

# Sarah Manasreh Stevens Point, WI

## BIG BLACK BLOTCH PROJECT

Sarah Manasreh uses her degree in music performance, and career as a professor and professional musician, to pursue her passion: promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in classical music.

It used to be you played these dead white guys, and if you wanted to do anything outside of that, that was considered Avant Garde and you were not going to get the support and resources you needed to pursue your own music.

Sarah started the Big Black Blotch Project, referring to the shape of individual musical notes, inviting emerging composers, of any age, to submit their own composition. Her goal is to find ways to make sure they have support, equipment, and a space where they belong and have a community. Sarah meets with all composers virtually, records their composition, create a website and promote it. One result is an ever-growing musical archive themed “storytelling.”

Sarah is a Palestinian American. With light skin, growing up she straddled the line of not belonging in any particular group. “My skin color became an obsession. I do not fit the stereotype of an Arab woman. I do not wear the Hijab, I don’t have dark skin, or other attributes many Americans associate with being Middle Eastern. The majority is who decides the stereotypes, or what the attributes are, and I don’t have a say in that. I sometimes feel like a fraud, but I began to accept and redefined myself by saying, *I get to decide where I belong.*”



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