

Women of Note:

Notable Female Composers for Chorus

1. Question & Research Task

Most often when we think of choral composers, we think of old, white-haired men. But there is actually a long history of female composers, from Hildegard in the 12th century to composers like Barbara Baker, whose teaching and arrangements have spanned the better part of the 21st century.

A composer's work may be influenced by a variety of biographical, social, cultural, and historical contexts. Your focus will be to research the lives of few female choral composers of the 20th century to today in order to determine how their life experiences influenced their music and work.



[NYU Women's Choir performs Barbara Baker's arrangement of *The Storm is Passing Over* \(2021\).](#)

Image Source: YouTube

In this Slam Dunk, you will conduct brief, focused research to respond to the inquiry question:

How do a composer's life experiences influence her music?

2. Information Sources

Choose several of the information sources linked here to complete the Student Activity on Slide 3.

You will use the resources to gather biographical information about a notable female composer for piano. As you research, you will examine influences on the composer's music.



Amy Beach	Emma Lou Diemer	Laura Farnell	Andrea Ramsey	Mary Lynn Lightfoot	Barbara Baker
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University of New Hampshire• Parker Symphony Orchestra• World Book Advanced• Celebrating Amy Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emma Lou Diemer Biography• Santa Barbara Music• Emma Lou Diemer Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laura Farnell Singer• Carl Fischer Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Andrea Ramsey• Santa Barbara Publishing• Music Spoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choristers Guild An Interview with Mary Lynn Lightfoot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oral History Interview with Barbara Baker

3. Student Activity

Choose one of the female piano composers on Slide 2 to research her life and musical influences. Use this [graphic organizer](#) to take notes.

As you research, think about how the composer's life experiences influenced the creation and performance of her music.

Slam Dunk Research Notes

Women of Note: Notable Female Composers for Piano

Select one female piano composer (Amy Beach, Clara Wieck Schumann, Fanny Mendelssohn, Joan Towers, or Jennifer Higdon) to research the following information using sites on Slam Dunk Slide 2 or other reliable sources you find. Cite your sources for a Bibliography/Works Cited.]

Research Topics	Notes & Sources
Name	Type name of composer here
Birth	Types notes here
Death	Types notes here
Nationality	Types notes here
Era	Types notes here
Famous Work(s)	Types notes here
Age When She Began Composing	Types notes here
Education	Types notes here
Important Fact #1	Types notes here
Important Fact #2	Types notes here
Important Fact #3	Types notes here
Important Fact #4	Types notes here
Important Fact #5	Types notes here
Important Fact #6	Types notes here
Important Fact #7	Types notes here
Important Fact #8	Types notes here

4. Assessment Activity

How do a composer's life experiences influence her music?

Influential or famous people often have information published about their lives and work in a quick, easy-to-read format.

Use one of these tools to share information about the female composer you researched:

- [Profile Publisher](#) (Teacher resource)
- [Trading Card](#) (Teacher resource)
- Digital Poster using [Discovery Education Board](#) (Teacher resource)
- Other digital or non-digital tool approved by your teacher

Refer success criteria on this [rubric](#) as you create your final product.

Be ready to share your new knowledge with your classmates!

The image shows a screenshot of the 'profile publisher' tool interface. At the top, it says 'profile publisher' in large white letters on a blue background. Below this is a section titled 'Tips for Using the Profile Publisher'. To the right of the tips is a preview of the profile publisher form, which is outlined in red. The form has tabs for 'Names', 'Personal Info', 'About Me', 'Latest Blog', and 'Interests'. It contains several sections: 'SPACE FOR IMAGE' with instructions to draw or paste a picture; 'A Quote/Greeting' with a text box; 'Song Now Playing' with a text box; and 'Instructions' with detailed text about choosing a quote and a song. At the bottom of the form is an 'Add Changes & Next' button. Below the form is a 'Create a Profile' button. Red arrows point from the tips to the corresponding sections in the form: one points to the 'SPACE FOR IMAGE' section, another to the 'A Quote/Greeting' section, and a third to the 'Add Changes & Next' button.

profile publisher

Tips for Using the Profile Publisher

Be sure that your text fits inside the boxes shown on screen. If your text scrolls below the bottom of the text box, only part of your writing will appear in the Preview and Printout.

Be sure to click the Add Changes button after adding text to your profile to make sure that your text is included in the Preview and Printout.

Be sure to print your work when you complete your profile. Printing is the only way to keep a record of your work. You cannot "save" your work to return to it later.

profile publisher

Names Personal Info About Me Latest Blog Interests

SPACE FOR IMAGE
In this space on your profile you can draw a picture or paste a photo or other image to illustrate the profile.

A Quote/Greeting

Instructions
In the top box, choose a quote or greeting to represent yourself or to welcome visitors to the page. This need not be something you actually say or have said (though it may be), but it does need to represent you at the chosen point of your life.

In the bottom box, choose a song that reflects your mood or feelings at this particular moment. Be sure to consider the sound of the music, as well as the meaning of lyrics.

Be sure to click the Add Changes button when you finish writing.

Song Now Playing

Add Changes & Next

Create a Profile

5. Enrichment Activities

SLIDE NAVIGATION

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The image shows a musical score for three voices (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) and piano. The tempo and mood are marked "p sempre dolce". The lyrics are in German: "Ihr wandelt droben im Licht auf weichem Boden, selige Ge-ni-en." The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The piano part is marked with a forte "f" dynamic.

Image Source: Wikipedia Commons

Learn how to sing a song by one of these female composers! Using the sites listed below, research a female composer's songs. Teach yourself the music and sing the song for your choir class. Then, write your own song in the style of this song. Choose your music and lyrics, and remember to draw upon your own life experiences and knowledge of music to compose it.

[Songs by Emma Lou Diemer](#)

[List of Compositions by Amy Beach](#)

[Laura Farnell Music](#)

[Andrea Ramsey Songs](#)

[Songs by Mary Lynn Lightfoot](#)

[Barbara Baker Songs](#)

6. Teacher Resources

Learning Standards Alignment

Content Learning Standards

Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

[Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy](#)

Reading: 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

[P21 Framework: 21st Century Student Outcomes](#)

3. Information, Media & Technology Skills: Information Literacy: Access information efficiently and effectively; Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.

ICT Literacy: Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information.

SLIDE NAVIGATION

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Grades 9- 12 Chorus

Objective: Students will conduct brief, focused research in order to describe how personal and cultural factors influenced the creation and performance of a selected female choral composer’s music.

Time Frame: 1-2 90-minute class periods

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- Have students use learning supports provided in any BCPS Digital Content in the [Apps Portal](#) included in this lesson. Refer to [Digital Content Snapshots & Support resources](#) for guidance as needed.
- Consider [using the Schoology Assignment Apps feature](#) to assign Microsoft and Google documents and files for students to access, edit, and submit through Schoology.
- If you will be providing paper copies of the graphic organizer on Slide 3 for note-taking, delete the words “Type Notes Here” and expand the rows to provide room for hand-written notes.
- Both Laura Farnell and Mary Lynn Lightfoot have their own Facebook pages, which are public but not accessible to students on BCPS devices/in BCPS network..

Last updated: July 2022 Use this [form to report broken links](#) to BCPS Library Media Programs & Digital Resources 443-809-4035

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