

Gender Studies in the Spanish University

Musicology – Towards a transversal formation

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1. Subject history and objectives

The subject *Gender Studies Applied to Music* forms part of the History and Science of Music Degree – Grado en Historia y Ciencias de la Música – at the University of Oviedo, a degree whose preliminary report was finalised and submitted for verification in 2008.

Some time before the start of the adaptation process to the European Higher Education Area, which in Spain started with the directives from the Ministry of Education and Science in December of 2006, more than a thousand university researchers, among them the first signatory of this paper, gave their support to the document titled “For the inclusion of Gender Studies in the new syllabuses” – “Por la inclusión de Estudios de Género en los nuevos Planes de Estudio”. Following the experience of the *White Paper on The Studies of Women in Spanish Universities (1975–1991)* – *Libro blanco sobre Los Estudios de las Mujeres en las Universidades españolas (1975–1991)* – and its subsequent revisions, a group of researchers from diverse fields of expertise, specialising in Women, Gender and Feminists Studies agreed at the conference held in 2004 at the Autonomous University of Madrid (Peréz Cantó, et al., 2006) present a proposal to the Government for the inclusion of these studies in the curriculums adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

¹ The authors belong to the Research Group Music, Dance and Cultural Studies (MUDANZES) at the University of Oviedo. This text has been developed thanks to the aid granted to this group by the Department of Education, Culture and Sport of Principality of Asturias (2015).

The manifesto's introductory text, which was subsequently in circulation, made reference to the Organic Law 1/2004, 28th of December, on Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender Violence, given that within it, the field of higher education was referred to: "Universities will, in all academic fields, include and encourage education, teaching and research on gender equality and non-discrimination transversally" (Tit. I, cap. I, art. 4.7).

The Ministry for Education and Science created the Women and Science Unit, and at the end of 2006 the first conference was held on *Women, Gender and Feminist Studies: Bachelor and Postgraduate Degrees in the EHEA – Los Estudios de las Mujeres, de Género y Feministas: Grados y Postgrados en el EEES*. Almost 200 female professors from 38 universities took part in said conference, in response to the joint notification from the Secretary for Policies of Equality, the Women's Institute and the aforementioned Women and Science Unit. Amongst the numerous subjects designed and presented at that forum, there was one course (3 ECTS credits) dedicated to *Gender Studies in Music* (which was proposed by Carmen Cecilia Piñero Gil, from Autonomous University of Madrid), and also some contents related to music within the broader subjects of history of women, history of feminist theory or society and culture (between 4 to 6 credits), contributed by lecturers from three Spanish universities.²

The subject of university studies seemed of vital importance at that stage of great educational reform. Therefore, the Fourth Conference of the University Association of Women Studies (AUDEM) [Spanish initials] held in Palma de Mallorca also formulated a "Proposed declaration for

2 The revision of the CD-ROM edited by the Women's Institute in 2008 allows all the subjects and contents relative to music proposed at that conference to be identified: Ángela Muñoz Fernández (University of Castilla-La Mancha) proposed a *History of women and gender relationships* (4 ECTS credits, free elective subjects for History of Art, Philosophy, Law and Education Science degrees). Carmen Díez Mintegui (University of the Basque Country) presented *Women in Basque Society and Culture* (4.5 ECTS credits, also free elective subjects focused at the undergraduate Degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology and future honours degrees). Carmen Cecilia Piñero Gil (UAM), for her part, proposed *Gender Studies in Music* (3 ECTS credits, free elective, focused at undergraduate degrees in History and Sciences of Music and History of Art, with the aim of incorporating it in future honours degrees). Finally, M. Amparo Pedregal Rodríguez (University of Oviedo) presented *History of Women in the Antiquity* (6 ECTS credits, compulsory and free elective for Undergraduate Degrees in History of Art, Music History and Science, Philology, Philosophy and other degrees, with the aim of future developments in Honours Degrees, Master and Doctorates).

the full integration of women, feminists and gender studies in the European higher education area”, which came as a result of many years of work and debate (Pedregal, 2007).

The Organic Law 3/2007, 22nd of March, on Gender Equality referred to equality in the field of Higher Education and specifically highlighted that public authorities should encourage “the inclusion in curriculums, where appropriate, of gender equality teaching” (Tit. II, cap. II, art. 25). The Royal Decree of 1393/2007 for the Organisation and Planning of Official University Education (BOE [Official State Bulletin], 30th of October of 2007) was published some months later and echoed all of these recommendations.

When the design of degrees adapted to the European system started, the University of Oviedo created a Humanities Workgroup and several meetings of the specific commissions named to this effect were convened in the old Faculty of Geography and History to draw up the preliminary reports for four degrees which at that time belonged to that centre (Geography and Territorial Planning, History, History of Art and History and Science of Music – Geografía y Ordenación del Territorio, Historia, Historia del Arte, e Historia y Ciencias de la Música).

Amongst many other questions, the workgroup discussed whether it was better to introduce gender related contents in various subjects or create specific subjects. This debate was later extended to the departments and areas of knowledge. Finally, the preliminary report for the Degree in History and Science of Music included one objective, one competence, various learning achievements and the subject with which this text deals, included in the official Curriculum (BOE, 15th of July of 2010).

One of the four general objectives set out in the 2008 preliminary report for the Degree in Music History and Science highlights that students should “analyse the diverse criteria that musicology proposes in its approach to music, with special attention to gender and difference” (Memoria, 2008: 21). In regard to this objective, a specific competence – a knowledge-related discipline – was formulated, which was set out as “Basic education in cultural theory and gender studies, in order to apply concepts, theories and methodologies from these disciplinary fields to the study of music” (CD9, Memoria, 2008: 24). According to the official preliminary report, this competence should be developed in three degree modules: those related to *Music History*; *Music and Cultures*; and *Music, Entertainment and Communication*.

In effect, the preliminary report includes a learning achievement set out as “Revision of the role of the woman in different stages and processes of academic music history, and the treatment given to the aforementioned by different musicological tendencies” (Módulo “Fundamental 1: *Historia de la Música*”. Memoria, 2008: 62). Another learning achievement consists of “Recognising and emphasising women’s participation in the construction of traditional and popular urban music repertoires” (Módulo “Fundamental 2: *Música y Culturas*”. Memoria, 2008: 66). In regard to the “Elective 2: *Music, Entertainment and Communication*” module, CD9 is indicated amongst other competences (Memoria, 2008: 77) but no learning achievement directly related to women or gender is established.

Finally, the curriculum for the History and Science of Music Degree at the University of Oviedo included the subject which is referred to in the title of this text, a subject taken in the fourth and final year of the degree. In the aforementioned year, students must study two elective subjects from the three core subjects on offer, *Gender Studies Applied to Music*, *External work experience* and the subject of *ICTs applied to music production*.

In conclusion, during the process of adaptation to the European Higher Education Area we achieved a degree subject, although not a core of compulsory one, as the AUDEM had called for in its meeting in Palma de Mallorca (Pedregal, 2007, p. 377). We consider positively, however, that this elective subject carries 6 ECTS credits, double the minimum 3 credits established as a reference for the subjects proposed in the 2006 conference.³

Within the History and Science of Music Curriculum, the subject of *Gender Studies Applied to Music* (GHISCM01–4–011) is clearly the most focused on achieving one of the four general objectives set out in the preliminary report for the Degree verification, that which, as previously mentioned, pays “special attention to gender and difference”. Given its transversal nature, the subject cannot be specifically linked to any of the itineraries proposed in the curriculum. It can enrich any of the professional profiles which the degree might lead to: music heritage, music management, teaching, the media and culture industries or research. The value

3 In the History Degree of the current Faculty of Philosophy and Letters there is also the subject of *History of Women and the Construction of a Patriarchal Society*. The University of Oviedo also has an Erasmus Mundus Master Degree in *Women’s and Gender Studies* and a Doctorate in Gender and Diversity, but does not currently have music contents.

and importance of this subject lies precisely in the fact that it provides the necessary tools to integrate the gender perspective to any type of activity of a musicological nature.

Four learning achievements are associated with the subject, two of a disciplinary nature and the other two of a professional nature. The disciplinary learning achievements are the following: “Understanding cultural theories and gender studies in order to apply concepts, theories and methodologies from these disciplinary fields to the study of music”; “Understanding the roles women have had in music throughout history and in diverse cultures”. In regard to the learning achievements of a professional nature, these are: “Possessing a critical attitude towards the patriarchal dimension of classical Musicology, accompanied by a reflection on the application of equality policies to music history, musicology and music teaching” and “Defining and demarcating research subjects related to gender studies via appropriate and updated methodologies” (Memoria, 2008: 80–81).

Subsequent to the approval of the Oviedo Curriculum, a subject with an identical title has been included in the History and Science of Music Degree at the University of Granada, where, to date, it has not been activated, and in the Music Conservatory of Málaga, where it has been available since 2010. In the same way, the Musicology Degree at the Autonomous University of Barcelona includes a subject titled *Music, identity and gender* which began in 2012.

The remaining sections of this text will be dedicated to the teaching experience of the *Gender Studies Applied to Music* subject. The subject was imparted to a group of fifteen students (eight females and seven males) registered in the academic year 2013–2014 at the University of Oviedo.

2. Subject contents

When specifying the subject contents in the teaching guide, the signatories and authors of this text⁴ decided to deal with the main lines of research and debate that feminist musicology has set out over the last three decades. We organised the seven themes that comprise the aforementioned contents into three thematic sections, an introductory one to gender studies, another on gender roles and contributory history, and the third on gender as a category for analysis.

The first section was introductory. Given the relevance of the development of gender studies in musicology, we dedicated the first theme to the emergence of this perspective in our discipline, especially in relation to the so called “New Musicology”, and to the articulation of critique to the autonomy of music (Ramos López, 2003), two of the themes which have had the greatest impact on music studies in recent times.

A brief introduction to the history of feminism was carried out in the second theme: enlightenment, suffrage, second and third wave feminism, the identity crisis and the new debates about the construction of the commons. Here, students, both male and female, had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with some of the basic concepts linked to critical feminist theory such as patriarchy, gender, equality, difference, the glass ceiling, parity, etc.

The second thematic section was based on two lines of work extensively developed in gender studies applied to music: gender roles and the history of women in music. As pointed out by Lucy Green (1997) and many other researchers, music creates gender roles. Thus, throughout this third theme we deal with issues such as the association of musical instruments with patriarchal notions of femininity and masculinity; the masculinisation of certain music practices and the feminisation of others – for example, music composition and direction versus music education and song –; the possibilities of assigning new meaning to and re-appropriation of

⁴ We readily accepted the challenge of designing a new subject as both of us had a clear interest in gender studies and some experience in research focused on that field: Beatriz Martínez del Fresno in publications on dance (refer to bibliography) and Llorián García-Florez due to the focus of his research on traditional music forms (Bachelor and Master’s Degree Dissertation and Doctoral Thesis).

these roles by women for empowerment; etc. Through various examples, we invite the students to analyse the part the patriarchy plays in the building of unequal gender roles.

In a similar way to what has occurred in other humanistic disciplines, musicology helped build a music history canon in which women and all things feminine played a secondary role, if not completely invisible (Citron, 1993). Therefore, the fourth theme of this programme was dedicated to the study and debate of different issues relative to the history of women in music: Why in the “History” of music are women not present? Why has the gender perspective been so important in the new historiographic approaches to music? Which women have been relevant in music history? Carrying out which roles? What difficulties have women had historically in devoting themselves professionally to music? What other ways of studying music history allows us to incorporate the gender perspective?

The third and final thematic section was dedicated to developing the concept of gender as a category for analysis in musicology and to highlight the way contemporary feminism’s principal contributions of have been received in our discipline. The construction of the masculine and the feminine in music was dealt with in the fifth theme as well as some models of musical analysis such as Susan McClary’s (1991). Finally, the last two models were dedicated to musicology’s reception of the “new feminisms”. Such was the case for the perspectives based on the concept of intersectionality, in which gender operates in relation to other types of subordinations (race, class, sexuality, language, nationality, faith, disability, etc.); the same as in *queer* feminism (García-Flórez, 2012b), in which the study of the processes of body normalisation, of sexualities and performative conception of gender (Butler, 1991) acquire great relevance.

3. Methodology used

The subject was divided into 60 in-class hours and 90 out-of-class hours. The former were divided into 31 hours of lectures, 21 hours of practical classes, 4 hours of group tutorials and 4 hours of assessment. The latter, on the other hand, was divided into 10 hours of working on group projects and 80 hours for independent study/projects.

The lectures were designed as master classes based on the different contents of the syllabus, where student participation consisted of rounds of questions. In regard to the practical classes, we programmed two seminars, one on texts and the other on design of intervention plans, as well as practical classes dedicated to group discussions on the issues raised in the lectures and analysis of materials (texts, scores, images, recordings, etc.) from a gender perspective. Some of these practical classes were carried out without the students having done previous classwork, as is case with some discussion or materials analysis practical classes. On other occasions, however, some of the out-of-class, independent work was a necessary requirement for their studies, both at a group and individual level.

In regards to assessments, as established in the preliminary report for the *Elective transversal and external work placements* module and in Regulation for assessment of students' learning achievements and acquired skills, the grades for the exams were comprised of three sections: final written assessment (50% of total grade), in which we take into consideration the theoretic knowledge acquired by the students and their ability to put them into practice in specific exercises; the continuous evaluation of the seminars and practical classes carried out throughout the semester (30%); and the coursework (20%), in which we evaluate the level of integration of the gender perspective, as well as the students' capacity to carry out a critical appraisal of a case study. 93,33% of the students passed the subject in the first exams, which represents a very high success rate.

In the following sections we will describe three of the activities within the subject which meant students completing assignments outside of class; the "Seminar on texts", the "Design of intervention plans and projects", and the completion of coursework.

3.1 Seminars on texts

The first group practical classes were focused on the execution of a seminar on basic texts, with the aim of familiarising students with some concepts and key themes relative to the application of the gender perspective to musicology. In order to do so, workgroups, each comprised of four students, were set up. These chose a thematic field, suggested by the teaching team, to work on. The formation of these groups and the assignment of texts to each group were the objectives of the first group tutorial.

The texts we suggested to the students revolved around various fields; music history, theories and methods of feminist musicology, music education, and popular and traditional music. These last three were the most sought after by the different groups. Once the work (individual and group) on the texts had been completed, each group gave an oral presentation of about twenty minutes on the texts they had studied, summarising the principal contents and, in some cases, evaluating them. Commentaries on the presentations were subsequently made, with the contributions from the rest of the class and the teaching team.

One generalised difficulty throughout the course of these seminars which can be highlighted is that of going beyond a merely descriptive level of interpretation of the texts, as few students ventured to express critical judgements. In any case, this aspects improved as the subject developed, along with the understanding and assimilation of the gender perspective.

3.2 Design of intervention plans and projects

The second scheduled seminar was conceived as “Design of intervention plans and projects”. In the same way as the previous one, this practical class was carried out in groups, five groups of three students. In a group tutorial specifically dedicated to the preparation of the task we offered the students general guidance on a type of practical class which they were not used to.

Six possible courses of action were established for the projects that each group had to design. These, all related to music, were the following: education, performance, planning, dissemination of culture, the media (printed and audio-visual) and research. Two groups chose for their intervention plan proposal some music education centres in Oviedo and

Gijón; a third group expressed an interest in dance training in the region of Asturias; a fourth group focused on the planning and female performance within a specific music genre, flamenco, specifically analysing the Jerez festival; and a fifth group analysed the image of female violinists in the media.

The work process was organised into seven phases:

1. In situ observation or analysis of sources (oral, printed, resonant, visual, audio-visual...),
2. Detection of inequality, discrimination or sexism (in regulations, stereotypes, cultural constructs, language, discourse, practices, glass ceiling, points of view or method),
3. Diagnosis and selection of a specific case (problem formulation, causes and effects),
4. Examination of possible solutions,
5. Design of actions (with awareness objectives, quantification, control, change, promotion, positive action, creation of new models, codes of practice, transformation and improvement),
6. Development plan for the aforementioned actions (agents involved, space and time coordinates, phases),
7. Necessary resources (materials, human, legal and political frameworks).

For the preparation of this practical class we recommended texts on equality programmes and policies and proposals for action in the field of education, as well as recommending consultation of some reports available on-line (Women's Institute website, Women in Facts and Figures database – *Mujeres en Cifras* – or general studies on discrimination).

The teaching team led the organisation of the presentations. Each group distributed amongst the rest of the class an outline of their proposal, with bibliography and sources. We established that the oral presentation should follow the same order, in such a way that the following would be clearly set out by each of the groups; observations and analysis carried out, diagnosis, evaluation of possible solutions, and finally description of proposed action with clear definition of objectives, development plan and estimate of necessary resources for its execution. At the end of each presentation there was a group debate.

During the course of these practical classes the students worked with different types of sources: direct observations, statistics, time scheduling, subject teaching guides, interviews, surveys, images, blogs, online forums and periodicals. Their diagnoses highlighted discrimination against women and/or lack of women's presence, both in their roles as creators (pointing out, for example, their absence in teaching programmes in music conservatories) and in the roles as performers (analysing in particular the case of flamenco cycles and festivals). The group that studied the image of prestigious female violinists compiled texts, photographs, posters and recording covers which allowed the observation of sexism in language, objectification of women and the patriarchal mechanisms aimed at product sales. Finally, the students interested in dance visited academies, conducted interviews with folk groups and studied experiences related to *queer* tango.

The proposed actions were also very diverse: specific cycles for female repertoires, competitions, organisation of conferences and concerts, exhibitions, campaigns, awareness-raising in music teaching staff, working with children from an early age (school), modification of teaching systems (for example, with the learning of different roles within dance), revision of ratios of male and female composed works in study programmes, etc. Some of the initiatives included the creation of new circuits in collaboration with existing collectives or making the most of existing implementation/action plans.

The result of the work carried out by these five groups, their diagnoses and proposals as well as the liveliness of the subsequent debates proved that we were achieving a high level of involvement in the subject on the part of these future musicologists and that some basic concepts about discrimination, patriarchy and women's visibility had been assimilated by the group of students as a whole.

3.3 Coursework

Once the seminars on texts and the design of intervention projects were completed, the independent learning (non-class) activity was centred on the completion of individual coursework, which allowed us to refine the assessment of each student. In a seven or eight-page text, each student carried out a reflection on a theme which they were free to choose and previously approved by the teaching team. The guidance for these assignments was carried out in the last two group tutorials for the subject.

Just as we had proposed to our students, the most prevalent themes in the assignments were those which developed an aspect already introduced in the previous practical classes; although it is also true that there were some that chose to deal with completely different themes. The number of assignments on popular music were high: sexism in hip hop and indie lyrics, the activism of the Riot Grrrls or the figure of Janis Joplin were some of the themes dealt with along this line. Another significant percentage of assignments was dedicated to the study of gender and music in audio-visual media – film soundtracks, the phenomenon of viral videos on the internet, etc. There were also students who focused their attention on specific music practices, analysing gender in the teaching of percussion and dance, or problems of gender discrimination, such as the invisibility of *tocaoras* (female flamenco guitarists) in flamenco. To a much lesser degree – only in two assignments – students ventured to critically debate some of the theories introduced in class. And finally, only one assignment looked at the history of women in music.

In the individual assignments carried out in the last weeks of the course, we observed a generalised progress, both in the integration of the gender perspective and in the development of capacity for criticism of this perspective. We were able to observe that the level of involvement and comprehension of gender problems had improved substantially in the majority of cases.

4. Final considerations

By the end of the course, the assimilation of concepts, development of skills and acquisition of the contents set out in the teaching guide were in the majority of the students positive. Despite some initial reservations about the relevance of incorporating the perspective of gender to the study of music, the group were favourably disposed to it and the majority of students ended up deeming the diagnoses and demands of feminism as being appropriate, as well the use of gender studies in the analysis of music phenomena. In this process, the main resistance to concepts that we found among students were two: on the one hand, the exclusive identification between “gender studies” and “studies of women”; and on the other hand, the idea that patriarchy has been overcome and, therefore, gender issues are no longer a collective problem rather a problem that derives from personal situations and individual decisions. The survival of these prejudices among students reaffirm the importance of gender perspectives and the place they should occupy in all levels of the education system.

In any case, as we mentioned at the beginning, the results achieved in this first experience were highly positive and the initial difficulties were resolved successfully by the students as a whole. The continuity of the subject has been maintained in the academic year 2014–2015. We trust that its presence in the syllabus be regularised and that future musicologists of the University of Oviedo continue graduating with a good grounding in gender studies, a perspective which has contributed much to humanities, to social sciences and to educational disciplines.

Finally, we would not like to end without highlighting the relevance of this kind of education in regards to the History and Sciences of Music Degree. Many of our students will be future music teachers, in primary and high schools, music conservatories and universities. Therefore, as well as highlighting the possibilities that the gender perspective offers in terms of gender mainstreaming, we would like to point out the potential multiplier effect of teachers and educational institutions, essential tools in order to achieve a better musical and social education in the twenty-first century.

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