

Department of Philosophy, History and Art
University of Helsinki
Dissertationes Universitatis Helsingiensis
300/2024
Studia Musicologica Universitatis Helsingiensis
XXXI/2024

Classical music, misconduct, and gender

*A feminist study on social imaginaries and women musicians'
experiences of gender inequality in Finland*

Anna Ramstedt

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

To be presented, with the permission of the Faculty of Arts of the University of
Helsinki, for public examination in Hall 1 (B116), Metsätalo,
on the 13th of December 2024, at 10 o'clock.

Helsinki 2024

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The Faculty of Arts uses the Ouriginal system (plagiarism recognition) to examine
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Publisher: University of Helsinki

ISBN 978-952-84-0388-3 (print)

ISBN 978-952-84-0387-6 (online)

ISSN 2954-2898 (print)

ISSN 2954-2952 (online)

Dissertationes Universitatis Helsingiensis 300/2024

ISSN 0787-4294

Studia Musicologica Universitatis Helsingiensis XXXI/2024



PunaMusta
Joensuu 2024

Abstract

In this article-based doctoral dissertation in feminist musicology, I study gendered and sexual misconduct, emotional abuse, gender inequality, and whiteness in the classical music culture in Finland. My main question in this dissertation is: How does gender inequality appear in the classical music culture in Finland, and how are common social imaginaries of this culture associated with the prevalence of gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse? The research material consists of in-depth interviews with fourteen Finnish white women professional pianists, violinists, cellists, and violists between the ages of 25 and 45. I define gendered and sexual misconduct as encompassing behaviour ranging from sexist statements to sexualized communication, sexual advances, and grooming. Emotional abuse I define as continuous non-contact behaviour ranging from unwarranted anger, denial of support, to consciously setting up a student for failure.

I apply the theorisations and writings by feminist philosopher Moira Gatens to define the three key concepts (*social imaginaries*, *social norms*, and *embodied subjectivity*) through which I explore the main question. By investigating overlapping situation-bound and material representations, narratives, ideals, ready-made images, symbols, and metaphors (social imaginaries), as well as codes of conducts, beliefs, and values (social norms), over four distinct articles I scrutinize how intersecting gender inequality is manifested within the specific context of the classical music piano, violin, and cello culture in Finland. Utilizing the concept of embodied subjectivity, I also investigate how social imaginaries and social norms impact and shape individuals' lived experiences, and how gender appears as a lived phenomenon. I explore social differences as not only already existing but also open-ended, processual, and impacted by material components (such as instruments) (Tiainen et al. 2020). Supporting my theorization of Gatens with feminist scholar Sara Ahmed's work, I explore whiteness in this research in the ways that white individuals are understood as a norm, but also how whiteness appears in its many guises in the specific context of classical music in Finland.

In this dissertation I explore the interconnectedness between social imaginaries and specific understandings of masculinity and femininity, revealing binary gender and heteronormativity as structuring forces. Gender binarity and heteronormativity organize participation within classical music culture and, at worst, normalize gendered and sexual misconduct and gendered power discrepancies. On the other hand, constructions of gender and whiteness emerge through the fleshy performance of Eurocentric gendered and racialized social imaginaries that are also orientated through material circumstances composed of instruments, spaces, bodily dispositions, and sounds. While appearing stagnant, I demonstrate that such social differences are nevertheless fragile and subject to change.

I also present how the social norms, dominant social imaginaries, and genre boundaries of classical music generate damaging beliefs and values. Idealizing excellence and other harmful beliefs may not only facilitate but even justify teachers' emotionally abusive behaviour. In summary, gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse are not isolated incidents but are instead the consequences of a web of elements composed of social imaginaries, social norms, values, hierarchies, and practices. Based on the findings of research, I also suggest ways to engage in repair work in order to prevent gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse.

Keywords: classical music, gender inequality, sexual harassment, emotional abuse, music higher education, gendered misconduct, sexual misconduct, social imaginary, grooming, power hierarchies, heteronormativity, student-teacher grooming, whiteness, Finland, cronyism, homophily, piano, cello, violin, networks, performance ideals.

Tiivistelmä

Tässä artikkelimuotoisessa feministisen musiikkitieteen väitöskirjassa tutkin sukupuolittunutta ja seksuaalista epäasianmukaista käytöstä, henkistä väkivaltaa, sukupuolittunutta epätasa-arvoa ja valkoisuutta klassisen musiikin kulttuurissa Suomessa. Väitöskirjani pääkysymys on: Miten sukupuolittunut epätasa-arvo ilmenee klassisen musiikin kulttuurissa Suomessa ja miten kyseisen kulttuurin vallitsevat sosiaaliset mielikuvastot liittyvät sukupuolittuneen ja seksuaalisen epäasianmukaisen käytöksen sekä henkisen väkivallan ilmenemiseen? Tutkimusmateriaali koostuu 14 klassisen pianistin, sellistin, viulistin ja alttoviulistin syvähaastatteluista. Haastateltavat olivat 25–45-vuotiaita suomalaisia valkoisia naisia. Määrittelen sukupuolittuneen ja seksuaalisen epäasianmukaisen käytöksen käsittävän laajan kirjon toimintoja, kuten härskit vitsit, seksuaaliviritteisen viestinnän, häirinnän ja houkuttelun, mutta myös muita epäasiallisia käytösmuotoja. Henkisen väkivallan määrittelen jatkuvaksi ei-fyysiseksi käyttäytymiseksi, joka voi ilmetä monin eri tavoin, kuten perusteettomana vihana, välinpitämättömänä kohteluna tai tietoisena opiskelijan epäonnistumiseen johtavana toimintana, mutta myös muina vahingollisina ja alistavina käyttäytymismuotoina.

Sovellan feministifilosofi Moira Gatensin teorioita määritelläkseni kolme keskeistä käsitettä (*sosiaaliset mielikuvastot*, *sosiaaliset normit* ja *ruumiillistunut mieli*), joiden kautta tarkastelen pääkysymystä. Tutkimalla limittyviä, tilanteeseen sidottuja ja materiaalisia representaatioita, narratiiveja, ihanteita, valmiita kuvastoja, symboleita ja metaforia (sosiaaliset mielikuvastot) sekä käytänneseäntöjä, uskomuksia ja arvoja (sosiaaliset normit), tarkastelen neljässä erillisessä artikkelissa, miten risteävä sukupuolten epätasa-arvo ilmenee klassisen musiikin piano-, viulu- ja sellokulttuurin erityisessä kontekstissa Suomessa. Hyödyntämällä ruumiillistuneen mielen käsitettä tutkin myös, miten sosiaaliset mielikuvastot ja normit vaikuttavat yksilöiden elettyihin kokemuksiin ja kuinka sukupuoli ilmenee elettyinä ilmiönä. Tarkastelen sosiaalisia erontekijöitä paitsi jo olemassa olevina, myös avoimina, prosessuaalisina ja materiaalisista osatekijöistä (kuten soittimista) riippuvaisina (Tiainen ym. 2020). Tukemalla Gatensin teoretisointia feministitutkija Sara Ahmedin työllä, tutkin valkoisuutta tässä tutkimuksessa sekä siinä, miten valkoiset yksilöt ymmärretään normina, että siinä, miten valkoisuus ilmenee monina eri muotoina klassisen musiikin kontekstissa Suomessa.

Tässä väitöskirjassa tutkin sosiaalisten mielikuvastojen ja tiettyjen maskuliinisuuden ja feminiinisuuden käsitysten välisiä yhteyksiä, ja osoitan, kuinka sukupuolen binäärisyys ja heteronormatiivisuus toimivat jäsentävinä voimina. Sukupuolen binäärisyys ja heteronormatiivisuus järjestävät osallistumista klassisen musiikin kulttuurissa ja

pahimmillaan normalisoivat sukupuolittunutta ja seksuaalista epäasianmukaista käytöstä sekä sukupuolittuneita valta-asetelmia. Toisaalta sukupuolten ja valkoisuuden rakentuminen ilmenee eurokeskeisten sukupuolittuneiden ja rodullistettujen sosiaalisten mielikuvastojen ruumiillisissa esityksissä, joihin vaikuttavat myös materiaaliset olosuhteet, kuten soittimet, tilat, keholliset asennot ja äänet. Vaikka sosiaaliset erontekijät saattavat vaikuttaa pysyvästi, osoitan, että ne ovat kuitenkin hauraita ja muutoksille alttiita.

Esitän myös, kuinka klassisen musiikin sosiaaliset normit, vallitsevat sosiaaliset mielikuvastot ja genrerajat luovat vahingollisia uskomuksia ja arvoja. Erinomaisuuden ja muiden haitallisten uskomusten ihannointi ei ainoastaan mahdollista, vaan saattaa jopa oikeuttaa opettajien henkisesti väkivaltaisen käytöksen. Yhteenvetona: sukupuolittunut ja seksuaalinen epäasianmukainen käytös sekä henkinen väkivalta eivät ole yksittäisiä tapauksia, vaan ne ovat seurausta sosiaalisten mielikuvastojen, normien, arvojen, hierarkioiden ja käytäntöjen muodostamasta verkostosta. Tutkimustuloksiini perustuen esitän myös keinoja, joilla voitaisiin ryhtyä korjaaviin toimiin sukupuolittuneen ja seksuaalisen epäasianmukaisen käytöksen sekä henkisen väkivallan ehkäisemiseksi.

Avainsanat: klassinen musiikki, seksuaalinen häirintä, henkinen väkivalta, sukupuolittunut epäasianmukainen käytös, houkuttelu, seksuaalinen epäasianmukainen käytös, musiikkikasvatus, sosiaaliset mielikuvastot, valtahierarkiat, heteronormatiivisuus, valkoisuus, kronyismi, homofilia, piano, viulu, sello, esitysihanteet, verkostot, hyvä veli - verkostot, Suomi.

Acknowledgements

This doctoral dissertation project would neither have been begun nor completed without the unwavering support I have received from so many wonderful individuals.

First and foremost, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my encouraging and inspiring supervisors, who generously shared their time and expertise with me. I am immensely grateful to my supervisor, Senior Lecturer, Docent Juha Torvinen, for his invaluable guidance, pragmatic assistance, and academic wisdom, as well as for the academic skills I gained under his mentorship, which have been instrumental in shaping my growth as a scholar. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my other supervisor, Senior Lecturer, Docent Milla Tiainen, whose sharp theoretical insights, unwavering belief in my abilities, and exceptional pedagogical feedback have been crucial to my development, making even the most challenging moments manageable and motivating.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my preliminary examination committee, Dr. Anna Bull (Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor) and Senior Lecturer Docent Ann Werner, for their invaluable feedback and constructive criticism during the final phase of my research. Their insightful questions and rigorous evaluations challenged me to refine my work and deepen my understanding of the subject. Special gratitude goes to Dr. Bull for agreeing to be my opponent in the public examination. I am especially thrilled because the work of Dr. Bull has been a source of inspiration throughout this project and has significantly shaped its direction. Similarly, I am deeply grateful to all the anonymous peer reviewers of the four different articles who have contributed to elevating the standards of my research through their rigorous questions and invaluable feedback.

My heartfelt thanks go to the University of Helsinki, the dedicated professors, lecturers, and researchers, and my doctoral seminar peers for fostering an academic environment that has felt welcoming and supportive throughout my journey. The constant support and confidence of Professor Susanna Välimäki in the importance of my work have been especially significant, providing me with the drive to complete the project and fostering my commitment to working towards a more socially just classical music culture. I would also like to thank Emeritus Professor Pirkko Moisala for believing in me during the early stages of my research, already in 2018

encouraging me to pursue doctoral work on the topic of sexual harassment in classical music culture.

Furthermore, I want to thank everyone at the doctoral seminar for the collaborative atmosphere and stimulating discussions that have greatly enriched my experience and nurtured my academic journey. This list includes: Senior Lecturer, Dr. Kai Lassfolk (in memory), University Lecturer, Dr. Nina Öhman, University Lecturer, Dr. Mikko Ojanen, Docent Lasse Lehtonen, Docent Elina Seye, Dr. Kristian Wahlström, Dr. Ying-Hsien Chen, Dr. Jussi Jaatinen, and doctoral candidates Wilhelm Kvist, Emmi Kujanpää, Helen Metsä, Reetta Näätänen, Grisell Macdonel-Kvist, Eirik Skjelstad, Henri Pitkänen, Aleksi Haukka, Lise Vigier, Ahti Korhonen, Johanna Eränkö Hyytinen, Tia Svanberg, and Panu Heimonen. I want to especially express my gratitude to doctoral candidate Susanna Waldén-Antikainen for her invaluable peer support and treasured friendship; we have navigated many challenges related to our dissertation projects together, and for that, I am forever grateful.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the research association Suoni, which has become a second academic home for me. I feel grateful and relieved to have discovered a feminist support network through my membership in Suoni, as it has been absolutely invaluable in navigating my research on this challenging topic. I would like to thank each and every one in Suoni for fostering such a welcoming and kind environment. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Kaj Ahlsved, Dr. Sini Mononen, and Dr. Inka Rantakallio for their encouragement and support. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Nuppu Koivisto-Kaasik for the invaluable advice and the stimulating, inspiring conversations that greatly enriched my work. My gratitude also goes to doctoral candidate Marika Kivinen for the collegial support. The Zoom coffees we shared at the start of my Ph.D. journey provided a joyful and much-needed break, and our engaging discussions played an important role in shaping the direction of my research.

I am deeply grateful to the Finnish Cultural Foundation, whose generous financial support enabled me to dedicate myself fully to this research over the past four years. I am equally thankful for all the grants from the University of Helsinki Funds that made it possible for me to take part in conferences and a research exchange. I extend my gratitude to Utrecht University and Associate Professor, Dr. Rebekah Ahrendt for their warm welcome during my exchange. Participating in the courses offered by the Netherlands Research School of Gender Studies was particularly crucial, providing me with new rigorous theoretical perspectives to enrich my research. Through international conferences, I have had the pleasure of meeting many inspiring colleagues, who are too numerous to mention. However, I would like to extend a thanks to Dr. Cassandra Gibson who immediately felt like a long-lost friend and a feminist research colleague. Similarly, I want to express my

gratitude to doctoral candidate Iris Seesjärvi for the warm friendship, help, invaluable peer support, and stimulating collegial discussions.

I am indebted to the exceptional teachers and mentors who guided me before my Ph.D. journey began. Although not directly involved in this dissertation, pianist, composer and pedagogue Joonas Pohjonen and pianist and pedagogue Hanna Aho-Oikkonen provided me with skills that proved absolutely invaluable also in my work on this project. Their belief in me, long before I embarked on this path, made the prospect of pursuing a Ph.D. feel far more attainable.

A truly heartfelt thank you and special acknowledgment goes to the unofficial supervisor of my work, my second eldest brother, Assistant Professor, Dr. Kim Ramstedt. If only my supervisors had known the true number of questions I had! He has offered me invaluable tips, unwavering support, and a patient, kind listening ear throughout the years; without him, this journey would have been significantly longer and far less enjoyable.

I feel extremely lucky and endlessly grateful to have such an amazing family and friends. I want to thank my dear parents, Anne Ramstedt and Commercial Counsellor Jukka Ramstedt, who have always been supportive and have done their best to make my dreams come true. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my dear brothers Kaj-Erik and Kenneth; my lovely sisters-in-law, Helena and Mirna; my brilliant nieces, Isabella, Elisabeth, Maisha, and Kenza; and last but not least, my ever-so-fluffy “niece”, Tyyne, the cat. I want to extend my gratitude to all of my extended family for their support. I want to also thank dear young Lionel for lending me his worktable; I pinky promise I will not write another dissertation on it. I want to thank all of my dear friends in Helsinki, Amsterdam, Pori, Copenhagen, Tampere, and Turku for their support. Particularly, I want to thank cellist Iris Tötterström and pianist Noora Meriläinen for your daily, treasured friendship and encouragement; it means the world to me. Thank you, family and friends, for keeping me grounded and ensuring that my priorities remain in order.

I am endlessly grateful to my best friend, life partner, and love, Dror Meir, for the support, love, hugs, and humor that bring joy and excitement to my life. I deeply appreciate your kindness and flexible mindset, always being there for me, no matter what.

Lastly, I want to thank the courageous musicians who shared their stories with me. I am profoundly humbled by the trust you have placed in me. I hope this work does you justice and helps foster a world where young musicians feel safer and more encouraged to explore their musicality and share their joy of music.

In Amsterdam on the 28th of October 2024,

Anna Ramstedt

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List of original publications

This thesis is based on the following publications:

- I “A man is practically the general norm” – A case study of gender inequality and whiteness in the classical music scene in Finland. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 2022. 31(1): 91–107.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2022.2088611>
- II “You just had to learn to live with it”: Gendered and sexual misconduct in classical music culture in Finland. *Musiikkikasvatus – The Finnish Journal of Music Education (FJME)*. 2023. 26(2): 40–55.
https://taju.uniarts.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/8113/FJME_Vol26_No2_2023_netiversio.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- III Emotional abuse in classical music education in Finland: A study of Finnish women musicians’ experiences. *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education (ACT)*. 2023. 22(3): 198–226. 2023.
<https://doi.org/10.22176/act22.3.198>
- IV Homophily and genre boundaries: Inequalities in classical music networks in Finland. *Musiikki*. 2023. 53(2): 8–33.
<https://doi.org/10.51816/musiikki.131301>

The publications are referred to in the text by their roman numerals.

1 Introduction

1.1 Object of the study and key concepts

[M]usic is indeed socially contingent and participates in the dynamics of culture. Which music is deemed canonic says a great deal about the image a society has of itself.

(Marcia J. Citron [1993] 2000, 3)

Why should we care if (or whether) music is a medium for the culturally intelligible performances of bodies, gender, and sex? What are the implications of thinking of music this way? What might we lose from our everyday assumptions about the nature of music? What might we gain in exchange?

(Suzanne G. Cusick 1999, 41)

It was 25 and 31 years ago, respectively, that music historians and musicologists Marcia J. Citron and Suzanne G. Cusick wrote these observations. They were written during a time in which feminist scholarship was grounding its foot in musicology; mapping a genealogy of women in classical music history and exploring the idea of gender as a performance¹ (Butler 1990) were inspiring new ways to understand gender in a culture where androcentrism had long held sway. These quotations are still topical today, and have been echoing in the back of my mind for the last five years during my own intellectual efforts in feminist musicology. Since I embarked on this doctoral research in 2019, the effects of the #metoo-movement, initially started by activist Tarana Burke (2021), and the so-called fourth-wave feminism,² can be recognized in the mainstream media's interest – at least in

¹ Post structuralist queer-feminist philosopher Judith Butler (1990, 1993) has famously theorized gender and sexuality as performatives and socially constructed categories. Butler's theorizations quickly surged new tools to musicology to explore gender and sexuality in musical phenomena (Cusick [1994] 2006, 1994; Rossi 2017).

² Feminism, feminist movements, and feminist philosophy are often conceptualized by a division into four different "waves" of thinking. The so-called hashtag feminism, and the #metoo-movement, is often associated with the fourth feminist wave, which can be characterized by using social media

Finland and other Western countries – in reporting about misuses of power, racism, sexism, sexual harassment, and emotional abuse, including in classical music culture (e.g., Pace 2013; Harding 2017; Brug 2018; Kvist 2019, 2020; Mattila 2020; Karemo 2020; Riihinen & Tiikkaja 2020; Tiikkaja 2020; Vedenpää 2020; Pointer 2023; Saarikoski 2020, 2023, 2024; Paananen & Saarikoski 2024). Reports of blatant abuse of power and gender inequality in the context of the classical music culture in Finland could be seen as somewhat bewildering, considering the country's long reputation as a trailblazer in gender equality (Larsen, Manns & Östman 2022),³ classical music, and music education (Hoge 2003; Väkevä & Westerlund 2007; Aarnio 2017; Finnish Toolbox 2020). At the same time, problems of inequality and the misuse of power in classical music culture are also unsurprising when looked at against the backdrop of the abundance of studies that have provided nuanced readings of classical music culture as comprised of various power regimes and complex constructions of social categories (e.g., McClary [1991] 2002; Citron [1993] 2000; Brett et al. [1994] 2006; Cusick 1994, [1994] 2006, 1999; Lamb 1996; Green 1997; Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000; Leppänen 2015; Yoshihara 2007; Bennett [2008] 2016; Yang 2014; Hess 2015; Scharff 2017; Bull 2019; Ewell 2020, 2023; Walker 2020; Kajikawa 2019).

I have been involved with classical music since my childhood, starting as a beginner pupil of the piano, and later becoming a piano student in higher music education, a pianist, an accompanist, and eventually a piano teacher, as well as a musicologist. In these different roles, as a student and professional of music, I have been able to experience a strong sense of identity, approval, and the possibility to enjoy the pleasures that come with playing a wide range of beautiful music (cf. Bull 2019, 174). On the other hand, these experiences have been accompanied by experiences of insufficiency, opprobrium, and, at times, heartbreak stemming from harmful behaviour. My experiences are hardly unique, as the tensions between such contrasting experiences in the classical music culture have been expressed by many (e.g., Yang 2014, 4; Cusick [1994] 2006, 1999; Scharff 2017, 165; Bull 2019, xi–xiii, 174). Returning to the quotes above, the fear of losing those exhilarating feelings

and global networks to criticise, often intersectionally, oppressive power hierarchies (Peroni & Rodak 2020, 5S). Fourth wave feminism has also been scorned for justicialism, Puritan moralism, and feminist punitivism (Peroni & Rodnak 2020, 5S), whereas the #metoo-movement, initially launched by Tarana Burke (2021), has been criticised for having later been co-opted by white, Western, and privileged women (Phipps 2020, 37). Marking distinctive separations between different feminist waves has also been criticized by many, as such separations overlook how different feminist thoughts have developed and emerged in overlapping ways and alongside each other (Kontturi 2006, 23, 192; Hewitt 2010, 1–2; van der Tuin 2014).

³ In the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, the World Economic Forum (2023) ranked Finland as the third best country in the world for women's equality in the workplace. On the other hand, Finland's ranking in the EU on the Gender Equality Index has dropped from the fourth place to the eighth since 2020 (European Institute for Gender Equality 2023).

and a sense of approval might even prevent one from questioning the normalized inappropriate behaviours and power regimes that are upheld in classical music culture (Citron [1993] 2000, 3; Cusick 1999, 41; Bull 2019, xiii, 174). Yet, it is precisely this chasm that compelled me to study the connections between narratives, representations, ideals, plural ready-made images, symbols, and metaphors (Gatens [1996] 2003) related to gender and sexuality, and the prevalence of gender inequality, sexual harassment, and emotional abuse in the field of classical music. For while there is a myriad of research on inequalities in classical music culture (e.g., McClary [1991] 2002; Citron [1993] 2000; Yoshihara 2007; Bennet [2008] 2010; Scharff 2017; Bull 2019; Bull, Scharff & Nooshin 2023; Kowalczyk 2023; Werner & Kuusi 2023), deep-seated qualitative research exploring the patterns and mechanisms of various forms of misconduct in classical music education have only begun to significantly grow over the past six years (Fernández-Morante 2018; Baker & Frega 2018; Baker, Bull & Taylor 2018; Bull 2019; Scharff 2021; Özevin 2022; Saloranta 2023; Valtasaari 2023; Välimäki 2023; Seesjärvi 2024; Koivisto-Kaasik 2024; Gibson 2024; Fong forthcoming 2024). With this dissertation I hope to contribute to the work of previous scholars by shedding light on gender inequality and whiteness in the classical music culture in Finland, and specifically the hitherto under-researched subjects of gendered and sexual misconduct, grooming, and emotional abuse.

This dissertation is a qualitative research based on interviews with fourteen Finnish white female classical musicians aged between 25 and 45, who all play as their main instrument either piano, violin, viola, or cello. The interviewees had either already finished their studies and entered working life as instrumental teachers or musicians of classical music, or they were on the verge of graduating from their studies whilst already working as professionals in music. The theoretical framework of the study emerged from my interest in understanding the connections between the socio-cultural features and common practices of classical music culture in Finland, and the prevalence of gender inequality, whiteness, and gendered and sexual misconduct or emotional abuse. The key concepts in this research, through which I explore the issues raised above, are: 1) *social imaginaries*, 2) *social norms*, and 3) *embodied subjectivity*. These key concepts are based on my application of feminist philosopher Moira Gatens' (2004; [1996] 2003; Churcher & Gatens 2019) work, and especially her understanding of *social imaginaries*. According to Gatens (2004, 283; [1996] 2003; Churcher & Gatens 2019), the key concept of social imaginaries "help structure forms of embodied identity, and belonging, social meaning and value." Applying Gatens' concept (2004, 283; [1996] 2003, viii; 2020; Churcher & Gatens 2019), I refer to *representations*, *narratives*, *ideals*, *plural ready-made images*, *symbols*, and *metaphors*. In my research, which is set in the classical music culture of contemporary Finland, I understand these, in many ways overlapping, components as follows.

By representations and narratives, I refer, firstly, to the classical music repertoire and canonized composers,⁴ and relatedly to “a historical teleology with Europe as its point of origination and efflorescence” (Yang 2014, 4). Secondly, by representations, I refer to admired musicians playing the piano, violin, and cello that are considered the “best” and most important reference points in relation to these instruments (discussed in Chapter 5.1). Thirdly, in my take on narratives in classical music culture, I include the concept of the “genius myth”, in which, specifically, white male artists from the eighteenth and nineteenth century are considered to be “geniuses” or even godlike figures (Battersby 1989; Citron [1993] 2000, 201; Moisala 2006; Koskinen 2006; Ryyänen 2020, 14–19). Associated with these narratives is the belief in aesthetic transcendence (e.g., Goehr 1992; Cusick [1994] 2006, 1999; Tiainen 2005b; Eagleton 2015, 46–47; Vaugeois 2018; Bull 2019). In addition, narratives are related to how different gendered categories are produced, such as femininity and masculinity. By ideals, I refer to the generally accepted performance practices of classical music, and, specifically, to elements such as expectations related to physical appearance or embodiment required for “good quality performances” (Bull 2019, 178). Ready-made images I understand as signifying stereotypes, and as quintessential imaginaries of how a classical instrumentalist, specifically, pianists, violinists, or cellists, should dress, behave, or take space in the classical music culture in Finland. In this context, I understand symbols and metaphors as related to these previously mentioned concepts. For example, I examine how symbols and metaphors are associated with specific forms of embodiment or performance practice.

The concept of social imaginaries, as used in this dissertation, refers to all of the elements mentioned above, which I see as overlapping instead of clearly distinct. In this dissertation I study elements of gender, sexuality, and race. Moreover, I dissect how social imaginaries are related to gender as a binary construction and whiteness (Dyer 1997; Ahmed 2007). While social class is not specifically a key viewpoint in this dissertation, class, and especially middle class, appears as a sociocultural construction that interweaves with other social categories that are central to this research (as discussed further below).

⁴ The canon of classical music is usually considered to comprise the music of such composers as J.S. Bach (1685–1750), W.A. Mozart (1756–1791), L. van Beethoven (1770–1827), F. Chopin (1810–1849), R. Schumann (1810–1856), R. Wagner (1813–1883), J. Brahms (1833–1897), G. Mahler (1860–1911), and many more white male composers of European descent. Citron ([1993] 2000, 193) stipulates that the formation of the musical canon is a “complex process that exerts great power in shaping and perpetuating attitudes toward valuation and hence what gets enshrined as masterpieces.” That the classical music canon is still today comprised of mainly white male composers has been criticized by many, for example by music historian Margaret E. Walker (2020; see also Kurkela & Mantere 2015), who maintains that it reflects a colonial legacy that continues to erase historical diversity (see a discussion of this in Chapter 2).

Yet another key concept of my dissertation is *social norms*. I understand social norms as produced through the differential meanings and values that social imaginaries “confer on particular bodies and practices” while establishing “collective norms of behavior” (Churcher & Gatens 2019, 154). I use this key concept to examine how social imaginaries are related to generally accepted codes of conduct, for example gendered norms of how women should, or should not, behave within and beyond musical performance situations. Especially in relation to emotional abuse, I use this concept to analyse how values and beliefs conferred in social imaginaries allow for social norms that, at worst, normalize abusive behaviour. My third and last key concept is *embodied subjectivity*. With it I refer to an individual’s lived, internal, albeit socio-culturally shaped, experiences that are impacted, and affected by social imaginaries and social norms (Gatens [1996] 2003; see also Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2002; McLaren 2002).

Through these key concepts, and the theoretical framework provided mainly by Gatens’ work ([1996] 2003; 2004; Churcher & Gatens 2019), I seek, firstly, to examine intersectional meanings and values that are reflected, created, and maintained in the classical music culture in Finland. Secondly, I seek to understand how these meanings distribute agency, power, and social value to differently gendered and otherwise positioned individuals in classical music culture. Through such viewpoints I study how gender inequality, emotional abuse, and gendered and sexual misconduct appear in classical music education, and how these social phenomena pertain to and have become normalized in Finnish classical music culture. I analyse gendered narratives and power discrepancies in social networks, specifically how homophily and cronyism shape gender inequality in the networking and work life of Finnish classical music culture. By homophily I refer to an often (un)conscious tendency of people to socialize with individuals with similar characteristics based on gender, age, ethnicity, race, social class, and so on (discussed in Chapter 5.4; see also Scharff 2017, 60, 2020; Ibarra 1992; McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook 2001; Sang, Dainty & Ison 2014, 249; Wreyford 2015). By cronyism I denote favouritism of subordinates or peers, as it appeared in the research material (Chapter 5.4; Khatri & Tsang 2003, 292).

Further, I scrutinize genre boundaries of classical music and the onto-epistemology⁵ that is also implied in relation to gender in historical performance ideals, and how they are reflected in modern-day gender inequalities in the classical music culture in Finland. I use the concept of gendered and sexual misconduct to

⁵ Gatens ([1996] 2003, 58) defines dualistic divisions between knowing and being (epistemology and ontology) in her conceptualization of the body. In my dissertation I apply her view to examine how what is understood and defined as classical music continuously intersects with how it is represented and materialized. By referring to onto-epistemology, I understand the process of what classical music is to be dynamic, constantly unfolding in representation and realization and in how these are understood.

discuss a wide range of behaviours, encompassing behaviour that reinforces male dominance and generalized sexist statements and extending to sexual harassment, sexualized communication, grooming, and sexual advances (discussed in Chapter 5.2; see also Carstensen 2016; Page, Bull & Chapman 2019). Emotional abuse refers to specifically patterned and continuous non-contact behaviour directed by a person in an important role of authority at an individual subject to that behaviour. In this research emotional abuse appeared, for example, as demeaning comments, unwarranted anger, denial of approval, support, or attention, harmful comparison, and consciously setting up a student for failure (discussed in Chapter 5.3; see also Stirling and Kerr 2008).

While many of these behaviours, ranging from verbal and physical harassment to grooming, are crimes punishable by law in Finland (Finlex), the laws and legal definitions regarding emotionally abusive behaviour are still lacking. A study by the Ministry of Justice (Tolvanen & Silvennoinen 2023, 63) states that psychological violence is very rarely punishable as assault in Finland, due both to the difficulties in detecting such behaviour but also due to difficulties related to how psychological violence is defined in relation to caused damage. Further, definitions of harassment or misconduct vary across educational institutions in Finland. In some institutions they are more clearly defined than others. Policies and definitions have also changed during the writing of this dissertation, and therefore in this study I am not discussing how definitions of gendered and sexual misconduct or emotional abuse differ between institutional definitions. I have opted to discuss forms of misconduct only in regard to how they appear in the research material and by reflecting on how these are defined in the academic literature. I hope, however, that the knowledge that this dissertation creates can help institutions define and detect gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse, and possibly inspire any necessary policy changes.

1.2 Defining the research subjects

As this research sets out to examine classical music, gender, and associated whiteness in the context of classical music culture in Finland, it is imperative to define these concepts, and other notions that are associated with them, and to discuss the ways in which they used in this dissertation.

I use the vernacular term “classical music” instead of “Western art music” to avoid juxtaposing this genre as “art” with other genres, which would be considered thereby as “not art” (for a discussion on this see Gelbart 2007, 191–224; see also Bull 2019, xvii). Similarly, for example, the only music university in Finland, the Sibelius Academy of The University of the Arts Helsinki, uses the term “classical music.” The term “classical music” was likewise used by many of the participants in this study (see also Bull 2019, xvii). However, the question of what kind of music is

exactly meant by “Western classical music” is far from simple. Music researcher Laudan Nooshin (2011, 294), for one, discusses the limits and problems of the term “Western” in the concept of Western art music/classical music. Because of Western colonialism and globalization, Nooshin (2011, 294; see also Yang 2014; Wang 2014) argues that the term “western” no longer adequately captures this musical tradition, which nowadays has a global reach. Even though in terms of the research material of this study the music culture that the interviewees are engaged in is indeed predominately “Western”, as most of the discussed composers as well as the performers and the teachers are of European descent, I insist on using the term “classical music.” I adhere to this term as a means to signify a musical practice that relies on a canon of music composed on staff notation in Europe between around 1750 to 1950 and created mainly for acoustic instruments (Bull 2019, xvii). Contemporary classical music was also discussed to some extent by the interviewees, but the locality of their activity, practice, and work was strongly set in the classical music culture in Finland.

What sets apart classical music is the common discourse of describing this music as serious and profound, and viewing classical music as thus allowing for an access to an “inner depth” (Bull & Scharff 2017, 293). In research set in the modern-day United Kingdom, sociologist Anna Bull and sociologist Christina Scharff (2017, 296) argue that describing classical music as serious and important contributes to distinguishing hierarchies of value between classical music and other musical genres. This purported exceptionality of classical music is related to the “work concept” and discourses that view classical music as if it were detached from social constructions (Bull 2019, xvii; see also Small [1977] 1996; Goehr 1992). As musicologist Brian Inglis (2018, 8) points out, such an ideology, stemming from the Romantic period, still exists through the concept of “authenticity.” While the concept of authenticity in relation to musical works is not discussed, authenticity appears as an element connected to how certain performance practices are seen as symbolizing and embodying ideals. This aspect also relates to Bull and Scharff’s (2021, 673) argument that genre boundaries are (re-)produced in labour, in institutional settings, as well as in pejorative attitudes towards genres not considered classical. The genre hierarchies that are maintained and produced in classical music culture reaffirm also hierarchies related to gender and race (Bull & Scharff 2021, 673; Walker 2020; Kajikawa 2022; Ewell 2020, 2023).

I understand gender as a multifaceted phenomenon related to ideas about hormones, chromosomes, physiological features, psychological processes, and a myriad of social and cultural factors (Lips [2014] 2019, 1–22). Put differently, I rely on an understanding of gender that is influenced by both intersectional and new materialist thinking (Tiainen et al. 2020). This derives from Gatens’ theorizations of gender, which are situated in-between social constructivist and new materialist

views.⁶ Gatens ([1996] 2003, 149–150) describes her theorization of gender as moving beyond dualistic views of sexual differences into a dynamic complex assemblage in which sex [body] and gender are understood as parallel descriptions without causal attributes. Although gender inequality and gender as a category comprise the primary focus of this dissertation, they are nevertheless discussed and understood as intersectional (Crenshaw 1989), specifically in relation to white normativity and whiteness. This is, firstly, due to the ways in which the Western binary construction of gender, including the binary’s manifestations in classical music, has its roots in coloniality, and binary gender constructions are complicit in producing Europeanness, and race (see e.g., Oyěwùmí 1997; Lugones 2007). Secondly, gender and gender inequality are distinctly coproduced with constructions of white normativity in my research material.

In order to highlight this way of examining gender, which combines a social constructivist and an intersectional understanding with new materialist viewpoints, I draw on an approach proposed by feminist musicologists and theorists Milla Tiainen, Taru Leppänen, Katve-Kaisa Kontturi, and Tara Mehrabi. Tiainen et al. (2020) seek, through the concept of “the middle,” to intersect intersectionality theories with new materialist perspectives (for a detailed discussion on this see Chapter 3.2). Examining gender through the lens of the middle, that is intersecting new materialist and intersectional theorizations, allows me to examine how gender differences and embodied subjectivities are situation-bound, relational, processual, and material realities that vary across “social, material, discursive, human, and more-than-human areas of activity” (Tiainen et al. 2020, 214). For example, instruments (piano, violin, and cello) are considered in this dissertation as material components that impact the ways in which gender and embodied subjectivities emerge. Such an understanding of social differences through the concept of “the middle” is also used to examine social imaginaries as always situation-bound, and thus fragile.

By focusing on gender and gendered⁷ inequality, I examine the ways in which gender structures inequality – that is, how gendered social differences appear in social imaginaries within the classical music culture in Finland, and how social differences are related to unequal treatment of individuals, or sociocultural or economic disparities and prejudices. I examine constructions related to gender, such as Eurocentric and heteronormative ideals of femininity, and how these shape participation in the classical music culture in Finland. I analyse how gender

⁶ For a detailed discussion of how I based my understanding of gender on Gatens’ ([1996] 2003) writings, see Chapter 3.

⁷ “Gender inequality” and “gendered inequality” are used interchangeably. In Article I, I refer to “gendered inequality”, whereas in the rest of this dissertation I use the slightly shorter version, “gender inequality.”

constructions are situation-bound and also dependent on material conditions such as, more specifically, musical instruments. Gender is also scrutinized in this dissertation as a lived experience in the context of the classical music culture in Finland. Related to gender, I examine how binary understandings of gender and heteronormativity structure inequality, and in what ways these can be linked with the prevalence of gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse. By heteronormativity I refer to a normative “system of power enforced through masculinist and naturalized binary gender norms and sexual aesthetics” (Me. Burke 2020, 161). Race and whiteness also intersect with gender inequality in many ways in this research. The discussions of constructions of race, whiteness, and social class are contextualized in a special way by the fact that this research is set in Finland.

In Finland and the other Nordic countries, coloniality, whiteness, and racism are often still (mis)understood as irrelevant, due to these countries’ (supposedly) distant involvement with European imperialism (Lofstdóttir & Jensen 2012, 2; Rastas 2012, 90; Keskinen 2021, 69–70). Researcher in ethnic relations and decolonial studies Suvi Keskinen (2021, 70) maintains that the Nordic countries, including Finland, have benefitted both economically and socio-culturally from colonial structures and ideas of European superiority. Finland has also actively participated and continues to participate in settler colonialism underpinned by a “logic of elimination” towards the Indigenous Sámi people living traditionally in Sámi territories (Sápmi) reaching across the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia (Kuokkanen 2020, 299).

Finland’s entanglement with coloniality can be reflected in how “many discourses and practices of Finnishness are unconsciously entangled with, or politically invested in, whiteness” (Hoegaerts et al. 2022, 6). While “Finnishness” and “Nordicness” are not specifically analysed in this dissertation, they constitute the boundaries within which this dissertation takes place, in that all my interviewees are white Finnish individuals. This is reflected in this research through white normativity. Feminist musicologist Taru Leppänen (2015, 20) writes that while race, ethnicity, and racism have been studied in Finland “mainly in the most axiomatic contexts,” these topics are also relevant in “less axiomatic contexts, such as Western classical music.” The era in which the classical music repertoire that is considered quintessential was composed marks an era in which the European colonial occupation and empire reached their peak of power (Vaugeois 2018; Walker 2020; Ewell 2020, 2023; Kajikawa 2019, 2022). Classical music, whiteness, and the middle class share a special bond in that they are often produced intersectionally (Crenshaw 1989) – that is, in tandem and interaction with each other. That classical music is viewed as a not self-evident context in which to study race, ethnicity, and racism directly reflects white normativity (Leppänen 2015, 20). As many scholars have argued, white normativity and whiteness are produced and upheld in classical music culture in multiple ways; for example, through

performance practice ideals, representations, practices of listening, and musical repertoire (E.g., Leppänen 2015; Hess 2015; Bull 2019; Walker 2020; Ewell 2020, 2023; Thurman 2021; Kolbe 2021; Kajikawa 2022; Thurman 2021; Kowalczyk 2023).

Before defining whiteness, it is necessary to have a look at the notion of “race.” I understand “race” as a socially constructed category not only related to physiological features but also dependent in its definition on social power hierarchies and how they relate to each other (Hoegaerts et al. 2022, 6). Like race, “white” is also relative and dependent on time and space-specific structures of power and dominance. By white normativity, or whiteness, I refer to the ways in which white individuals are understood as the norm, not only in the sense of representation but also by the ways in which white normativity impacts privilege and power, for example positions of knowledge and knowledge production (Hoegaerts et al. 2022, 6; see also Dyer 1997, 1; Ahmed 2007; Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2012).

Musicologist Loren Kajikawa (2019) turns to critical race theorist Cheryl Harris (1993) and her theorizations to show the ways in which classical music and whiteness can be considered as forms of “property.” As Kajikawa (2019, 164) interprets it: “To own whiteness today is to be empowered to ignore the legacy of racial discrimination.” By leaning on this idea of whiteness as property, classical music can be interpreted as a form of cultural capital that reinforces white belonging and privileges for those who can inhabit whiteness. Kajikawa’s thoughts provide a valuable starting point for the analysis of whiteness in this dissertation. To examine whiteness in relation to classical music, I support my theorization of Gatens by leaning on feminist scholar Sara Ahmed’s (2007) work, and her theorization of the phenomenology of whiteness in particular. Ahmed (2007, 156) explores how spaces are shaped through bodies and their habitual actions and turns “to the concepts of habits to theorize not so much how bodies acquire their shape, but how spaces acquire the shape of the bodies that ‘inhabit’ them.” Rather than understanding whiteness as a static category, I scrutinize how it appears in many guises and context-specific ways in tandem with gender constructions.

Whiteness within the classical music culture is furthermore interlinked with specifically Western upper and middle classes; classical music has often been “framed as the utmost expression of cultural value” and “with the power of social elites” (Kolbe 2021, 2). Bull (2019, 170) stipulates in her study on youth orchestras in the UK that participating and engaging in classical music culture can contribute to maintaining or improving one’s class position. In Finland, at the time of writing this, music schools are subsidized by the state while higher music education is free of charge for students coming from within the EU/EEA. At first glance, then, Finnish music education seems to be available to individuals from different social class backgrounds. Nevertheless, researchers have demonstrated a link between

classical music culture and the status and cultural values of the middle and upper classes (see for example Väkevä & Westerlund 2007; Bull & Scharff 2017; Bull 2018; Scharff 2018a, 2018b; Kolbe 2021; Väkevä, Westerlund & Ilmola-Sheppard 2021; Kallunki 2023), as well as a link between a person's socio-economic and family circumstances and "the path from childhood to success (or failure) in a higher education entrance examination" (Jääskeläinen 2021, 14). While social class is not a key aspect of this dissertation, I explore social class as it appears not only in association with whiteness, but also heteronormativity and gender.

1.3 Positioning the study

This dissertation is linked with and contributes first and foremost to feminist musicology, more precisely to (intersectional) feminist scholarship on classical music culture (e.g., Wood 1980; McClary [1991] 2002; Citron [1993] 2000; Cusick 1994, 1999, [1999] 2001; Brett et al. [1994] 2006; Killam 1994; Green 1997; Moisala & Diamond 2000; Born and Hesmondhlagh 2000; Koskoff 2014; Leppänen 2010, 2015; Tiainen 2005a; Yoshihara 2007; Maus 2013; Yang 2014; Moisala et al. 2014; Leppänen et al. 2018; Macarthur et al. 2017; Werner 2019, 2020; Mathias 2021; Abfalter & Reitsamer 2022). This study thus builds upon the feminist music research tradition, which can be characterized by its aim to promote equality and change by revealing and producing information about inequalities and power regimes related to music (see Killam 1994; Macarthur et al. 2017).⁸ This dissertation also leans and expands on a large body of sociological research that scrutinizes socio-cultural constructions of various social categories, such as gender and race in classical music culture (e.g., Browning 2016; Macarthur et al. 2017; Scharff 2018; Bull 2019; Schmalenberg & Maddox 2019; Raine & Strong 2019; Bull, Scharff & Nooshin 2023; Wickström 2023). Most specifically, this dissertation builds upon and contributes to a currently dynamically growing body of work on gender discrimination and gendered and sexual misconduct in contemporary classical music culture in Finland and other Western societies, such as the UK, Germany, Poland, Australia and the US (e.g., Scharff 2017; Bull 2019; Kolbe 2021; Kowalczyk 2019, 2023; Bull, Scharff & Nooshin 2023; Gibson 2024).

Lastly, this dissertation partakes in the past and current movement and networking of feminist scholarship regarding the culture of classical music in Finland (Moisala 1994; Sivuola-Gunaratnam 1994; Välimäki 2001; Rojola & Väättäinen 2004; Wahlfors 2021; Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023b; Rantanen,

⁸ How feminist musicology offers also a theoretical framework for this research is discussed in Chapter 3.1.

Koivisto-Kaasik & Lampela 2023; Talasniemi, Broman-Kananen & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023) that encompasses research on:

- historical and modern-day perspectives of sexual harassment, emotional abuse, and experiences of shame within the classical music culture (Kurkela [1993] 1997; Saloranta 2023; Välimäki 2023; Lampela 2023; Valtasaari 2023; Seesjärvi 2024; Koivisto-Kaasik 2024)
- genders, sexualities, and queer readings of classical music performance (e.g., Leppänen 2000, 2010, 2015; Karakorpi 2015, 2023; Leppänen & Tiainen 2018; Wahlfors, 2020a, Wahlfors 2020b; Chorell 2021; Välimäki 2023)
- previously overlooked historical Finnish composers and musician women (e.g., Moisala & Valkeila 1994; Moisala 2009; Kurkela & Mantere 2015; Konttori-Gustafsson 2019; Heikkilä 2022; Broman-Kananen 2023; Rahkonen 2023; Ahlsved 2023; Virtanen 2023; Välimäki & Koivisto 2023)
- feminist music analyses and rereading of works by Finnish composer women (Ristilä 2022, 2024)
- gender inequalities in Finnish orchestral repertoires (Kvist 2023a; Kvist 2023b)
- new materialist, post and decolonial, and posthuman perspectives and theorizations on Finnish music history (e.g., Tiainen 2007, 2018, forthcoming 2025; Hautsalo 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Moisala et al. 2014; Leppänen et al. 2015; Leppänen & Tiainen 2018; Torvinen 2019; Kivinen 2022; Metsä 2023; Näätänen 2023; Torvinen & Välimäki 2023).

Aligning with previous feminist music research that is often characterized by activist pursuits intended to promote change (Naples 1998), I associate this dissertation with action-based activist research and feminist music research (Suoni 2023; Mononen & Välimäki [eds.] 2018; Ramstedt, K. et al. [eds.] forthcoming 2025) and with academic research as “slow activism”, as proposed by scholars Tiffany Page, Anna Bull, and Emma Chapman (2019, 1317), which refers to research that produces information that can be used in order to shift and change “sector guidelines and policy.” As such, through this dissertation I engage in repair work in classical music culture to prevent inequalities, gendered and sexual misconduct, and emotional abuse in the future. I find this dissertation not as separated from everyday life and practice but as partaking, through academic discussion, in everyday practices and debates revolving around inequality in classical music

culture in Finland.⁹ While problem-centred, this research is essentially solution-oriented, thus reflecting the activist ethos of this dissertation.

1.4 Aims and research questions

The primary aim of this dissertation is to understand via in-depth interviews how various forms of gender inequality appear and manifest themselves in the classical music culture in contemporary Finland. My main research question is:

How does gender inequality appear in the classical music culture in Finland, and how are the common social imaginaries of this culture associated with the prevalence of gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse?

I seek to answer this main question through the following five sub-questions:

(1) How are gender and related socio-cultural categories conveyed in the performance practice ideals maintained by widely acclaimed performance figures, and how do traditionally accepted ways of performing musical works intertwine with and influence the embodied experiences of instrumentalist women?

(2) How do understandings of gender and sexuality related to traditional power hierarchies, narratives, and widespread practices within classical music allow for gendered and sexual misconduct in classical music culture, particularly in classical music education?

(3) How do constructions of gender and sexuality that are reflected in social imaginaries appear in embodied subjectivities of classical instrumentalist women as lived and affective phenomena?

(4) How do beliefs and values specific to classical music culture partly allow for emotional abuse, and how are such beliefs and values embodied?

(5) How is gender inequality related to genre boundaries, and how do genre boundaries structure gender inequality in classical music networks?

The sub-questions tackle the issue of gender inequality from different perspectives. The first question is related to understanding what kind of social imaginaries are embedded in narratives, representations, ideals, plural ready-made images, symbols, and metaphors that appear in the classical music culture in Finland. These aspects are specifically discussed in how they appear in association with performance ideals and related to idealized performance figures. This is how I explore social imaginaries and deep-seated understandings of gender, and thereby

⁹ For a more detailed discussion on my research positionality and activist work, see chapter 4.4.

how gender is constructed and viewed in classical music culture, for example in the norms concerning femininity and other social codes of conduct. In association with gender, I also discuss whiteness, as it is a socio-cultural construction that accompanies femininity norms in this research. This first sub-question is specifically answered in Article I (see Table 1: *Sub-questions* and Table 2: *Articles*). In Chapter 2, I will also discuss the historicity of the studied social imaginaries in classical music culture to build a coherent and complete understanding of the modern-day inequalities that lie at the heart of this dissertation.

This leads to the second sub-question, through which I explore how socio-cultural constructions of gender and sexuality are embedded in social imaginaries and social norms. For example, I study how binary understandings of gender structure and organize women's participation in classical music culture through expectations to adhere to certain prevailing performance ideals, and femininity norms in music education and networking. This second sub-question allows me to explore how social imaginaries in classical music culture may, through generally accepted norms and values, allow for abuses of power. Through this question I delve into how heteronormativity and binary gender constructions normalize gendered and sexual misconduct via norms of femininity and ideals of masculinity. These research interests are discussed specifically in Article II (see Table 1: *Sub-questions* and Table 2: *Articles*).

In the third sub-question, I examine how social imaginaries and social norms within classical music culture, specifically those related to gender and sexuality, impact the lived, internal experiences of the interviewees. I also investigate how femininity norms shape the interviewees' embodied subjectivity and their participation in classical music culture. These discussions are explored specifically in Articles II and IV (see Table 1: *Sub-questions* and Table 2: *Articles*).

The fourth sub-question allows me to study how idealizing certain types of performance and musical skills is related to the prevalence of emotional abuse. Through this sub-question I scrutinize what kind of harmful values and social norms emerge from social imaginaries in the form of codes of conduct and normative behaviour. Through this question I also explore how such beliefs and values emerge from the internal and lived experiences of the interviewees, and how, for example, shame and humiliation can be read as signs of belonging to the Finnish classical music culture. These topics are discussed specifically in Article III (see Table 1: *Sub-questions* and Table 2: *Articles*).

Lastly, with the fifth sub-question, I explore how gender inequality persists in classical music culture by analysing especially experiences of work life and networking among my interviewees. With this question I will also address the impact of gender, gender inequality, as well as genre boundaries in structuring systemic inequality in classical music culture. Through this last sub-question, I discuss how repertoire, and prejudices related to repertoire are linked with the

persistence of gender inequality. The fifth sub-question is studied specifically in Article IV (see Table 1: *Sub-questions* and Table 2: *Articles*).

The sub-questions are addressed and answered in the dissertation's four sub-studies (see Table 1: *Sub-questions* and Table 2: *Articles*). The four different articles explore the five sub-questions from different perspectives, while relying on the same interview material (presented in detail in Chapter 4.1). In Table 1: *Sub-questions*, which articles answer which sub-questions are marked with an X (see Chapter 5 for a detailed summary of the articles).

Table 1 Sub-questions

Sub-question	Article I	Article II	Article III	Article IV
(1) How are gender and related socio-cultural categories conveyed in the performance practice ideals maintained by widely acclaimed performance figures, and how do traditionally accepted ways of performing musical works intertwine with and influence the embodied experiences of instrumentalist women?	X			
(2) How do understandings of gender and sexuality related to traditional power hierarchies, narratives, and widespread practices within classical music allow for gendered and sexual misconduct in classical music culture, particularly in classical music education?		X		
(3) How do constructions of gender and sexuality that are reflected in social imaginaries appear in embodied subjectivities of classical instrumentalist women as lived and affective phenomena?		X		X
(4) How do beliefs and values specific to classical music culture partly allow for emotional abuse, and how are such beliefs and values embodied?			X	
(5) How is gender inequality related to genre boundaries, and how do genre boundaries structure gender inequality in classical music networks?				X

Table 2 Articles

Article	Title	Journal	Status
I	"A man is practically the general norm" – A case study of gender inequality and whiteness in the classical music scene in Finland	<i>NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research</i>	Published in volume 31, number 1.
II	"You just had to learn to live with it": Gendered and sexual misconduct in classical music culture in Finland	<i>Musiikkikasvatus – The Finnish Journal of Music Education (FJME)</i>	Published in volume 26, issue 2.
III	Emotional abuse in classical music education in Finland: A study of Finnish women musicians' experiences	<i>Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education (ACT)</i>	Published in volume 22, issue 3.
IV	Homophily and genre boundaries: Inequalities in classical music networks in Finland	<i>Musiikki</i>	Published in volume 53, number 2.

1.5 Previous studies and their key contributions

The cultural and art fields in general have largely been dominated by white men (see Battersby 1989; Dahlhaus [1978] 1989; McClary [1991] 2002; Goehr 1992; Tiainen 2005b; Moisala 2006; Bonds 2014; Cvejić 2015; Torvinen 2019b, 2020; Thurman 2021; Edwards 2022). As sociologist Diana L. Miller (2016, 119) points out, "the ideal-typical artist, like the ideal-typical worker (Acker 1990), is implicitly masculine." Miller (2016, 122) distinguishes that this idealization happens through the following factors: "(i) an expectation of creative genius; (ii) gender bias in aesthetic evaluations; and (iii) the necessity of entrepreneurial artistic labor." These elements are also reflected in research on gender, race, and class constructions in the specific context of classical music culture (e.g., Kawabata 2004; Tan 2013, 2023; McCormick 2015; Prince 2017; Thurman 2021; Abfalter & Reitsamer 2022; Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023). Since the turn of the millennium, a growing number of studies have turned their attention to classical musicians and their experiences of education and work life as shaped by various intersecting inequalities (e.g., Yoshihara 2007; Bartleet 2008; Bennett [2008] 2016; El-Ghadban 2009; McCormick 2015; Leppänen 2015; Dromey & Haferkorn 2018; Bucura 2020; Ahokas 2023; Kowalczyk 2023; Gibson 2024).

The most significant body of research that this dissertation draws upon has been conducted by sociologists Anna Bull and Christina Scharff. Pioneering works by Bull encompass research on how socio-cultural constructions produce intersecting inequalities among youth orchestra musicians in the UK (Bull 2018; 2019), as well as constructions and abuses of power in music education (Bull 2016; 2019 see also Baker, Bull & Taylor 2018). Scharff has done significant research on class, race, and gender inequalities within the classical music profession and its networks (Scharff 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020a), sexual harassment, and male dominance (Scharff 2020b, 2022), as well as inequality talks (Scharff 2020b, 2021). These scholars' joint efforts involve research on genre hierarchies and seek to repair practices within classical music culture (Bull & Scharff 2017, 2021; Bull, Scharff & Nooshin 2023). Their significant research inputs show how modern-day classical music conventions and hierarchies rely on historical constructions and practices, revealing the ways in which inequalities fold into structural inequalities (Bull 2019; Scharff 2017, 2020a).

The centrality of white, male, middle-class identities is reflected in studies on women's experiences of classical music work life, which is, according to Scharff (2017, 195; 2018, 202), characterized by a lack of workforce diversity. Indeed, systemic inequality appears, according to Bull (2018), already in music education institutions, where especially male students from professional or upper-middle classes are more easily promised careers in classical music. In her pioneering book *Class, Control, and Classical Music* (2019, 175), Bull demonstrates how classical music practices are linked to specifically middle-class forms of selfhood and identity. According to Bull (2019, 175–177), the ways in which commonly accepted practices within classical music can be associated with middle classes happen through four “articulations” (Hall 1985).¹⁰

In these four articulations, Bull (2019, 175–176) includes, firstly, the formal modes of social organization within classical music culture. These formal modes of organization comprise regulations, practices, and norms, for example related to repertoire, being faithful to the composer's intentions, or clear distinctions between audience and performers (Bull 2019, 176). The second articulations are encompassed in Bull's (2019, 177) formulation of “historical and contemporary modes of embodiment of the white middle classes.” In this category Bull (2019, 177) includes, for example, “respectable femininity” and “controlled excitement” as ways in which individuals are expected to inhabit specific modes of classed and gendered embodiment or forms of agency. This category also includes ways in which power is embodied or accepted, such as how individuals are expected to respond to authorities, for example with fear or admiration (Bull 2019, 177). Thirdly, Bull

¹⁰ Bull (2019,13) applies sociologist Stuart Hall's (1985) concept of “articulations” to examine under what conditions and practices middle-class formations can be associated with classical music practices.

(2019, 177) considers the “imaginative dimensions of bourgeois selfhood” as a way in which classical music is linked with the middle classes. Such an articulation can be noticed, according to Bull (2019, 178), in a fear of making mistakes, in how power dynamics (for example between conductor and orchestra players) reflect fantasies of order and control, or in how classical music can arguably offer the means to experience a transcendence from everyday life, thus “reproducing ideals associated with the Christian soul and the white body.” Lastly, the fourth articulations (Bull 2019, 178–179) pertain to the aesthetic of “getting it right.” Bull (2019, 178–179) argues that the aesthetic ideals of precision, detailed control, and “getting it right” are at the heart of keeping out those not willing or able to make the long-term investment in becoming what is considered a classical musician.

Bull’s (2019) exhaustive in-depth research illustrates the significant weight that ideals and parameters of what is considered “right” have within classical music culture, and demonstrates the importance of examining associations between socio-cultural ideals and the persistence of social inequalities. A large bulk of research has by now examined how shared ideas of femininity or masculinity, which intersect with constructions of e.g. class and race, affect the musicians’ work and experience within the classical music culture in many ways (e.g., McClary [1991] 2002; Citron [1993] 2000; Green 1997; Yoshihara 2007; Scharff 2017, 2022; Prince 2017; Leppänen & Tiainen 2018; Wahlfors 2020a; Cannizzo & Strong 2020; Karakorpi 2023; Kowalczyk 2023; Werner & Kuusi 2023; Fern Almqvist & Werner 2024; Kuusi & Werner 2024). However, Scharff (2017, 196) argues that “exclusionary dynamics do not only pertain to the kinds of classed, gendered, and racialised subjects that can easily lay claim to being entrepreneurial, but may lie at the heart of constitution of entrepreneurial subjectivity.” This reflects how inequalities are related with particular subject positions that are favoured within classical music culture.

Scharff (2017, 2018, 2020a, 2020b, 2021, 2022) shows in her extensive research on inequalities in the classical music profession in the United Kingdom and Germany that inequalities can be explained by examining not only norms and constructions of “ideal” musicians, but also by the precarious nature of work, informal recruitment, inequalities in music education settings, and issues around parenting. Scharff (2020a, 16; 2020b) further argues that neoliberalism and the reliance on an imagined meritocracy also establish and reproduce exclusions. I contribute to previous research, as discussed above, by focusing on how specific understandings of gender as binary and heteronormativity emerge as the backdrop of how gender orientates participation in classical music culture and the affective investments in musicians’ experiences.

Leaning on Bull’s (2019) idea of how formations of selfhood and subjectivities in modern-day classical music reflect dominant narratives of classical music history, I, further, make new contributions to research through an approach that

intersects intersectionality studies with new materialism (Gatens [1996] 2003; Tiainen et al. 2020; see Chapter 3.2 for a detailed discussion on this) in examining how ideals within classical music culture are constantly co-formed both materially and representationally. While classical music history and its analysis are not the main focus of this dissertation, a perusal of the cultural heritage of classical music in Chapter 2 situates this doctoral research to the field of musicology, while setting the stage to provide an in-depth account of how the modern-day inequalities that are at the heart of this dissertation not only reflect certain forms of historicity but also actively reproduce them.

Research on sexual harassment and associated abuses within classical music culture has exponentially increased during the recent years¹¹ (e.g., Bull 2019; Strong & Cannizzo 2017; Baker & Frega 2018; Fernández-Morante 2018; Baker, Bull & Taylor 2018; Hennekam et al. 2019; Strong & Cannizzo 2019; Schmalenberger & Maddox 2019; Cannizzo & Strong 2020; Ege 2020; Scharff 2020; Özevin 2022; Saloranta 2023; Valtasaari 2023; Välimäki 2023; Seesjärvi 2024; Gibson 2024; Koivisto-Kaasik 2024). The most prominent and important contribution that I make to the study of these issues through this dissertation comes in the form of new in-depth knowledge on emotional abuse and gendered and sexual misconduct within classical music culture. Especially qualitative research on classical music teachers' grooming behaviour and emotional abuse is still scant, and it is this gap in knowledge that I, within the limitations of this research, address. Bull (2019; 2022) suggests that the social effects of the ideal of "getting it right" and the "pedagogy of correction" may open doors for inequality, and even emotional abuse, in classical music education. With my study, I further expand our understanding of classical music culture's typical quest for excellence (Bucura 2020; see also Kurkela [1993] 1997; Huhtanen 2004) and getting it right (Bull 2019; 2022) by showing how they emerge as part of my women interviewees' experiences of emotional abuse, and how these experiences have impacted these musicians' embodied subjectivities.

In relation to discussions on sexual harassment in particular, recent research by Bull, Tiffany Page, and other scholars on sexual misconduct and grooming in higher education in the UK provides important points of departure and comparison (e.g., Bull & Rye 2018; Page, Bull & Chapman 2019; Bull & Page 2021; Bull, Calvert-Lee & Page 2021; Bull, Duggan & Livesey 2022; Coy et al. 2022; Bull et al. 2023; Bull 2024). These studies demonstrate how heteronormativity infuses the power discrepancies between higher education staff and students, which can further be blurred through the authorities' grooming behaviour (Bull & Rye 2018; Bull & Page 2021; Bull et al. 2023). Issues and discrimination related to complaint processes for

¹¹ We might actually be witnessing the peak of research on sexual harassment and abuse within classical music culture – but that is for future research to reflect upon.

sexual misconduct in higher education institutions have also received extensive attention in research, in many ways demonstrating the insufficient measures that institutions are taking to deal with issues related to misconduct (e.g., Ahmed 2021; Bull 2022; Coy et al. 2022; Page 2022). Indeed, power discrepancies and the normalization of harassment and abuse may in many ways make reporting and dealing with misconduct even more complex. With regard to the power dynamics and hierarchies between teacher and students, this dissertation will most significantly build upon research on grooming, emotional abuse, and sexual misconduct in sports between coaches and athletes (Tomlinson & Yorganci 1997; Mi. Burke 2001; Bringer, Brackenridge & Johnston 2002; Koivisto & Tiihonen 2002; Fasting & Svela Sand 2015; Stirling & Kerr 2008, 2009, 2013; Kavanagh et al. 2017; Owton & Sparkes 2017; Battaglia, Stirling & Kerr 2017; Wilinsky & McCabe 2021; Willson & Kerr 2021; McMahon, McGannon & Palmer 2022). Power discrepancies, the connections between gendered and sexual misconduct, and emotional abuse within a framework of overall systemic inequality, are all imperative topics to scrutinize in classical music culture as well.

Scharff (2020b, 24) demonstrates that “the rhetoric of women’s alleged empowerment in the so-called #MeToo era may actually have a disempowering effect as women blame themselves for being unable to call out, or fight against, the prevalence of sexual harassment in the cultural and creative industries.” In other words, Scharff (2020b) criticizes the search for individual solutions for sexual harassment, because sexual harassment is always entangled with complex intertwining inequalities. This prompts the question: how are grooming, emotional abuse, or other forms of gendered and sexual misconduct entangled with other inequalities manifested in networking, or in the genre boundaries of classical music? Instead of being merit based, networks are in Scharff’s (2020a, 17) research linked with homophily, and the tendency to prefer individuals with a similar background and embeddedness in the same social categories. Further, Bull and Scharff (2021, 673) show how genre hierarchies that are (re-)produced in institutional settings, workplaces, and social interactions contribute to inequality within the classical music culture by reaffirming gendered hierarchies and by contributing to how musicians are valued.

The previous studies referenced and discussed above provide important insights into the intersecting systemic inequalities in classical music culture. However, these studies on especially female classical musicians’ experiences of inequality are predominantly set in the UK and Germany,¹² which differ significantly from Finland (and the other Nordic countries) historically and socio-culturally. For example, art

¹² While Scharff’s (2017, 25) research material is based on interviews with musicians living in Berlin or London the participants of the research comprise of many different nationalities and racial backgrounds.

education researchers Mira Kallio-Tavin and Kevin Tavin (2018, 69) point out how “in Finland, the general climate seems to be one that refuses to problematize the power of whiteness to produce both white and non-white subjectivities.” Through this dissertation I contribute to exploring how inequalities within networking and work in classical music culture are related through homophily to genre boundaries in Finland, where, for example, racism and acknowledging privilege are often seen as irrelevant due to the country’s perceived distance from European imperialism (Keskinen et al. 2009; Seikkula 2019; Keskinen 2021).

In their joint research, Bull and Scharff (2021, 682) summarize that “the association of classical music with Whiteness, masculinity, western culture and being upper class is not separate from, but instead linked to the positioning of classical music at the top of the hierarchy of musical genres” [sic.]. A myriad of researchers have drawn attention to the impact that such positioning of white Western masculine identities in classical music culture has had on musicians working in the field, as well as in maintaining racialized power hierarchies in society (e.g., Bull 2019; 174; Walker 2020, 178; Kolbe 2021, 2). Previous research on whiteness, racial inequalities (e.g. Vaugeois 2018; Bull 2019; Walker 2020; Thurman 2021; Ewell 2020; Kajikawa 2019, 2022; Ege 2022), and how classical music culture, both historically and in modern-day practices, constructs Europeaness and whiteness, can establish valuable resources for understanding how the cultural heritage of classical music in the context of the researched area can be traced to coloniality (see Chapter 2 for a discussion on coloniality of the classical music heritage).

While extensive research, as discussed above, has demonstrated the centrality of white masculine identities in classical music culture and how it is also ingrained in systemic inequality, declaring classical music as an inherently exclusionary and white domain may repeat the very same dominant narratives that one seeks to oppose.¹³ As pointed out above, classical music has by now attained a global reach and can be found across the world, inherently demonstrating that classical music is not only a white, European cultural practice (Nooshin 2011, 294–296; El-Ghadban 2011; see also e.g., Yang 2014; Ege 2020, 2021). Music historian Kira Thurman (2021, 280) proves in her revelatory book *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms*, about Black musicians in nineteenth-century German-speaking Europe, that Black music-making was “at the centre of our musical and historical narratives,” although it has often been rendered invisible. The practice of reiterating classical music culture as a predominantly

¹³ Such a problem reflects of course a notorious conundrum in feminist or decolonizing research (see for example Lorde 1984; Nash 2019).

white male domain is seen in this dissertation as a partly unavoidable risk, which I attempt to minimize through a methodological approach.¹⁴

As discussed in the beginning of this text regarding the definition of classical music, and as will be discussed further in Chapters 2 and 3, classical music can be seen as characterized by a tension between representation and materiality. This comes up not only in the quest for transcendence in classical music performances (see discussion in Chapter 2.4 and 3.1), and how classical music has been reified within musicology in the past, but also in how classical music has, historically, been seen as detached from social life (see discussion in Chapter 3.1). However, regardless of how “transcendent” classical music may be rendered, it is still studied, learned, and performed through fleshy bodies and other materialities (e.g., Thurman 2021, 274, Bull 2019, 24). In this dissertation I expand on previous research by further considering the relationship between the representations of what classical music is expected or imagined to be in Finland, the historical background and dominative narratives related to these imaginings, and the materiality and fleshiness of musical performance. I do this by relying on Gatens’ ([1996] 2003, 2004, 2020; Churcher & Gatens 2019) work and insights, which intersect social constructivist and new materialist viewpoints, and which, until now, have not been used to analyse gender inequality in classical music culture.

1.6 Structure and delimitations of the study

This article-based dissertation consists of four published articles (Table 2: *Articles*) and the present introductory text. The second chapter of the introductory text focuses on the historical background of gender and gender inequality in classical music culture. By presenting the cultural heritage behind the social imaginaries analysed in this dissertation within the instrumental practices of classical music culture, Chapter 2 contributes to building a nuanced picture of gender inequality in modern-day classical music practices. The third chapter then outlines the theoretical underpinnings and framework of this dissertation. This chapter is divided into two parts, with additional subchapters. In the first part (3.1), I discuss the research tradition and viewpoints of feminist musicology that this dissertation builds upon. In the second part (3.2) and its subchapters I more closely present the theoretical framework and concepts that the analysis of this dissertation relies on. Chapter 4 focuses on the research methodology of this dissertation, by discussing my study’s research material, methodological choices, analytical approach, ethical considerations, and my researcher’s position. Chapter 5 consists of summaries of the four published articles that are the sub-studies of this dissertation (Table 2:

¹⁴ For a discussion on this, see the end of Chapter 3.1, Chapter 4.4, and Chapter 6.1.

Articles). Chapter 6 of this introductory text discusses the key findings of the dissertation, along with a discussion on how the four sub-studies complement and build upon each other to answer the research questions presented in Chapter 1.2. The discussion part of Chapter 6 is complemented by a short reflection on the dissertation. In the very final chapter, Postlude, I offer recommendations, based on the conclusions, on how to engage in repair that could help to prevent gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse in classical music culture in the future.

While this dissertation provides different viewpoints on gender inequality and associated whiteness, by focusing on 1) performance ideals of the piano, violin, and cello culture in Finland, 2) gendered and sexual misconduct, and emotional abuse, 3) abuses of power, and 4) networking and genre boundaries, it is also necessarily limited in terms of its approach, research material, and findings. Firstly, all of my interviewees identify as women (see Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of the interview material). Inviting only musicians that identify as women to be interviewed is due in part to how women, according to statistics, experience gendered and sexual misconduct more frequently than men (Seye 2018; Inklusiiv 2022), and especially due to how classical music culture is still often male dominated. However, journalists Karoliina Paananen and Sonja Saarikoski's (2024) revelatory investigating journalism on the misconduct and sexual violence experienced by young male musicians suggests that such violence might also often be rendered invisible due to norms of masculinity. Thus, I acknowledge that by focusing on only women musicians' experiences this research does not offer knowledge on how, for example, young men or individuals identifying with other genders experience sexual harassment.

While pianists, violinists, and cellists form a coherent group in that they constitute the common chamber music ensemble dating from the nineteenth-century Romantic period of classical music, this focus also entails limitations for this study. For example, women are commonly underrepresented in the professions of conductors, percussionists, or brass players, most probably resulting in different experiences of gender inequality and misconduct than the instrumentalists interviewed for this research (e.g., Bartleet 2008; Schmalenberger & Maddox 2019; Scharff 2022; Higham-Edwards 2023). Another limitation of this dissertation is that social class is not specifically discussed and analysed, even though it appears in association with discussions on appearance, ideals, and whiteness. While not a key aspect of this dissertation, social class is still discussed when relevant in relation to other social categories. Further, all of my interviewees are white women, and were not asked about their sexual orientation, which might have resulted in more intrinsic knowledge of how heteronormativity or sexual harassment was experienced by these participants.

It is important to recognize and be aware of these limitations, as gendered and sexual misconduct, as well as sexual violence, often intersect with inequalities based

on race, ethnicity, and citizenship, in addition to gender and sexuality (Hirsch & Khan 2020, 134, 244; see also Hamilton 2021; Kelekay 2023; Bull et al. 2023). As such, this study offers an inevitably limited account of gender inequality, whiteness, gendered and sexual misconduct, and emotional abuse in the classical music culture in Finland.

2 The cultural heritage of classical music

[W]hether we care to acknowledge it or not, we are historical beings whose language, stock of images and social practices constitute an unconscious dimension of our cultural heritage.

(Moirá Gatens [1996] 2003, xi)

When planning this dissertation, my initial aim was to focus particularly on the traditions and historical backgrounds of piano, violin, and cello performance. However, I soon realized that such a focus would have resulted in limiting the use of the rich and abundant interview material I had gathered. Nevertheless, as Gatens' ([1996] 2003, xi) statement cited above suggests, the historical background is also fundamental to understanding contemporary phenomena such as gender inequalities in today's classical music field. In classical music culture, most of the repertoire that is seen as quintessential was composed from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. This is also the period when the European colonial empire reached the apex of its expansion (Walker 2020, 5).

Music theorist and musicologist Philip Ewell (2020) discerns connections between European coloniality and aesthetic ideals in classical music. Ewell (2020, np.) writes:

The aesthetic qualities prized in symphonic music—melodic and harmonic development—were found to be missing in the music of more “primitive” peoples. The adjectives used to describe classical music and its others took their names from contemporary racial science. In this way, classical music and Whiteness were “co-productive,” meaning that they defined and reinforced one another through a shared opposition to undesirable racial, ethnic, and class groups. (Ewell 2020, np.)

Thus, classical music culture is in no way separate from its surrounding historical, cultural, and political contexts. This is an important consideration, because the historicity of classical music is sought after in countless ways, and attempts are even sometimes made to reproduce it, for example by aiming towards an “authentic or historical performance” of musical works (Goehr 1992, 279; Petzold 2023). Another way in which this historicity is emphasized in classical music culture is that, compared with other Western cultural artefacts, the instruments used in symphony

orchestras have, to a remarkable degree, been preserved with largely the same features ever since the mid-nineteenth century (Bijsterveld and Schulp 2004, 649). While it is outside the scope of this research to discuss the historical performance practices of playing certain works, this ideal of aiming for historically accurate practices stresses the historicity prevalent in classical music culture.

This strong emphasis on, and even respect for, performance ideals, traditions, and narratives in classical music history provides incentive to explore what kind of “heritage” classical music culture has been left with, and how modern-day inequalities in classical music culture are contextualized through its past. In this chapter I will discuss the historical stories and narratives that comprise the - perhaps unconscious - dimensions of the heritage of classical music culture. I will thus explore piano, violin, and cello performance ideals related to different social constructions of Europeanness, whiteness, class, and gender formation in the history of classical music. Further, I will examine how the heritage of classical music culture indeed includes various forms of misconduct and abuse.

2.1 Piano, femininity, and the uncomfortable history of music lessons

Musicologist Richard Leppert ([1993] 1995, 153) argues that in the nineteenth century the semiotics of music practices transformed to establish and legitimise several society-framing binaries. Leppert ([1993] 1995, 153) discerns that key among such binaries were “man/woman, public/private, good/evil, center/periphery, self/other.” Consequently, depending on the performer’s gender and the performance setting and repertoire, piano, violin, and cello performances came to differentiate between these binaries, reflecting different social modes and statuses. Of these instruments, piano playing in particular can be considered to have been an activity that potentially affirmed femininity and social status for Western white middle-class women (see Loesser [1954] 1990; Öhrström 1987; Leppert 1993; Green 1997, 54; Bull 2019, 38–40).

Music education scholar Lise C. Vaugeois (2018, 55) argues that skills related to classical music and associated civilized conduct and knowledge of classical music marked an involvement with whiteness, and thus involvement with “an exalted category of humanity.” This led not to economic capital, but instead to the acquisition of “cultural capital” (Vaugeois 2018; Bourdieu [1979] 1984, 1993; see also Kajikawa 2022). According to musicologist Žarko Cvejić (2015, 29): “for most women, piano skills were not an avenue towards a professional career in public pianistic virtuosity, but only to a more or less rewarding marriage.” Indeed, for

piano playing to symbolize middle-class femininity it needed to be played by women in ways that allowed the body to stay mainly stationary (Cvejić 2015, 29).¹⁵

Just as in other European countries, in Finland piano became a popular and socially accepted instrument among women in the nineteenth century (Koivisto 2019, 53; Järvi 2016, 55–56). The popularity of playing the piano in Europe was even referred to as “the piano plague.” According to cultural historian James Kennaway (2011, 27), in medical discussions of that time many psychiatrists and gynaecologists even argued that girls’ music making could “over-stimulate the nervous system directly, playing havoc with vulnerable female nerves and reproductive organs.” This discussion reflects how women’s musical activities and playing could be understood and interpreted through essentialist Western gendered constructions while simultaneously affirming and (re)constructing them.

The prevalence of women taking piano lessons also appears as a theme in Western European art and literature already from the seventeenth century onward (Burgan 1986; Leppert [1993] 1995, 161; Meyer-Frazier 2006). However, music historian Petra Meyer-Frazier (2006, 57) astutely points out that fiction typically reflected “an ideal womanhood, not any woman’s lived reality.” Analysing paintings from the nineteenth century that depict piano lessons, Leppert ([1993] 1995, 161) writes that piano lessons were furthermore portrayed as opportunities for young male teachers to seduce young pupils, who were presented as virgins but nonetheless sexually curious. That sexual harassment took place in music lessons is also reflected in other historical sources (Välimäki 2023). Musician and singer Anna Blomqvist (1840–1925) explains in her memoirs and letters that mothers were often expected to protect their young daughters from unwanted sexual advances by chaperoning their singing lessons in the Paris Conservatory. Young female students were prone to experience what is nowadays regarded as sexual harassment by their fellow male students in group lessons (Välimäki 2023, 43). Leppert’s ([1993] 1995) analysis and historical evidence, as reported by musicologist Susanna Välimäki (2023), prompt the question of how common it might have been for music lessons to be a space in which some kind of boundary blurring, abuse of power, or sexual harassment happened between the teacher and the (female) students? This is a question that still awaits closer scrutiny, but such a theme seems frequent in paintings, and historical evidence suggests that music lessons indeed often had “sexual associations” (Bull 2019, 37; Gould 2009).

Another common theme in the paintings analysed by Leppert is the depiction of music lessons offered by mothers to their daughters, which according to Leppert ([1993] 1995, 164) “strove principally to inscribe domestic sensibilities.” The commonness of this image also suggests that piano playing could be an activity

¹⁵ See subchapter 2.4 for a discussion on gendered restrictions placed on piano playing.

especially practiced and taught by women, and was thereby a skill passed on from older to younger women. Many educated women even earned their living by giving piano lessons, as being a piano teacher was, like being a teacher or office clerk, considered a respectable profession for educated middle-class unmarried women (Koivisto-Kaasik 2022, 3).¹⁶ Music historian Nuppu Koivisto-Kaasik (2022, 2–3) points out that teaching was often only one side of pianist women’s careers, with the other sides involving work as composers, performing artists, and also concert organizers and school or language teachers. For example, although in the early days after its foundation in 1882 the main piano teachers at the Helsinki Music Institute were men, women nevertheless created their own private educational institutions outside the conservatoire system (Koivisto-Kaasik 2022, 3).

While typically overlooked in history (as discussed in Article I), there were also a vast number of esteemed piano pedagogues and professional pianist women in nineteenth and twentieth century Finland. Despite the challenges that women musicians faced, a long list of pianist women can be assembled, for example Fanny Mannsén (1834–1855), Mina Boije (1818–1873), Gustava Boije (1811–1899), Vivika Ekman (1826–1911), Laura Netzel (1839–1927), Ina Lange (née Forstén, 1846–1930), Alie (Alexandra) Lindberg (1849–1933), Elna Engström (1856–1924), Ellen Kolström (née Brander, 1860–1940), Selma Kajanus (1860–1935), Ingeborg Hymander (1886–1938) Alexandra Armfelt Železnova (1866–1933), Siri Brander (née Lindebäck, 1866–1934), Mary Gallen-Kallela (née Slöör, 1898–1947) Gertrud Ollus (1890–1951), Anne-Marie Mechelin (1892–1929), Elisabeth von Tiesenhausen-Forstén (1896–1963), Margaret Kilpinen (née, Alfthan, 1896–1965), and Kerttu Bernhard (1902–1944) (Konttori-Gustafsson 2019; Ruuska 2021; Koivisto-Kaasik 2022; Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023; Rahkonen 2023; Järvi 2024).

This contextualization of gender, and specifically femininity, within piano performance history reveals how the piano has in several ways provided a means through which binary gender and middle-class normative femininity was constructed in classical music culture. The historical evidence of the commonness of sexual harassment within piano lessons similarly provide a context for modern-day inequalities, in that such abuses of power within music lessons can be regarded as intrinsically and more broadly related to the heritage of classical music culture and its historical practices.

¹⁶ Koivisto-Kaasik’s article is published in German. I have used as a source the original English manuscript. A copy of the manuscript is in the author’s possession. The page numbers indicated are likewise referring to the pagination of the English manuscript.

2.2 The violin, and memories of grooming

In contrast with the piano, the violin was for centuries regarded as unwomanly and an improper instrument for women (Loesser [1954] 1990, 65; Leppert [1993] 1995, 158; Nagel-Frazel, Meyer-Frazier & Banducci 2021; Powell 2022). Leppert ([1993] 1995, 34) summarizes that the violin was popular in the 17th century, especially among the lower social classes, where it was used mainly to accompany dance. Perhaps because of its association with lower social classes, it was not seen as a proper instrument for middle-class white girls and women, indicating that the socio-cultural constructions associated with playing this instrument were indeed intersectional, involving both gender and class. Furthermore, musicologist Maiko Kawabata (2004, 105) states that “[t]he violin was understood as a feminine agent, responding to (if victimized by) masculine control.” Accordingly, publicly playing an instrument that symbolized a female body was considered inappropriate for women (Kawabata 2004, 105).

Kawabata (2004, 104) reflects that it is not entirely known how the violin changed from being associated for centuries with masculine connotations into an instrument that was viewed as feminine. A study on the American violinist Camilla Urso (1840–1902) suggests that successful women violinists in the nineteenth century might have also, through their success, played a part in rebranding the gendered (mis)conceptions associated with the instrument (Nagel-Frazel, Meyer-Frazier & Banducci 2021). Nevertheless, the violin’s soprano ambitus and curvy form started to denote femininity, while the bow, with which it was played, started to represent phallic power (Kawabata 2004, 104). In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the violin became such a common instrument for women to play at home that men were encouraged to play the cello, to bring “male domination of the female through its ‘imposing power’” (Kennaway [2014] 2016, 181).

Yet, the social status of the violin also depended on the local culture. While the violin was an accepted instrument for women to play in Germany, this was not the case in England (Kennaway [2014] 2016, 185). In Finland, the musical education of women followed general European trends (Koivisto 2019, 53). Despite gendered barriers, one significant violinist from the nineteenth-century Duchy of Finland was composer and violinist Agnes Tschetschulin (1859–1942), whose virtuosic violin works were among the most played compositions by a Finnish composer in nineteenth century Europe (Välimäki 2021). The associated upsurge in the number of violinist women and the change in societal norms associated with the violin is depicted in a Finnish periodical¹⁷ from 1937:

¹⁷ Toveritar: Suomen Sosiaalidemokraattisen Työläisnaisliiton Äänenkannattaja.

A couple of centuries ago it was considered as a sensation and an emancipatory expression that a woman's hand would grab the curve of the violin. She could sing and play the keyboard instrument but performing with violin was strictly a manly thing.¹⁸ (Ahokas 1937)

Moreover, it was noted that it was “peculiar” how many women violinists, such as Kerttu Wanne (1905–1963), Anja Ignatius (1911–1995), Irma Nissinen (1910–2003), and Märtha Fogelholm-Peppink (1904–1911) were pursuing international careers at the beginning of the twentieth century (Ahokas 1937). That women were active in music can be seen in that the majority of the students in the Music School of Helsinki were women (Koivisto 2019, 51–52). Likewise, in Europe's music conservatories as much as 70 to 80 percent of students were women during the nineteenth century (Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023, 16; see also Rieger 1988, 59–74).

Many Finnish musician women received grants to pursue studies with internationally renowned music teachers abroad (Koivisto 2019, 51). One of them was violinist Anna Forssell (1882–1970). Her studies and relationship with violinist Felix Berber (1871–1930) in München have been scrutinized in recent years by artistic scholar Elina Saloranta. In her artistic research, Saloranta (2023) has analysed the letters written in the years 1905–1907 between Anna Forssell and her sister, singer Elli Forssell-Rozentälle (1871–1943), as well as between Forssell and her father Theodor Forssell (1837–1909). Saloranta (2023, 12) characterizes the letters as #metoo-letters, in which it becomes apparent that Forssell was in love with her teacher Berber, who encouraged this through blurring of boundaries, favouritism, and spending time with Forssell secretly while his own family was travelling. The letters also reveal that Forssell-Rozentälle had a similar relationship with her singing teacher Alessandro Guagni-Benvenuti (1844–1927) in Milan, Italy. Forssell-Rozentälle describes herself as having been “weak” while being “full of trust”¹⁹ towards her teacher Guagni-Benvenuti, whom she described as having a “strong personality” (Saloranta 2023, 7–9).²⁰

What is described in Forssell-Rozentälle's letter is that power was very unequally distributed between her and the teacher, impacting their relationship and the choices made by her. Further, these descriptions, as well as the description of Forssell's and Berber's relationship, could be understood in modern-day terms as

¹⁸ “[P]ari vuosisataa takaperin pidettiin suoranaisena sensationa ja ennenkuulumattoman emansipatsionin ilmaisuna sitä, että naisen käsi tarttui viulun käyrään. Laulaa hän kyllä sai ja soittaa klaveria, mutta viulun soittaminen oli taiteellisessa esitysmielessä vain miesten asia.” (Ahokas 1937) Translated from Finnish by the author.

¹⁹ “[M]inä heikompi, täynnä luottamusta.” Saloranta (2023, 8) Translated from Finnish by the author.

²⁰ “Hän oli voimakas luonne.” (Saloranta (2023, 7–8) Translated from Finnish by the author.

grooming – the subtle blurring of boundaries and actions by the teacher aimed at gaining the trust of the student, in other words, the preparation of the student for possible sexual harassment and abuse (e.g., Page, Chapman & Bull 2019; Chapter 5.2; Table 4: *Gendered and sexual misconduct*). In the letters, Forssell is warned by her siblings and father, who hopes that her teacher would not be similar to “all teachers” of her sister. Forssell-Rozentälle warns her sister from pursuing a relationship with Berber: “My inexperienced little sister, be careful that there does not develop between you and Berber any other kind of relationship than what is natural between a good teacher and a talented student! That borderline is so dangerous, and so easily one can err” (see Saloranta 2023, 7).²¹ Anna Forssell later became the first violinist woman chosen for a permanent position in a Finnish symphony orchestra in 1908 (Koivisto 2019, 55). Just as was the case with many other musician women, Forssell’s career ended with her marriage (Koivisto 2019, 55).

Sexual harassment and grooming were not yet acknowledged as social phenomena in the beginning of the twentieth century, and consequently there were no specific terms with which to describe the process that is depicted in the letters discussed here. Nevertheless, the astonishing similarities between Forssell-Rozentälle’s and Forssell’s experiences, the above-mentioned historical evidence regarding piano lessons, and the grooming cases discussed in Article II of this dissertation, all suggest a historical continuum of gendered and sexual misconduct in classical music. This further brings up the question: how common was grooming in the history of classical music education? This question still awaits to be answered. However, this review of the history of classical music education demonstrates that while not yet being recognized as a social phenomenon, nor having a name, grooming might have been common within the history of classical music education. In many ways the same risk factors appear in the historical evidence of grooming as in the modern day cases presented in Article II of this research. Establishing that grooming has deep historical roots is important to keep in mind, especially when compiling ways to prevent gendered and sexual misconduct. The historicity of grooming demonstrates that it should be seen in a larger context, in which it has oftentimes been a silently recognized part of classical music culture.

²¹ ”Mutta – pikkunen, kokematon sisareni – varo vaan, ettei sinun ja Berberin välille muuta suhdetta synny, kuin sellainen, joka on luonnollinen etevän opettajan, ja lahjakkaan oppilaan välillä! Se raja on niin vaarallinen, ja sitä niin helposti erehtyy.” (see Saloranta 2023, 7) Translated from Finnish by the author.

2.3 Cello, masculinity, and abuse in ladies' orchestras

While women were only very rarely allowed to play in mixed gender symphony orchestras in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (Koivisto 2019, 54–55), ladies' orchestras were “an extremely popular phenomenon all around Europe before the Great War, we are talking about hundreds of orchestras and thousands of professional musicians” (Koivisto-Kaasik 2024). According to Koivisto-Kaasik (2019, np), ladies' salon orchestras formed “a significant part of middle-class, urban entertainment” in larger Finnish cities – Turku, Viipuri, Tampere, and Helsinki – during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The term “ladies' orchestra” might denote various women-dominated bands, but in this context it denotes a salon or restaurant orchestra: *Damenkapelle* or *Damenorchester* [Ladies' band/orchestra] (Koivisto-Kaasik 2024, 52). In Finland, the musician women that had played abroad in restaurants and other entertainment venues had a lower social status than the women who had been educated in Finnish conservatories (Koivisto 2019, 264). Despite the popularity of ladies' salon orchestras, they have “remained a neglected part of the Western musical past” (Koivisto-Kaasik 2024, 52).

Ladies' salon orchestras offered a space and an arrangement in which musician women could work professionally, but their status was precarious. The precarity is most extremely depicted in the case study of *Erste Wiener Damen-Capelle Maiglöckchen* by Koivisto-Kaasik (2024). The ensemble toured in Central Europe for some years until the bandmaster Julius Onczay's physically and psychologically “violent and abusive behavior were revealed in the press, leading to a scandalous court case” (Koivisto-Kaasik 2024, 51). Koivisto-Kaasik's research discusses the gendered power hierarchies of the *belle époque* entertainment industry, and musician women's related strategies of resistance. Koivisto-Kaasik (2024, 52) describes her work as a “historical contextualisation” for research on sexual misconduct in the modern-day music industry, as explored in Articles II and III of this dissertation, as well as in the research done by Bull (2019) and Scharff (2017).

Research shows that the musicians of these orchestras came from various social background and places – which might even have been a “conscious tactic not to hire too many mutually acquainted musicians.” This plan backfired, however, as the women ended up uniting and rebelling “against patriarchal violence.” This was no easy task, considering the amount of power Onczay possessed over the orchestra, which often was a highly unequal and hierarchical community in which the director or conductors had the dominant position (Koivisto-Kaasik 2024, 54; see also Kaufman 1997, 92). There was also no labour union that the orchestral musician women could have turned to at that time. Despite the shockingly violent behaviour of Onczay, the case reflects the more common phenomenon of ladies' orchestras being used for trafficking young women by “coaxing young women into sex work with promises of a musical career” (Koivisto-Kaasik 2024, 55). While Koivisto-

Kaasik (2024) suggests that there is not enough quantitative data to show how widespread human trafficking was in late nineteenth-century ladies' orchestras, music researcher Risto Pekka Pennanen (2022) compellingly suggests that it might have been common for musicians of the Kingdom of Bohemia to have been victims of human trafficking at the turn of the twentieth century.²² Just like in the historical cases of sexual harassment and grooming discussed earlier in this chapter, the extent of this form of gendered and sexual violence in the history of classical music practices remains unknown.

From the point of view of gender, the history of the cello differs vastly from that of the piano or violin. In a description of a ladies' orchestra in a Finnish newspaper from the 1890's, it is mentioned that three men commonly play in this orchestra: namely, they play the first violin, the piano, and the cello. This description shows further prejudice against the musician women, suggesting that the violinist women "help out" the lead violinist man while the cellist man player brings "balance" to the otherwise feminine setting (Koivisto 2019, 130). Such a description reflects broader societal trends of the time. As the number of women playing the violin increased in homes, men were encouraged to play the cello in order to regulate musician women's emotions and passions (Kennaway [2014] 2016, 178-179).

Kennaway ([2014] 2016, 177), who has studied the history of the cello, states that "[w]hereas the small, curvaceous, high-pitched violin was seen as an inherently female instrument, and the piano acquired a female gender through social practice as an instrument suitable for women to play in the home, the cello was seen as masculine, at least in the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth century." According to literary historical evidence, the cello has often been depicted as an instrument with a majestic and sublime sound – qualities that are believed to elevate the mind from passions to higher states (Kennaway [2014] 2016, 198). However, for women to play the cello between the legs was considered as unacceptable as riding a bike or a horse for the most part of the nineteenth century (Kennaway 2014, 188). Kennaway (2014, 192) argues that the way cello playing was gendered changed in the latter part of the nineteenth century: the cello's "'masculine' character was becoming at least diluted if not actually feminized." From being a completely inappropriate instrument for women, the cello started to even affirm femininity. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it had changed from being a predominantly men's instrument with which one could bring rationality to a chamber music ensemble, into an instrument that was also, at least to some extent, suitable for women (Kennaway 2016, 193, 203).

²² Music researcher Risto Pekka Pennanen (2022) writes in a blog text that historical evidence suggests that human trafficking might have been common in the Kingdom of Bohemia, which was also referred to as the "European conservatory."

In Finland, even though string instrumentalist women were educated professionally in the nineteenth century, only a few of them continued to play professionally in orchestras (Koivisto 2019, 54). Of these, only one cellist, Miriam Sahlman (1880–1962), proceeded to having a professional career, playing in the ladies’ salon orchestra “Fennia,” conducted by Josef Silberman (Koivisto 2019, 54). In Article I, I discuss how the vast majority of “legendary” cellists are men. That cellist women have been overlooked in history is also reflected in that, at the time I am writing this, there are no mentions of Finnish women cellists of the twentieth century, such as Eija Ignatius (1912–2009), Kirsti Gallén-Kallela (1896–1980), or Varpu Siirala (née Siukonen, 1925–2017) in the National Biography of Finland’s online collection of biographies of famous Finnish persons. While there were numerous women cellists in the twentieth-century Finland and Europe, they were often met with sexism and misogyny in concert reviews (Ramstedt, A. 2021).

Even in the 1930’s cellist women were banned from the BBC Symphony Orchestra, according to composer Ethel Smyth’s report (Kennaway 2014, 188). The way cellist women were met with astonishment is also depicted in cellist woman Kirsti Gallén-Kallela’s memoirs *Suuren isän varjossa* [In the shadow of a great father], in which she describes that for her father, painter Akseli Gallén-Kallela (1895–1931), it was difficult to accept her involvement as a player in ladies’ salon orchestras, because he had wished for her to remain “a nice family girl” (see Koivisto 2019, 57).²³ In other words, playing the cello was seen as a practice that did not affirm middle-class notions of femininity, but instead perhaps opposed them.

The masculinity norms and gendered expectations associated with cello playing reveals how the instrument, and thus the materiality of other-than-human components, plays a role in shaping and orientating socio-cultural inequalities. On the other hand, the review of ladies’ orchestras demonstrates how social injustice, and specifically severe cases of violence, are also a part of classical music history, even if such incidents are uncovered only a century later. This reveals that while the normative story of classical music history often orbits around narratives about masters, composers, and musician geniuses, there a vast number of different kinds of stories about classical music culture that, while perhaps uncomfortable, deserves to be viewed as a part of the heritage that we reflect upon.

2.4 Gendered bodies in the classical music ideals

Although women’s agency and work have long been largely disregarded in studies of Finnish music history, musicologist Susanna Välimäki and music historian

²³ “Isä haluaa minusta vain kilttiä perhetyttöä.” (Koivisto 2019, 57) Translated from Finnish by the author.

Nuppu Koivisto-Kaasik (2023, 16) have shown in their significant research that women had quintessential roles in the formation of Finnish musical life and culture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their research (Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023) shows that there were at least 127 composer women that were active in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries that have since been practically ignored in accounts of Finnish music history, despite their achievements and contributions to the music culture in Finland. The institutional, systemic, ideological, social, and economical hindrances that women had to overcome in order to perform and compose inherently demonstrates how women's music making was a societally subversive act (Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023, 165).

Because women were often excluded from male-dominated mainstream cultural venues and institutions, and from positions of authority, they tended to create their own spaces where they could pursue their art more freely. For example, girls' schools could be viewed as alternative art and science academies, which were often important institutions in terms of networking and creating connections among women (Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023; see also Andrade Schnettler 2024). Indeed, many women who ended up pursuing music professionally had been supported by other women, women-dominated families, or friendship networks. Many composer-musician women in Finland also had life-long women-dominated networks, consisting of woman-to-woman friendships, women work colleagues, sisters, foster daughters, female family members, or women life partners. Many of the historical pianists, violinists, and cellists (Selma Kajanus, Agnes Tschetschulin, Kerttu Wanne) relevant to the historical contextualization of my study also had same sex romantic relationships (Välimäki 2023; Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023).

To understand the historical socio-cultural constructions that have shaped women's professional activities in the field of (classical) music, it is also necessary to understand how the idea of an ideal-typical artist (Miller 2016) was associated with intersecting constructions of gender, sexuality, class, and race. For example, the violin, especially as played by the nineteenth-century virtuosos such as Niccolò Paganini, Karol Lipinski, and Alexander Boucher, was associated with heroism and a notion of genius that externalizes "some inner quality in the possession of unusual individuals" (Kawabata 2004, 89). Yet, as Kawabata (2004, 89) states: "the understanding of virtuosi as inscrutable geniuses was a phenomenon that emerged only after Paganini's death." There is a misconception in believing that the idea of the heroic performance originated with Paganini, though the phenomena was more widespread within violin performances, to which performers, critics, and audience contributed (Kawabata 2004, 106–107). Drawing upon historian Peter Gay's (1995) research on the nineteenth century, Kawabata (2004, 106) proclaims that the notion of "romantic virtuosi" performers were "pseudo-heroes" in the "unheroic" everyday life and emptiness of the European bourgeoisie. The male virtuosi

performances were filled with symbols of military power, being thus part of a greater cultural phenomenon (Kawabata 2004, 106).

In contrast to such male virtuosi, professionally active musician women needed to regulate their femininity in spheres where it was not socially acceptable – namely on the public concert stage (e.g., Ellis 1997; Kawabata 2004; Lim 2012; Prince 2017; Edwards 2022). Kawabata (2004, 106) observes that “in the first half of nineteenth century, female violinists were seen as succeeding when playing in a ‘masculine’ manner.” This is also depicted in a Finnish newspaper article from 1936, where it is pointed out that Polish American violinist Lea Luboschütz’s “musical understanding is healthy and free from excessive sentimentality. When it further combines with a strong, almost manly artistic temperament, the result is exceptionally interesting and impressive” (Klami 1936).²⁴ The ways in which socio-cultural expectations for women collided with women’s work as performing artists are also depicted by musicologist April L. Prince (2017, 110), who argues in her research about Clara Schumann that “gender became one of the most important aspects of her [Clara Schumann’s] performance identity, primarily because it demanded constant mediation.” According to Prince (2017), Schumann mediated between her public performance identity as a virtuoso woman and society’s expectations of women by stabilizing femininity in her performing persona through paintings made of her.

Musicologist Katherine Ellis (1997; see also Lim 2012) argues that the piano repertoire was gendered even on an institutional level, such as in the piano competition of the conservatory in 18th-century Paris. Ellis’ (1997, 380–381; see also Lim 2012; Edwards 2022) research shows that music composed before Beethoven was considered not only as “subprofessional” but also, and because of that, as suitable for women to perform. Pianist women encountered not only misogyny, but also opinions that were influenced by the “ideological conflicts over the virtuoso as composer and the virtuoso as interpreter, the status and gendering of repertoires, and the appropriate attitude for a performer playing a canonic work” (Ellis 1997, 384). The “ideological” conflict that Ellis mentions can be associated especially with Beethoven, whose music, according to music sociologist Tia DeNora (2002, 31–32), came to further elaborate masculine modes into the notion of “Genius” – “the uncompromising, visceral, leonine figure (though also more high status a figure than a mere virtuoso).”

Echoing the discussions in Article I of this dissertation, whether virtuosic and bodily expansive or intellectual and bodily stagnant, the performance was especially

²⁴ Musiikillinen käsityskyky on terve ja kaikesta liiallisesta tunteilusta täysin vapaa. Kun se vielä yhdistyy voimakkaaseen, melkeinpä miehiseen taiteilijatemperamenttiin, niin tulos on harvinaisen mielenkiintoinen ja vaikuttava.” (Klami 1936) Translated from Finnish by the author.

expected to reaffirm masculinity. DeNora (2002, 31–32; DeNora 2005, 28–29) states that due to the development of the technology of the piano in the early nineteenth-century, gendered structures started to be increasingly associated with the instrument. As new compositions, primarily composed by Beethoven, became physically more demanding, the piano repertoire started to be segregated by gender (DeNora 2002, 29–32). To play Beethoven's piano music without losing "feminine decorum" was a challenge for pianist women (DeNora 2002, 30), in whose case immobility symbolized even sexual restraint, which was a desired quality (Mustakallio 2003, 60). In other words, bodily movements and the body of the performer determined what kind of values and meanings could be associated with the performance.

Bull (2019, 104) draws parallels between classical music and film and cultural studies scholar Richard Dyer's (1997) writings on the Christian ideas of the sublime and sacred: the "problem of the body in performing classical music" is that "it needs to present in order to make sound, but it needs to be transcended in order to allow the spirit of musical work to shine through." This theorization resembles the Western dualist thought that springs from the Christian dualism, in which the spirit that is beyond the body is still somehow located in the body. Dyer (1997, 14) writes that this dualism is:

a compelling cosmology, as well as a vivid imaginary and set of narrative tropes, that survive characteristics of Western culture. All concepts of race, emerging out of eighteenth-century materialism, are concepts of bodies, but all along they had to be reconciled with notions of embodiment and incarnation. The latter become what distinguished white people, giving them a special relation to race. (Dyer 1997, 14.)

Music educator Lucy Green (1997, 54) states that this dualism is reflected in how, for male instrumentalists throughout classical music history, gender has been treated as if it were something transparent that is seen through. Perhaps due to this, for men playing the piano could function as an affirmation of their genius and masculinity (DeNora 2002). The social categories associated with appearance ideals that specifically white Finnish women face show how the historicity of social imaginaries in classical music can be associated with the broad historical, political, and cultural contexts of coloniality and the European middle class during the nineteenth century. Classical music offers a space for white middle-class women, "for whom the terrain of 'spirituality' was one that allowed them to express emotions but, in a manner defined as qualitatively different from emotions experienced by lower-classed and/or racialized people" (Vaugeois 2018, 55–56). Vaugeois (2018, 56) discerns that to study music, and other forms of arts, meant to engage with what was considered to be profound "problems of the human soul."

That this so-called profoundness in classical music was associated with whiteness and constructions of race is also exemplified in Thurman's (2021) research on Black musicians in German-speaking Europe in the nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries. Thurman (2021, 153, 157) argues that race became a filter through which performances were interpreted, revealing the cultural limitations of performing German music. The fact that white listeners in interwar Central Europe needed to struggle to come to terms with performances of classical music by Black musicians stands to show how musical performances can be understood as an active process through which racial categories were worked through and renegotiated (Thurman 2021, 136). Thurman's example illustrates how whiteness as a norm shapes classical music culture's listening practices, and the narratives through which classical music history is produced.

As presented in this subchapter, the historical heritage of classical music culture covers a wider range of plural histories, despite the fact that some dominant images appear later to have been all-encompassing, such as narratives or musical works that continue to be seen as representing quintessential classical music history (e.g., Citron [1993] 2000; Walker 2020; Ewell 2020, 2023; Thurman 2021; Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023; Andrade Schnettler 2024; the canon of performers is discussed in Article I). The ways in which different narratives or takes on history give agency and value to differently positioned subjectivities demonstrates how history is continuously reproduced in the present, but, more specifically, also how intersectional socio-cultural constructions are reproduced in social imaginaries of classical music history (Gatens [1996] 2003; Sellberg 2019).

Rather than only focusing on what constitutes the cultural heritage of classical music, it is important to understand *how* social value becomes imprinted differently on differently positioned subjectivities in history. It is this *how* of cultural heritage that I see as significant to understanding modern-day inequalities. The brief foray into the history of piano, violin, and cello culture within the context of European, and specifically Finnish, history demonstrates how classical music performances have for centuries been interpreted through constructions of gender, race, and class, and, on the other hand, how classical music performance has participated in (re)producing the gender binary, gendered norms, and whiteness.

3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Feminist music research

Modern academic research on viewing music through feminist lenses began to take off in the Anglo-American and European universities at the turn of the 1980's, focusing first on uncovering historical women musicians and composers in the tradition of classical music (Wood 1980; Neuls-Bates 1982; Reich 1985; Bowers and Tick 1986; Briscoe 1987; Öhrström 1987; Pendle 1992). Simultaneously, another body of research engaged in discussing prevailing gendered assumptions and socio-cultural constructions and the gendered formation of the musical canon in the context of classical music (Goehr 1992; Citron [1993] 2000; Moisala & Valkeila 1994; DeNora 1995). Further, Susan McClary's *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* ([1991] 2002; see also Clément [1979] 1999) engaged in issues of representation, discourses, and constructions of gender and sexuality in opera, and other forms of classical and avantgarde music at various historical moments.

These developments were especially important and crucial, because previously discussion in the field of musicology had centred around the notion of male genius (Macarthur et al. 2017, 74–75). More precisely, feminist musicology approached the historical narrative and repertoire of classical music by contextualizing and deconstructing the formation of the canon with wider sociocultural frameworks in mind (see also Killam 1994). Such an emphasis relates both to the genre of specifically classical music as much as to the field of musicology, because classical music had mainly been viewed - until the emergence of feminist, critical, and “new” musicology in the 1980's and 1990's - as an “abstract, autonomous, and self-contained system” (Macarthur et al. 2017, 74; see also, e.g., McClary [1991] 2002, 3; Taruskin 1995).

The understanding classical music as autonomous and self-contained can be connected to the belief that classical music has a “quasi-spiritual status in Western culture,” and the idea that classical music only represents itself (i.e. the notion of absolute music) (Bull 2014, 16; see also e.g., Goehr 1992; Dahlhaus [1978] 1989; Scruton 2007; Kramer 2007). In the nineteenth century, especially instrumental music without a particularized social context was seen, by art and music theorists, as a fine art par excellence, as it was understood as an art form that enabled an experience and expression of universality and even “truth that transcends particular

natural contingencies and transitory human feelings (Goehr 1992, 153). As was discussed in Chapter 2 concerning the historical contextualization of classical music's gendered practices, the development of the piano along with more physically demanding piano works composed by Beethoven started to segregate repertoire by gender (DeNora 2002, 29–32; DeNora 2005, 28). For example, qualities such as “universality” or “truth” were associated with Beethoven's piano works mainly when performed by white male pianist bodies (see also DeNora 2005, 29). These supposed qualities in classical music works were also constructed in contradistinction to musical works composed by women (Citron [1993] 2000), and Black, indigenous, or composers of colour. Thus, the nineteenth-century quest for a “Spirit,” “universality,” or “eternal truth” through classical music cannot be discussed separately from its historical context, which has to do with gendered and racialized inequalities. Further, such ideas were enhanced through academic music research that focused mainly on canonized classical music composers, and the supposed sublimity of their art (e.g., Kramer 2007, 15–16).

Musicologist William Weber ([1999] 2001, 337) argues that, precisely because classical music was seen as detached from social realities, musicologists have been slow to criticise the canon and the ideas attached to it. Citron ([1993] 2000, 22) similarly states: “Universality, neutrality, and immutability: difficult myths to counter or even recognize as such, especially since the interests represented in a canon are generally content to let those myths stand.” The marginalization and dismissal of women was, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, not just a part of a praxis related to musicological research, but more widely to the history of praxis in the field of musicology itself, as “‘woman's work’ would threaten musicology's legitimacy and equality with ‘the great studies’ of the day” (Cusick ([1999] 2001, 473). Moreover, as Cusick asked in 1999: “Is the perceived marginality of gender to musicology part of the problem that feminist musicology must even eventually address?” (Cusick [1999] 2001, 473–474). Thereby feminist scholarship in musicology was responding to gender inequalities not only in classical music culture, but also in the field of musicology itself, and its perceptions of classical music.

These discussions and developments in musicology in the 1990's show how the issues of gender inequality in classical music culture are interconnected with genre boundaries and everything surrounding that culture, including research. Gender can be seen as an analytical tool through which classical music culture is scrutinized in early feminist musicology. Macarthur et al. (2017, 74) even draw correlations between the volume of research scrutinizing specifically women composers and their music and the amount of musical work by women performed in concert halls. In other words, Macarthur et al. (2017) portray how the viewpoints and perspectives adopted in academic music research may have practical implications on the concert stage (see also Kvist 2023b). Feminist musicology may thus also be associated with

activism and the support for and celebration of women's music (see also Killam 1994).

In the early 1990's, feminist scholarship in musicology reached its first zenith with the emergence of research from post-structuralist points of view, as well as the emergence of queer feminist musicology, such as the edited volume *Queering the Pitch. The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (Brett et al. [1994] 2006). Notwithstanding the exception of Suzanne G. Cusick's [1994] 2006; 1999) auto-ethnographical work, the 1980's and 1990's feminist scholarship in musicology was mainly directed at classical music repertoire and the canon, while less attention was given to modern-day musicians and their experiences of inequality in their musical praxis. Gatens ([1996] 2003, 76) describes the feminist scholar's interest in history, narratives, and stories as unsurprising, as indeed, the focus on women's history has been a project of "charting a genealogy of the category 'woman' or 'women,'" which as a project has been, as also discussed above, vastly different from that of research which reiterated gendered ideas of the artistic canon.

While some studies discussed the impact of evidently gendered power discrepancies in music education already in the 1980's (i.e., Pucciani 1983; Gould 1992; Leppert [1993] 1995; Lamb 1996; Green 1997), sexual harassment or emotional abuse did not receive attention in the academic literature and research on any music genre at that time. Despite this, as music education researcher Elizabeth Gould (2009, 66) argued, sexual harassment, "typically perpetrated by male teachers against female students and colleagues," was "music education's unspoken 'dirty little secret'" and characterized many music lessons – as demonstrated in Chapter 2. Meanwhile, researcher in sport studies Sandra Kirby astutely observed already in 1995 (58) that "[v]ulnerability to harassment stems from women's subordinate position in sport, compounded by dependence, often on the coach, and isolation (by disability, rural location, sexual orientation, race, economic situation, and age)." In the 1980's and 1990's, research on sexual harassment and emotional abuse in sports and academia began to appear (e.g., Lenskyi 1990; 1992; Tomlinson & Yorganci 1997; Brackenridge 1997). While sexual harassment in academia has been scrutinized since the 1980's, sexual harassment in music higher education has not received comparable interest (e.g., Pucciani 1983; Hoffman 1986; Paludi & Barickman 1991; Fitzgerald & Ormerod 1993; van Roosmalen & McDaniel 1999).

Similarly to the lack of research on gendered and sexual misconduct, racism and racial inequalities in classical music culture were also long overlooked, even in feminist musicology, while classical music's association with colonialism was studied indirectly in research on how Western classical music culture has repudiated various forms of non-Western music (e.g., Solie 1993; Dellamora & Fischlin 1997) and studies discussing exoticism and orientalism in Western classical music (e.g., Locke 1991, 1993; McClary 1992; Taruskin 1992). Musicologist

Georgina Born and music sociologist David Hesmondhlagh (2000, 2) claim in their book *Western music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation of Music* that “in the study of Western art music, still the privileged domain of academic music scholarship, the impact of postcolonial analysis has yet been minimal.” Notwithstanding some exceptions (Cuney-Hare 1936; Southern 1975), the feminist work done in musicology, especially related to classical music, is nearly exclusively conducted from a white feminist point of view (see e.g., Ege 2022). This is a significant caveat considering, as discussed in the previous chapter, how classical music partook in the cultural construction of the European colonial empire and related constructions of racial and gender difference (Walker 2020, 14; Vaugeois 2018; Ewell 2020; Kajikawa 2019, 2022).

Since the turn of the millennium, and especially the 2010’s, research within feminist musicology, music education research, and music sociology has turned to previously neglected topics ranging from racism, whiteness, and racial inequalities within classical music education, culture, history, and research (e.g., Bradley 2006; Yoshihara 2007; Hung 2009; Yang 2014; Leppänen 2015; Hess 2015, 2017; Imoto 2017; Vaugeois 2018; Ewell 2020; Walker 2020; Kajikawa 2019, 2022; Thurman 2021; Darren 2021; Bull 2019; Tan 2021; Cuyler 2022; Hayes 2022; Bull, Scharff & Nooshin 2023; Knapp & Mayo 2023) to children’s music (e.g., Leppänen 2010), disability studies (e.g., Straus 2006; Rojola & Väättäinen 2004; Lubet 2010; Howe et al. 2014), ecomusicology (Torvinen 2020; Torvinen & Välimäki 2023), and trans* and queer studies (e.g., Tiainen 2007; Wahlfors 2020; Leppänen & Tiainen 2018; Chorell 2021; McClary 2021; Tiainen forthcoming 2025; Fong forthcoming 2024). Building upon the interest that was placed within feminist music research of the 1990’s on theories of social constructionism and performativity, music research after the turn of the millennium also began to apply Deleuzian and Guattarian²⁵ thinking about the processual emergence of reality (Bogue 2003; Buchanan & Swiboda 2004; Macarthur 2010, 5–6; Campbell 2013; Leppänen et al. 2015; Moisala et al. 2017), as well as theories of new materialism (Leppänen & Tiainen 2018; Belgrano, Tarvainen & Tiainen forthcoming 2025) and post-humanism (Brophy 2010; Tiainen 2018) to the study of diverse topics. These strains of musicology decentralize ideas of stagnant socio-cultural differences and representations, and bring forth views of music, sound, and sonic performances that are concerned with social differences as relationships, emergences, and

²⁵ Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) and Félix Guattari (1930–1992) were philosophers within the continental/psychoanalytical/post-structuralist strains of philosophy. Leppänen et al. (2015, 15) describe Deleuze’s philosophy, and his collaboration with Guattari, to centralize non-teleological aspects and processualism, as relational and multifaceted, becoming concerned with the immanent rather than the transcendental. As Leppänen et al. (2015, 15) state, in a Deleuzian perspective the world, subjectivities, musical works, and so forth, are seen as time, context, and place-specific emergences and processes of becoming (see also Macarthur 2010, 1).

assemblages, and as co-produced by non-human entities and different types of materiality.

For this dissertation, I find especially fruitful and pertinent the views and approaches presented by Leppänen et al. (2015) and Tiainen (2007). Leppänen et al. (2015, 28) inspire music and gender studies scholars to apply viewpoints that emphasize processuality and fluidity as perspectives when scrutinizing identity and knowledge formation in music research. In a study that explores musical practices in today's Western opera culture, Tiainen (2007, 150) suggests an understanding of music-making in terms of the musicians' embedded, yet changing and multiple subjectivities. Tiainen (2007) proposes that instead of viewing various classical music scenes, opera for example, as inherently conservative, they can be approached as open-ended spaces where situation-bound constellations of subjectivities are produced. As has been demonstrated in all of the previous chapters, as well as in this subchapter, the intersectional differences, power hierarchies, and power relationships within classical music culture may easily appear as stagnant and unavoidable. I find approaches embedded in an understanding of social differences as processual and fluid to be a fruitful framework that paves the way to approach social inequalities as a subject for change and repair, as opposed to inevitable and stagnant elements of the field.

3.2 Social imaginaries

In this dissertation I draw attention to the standards and expectations that set the boundaries of what is considered to be “good” in terms of musical performance, and as something a musician should strive for. To examine narratives, representations, ideals, ready-made images, symbols, and metaphors that appear in classical music culture, I am drawing on feminist philosopher Moira Gatens' ([1996] 2003, 2004; Churcher & Gatens 2019) understanding of *social imaginaries*. Gatens' use of the notion is not novel *per se*. As she points out ([1996] 2003, viii), imagination was already a central notion to philosophers such as René Descartes (1569–1650), David Hume (1711–1776), and Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677). Throughout her work, Gatens ([1996] 2003, 56) builds specifically upon the work of the Dutch philosopher Spinoza, whom she describes as capable of suggesting “an account of the body and its relation to social life, politics and ethics” in a way that is not dependent on the dualisms offered by many dominant traditional Western philosophies. Neither neutralizing difference, nor dichotomising its conceptualization, Spinoza's work offers a framework in which problems can be looked at in different theoretical terms (Gatens [1996] 2003, 56).

The notion of an *imaginary* has also been applied by several early twentieth-century philosophers,²⁶ whose writings have undoubtedly influenced feminist philosophers of the latter part of the twentieth century. However, in order to define social imaginaries distinctly from previous philosophers, Gatens ([1996] 2003, ix) stresses that the concept of imaginaries is in her work “not analogous to that of ideology.” She ([1996] 2003, ix) rejects the idea that there would be one single social imaginary, which unavoidably would contrast with a notion of “reality.” Instead, Gatens ([1996] 2003, ix) proposes the employment of “social imaginaries,” allowing “one to see that the system of linked social imaginaries is constantly being transformed and refigured.” Indeed, her book *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality* (Gatens [1996] 2003) consists of essays on topics such as body politics, critiques of the sex/gender distinction, and how these concepts emerge in law, power, and ethics – thus exploring the question of “body in the domain of social power and political constitutions” (Colebrook 2000, 90). In her later work, Gatens (2004, 283; Churcher & Gatens 2019, 154) adds that social imaginaries vary historically and contextually, and as they are a plural phenomenon they consist of different imaginaries, such as national, racial, political, and legal ones.

Following Gatens (Churcher & Gatens 2019, 154), I understand social imaginaries as not only mirroring a status quo, but as shaping, constructing, and contributing to the beliefs, values, and ways of being in a classical music culture. It is by examining the emerging social imaginaries that I analyse the emergence of social differences, and how these constructions are associated with experiences of misconduct and gender inequality. While my aim in this dissertation is definitely not to pursue the ontology of gender or sex, I do use gender as an analytical tool, and thereby as a prominent concept it is relevant to discuss in greater detail how I, through Gatens’ stipulations, theoretically approach gender.

The discussions of gender and the body in Gatens’ *Imaginary Bodies* are based on essays written between 1983 and 1994. Thereby, Gatens’ engagement in discussions of sex/gender/body are contextualized by how these concepts were perceived in societal discussions and feminist theories within that time (see for example Gatens [1996] 2003, 3–4, 49, 67–68, 77, 95–96; Colebrook 2000, 76–

²⁶ For example, writings by Jacques Lacan, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Louis Althusser, and Cornelius Castoriadis on the notion of imaginary have influenced philosophers such as Luce Irigaray and Michèle Le Dœuff (Gatens [1996] 2003, viii).

78).²⁷ Although Gatens does not state this explicitly, her theorization of gender ([1996] 2003) could be situated as somewhere in-between feminist psychoanalytical, social constructionist, and new materialistic theories – even if new materialisms were not yet recognized as a specific theoretical orientation during that time. First and foremost, Gatens ([1996] 2003, 4–5) attempts to question ideas that body and mind are *tabulae rasae* or neutral entities, upon which social constructions are inscribed. On the other hand, she (Gatens ([1996] 2003, 4–5) argues against the exclusive disjunctions of “environmentalists” or “essentialists” (or, as Colebrook (2000) describes the tension later, between representation and materiality). Gatens ([1996] 2003, 40–41) even describes it as “nonsensical” to perceive the body as something outside of cultural influences, as speaking or writing about the (also biological) body is inherently already subjecting it “to language, itself a cultural product.”

It is in this sense that her understanding of gender coincides with the poststructuralist thinking of feminist philosopher Judith Butler (1990; 1993), who views gender as well as the “sexed” [gendered] body as discursively produced (Colebrook 2000, 78). Rather than embarking on an epistemological project like, for example, Butler, Gatens’ locus is ontological, as her theorization is process-oriented as she questions the nature and force of the dichotomy of representation and matter (Colebrook 2000, 82–83).²⁸ Gatens’ critique ([1996] 2003, 5) of both “essentialist” and “environmentalist” understandings of sex and gender reflects, and perhaps pre-empts, discussions and tensions between intersectional and new materialist theorizations of gender (Ahmed 2008; Sullivan 2012; Sellberg 2019; Tiainen et al. 2020).²⁹ According to Gatens ([1996] 2003, 13), traits that are deemed masculine or feminine are not merely the results of patriarchal socialization and

²⁷ Gatens ([1996] 2003) implies that she engages in a discussion with, for example, feminist psychoanalytical, essentialist, and Marxist and liberal sociopolitical theories on the situation of women and gender.

²⁸ In the article “From Radical Representations to Corporeal Becomings,” cultural theorist Claire Colebrook (2000) outlines the differences between poststructuralist feminist theory by Judith Butler and the “Australian corporeal feminist” thinking of philosophers Genevieve Lloyd, Elizabeth Grosz, and Moira Gatens. These latter philosophers and their branch of “Australian” feminism are presented by Colebrook as forming one of the roots of new materialist thinking (Colebrook 2000; Sellberg 2019, 96). Colebrook (2000, 78) argues that Butler’s theorization suggests a conflation of the “being of a thing with the mode in which that thing is known.” While matter (body) is not viewed as an effect of discourse, in the effect of speculating on it matter nevertheless comes to have a “status as non-discursive” in Butler’s (1993) writing (Colebrook 2000, 79). Colebrook (2000, 82) summarizes that even after a detailed review of Butler’s theorization, a dichotomous logic of priority and origin still prevails in Butler’s distinction between sex and gender (or materiality and representation if you will).

²⁹ The tensions between social constructivist, and more recently intersectionality, and new materialist ways of thinking about gender are described in Tiainen et al. (2020). New materialist ways of thinking are often reputed to overemphasize the ontological priority of matter, while intersectional ways of thinking are often reputed as reproducing the positioning of subjects and overstating discursivity (Tiainen et al. 2020, 211).

conditioning but are “manifestations of and reactions to the (conscious and unconscious) ideas which we share about biologies,” and thereby sex and gender are not only arbitrarily connected.

To discuss the relation of the body and power in terms of gender differences, Gatens ([1996] 2003) employs philosopher Michel Foucault’s (1978; 1980, 118) thoughts. What she describes as a “Foucauldian emphasis” on the body moves beyond only examining how discourses and practices create subjectivities. Instead, this approach addresses the ways in which discourses and practices create “certain sorts of body with particular kinds of power and capacity; that is, how bodies are turned into individuals of various kinds” (Gatens [1996] 2003, 67). Gatens’ ([1996] 2003) theorization thus adopts a Spinozist ontology, in that being is understood “*as becoming*.” The body, then, “*is in its modes of practice, self-representation, and engagement*” (Colebrook 2000, 86). In this way, Gatens belongs to the Australian corporeal feminist strand of thinking, in which the representational and the material are in a Spinozan/Bergsonian³⁰ tradition considered as inseparable “through their mutual coformation in time” (Sellberg 2019, 96).

The nature of Gatens’ ([1996] 2003, 2004) philosophy as interlinking representation and materiality is key to locating gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse as interconnected with commonly accepted practices of classical music culture, but is also key to understanding social assemblages as fluid, and thus subject to change. Following Gatens, I understand social differences, such as gender, to be related to underlying beliefs and ideas that through social imaginaries as constantly becoming, and are inherently part of material and contextual connections. Moreover, I understand gender inequality, as well as other social differences that yield to inequality, as also associated with underlying beliefs and ideas that may legitimize the ways in which social differences are impacting norms and practices.

To clarify such an understanding in-between social constructivist and new materialist conceptions of gender, I also rely on the concept of “the middle,” as proposed by Tiainen et al. (2020). “The middle” is defined as a “situation-bound region of in-mixing from within which intersectional differences emerge, re-emerge and transform” (Tiaien et al. 2020, 212). Tiainen et al. (2020) expand on previous work that has examined intersectional and new materialist theories co-constructively (e.g., Puar 2007, 2001; Barad 2007; Tiainen, Kontturi & Hangisto 2015; Manning 2019). They (2020, 211) foreground “the situated emergence and relatedness of embodied subjectivities and social differences,” while drawing “increasing attention to the material and other-than-human elements involved in

³⁰ Sellberg (2019) refers not only to Baruch Spinoza but to philosopher Henri Bergson (1859–1941), who can be considered as one of the first process philosophers interested in identifying processuality and actualisation.

the relational emergence of intersectional differences and power-relations.” In this dissertation, these other-than-human elements include, for example, musical instruments, whereas the situated emergence refers to gendered, classed, and racialized social imaginaries within the classical music culture. I also employ the concept of “the middle” (Tiainen et al. 2020) to highlight that social imaginaries are non-permanent and fragile. Similar to Tiainen et al. (2020, 211 & 219), I examine social differences as not only already-existing, but instead as “open-ended relationalities happening across” social, material, discursive, and human modes of activity.

While social imaginaries are, as discussed above, temporary, varying, and also dependent on material components, some social imaginaries have become standardized, normative, and indeed idealized. Gatens [1996] 2003, 11, 31) insists that it is imperative to analyse the *imaginary body* – or the body image, and the body double – by which she refers to the feminist re-readings of Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis. Gatens’ understanding of the double and imaginary body is most astutely described in the following passage concerning the body and social power: “The imaginary body can be posited as an effect of socially and historically specific practices: an effect, that is, not of genetics but of relations of power. This imaginary body is in fact the anatomical body overlaid by culture, since the anatomical body is itself a theoretical object for the discourse of anatomy which is produced by human being in culture” (Gatens’ [1996] 2003, 70). As Colebrook (2000, 86) clarifies, Gatens understands this doubling neither as material nor as ideal, but instead as the “doubling of the material body *as* an ideal body.” Further, the subject occurs in relation to this body image (Gatens [1996] 2003, 13; Colebrook 2000, 86). This imaginary body can also be examined on a larger scale.

Gatens ([1996] 2003, 21) draws attention to the term “representation,” and especially how it is used in political theory. Moreover, Gatens asks ([1996] 2003, 21) “*whose* body it is that is entitled to be represented” by political corporations? Further, “this involves understanding ‘representation’ in the sense where one body or agent is taken to stand for a group of diverse bodies” (Gatens [1993] 2003, 21). When one reflects on representation and Gatens’ writings in the context of classical music culture, they provoke one to ask what kind of underlying narratives, representations, plural ready-made images, symbols, and metaphors determine the prevalent ideals of the body, and whose bodies are similarly the elements that classical music culture is based upon. More specifically, what are the social imaginaries that orientate the onto-epistemologies of classical music?

I do not separately examine manifestations of an imaginary body in the four articles of this dissertation. Rather, by applying the concept of social imaginaries, I investigate what kind of understandings of gender emerge in my informants’ experiences, and in their own perspectives and opinions of classical music education, lessons, networking, and classical music working life. These experiences

include gendered and sexual misconduct (Article II), emotional abuse (Article III), and other experiences associated with gendered inequality (Articles I and IV). Simultaneously, I examine how the always-emerging social imaginaries are reflected in values, repertoires, standards, and ideals related to classical music (Articles I, III, and IV). In Article I, I examine the social imaginaries associated with idealized pianists, violinists, and cellists, as related performance practice ideals. In this Article, I emphasize that social imaginaries vary from context to context, also depending on other-than-human elements. Further, in this introductory part I examine what kind of an *imaginary body* emerges overall in this dissertation's four articles, and how this imaginary body reflects ideals that have their roots in the historical development of classical music culture (discussed in Chapter 2) and genre boundaries. In this way, through Gatens' writings, I explore the ways in which understandings of gender and gender inequality, along with musical genre boundaries, reflect an imaginary body – and more specifically the androcentric positioning of the white masculine body (Bull & Scharff 2021, 679; see also Miller 2016, 120; Cannizzo & Strong 2020). Gendered and racialized social imaginaries in classical music culture ultimately emerge in a situation-bound manner, dependent on many social, subjective, and material components (such as instruments).

Gatens' ([1993] 2003; 2004) notion of social imaginaries also provides a way to understand present-day social imaginaries of classical music culture by reflecting on their historical background and formation. To demonstrate the historicity of sometimes unconscious habits, Gatens ([1993] 2003, xi) uses as an example wedding rings, which are to be worn on a specific finger. She ([1993] 2003, xi) points out that we have embodied habits that we cannot trace to their historical origin, and which might have long been forgotten. This is especially important when reflecting on social imaginaries related to the embodied practices of classical music. While the classical music canon is often traced back to a historicity and lineage of great masters, it is important to question why such a story is taken for granted. As discussed in Chapter 2, within classical music culture there are some interesting strains, or rather relationships, between modern-day practices and historicity. Instead of only demonstrating exclusion within the history of classical music culture, the cultural heritage becomes meaningful in taking into consideration *how* differently positioned subjectivities are reproduced.

Researcher Karin Sellberg (2019), who is specialized in feminist and queer historiography, writes about temporality in feminist new materialist philosophy and Australian feminism (Colebrook 2000), and offers clarifications and insights on how history and constructs of time are approached in these strains of philosophy. Sellberg (2019, 94) argues that new materialism “creates a new approach to temporality, but this construct also relies on earlier formulations of time –and as such it continually reiterates and reproduces the tensions between past, present and future paradigms of feminist philosophy.” When explaining the thinking of

Australian feminist Elizabeth Grosz, Sellberg (2019, 99) suggests that “history is a being in time – narrative creation and a continual recreation nourished and sustained by duration.” Instead of understanding, for example, male domination in modern-day inequalities as being based on a clear lineage that harkens back to the past, it is important to understand that history consists of a myriad of stories that are (re)constructed in the present. What is more important when viewing and summarizing the cultural heritage of classical music is to understand how binary notions of *gender* and *whiteness*, along with intersecting socio-cultural categories, have been key in organizing participation in this culture. I would suggest that this is the fundamental aspect in the heritage of classical music culture that needs to be considered.

Whereas Gatens ([1996] 2003; 2004; Churcher & Gatens 2019) is primarily concerned with gender inequalities, Sara Ahmed’s work provides support for Gatensian perspectives through which it is possible to discuss race, and especially whiteness. While Ahmed (2008) has expressed vehement support for social constructivist approaches, in opposition to new materialistic ones, her ideas concerning the phenomenology of whiteness coincide partly with Gatens’ ideas in ways that support the analysis of whiteness within the chosen theoretical framework. Like Gatens ([1996] 2003, x), who discusses social imaginaries as a background for consciousness, Ahmed (2007, 149) discusses whiteness as a habit that she regards as akin to a background to social action. Ahmed (2007, 158) refers to whiteness as “what the [academic] institution is orientated ‘around’, so that even bodies that might not appear white still have to inhabit whiteness, if they are to get ‘in.’” Further, Ahmed (2007, 158) draws attention to how whiteness may allow bodies “*to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape*” [sic.]. In this research, I examine how some bodies’ habituality (re)produce whiteness in social imaginaries, especially in representations and narratives, by shaping ideas of what bodies can do in the spaces of the classical music culture in Finland. Specifically, in Article I, I examine in what ways classical music culture in Finland is shaped by whiteness, for example through gendered appearance ideals related to musical performance practices.

Further, Ahmed (2007, 156) explains that the “body is ‘habitual’ not only in the sense that it performs actions repeatedly, but in the sense that when it performs such actions, it does not command attention.” This gives a point of departure to scrutinize how the whiteness of a classical music concert space also affects listening practices (Thurman 2021). However, the whiteness, and the other underlying social imaginaries of classical music culture, can become “neutral,” “unconscious,” or “unseen” until a body that does not fit makes an appearance. Through these theoretical frameworks, I seek to understand how the social imaginaries endemic to the classical music culture in Finland relate to and construct whiteness. Lastly, I employ the notion of social imaginary to understand how socio-cultural

constructions, and understandings of gender and race, are associated with codes of conduct – which brings us to the next theoretical concept, introduced below.

3.3 Social norms

The second central concept of my research is *social norms*. I discuss how social imaginaries in classical music culture are associated with social norms, which I, in this research, refer to as codes of conduct and normative behaviour. To explore this topic, I continue to employ Gatens' ([1996] 2003, 2004; Gatens & Churcher 2019) work. Gatens ([1996] 2003, viii) argues that it is through social imaginaries that we “make sense of social bodies and determine, in part, their value, their status and what will be deemed their appropriate treatment.” By social norms Gatens (2004, 284) refers to: “A collective expectation about what is to count as appropriate behaviour for a particular identity in a particular context. Normative social practice involves more than the acceptance of ideas, of the holding of beliefs, it also involves emotive and intersubjective embodied commitments, including those of which one is not consciously aware” (Gatens 2004, 284). In this research, the specific context examined is the Finnish classical music culture. Consequently, by social norms I refer in this research to the normative behaviour that is suggested through the social imaginaries of classical music. I propose that social norms are construed based on what kind of values are bestowed by social imaginaries on different subjectivities and bodies. In doing so, I discuss the ways in which harmful social phenomena, such as gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse, can also be derived from social imaginaries and the treatment of different bodies that they suggest.

The connection between social imaginaries and (harmful) social norms has previously been explored by Churcher and Gatens (2019), and Waterhouse-Watson (2009; 2012). Churcher and Gatens (2019, 151) have criticized the “implicit and explicit codes of sexual honour that are grounded in social imaginings of sexed [gendered] subjects.” They (2019, 152) have argued that certain social imaginaries “function to normalize violent and disrespectful sexual behaviors in heterosexual encounters,” as well as “grounding and sustaining damaging norms of sexual conduct” (Churcher & Gatens 2019, 155). Similarly, researcher in media, communication, and literary studies Deb Waterhouse-Watson (2012, 77) has studied how “an imaginary’ of the [Austrian] footballer’s body is produced in everyday football discourse.” She (2012, 85) writes that discourses in the media on footballer sexual assault are, in terms of metaphors and narrative constructions, “overlaid on an imaginary of the footballer’s body as big, tough and indestructible, inherently and legitimately violent, and thus immune from being accountable for sexual assault.” Waterhouse-Watson (2012, 99) concludes that “the construction of the imaginary body in the genre of general football writing provides layers of

semantic thickness to endorse and normalize footballers' narrative immunity against being held accountable for alleged sexual assault."

Social norms can be unconscious, and even considered as the "natural order" (Gatens 2004, 287). Gatens (2004, 288) thereby emphasises that "any given norm does not, and cannot, stand alone. Every norm is a part of a much larger cluster of norms that is, in turn, woven into broader social imaginaries." A similar understanding underlies my research, in that I understand gendered and sexual misconduct, and emotional abuse, not as separate incidents but instead as outcomes of a web of social constructions of values, systems, hierarchies, and practices—as a result of a much larger cluster of factors. In addition to understanding how social imaginaries reflect the value of individuals and thereby deem their appropriate treatment, I explore what kind of social imaginaries and values can be dissected from gendered and sexual misconduct and emotionally abusive behaviour. In other words, I ask what kind of underlying belief systems and values manifest themselves in harmful social phenomena? And, how are those underlying social imaginaries linked to features of classical music culture?

Gatens (2004, 284) argues that "[s]ocial norms link together emotions, imagination and intellect, that is, they act on and through our embodied selves." As powerful emotions that social norms can be linked to, Gatens (2004, 284) mentions "fear, guilt and shame." She explains this as follows:

Social norms are such successful constraints on action because they engage the whole person—reason *and imagination*, rationality *and affect*, mind *and body*. ... These corporeal aspects of social norms — which will, of course, vary from culture to culture — are not at all well understood, but it is uncontentious to cite them as an important force behind the power of social norms to constrain behavior. (Gatens 2004, 285 [*italic in original text*].)

Thereby, "normative relations" come to "embody aspects of the broader imaginary through the internalization of what is to count as appropriate behaviour for particular types of identity" (Gatens 2004, 286). Gatens (2004, 286) even suggests that the emotions associated with social norms can be viewed as signs of belonging to the given society or culture. Previously, Bull (2019, 83, 178) has argued that in classical music culture the aesthetic ideal of "getting it right" can be associated with "powerful affective dimensions" such as the sense of connectedness and community in orchestras, but also the fear of humiliation of being corrected or failing. By leaning on Gatens (2004), I discuss how ideals through associated social norms can be dissected at the level of people's affective responses. Connecting social imaginaries to internalized responses and emotions also brings up the next and last concept, which I will introduce below.

3.4 Embodied subjectivity

The privileged relation which each individual has to [their] own body does not include privilege over its construction.

(Moirá Gatens [1996] 2003, 35)

The third, and last, key theoretical concept of this study is *embodied subjectivity* (see e.g., Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2002; McLaren 2002). By embodied subjectivity I refer in this dissertation to an individual's internal, lived experience that always depends for its existence on a system and world of myriad social imaginaries. Through this concept I seek to understand how the previously presented notions of social imaginaries and social norms can be scrutinized as the internal experiences of this study's participants. Gatens ([1996] 2003, 9) argues that the same gendered behaviours, regardless of whether they are characterized as masculine or feminine, have different "personal and social significances" when acted out by different subjects. Moreover, "each gesture, attitude, perception that enters human consciousness does so charged with significances that relate to all that has gone before" (Gatens [1996] 2003, 9). As discussed in the previous subchapter, social imaginaries and norms act through affective investment in our embodied selves. Through this emotional and affective engagement, social norms, as well as perhaps their underlying social imaginaries, contribute to the embodied subjectivities that are shaped by them.

I approach the concept of embodied subjectivity in different ways in the four sub-studies. In Article I, I scrutinize how social imaginaries related to performance ideals shape the participants' self-esteem as well as their understanding of gendered and racialized bodies, including their own. In Article II, I examine how experience of gendered and sexual misconduct has impacted the interviewees. In Article III, I scrutinize how the values and beliefs of classical music culture, including emotionally abusive behaviour, contributed to the construction of embodied subjectivities and affective responses among my research participants. In this article I also discuss shame and humiliation as embodied signs of belonging to the Finnish classical music culture. Lastly, in Article IV, I examine gender as a lived experience, and specifically how cisnormativity was imposed on the participants' gendered bodies through certain codes of conduct to which they were expected to conform. While one of the initial aims of this research was to understand the ways in which the interviewees seek to experience empowerment through musical repertoire or musical activity, the significant amount of misconduct and gender inequality that appeared in the interview material compelled me to focus specifically on how experience of gender is associated with inequality and misconduct, instead of positive experiences of gender. Embodied subjectivity is analysed in relation to, for example, feelings of "otherness" and out-of-placeness.

4 Methodology

The methodology in this research was chosen based on an aspiration to gain an intrinsic understanding of the studied women's experiences regarding gender inequality in classical music culture, and to explore "deep" knowledge about it, which is "often taken for granted and not readily articulated by most members" of the given culture (Johnson & Rowlands 2012, 101). Researcher Paul ten Have states (2004, 15; see also Brinkmann 2017, 6) that what characterizes qualitative research is the "search for hidden meanings, non-obvious features, multiple interpretation, implied connotation," and "unheard voices." While the vast amount of media coverage on sexual harassment and emotional abuse within classical music culture in Western societies (e.g., Pace 2013; Harding 2017; Brug 2018; Kvist 2019, 2020; Mattila 2020; Karemo 2020; Riihinen & Tiikkaja 2020; Tiikkaja 2020; Vedenpää 2020; Saarikoski 2020, 2023, 2024; Paananen & Saarikoski 2024) offers a contextualization to this research, considering my focus on sociocultural constructions in the field of classical music with regard to gender inequality, as well as musicians' subjectivity, conducting qualitative in-depth interviews appeared to be the most suitable method to gather research material (Johnson & Rowlands 2012, 101). Therefore, using a qualitative research approach and interviewing as a method of data generation will hopefully allow me to explicate the complex webs of meanings in the chosen topic (Have 2004, 15). In this chapter I will present the interview material that this research is based upon and the methodology with which the interview material was analysed and scrutinized. I also reflect on research ethics, data management, and my own positionality within this research.

4.1 The interview material

The research material of this dissertation is based on fourteen (n=14) interviews conducted between November 2019 and May 2020. Two of the participants (n = 2) of this study were recruited directly by the author, while the rest of the participants (n = 12) were recruited through an invitation to participate in the research. In the initial research proposal for this dissertation, I was planning on conducting interviews with only women *pianists*, thus limiting the focus of the study to women pianists and piano culture in the field of classical music in Finland. However, after the first two interviews I realized it would be very difficult to ensure the anonymity

of the participants if they were solely pianists. Therefore, before publishing the official invitations to participate in this study, I decided to extend the invitation to women violinists and cellists as well.

The invitation, which was written in Finnish, outlined the main aim of the research, which was to scrutinize how social norms may facilitate gender inequality in classical music culture, and to understand the connection between performance practice ideals, gendered power discrepancies, and even sexual harassment. The invitation also mentioned my additional aim of understanding how pianists may be able to empower themselves and free themselves from the impacts of gender inequality through their artistic work. However, this last aim was discarded in the later stages of the research, because I chose to prioritize research on emotional abuse and grooming.

The invitation stated that I was looking for professional classical music pianists, violinists, or cellists between the ages of 25 and 45 that identify as women. The invitation stated that interviews are to be done anonymously, and that the participants' anonymity would be safeguarded by refraining from describing the interviewees' experiences and narratives in detail in the research articles. Further, it was made clear that the interview material would not be used without the participants' approval. The invitation was posted on the website of the activist music research association Suoni. It was also later shared via social media on Suoni's Facebook page, but also by several persons, and in online groups, such as the student groups of higher music education institutions.

In the end, based on the musicians that responded to the invitation, the interview material ended up consisting of interviews with six pianists and three cellists, with the remaining five interviewees playing either violin or viola. The exact number of violinists and violists is not specified to ensure the anonymity of participants. The relatively small number of interviews allowed me to delve into the complexities of the phenomenon in a way specific to qualitative research, that is, by exploring the *quality* – and not only the quantity – of experiences related to gender inequality, gendered and sexual misconduct, and emotional abuse. Further, I consider this dissertation to be part of the international network of feminist research on classical music inequalities (e.g. Bull 2019; Gibson 2024; Scharff 2021; Bull, Scharff & Nooshin 2024). I thus hope that this dissertation will contribute through its specific viewpoint to the of larger web of knowledge on inequality and various forms of misconduct in classical music culture.

All of the participants were white Finnish women between the ages 25 and 45, and at the time of the interviews they were students in or graduates from higher classical music education in Finland. The participants in this research were also working in the classical music scene as teachers and/or musicians. In Article I, I refer to the interviewees as ciswomen, however, in the rest of the articles I only state that they identify as women. My understanding of gender diversity has developed

throughout this dissertation. During the interviews, I unfortunately did not ask about the interviewees' specific gender identity, or pronouns.³¹ This lack of knowledge and awareness on my part entails that I cannot state whether the interviewees identify themselves as both women *and*, for example, as nonbinary (thereby not necessarily cisgender).

The interviews were conducted in either of the two official languages of Finland – Finnish or Swedish. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, only five of the in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face, while the rest were conducted via video calls. Each informant signed an interview agreement, which included information about the research, and in which interviewees could choose their desired level of anonymity and detail their wishes about the handling of the interview material (this is discussed in more detail in sections 4.2). The interviews were transcribed verbatim in their original language, but the quotes to be used in the research articles were thereafter translated into English.

Thirteen of the interviews were semi-structured in-depth interviews (Johnson and Rowlands [2002] 2012; Morris [2015] 2018, 11). One of the participants wished to participate in the form of written responses, so as not to relive any possible traumas related to the interview topic. The written interview was significantly shorter than the in-depth interviews, and provided information only about abuses of power and sexual harassment. The written interview was closer to a narrative interview, in that the interviewee wished only to tell her story about a particular issue (Morris [2015] 2018, 12). No follow-up questions were asked to respect the interviewee's wishes and boundaries. The other thirteen interviews lasted between approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The themes that were discussed were: 1) the interviewees' musical background and biography; 2) experiences of playing in their childhood, youth, and during their professional studies; 3) perceptions and experiences on if/how gender impacts their musicianship; 4) possible experiences of inequality in work life; 5) their perception of inequality in the classical music culture in Finland; and 6) experiences of possible misconduct during the participants' musical studies and professional work.

While I used a set of guiding questions, what characterized the in-depth interviews was that they were akin to conversations between "two individuals discussing a topic of mutual interest" in a relaxed manner (Morris [2015] 2018, 3; see also Mason 1998; Johnson & Rowlands 2012, 100). However, as Johnson and Rowlands (2012, 100) point out, in-depth interviews are, despite the possible friendliness and relaxed atmosphere, also different from a conversation with a friend because of the interviewer's intent to seek information. To give the interviewees the feeling of control of how much and what to share, I strove to keep

³¹ In the Finnish language the third person singular pronoun is inherently gender neutral.

the interviews free flowing (Campbell et al. 2009, 612). While the interviews were meant to go at the pace of the interviewee, I did at times ask follow-up questions based on the issues that the interviewees brought up in order to receive a clearer or more elaborated answer (Morris [2015] 2018, 3).

My own positionality facilitated the interviews, in that my own expertise in the classical music field allowed me to formulate follow-up questions. I was, however, not prepared to hear about such experiences of emotional abuse and serious forms of gendered and sexual misconduct that came up in some of the interviews. In hindsight, the informants had probably understood these experiences to fall under the issues of gender inequality and gendered abuse of power – which were identified in the invitation to participate as my main research interests. While I expected to learn about experiences of sexual harassment, or sexism, I did not expect to hear about seriously abusive relationships. Further, I was also not expecting to hear about experiences of emotionally abusive behaviours by the participants' childhood teachers. The consequence of this was that I felt in some instances shocked and saddened during the interviews, which made me slightly disoriented and unsure of how to move forward. This is discussed in more detail both in the section on research ethics and when I discuss my positionality in this research.

This unexpected nature of the data also relates to the fallbacks of conducting in-depth interviews. As Buys et al. (2022, 2036) note about doing in-depth research from an “insider” position, I had to similarly maintain “an appropriate level or reciprocity while conversing as equals,” and not “overshare.” Sociologist Alan Morris ([2015] 2018, 13) argues that the interviews are impacted, for example, by the “extent to which the interviewee trusts the interviewer, the questions asked, the level of probing and the interruptions will all contribute to shaping the final product – the interview transcript.” During the interview, “the interviewee consciously and unconsciously makes decisions to omit some experiences, perceptions, and insights and not others, to give varying degrees of detail and perhaps exaggerate some aspects and downplay others” (Morris [2015] 2018, 13). My own strong background in classical music culture could also be perceived as having allowed me “more rapid and more complete acceptance” on the part of the participants, resulting in more open data (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle 2009, 58). On the other hand, my proximity and previous involvement in the classical music scene might have also given some interviewees a feeling of safety, resulting in them sharing more than they were themselves perhaps comfortable with later. However, most of the interviewees were reflexive during the interviews and expressed their wishes on what kind of information and details should be omitted from the research. Later, all of the interviewees were nevertheless contacted separately to confirm that the used quotes had been understood and translated correctly. For example, in some instances the interviewees corrected words or even spelling errors in the quotes. While the

analysis of the information remains my interpretation, I sought to have the most accurate comprehension of the interviewees' opinions, perceptions, and storylines.

In the end, quotes were not used from all of the interviews. Further, one of the interviewees had wished to be interviewed even though this participant did not perceive gender inequality in the classical music scene and did not share any experiences of misconduct. After consideration, I decided to keep this interview as part of the research material, even if I did not include any quotes from this interviewee in my analysis. The reason for not including quotes from this interview was to give a voice for those who had experienced different forms of gender inequality, inappropriateness, and oppression and who often do not find a safe space where to share such experiences from classical music culture. Nevertheless, the interview still offered in-depth information on classical music education and classical music work life and networks, and therefore I decided to keep it in the research material.

The interviewees were contacted many times during the dissertation process to confirm that they perceived my translations of the quotations to English as correct, and that I had correctly understood their meaning. Moreover, I asked the interviewees to confirm that the quotes could not endanger their anonymity.

4.2 Research ethics and data protection

Considering research ethics is particularly important in the case of this dissertation, as my original research plan did not undergo the University of Helsinki's ethical pre-review. The primary reason for not asking for an ethical review was that it was not considered to be necessary by the supervisors of this dissertation, who in the application for an ethical review serve as the principal investigators. According to The Finnish National Board of Research Integrity (TENK) guidelines for ethical review in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences, a research project is advised to undergo an ethical review if it: 1) involves intervening with the physical integrity of research participants, 2) is focused on research on minors under the age of 15 without a separate consent from care giver, 3) exposes participants to exceptionally strong stimuli, for example by showing the participants data containing violence, 4) risks causing mental harm to the research participants or their family members or other closest to them which exceeds the limits of normal daily life, or 5) if conducting the research could threaten the safety of the participants or their family (University of Helsinki, n.d.). In the very beginning of this research, the risk of causing mental harm was not seen as relevant, as discussing gender inequality or misconduct, although serious, was not considered by my supervisors or me as something that would exceed the range of normal everyday experiences and emotions.

Soon after starting the interviews, I realized that the interviewees were sharing more intimate and sensitive information and topics than what had been asked for in the interview invitation, and what I (and my supervisors) had expected. Therefore, after the first two interviews I reached out to the ethical review board to inquire about the review process, but even an application for a review was denied, as the gathering of the research material had already commenced. It is important to note though that in the University of Helsinki the ethical review is *not a permit nor a license* to conduct research, and obtaining such a review does *not* “shift the researcher’s ethical responsibility” (University of Helsinki, n.d.). However, in hindsight, the ethical review might have made me more aware of the unanticipated issues that came up during the interviews.

Nevertheless, since starting the research and after realizing the sensitivity of the issues that were unexpectedly brought up (such as emotional abuse), I have done the utmost in my power to proceed with awareness of the weight of my ethical responsibility. For example, throughout the research process I remained overly cautious about the interviewees’ anonymity. While some interviewees were willing to include their names with the quotes, I did not reveal them. This was also to protect those interviewees who wanted their identity to remain anonymous. Throughout the process it was a very clear and conscious decision on my part to always prioritize the interviewees’ anonymity, even with the risk of decontextualizing some of their accounts (see also Scharff 2017, 27). This means that in many instances I withheld some context of some of the experiences and quotes that were used in the articles. I also separated quotes from each other, so as not to build connections between different instances in which quotes were used from the same informant. Further, to ensure the interviewees’ anonymity, I did not give any detailed information about their musical biography in relation to the quotes. While pseudonyms were used in Article I, in the other articles quotes by all the interviewees were referred to as anonymous and were not attached to specific interview dates. The reason for this was so that no one could build connections between the same participants’ quotes by comparing them in the different articles.

The topics that came up unexpectedly in the interviews included experiences of emotional abuse, grooming behaviour by teachers, and experiences of abusive relationships with teachers. These were all topics that I had not set out to explore. Although the equivalent term for “emotional abuse” in Finnish or Swedish was not used by the interviewees, various types and degrees of emotionally abusive behaviour (see Table 6: *Emotional abuse* in Chapter 6.3) came up in twelve of the fourteen interviews (n = 12) as either something they had experienced themselves or something that they had witnessed. Emotionally abusive behaviours appeared in the interviews in relation to questions about the interviewees’ musical background, education, and the interviewees’ stories about how they had experienced

instrument lessons and teachers in their childhood. Emotionally abusive behaviour also appeared in association with grooming behaviour.

After collecting the data, I first planned to omit the topic of emotional abuse, however as it appeared in the interview material in such volume, I decided to explore the possibility of writing an article about the topic. As I did not set out to study emotional abuse, I separately contacted all of the interviewees and disclosed that such a topic had come up and asked for permission to also write an article about that – to which everyone agreed. Further, in some cases I feared that the interviewees did not themselves realize that they had experienced emotionally abusive behaviour. In one of the cases I met up with the interviewee face to face. I proceeded cautiously to ask if the interviewee agreed with my interpretation and analysis of their experiences. The reason for this was that I felt uneasy about the possibility of having an interviewee realizing from reading the research article that I had interpreted the behaviour that they had encountered as indeed emotionally abusive behaviour. In other cases, I inquired by email if I could proceed with the research, and if the participants agreed with my interpretation of their experiences. While all of the interviewees were reminded that they could withdraw from the research at any time, each of them gave their confirmation of participation and approval for me to pursue the research further.

Similarly, I was not expecting to learn about the participants' intimate relationships with teachers. One such relationship came up through the written interview. The interviewee expressed a strong willingness to participate by sharing their story, but expressed their own wishes on how to share the information and how much information could be shared. To respect the interviewee's wishes, no follow up questions were asked in the case of this written interview. In another case, the interviewee shared her experiences very openly, however, in the interview situation I remember being startled myself at the information that was provided. In hindsight this demonstrates how important it is for researchers interviewing survivors of gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse to receive appropriate training for conducting interviews (Campbell et al. 2009, 597).

Sexual violence researchers Rebecca Campbell et al. (2009, 601) outline six key expectations of interviewers: 1) prioritize the interviewee's emotional well-being by offering comfort and, if particularly distressed, asking whether it is okay to continue the interview; 2) giving the interviewee time and space to answer a question at their own pace; 3) showing patience and respect while listening, and giving the interviewee the control to choose what to share; 4) be prepared to ask follow-up questions and engage in dialogue; 5) know when to provide information or resources to help them understand or normalize their experiences; and 6) creating a compassionate and warm interview atmosphere (Campbell et al. 2009, 601). Campbell et al. (2009, 603) summarize that interviewers should be knowledgeable about sexual violence and its very diverse impacts on victims – if that is what the

interviewer is set to conduct research on. Additionally, interviewers should recognize that a survivor of sexual violence can be *anyone*, and understand that knowledge gained through education is limited compared to personal experience (Campbell et al. 2009, 609–610).

It should be noted that no incidents of sexual violence, such as rape, violence, or assault were mentioned in the interviews in this specific research. While this might be due to the lack of these experiences, it is also important to keep in mind that such experiences are extremely difficult to report and might be shared only after many interview sessions (Hirsch & Khan 2021, xxix; see also Article II). Even though the guidelines and suggestions by Campbell et al. (2009; 2010) are targeted at researchers conducting research on sexual violence, similar guidelines would, according to my experience, also be beneficial to researchers conducting other topics related to gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse. Considering that this study is the first qualitative research in Finland on gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse in the classical music sector, it is, however, natural that there are lessons to be learned for future researchers.

Perhaps due to my own experiences within the classical music culture, I tried my best, except for some instances when I was shocked or saddened, to respond with compassion and respectful listening, while assuring them that their experience of forms of gender inequality and misconduct were common and similar to other women's experiences within classical music culture (on my researcher positionality see Chapter 4.4). As Campbell et al. (2010, 69, 75–76) note, assuring interviewees that they are not alone with their experiences and providing compassion can be appreciated and welcomed by survivors of trauma. On the other hand, showing an emotional response to the interviewees' story, such as sadness, might also feel meaningful to the interviewee (Campbell et al. 2009, 612. Campbell et al. 2010, 73). However, my surprise or shock was a negative emotional reaction that might have been "interpreted as something abnormal" about the interviewee (Campbell et al. 2009, 612). This emotional reaction also resulted in that I was not prepared to ask follow-up questions, and instead moved on to ask about other topics. However, throughout the research process most of the interviewees expressed strong positivity toward participating in this research, while also expressing a wish and willingness to help advance research on gender inequality, gendered and sexual misconduct, and emotional abuse by sharing their experiences. This aligns with research showing that survivors of various forms of trauma may experience being able to talk to an interested listener, and have their experiences validated, as beneficial (Campbell et al. 2010, 61–62).

While not having received training to encounter interviewees with experiences of trauma, I would warmly recommend and suggest that further similar studies would be done with more consideration on training before commencing the interviews. Carrying the interviewees' stories of various forms of abuses of power

has been an emotionally difficult part of this process, as the informants' identities and full stories have also been anonymous to my supervisors. However, I would claim that throughout the research I have been extremely cautious about the interviewees' anonymity and aware of my weighty ethical responsibility. This has resulted in a mental burden for me as a researcher, which I will discuss in greater detail in relation to my positionality. While I had the opportunity to participate in the supportive research network Research Association Suoni (Suoni, nd.), and also had the possibility to receive support and discuss the research (in parts) with colleagues and supervisors, it would have been beneficial to have been emotionally prepared for this type of research.

Nevertheless, I believe that in order to maintain high research ethical standards this research must provide slightly less information about these topics than it could have. For example, in the peer review process of Article III, I was asked to show even more data without compromising the participants' anonymity. Although I added, with the interviewees' approval, some quotes, I am aware that some of these quotes missed nuanced context. Thereby, what may seem a weakness in this research is simultaneously a strength in terms of high ethical standards. These issues regarding anonymity and research ethics also demonstrate that qualitative research on topics such as gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse needs to happen on a vast scale, so that different individual studies can complement each other.

The data, including the audio format and text format of the interviews, as well as the signed interview contracts, were stored in the University of Helsinki's well-protected cloud services. During the analysis, some of the interview material was also stored on my own computer. According to the wishes of the participants, some of the interviews will be destroyed after this dissertation is completed. Some of the material will be, again according to the participants' wishes, stored in Finnish Social Science Data Archive available for other researchers.

4.3 Understanding inequality through interviews

There is nothing more practical than a good theory.

(Kurt Lewin 1951, 169)

The analysis in the four sub-studies of this dissertation was carried out by means of a thematical examination of the interview material. Social scientists Greg Guest, Kathleen M. MacQueen, and Emily E. Namey (2012, 11) explain that “[t]hematic analyses move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes.” I did not use any software to thematize the interview material, but instead went through the transcriptions of the interviews manually, exploring what kinds of

topics and themes emerged from the material (see Table 3: *Themes*).³² While the interviews were conducted as thematically structured in-depth interviews, the main questions were not used as themes of analysis (Maguire and Delahunt 2017, 3353; see also Braun and Clarke 2006). Instead, I was looking for significant information in relation to the research questions that represented “some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun and Clarke 2006, 82). Based on psychologists Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke’s six-phase framework (Braun and Clarke 2006, 87), I proceeded as follows: 1) I became familiar with the data set; 2) I generated initial codes, and; 3) searched for themes; 4) I reviewed themes; 5) defined themes, and lastly; 6) wrote the articles. I paid attention to the initial coding, that is, the potential patterns, already during the interviews. In the second phase I carefully read through the transcripts and marked the document with a highlighter and comments. I then assembled the data that had similar patterns and segments. Examples of the codes that appeared include “men as authorities,” “small networks,” “men are seen as soloists,” “role models,” and “physical appearance.” Not all codes led to themes, and if they did, it was not possible to explore every theme within the articles’ assigned word counts. For example, themes such as emotional abuse in orchestras, or experiences of playing contemporary music, were left out because of space limitations.

In the fifth stage, I identified what kinds of themes emerged, and specifically paid attention to both the semantic (representational) level and implicit level. The themes that emerged are depicted in Table 3: *Themes*. At the implicit level, I looked for ideas and underlying assumptions that shaped the semantic content (Maguire and Delahunt 2017, 3353). Returning to the quote in the beginning of this section, social psychologist Kurt Lewin has famously stated that “[t]here is nothing more practical than a good theory” (Lewin 1951, 169). I find this statement especially apt in the case of the theoretical framework used in this dissertation. Applying Gatens’ ([1996] 2003, viii) approach, I use social imaginaries as a technical tool. In practice, I dissected representations, symbols, metaphors, ready-made images, narratives, and values from the interview material and analysed them in relation to the specific themes listed above. I analysed how they appeared, both in the interviewee’s experiences of inequality or misconduct, that is, in the treatment they had encountered, and also in the interviewees’ opinions and perspectives. Through this kind of thematic analysis, I then examined the underlying values, beliefs, and gendered and racial constructions that informed the emerging social imaginaries.

³² The x’s in the table indicate in which articles the themes were analysed.

Table 3 Themes

Themes	Article I	Article II	Article III	Article IV
Performance ideals	x		x	
Aesthetic ideals in classical music repertoire	x			x
Genre boundaries and narratives				x
Gendered and sexual misconduct		x		x
Emotionally abusive behaviour in music education		x	x	
Experiences of inequality in networks		x		x
Inequality in work life				x
Embodied subjectivity	x	x	x	x

4.4 Researcher positionality

An important part of any qualitative research is pursuing self-reflection, maintaining a reflexive approach, and seeking an awareness of the researcher's world view (epistemology), as well as their position in relation to social statuses, power relations, the researched topic and its contexts, and the study's informants (Darwin Holmes 2020, 2; see also Merriam et al. 2001; Savvides et al. 2014). I have conducted this research as a bilingual Finland-Swede, white, and able-bodied cisgender woman. For this research I have also received a four-year grant from the Finnish Cultural Foundation. Even though I do not economically locate myself in the middle class, writing a doctoral dissertation, and on a topic in classical music, results in a significant level of symbolic capital and prestige related to social capital (Bain 2005, 33). These social locations and the financial support I have benefited from are linked to privilege, which has facilitated and impacted the process of writing this dissertation. Further, having a long background in classical music culture from being a student to being a performer, teacher, and occasionally a music critic, I thereby position myself in relation to the researched subject as a member of

classical music culture. However, Corbin Dwyer and Buckle also (2009, 60) observe that:

[h]olding membership in a group does not denote complete sameness within that group. Likewise, not being a member of a group does not denote complete difference. It seems paradoxical, then, that we would endorse binary alternatives that unduly narrow the range of understanding and experience. (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009, 60.)

A useful alternative approach would therefore be to understand the researcher's position as being "in between" insider/outsider and self/other positions pertaining to various social categories (such as gender, language, ethnicity, etc.) (Merriam et al. 2001, 405; Corbin Dwyer & Buckle 2009, 2018; Savvides et al. 2014, 412, 420). I find this view especially fitting regarding my own researcher position.

Inspired by the musicality of my maternal side of the family, and one of my older brother's piano playing, I began to play the piano in a conservatory at the age of six. I still remember the very strong feeling of excitement and inspiration that I felt as a child when I let my fingers dance on the piano keys improvisatorially, without any formal knowledge and skills. However, while piano playing was a dear hobby to me as a child, it was only at the age of fifteen that I was introduced to advanced piano works and was led to play Frédéric Chopin's second Scherzo in b flat minor (op. 31), which is when I began to practise the piano systematically and with passion. Mostly, I was enthralled by the strong emotions and the ecstatic feeling that playing could bring. During this time, I already became intrigued by the piano teacher's power and impact on their students. This was most probably because playing the piano and participating in classical music culture allowed me to experience a strong sense of identity (Bull 2019, 174), thus also realizing my vulnerability under such strong influence exerted by the teacher. I even interviewed my own piano teacher, read books about piano pedagogy, and wrote an essay based on that material for a psychology course in senior high school. In my late teenage years, I participated in piano courses and master classes, and was given the opportunity to play as a soloist with the city orchestra – all building up to my ultimate dream of studying piano on a professional level. I ended up studying the piano as my main subject both at the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (in Helsinki), and in the Sibelius Academy at the University of the Arts Helsinki between the years 2008 and 2017.

Even though as a young pianist I thought I would finally feel like an "insider" when I was accepted as a student to the Sibelius Academy, during my studies I most often felt a sense of not belonging, for example due to insecurities about my musical skills, my sporadic inability to play the piano (due to physical pain), or due to not having come from a musical family, nor having studied earlier in the Junior Academy of the Sibelius Academy – the preparatory division for young musicians. I reflect on this because I want to emphasize how my "insider status" was already then obscured by subjective feelings of (not) belonging, as well as by the (dis)ability to practice my instrument without interruption. Now, when finishing the

dissertation at hand, I believe that this feeling of displacement was also due to gendered constructions and a strong male dominance in terms of the power, representation, and narratives of classical music culture. My positionality was (somewhat) marginalized due to gender, but not due to race, because the spaces of classical music in Finland are predominantly white.

My classical music studies were indeed filled with moments of joy of performing, joy of learning, and a sense of self-actualization, but also with a significant amount of anxiety, pressure, and even physical pain, especially during times when I suffered from severe repetitive strain injuries. After some years of professional studies, I needed to take a longer pause from playing the piano, and instead began studying Middle Eastern Studies and Musicology at the University of Helsinki. The step back from playing classical music allowed me to look at this culture I was so immersed in with renewed critical and evaluative eyes. During all my studies in higher education institutions, I was also teaching piano for children, teenagers, and young adults, both privately and in music schools. By the time I graduated from all the above-mentioned institutions my position in relation to classical music more generally, academia, and teaching the piano could best have been described as a Möbius strip – obscure, confusing, and perplexing. When I started researching for this dissertation, I still had a permanent piano teacher position in a music school. However, my position in relation to classical music culture has further shifted during the writing process to a more distant one, as I quit said permanent teacher's position to pursue this dissertation full-time.

Needless to say, my position with regard to the topic, the field, and the participants of this research remains biased – which naturally has impacted the study at hand, simultaneously contextualizing and setting limits to it. However, in-depth interviews can be, as Johnson and Rowlands (2012, 102) suggest, used to check researchers' "understandings and to see if they are shared by other members or participants. Former or returning members [of a culture] can fruitfully use in-depth interviews to check, stimulate, or inspire their own self-reflections and to see if their understandings are the same as those shared by others who are also members or participants" (Johnson & Rowlands 2012, 102). Education researcher Andres G. Darwin Holmes (2020, 3) suggests that through self-reflexivity, "rather than trying to eliminate [the researcher's] effect, researchers should acknowledge and disclose their selves in their work, aiming to understand their influence on and in the research process."

Throughout the process of writing this dissertation, I have constantly engaged in self-reflection about my relation to the studied field, the participants, and the studied phenomena. I have myself also both observed, and experienced gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse, as well as various other social inequalities in classical music culture. Because of this I was strongly motivated to focus on studying women musicians' experiences in the still very male-dominated

field of classical music culture. My wish to study especially women pianists, as well as instrumentalists (violinists, cellists, violists) who often play together with pianists in chamber music ensembles (piano trios and quartets), was also motivated by my own instrument and attendant participation in classical music culture. My decision to extend the invitation to the research to musicians older than 25 years also stemmed from my own experience, as I intuitively searched for research participants with at least some distance between the early intensive years of studying an instrument professionally, and thus possibly more preparedness to reflect on their study years. The theoretical framework, and orientation to scrutinize the beliefs, values, and social imaginaries, is similarly motivated by my long-term experiences of *not* questioning or criticizing the surrounding culture until I took a step back and started to reflect on and observe classical music culture from, if not an outsider position, then a more distant positioning. I could have done this research very differently, and chosen to pursue ethnographic or autoethnographic research (Vine et al. 2017). However, the chosen methodology has served well in allowing me to acquire and understand in-depth information by engaging with feminist theory in my analysis.

I find that my position in an “in between” has been especially crucial in evaluating what kind of information about the interviewees should be left out from the research so as not to jeopardize their anonymity. It is the task of future research, though, to fruitfully criticize what has been left out of this research, because self-reflection can only take one so far, as “you don’t know what you don’t know.” Nevertheless, feminist researcher Nancy Naples (1998, 10) states that being personally affected by the scrutinized issues follows feminist activist research that “opens when we enter the field as participants personally affected by the issue that is the focus of our work.” Indeed, my background has undoubtedly motivated me toward the epistemological view I have taken in this dissertation. I position myself as a member of the activist music research association Suoni, and as someone who pursues feminist activist research with the intention of engaging in “slow activism,” a term used by researchers Tiffany Page, Anna Bull, and Emma Chapman (2019, 1317) to refer to producing information and analysis that can help shift and change “sector guidelines and policy.” However, as they (Page, Bull & Chapman 2019, 1317) point out, “this takes time,” referring to the temporal slowness of conducting academic research and applying the produced information to the given social practices. Sara Ahmed (2021, 286) further points out that “[i]t is important to work slowly, given how solutions become problems; ways of saying we have done something can be how we don’t do something.”

I have engaged in activism from several different angles during my doctoral project. This activism has taken the form of writing essays for a wider audience about historically forgotten historical women instrumentalists (Ramstedt, A. 2019, 2020, 2021c, 2023a) and about gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional

abuse within contemporary classical music culture (e.g., Ramstedt, A. 2021a, 2021b, 2023b), giving interviews in radio shows, pod casts, and tv, as well as to newspapers and journals, in order to inform the audience about problematic issues within classical music culture and to promote preventative repair work (e.g., Kivelä 2021, 2023; Kvist 2024; Isolammi 2024). In an ongoing project together with music researchers Susanna Välimäki and Timo Virtanen and music historian Nuppu Koivisto-Kaasik, we are also working on publishing piano music by Finnish historical women composers from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century (Ramstedt, A et al. [eds.] forthcoming). The aim of the project is two-fold. Firstly, the aim is to make music by Finnish women composers available for students, practitioners, and teachers of classical music. Secondly, our aim is to contribute to a more accurate and more complete history of Finnish classical music culture, which indeed includes numerous women composers and musicians that have so far often been overlooked or forgotten (see Välimäki & Koivisto-Kaasik 2023). An important part of my activist work has revolved around giving lectures to classical music students and practitioners to teach young musicians how to recognize harmful behaviours and risk factors within classical music culture. Thus, my activist work has happened in many guises as a process of contributing to the slow and relentless work of changing views of the past, present, and also future.

It is also important to consider the academic environment that this research is situated in. Academia can in many ways perpetuate Eurocentric practices (as discussed in Chapter 3.1). This aspect is especially relevant to a feminist researcher studying Western classical music. Despite good intentions to reveal inequalities and abuses of power, and to disrupt power hierarchies, my position, and the financial support I have received, also risk reproducing some of the very hierarchies that I wish to dismantle. While this whole dissertation focuses on the informants' experiences of gender inequality and various abuses of power, they are similarly also white women in Finland. Thereby, this dissertation also reproduces power hierarchies, in that I have chosen to give a voice to and centre the experiences of *white* individuals. Conducting research on classical music itself also emphasizes and gives attention to a culture that is in myriad ways elitist, middle-class, and marked by white normativity (Bull 2019; Walker 2020; Kajikawa 2019).

On the other hand, as discussed especially in Chapter 2, classical music does not, neither historically nor in the modern era, consist only of white male composers and musicians. As discussed in Chapter 1, and as Nooshin (2011) points out, classical music is a site of multiple stories and agencies. Through the knowledge this dissertation produces, and the related slow activist work I engage in, my research contributes to de-centralizing the white male domination within classical music culture and to developing this culture into a safer space in which young students and musicians can express themselves musically.

5 Summaries of the four sub-studies

My dissertation's four sub-studies are all connected by their exploration of gender inequalities in classical music culture from different perspectives. In this chapter I outline the points of departure, research questions, methodologies, and most important findings of the sub-studies.

5.1 Article I: “A man is practically the general norm” – A case study of gender inequality and whiteness in the classical music scene in Finland

In Article I, I explore the widely accepted performance practice ideals that are reflected in performances by generally acclaimed performance figures in violin, piano, and cello culture in Finland. In this context, by “performance practice ideals” I refer to common expectations and ideals regarding musicians' appearance, bodily dispositions, and playing movements. By generally acclaimed performance figures I refer to pianists, violinists, and cellists that have been praised as quintessential musicians, and who are even thought to set the standards for the playing of their respective instruments. While the other articles examine inequality in classical music culture mainly from the perspective of gender, this article contributes to understanding how race-related inequality, and more specifically whiteness, intertwines with gender inequality in the fleshy acts of classical music performance. Based on the interviews conducted with fourteen Finnish white women classical musicians, this article contributes to an understanding of how white normativity emerges as a background for gender inequality, as well as how gender inequality and whiteness shape musicians' embodied subjectivity and affect their self-esteem. I ask, firstly, how gendered and racialized constructions are conveyed in performance ideals maintained by widely acclaimed performers and traditionally accepted ways of performing musical works. Secondly, I inquire how gendered and racialized constructions associated with idealized performers and performance ideals shape, intertwine in, and influence the interrelation of body and mind – *the embodied subjectivity*.

By leaning on Gatens' ([1996] 2003; 2004; Churcher & Gatens 2019) writings, I scrutinize how social imaginaries that appear in the form of representations, narratives, ready-made images, symbols, metaphors associated with performance

ideals, and idealized performer figures reflect and contribute to gendered and racialized constructions. Further, to understand how racialized social imaginaries reflect white normativity, I employ Ahmed's (2007, 154) understanding of race as a "question of what is within reach, what is available to perceive and to do 'things' with." Through this framework I study how idealized social imaginaries are associated only with specifically gendered and racialized musician bodies.

The findings show that gender inequality manifests itself in the over-representation of male performers as idealized performance figures in Finland, especially in the piano and cello cultures. I argue that when only certain white male artists and their recordings are established as legendary and idealized, this gives rise to a "canon of performers" comprised of these selected celebrated musicians. At the same time, the near complete ignorance of recordings by women, Black, indigenous musicians, and musicians of colour denotes not only misogyny but also racism. Ahmed (2007, 156) points out that "[p]ublic spaces take shape through the habitual actions of bodies, such that the contours of space could be described as habitual." This shows in the interview material in the silent assumption of white normativity, as well as how authority figures can, through bodily dispositions and playing movements, be associated with social imaginaries of whiteness and masculinity.

In the interviews, the minimal corporeal playing movements by white male pianists were seen to symbolize transcendence, "honest expression," and intellectuality – features that were described as ideals in classical music performance. That the body of white male pianists was described as "invisible," thus allowing these ideals and the "spirit of music" (Bull 2019, 104) to shine through, shows that white male normativity informs the ideals. As Ahmed (2007, 156) writes, whiteness orientates around institutions while "spaces extend bodies and bodies extend spaces." As white men remain the norm in classical music culture, white male pianists' bodies can extend the associated spaces by realizing imaginaries of transcendence, intellectuality, and the "spirit of music." In contrast, heroism and masculinity – aspects that were described as ideals in the Finnish cello culture – were especially associated with expansive bodily movements when performed by white male cellists. Because the acceptable form of corporeality can be argued to affirm heteronormative white masculinity, whiteness yet again appears as the background of social imaginaries associated with ideal cello performances.

Some interviewees reported that their feminine bodies often unintentionally attracted attention. Women pianists noted that using minimal corporeal movements was mistaken for shyness, and women cellists reported that femininity and women in general are associated with unprofessionalism. This confirms the situatedness (Tiainen et al., 2020) of social imaginaries: white women's bodies did not succeed in being associated with the established ideals in the piano and cello culture, while in violin culture women could be associated with authoritative violin

playing. Indeed, the women violinists in this research reported that they viewed a considerable number of women to be idealized violinists. However, the findings show that the interviewed women violinists and violists noted a plethora of appearance ideals that they were expected to live up to, such as being thin, beautiful, and “tidy.” The symbols, representations, and images surrounding the appearance ideals recognized by the interviewees can be summed up as a social imaginary that idealizes restrictive Western beauty standards, thinness, able-bodiedness, and heteronormativity – exposing that whiteness governs the gendered appearance ideals of the white Finnish women musicians. Again, the situatedness of these ideals and social imaginaries (Tiainen et al. 2020) can be affirmed by relying on the writings by musicologist Mina Yang (2007) and Leppänen (2015), who suggest that minimal bodily movements by Asian musicians have been associated with “the image of Asians as automatons, robots without souls” (Yang 2007, 14), and as “lacking in interpretative ability” (Leppänen 2015, 30). Further, as cultural historian Mari Yoshihara (2007, 119) argues, Asian women are often expected to be exotic, seductive, and sexually available.

These social imaginaries shaped the way the interviewees experienced themselves, and imposed control on the interrelation of their body and mind. Most of the participants had also occasionally had feelings of being insufficient and experiences of lacking self-esteem, as well as stage-fright and physical injuries. Especially the violinists of this study also mentioned eating disorders, and anxieties about how others perceive their sexuality through physical appearance and behaviour. However, it should be noted that at the time of the interviews most of the participants expressed strong criticism toward oppressive performance ideals. Because all of the aforementioned ideals were communicated to the participants of this study by their teachers and reaffirmed by their peers, the findings contradict Finland’s reputation as a model country for gender equality, as well as the Finnish music education system’s reputation as an emblem of social equality. Lastly, this study shows how whiteness and racialized inequality emerge as the background of both gendered ideals and gender inequality in the classical music culture in Finland.

5.2 Article II: “You just had to learn to live with it”: Gendered and sexual misconduct in classical music culture in Finland

The second article is, like the other three articles, based on the same research material gathered through interviews. In Article II the focus is on how gender inequality manifests itself in gendered and sexual misconduct in the classical music culture in Finland. Building upon the discussion of the social imaginaries of classical music culture in Article I, the second article offers an in-depth discussion of how underlying beliefs regarding heteronormativity established through

narratives, metaphors, representations, and ready-made images in Finnish classical music culture – social imaginaries – contribute to codes of conduct that help to normalize gendered and sexual misconduct. By “gendered and sexual misconduct” I refer to a wide range of behaviours. Firstly, by gendered misconduct I refer to behaviours that gender studies scholar Gunilla Carstensen (2016, 276–277) considers the “light grey” zone of sexual harassment, such as behaviour inappropriate from the gender perspective: dirty jokes, generalized sexist statements, and behaviour that damages gender equality by reinforcing male dominance. By “sexual misconduct” I refer to the notion used by sociologists Tiffany Page, Emma Chapman, and Anna Bull (2019, 1311) to denote behaviour such as sexual harassment, sexualized communication, and grooming. In association with the process of preparing a student for possible sexual harassment or abuse – that is, grooming – I also briefly discuss emotional abuse, such as harmful verbal behaviour or emotional neglect (Stirling and Kerr 2008, 173, 178; Bull and Page 2021) (see also Table 4: *Gendered and sexual misconduct* in Chapter 6.2).

In Article II, I employ Gatens’ ([1996] 2003, 2004; Churcher & Gatens 2019) work to analyse how social imaginaries confer differential meaning and value to particularly gendered bodies. Through the notion of social imaginaries, I examine beliefs about gender and sexuality, as well as power hierarchies, representations, and images that appear in the interview material in relation to experiences of gendered and sexual misconduct. By drawing upon anthropologist Jennifer Hirsch’s and sociologist Shamus Kahn’s (2020, 248–249) research, I examine how power is distributed in situations of gendered and sexual misconduct, and also how traditions and hierarchies specific to classical music culture contribute to power discrepancies between students and teachers.

What emerges from the participants’ experiences of gendered and sexual misconduct is that heteronormative gender power dynamics structure behaviour in the field of classical music in Finland. This reflects a social imaginary in which women are seen as available targets for the advances of heterosexual men. Moreover, older male teachers specifically are even seen as “predators,” who may easily start to take advantage of their young female students. Churcher and Gatens (2019, 152) write that social imaginaries can “function to normalize violent and disrespectful sexual behaviors in heterosexual encounters,” suggesting that what is considered normal is largely constructed through prevalent social imaginaries. The connection between the normalization of harmful behaviour and social imaginaries emphasizes the impact that gendered representation and oppressive practices in classical music culture can have. Thus, Article II expands upon the discussions of social imaginaries in Article I, and shows in what ways prevailing heteronormative social imaginaries contribute to social norms.

In Article II, I also analyse music/instrumental teachers’ power, relying on Hirsch’s and Khan’s (2020) study and their understanding of power as something

a person can possess, something a person can practice, and something a person can enjoy due to structural advantage. I argue that in the role of a classical music teacher one can possess power based on structural power, and thereby power over students' career opportunities and trajectories, as well as possible monetary resources (see also Table 5: *Power* in Chapter 6.2). This is further emphasized by historically long-standing hierarchies related to the master and pupil learning setting in classical music lessons and the social imaginary underlying this setting, which assumes a strong tradition of power disparity between “master” and “pupil.” Due to age hierarchies, teachers may also possess more sexual experience and psychological maturity, and thereby have the power to act at ease in sexually charged situations. Persons in positions of structural power can also possess social power in the form social influence and appreciation of other teachers and musicians in positions of authority.

These different power hierarchies of classical music culture make it difficult to report about gendered and sexual misconduct. However, as both Churcher and Gatens (2019) and Hirsch and Khan (2020) maintain, the surrounding culture, including social imaginaries, affects how individuals perceive their own rights and self-determination over their own body. I argue that because classical music practices, traditions, representations, and narratives often objectify, diminish the value of, and sexualize women, this partly allows for gendered and sexual misconduct. I also argue that the prevailing social imaginaries of gender and sexuality gave the teachers of my research participants easier opportunities to engage in grooming behaviour, including emotionally abusive behaviour. Moreover, the teachers could also gain the trust of their students through grooming behaviour, which in some cases led to abusive relationships between the teacher and the student.

While not all cases of grooming led to abusive relationships, according to my findings all of the grooming experiences resulted in severe consequences, ranging from anxiety, panic attacks, depression, and sleep deprivation to difficulty trusting fellow humans. Lastly, Article II contributes to an understanding of how oppressive views of gender that are reflected and (re)produced in classical music performance ideals, and canonized repertoire and narratives, such as restrictive Western beauty standards, thinness, able-bodiedness, and femininity norms, contribute to sexism and gendered and sexual misconduct. The harmful gender inequalities of classical music culture can thus be seen as manifested in experiences of gendered and sexual misconduct.

5.3 Article III: Emotional abuse in classical music education in Finland: A Study of Finnish women musicians' experiences

Article III focuses on the prevailing beliefs and values in the Finnish classical music culture and how these contribute to harmful codes of conduct in classical music education, more specifically to the teachers' emotionally abusive behaviour. Unlike in the other articles, gender does not serve as the main analytical concept here, but nevertheless this article, too, is contextualized by gender because all of the interviewees were white Finnish women. Further, gender is discussed when it is relevant to my analysis of the values and beliefs that emerge in relation to emotional abuse. Article III scrutinizes the value systems in classical music culture related to playing skills and achievements. Based on the interview material used in all of the dissertation's articles, Article III sheds light on the under-researched subject of emotional abuse in classical music education, which is sometimes presented in the Finnish media as a harmful yet normalized feature of classical music culture.

I define emotional abuse as patterned deliberate non-contact behaviour, such as verbal abuse and emotional neglect (Stirling & Kerr 2008). In my research, such behaviour included maleficent and/or demeaning commenting, unwarranted anger, humiliation, harmful comparison, denial of approval, attention, or support, and intentionally setting a student up for failure (see Table 6: *Emotional abuse* in Chapter 6.3). In Article III, I ask in what ways beliefs and values specific to classical music culture partly allow for emotional abuse. Further, I ask how the understandings and theories by Gatens ([1996] 2003; 2004; Churcher & Gatens 2019) and philosopher Torbjörn Tännsjö (2000) can be applied to explain how representations, images, symbols, and narratives specific to classical music culture allow for the prevalence of emotional abuse by impacting the beliefs and norms of behaviour that left the individual subjects prone to both participating in and accepting emotionally abusive behaviour.

Two aspects of Gatens' understanding of social imaginaries are relevant here. First, leaning on the concept of social imaginaries (Gatens [1996] 2003, 2004; Churcher & Gatens 2019), I analyse the themes that came up in the interview material in association with experiences of emotionally abusive behaviour. These themes are the narrative of artistic "geniuses" and the associated idealization of musical excellence and skills; the ready-made images of accomplished and skilful musicians with associated gendered and racialized constructions; and the ways in which artistic excellence and skills are equated with the status and value of individuals. The findings of this article show that these themes comprise a key social imaginary of classical music, in which musical accomplishments and skills determine how individuals are accepted and appreciated – or not – as persons. These findings support Tännsjö's (2000) argument that the admiration and

idealization of the so-called heroes of sports, science, or the arts, and their performances and accomplishments, spring from the fascistoid admiration of strength. By “fascistoid” Tännsjö (2000, 23) refers to something “resembling or tending to resemble fascism.” According to Tännsjö (2000, 13) the admiration and idealization of strength, or in this context musical excellence and skills, also confirms the opposite – the condescending attitude toward “losers.”

The second aspect of Gatens’ (2004, 285) work that is relevant to Article III is how social imaginaries affect the whole person – their embodied subjectivity. In other words, how contempt – which Tännsjö (2000) acknowledges as a reaction towards those who are considered comparatively “weak” and less valuable – can be understood as an *affective* response to social norms. In this article I elaborate on how the social imaginaries of classical music culture can also be associated with visceral responses. I analyse how emotionally abusive behaviour can be understood as contempt for “losers” – and as such, as an affective response to the idealization of skills and the norms of evaluating individuals’ status and value based on their musical skills. On the other hand, the shame and guilt experienced by the interviewees for not meeting the “musical standards” can also be understood as affective responses to social imaginaries, and thus as “signs of one’s belonging” (Gatens 2004, 286) to classical music culture.

This article contributes to an understanding of how inequality appears in the value systems of classical music culture that work through social imaginaries. By expanding on the works of Gatens (2004) and Tännsjö (2000) this article contributes to showing how social imaginaries in classical music culture, and the associated social norms, allow for emotionally abusive behaviour. Specifically, emotionally abusive behaviour motivated by contempt, and the acceptance of emotionally abusive behaviour as evidenced by its targets’ feelings of shame and guilt, can be seen as affective responses to social norms and as signs of belonging to classical music culture. Finally, in Article III, I also propose changes that should be implemented in classical music education to prevent emotional abuse in the future.

5.4 Article IV: Homophily and genre boundaries: Inequalities in classical music networks in Finland

The fourth article of this dissertation explores how gender inequality impacts women musicians’ experiences of networking, and how gender inequality is also (re)produced in these and through musical genre boundaries. While all of the other articles examine the interviewees’ experiences of their time as students in music schools, or professional studies, this article focuses on the interviewees’ experiences in the classical music industry as jobseekers, employees, or freelance musicians. Further, contrary to the other articles that scrutinize the intertwining of gender inequality and whiteness, this article also contributes to an understanding of how

these phenomena are reproduced in relation to connotations associated with the canonized repertoire and genre boundaries of classical music. Based on the interview material, I ask how gendered power dynamics and inequality are manifested in the participants' experiences of working life and networking, how gender inequality is intertwined with the genre boundaries of classical music, and how musical genre boundaries thus structure gender inequality in the classical music culture in Finland.

To understand how networks (re)produce gender inequality, I explore how social imaginaries intersect with homophily. By homophily, or homosocial behaviour, I refer to individuals' un/conscious tendency to socialize with people with similar characteristics to their own, such as age, social class, gender, race, and more (Scharff 2017, 60; see also Ibarra 1992; McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2001; Sang, Dainty and Ison 2014, 249; Wreyford 2015). In addition to homophily, I also analyse how the interview material reveals the prevailing favouritism of peers (*horizontal* cronyism) and the favouritism of subordinates (*vertical* cronyism) (Khatri & Tsang 2003, 292). While relying on qualitative research material, I analyse how experiences of homophily can play into systemic inequality through narratives regarding genre, as well as gendered constructions. In this article, I argue that homophily in classical music culture perpetuates socio-cultural conditions that involve and reinforce gender inequalities, hierarchies, and privileges.

By employing Gatens' ([1993] 2003, 2004) notion of social imaginaries when exploring homophily, I discuss how inequalities become intertwined with genre boundaries. In homophily, a belief in the strict musical genre boundaries of classical music – considering canonized classical music works as supreme and the only ones worth performing – intersects with the idea that mainly white males are quintessential artists, whereas music composed by women is a mere subgenre of classical music. This article also brings together the themes discussed in the other articles. In this last article of the dissertation, I discuss how the inequalities examined relate to performance ideals explored in Article I, the inequalities linked to hierarchies and gendered power discrepancies in Article II, and the ready-made images of an idealized classical musician in Article III.

Further, as in Article II, I analyse also in Article IV how gender appears as lived experience through the ways in which the interviewees faced femininity norms and expectations based on their gendered bodies. This also relates to the way participation in classical music culture thus imposes binary gender norms that orientate participation and experiences within that space, even though binary gender constructions are insufficient and fail to represent the variety of gender identities and expressions. These concepts and phenomena are also related to social imaginaries of binary bodies, femininity norms, and to the ways these constitute the premises in classical music piano, violin, and cello culture. I argue that the imaginary body to which privilege is assigned is based on an ideal-typical white

male body, and thus this article aligns with a long line of studies that have revealed classical music culture as often reaffirming mainly white, male, middle-class identities (e.g., McClary [1991] 2002; Citron [1993] 2000, 2004; Green 1997; Miller 2016; Bull & Scharff 2021; Gibson 2024).

Lastly, in Article IV I also shed light on the ways that musical repertoire, and what is thought to constitute classical music, orientate women musicians' participation in classical music work and networks in Finland. The repertoire that is deemed the most prestigious to perform consists almost solely of music composed by white male European composers. This canonical musical repertoire is, according to the interviewees' experiences, often described as the traditional cultural heritage of classical music. Narratives associated with the musical canon thus contribute to gendered storytelling (Alacovska & O'Brien 2021), in which white male middle-class identities are considered as inherently neutral to the extent that they are seen as constituting the very premise of the classical music genre. Through this consideration, in Article IV I show how gender orientates networks and genre boundaries through which gender inequality may extend into systemic inequality.

6 Conclusions and Final Reflections

My motivations for this dissertation were inspired by feminist music scholars Marcia J. Citron ([1993] 2000, 3) and Suzanne G. Cusick (1999, 41) – both of whom draw attention to how a socially contingent music culture participates in reflecting and producing the society in which it exists. Cusick inspired me to explore *why* we should care about the ways a music culture works as a medium for intersectional sociocultural constructions of differences primarily related to gender and race. Classical music entails an unbelievably vast concept, a range of phenomena that comprise musical repertoires, practices, and history which has, over the past 300 years, spread and transformed into a myriad of shapes. Similarly, there is an increasing amount of research that has already demonstrated the multiple ways in which classical music culture is linked to oppressive socio-cultural structures and white male domination. Despite this, there has, until now, been a lack of research on the prevalence of gender inequality in classical music networks and education in Finland, and more specifically the harmful manifestations of oppression in the form of gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse.

In this dissertation I set out to study the classical music culture in Finland from the concise perspective, and in the specific context, of the experiences of Finnish white women professional pianists, violinists, cellists, and violists between the ages of 25 and 45. The main question, which I have sought to answer is how gender inequality appears in the classical music culture in Finland in the context of these specific instruments and related music-making practices, and how gender inequality, whiteness, gendered and sexual misconduct, and emotional abuse can be linked to the commonly accepted practices, ideals, and socio-cultural features of the researched surroundings. In order to pursue the main question of my study, I investigated social imaginaries and social norms within the classical music culture in Finland, and the ways in which these impacted and affected the embodied subjectivities of my research participants.

Through the concept of social imaginaries, I examined specific components in the Finnish classical music piano, violin, and cello cultures as they emerged in the interview material. I understood social imaginaries as consisting of overlapping representations, narratives, ideals, ready-made images, symbols, and metaphors. Through the context-specific, and even situation-bound, social imaginaries and

social norms (generally accepted codes of conduct) that appeared in the interview material, I examined understandings of gender, sexuality, and whiteness, along with beliefs and values. Further, I examined how these social imaginaries affected and shaped the lived experience – embodied subjectivities – of the interviewees. In this last chapter I highlight and discuss the results of my four sub-studies and the ways they together contribute to answering the main research question and its five sub-questions. Thereafter I present the conclusions of this dissertation. Based on my research and its conclusions, I propose (in the Postlude) some recommendations on how to engage in repair work to prevent gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse in the classical music culture of the future.

6.1 Materialising imaginary bodies in classical music

In broad strokes, this dissertation supports previous research in that the findings ostensibly reaffirm that classical music culture, and the power hierarchies within it, are gendered and male-dominated (e.g., Citron [1993] 2000; Green 1997; Scharff 2017; Bull 2019; Gibson 2024; see Chapters 1.3, 2, and 3 on previous research). White male domination appeared in representations of the musical canon, and also in the canon of performers in specifically piano and cello culture (Articles I and IV). Gendered domination also appeared in how power hierarchies, or homophily and cronyism were associated in the research material with music education and networking (Articles II, III, and IV). Also, narratives such as the genius myth (Articles I and III) and ready-made images of stereotypical and quintessential classical pianists and cellists (Articles I, III and IV) were clearly (white) male dominated. I have also demonstrated how repertoire and genre boundaries contribute to building and legitimizing forms of inequality through gendered narratives and modes of thinking (Article IV). Gender inequality and male domination also related to my interviewees' experiences of various forms of gendered and sexual misconduct, including grooming, as well as emotional abuse (Articles II, III, and IV).

These results reflect in many ways the historical male-dominated practices of classical music piano, cello, and violin culture, which were shaped amidst an era of European colonial occupation and empire (discussed in Chapter 2). That social imaginaries in modern-day classical music culture are traced back to such a one-sided narrative of cultural heritage related to canonized music of (mainly) non-Finnish white male composers from central Europe epitomises how gender binary and coloniality are also prevalent in forming historicity in Finland. Obviously, dominant social imaginaries are inherently insufficient to represent any kind of “universality” or “neutrality.” Nevertheless, that the white imaginary body metaphorically stands for a hegemonic conception of the classical music tradition, and an overarching background to ontological and epistemological concerns in this

culture, may invoke an eerie sense of fatalism and essentialism, in that gender inequality and gendered power hierarchies may seem destined to be perpetuated in modern-day classical music culture.

Through the first sub-question I set out to explore how gender and related socio-cultural categories conveyed in the performance practice ideals maintained by widely acclaimed performance figures. By applying viewpoints from Gatens' writings and the concept of "the middle," in which intersectionality and new materialist thinking intersect, I have demonstrated how gender and other constructions of social differences may be understood, instead of as stagnant, rather as constantly unfolding through social imaginaries. Although narratives surrounding classical music, and especially canonized repertoires, are at times associated with even transcendent qualities, music nevertheless is located and constructed through the performances of fleshy bodies. The ways social imaginaries and social differences emerge in situation-bound instances were discussed mostly in Articles I and IV. I have dissected how constructions of gender and race emerge through the fleshy performance of Eurocentric gendered and racialized social imaginaries that are also orientated through material circumstances composed of instruments, spaces, bodily dispositions, and sounds. For example, "neutrality" is associated with a certain bodily stagnant performance of white masculinity, especially when playing the piano, whereas the cello, played by especially white Finnish male cellists, was described by my interviewees as allowing for a performance of proving and portraying heteronormative masculinity. When examining the performance ideals that women musicians, and specifically violinists, face, I have argued that the social imaginaries behind the appearance ideals are based on Western beauty standards such as able-bodiedness and thinness, and overall on middle-class femininity norms and white appearance criteria (Article I).

These findings demonstrate how the institutional space of classical music contours the actions of bodies and determines the ways in which bodies need to inhabit whiteness. As visualized in Figure 1: *Findings*, my research results are interconnected to each other and build up a fluid and circular process of social imaginaries, social norms, music-making practices, the cultural heritage of classical music, and power hierarchies and social differences. Nevertheless, male domination and the interconnectedness between history, present, inequality, and practices are orientated not only through male domination, but also through distinct underlying understandings of masculinity and femininity that reveal binary gender and heteronormativity as structuring forces.

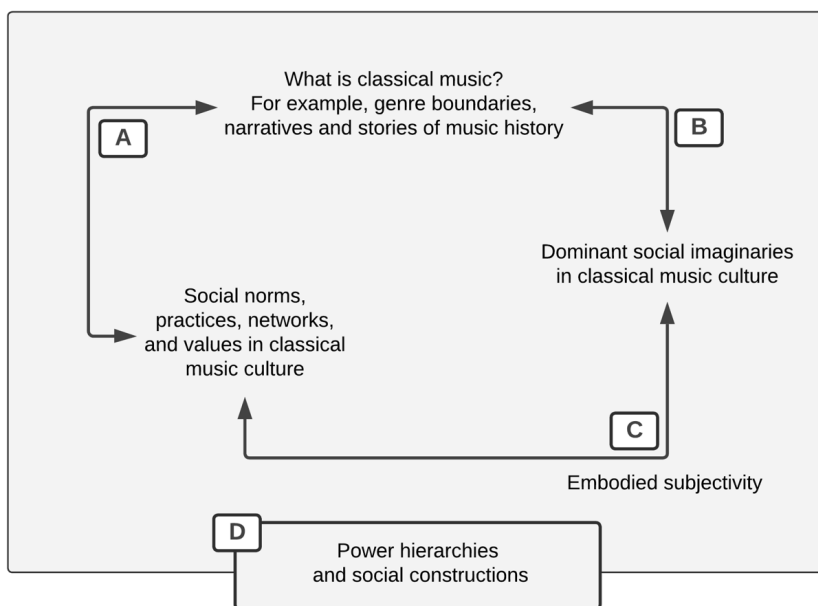


Figure 1 Findings. The figure visualizes how A, B, C and D are interconnected.

A: Social norms, values, beliefs and practices in classical music culture impact what is considered as classical music (genre boundaries), which, in turn, impact social norms, values, beliefs, and music-making practices. The connection is processual and fluid.

B: The narratives and stories related to classical music history and what is considered as the cultural heritage of classical music impact also dominant social imaginaries, such as representations and narratives of canonized music, performance practice ideals, and ready-made images of who is considered a classical musician. On the other hand, these social imaginaries reaffirm and construct the past and what is considered the history of classical music.

C: Dominant social imaginaries also impact what kind of social value is placed on individuals, and what are the social norms in relation to how to treat each other. On the other hand, dominant social imaginaries construct and reflect values and beliefs of how one should participate in the classical music culture, impacting thus for example networks and music education. The relationship between these components, that are impacted also by what is considered the cultural heritage of classical music, also affect and impact the embodied subjectivity of individuals within this culture. The relationship between these clusters of components are fluid and processual, and they should be considered as constantly co-constructed.

D: Together these all clusters of components impact power constructions and social constructions, such as whiteness, heteronormativity. On the other hand, social constructions and power hierarchies are also a background on which A, B, and C are emerging on.

6.2 Gender as a structuring force of inequalities

One of the sub-questions of this research related to understanding how social imaginaries in classical music culture are associated with forms of misconduct (see Table 4: *Gendered and sexual misconduct*). According to my findings, gender and the intersecting social categories of social class and race orientate networks, participation in work life, and music education, as differently socially positioned bodies are associated differently with the social imaginaries of classical music culture. This is also inherently related to the distribution of social power and genre boundaries in classical music (Articles II and IV) – demonstrating again the processuality of and interconnectedness between practices and representations (Figure 1: *Findings*).

Table 4 Gendered and sexual misconduct

Gendered and sexual misconduct: • gendered and sexist statements and comments • sexualized and flirty gestures • sexist and/or gendered jokes • touching (also not explicitly sexually) • sexual advances • sexualized communication in various ways • coercion and sexual invitations • Grooming: • sharing of private/intimate information with a student • comments on a student's body/clothing/appearance/private matters (often sexualized) • invitations for dinners and social outings • spending time with students outside of education institutions without other staff (for example by attending student parties) • messaging about topics not related to the taught subject • emotionally abusive behaviour: - alternating between appraisal and neglect - controlling behaviour

By examining social imaginaries, social norms, and embodied experiences of the interviewees, this research demonstrates how essentialist binary gender narratives systematize social arrangements and ways of interacting in that feminine norms are imposed impact women musicians, through appearance ideals and the ways the interviewees were pressured into affirming essentialist cisnormativity through gendered codes of conduct and norms. Binary gender constructions also intersect throughout this dissertation with heteronormativity, whiteness, and class, thus shaping Finnish classical music culture: who can participate in it and inhabit its spaces. As visualized in Figure 2: *Risk factors*, binary gender constructions also

organise and impact networking through male dominated homophily and cronyism, power, and harmful gendered social norms.

That gendered and sexual misconduct (Table 4: *Gendered and sexual misconduct*) is normalized in classical music culture epitomizes what social imaginaries discussed across the articles suggested all along: young women are sexually available for men, who are in turn driven by their (hetero)sexual drive. Gendered misconduct and emotional abuse are also related to power discrepancies in teacher-student communication. In Table 5: *Power*, I illustrate how, based on Hirsch and Khan's (2020) theorization, power dynamics emerged in this research, and how these appear as risk factors for abuses of power. As affirmed through predominant social imaginaries, power hierarchies, normalized harmful behaviour, and male-dominated networks appear as risk factors for grooming behaviour and emotional abuse (Figure 2: *Risk factors*). As demonstrated in Articles II and III, a sense of isolation and inhabiting small social circles may further increase an individual's precarity when experiencing gendered and sexual misconduct or emotional abuse.

While the embodied subjectivities of (the majority of) my participants were affected and impacted by specific femininity norms, or requirements concerning appearance, or musical ideals, the interviewees also expressed criticism and exhaustion toward such gendered requirements. Most of the interviewees also affirmed that taking part in this research provided them with a way to oppose the dominant *status quo* of the classical music culture in Finland. This demonstrates how the interviewees were not acquiescent to hegemonic power hierarchies, but instead active in resisting them.

While this research has focused on understanding dominant social imaginaries and gender inequalities, it should be noted that such scenes do not represent the entirety of classical music culture in Finland today (Kvist 2023a; 2023b). Since I embarked on this dissertation, classical music culture in Finland has gone through remarkable changes and shifts. Firstly, a massive change was caused in the cultural sector in Finland by the global pandemic, which made many musicians' situations even more precarious. Secondly, after 2019, investigative journalism has shed light on inequality, sexual harassment, and abuse cases in the Finnish classical music scene (Kvist 2019, 2020; Mattila 2020; Karemo 2020; Riihinen & Tiikkaja 2020; Tiikkaja 2020; Vedenpää 2020; Saarikoski 2020, 2023, 2024; Paananen & Saarikoski 2024). On the other side of the spectrum, discussions in the media about intersecting inequalities and social problems have gone hand-in-hand with action, as an increasing number of institutions, music festivals, partitioners, and concert

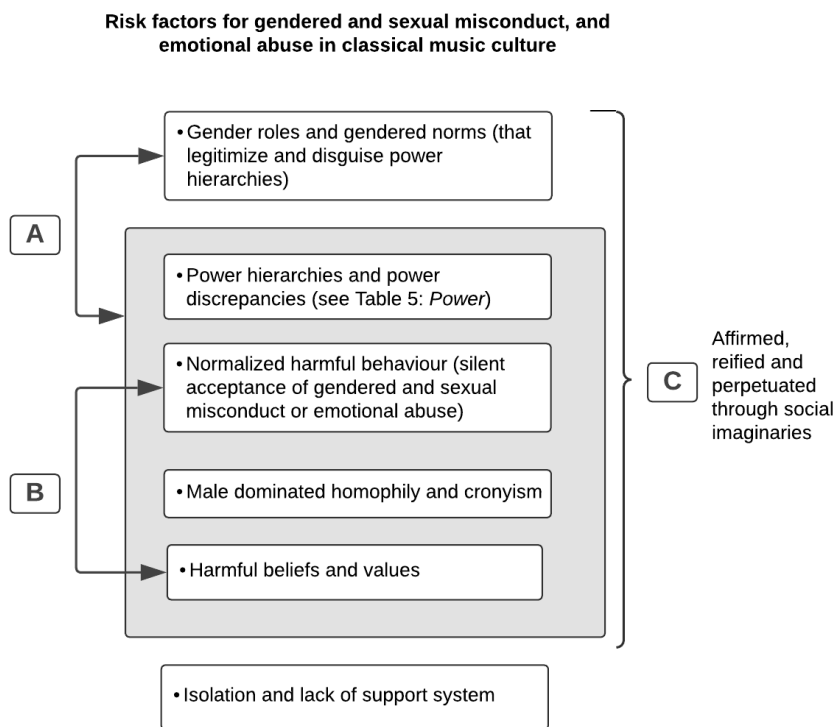


Figure 2 Risk factors

The figure visualizes the 6 main risk factors: 1) Gendered roles and gendered norms (that legitimize and disguise power hierarchies; 2) Power hierarchies and power discrepancies (see Table 5: *Power*); 3) Normalized harmful behaviour (silent acceptance of gendered and sexual misconduct or emotional abuse); 4) Male dominated homophily and cronyism; 5) Harmful beliefs and values; and 6) Isolation and lack of support system (for example, to be immersed only within classical music culture and therefore becoming used to harmful behaviour, or to lack genuine support system both within and outside of classical music culture).

A: The arrows visualize how binary gendered norms (for example, heteronormativity) are interconnected with power hierarchies, normalized harmful behaviour and male domination. While these elements can be seen as separate risk factors, they also reaffirm each other. For example, male dominated homophily can reaffirm binary gender roles and power discrepancies, whereas harmful behaviour may be rendered as normalized based on gendered power hierarchies and heteronormativity.

B: Harmful beliefs and values may normalize harmful behaviour and vice versa.

C: Risk factors 1–5 is united with a bracket. These factors may be reaffirmed, reflected and constructed through social imaginaries.

series have begun to engage in repair work combatting social inequalities (see for example Kvist 2023a; 2023b). These changes, and new currents now surging in the classical music culture in Finland are vital, since the binary gender dynamics exposed in this dissertation are, firstly, inherently inadequate to representing the actuality of gender identities and expressions, but are also a harmful risk factor for the perpetuation of power discrepancies and gendered and sexual misconduct (see Figure 2: *Risk factors*).

Table 5 Power

Power related to	Appears in
...specific spaces of classical music culture (such as a classroom)	long-standing hierarchical setting related to the master and pupil traditions admiration of (artistic) excellence/strength/genialness binary gender dynamics
... structural advantage	position of authority (e.g. teacher/professor/conductor) social power that comes with the position of authority power or privilege related to social constructions
...something an individual possesses	musical skills control over money resources (grants) control over networks and career opportunities age (psychological maturity, sexual experience) expertise of taught subject
... as something an individual practices (e.g. grooming or emotional abuse)	a student's trust or emotional dependence on the teacher

6.3 Harmful norms and values within classical music culture

The last two sub-questions of this dissertation concerned the ways in which classical music culture’s widely accepted norms and values partly allow for gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse, as well as why inequalities persist through genre boundaries. While social imaginaries are, as discussed above, temporary, varying, and also dependent on material components, some social imaginaries have become standardized, normative, and indeed idealized. In this research I have demonstrated the effects of such dominant social imaginaries.

All of my sub-studies show that what is believed to be idealized within the classical music culture also sets the boundaries for how one should participate in this culture. In the context of this research set in the Finnish classical music culture for piano, violin, and cello, factors such as idealizing excellence and the dominant social imaginaries on which such ideals are based are key components that impact networks, vertical and horizontal cronyism, and even create the boundaries for the classical music genre. I thus suggest that these connections could be understood as a system that structures and coordinates participation within classical music culture in Finland. Social imaginaries, and the values and beliefs that come with them, affect and impact how we understand and make value judgements on the surrounding environment and the individuals within it. Social imaginaries also create a background upon which norms and codes of conduct are based – orientating which actions are understood as “right” and which are understood as “wrong,” thus impacting even ethics. Harmful social norms and codes of conduct are thereby emerging as risk factors for abuses of power (see Figure 2: *Risk factors*), as they may normalize behaviour that in other cultural or social contexts would be seen as entirely unethical.

Table 6 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse: • demeaning/maleficent commenting • unwarranted anger/aggression • humiliation • harmful comparison between students • neglect, rejection, denial of support/approval (also through body language) • intentionally setting up a student for failure
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My research contributes to demonstrating how, at worst, harmful social imaginaries may appear in instances of emotional abuse (see Table 6: *Emotional*

abuse), even as reasons for such behaviour. Social norms also impact the affective investments of individuals. In this dissertation, embodied affects, such as feelings of inadequacy, shame, or self-blame caused by not meeting certain ideals, can even be interpreted as signs of belonging to the classical music culture. Such an understanding underlies my argument that gendered and sexual misconduct, and emotional abuse, are not separate incidents but are instead consequences of a web of elements that encompass social imaginaries, social norms, values, hierarchies, and practices.

To recall the beginning of this chapter, instead of seeing a neatly causal relationship between representations and materiality, these dimensions could be seen as continuously materialized (or embodied) through habituality. While intersecting and already-existing social differences, such as gender binary and whiteness, emerged as a background for social imaginaries, relying on a “Gatensian” reading allowed me to examine them as constant processes of *becoming*, in which representation and materiality are not determined only discursively and through causality but are instead co-formed. Simultaneously, these norms and actions unfold with narratives of classical music history, constantly orientating onto-epistemological points of departure, constructing the standards and ideals that formed the borders of what classical music is expected to be (see Figure 1: *Findings*). To answer, then, why inequality persists, I argue that this persistence is due to the ways in which this processuality within the system is relied upon and reiterated.

The question then arises, *why* does classical music culture revolve so strongly around a set of dominant social imaginaries that structure participation in the culture? Why are the practices of playing particular instruments in classical music culture, as discussed in this dissertation, seemingly dependent on “one image” that is being reiterated (Citron [1993] 2000, 3)? Cultural theorist Max Rynänen (forthcoming 2024; see also Rynänen 2020) argues that to envision a different system of art means not only criticising the existing system internally but also framing things differently. I believe that classical music culture would benefit from a conscious effort of re-imagining its practices as not having just *one* historical background, set of ideals, or set of practices. Instead, it should be accepted that classical music comprises equally important *multiple* and *co-existing* historical and present-day ways of practicing music that together form a plentiful and rich myriad of shapes of classical music culture.

6.4 Reflections

In this article-based dissertation I have demonstrated the prevalence of gender inequality within the context of classical music piano, violin, and cello culture in Finland. Previous research on various social inequalities, misconduct and abuse

within classical music culture, as experienced by musicians, has contributed to the study of this topic with sociological viewpoints, and focused on researching issues regarding male domination and intersecting inequalities in, for example, the representations, social networks, or aesthetic realms of classical music. I have sought to complement and enrich previous research by demonstrating how gender, and specifically binary gender and heteronormativity, structure and organize gender inequality within classical music culture. I have also demonstrated how whiteness form the background for gender inequality in Finland, despite that such inequalities are not always acknowledged in the sea of white normativity. Gender emerged in this research as a lived phenomenon that orientates musicians' participation in classical music education, work life, and networking. The largest and most prominent contribution that I have made with this dissertation is the in-depth knowledge that has been produced, especially related to gendered and sexual misconduct, and more specifically to grooming and emotional abuse. Most profoundly, I have contributed to research on how gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse interrelate with plural social imaginaries.

I have aligned this study with feminist research on classical music that follows a tradition of revealing inequalities and promoting repair work. By applying intersectional and new materialist theoretical frameworks I have demonstrated how intersecting inequalities can be regarded in terms of unfolding social imaginaries. This perspective has allowed me to expand previous research on gender inequalities within classical music culture by confronting and scrutinizing inequalities within this culture as not inherent, static, and stuck in their historicity, but as processual. I hope this theorization will inspire further research on temporality in relation to the historicity of inequality within classical music culture. Based on this dissertation, I believe that feminist music research, especially on classical music culture, could benefit from utilizing new materialist and post-humanist theories in order to de-centralize dominant socio-cultural hierarchies when scrutinizing intersecting inequalities. Hopefully, then, my doctoral dissertation encourages future research on these issues, but also on racism and microaggression, and how gendered and sexual misconduct is experienced by individuals with various gender identities or LGBTQ+ individuals in specific ways.

Circling back to the beginning, narratives, representations, ideals, plural ready-made images, symbols, and metaphors that appear in classical music culture produce interrelated social meanings, socio-cultural constructions, norms, values, and beliefs through which members of this culture navigate their everyday life. The reason for *why we should care* how social differences emerge and are produced through social imaginaries is that they impact, or rather co-form with, social norms and codes of conduct and the ways in which differently positioned individuals are valued and treated. What kind of narratives, practices, images, and ideals are (re)produced matters - but such components are not set in stone, and every decision

is also an opportunity to create a more diverse and plentiful culture within classical music.

Postlude – Recommendations on repair practices

Based on this dissertation, intersecting inequalities within classical music culture depend on a complicated network of links and connections between social imaginaries and materiality. Thus, there are no quick fixes or fast solutions to preventing gendered and sexual misconduct or emotional abuse. Instead, preventing these phenomena requires a thorough refiguring and rethinking of classical music culture. Below I present ideas that, based on the results of this research, surface as important ways forward.

Recognizing and naming the issues

It should be noted that phenomena such as grooming and emotional abuse were not easily recognized by the participants of this research. As also discussed in other studies (Bull 2019; Stirling & Kerr 2009), this suggests that when such phenomena are normalized they tend to become more difficult to acknowledge as problematic issues. Therefore, to prevent gendered and sexual misconduct and emotional abuse, the entire spectrum of institutions, practitioners, teachers, and students should, firstly, be taught to recognize and identify harmful behaviours and beliefs (see Table 4: *Gendered and sexual harassment* and Table 6: *Emotional abuse* in Chapters 6.2 and 6.3). Secondly, institutions, practitioners, teachers, and students should be aware of risk factors specific to classical music culture (see Figure 2: *Risk factors* in Chapter 6.2). The key risk factors identified by my study were: power discrepancies (see Table 5: *Power* in subchapter 6.2), binary gender norms, male domination, harmful beliefs that reinforce commonly accepted musical ideals, the notion of placing excellence above the musicians' well-being, and individuals' lack of support.

Based on this study, I suggest that young musicians aiming to become professionals, as well as students in tertiary music education, should be offered social-emotional learning and safety skills in order to prepare them to participate in and work within the challenging field of music. Social-emotional learning and safety skills are taught in Finnish schools, and elsewhere, for all ages in order to prevent sexual harassment, violence, and bullying (e.g. Aaltonen 2012; Finnish National Agency for Education, n.d.; Granskog et al. 2018). Social-emotional

learning and safety skills could also be applied to teach and help young musicians to recognize harmful behaviours and risk factors for harmful behaviour, and to become self-aware and empathetic individuals that are mindful of respecting the boundaries of themselves and others (see also Hirsch & Khan 2020, 266–267, 269).

Replacing harmful values with affirmative and sustainable modes of practice

Just as misconduct such as emotional abuse or gendered and sexual misconduct can be rendered unnoticeable, similarly certain values, beliefs, and aims within classical music culture may seem self-evident. As this research demonstrates, harmful values may be intrinsically, and in a myriad of ways, connected with the social norms, beliefs, and practices of a specific culture. In order to engage in repair work, change thereby also needs to happen through critical reflection on the ethics of institutions' or practitioners' ways of acting. This includes advancing awareness and encouraging critical consideration of how power hierarchies, practices, repertoires, narratives, representations, and symbols in classical music culture may contribute to harmful social norms that may facilitate gendered and sexual misconduct or emotional abuse. Affirmative and sustainable practice means viewing a music student's development holistically and placing emphasis on creating long-term, student-centered goals (see e.g., Pozo et al. 2022; Wahlström 2022, 222). Holistic and sustainable support by practitioners should also include respecting the broad range of ways in which individuals may express gender and various identity formations. Similarly to Stirling and Kerr (2009, 235), I argue that an important way in which to promote sustainable modes of practice is to create understanding and knowledge among musicians and students, so that playing classical music *never* needs to come with the sacrifice of mental and physical health and well-being.

Dispersing power discrepancies

While holding power cannot be seen as a cause for harmful behaviour *per se*, power discrepancies can nonetheless be regarded as risk factors that hinder individuals from opposing or reporting misuses of power. As a step towards the prevention of emotional abuse and gendered and sexual misconduct, I suggest that the students' dependence on their instrumental teachers could be lessened. Similarly to Wickström (2023; see also Jääskeläinen et al. 2023; Stirling & Kerr 2009), I suggest that instrumental teachers' power could be dispersed by also inviting other partners and professionals to support students' development, such as performance coaches, discipline-specific counselling, and people providing support with psycho-physical issues.

Accepting Responsibility

Institutions, artists, teachers, and practitioners, as well as students, would do well to reflect on the social, cultural, subjective, affective, visceral, economic, and ecological impact that their behaviour and actions may have on other humans and the surrounding world. In practice, this means always considering what kinds of impact one's specific decisions or behaviour may have. For example, the repertoire one selects or the ideals one chooses to affirm may unintentionally reinforce harmful power hierarchies. Choosing to play only canonized music and reaffirming its status as great or quintessential without unpacking its colonial and gendered baggage may, as Margaret E. Walker (2020, 14) points out, continue to produce Eurocentric superiority. Every choice and decision that institutions, artists, teachers, and practitioners make is thus also an opportunity to contribute to a positive difference.

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