

MUSIC PAST TO PRESENT

How to Play the Piazzolla Music:

The Codes Behind the Scores

Paulina Fain

3:00 PM

Making a Spectacle of Themselves:

Prominent Female Keyboardists in Western History

Marcie Ray

4:00 PM

Making a Spectacle of Themselves: Prominent Female Keyboardists in Western History

In February 2020, critics unleashed their fury upon Yuja Wang for wearing dark-colored spectacles throughout her concert in Vancouver. Norman Lebrecht, as well as conductor Tania Miller (who later apologized) led the charge. Miller, in particular, bemoaned how the glasses and her demeanor “shut the audience out” and felt like “rejection” of the audience’s need for access to the artist. For other critics, notably after her 2011 performance at the Hollywood Bowl, Wang has been accused of being too available to audiences with her penchant for stylishly short hemlines. In this talk, I use Wang’s sartorial choices and her critical reception as a window into the preoccupations with women’s comportment, dress, and, by extension, morality that have beleaguered female keyboardists from the Renaissance to today. As music institutions invest more visibly in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, it’s essential to examine the conceptual frameworks, systems, and institutions that have created barriers for female-identifying musicians in Western classical keyboard performance, as well as to pay homage to the women who have nevertheless managed to secure public performing careers and even adulation. I will briefly explore the careers of several female pianists that represent a range of identities.

Marcie Ray is an Associate Professor of Musicology at the Michigan State University College of Music. Her monograph *Coquettes, Wives, and Widows: Gender Politics in French Baroque Opera and Theater* (Boydell & Brewer) was published in 2020, supported by MSU’s HARP production grant and the James R. Anthony Fund from the American Musicological Society. Her other work can be found in *Música em Perspectiva*, *Early Music*, *American Music*, and *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Pedagogy*. She has won several grants and awards for her teaching including a Lilly Teaching Fellowship, a Creating Inclusive Excellence Grant, the Dortha J. and John D. Withrow Excellence in Teaching Award, and the Fintz Award for Teaching Excellence in the Arts and Humanities.

