaſts into ſuch ſtreights, that they ſoone purchaſe a ſtinking breath; and while they ignorant-*

Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 15.

The two previously mentioned early nineteenth century articles by the Royal College of Surgeons which had discussed wide-ranging 'ill effects' of corset wearing, also focussed specifically on the garment's effects on the chest and respiration of the wearer.[113] The 1833 piece *On the Ill Effects of Insufficient Exercise, Constrained Positions, and Tight Stays on the Health of Young Women* for example discusses 'the obvious impediment to the motions of the ribs which this constriction of the chest occasions. For the perfect respiration these motions should be free and unrestrained […] and thus quickened respiration commences'.[114]

Figure 3.30: Carjat, E., *'Alphonse Sax Junior transforms himself into a sylphide, the better to convert the fair sex to the holy principals of morality and brass instruments!'*, (1862)

Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 226.

[113] Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On the Ill Effects of Insufficient Exercise*.
[114] The Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On the Ill Effects of Insufficient Exercise*, p. 79.

Instrument manufacturer Alphonse Sax Jr was vocal about the health benefits of blowing a musical instrument with regards to lung health, and was derided for his views in the press (see Figure 3.16).[115] The engineer responsible for designing a greatly improved piston valve system for brass instruments (and brother of Adolphe, inventor of the Saxophone), Sax set about establishing a women's brass band in 1862.[116] His reason for doing this was two-fold: firstly, he aimed to 'prove that women had the physical capacity to play brass instruments' as he felt that 'social impediments to their performance in public as brass players were based on blind prejudice'.[117] Also, most importantly for Sax, he wished to demonstrate the potential health benefits (both morally and physically) for women wishing to take up one of these instruments.[118] A main driver for Sax was undoubtedly the horrific and uncontrolled spread of tuberculosis throughout Europe which killed not only eight of his siblings, but also his mother.[119] Due to the constrictive nature of both women's clothing and lifestyles, and the fact that they were precluded from most forms of exercise, Sax was concerned about the high prevalence of tuberculosis among women, and society's encouragement of this sedentary lifestyle, particularly 'women of the upper classes'.[120] His women's brass band experiment was followed closely by several leading physicians of the day and he received support from, for example, Louis Mandl, Louis Segond, Stephen de la Madelaine and Francesco Bennati (the latter of whom had written similar papers on the health benefits of singing).[121]

[115] Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', pp. 221 and 226.
[116] Ibid., p. 224.
[117] Ibid., p. 224.
[118] Ibid., p. 224. It is also worth noting that this would have been a most unusual band of musicians and, as such, a great advertising opportunity for his instruments, so it could be said that his reasons for setting it up were perhaps three-fold.
[119] Ibid., p. 227.
[120] Ibid., p. 228.
[121] Ibid., pp. 227-228.

As the nineteenth century progressed, other medical professionals such as Henry Flower and William Wilberforce-Smith added weight to this argument with their expanding anatomical knowledge and increasingly evidence-based scientific findings on the effects of corsets and constriction on breathing. Flower discussed the harm they caused to 'respiration, circulation and digestion' [122] The ground-breaking scientific study completed in 1890 by William Wilberforce-Smith included demonstrable differences between the lung volume of corseted and un-corseted women.[123] One of Wilberforce-Smith's aims was to prove that men and women breathed in the same way, and his data demonstrated that un-corseted women had vastly superior lung-capacity to corseted women – in some cases they even matched men of a similar stature (see Figure 3.17).[124]

Figure 3.31: Wilberforce-Smith, W., *A Comparison of Lung Capacities (*1888)

| | Stature Inches | Lung Capacity Cubic Inches | Age Years | Total avoidance of stays Years |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average man | 59.7 | 138 | 40-40 | |
| Stayless woman (case 1) | " | 135 | 47 | 9 |
| Average woman | " | 87 | 40-50 | |
| Average man | 60.9 | 185 | 23-26 | |
| Stayless woman (case 2) | " | 158 | 30 | 10 |
| Average woman | " | 115 | 23-26 | |
| Average man | 62.6 | 210 | 23-26 | |
| Stayless woman (case 3) | " | 150 | 30 | 14 |
| Average woman | " | 130 | 23-26 | |
| Average man | 62.7 | 215 | 23-26 | |
| Stayless woman (case 4) | " | 200 | 30 | |
| Average woman | " | 130 | 23-26 | |
| Average man | 65.2 | 245 | 23-26 | |
| Stayless woman (case 5) | " | 195 | 30 | Lifelong |
| Average woman | " | 162 | 23-26 | |
| Average man | 65.8 | 212 | 40-50 | |
| Stayless woman (case 6) | " | 160 | 46 | |
| Average woman | " | 147 | 40-50 | |

Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 118.

In 1887, Gynaecologist Robert Latou Dickinson 'fashioned a small rubber bladder attached to a sphygmomanometer (blood pressure measuring device) and slipped it

[122] William Henry Flower*, Fashion in Deformity,* p. 82.
[123] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 117.
[124] Ibid., p. 117.

between the corsets and torsos of his patients to obtain pressure readings' - this was the experiment which Gau replicated in her study.[125] He then attempted to persuade his patients, with limited success, about the dangers of wearing corsets based on his findings (see Figure 3.18).[126]

Figure 3.32: Dickinson, Dr. R. L., *Pressure bag under corset with bulb and gauge'* (1887)

Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives,* p. 3.

There was also much debate at the time in both the music and medical press, as to the suitability of corsets for singers, such as the work conducted by Francesco Bennati.[127] Some of it was positively in favour of corsets, such as the article by corsetiere Dr. Gaches-Sarraute, however much discourse on the subject suggested that corsets impeded singers' breathing during performance, with Bennat, proposing that exercising the lungs, free of the constrictions caused by corset-wearing, would ultimately be beneficial to women.[128] The wide-ranging debate regarding breathing and how it was affected by corset wearing became increasingly scientific in its basis as the nineteenth century progressed.

[125] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 2.
[126] Ibid., pp. 2-3.
[127] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 119, and Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 228.
[128] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 119, and Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax', p. 228.

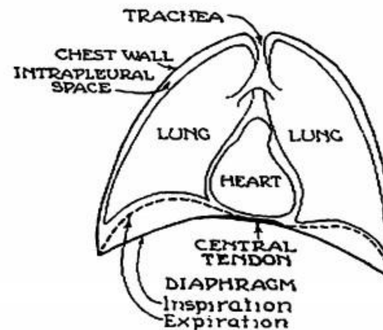
The study which Colleen Gau undertook as the basis for her PhD was jointly inspired by the research of Dr. Robert Dickinson's investigations into the pressure inflicted by corsets on the torso, and her awareness of the re-emergence of the corset on the fashion scene in the 1990s, championed by the likes of the pop singer Madonna, and designer John Paul Gaultier.[129] In her study, Gau aimed to 'assess the health-safety aspects of wearing tight laced corsets'.[130] There were several aspects to her study, including one experiment based on Dr. Dickinson's corset pressure test (using similar, if more up-to-date equipment), measures of comfort of volunteers whilst wearing the garments during re-enactment activities, and measurements of lung capacity of both corseted and uncorseted individuals.[131] Gau conducted the experiment on both small and naturally large-waisted volunteers, all of whom had their original waist measurement reduced by three inches by the tight-lacing of corsets.[132] She concluded that the small-waisted volunteers 'lost on average 10.6 percent of vital capacity when tight-laced' and that the large-waisted 'dropped an average of six percent'.[133] Furthermore, in the case of the large-waisted volunteers, in the evening when they removed their corsets, they regained only five percent of vital capacity, demonstrating that they were initially 'unable to fully recover', a situation which Gau, who was a nurse, suggested could become permanent over time.[134]

Ultimately, this study was a clear, scientifically robust demonstration of significant reductions in vital capacity. It also included a detailed diagram of the female torso

[129] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 3.
[130] Ibid., p. 3.
[131] Ibid., pp. 3, 161, 167-170.
[132] Ibid., p. 3. The experiments, involving 7 volunteers, took place in a cardiovascular fitness laboratory at St Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, p. 161.
[133] Ibid., p. 170.
[134] Ibid., pp. 170-171.

and internal organs, to demonstrate how catastrophic reducing an individual's waist-circumference by twenty-five percent (which was common) would have been, and another diagram demonstrating the extent of the movement of the chest and diaphragm on inhale and exhalation (see Figure 3.19).[135]

Figure 3.33: King and Showers, *Diaphragm Positions During Inspiration and Expiration*




Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, p. 33.

It is possible to observe how adversely a person's respiration would have been affected if the required natural movement of their ribs when breathing was impeded by tight, constricting corsets and clothing.

Steele has also conducted research in similar areas as part of her investigations into the corset. In her chapter *Dressed to Kill: The Medical Consequences of Corsetry*, she described her collaboration with cardiologist Dr. Lynn Kutsche, and conceded that x-rays which they viewed of modern tight-lacer Catherine Jung 'indicate clearly that a tight corset does indeed push the ribs significantly in and up, altering the position of internal organs'.[136] Referencing an edition of *The Lancet* from 1868 which suggested that 'tight-lacing seriously limits, indeed almost annihilates, the respiratory movements of the diaphragm' and supposing the article may be overstating the case, Steele also concedes, nonetheless, that there is now enough modern scientific

[135] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, pp. 33-41.
[136] Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, pp. 68-69.

evidence to prove ‘that this aspect of the medical critique of corsetry was not completely mistaken’.[137] She also confirmed that modern-day corset wearers report being out of breath, and that the vast number of reports of Victorian women fainting whilst wearing corsets, particularly during periods of physical activity such as dancing, are ‘likely to have been accurate’.[138]

An examination of the good breathing techniques required for brass playing, and the challenges they would have presented to corset-wearing women

Having established, through a combination of nineteenth century and modern-day studies the extent to which the chest and respiration of corset wearing women would have been restricted, the next step in demonstrating how these fashions would have detrimentally affected female brass players in particular is to establish what, in contrast, constitutes good breathing technique for brass players. One of the oldest – and still most widely referenced and respected – brass playing manuals is *The Cornet Method* by Jean-Baptiste Arban, which was first published in 1907.[139] Even in these relatively early days of brass playing pedagogy, much reference is made to the importance of good breathing technique, with Arban describing how vital it is for the musician to be aware of the expansion and movement of the chest when breathing correctly.[140] World-renowned brass instrument accessory manufacturer Denis Wick has produced a playing guide which was compiled by Deanna Swoboda of Dallas Brass, and offers advice on best breathing technique.[141] Swoboda describes

137 Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, p. 69.
138 Ibid., p. 70.
139 J. B. Arban, *Cornet Method* (London: Hawkes and Son, 1907).
140 Ibid., p. 4.
141 Deanna Swoboda, *Breathing Exercises for Brass Players,* <https://www.dansr.com/wick/resources/breathing-exercises-for-brass-players> [accessed 21 August 2020].

practicing the sudden bursts of breath used when blowing out increasing numbers of candles, and recommends that at the commencement of brass instrument practice, the musician flop over 'like a rag doll' with loose, floppy arms.[142] In this way, upon taking deep breaths in and out, the player is able to see the body rise and fall – a visual demonstration of the best kind of deep breathing technique required for brass playing.[143] It is suggested here that the type of exercise – and breathing – described here would be extremely difficult or almost impossible for a corseted individual to undertake, particularly if also wearing one of the tight-sleeved, high-necked dresses with the tight, long skirts and 's' corsets which became fashionable from the end of the nineteenth century designed, to reiterate Crow's words, to 'emphasise the elegance and weakness of the wearer'.[144]

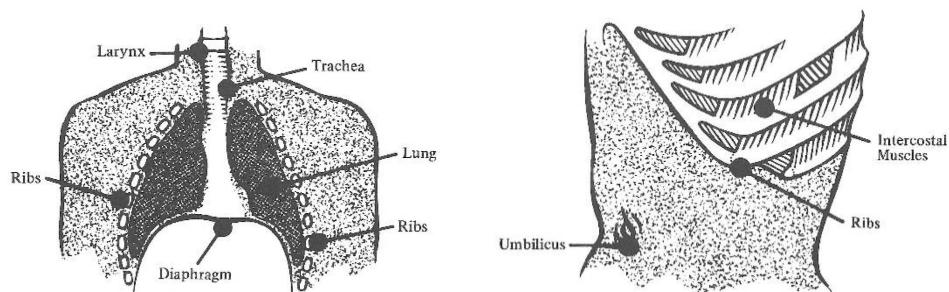
One of the most widely used and highly regarded brass teaching manuals of more recent years is *How Brass Players Do It* by John Ridgeon, which was published originally in 1975.[145] Much referenced by many players and teachers in both the brass band and orchestral movements, its focus is mainly on breathing and embouchure, describing them as 'the essential physical aspects of brass technique' and is not so much a beginner's guide, as a manual designed to guide and correct player technique through a series of supplementary 'lip building' exercises.[146] Embouchure is defined as 'the placement of the mouthpiece on the lips of brass players'.[147] This manual was published almost fifty years ago, so due to the potential for the photographs being used by Ridgeon in this book in the section instructing

[142] Deanna Swoboda, *Breathing Exercises for Brass Players*.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman*, p. 339.
[145] John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It*.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Stewart Carter (ed.), *Brass Scholarship in Review: Proceedings of the Historic Brass Society Conference, Cite de la Musique, Paris 1999* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2006), p. 237.

good breathing technique having aged, for the benefit of this study, a brand new copy was purchased. However, it soon became apparent that the photographs used in the book remain unchanged and are reproduced here – serving, as they do (along with the accompanying text), two purposes. Firstly, the manual provides some excellent advice on breathing techniques (which is why it remains so popular), many aspects of which would have been immeasurably hampered by the wearing of corsets. Secondly, the publisher's decision to continue with the inclusion of this set of photographs (and some of the accompanying wording, as will be shown) demonstrate that many attitudes to women in the world of brass playing discussed in this study still prevail to the present day, and emphasise how crucial it is to address this.

Ridgeon describes the two types of breathing necessary to play brass instruments successfully, in order to prevent becoming fatigued too quickly and improving range, tone, and dynamic contrasts. He refers to them as 'diaphragmatic' and 'costal' breathing.[148] He describes the diaphragm as the 'principle breathing muscle, separating the chest from the lungs (see Figure 3.20).[149]

Figure 3.34: Ridgeon, J., *Diagrams of diaphragm and rib muscles*




John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It: A Book of Lip Building and Flexibility Exercises* (Rutland: Brass Wind Publications, 1975, p. 1.

[148] John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It*, p. 1.
[149] Ibid., p. 1, figs 2 and 3.

The other, upper chest type of breath is achieved by 'contraction of the intercostal muscles' (situated between the ribs).[150] He recommends that players pant rapidly with nose and mouth open and cough, in order to physically demonstrate the contraction of the diaphragm so important in sustained note production.[151] This study suggests that such use of the diaphragm, integral to successful mastery of a brass instrument, and the breathing exercises mentioned above, would have been extremely difficult while wearing a corset. It is unlikely that the wearer would have either been able to locate, or use, her diaphragm successfully based on the studies regarding the effects of corset wearing on an individual's respiration, and the displacement of internal organs, which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

The other aspect of *How Brass Players Do It* which makes it especially useful to include as part of this study is the set of photographs used to demonstrate different areas of Ridgeon's advice on breathing technique. Figure 1 in the book, entitled *Miss Incorrect Breath (inflated)* shows a bikini-clad model, with her chest puffed out, demonstrating 'poor breathing technique' (see Figure 3.21).[152]

[150] John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It*, p. 1.
[151] Ibid., p. 1.
[152] Ibid., p. 1.

Figure 3.35: *Miss Incorrect Breath (inflated)*

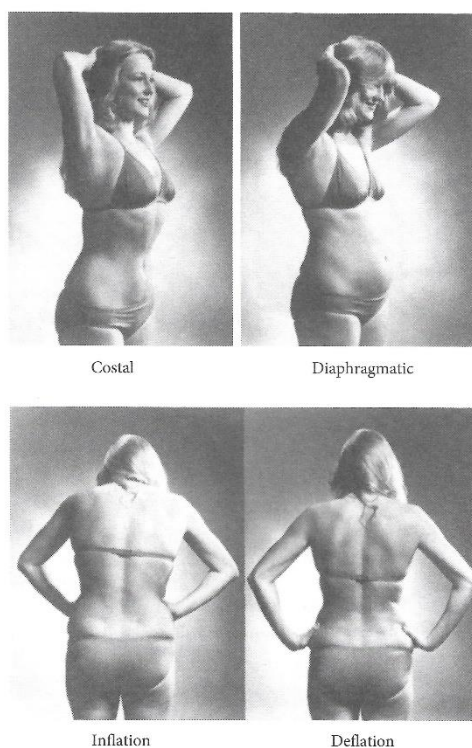
Fig. 1
Miss Incorrect Breath
*(inflated)*

John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It*, p. 1.

Above the picture, Ridgeon states, 'attractive as Miss Incorrect Breath appears in our photograph, her approach will not help the brass player' inferring that this woman herself could not possibly be a brass player.[153] The same bikini-attired model is then shown again, in pictures over the page, demonstrating the types of good breathing technique described above in the breathing exercises (see Figure 3.22).[154]

[153] John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It*, p. 1.
[154] Ibid., p. 2, fig 4.

Figure 3.36: *Costal, Diaphragmatic, Inflation and Deflation*

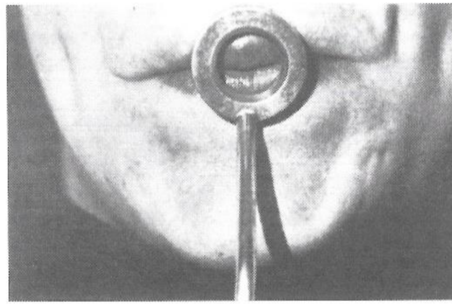



John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It*, p. 2.

Ridgeon, in using the female, scantily clad model as the example of bad technique, and giving her the title 'Miss Incorrect Breath', appears to imply that this 'silly' woman's incorrect breathing would never be done by a proper, serious (male) brass player. Indeed, all the pictures showing good embouchure technique - the only other set of photographs in the book – are photographs of male brass players (for an example of one of these images, see Figure 3.23).[155]

[155] John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It*, p. 6.

Figure 3.37: *Correct Chin Contraction*



John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It*, p. 6.

The observation here, particularly as this is a brand-new copy of this teaching manual, is that certain negative, dismissive attitudes towards female brass players (and women generally) are still prevalent today in widely referenced teaching literature, and it is very telling that the type of language and imagery included in this publication appear still to be viewed as suitable elements to be included within modern brass playing pedagogy. This set of photographs and the accompanying language used are potent and quite shocking examples of the importance of on-going analysis into the ways women continue to be viewed by society, and why studies such as this one are so important.

This chapter has gone into significant detail of the construction, development, and wide-spread adoption of the corset by women in Victorian and Edwardian England, despite growing awareness of the dangers inherent in wearing them. This has been combined with in-depth analysis of what exactly constitutes good brass playing breathing techniques, according to widely referenced music teaching pedagogy. What these discussions have demonstrated, when considered in parallel, is that the restrictive nature of the clothing which society pressured women to wear at this time would have rendered the lungs and other organs incapable of the movement and

actions required for women simply attempting to breathe effectively. Certainly, this would have been an uncomfortable and inconvenient situation for women in their day-to-day activities. However, this study has shown that the corset in particular was a positively dangerous hindrance to female brass players, rendering nearly impossible the deep, sustained breathing which for them would have been necessary in order to play their instruments safely and successfully.

# CHAPTER IV:
# The ones who got away: women who became brass musicians against the odds

This study has presented a growing litany of challenges faced by Victorian and Edwardian women who wished to take up a brass instrument. However, a few did manage to successfully become brass musicians, and the aim of this chapter will be to demonstrate that familial or group support was often a factor, whilst acknowledging that the experience would not have been the same for women everywhere, or in every branch of music or organization. It is suggested that family groups, religious movements, and other organisations which encouraged and promoted female brass players, assisted these women in overcoming some of the odds which would ordinarily have been stacked against them in terms of playing opportunities at this time. This section presents a selection of individual case studies which, among other things, demonstrate some important areas of commonality in the experience of many female musicians. Finally, through the analysis of these case studies, it will be argued that some female musicians who were involved in religious movements, dressed in 'military wear' or performed as 'novelty acts', may have taken the opportunity of wearing this clothing as a way of overcoming the challenges of Victorian and Edwardian dress discussed in chapter three.

## Musical women from musical families: the importance of familial support

The importance of familial support and assistance in the cases of female brass players who emerged at this time has long been noted. For example, Ehrlich refers to a brass-playing 'family tradition,' which would have benefitted many girls who were raised in a musically nurturing family setting where music lesson money was saved,

as relatives tutored each other.[1] In many cases, time spent teaching daughters to play an instrument would have been a wise investment. At a time when there were few employment opportunities for women, it meant that they gained the training required to potentially supplement the family income.[2] Germaine Greer observes this 'family tradition' also taking place in artists' families. The majority of female painters who came to any prominence had generally only received any training at all because of who they were related to, and this would also have almost certainly been the same in circus and theatrical families regarding the teaching, and passing on of, particular skills to younger generations.[3] Writing of women in the music profession, Rohr also notes 'the importance of familial support of female musicians' which is also demonstrated by the number of women who founded the Royal Society of Women Musicians who came from musical families.[4] Other writers to discuss the importance of belonging to a musical family are Margaret and Robert Hazen, who document how central women were to the success of the many family brass bands touring the US in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[5]

There is evidence that family bands were also taking on extensive tours of the UK and Europe – although there are far more documented accounts of American family bands. One successful British group which emerged at this time was the Bramusa

---

[1] Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain*, p. 11.

[2] Ibid., p. 14 and Francois Bedarida, (trans. A. S. Forster and G. Hodgkinson), *A Social History of England 1851-1990, 2nd edition* (London and New York: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1991), pp. 52-60. Bedarida provides a comprehensive definition of the class structure in Britain at this time, with the middle class being made up of three 'degrees' or levels, and discusses the types of professions found in each one. The lower-middle-class and 'skilled' working-classes would have been where most of the musicians in family bands would have been situated, class-wise, within society at this time (as discussed in the introduction).

[3] Ibid., p. 13 and Pirkko Moisala and Beverley Diamond (eds.), *Music and Gender*, p. 190.

[4] Debora Rohr, 'Women and the Music Profession', p. 315. She writes of the founding members of the RSWM that the majority of them were either married into, or were from, 'families of London professional musicians'.

[5] Margaret Hindle Hazen and Robert M. Hazen, *The Music Men: An Illustrated History of Brass Bands in America, 1800-1920*, (Washington D.C. and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), p. 55.

Family Band (also known, from 1906 as The Seven Bramusas), who toured the British isles substantially between 1904 and 1921.[6] Both parents played initially, along with four daughters and two sons on, between them, cornet (covering the soprano line), horn (the alto part), euphonium (tenor), tuba (the bass line) and percussion.[7] Essentially, the melody, harmony and bass parts present in a modern brass band were all covered by the Bramusas in what appears to have been a well-balanced ensemble with, unusually, the tuba being played by one of the daughters (see Figure 4.1).[8]

Figure 4.1: *The Bramusa Family Band*

Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family*, p. 8.

The family toured prolifically, with many descriptions of their musical 'extravaganza' 'Music Afloat' appearing in reports in newspapers up and down the country (see Figure 4.2).[9]

---

[6] Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family – the Family Brass Bands that Entertained the USA and UK in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, (October, 2017), pp. 8-9. <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020].

[7] Ibid., p. 8.

[8] Ibid., p. 8.

[9] Ibid., p. 9.

Figure 4.2: *The Seven Bramusas: Music Afloat*

Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family*, p. 9.

To demonstrate the distance travelled by the group, and extraordinary number of years that they were active, they can be seen being either advertised, or their performances glowingly described, in local newspapers the length and breadth of the British Isles. An early description can be found in and advertisement which appeared in the *Portsmouth Evening News* of 22 December, 1906. In a rare insight into the type of repertoire the group performed, it informs its readership that the 'Bramusa Band, seven in number, ladies and gentlemen are "coming down" with their marches, cornet solos and the like'.[10] In 1909, the *Irish Independent* of 28 July also carried an advertisement for the band, informing the public that they would be travelling to their shores, with, in the same year, the *Music Hall and Theatre Review* of 10 June describing the Bramusas as 'expert instrumentalists'.[11] Also in 1909, the *Leamington Spa Courier* gushed that 'the band of the Bramusas, with its little girl drummer and smart small boy conductor is absolutely unique' adding that the entertainment they offered was 'first-class' and 'well worth seeing'.[12] The Bramusas are advertised in 1910 by London newspaper *The Era,* of 26 March, as a 'juvenile family of Brass

[10] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 24 August 2020].
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

Band fame, in their unique spectacular production ‘Music afloat’, and what are presumably their costumes for this show can be seen in Figure 4.3.[13]

Figure 4.3: *The Seven Bramusas*

Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family*, p. 8.

They can be seen to have performed in Derbyshire in 1911 and Coventry in 1912, and as far afield as Lanarkshire according to an advertisement in *The Scottish Referee* of 16 September 1912.[14] The varied fortunes and experiences of this group are perfectly summed up in two playbills, one from the *Pall Mall Gazette* from 19 January 1914 which lists them in the same show as George Formby, father of, and inspiration to, his film star son of the same name.[15] The second playbill, in the *Sheffield Star Green ’un* from 9 March, 1912 lists the Bramusas below the star attraction ‘Dan, the Intoxicated Canine’ (see Figure 4.4).[16]

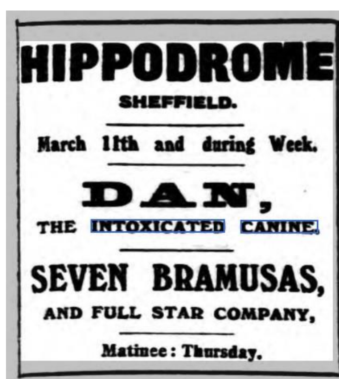
[13] The British Newspaper Archive and Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family*, p. 8-9. The definition of ‘juvenile’ being used to describe the band in this report would have been ‘relating to young people’ rather than the more common, modern usage of the word, ‘childish’, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* 12th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[14] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 24 August 2020].

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

Figure 4.4: *Dan, the Intoxicated Canine playbill*




*The Sheffield Star Green 'Un*, 9 March 1912, The British Newspaper Archive, https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/

Several insights can be gained from the newspaper coverage provided above, which is only a fraction of the information available on this group. Firstly, it is clear that they toured prolifically, at a time when some of the performing members of the family were surprisingly young. Secondly, descriptions and reviews of the group are overwhelmingly positive – while their youth is mentioned, so too, regularly, is their musical excellence and, Dan the Intoxicated canine aside, they regularly appeared on the same bills as some of the top performers of the day. Thirdly, the family included at least five brass or percussion playing daughters one of whom was the group's tuba player, and a mother who appears to play the second-biggest instrument in the band, the euphonium (see Figure 4.1).[17]

Clearly, the tuition enjoyed by these girls opened up performance opportunities which were unusual for the time. It offered them the chance of a career which meant they were able to contribute the families' income, and furthermore, it appears that they managed to sustain these careers for many years, despite the enormous prejudices against female performers on the public stage at this time which were outlined in chapter two. It could, however, be observed that playing as part of a

[17] Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family*, p. 8.

family group meant performing in what could be considered at the time a ‘safe space’, and that inevitably these bands would in all likelihood be run by the father or other male members of the family.

Across the North Atlantic, demonstrating that the popularity of the ‘family band’ concept extended beyond the British Isles, the Shepard Family Band were just one of a very substantial list of bands listed as being in existence at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries in the United States (see Figure 4.5).[18]

Figure 4.5: *The Shepard Family Band*

Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family*, p. 49.

They were performing slightly earlier than the Bramusas – during the 1880s and 1890s - and are unusual in that all the family not only played brass, but also performed as both string and banjo ensembles, and also as a vocal and ‘character sketch’ group (see Figure 4.6).[19]

[18] Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family*, p. 49.
[19] Ibid., p. 49.

Figure 4.6: *The Shepard Family Band on strings and banjos*

Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family*, p. 49.

What is also notable about them in terms of this study is that, as was the case with the Bramusas, the women all play brass, as in many family groups of the time, such as that of the world-renowned 'Distin' brass-playing family, the mother and/or daughters were consigned to conducting or pianist duties, and only the father and sons played brass instruments.[20] Unfortunately, as was often the case, particularly regarding the much more numerous US family bands, there is plenty of photographic evidence of groups such as the Shepard Family but scant information regarding their performances or repertoire (see Figure 4.7).[21]

[20] Jackie Frisby,*' Long Among us in the Character of Settled inhabitants', The Members of George IV's Private Band in Brighton*, Royal Pavilion Archives RPFILES0465.
[21] Ibid., p. 49.

Figure 4.7: *The Shepard Family Band 2*

Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family*, p. 49.

It does appear, however, that the female brass players in this band, as in the case of the Bramusas, were equally important to the group's success, providing balance to the ensemble with their mastery of a wide assortment of instruments.

Gavin Holman's paper *Child prodigies in brass* contains a significant number of photographs of brass-playing children, the majority of which, as was the case with the Shepard family, hold little or no key to their identity, activities or musical output (see Figure 4.8).[22]

Figure 4.8: *Vintage image of unknown brass-playing child*

Gavin Holman, *Child Prodigies in Brass – a Selection of Vintage Images of Children Who Played Brass Instruments* (February, 2020), p. 8. Some pictures were probably staged, but this youngster is holding the cornet correctly.

[22] Gavin Holman, *Child Prodigies in Brass – a Selection of Vintage Images of Children Who Played Brass Instruments* (February, 2020), p. 8. <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020].

A small number of those included, however, contain just enough information to offer up a tantalising glimpse into the lives of these young female brass players, and hints at the familial support and encouragement that these particular children might have received. For example, sisters Gertie and Flossie Edgcombe are described on their publicity cards as ‘the world’s youngest cornet and violin duettists’ and were active around 1906 (see Figure 4.9).[23]

Figure 4.9: *Gertie and Flossie Edgcombe: the world’s youngest cornet and violin duettists*

Gavin Holman, *Child Prodigies in Brass*, pp. 2-3.

They are described by the *Western Times* of 8th June 1906 as being part of a day of music and festivities organised by the Christian Temperance organisation the Band of Hope in Tavistock, where they entertained the large crowd which gathered for that evening’s Temperance meeting.[24]

Florrie Horsfield, whose publicity shot simply informs us she is from Baildon near Bradford, appears to have been a fairly prolific performer around the years 1909-10 (see Figure 4.10).[25]

[23] Gavin Holman, *Child Prodigies in Brass*, pp. 2-3.
[24] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 24 August 2020].
[25] Gavin Holman, *Child Prodigies in Brass*, p. 3.

The *Halifax Evening Courier* of 2 February 1909 tells us that at a music competition in Ripponden, Horsfield, 'a very young soloist, gave two solos in nice style, and was loudly applauded'.[26]

Figure 4.10: *Florrie Horsfield*

Gavin Holman, *Child Prodigies in Brass*, p. 3.

Later that year, she could be found playing at a Sheffield fundraising concert in front of some 500 people, and in 1910 the *Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser* announced the 'special engagement' of Miss Florrie Horsfield at the Knutsford and Cross Town Band annual concert and dance'.[27] There is a strong likelihood that this young lady was related to someone in the above organisation (there was a proliferation of brass bands in the area at the time), or one similar, and whilst there is frustratingly little written record of their experiences, it is gratifying to see evidence of some bright young talent being nurtured, encouraged, and their performances appreciated.

In 1983 a book of memoirs was published by Greta Kent, who had herself been something of a musical prodigy at a similar time to the girls mentioned above.[28] Her book, *A View From the Bandstand*, goes some way towards redressing the balance

[26] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 24 August 2020].
[27] Ibid.
[28] Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand*, p. 7.

of male dominated narratives which have, out of necessity regarding availability of materials been referred to in this study.[29] The great majority of music and general press was of course dominated by men and any information gathered has, on the whole, been down to what male writers have decided to record or not - the frequent exclusion of female musicians and their achievements is an unfortunate consequence of this. Greta Kent's volume was published by Sheba Feminist Publishers, who were at pains to acknowledge the importance of memoirs such as this one for exactly the reasons mentioned above, describing the documentation of her experiences as the recording of 'a chapter of women's history, and the history of music, that had almost been forgotten'.[30]

Greta Kent, born in 1895, was a pianist who hailed from a large and prolific musical family, and she regularly played for theatres and silent films during her teens and early twenties (see Figure 4.11).[31]

Figure 4.11: *Greta Kent*

Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983), p. 28.

Before this, as previously mentioned, she appears to have been something of a young musical prodigy, although she modestly writes of very few of her own

[29] Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand.*
[30] Ibid., cover notes.
[31] Ibid., pp. 28 and 32.

achievements in the book. However, a newspaper review of a concert in Dovercourt appeared in the *Evening Star* on 17 August 1907 which glowingly describes twelve-year-old Greta appearing alongside her mother (who played trombone solos), describing the pair as ‘special features’ of the programme.[32] They describe ‘the singing and dancing of little miss Greta Kent, a most capable and clever young artist’.[33]

Kent sadly recalls her husband being ‘not too keen on her playing’ and disapprovingly comparing her to a suffragette in her attempts at musical independence, with the result that she didn’t play the piano very much for many years after she married in 1918.[34] This attitude fits with the ‘separate spheres’ rhetoric of the time discussed in chapter one, and is a view which would have undoubtedly blighted the chances of many budding female musicians at this time – yet another hurdle to overcome. Her memoirs mainly concentrate on telling the story of her musical family, in particular her mother and paternal aunts. She became more determined to record their experiences with Sheba Feminist Publishers after suggesting the idea to other publishers and being told that nobody would be interested in her story because she was not ‘well known’ – or as Sheba suggest, more likely because she was a woman.[35]

The book has been compiled around a set of remarkable photographs from her family album – many of which have been included here. Both her parents earned

[32] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 25 August 2020].
[33] Ibid.,
[34] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 34.
[35] Ibid., p. 38.

their livings as musicians, playing regularly as a group and with various orchestras (see Figure 4.12).[36]

Figure 4.12: *The Kent Family poster*

Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 14.

Greta writes that intriguingly and unusually her mother, Nellie Baldwin, was a good pianist and violinist before she ‘broke with tradition for lady musicians and took to playing the trombone’.[37] She further ruminates on this possibly quite shocking switch by her mother from strings to brass, writing:

> I don’t know why mother gave up playing the violin and started playing the trombone, because it must have been very unusual indeed at that time. Ladies were just starting to take to the wind instruments, and the drums, and I suppose that she thought it was original and interesting.

Greta adds, ‘she certainly liked it’, noting that once Nellie had made the switch, she certainly seemed to have made the trombone her instrument of choice.[38]

[36] Ibid., pp. 7 and 14.
[37] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 7.
[38] Ibid., p. 12. Greta’s mother Nellie can be seen with her violin in a photograph taken in 1895, in which she is pregnant with Greta (see Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13: *Nellie Baldwin*

Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 12.

Nellie's mother (Greta's grandmother) had also been a musician and had her own group called 'The Anglo Saxon Ladies' Band'.[39] In a photograph of this group, which Greta reckons was taken in 1880 'if not a little before', her mother can be seen on the third left and her father's sister Hilda is standing to the left, holding her cornet (see Figure 4.14).[40] Hilda can also be seen in a solo publicity photograph (see Figure 4.15).[41]

Figure 4.14: *The Anglo Saxon Ladies' Band* (c.1880)

Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand,* p. 9.

[39] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 9.
[40] Ibid., p. 9.
[41] Ibid., p. 11.

Figure 4.15: *Aunt Hilda*

Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 11.

Greta's father's father, 'Grandfather Kent' was a trumpeter in the 14th dragoons and is pictured with his cornet in 1846 (see Figure 4.16), further demonstrating that the support and encouragement which Greta herself so benefitted from, were passed down through Greta's family for several generations.[42]

Figure 4.16: *Grandfather Kent*

Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 10.

Indeed, Greta was surrounded by music and musicians all her life, stating in a way which must have been the case for many girls who were lucky to grow up in musical, artistic or literary families that she, 'learnt to read music as I learnt to read other books'.[43] She writes that her parents both encouraged her to practice, but 'never

[42] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 10.
[43] Ibid., p. 12.

enough to make it a misery', that her family 'heard, and played, music so much that it has always been a part of my life'.[44]

Greta describes sitting at her mother's feet as she played her trombone with various orchestras and Nellie can be seen in a photograph of the brass section of an unknown ladies' orchestra in a photograph taken around 1900, along with Greta's Aunt Mina next to her and her Aunts Hilda and Viola in the front row holding their cornets (see Figure 4.17).[45]

Figure 4.17: *Greta's mother and aunts, brass section, unknown orchestra* (c.1900)

Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 23.

The three aunts in this photograph (her father's sisters) were also part of a very successful 'lavishly dressed, novelty' brass and percussion group called the Biseras, who toured Britain and Europe extensively at the beginning of the nineteenth century (see Figure 4.18 in which Greta has marked which members of the troupe were her aunts).[46]

[44] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 12.
[45] Ibid., p. 23.
[46] Ibid., pp. 40 and 42.

Figure 4.18: *The Biseras*

Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 41.

Managed by a ‘Mr and Madame Biseras’, Kent describes the group as being active for ‘many years’, often being top of the bill and playing some of the biggest concert halls in Europe.[47] However, as in the case of the Seven Bramusas, it appears that life on the variety and music hall circuit was as much of a mixed bag for the Biseras as it would have been for many of what would have been described as ‘novelty acts’ of the era - tellingly, female acts were often viewed as ‘novelties’, and not taken entirely seriously. The *Leicester Daily Post* of 17 September 1906 describes the ‘Bisera Troupe’ as ‘eight charming lady musicians’ – but, unfortunately, they appear well below ‘Abdy’s Canine Circus: a show well worth seeing’ on that particular playbill (see Figure 4.19).[48]

[47] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, pp. 40 and 43.
[48] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 25 August 2020].

Figure 4.19: 'Abdy's Canine Circus', *Leicester Evening Post,* 17 September 1906

Amusements.

PALACE, LEICESTER.
TO-NIGHT

BELLA & BIJOU,
The Delightfully Droll Diverting Duo.
HARRIS & WORTH.
A Pair of Huntsmen.
Abdy's CANINE CIRCUS.
A Show well worth Seeing.
THE AMERICAN BIOSCOPE.
SPRY & MONTI.
The Dandy Guardsmen.
RUBY DAHL. with her MERRY MANNIKINS.
A Unique and Novel Act.
MADAME MARVELLE
and her Marvellous Birds.
J. C. SCATTER.
Tyneside Comedian and Dancer.
BISERA TROUPE,
Eight Charming Lady Musicians.
HARRY GREY.
The Australian Nugget.
When it comes to Whimsicalities he leads the Field
Seats may be booked at J. HERBERT MARSHALL'S Victoria Galleries, Granby-street.
Managing Director: OSWALD STOLL.
Acting Manager: GEO. ANDREWS.

TWICE NIGHTLY
At 6.50 and 9 o'clock
Doors open half an hour earlier.
Book in advance.
Telephone No. 1099

*The Leicester Evening Post,* 17 September 1906, The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Two years later, however, they were part of a large variety line-up appearing at the prestigious London Coliseum, which was advertised in the *Music Hall and Theatre Review* of 10 May 1908, so it appears that they did perform at some more salubrious venues (see Figure 4.20).[49]

Figure 4.20: 'The London Coliseum', *Music Hall and Theatre Review* 10 May 1908

Calls for Monday, April 13, 1908.
THE LONDON HIPPODROME.
[illegible] Elliott, Jenny Mannings, Two Butterflies, Dubois' Monkeys, Hagedorn's Ladies of the Lake, Frederick Villiers, [illegible], Everhart, Gray and McCarthy, Fratellinis, [illegible], The Human Top.
THE LONDON COLISEUM.
Rehearsal at 10 for
Truly Shattuck, Howe and Ardie, Datas, Lily Shaw, Nellie Hodson and Co., David Poole, Daisy Wood, Bisera Troupe, Chas. Fisher's Opera Co., Mdlle. [illegible] Sporting Girls, Harry Marie, Leo Tell, Bioscope, "The Schoolmaster's Mistake," [illegible]

*Music Hall and Theatre Review*, 10 May 1908, The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

Some of the frustrating contemporary prejudices against, and attitudes towards, female musicians are hinted at in Kent's memoirs regarding the Biseras. Two incidents in particular stand out. In the first, the Musical Director of London's Drury Lane Theatre took 'a dislike to [the Biseras] for some reason' and proceeded to attempt to sabotage their performance by deliberately conducting their music at the

[49] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 25 August 2020].

wrong tempos.[50] Hilda, the band leader, told the troupe to follow her in future performances, and to pay no heed to the conductor's beat and eventually he desisted, but this must have been an extremely trying, not to mention embarrassing, experience for a group of women whose future employment potentially hinged on the success of their last performance.[51] Another unfortunate episode occurred when they were performing in a theatre in Germany and it was discovered, in Kent's words 'through some error in the contract' that the Biseras were expected to 'entertain' gentlemen after the last performance'.[52] There was a court hearing, due to the Biseras management hastily claiming, as a way of getting their changes out of any deals whatsoever with this particular establishment, they could not possibly do this as they were not 'qualified musicians'. The case, which was attended by all eight, very tense Biseras, was eventually settled out of court.[53] These examples clearly demonstrate the on-going lack of respect for women on stage at this time, even a group as highly regarded, skilful and experienced as the Biseras, and it is unlikely that either of the above scenarios, but in particular the second one, would have happened to a professional troupe of male musicians.

Eventually the Biseras broke up, as a result of their management trying to get them to incorporate balancing and other feats into the act, to up their 'novelty' factor.[54] These suggested changes are reflected in the experience of the Shepards, who diversified instrumentally and into sung and spoken performance, or the Bramusas, who developed their extravaganza 'Music Afloat'.[55] In order to maintain success, acts

---

[50] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 40.
[51] Ibid., p. 43.
[52] Ibid., p. 43. This ties in with the discussion in chapter two surrounding women on stage being viewed as 'fair game'.
[53] Ibid., p. 43.
[54] Ibid., p. 43.
[55] Ibid., p. 43.

(particularly female acts) had be different, to stand out – but the Biseras did not embrace the changes and eventually split up to go and join other orchestras, occasionally getting together to play for their own enjoyment.[56] Viola married soon after but was widowed very young and kept playing her cornet.[57] Greta's other two aunts, Mina and Hilda, never married.[58] However, Greta makes a point of finishing their story by explaining that they both managed to continue earning a living through their playing, even in the face of all the opposition which this study has demonstrated they would have faced, including societal prejudices and the type of unprofessional treatment of female musicians which is detailed above (see Figure 4.21).[59] It can only be concluded that on-going societal views of female acts such as the Biseras which considered women musicians only as 'novelties', ultimately led to these talented musicians (and in all likelihood many others like them) turning away from a profession at which they excelled, frustrated that they continued not to be taken seriously.[60]

Figure 4.21: *The Biseras 2*

Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 45.

---

[56] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 43.
[57] Ibid., p. 43.
[58] Ibid., p. 43.
[59] Ibid., pp. 43-45.
[60] The continuing references to female groups and musicians as 'novel' or 'novelties' could be seen as far back as George Bernard Shaw's musical reviews from 1885, which were detailed in chapter two.

Greta finishes her book with a 'coda', in which she describes feeling encouraged all her life by her Grandfather, and also includes a fitting reaction to a quote by diarist and 'passionate lover of music' Samuel Pepys.[61] She quotes, 'I went down to Greenwich to eat and drink and heard music at the 'Globe', and saw the simple notion that is there, of a woman with a rod in her hand, keeping time with the music as it played, which is simple, methinks'.[62] Referencing her remarkable female-musician relatives, she ponders, 'What would he make of the achievement of the 'women with a rod in their hands' three hundred odd years later?!'.[63] What indeed – but what a fight her brass-playing female relatives had endured, despite benefitting so profoundly from their richly musical family life, and what a battle it has continued to be for women in music - even those lucky enough to have had the type of familial encouragement and support described in this section.

Opportunities afforded to female musicians in the areas of music for worship and patriotism

Another area which provided brass playing opportunities for women was their participation in music making linked to Christian worship. As the nineteenth century progressed (and, as will be demonstrated, during the First World War) female brass players were welcomed into the ranks of Salvation Army bands. However, evidence suggests that there were a small number of women playing with these bands at the turn of the century, and that the Army was a movement famous for its championing of women. Co-founded in 1865 by Catherine Booth and her husband William, women

[61] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 47. The definition of the musical term 'coda' is: 'the concluding passage of a piece or movement', *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, (12th edn.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[62] Greta Kent, *A view From the Bandstand*, p. 47.
[63] Ibid., p. 47.

were encouraged to preach and take on leadership roles within the Salvation Army from the outset, and Catherine herself preached bible passages which were more supportive of equality.[64] The Salvation Army was famously supportive of social reform and equality in general – their first female African American officer was Mable Broome, who was appointed in Chicago in 1915.[65] Furthermore, William Booth encouraged women musicians, asking 'and do not our prophesesses lead their people with music and song under the bare heavens in processions of mercy?'.[66] Despite this encouragement, an attempt to set up a British 'lasses band' in 1889 does not seem to have been a success.[67] Brown suggests part of the reason why Salvation Army women (and women in general) may have been initially reluctant to become involved in banding would potentially have been due to the fact that much of the music was 'loud and powerful, symbolising [the Salvation Army's] battle with evil'.[68] The Hazens concur with this view of brass music, suggesting that brass bands were 'military in origin and powerful in instrumentation, bands were unabashedly masculine organizations'.[69]

There is evidence to suggest that the movement certainly provided a small number of women with the chance to play brass however, as playing music for worship was a vastly different proposition to women 'selfishly' making music for their own enjoyment (as discussed in chapter two). The Salvation Army itself has produced a guide for musicians, in which it clearly outlines this very specific role of music within its

[64] 'The Five Women Who Shaped Salvation Army History', <centralusa.salvationarmy.org> [accessed 26 August 2020].
[65] Ibid.
[66] Andrew James Blyth, *Music Practice Within the salvation Army: Its History, Significance and Relevance in the 21st Century,* PhD, University of Salford, 2015, p. 39.
[67] Ibid., p. 39.
[68] Ibid., p. 40.
[69] M. and R. Hazen, *The Music Men*, p. 55.

organisation.[70] Their handbook *Orders and Regulations for Bands and Songster Brigades* states that musicians are not to play competitively or for monetary reward and that the 'Supreme Purpose' of Salvation army music groups 'is to proclaim the Army's message: salvation from sin through Jesus Christ'.[71]

Gordon Cox has written at length about the music of the Salvation Army, and observes that there were nine women playing 'in the 51 representative bands between 1901-1907'.[72] This was, however, out of a total membership of 1396.[73] Brindley Boon's widely referenced *Play the Music, Play!: the Story of Salvation Army Bands* contains a few references to female musicians, and a couple stand out. In 1880, accomplished musician Captain Valentine Case took command at Portsmouth and, along with his daughters decided that they should all learn to play brass instruments, demonstrating the combined importance in this example of both the religious movement they were involved in and familial support as previously discussed.[74] Also, in an announcement in the Army's official news publication the *War Cry*, a Mrs Captain Abraham Davey let it be known that 'she wished to obtain a cornet' thereby becoming 'the first woman to play a brass instrument in the Army'.[75]

---

[70] Mathilda Pullen, writing in 1855, insisted 'women should not be devoted to frivolous pastimes of their own, but to their families' Matilda Pullen, *Maternal Counsels to a Daughter* (London: Parton and Co., 1855), p. 81. This was discussed in further detail in chapter two.

[71] *Orders and regulations for Bands and Songster Brigades*, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51114aa3e4b017fd934d0693/t/583345b220099ee040d9e142/1479755187262/Orders+and+Regulations+for+Bands+and+Songster+Brigades.pdf> [Accessed 25 August 2020], pp. 1, 3 and 4.

[72] Gordon Cox, *The Musical Salvationist: The World of Richard Slater (1854-1939), 'Father of Salvation Army Music' (Music in Britain, 1600-1900)* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), p. 111.

[73] Ibid., p. 111.

[74] Brindley Boon, *Play the music, play!* second edition (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies Ltd., 1978), p. 15.

[75] Ibid., p. 15.

It appears that she got her wish, as Boon describes a photograph of her holding a cornet appearing in the *War Cry* of July 31 1880.[76]

Elsewhere globally, *The Sydney Daily Telegraph* of 16 August, 1905, and the *NSW Barrier Miner* of 8th February 1906 reported incredulously on the exploits of the Austral Women's band, or 'Austral Lasses', who toured throughout 1905-7 and were led by Captain Ruby Baker (See Figure 4.22).[77]

Figure 4.22: *The Austral Lasses*

'The Austral Brass Band' <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/44491455#>.

The *NSW Barrier Miner* wondered, with the typical thinking of the day, whether 'their bright faces might suffer when puffed up at the end of a bass instrument or when trying to sustain a long passage on the cornet', and this was after having described their appearance in detail, including the fact that they were wearing 'Salvation Army

[76] Brindley Boon, *Play the Music, Play!,* p. 15.

[77] 'An Amazon Brass Band' <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/237688608> [accessed 26 August 2020] 'The Austral Brass Band' <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/44491455#> [accessed 26 August 2020] and 'Bandmaster Britteny Flying the Flag for Women', <https://others.org.au/features/bandmaster-britteny-flying-the-flag-for-women/> [accessed 26 August 2020]. In this article, modern-day Salvation Army Bandmaster Britteny Ling describes being inspired by the leader of the Austral Lasses, Captain Ruby Baker, who became a bandmaster at just 15 years of age.

costume'.[78] The reporter's evaluation of the music performed concluded that the women's quiet playing was 'sweeter and less masculine than a man's band' but also reluctantly admitted that the louder passages 'are surprising in their volume of sound'.[79] The *Sydney Daily Telegraph's* report concluded they were a 'novel brigade' of 'skilled women instrumentalists'.[80] Here it is possible to see that word 'novel' again pertaining to a group of female musicians who appear not to have been taken seriously in the same way as the Biseras who were discussed earlier in this chapter.

As would be expected, there is evidence of more involvement of women playing brass instruments for the Salvation Army during the First World War. One example of this comes under the headline 'Home from the trenches! Wounded and 'on leave' soldiers come under the healing spell of army music discoursed by women comrades', in the *Social Gazette* of 6 January 1917. The report describes, 'a band, largely composed of bonneted women' who entertained injured soldiers (see Figure 4.23).[81]

Figure 4.23: *Home from the trenches!* from *The Social Gazette* (6 January 1917)

'Home from the trenches!' *The Social Gazette* 6 January 1917, The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

---

78 'The Austral Brass Band' <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/44491455#> [accessed 26 August 2020].
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 23 July 2020].

These soldiers, from New Zealand and Canada, heard a band strike up outside the hostel they were staying in, where they were enjoying ‘ten days respite from the nerve-wracking horrors of the terrible trenches’. The reporter noted a ‘Salvation Army band *and women!’* which proceeded to play several Christmas carols such as *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*.[82] *Home Sweet Home* was requested at the end of their performance which left all present ‘fighting a losing battle with emotion’.[83] After this, the band moved to the Royal Free Hospital, where the house-surgeon beckoned them inside to play on the wards for the wounded soldiers.[84] The conductor was rather concerned to note the ward’s glass roof, but urged the band to play quietly, proudly explaining to the impressed surgeon that that were able to play so softly and tunefully due to much practice – this was despite the fact that, as he pointed out, some of the women had only been playing for twelve months.[85]

Another church-affiliated group which encouraged women to play brass instruments at this time was the Church Nursing and Ambulance Brigade (formerly The Church Red Cross - not to be confused with the Red Cross, which had been founded in 1863 and gained its royal charter in 1908, leading to the necessary name change of the Church Red Cross).[86] It was part of the Church Lad’s and Church Girls’ Brigade, an Anglican youth organization had formed in 1891. The Brigade was one of the founder members of the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services, which also

[82] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 23 July 2020].
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 23 July 2020]. They had in all likelihood taken up the instruments due to the scarcity of male musicians during wartime.
[86] *Church Lads and Church Girl’s Brigade Historical Factsheet,* <https://www.clcgb.org.uk/documents/historical-group/315-factsheet-18-thomas-florence-milner/file> [accessed 23 July 2020].

counts among its number such organisations as Action 4 Youth, The Army Cadet Force Association and the Red Cross.[87] The *Illustrated London News* of 21 November 1914 reported, underneath a photograph of the band on the march, that ‘the gentler sex, like recruits, are inspired by martial music: a band of the Church Girls, Nursing and Ambulance Brigade in Regent Street’ (see Figure 4.24).[88]

Figure 4.24: *The gentler sex* from *The Illustrated London News* (21 November 1914)

THE GENTLER SEX, LIKE RECRUITS, ARE INSPIRED BY MARTIAL MUSIC: A BAND OF THE CHURCH GIRLS' NURSING AND AMBULANCE BRIGADE IN REGENT STREET.

Much interest was aroused in London on Saturday afternoon (the 14th) by the brass band of the Church Girls' Nursing and Ambulance Brigade which marched along Regent Street playing inspiriting airs. The War Office intends to make more use of bands to assist recruiting and stimulate popular enthusiasm. Evidently woman also finds inspiration in music for her duties in time of war.—[*Photograph by Topical.*]

‘The gentler sex’ Illustrated London News 21 November 1914, The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

.

The report continues:

> much interest was aroused in London on Saturday afternoon (the 14th) by the Brass Band of the Nursing and Ambulance Brigade, which marched along regent’s street playing inspiring airs. The War Office intends to make more

[87] ‘NCVYS: Our Members’, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130512231646/http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=392> [accessed 23 July 2020].

[88] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 23 July 2020].

use of bands to assist recruiting and stimulate popular enthusiasm. Evidently, women also find inspiration in music for her duties in time of war.[89]

The band were also spotted the following year ‘engaged in patriotic duties in Trafalgar Square’ (see Figure 4.25).[90] Women can be seen in these photographs marching with brass instruments of all sizes, which clearly caused much astonishment in the press and public, but demonstrates that equal opportunities were available to some women who were involved in these organisations because the music they produced was of a worshipful or patriotic nature.[91]

Figure 4.25: *The Church Nursing and Ambulance Brigade*

‘Church Lads and Church Girl’s Brigade Historical Factsheet’, <https://www.clcgb.org.uk/documents/historical-group/315-factsheet-18-thomas-florence-milner/file>

---

[89] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 23 July 2020].

[90] *Church Lads and Church Girl’s Brigade Historical Factsheet*, <https://www.clcgb.org.uk/documents/historical-group/315-factsheet-18-thomas-florence-milner/file> [accessed 23 July 2020].

[91] The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 23 July 2020].

Uniforms and costumes: ways in which women dressed less restrictively

An important aspect of the organisations mentioned above which has a bearing on this study, is the type of clothing which the members would have worn whilst performing on brass instruments. Uniforms such as the ones worn by the Salvation Army and the Church Nursing and Ambulance Brigade appear in the main to be a lot less restrictive looking than the standard fashions of the day and more likely to have been designed with practicality in mind for both men and women (see Figure 4.26).[92] The idea behind the design of the Salvation Army uniform was that it was to be plain, and 'to avoid 'high fashion', with uniform being worn by soldiers and officers by 1881.[93]

Figure 4.26: *Salvation Army uniform*

Image can be found at: IBEW, http://www.ibew.org.uk/.

Another example of a 'military' style uniform-wearing, brass-playing woman was Helen May Butler (1867-1957), who not only played the cornet to an exceptionally

[92] Image can be found at:
IBEW brass band archive, < https://images.app.goo.gl/fAnSNjFyaAsNuPEF7> [accessed 6 September 2020].

[93] Major John G Merrill, *Historical Dictionary of the Salvation Army* (Lanhan, Maryland, Toronto and Oxford: Scarecrow Press inc., 2006), p. 586.

high standard, but also formed and conducted the Talma Ladies' Orchestra (by 1898, the Talma Ladies' Military Band) (see Figure 4.27).[94]

Figure 4.27: *Helen May Butler*

Gavin Holman, *Soft lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018), <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> p. 12, and M. and R. Hazen, *The Music Men*, p. 186.

She was not only a contemporary of Sousa, but was also friends with him, her group performed his compositions as well as Butler's own, and one of her marches, *Cosmopolitan America March*, was so popular that it was made the official march of Theodore Roosevelt's Presidential Campaign of 1904.[95] Butler's band toured extensively, to great critical acclaim, for more than twelve years, and after it disbanded she raised a family and taught music alongside playing as a soloist - eventually running for seat in Senate in 1936.[96] From the mid-1880s, it is interesting to note that this 'Military'-style of dress can also be seen to influence everyday-wear in both Britain and the United States (see Figure 4.28).[97]

[94] Gavin Holman, *Soft lips on Cold Metal*, <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020], p. 12, and M. and R. Hazen, *The Music Men*, p. 186.
[95] Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 13.
[96] M. and R. Hazen, *The Music Men*, pp. 189, 186 and 188.
[97] Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion*, pictures 151 and 152.

Figure 4.28: *Military-style dresses* (1885 and 1888-9)

Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic Survey* (Mineola, N.Y: Dover, 1981), pictures 151 and 152.

Other female brass players from the United States who embraced the use of uniforms as their stage costumes include Cora Youngblood Corson, whose sextet received a glowing review in 1913 in Illinois paper *The Player* of 30 May, which describes the group as already having been active for seven years (see Figure 4.29).[98]

Figure 4.29: *Cora Youngblood Corson*

Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 18.

[98] 'Cora Youngblood Corson Sextet Champions Wild West', <https://idnc.library.illinois.edu/> [accessed 31 August 2020] and Gavin Holman *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 18.

Other examples of American cornet players who used uniforms as their stage costumes (not just as part of a group) included Louisa Helm (see Figure 4.30), Mary Munro (see Figure 4.31) and Cora Reiter (see Figure 4.32) who were active in 1908, 1894 and 1910 respectively.[99]

Figure 4.30: *Louisa Helm*

Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 33.

Figure 4.31: *Mary Munro*

Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 45.

Figure 4.32: *Cora Reiter*

Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 53.

---

[99] Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 33, 45 and 53.

As well as uniforms, the wearing of stage costumes - one of the few benefits to women's music groups frequently being regarded as 'novelty acts' - could be a way of circumnavigating the uncomfortable, corset-based fashions of the day. The many images of Greta Kent's brass playing family members, who were members of the Bisera troupe discussed above, demonstrate that the wearing of stage costumes allowed women to wear such practical items as trousers or pantaloons (see Figure 4.33).[100]

Figure 4.33: *The Biseras in costume*

Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand*, p. 46.

The Seven Bramusas too, as mentioned earlier, wore comfortable and relaxed-looking sailor costumes for their show 'Music Afloat' (see Figure 4.34).[101]

Figure 4.34: *The Seven Bramusas in costume*

Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family,* pp. 8-9.

---

[100] Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand*, p. 46.
[101] Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family,* pp. 8-9.

In her essay *Searching for Data about European Ladies' Orchestras, 1870-1950*, Margaret Myers discusses the pressure on women to include showmanship and exotic or unusual dress including military uniforms into their act, as it was not enough for women to simply be virtuosic.[102] This requirement for women to concentrate on the appearance of their act more than men would, however, potentially enable them to wear items of clothing not normally so acceptable in everyday life, as can be seen in the examples in this chapter.

Once again, images of these types of on-stage costumes can be found amongst the many case studies of female brass players from the United States. The 'Cowgirl Cornettist', Mattie Beding (also known as Mattie Babel), for example, was performing as part of a double act in the late 1880s – her clothes appearing in these photographs to be much more comfortable and practical than typical fashions of the day would have been (see Figure 4.35).[103]

Figure 4.35: *Mattie Beding, the 'Cowgirl Cornettist'*

Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal,* p. 4.

[102] Pirkko Moisala and Beverly Diamond (eds), *Music and Gender*, p. 200.
[103] Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal,* p. 4.

Cora Youngblood Corson also embraced costumes and was known to wear dress which reflected her Cherokee ancestry, which also appears to have been more practical and non-constraining to play in (see Figure 4.36).[104]

Figure 4.36: *Cora Youngblood Corson – Cherokee costume*

Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 19.

Two American cornet-playing suffragettes are also featured in the paper by brass band academic Gavin Holman - Rose Sanderman, who was active as a cornet player in 1907 and joined the suffragettes in 1913 (see Figure 4.37), and Rose Bower, who is described in South Dakota newspaper the *Herald-Advance* of 4 February, 1910 as playing her cornet at suffragette lectures which she toured the country giving (see Figure 4.38).[105]

[104] Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 19.
[105] Ibid., and *Herald Advance* 'Local and Personal Paragraphs', <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> [accessed 31 August 2020].

Figure 4.37: *Rose Sanderman*

Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 57.

Figure 4.38: *Rose Bower*

Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal*, p. 10.

Both of these female brass playing suffragettes can be seen to be embracing more relaxed styles of dress than generally would have been common at the time, more akin, perhaps, towards the 'Rational Dress' which is discussed in this study in chapter two.

It is also suggested in chapter two that there is a great deal more evidence, including photographs, available regarding female cornet players who were active in the United States during the time period discussed here. As the photographic examples in this chapter demonstrate, American audiences would appear to have been much more accepting of not only women playing brass instruments (the examples are plentiful), but also what protocol dictated was permissible for female performers to

wear on stage. One crucial reason for this appears to be the much earlier acceptance and eventual adoption by the United Stated of the types of clothing associated with ‘Rational Dress’. As previously discussed, as far back as the 1850s in the United States, feminist Elizabeth Smith Miller was an early advocate of trousers for women and introduced the idea to her cousin Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Stanton’s friend Amelia Bloomer, whose name became forever synonymous with this early incarnation of the garment.[106] Dr. Mary Gove Nichols wrote in 1851 of the ‘endangering’ and unhygienic nature of the fashions of the day, and her lectures on the subject in the same year were published in the *Water Cure* journal, which, appropriately, also featured details of a new ‘bloomer costume’.[107] It certainly appears that America was ahead of Britain when it came to early acceptance of a more rational form of dress for women. A more broad-minded way of thinking is reflected in the acceptance of American audiences (and greater documented numbers) of female performers on the public stage. This can be seen in the numerous case studies which were unearthed during the process of researching this study.

This chapter has discussed some of the female brass players who managed to perform despite the myriad challenges that they faced and suggests that one of the aspects which they had out of necessity at times to embrace – the practice of dressing in ‘novelty’ attire or uniforms – could have been the very thing which assisted them in their brass playing, enabling them to perform in more comfortable, practical outfits. They were undoubtedly often viewed and described as ‘novelties’, but it is suggested here that in this way many musicians managed to turn the

[106] Marlise Schoeny, ‘Reform Fashion, 1850-1914: Politics, Health and Art’ (2000), <https://costume.osu.edu/> [accessed 31 August 2020].
[107] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives*, pp. 49-50.

situation to their advantage. This, in combination with the support of the organisations discussed above and the backing and tuition received from some of the women's musical families, was enough to enable a few remarkably resilient women to 'break through' the judgement and prejudice levelled at them, and become brass musicians in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

# Conclusion

This research has detailed the extremely complex and varied set of challenges faced by female brass players between 1870 and 1920 with the aim of demonstrating that these challenges were unique to this group. Examined in combination, they explain why they managed to break through to become performers in such relatively low numbers. A detailed examination of the everyday lives of Victorian and Edwardian women living in a male-dominated society revealed unprecedented levels of upheaval experienced by people at this time (for example, brought about by the Industrial Revolution). The uncertainty brought about by these changes was shown to have affected the everyday lives of women of the era. There was a sense of shifting (or loosening) control over women, as they benefitted from several acts and laws which were introduced. Women began to push for suffrage, and this impetus has been shown to have led to a firmer return to notions of 'separate spheres' and a desire for the dependant, docile woman in her domestic home setting. This study has demonstrated that simply being a woman living in a patriarchal society was the first hurdle faced by female brass players.

It was also revealed that women leading a more 'public' life came to be regarded as a threat, particularly in the workplace, musical or otherwise, and demonstrated that female musicians came to be seen as selfish regarding their 'need' to perform on stage, ultimately robbing wage-earning men of their rightful employment. It has been shown that some methods of 'New Science' were enthusiastically embraced as a tool to force women back out of the workplace and into the private, domestic sphere.

Alongside this, it has been demonstrated that the period also saw women's fashions becoming markedly more impractical and cumbersome towards the century's end, and this study suggested that this was another subtle way of exerting control over

women at a time when they were beginning to gain new-found freedoms. The discussion surrounding the wearing of corsets, when combined with analysis of brass pedagogy describing what constituted good brass playing breathing technique, conclusively demonstrated just how difficult and dangerous this unavoidable ‘restrictive clothing/requirement for deep breathing’ combination would have been for potential female brass players at this time.

However, this study has also shown that despite all the challenges they faced, some women successfully took up playing a brass instrument, and analysis of their experiences was provided in order to explore the idea of any possible areas of commonality in their experiences, or reasons they were able to do so. The conclusion reached was that family support or membership of a religious or other organization were common themes, and that many family bands, ladies’ groups and orchestras often embraced the wearing of costumes. It was argued that this was done not only to provide the group with their own ‘unique selling point’, but that it was frequently an opportunity to overcome that most daunting of hurdles facing brass playing women – the wearing of cumbersome, impractical, dangerous items of clothing. The assortment of medical studies consulted for this thesis demonstrated how badly breathing is affected by corset wearing, and the female brass players discussed here can often be seen to wear trousers, pantaloons and looser clothing which meant they could breathe freely without the constriction of this garment. By wearing uniforms and costumes women were able, crucially, to largely avoid the judgement and scandal that going ‘corset free’ would ordinarily have brought upon them, and enabled them to breath more easily. The fact that these women continued to be seen as mere ‘novelties’ has, however, also been touched upon here as a frequently frustrating consequence of costume wearing for musical performance.

This research has brought together several different existing strands of scholarship addressing, for example, the everyday hardships experienced by Victorian and Edwardian women, the societal judgement aimed at female musicians and performers, medical research into the dangers of constrictive clothing, and good brass playing technique. Experts in these vastly different academic fields have been referenced, but what sets this study apart is the way in which these seemingly unrelated existing strands of research have been drawn together to examine the lives of a relatively under-research group of women from multiple angles. Ultimately, by considering these individual, separate hurdles faced by this group in depth, this thesis is unique in presenting the picture as a whole.

While the experience of breathing in a corset has been previously researched, this project has taken the knowledge gained from these medical studies, applied the findings to the breathing required for brass playing and then analysed just how difficult this would have been for women of this era who really had very little choice but to wear these garments. The aim has been, rather than focusing on just one area of the lives of these women either as females in a patriarchal society or as musicians as most previous studies have done, to present a cohesive discussion on just how complicated the challenges were for women looking to take up a brass instrument at this time, and to show just how courageous and inventive the women who successfully became performers truly were to have overcome the not inconsiderable odds stacked against them.

The time period selected to be covered here is extremely specific and was selected after careful consideration. Due to unprecedented changes taking place in the everyday lives of people at this time, for example as a result of the upheavals caused by the Industrial Revolution, there was, as has been demonstrated, enough

forward momentum in the opportunities available to women to see an increase in the number of female musicians during this time period. They may have broken through to become musicians in relatively small numbers, but they broke through nonetheless, and it was for reasons such as the Education Act of 1870, technical developments stemming from the Industrial Revolution and the beginnings of the suffrage movement which have been discussed here.

Therefore, a clear next step for further research into the experiences of female brass players would be to build upon the foundations established by this study which has concentrated on these women's 'early' experiences, and expand this to reach further into the twentieth, and even twenty-first centuries. In this way, this thesis will have acted as a solid foundation, putting in place detailed background information highlighting the experiences of pioneering early musicians, with the potential for moving on chronologically and examining the lives of women from 1920 onwards.

This could be done in several ways, for example potentially detailing the narratives of BAME and LGBTQ+ female brass musicians, or considering separate genres of music such as jazz and dance bands, orchestras, popular music, brass bands or all-female military bands. Particularly regarding the last of these surprisingly little has been documented and it could be that these areas are approached as separate strands of research or in combination, potentially drawing in the experiences of female brass players of different nationalities also.

Another area which would be useful to pursue in further detail would be the continued influence of women's fashions, and how the ways in which women were expected to dress affected their ability to perform. For example, if this line of research were also taken forward chronologically, the fact that digestion was likely

affected by corset wearing was demonstrated by a 1970s survey by Dr. Paul Dudley White into the wearing of tight girdles, who listed 'hiatus hernia, gastric reflux, and esophagitis, as well as colonic infarction' as side effects of wearing the garment which had come to replace the corset during the course of the twentieth century.[1] Further research in this area would serve to enrich the current body of scholarship surrounding female musicians, as it appears that the girdles worn in the mid-to-late twentieth century had a similar negative effect on the organs and torso of the women being encouraged to wear them. It would be interesting to see if the girdle, as worn by the female brass musicians of the mid-twentieth century, would also have negatively impacted the wearer's breathing in a similar way to the corset which went before it. Also worthy of investigation is whether the experiences of prospective female brass players became any less challenging in any of the other areas discussed here, or if women had to continue the fight for performance opportunities which was started by the brave and pioneering female brass musicians who have been the focus of this study.

[1] Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives,* p. 103. Colonic infarction is 'loss of blood circulation to the colon wall'.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources


‘An Amazon Brass Band’ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/237688608> [accessed 26 August 2020]

‘The Austral Brass Band’ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/44491455#> [accessed 26 August 2020]

*British Medical Journal* V1 N954 (April 1879) <https://jstor.org/stable/25250678> [accessed 16 April 2020]

‘Cora Youngblood Corson Sextet Champions Wild West’ <https://idnc.library.illinois.edu/> [accessed 31 August 2020]

Ellis, Mrs. S., *The Daughters of England, Their position in Society, Character and Responsibilities* (New York: Appleton and Co., 1843)

‘The Feminine in Music’, *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular,* V23 N476 (October 1 1882), 521-522

Flower, William Henry, *Fashion in Deformity, as Illustrated in the Customs of Barbarous and Civilised Races* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1881)

Gray, Cecil, *A Survey of Contemporary Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927)

Lloyd, Marie, *A Little of What You Fancy Does You Good* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aq6LKARJYZc> [accessed 22 June 2021]

‘Local and Personal Paragraphs’, *Herald Advance*<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> [accessed 31 August 2020]

du Maurier, George, *Trilby* (London: Osgood, McIlvaine, 1894, re-printed by Amazon)

Nightingale, Florence, *Notes on Nursing for Labouring Classes* (London: Harrison, 1876)

O'Followell, Dr. L., *Le Corset* (1905 and 1909) <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Le_Corset_%281908%29> [accessed 16 April 2020]

*Orders and regulations for Bands and Songster Brigades*, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51114aa3e4b017fd934d0693/t/583345b220099ee040d9e142/1479755187262/Orders+and+Regulations+for+Bands+and+Songster+Brigades.pdf> [accessed 25 August 2020]

Pullen, Matilda, *Maternal Counsels to a Daughter* (London: Parton and Co., 1855)

*The Rational Dress Society Gazette* (1889) <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-rational-dress-societys-gazette> [accessed 25 April 2020]

Royal College of Surgeons of England, *Dress and Health: An Appeal to Antiquity and Common Sense* (London: Elliot Stock, 1896)

Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On the Ill Effects of Insufficient Exercise, Constrained Positions and Tight Stays on the Health of Young Women* (London: Charles Knight, 1833)

Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On Voluntary Distortions of the Human Figure by Artificial Compression* (Edinburgh: S.N., 1832)

Smyth, Ethel, *March of the Women* by the Glasgow University Chapel Choir <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnMjOAxktS0> and the sheet music at: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/smyth-march-of-the-women#> [both accessed 8 February 2021]

Sommerring, Samuel Thomas von, *Über die Wirkungen der Schnurbruste (On the Effects of the Corset)* (Berlin: Neue Auflage, 1793)

Storry, Deans R., *The Law of Parent and Child, Guardian and Ward, and the Rights, Duties, and Liabilities of Infants: with the Practice of the High Court of Justice in Relation Hereto* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1895)

Wilde, Oscar, *The Philosophy of Dress* (originally published in the *New York Tribune,* 19 April 1885) available here: <https://www.readingdesign.org/philosophy-of-dress> [accessed 4 April 2020]

Primary sources: images

'Abdy's Canine Circus', *Leicester Evening Post,* 17 September 1906 in: The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 25 August 2020]

'Advertisement for the *W. B. Reduso Corset'* (c. 1900) in: Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* fifth edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)

'Advertisement for straight-front corset' (c. 1903) in: Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* fifth edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)

Alma-Tadema, Lawrence, 'Pleading' in: Stephen, Kern, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels, 1840-1900* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1996)

'The Anglo Saxon Ladies' Band' (c.1880) in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

‘Aunt Hilda’ in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

‘The Austral Lasses’ in: ‘The Austral Brass Band’ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/44491455#> [accessed 26 August 2020]

Baer*, Gil, Fine taille, horribles detales*, from Dr. G. J. Witowski*, Tetoniana*, (1898) in: Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* fifth edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)

Barnard, Fred, *Armorel of Lyonesse: And They Marvelled While the Music Delivered its Message – Which is Different for Every Soul* (1890) in: Gillett, Paula, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914 “Encroaching on All Men’s Privileges”* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000)

‘The Biseras’ in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

‘The Biseras 2’ in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

‘The Biseras – trousers’ in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

Blumenbach, F. S., *Skull Classification* in: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2151154/> [accessed 19 March 2021]

‘The Bramusa Family Band’ in: Gavin Holman*, Keep it in the Family – the Family*

*Brass Bands that Entertained the USA and UK in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, (October, 2017), 8-9. <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

Bulwer*,* John*, The Artificiall Changling* (1653) in: Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* fifth edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)

Carjat, Etienne, *'Alphonse Sax Junior transforms himself into a sylphide, the better to convert the fair sex to the holy principals of morality and brass instruments!',* (1862) in: Katharine Ellis, 'The Fair Sax: Women, Brass-Playing and the Instrument Trade in 1860s Paris', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, V124 N2 (1999)

'The Church Nursing and Ambulance Brigade' in: 'Church Lads and Church Girl's Brigade Historical Factsheet' <https://www.clcgb.org.uk/documents/historical-group/315-factsheet-18-thomas-florence-milner/file> [accessed 23 July 2020]

'Cora Reiter' in: Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018) <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

'Correct Chin Contraction' in: John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It: A Book of Lip Building and Flexibility Exercises* (Rutland: Brass Wind Publications, 1975)

'Cora Youngblood Corson' in: Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018) <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

‘Cora Youngblood Corson – Cherokee costume’ in: Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018), <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

‘Costal, Diaphragmatic, Inflation and Deflation’ in: John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It: A Book of Lip Building and Flexibility Exercises* (Rutland: Brass Wind Publications, 1975)

‘Diagrams of diaphragm and rib muscles’ in: John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It: A Book of Lip Building and Flexibility Exercises* (Rutland: Brass Wind Publications, 1975)

Dickinson, Dr. R. L.*, ‘Diagrams published by Dickinson to illustrate liver deformity with tight-lacing’* (1887) in: Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives of Corseting and Two Physiologic Studies With Reenactors*, PhD, Iowa State University (1998)

Dickinson, Dr. R. L., *‘Pressure bag under corset with bulb and gauge’* (1887) in: Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives of Corseting and Two Physiologic Studies With Reenactors*, PhD, Iowa State University (1998)

‘Domestic Joys of Parent’s Whose Daughters Take Part in Women’s Orchestras’ in: Katherine Ellis, ‘The Fair Sax: Women, Brass-Playing and the Instrument Trade in 1860s Paris’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, V124 N2 (1999)

du Maurier, George, ‘The Fair Sex-tett (Accomplishments of the Rising Female

Generation') (1875) in: Ellis, Katharine, 'The Fair Sax: Women, Brass-Playing and the Instrument Trade in 1860s Paris', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, V124 N2 (1999)

'Florrie Horsfield' in: Gavin Holman, *Child Prodigies in Brass a Selection of Vintage Images of Children Who Played Brass Instruments* (February, 2020) <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020].

Gau, Colleen Ruby, '19" and 13" waist circumferences' in: Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives of Corseting and Two Physiologic Studies With Reenactors*, PhD, Iowa State University (1998)

'The gentler sex', *The Illustrated London News* 21 November 1914 in: The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 23 July 2020]

'Gertie and Flossie Edgcombe, 'the world's youngest cornet and violin duettists'' in: Gavin Holman, *Child Prodigies in Brass a Selection of Vintage Images of Children Who Played Brass Instruments* (February, 2020) <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

'Girl playing a chanter', front cover of: MacNeill, Seumas and Thomas Pearson, *The College of Piping Tutor 1* (Glasgow: The College of Piping, 2017)

'Grandfather Kent' in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

‘Greta Kent’ in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

‘Greta’s mother and aunts, brass section, unknown orchestra’ (c.1900) in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

‘Helen May Butler’ in: Gavin Holman, *Soft lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018) <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

‘Hippodrome, Sheffield, Dan, the Intoxicated Canine playbill’ in: *The Sheffield Star Green ‘Un*, 9 March 1912, The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 24 August 2020]

‘Home from the trenches!’ *The Social Gazette* 6 January 1917 in: The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 23 July 2020]

Hughes, Arthur, ‘The Home Quartet: Mrs Vernon Lushington and Her Children’ (1883) in: Paula, Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914 “Encroaching on All Men’s Privileges”* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000)

‘Hysteria’ image in: <https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/W89GZBIAAN4yz1hQ> [accessed 19 March 2021]

Image showing Sections of Skull Corresponding to Different Mental Traits, in: <https://pages.vassar.edu/realarchaeology/2017/03/05/phrenology-and-scientific-racism-in-the-19th-century/> [accessed 19 March 2021]

‘John Bull – English Symbol’ in: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/John-Bull-English-symbol> [accessed 8 May 2020]

‘The Kent Family poster’ in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

‘King and Showers, Diaphragm Positions During Inspiration and Expiration’ in: Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives of Corseting and Two Physiologic Studies With Reenactors*, PhD, Iowa State University (1998)

Lady Harberton in: <https://helenrappaport.com/footnotes/rational-dress/> [accessed 19 March 2021]

‘The London Coliseum’*, Music Hall and Theatre Review* 10 May 1908 in: The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 25 August 2020]

‘Louisa Helm’ in: Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018) <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

‘The Man and the Woman of Tomorrow’ from *Les Elegants*, (1904) in: Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* fifth edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)

‘Mary Munro’ in: Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018) <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

‘Mattie Beding, the ‘Cowgirl Cornettist’’ in: Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018)

<www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

'Military-style dresses (1885 and 1888-9)' in: Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic Survey* (Mineola, N.Y: Dover, 1981)

'Miss Incorrect Breath (inflated)' in: John Ridgeon, *How Brass Players Do It: A Book of Lip Building and Flexibility Exercises* (Rutland: Brass Wind Publications, 1975)

'The Mode and the Martyrs*', Puck*, (c.1877) in: Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* fifth edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)

'Multiples of increase in selected professional groups, England and Wales 1861-1911' in: Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women* (London: Routledge, 1991)

Muschamp, F. Sydney, 'Scarborough Spa at Night' in: Stephen Kern, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels, 1840-1900* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1996)

'Nellie Baldwin' in: Greta Kent, *A View From the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

'Princess Louise, Duchess of Fife, at her Scottish home Mar Lodge (1889') in: Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic* Survey (New York: Dover Publications Ltd., 1963)

O'Followell*,* Dr. L., 'Radiographic operating table and equipment' in: O'Followell, Dr. L., *Le Corset (The Corset)* (Paris: A. Maloine, 1905 and 1908)

O'Followell, Dr. L.,' Radioscopy drawing' in: O'Followell, Dr. L., *Le Corset (The Corset)* (Paris: A. Maloine, 1905 and 1908)

O'Followell, *Dr. L.*, 'X-ray of the thorax, Radiography of the line corset (front) and X-ray of the arched corset in front (back)' in: O'Followell, Dr. L., *Le Corset, (The Corset)* (Paris: A. Maloine, 1905 and 1908)

'Petticoat Quartette' in: *The Strand Magazine* (1892) <https://archive.org/details/StrandMagazine13/page/n63/mode/2up?q=street+musicians> [accessed 20 January 2021]

'Ratios of Male and Female Actors and Musicians 1861-1911' in: Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women* (London: Routledge, 1991)

Ridel, L., 'Last Flowers' (1900) in: Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-De-Siecle Culture,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

'Rose Bower' in: Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018) <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

'Rose Sanderman' in: Gavin Holman, *Soft Lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018) <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

Royal College of Surgeons, 'Contents of the Thorax and Abdomen' in: Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On Voluntary Distortions of the Human Figure by Artificial Compression* (Edinburgh: S.N., 1832)

Royal College of Surgeons, ‘Diagram of the rib cage’ in: Royal College of Surgeons of England, *On Voluntary Distortions of the Human Figure by Artificial Compression* (Edinburgh: S.N., 1832)

‘Salvation Army uniform image’ at: IBEW brass band archive <https://images.app.goo.gl/fAnSNjFyaAsNuPEF7> [accessed 6 September 2020]

‘The Serpent Starting to Tempt the Woman Once Again’ in: Ellis, Katharine, ‘The Fair Sax: Women, Brass-Playing and the Instrument Trade in 1860s Paris’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, V124 N2 (1999)

‘The Seven Bramusas’ in: Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family – the Family Brass Bands that Entertained the USA and UK in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, (October, 2017) 8-9 <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

‘The Seven Bramusas, Music Afloat’ in: Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family – the Family Brass Bands that Entertained the USA and UK in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, (October, 2017) 8-9 <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

‘The Seven Bramusas – costumes’ in: Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family – the Family Brass Bands that Entertained the USA and UK in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, (October, 2017) 8-9 <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

‘The Shepard Family Band’ in: Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family – the Family Brass Bands that Entertained the USA and UK in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, (October, 2017) 8-9 <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

‘The Shepard Family Band 2’ in: Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family – the Family Brass Bands that Entertained the USA and UK in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, (October, 2017) 8-9 <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

‘The Shepard Family Band on strings and banjos’ in: Gavin Holman, *Keep it in the Family – the Family Brass Bands that Entertained the USA and UK in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, (October, 2017) 8-9 <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

Stone, Frank, ‘The Last Appeal’, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/search?keyword=last&keyword=appeal> [accessed 16 February 2021]

‘Trade card for Ball’s corsets’ in: Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005)

Topinard, Paul, *Craniology*, in: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paul_Topinard,_Craniology._Wellcome_L0002708.jpg> [accessed 18 March 2021]

von Sommerring, S. T., 'Diagrams of corseted and un-corseted bodies (1793') in: S. T. von Sommerring, *Über die Wirkungen der Schnurbruste (On the Effects of the Corset)* (Berlin: Neu Auflage, 1793)

'Vintage image of unknown brass-playing child' in: Gavin Holman, *Child Prodigies in Brass – a Selection of Vintage Images of Children Who Played Brass Instruments* (February, 2020) <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

Watts, Caroline, 'The Bugler Girl' in: Gillett, Paula, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914 "Encroaching on All Men's Privileges"* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000)

Wilberforce-Smith, William, 'A Comparison of Lung Capacities (1888)' in: Colleen Ruby Gau, *Historic Medical Perspectives of Corseting and Two Physiologic Studies With Reenactors*, PhD, Iowa State University (1998)

Secondary sources

Arban, J. B., *Cornet Method* (London: Hawkes and Son, 1907)

'Bandmaster Britteny Flying the Flag for Women <https://others.org.au/features/bandmaster-britteny-flying-the-flag-for-women/> [accessed 26 August 2020]

Beattie, Michael, Penny Lenihan and Robin Dundas, *Counselling Skills for Working*

*With Gender Diversity and Identity* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018)

Beer, Anna, *Sounds and Sweet Airs: The forgotten Women of Classical Music* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2016)

Bedarida, Francois (trans. A. S. Forster and G. Hodgkinson), *A Social History of England 1851-1990, 2nd edition* (London and New York: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1991)

Birdsall, Nancy, 'Fertility and Economic Change in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Europe: A Comment', *Population and Development Review*, V9 N1 (March 1983)

Black Dyke Band website < https://www.blackdykeband.co.uk/lessons/> [accessed 16 June 2021]

Blyth, Andrew James, *Music Practice Within the salvation Army: Its History, Significance and Relevance in the 21st Century,* PhD, University of Salford (2015)

Boon, Brindley, *Play the music, play!* second edition (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies Ltd., 1978)

Brand, Violet and Geoffrey, *Brass Bands in the Twentieth Century* (Letchworth: Egon Publishers Ltd., 1979)

Brighouse and Rastrick Band website < https://brighouseandrastrick.com/> [accessed 16 June 2021]

The British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed between 23 July and 25 August 2020]

Carter, Stewart (ed.), *Brass Scholarship in Review: Proceedings of the Historic Brass Society Conference, Cite de la Musique, Paris 1999* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2006)

Chen, Eva, 'It's Prohibitive Cost: The Bicycle, the New Woman and Conspicuous Display', *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture,* V64, N1 (April 2017) 1-17

'Church Lads and Church Girl's Brigade Historical Factsheet' <https://www.clcgb.org.uk/documents/historical-group/315-factsheet-18-thomas-florence-milner/file> [accessed 23 July 2020]

*The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* twelfth edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Cory Band website <https://coryband.com/> [accessed 16 June 2021]

Cox, Gordon, *The Musical Salvationist: The World of Richard Slater (1854-1939), 'Father of Salvation Army Music' (Music in Britain, 1600-1900)* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011)

Crow, Duncan, *The Victorian Woman* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971)

Davis, Tracy C., *Actresses as working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991)

Dijkstra, Bram, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/the-geometer-of-race> [accessed 19

March 2021]

Domotor, Teodora, ‘Anxious Masculinity and Silencing in Ernest Hemmingway’s “Mr and Mrs Elliot”, *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)* V9 N1 (Spring 2012), pp. 121-133

Edwards, Susan, *Female Sexuality and the Law* (Oxford: Martin Robertson and Company Ltd., 1981)

Ehrlich, Cyril, *The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century* (Wotton-under-Edge: Clarendon Press, 1985)

Ellis, Katharine, ‘The Fair Sax: Women, Brass-Playing and the Instrument Trade in 1860s Paris’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, V124 N2 (1999)

Erkal, Melis Mulazimoglu, ‘The Cultural History of the Corset and Gendered Body in Social and Literary Landscapes’, *European Journal of Language and Literature Studies,* V3 N3 (2017)

Eustance, Claire, Joan Ryan and Laura Ugolini (eds.), *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000)

Fee, Elizabeth, ‘Nineteenth-Century Craniology: The Study of the Female Skull’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine,* V53 N3 (1979) 415-433

Finney, Gail, *Women in Modern Drama: Freud, Feminism and European Theatre at the Turn of the Century* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1989)

‘The Five Women Who Shaped Salvation Army History’ <centralusa.salvationarmy.org> [accessed 26 August 2020]

Freedman, Estelle B., *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of*

*Women* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2002)

Frisby, Jackie,*' Long Among us in the Character of Settled inhabitants', The Members of George IV's Private Band in Brighton*, Royal Pavilion Archives RPFILES0465

Fuller, Sophie, *The Society of Women Musicians* <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-music/articles/the-society-of-women-musicians> [accessed 2 July 2020]

Fuller, Sophie, *Smyth, Dame Ethel (Mary)* <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026038> [accessed 2 February 2020]

Fuller, Sophie, 'Women in Composition before the Second World War' in: Laura Hamer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Women in Music Since 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021)

Gau, Colleen Ruby, *Historic Medical Perspectives of Corseting and Two Physiologic Studies With Reenactors*, PhD, Iowa State University (1998)

Gernsheim, Alison, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: a Photographic Survey* (New York: Dover, 1981)

Gillett, Paula, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914 "Encroaching on All Men's Privileges"* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000)

Gitter, Elisabeth, 'The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination', *PMLA,* V99 N5 (October 1984) 936-954

Goodman, L., and Jane de Gay (eds), *The Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998)

Goodrich Dunst, Maura, "*Such Genius as Hers": Music in New Woman Fiction*

PhD, University of Cardiff (2013)

Gorham, Debora, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1982)

Green, Lucy, *Music, Gender, Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Green, Lucy, ‘Musical Meaning, and Education’, *Philosophy of Music Education Review,* V2 N2 (Fall 1994) 99-105

Grove, George, *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Macmillan and Co., 1879)

Hall, Lesley A., *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain Since 1880* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000)

Hazen, Margaret Hindle and Robert M. Hazen, *The Music Men: An Illustrated History of Brass Bands in America*, 1800-1920 (Washington D.C. and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987)

Herbert, Trevor (ed.), *Bands: The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991)

Holcombe, Lee, *Victorian Ladies at Work* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles (Holdings) Ltd., 1973)

Holledge, Julie, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre* (London: Virago, 1981)

Holman, Gavin, *Child Prodigies in Brass – a Selection of Vintage Images of Children Who Played Brass Instruments* (February, 2020) <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive

<www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

Holman, Gavin, *Keep it in the Family – the Family Brass Bands that Entertained the USA and UK in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, (October, 2017) <https://www.academia.edu/>, IBEW: The Brass Band Archive <www.ibew.org.uk> and <www.researchgate.net> [all accessed 24 August 2020]

Holman, Gavin, *Soft lips on Cold Metal: Female Brass Soloists of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (2018) <www.researchgate.net> and <www.ibew.org.uk> [both accessed 31 August 2020]

Horn, Pamela, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Victorian Britain* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999)

Horn, Pamela, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (Gloucester: Allan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1986)

Jasinski, Laurie E. (ed.), *Handbook of Texas Music* second edition (Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 2012)

Johnston, Lucy, *19th Century Fashion in Detail* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2016)

Kemp, Anthony E., *The Musical Temperament: Psychology and Personality of Musicians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

Kent, Greta, *A View from the Bandstand* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983)

Kern, Stephen, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels, 1840-1900* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1996)

Kift, Dagmar, *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict* (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 1991, English translation, 1996)

Leppert, Richard and Susan McClary (eds.), *Music and Society: the Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Lewis, Jane (ed.) *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family 1850-1940* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986)

Libbon, Stephanie E., 'Anxious Masculinity in Frank Wedekind's Spring Awakening', *Culture, Society and Masculinities; Harriman* V2 N2 (Fall 2010) pp. 165-180

Low, Rachael, *History of the British Film, 1918-1929*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971)

Lumsden, Rachel, '"The Music Between Us": Ethel Smyth, Emmeline Pankhurst and "Possession"', *Feminist Studies*, V41 N2 (2015) 335-370

MacNeill, Seumas and Thomas Pearson*, The College of Piping Tutor 1* (Glasgow: The College of Piping, 2017)

Manne, Kate, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (London: Penguin, 2018)

Mendus, Susan and Jane Rendall (eds.), *Sexuality and Subordination* (London: Routledge, 1989)

Merrill, Major John G., *Historical Dictionary of the Salvation Army* (Lanhan, Maryland, Toronto and Oxford: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2006)

Mitchell, Juliet and Anne Oakley ed, *What is Feminism* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1992)

Moisala, Pirkko, and Beverly Diamond (eds.), *Music and Gender* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000)

Morgan, Simon, *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: I. B. Taurus and Co. Ltd., 2007)

NCVYS: Our Members' <https://web.archive.org/web/20130512231646/http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=392> [accessed 23 July 2020]

Nevins, Paul Leonard, *Trumpet in Transition: A History of the Trumpet and its Players in the United Kingdom Through the Music and Relationships of Edward Elgar,* PhD, Birmingham City University (Birmingham Conservatoire), 2017

Newsome, Roy, *The Modern Brass Band From the 1930s to the New Millennium* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007)

< https://oldbike.wordpress.com/vintage-bicycle-adverts-1900-1920/> [accessed 26 March 2021]

OED on-line <https://www.lexico.com/definition/bifurcate> [accessed 26 March 2021]

Oxford Music on-line, *Women Composers by Time Period* at: <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/page/women-composers-by-time-period> [accessed 14 February 2021]

Pendle, Karin, *Women and Music: A History* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1991)

Powell, Kerry (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Price, Kevin, Phillipe Schartz and Alan H. D. Watson, 'The Effect of Standing and

Sitting on Breathing in Brass Players', *Journal of Musicological Research*, V18 (September 1 1999)

Pugh, Martin, *The March of the Women: A revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage, 1866-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Purvis, June, *A History of Women's Education in England* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991)

Rappaport, Helen, *Women in Trousers – From Bloomers to Rational Dress* (2018) <https://helenrappaport.com/footnotes/rational-dress/> [accessed 1 July 2020]

Raverat, Gwen, *Period Piece* fourth edition (London: Faber and Faber, 2002)

Ridgeon, John, *How Brass Players Do It. A Book of Lip Building and Flexibility Exercises* (London: Belwin Mills Music, 1976)

Roentgen's Discovery of the x-ray <https://www.bl.uk/learning/cult/bodies/xray/roentgen.html#:~:text=In%201895%2C%20the%20invention%20of,to%20cut%20into%20the%20flesh> [accessed 19 August, 2020]

Rohr, Debora, 'Women and the Music Profession in Victorian England: The Royal Society of Female Musicians 1839-1866', *Journal of Musicological Research*, V18 (1 September 1999)

Schoeny, Marlise, 'Reform Fashion, 1850-1914: Politics, Health and Art' (2000) <https://costume.osu.edu/> [accessed 31 August 2020]

Scott, Derek B., 'The Sexual Politics of Victorian Musical Aesthetics', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association,* V119 N1 (1994) 91-114

Sergeant, Desmond Charles, and Evangelos Himonides, 'Orchestrated Sex: the Representation of Men and Women in World-Class Symphony Orchestras', *Frontiers in Psychology* (16 August 2019)

Shepherd, Alexandra *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Showalter, Elaine, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siecle* (London: Virago, 2001)

Slater, E., 'Diagnosis of "Hysteria"', *British medical journal,* V1 N5447 (1965) 1395-1399

Steele, Valerie, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)

Swaboda, Deanna, Breathing Exercises for Brass Players <https://www.dansr.com/wick/resources/breathing-exercises-for-brass-players> [accessed 21 August 2020]

Tapper, Marion E., 'The Superego of Women', *Social Theory and Practice,* V12 N1 (Spring 1986) 61-74

Tasca, C., M. Rapetti M. G. Carta and B. Fadda, 'Women and Hysteria in the History of Mental Health' *Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health* N8 (2012), pp. 119-10

Taylor, Arthur R., *Brass Bands* (St. Albans: Granada Publishing Ltd., 1979)

Teets Schwarze, Tracey, '"Do You Call That a Man?": The Culture of Anxious Masculinity in Joyce's "Ulysses"', *European Joyce Studies v.10, Masculinities in Joyce: Postcolonial Constructions* (2001), pp. 113-135

Tosh, John, 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800-1914', *Journal of British Studies* V44, N2 (April 2005), p. 330-342

UK Parliament, *The 1870 Education Act* < https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact/ > [accessed 7 May 2020]

Vicinus, Martha, *Suffer and be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973)

Victoria and Albert Museum, *Corsets and Crinolines in Victorian Fashion* <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/corsets-and-crinolines-in-victorian-fashion/> [accessed 26 March 2021]

https://www.victorianvoices.net/ARTICLES/STRAND/1892A/S1892A-StreetMusicians.pdf [accessed 20 January 2021]

Walby, Sylvia. 'Theorising Patriarchy', *Sociology*, V23 N2, (1989)

Waugh, Norah, *Corsets and Crinolines* (London: Routledge, 2017)

Weliver, Phyllis, *Musical Women in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000)

Williamson, V. J. and M. Bonshor, 'Wellbeing in Brass Bands: The Benefits and Challenges of Group Music Making', *Frontiers in Psychology,* 10:1176 (2019)

Woolf*,* Virginia*, A Room of One's Own* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2012)

Wright, David H. C., *The Royal College of Music and its Contexts: An Artistic and Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019

Wrisley, S. P., 'Feminist Theory and the Problem of Misogyny' *Feminist Theory* (13 October 2021)

Zon, Bennett (ed.), *Musical Performance Culture in Nineteenth Century Britain:*

*Essays in Honour of Nicholas Temperley* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012)