

October 2019

Counting the Music Industry: The Gender Gap

Summary of key findings

A study of gender inequality
in the UK Music Industry

A report by Vick Bain

Executive Summary

Counting the Music Industry uncovers how the UK music industry professionally supports female musicians compared to male musicians and shows there is a deficit of women; the gender gap in music. This can be determined by focussing on the gender balance of those who are signed to labels and publishers.

Why is this important? The musicians who are signed to publishing companies and record labels are the ones who receive professional and economic support and investment to nourish and support their careers, and to earn money. There has been a rise in DIY self-funded careers over the past twenty years, but it is a fact that it is far more probable that a musician will be economically successful if they are signed to a publisher or record label, than if they are not. Those signed will have albums professionally recorded and released, go on tours organised for them, and have appropriate marketing including social media campaigns built around their personalities and music.

According to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) Global Music Report 2019, 'Record companies are investing more than one-third of their global revenues, or US\$5.8 billion, in Artists & Repertoire (A&R) and marketing each year, to break, develop and support artists'. This research reveals how many men compared to women are benefitting from these structures and investment in the UK right now.

Counting the Music Industry reveals that just over 14% of those currently signed to 106 music publishers and just under 20% of those signed to 219 record labels are female.

Despite it being 2019, a point at which many companies imagine they have 'done' diversity, this gap is still surprisingly large and is indicative of con-



tinuing widespread discrimination against women. This report attempts to unpack that discrimination by analysing twelve barriers that exist for girls and women wishing to start and sustain a career in music.

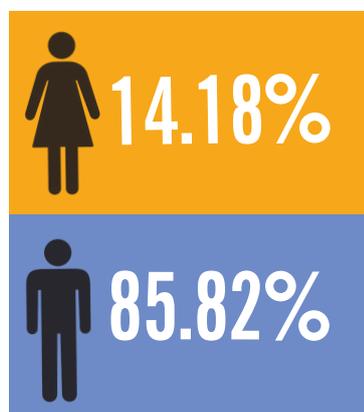
This report also looks at the entry routes into music, particularly by participation of boys and girls, young men and women at various stages of education, from GCSEs to A levels and, from the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA), to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. There has been increasing participation by girls and women in music education at all levels, to near equality, often gaining better grades than their male counterparts. This means the talented pool of young women are out there.

And finally, this report identifies opportunities for further research and concludes with a range of practical recommendations for government, education and the music industry to implement, improve and ultimately close the gender gap in music.

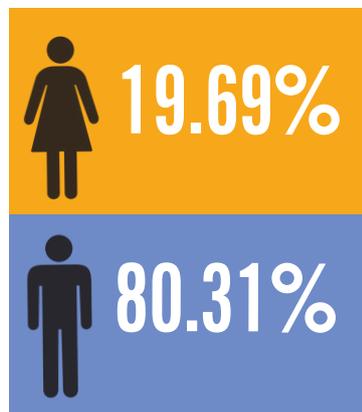


Key findings: The Gender Gap

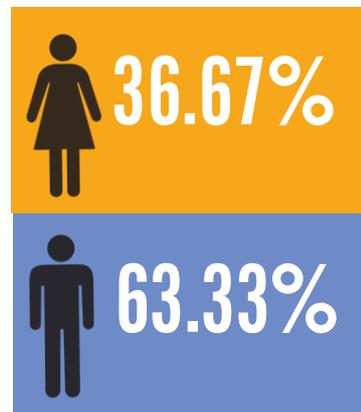
Of those **writers** currently signed to 106 UK music **publishers**:



Of those **artists** currently signed to 219 UK music **labels**:



Of those **working for** 126 UK music **publishers**:

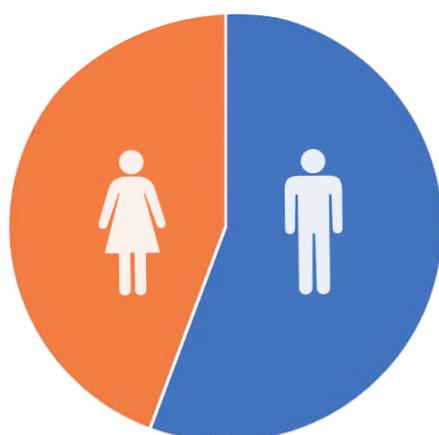


Music Publishers
36.67% female
 63.33% male

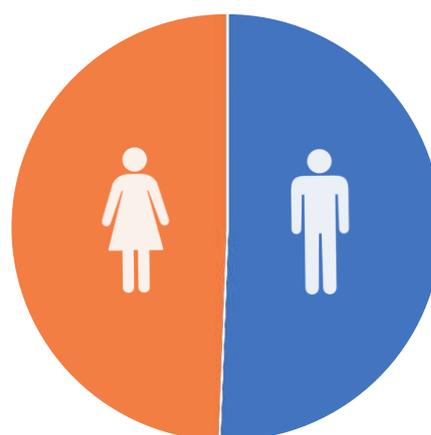
82% of CEOs of UK music publishing companies are male. There are some differences in genres of music:

Screen (tv/film) music female leaders 30%
Classical music female leaders 25%
Popular music female leaders 10%

Of the **25,690** students studying music related subjects at all degree levels in 2018: **44.33%** were female



Of the **5,295** students studying music related subjects at post graduate level in 2018: **49.40%** were female



*It is educating the historical mindset of the powers that be in the music/broadcasting/film/theatre industry who automatically book/commission a male composer out of habit to write the soundtrack/ score/ concert work/ theatre production score etc. I believe the best music for the job should be chosen always, whether it be written by a male or female - however as Counting the Music Industry shows women aren't even getting a look in most of the time to be in with a chance at the pitching stage. When I look at labels where female artists are almost non-existent, this is not a trend, it is a mindset that needs changing. **Julie Cooper, Composer/Orchestrator***

The Barriers: Summary & Conclusion

Talented female composers, songwriters and musicians are out there and yet, constitute only 14% of those signed to 106 music publishers and only 20% of those signed to 219 music labels. Why?

Counting the Music Industry discusses twelve reasons why the gender gap in the music industry is so significant. This list of twelve obstacles consists of; the historical context, the motherhood penalty, unsociable hours, the gender pay gap, female singers, technophobia, sexism, harassment, gendered careers, unconscious bias, lack of role models, confidence and the gender of music, and is not exhaustive. It should be evident that all these issues are cumulative; each on their own might be negotiable by an individual but combined will massively impact and prevent most women from being signed and progressing their creative careers.

The full report outlines the twelve barriers but it is worth saying a few words about the last here; the gender of music. The gender of music has three traits common across all musical genres. First, the pressure for women to be of a perfect physicality; with the only differences as to actual dress and presentation code. For female musicians sexiness and glamour is often given more credit than actual musical skill.

Second, most genres of music are gendered male, but some more than others. It comes down to what we perceive as more masculine or feminine genres in terms of instruments, lyrics, style of music, tone, attitudes and dress codes. There is a sliding scale; the more aggressive and darker the

music is, combined with the more technologically based; the fewer female musicians performing in those genres.

Moreover, there is nothing biologically to suggest that this classification of masculine and feminine traits is correct. The belief that 'masculine' instruments and genres are suitable for men and 'feminine' genres are not, reinforces women's exclusion from most genres of music in a society that deems all electric instruments, drums, guitars, brass instruments and anything technological as 'male'. Findings of biological differences are old fashioned and false cultural constructs that have unravelled under scrutiny (Saini, 2017).

These are out-dated beliefs, compounded by the third trait; that men appear to prefer to create and play only with other men, which excludes women and results in so few female musicians, especially in particular genres. This needs to be called out, revised and replaced by a more inclusive culture.

The hope is that seeing and understanding these statistics will act as a wake-up call for the industry. One senior executive recently stated, 'My board think we have done diversity.' These results show that few companies in the music industry have 'done diversity'. This is not a time to ignore this genuine issue or be complacent. The arguments for why we need greater diversity and inclusion have been won, not just in terms of the business and creative case but morally. Those in education and leaders in the music industry need to realise that it is in their best interests to get this right; it is not a box-ticking exercise; it's a cultural shift.



Recommendations

Each of these issues can and must be systematically addressed by government, our education system and our music workplaces. There are already organisations in the industry tackling these issues and they need greater support. Some are listed below. If the following can be achieved over the next five years, music's gender gap can be improved:

1 Government:

- **Improve legislation** extend pay-gap reporting, paternity cover, shared parental leave for self-employed, extend maternity protections, greater protection against sexual harassment and victimisation, strengthen flexible working requests, greater access to legal advice, for example
- **Funding** and support for gender diversity initiatives (via DCMS and Arts Council)

2 All Music Businesses:

- **Support** one female-positive initiative per year such as Women in Music, SheSaidSo, Girls-I-Rate, Keychange, WDM Collective, Illuminate Women's Music, Parental Pay Equality, Women in Music Awards and charities Parents and Carers in Performing Arts, Youth Music's GirlsRock London, Young Women's Music Project, etc
- **Conduct** an audit of staff and rosters and set their own diversity targets
- **Improve** female recruitment, especially in leadership roles
- **Improve** female talent retention in companies for those aged 35+ by instigating flexible working and 'return to work' initiatives
- **Record labels** to sign more female musicians going forward with an ultimate aim of 50% (specific genres may find this initially difficult)
- **Music publishers** to sign a minimum of 40% female composers going forward

3 Education (Primary, Secondary, Music Hubs, Conservatoires and Universities):

- **Improve** pathways and entry routes for music degree graduates
- **More** communication and collaboration between education and the music industry
- **Teach** technology competence to all female music student, at all stages
- **Encouragement** of female students to play traditionally 'masculine' instruments

4 Further Research:

This report has unearthed gaps in our understanding, more research is required on:

- **Music** alumni career pathways
- **Pay** gap of UK male/female composers and musicians
- **Ethnicity/disability/age/class** in the music industry – workforce/composers/musicians
- **Gender** balance in the top 10% of music industry companies
- **Gender** statistics for Trinity and ABRSM exams
- **International** labels for a global view
- **Catalogue** labels for a historical perspective
- **Gender** statistics for UK orchestras, choirs and big bands