

WAGE GAP INEQUALITIES IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Representation, Leadership, Earnings & Opportunity Gaps

Women contribute across every area of music — yet the industry's highest-paying, highest-visibility roles remain disproportionately held by men.



THE LEADERSHIP GAP

Women's representation declines as music industry positions become more senior



MUSIC EXECUTIVES

~30–35%
WOMEN

~65–70%
MEN

Senior leadership roles continue to show significant gender imbalance.

USC Annenberg researchers report:

- Little improvement has occurred since 2021 in women's representation at the highest levels of music industry leadership.
- Women represent more than one-third of executives overall, but their presence decreases in top decision-making positions.



EQUAL TALENT. UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITY.

It's time to change the score.

WHO HOLDS THE INDUSTRY'S HIGHEST-PAYING ROLES?

● WOMEN ● MEN

OCCUPATION	% WOMEN	% MEN	INEQUALITY IMPACT
 Music Producers	4.4–5.9% 	94–96% 	Women receive fewer production credits and fewer opportunities for high-value royalties.
 Recording Engineers / Audio Technicians	<5% 	>95% 	Technical and studio leadership roles remain overwhelmingly male.
 Songwriters (Billboard Hot 100)	14.5% (2025) 	85.5% 	Approximately 1 woman for every 5.8 men credited as songwriters.
 Conductors / Music Directors	~21–23% 	~77–79% 	Women remain underrepresented in top-paying conducting positions.
 Concertmasters	~20–25% 	~75–80% 	One of the highest-paid orchestra roles remains male-dominated.
 Composers / Music Directors	~26–30% 	~70–74% 	Women receive fewer commissions and fewer programming opportunities.
 Orchestra Musicians	~46–50% 	~50–54% 	Blind auditions improved access, but leadership chairs remain less balanced.
 Recording Artists / Vocalists	36.1% (2025) 	63.9% 	Women artists remain underrepresented on major charts.

REPORTED PAY INEQUALITY

TuneCore "Be the Change" Survey (2024)

Women reported discovering unequal pay at higher rates than men:



reported being paid less than colleagues doing the same or similar work.



reported being paid less than colleagues doing the same or similar work.

BY CAREER AREA:



Music business & executive roles: 51% of women reported discovering unequal pay.

51%



Artists, composers, songwriters & creators: 27% reported discovering unequal pay.

27%

These figures represent reported experiences, not calculated wage-gap percentages.

WOMEN CREATORS' EARNINGS

Women in the Mix Study Findings



36%

of women in the music industry earned less than \$40,000 annually.



48.6%

of women artists, performers, composers, and songwriters earned under \$40,000 per year.



57%

worked two or more jobs to support themselves.



THE LARGEST GENDER DISPARITIES

The greatest gaps exist in:

- 1  Music Production — approximately 95% men
- 2  Recording Engineering — approximately 95% men
- 3  Songwriting — approximately 86% men
- 4  Major Orchestra Conducting
- 5  Concertmaster Positions
- 6  Senior Music Executive Leadership

These roles often control:

-  Creative decisions
-  Career advancement
-  Recording opportunities
-  Royalties
-  Long-term earning potential



BUILDING A MORE EQUITABLE MUSIC FUTURE

Increasing women's access to:

- Leadership opportunities
- Producing and engineering roles
- Commissions and performances
- Executive decision-making positions
- Fair compensation practices

creates a stronger, more representative music industry.



TOGETHER,
WE CAN AMPLIFY
HER VOICE.

SOURCES

- USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative — research on gender representation in music industry leadership and creative roles.
- TuneCore "Be the Change" Survey (2024) — reported experiences of pay inequality among music professionals.
- Women in the Mix Study — research on women creators' earnings, employment patterns, and career experiences.
- Annenberg Inclusion Initiative annual reports on gender and music industry representation.
- Billboard Hot 100 songwriting and production credit analyses (2025).

Presented by:

**WOMEN'S
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