



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Dear Milton High School Choral Singers,

It's a pleasure to meet you all. Thank you for your interest in Jewish music in talking with me on Wednesday. I look forward to learning more about you in our Zoom session.

I've put together some materials that might interest you in advance of our Wednesday meeting, including 1) an excerpt on Hasidic music from the book *Discovering Jewish Music* by Marsha Bryan Edelman, 2) slides that I have made that document some of the historical prejudice against women composers and conductors, and 3) my official bio.

Here are a couple of notes, beyond what's included in the materials:

The most important thing to know about the Hasidic (also transliterated Chassidic) *nigun* is that it was designed to be a spiritual equalizer among the classes. Proponents thought that prayer should not be exclusively accessed by the intellectual elite (and wealthy). They often eliminated words so that participants would be unencumbered.

Regarding women in music (and specifically in the traditionally male-dominated fields of conducting and composition): this world is changing, but slowly. I've included slides here to let you know what certain prominent people in the field have said on the subject. I think we are starting to make progress in this area, and in all areas in music where minorities have been historically underrepresented in conducting and composition. Your generation will have a hand in accelerating this progress beyond my imagination.

Regarding my bio: what this carefully curated bio does not say is that I struggled to figure out how to make my way in music. I double-majored in music and English, and wanted to pursue multiple areas, including graduate work in English literature, music education, musicology, conducting, composition, music theory, comparative literature (reading texted music as a form of literary criticism), and, eventually, law. During and after college, I couldn't figure out a roadmap. As a result, I spent a year as a residence hall counselor at the Interlochen Arts Academy after college and then pivoted and went to law school. I practiced law for about four years at a large law firm in Los Angeles before doing another 180-degree turn and starting my graduate work in choral conducting. Looking back, I think that it would have been helpful for me, while in high school, to hear from people who may not have had one "destined" path—who can say that it's ok to wind your way through life and figure out your path.

Looking forward to our time together. I'd like to thank your incredible director, Mr. Schreer, for inviting me to your class. After our session on Wednesday, please do keep in touch. My contact information is below.

All best,

Dr. Duffy

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