

## Call for Papers

International Conference: *Women at the Piano 1848–1970*  
University of California, Irvine, 17–19 March 2023

Keynote Speaker: Professor Jann Pasler (University of California, San Diego)

Since the eighteenth century, the piano has afforded women the potential to attain mobility and visibility, to exploit public mouthpieces such as journalism and technological media, to secure financial independence, and to make (often controversial) decisions in their personal lives. Yet, in popular readers such as Schonberg's *The Great Pianists* (rev. 1983, 2006), Dubal's *The Art of the Piano* (1989, 2004) and Mach's *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves* (1980 & 1988/1991), men vastly outnumber women, and those women are often European or American. Scholarly studies reproduce this bias (e.g. Hellaby 2013). Existing biographies of women pianists, e.g. of Novaes or Haskil, tend to be stylistic studies or hagiographical. Rieger and Steegmann's 1996 *Frauen mit Flügel* is an important contribution but offers only biographical sketches.

This conference seeks to broaden out – historically and geographically – the discourse surrounding professional women pianists between 1848 and 1970. These years witnessed sustained interest in public piano performance, both onstage and in recording, against a backdrop of socio-political and technological change, from the 1848 revolutions, through two World Wars, to the decline of imperialism and the rise of second-wave feminism.

The conference themes are derived from recent work on Clara Schumann (Davies, Loges, Stefaniak, among others), with whom female pianists were compared well into the twentieth century. While Schumann has attracted much attention, many others, from across the world, remain comparatively unexplored. The conference committee therefore particularly welcomes contributions on women pianists linked to the global South and East, or papers that explore the piano as an instrument of globalism, colonialism, and mobility, with particular implications for women.

The conference themes include but are not limited to:

- Women's public self-construction as pianists
- Shared experiences and practices of women pianists
- Women's shaping of pianistic values
- Marketing, business strategies, and reception of women pianists
- Teaching and associated pedagogical activities
- Performance styles, genres, and aesthetic beliefs
- Repertoires, including the inclusion/exclusion of own compositions and improvisations
- Performance, including live, recorded, broadcast, and through other media
- Duo piano, chamber, and song pianist careers
- The harpsichord and other keyboard instruments
- Career trajectories from youth to old age
- Women's bodies, illness, injury, and disability
- Personal lives, including relationships, singlehood, divorce, parenthood, and widowhood

We invite proposals of up to 250 words for individual/co-authored paper presentations and lecture-recitals to [womenatthepiano@gmail.com](mailto:womenatthepiano@gmail.com) by **1 November 2022**. We also welcome informal enquiries about contributions beyond these categories, or in relation to new and emerging projects. Contributions from under-represented communities, graduate students, and independent scholars/artists are particularly welcome.

A small number of bursaries will be available for participants without access to institutional/financial support. To be considered for this scheme, please submit at the time of application a one-page CV, together with a brief statement outlining the reasons for the bursary request and a breakdown of estimated costs (e.g. travel, visa, accommodation).

The conference will take place in person at the University of California, Irvine. The committee will consider proposals for remote presentations in cases where in-person attendance is not feasible.

Notification of acceptance will be sent by 30 November 2022.

Selected papers will be published in a volume of essays under consideration by Cambridge University Press, edited by Joe Davies & Natasha Loges.

The conference is generously supported by the European Commission, the Women in Global Music Network, and the University of California, Irvine.

Conference Committee:

Jeanice Brooks (University of Southampton)

Joe Davies (University of California, Irvine)

Sophie Fuller (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance)

Nicole Grimes (University of California, Irvine)

Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (King's College London)

Yvonne Liao (Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Natasha Loges (Hochschule für Musik Freiburg)