

**THE SECOND SOUND**

Julia Eckhardt & Leen De Graeve

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CONVERSATIONS ON  
GENDER & MUSIC

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**the second sound – conversations on gender and music**

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This publication results from an invitation to musicians and sound artists to participate in a qualitative research on the role of gender and sex in their artistic field. The aim was to explore the role these notions play in shaping and determining artistic careers and output today. We asked questions about personal experiences, underlying dynamics, unwritten rules, unconscious psychology, and inner and outer barriers that participants have come across in their professional and connected personal life.

A wide variety of people provided elaborate, personal, detailed, and honest answers. Male, female, and other-gendered artists of different ages and nationalities and active in a variety of sub-fields – from opera to DJ-ing to installation art – gave us a rounded insight into different practices, strategies, and concerns.

The participant's statements came to us via an online questionnaire, but we heard the responses so vividly that they inspired us to shape them into this publication; a kind of discussion along the three thought-lines which appeared to be most prominent and urgent in the research:

- the still prevalent paradigm of the straight male, with its particular set of values and representations to which female and other-gendered artists relate as 'other';
- the music and sound art itself: if and how it relates to the gender of its creators. This line was the most controversial, but several participants show credibly that there is more to the goal of gender-equality in this field than simply programming more female and other gendered names;
- the field and its structures, mechanisms, and networks through which job opportunities and visibility is provided, and which are also important for mental and practical support.

As a conclusion, participants have offered ideas for action towards a more inclusive field.

Additionally, we have added a few supplements to the publication: a collection of relevant quotes by women from different fields and times, organised as an imaginary response to the questionnaire; some documentation on the definition of gender, sex, and sexuality; and the original questionnaire from which the statements were collected. Added is also a list of all persons participants named as role models during their lives.

This research on gender and sex in music and sound art is framed in the context of 'the other the self', a project by Q-O2 workspace for music and sound art, focussing on gender, voice, language, and identity. The questionnaire was developed in 2015, in response to a collection of remarks, anecdotes, frustrations, and questions which had been formulated by Q-O2's artists-in-residence over recent years.

We hope this survey can be a way to formulate and document some of the questions and conversations that are currently happening in the field.

In total, there are 155 artists – male, female, and other gendered - who took the questionnaire and participated in the virtual conversation of this book.

The participants primarily live and work in West-European and Anglo-Saxon countries, but there are also voices from other parts of the world, such as Eastern Europe, South America, and Asia. The participants age ranged from 20 to 63 years old, with a peak between 30 and 40. 41 participants are parents: 21 mothers, 19 fathers, and 1 non-binary.

We hear the voices of musicians that are active in a variety of different musical contexts, from experimental, contemporary sound art through to classical music. We hear from artists working within DIY and squat-music scenes, with little money involved, and from artists making full-time salaries and who are active in established institutions. A slight minority is able to make a living from their art, a majority can't or doesn't want to. The majority of the respondents are active in experimental music and sound art, but jazz, rock, pop and classical musicians also participated. Participants are working both as creators and as performers, individually and collectively.

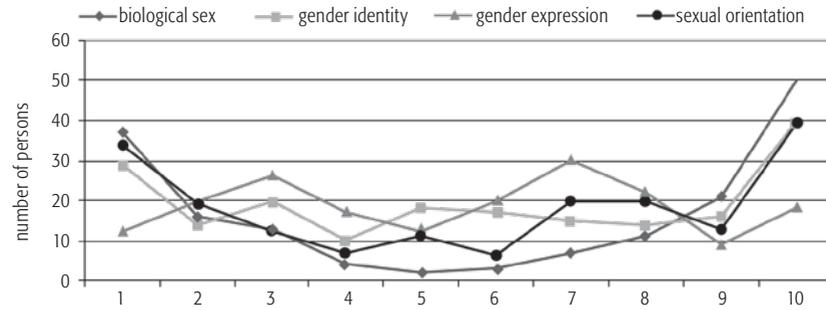
The artists surveyed present a large range of different sexes, genders, and sexual orientations. Cis-hetero males and females, queers, transsexuals, intersex and transgender people, bisexuals, gay men, lesbians, pansexual, non-binary, and post-gender people are all represented in the responses.

Most of the text of this book is made out of the testimonies of the participants. To guarantee their anonymity, all names in the text are replaced by [...], with the individual respondents further identified by their (random) number of participation, their year of birth by decade (e.g. 197X, 199X,...), and their geographic region (North America, South America, Oceania, Middle East, Western Europe (North included), Southern Europe (France and Turkey included), and Eastern Europe). Where people are

no longer living in their country of origin, the country of origin is given first. Their nominated gender and sexual identity is indicated as precisely as possible while still maintaining respect for the participant's anonymity.

For many participants, English is not their native language. We have made corrections to spelling and grammar only where there is a question of readability, otherwise, the contributions are left unedited. We wanted to respect the tone and what was being said between the lines as much what was stated directly.

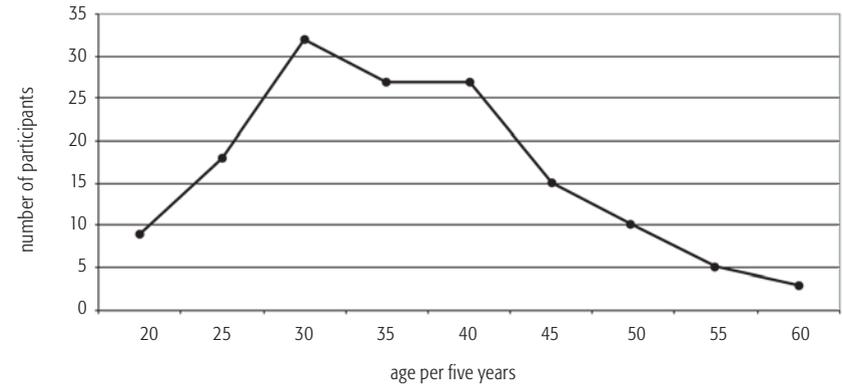
**Sex and gender identity**



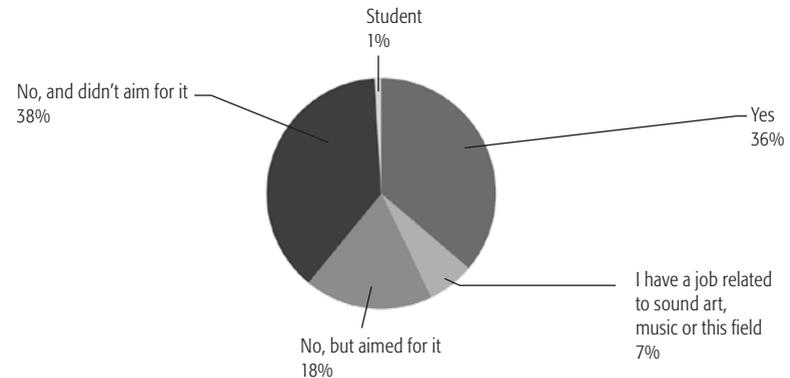
genderscale from 1 (male/man/masculine/attracted to women) to 10 (female/woman/feminine/attracted to men)

In the questionnaire, some definitions were clarified beforehand: sex is considered as a sliding scale between the two poles of male and female, with many areas in between; gender is considered as a sliding scale between 'man' and 'woman' as socially constructed concepts of identity. Sex, gender, and sexuality form a complex tissue with many layers, consisting of biological sex (anatomy, chromosomes, hormones), gender identity (psychological sense of the self), gender expression (communication of gender), and sexual orientation (romantic/erotic response). (See supplement for more detailed information.)

**Age**

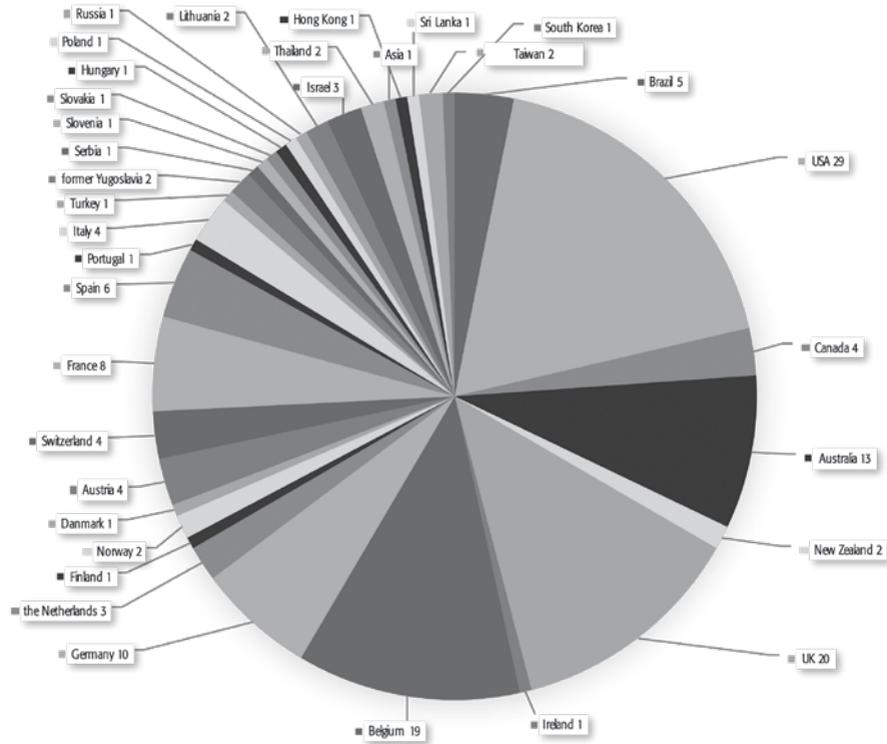


**Making a living out of art**

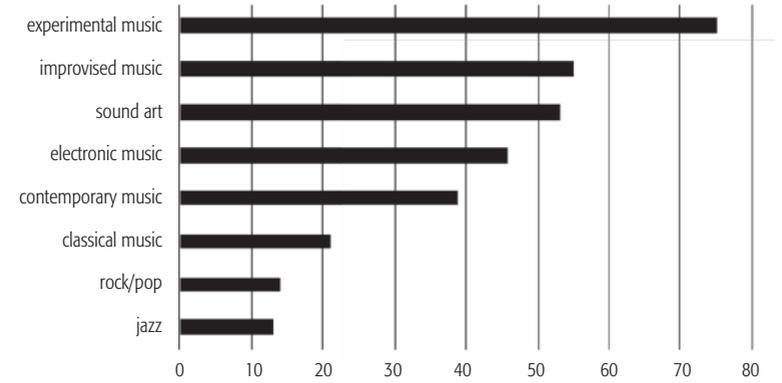


### Nationalities

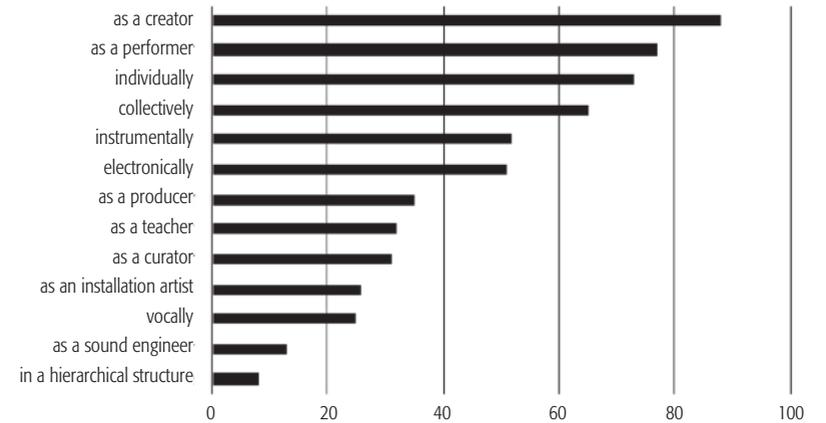
in case of double nationalities, we counted each nationality



### In which genre is your working field?



### Artists mainly working...



Participants could check several boxes.

# Discrimination – paradigm and otherness

Three out of four of the survey's participants acknowledge that gender has an influence on the field of music and sound art. More precisely, 65% of the female respondents, 27% of the male and 62% of the intersex, trans, and non-binary respondents answered positively to at least ten out of the thirteen questions which asked explicitly about the influence of gender on several aspects of artistic practice.

## **Stereotypes, preconception, prejudices, discrimination, sexualisation**

Through the flood of angry, confused, and frustrated, but also thoughtful and sometimes funny statements, it is impossible to ignore the consensus that whole fields of music and sound art are still oriented according to a paradigm of straight masculinity and its associated qualities and appearances. Generally speaking, the further artists are perceived as deviating from this paradigm – both by themselves and by others – the larger the role they attribute to gender, sex, and sexuality in their professional life.

Female and other-gendered artists often perceive themselves in the professional field as 'other', and feel negative discrimination in their professional lives. This discrimination can take a variety of forms and qualities, such as stereotyping, assumptions, condescension, conscious or unconscious exclusion, and blunt sexualisation.

The large majority of male participants either perceive no problems of gender discrimination in the field, or they experience these problems as observers rather than being directly affected. Male participants are, however, often confronted with stereotypical expectations because of their sex, which in some cases leads to defensiveness.

In general, our research indicated that queer men seem not to have suffered from exclusion but have often experienced 'otherness'

once their queerness is advertised. This may indicate that in the field of music and sound art, gender appearance is perceived more prominently than sexual orientation.

Some participants also remarked on other forms of discrimination, such as social or economic status, weight and height, race or foreignness, language etc. Each of these forms of discrimination has its own sociological and historical backgrounds and means of application. As such, it was not possible to cover all of them here.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that sexual discrimination does not exist in a vacuum. It intersects with many other social and historical factors. Often those who have experienced one form of discrimination are better able to recognise it in other forms.

Overall, the perception of otherness is different for female, male, and other-gendered artists when it concerns them directly. There is more similarities between the responses of those writing from the position of an outside observer. Because the gender-specificity of the experiences, this first chapter is divided into male, female, and other-gendered perspectives – beginning with those who might be considered as representatives of the paradigm:

## **The male perspective**

Although, or maybe because, male artists are personally much less confronted with negative discrimination, many are good and lucid observers of its mechanisms. Only 10% of the cis-male participants considered that gender was not an issue in the fields of music and sound art.

People are doing what they want; men and women now have equal opportunities in music. [Part 12, 196X Oceania hetero cis-male]

Don't notice real prejudices [related to gender and sex. The field is] pretty balanced... until it comes to robotics and high tech. Changes will happen. No need to force. [Part 57, 195X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

The majority of responses contradict this stance, however:

It seems that being a 38 year-old white male artist is right in the middle of normalness. I guess white male artists like myself could easily believe that their gender expression has no influence on the reception of their work, but surely the fact that being in any position as such an artist is not questioned is a form of influence. [Part 66, 197X S-Europe bi cis-male]

I am told I am in touch with stuff outside of classical music. My relative gregariousness and confidence in speaking in public has helped my recognition. [...] Confidence, outspokenness and the willingness to be controversial are significantly less risky for men. [As a response,] I try to listen more, and when on panels or in discussions be aware of how my privilege affects the amount of space my voice is given. Realistically, I often fail at this. [Part 19, 199X W-Europe bi cis-male]

[Prejudices] primarily have to do with visibility, respect, the ignoring of performance practice, and assumptions re: who is doing the 'actual music'. Still a student, but I think I have experienced an implicit acceptance towards my aspirations/goals based on my gender, which has helped me in innumerable little ways. [Part 95, 199X N-America hetero cis-male]

Dominance and achievement, protection of cultural hegemonies. I feel it's more of an undercurrent – the feelings at gigs, way people talk about music etc. [Part 26, 199X Oceania hetero cis-male]

I'm a white male who was born in the United States after the second world war. I'm certain that this has made an enormous number

of things in my life far easier than it would be if I were not born into this situation. [...] I think [...] in our culture there is a deeply ingrained sense that it's the men who are geniuses who come up with ideas, while women will only ever be brilliant technicians or labourers. I imagine this made being a composer seem more realistically possible for me than it may have if I were a woman, though that's pure speculation on my part. [Part 55, 197X N-America hetero cis-male]

I think people forgive certain mistakes and the fact that I'm not always playing instruments that I am familiar/proficient at much more quickly because they expect me to be a musician. A couple of times, I've had people love a DJ transition between songs during a set that was a pretty bad mistake, then watched them critique the next DJ for a similar slip-up, despite being fairly knowledgeable about the practice. I also know plenty of female DJ's who don't get audiences to show up when they open or perform, yet have had people show up to some of my shows at similar hours of the night despite her having more pull & skill. [Part 95, 199X N-America hetero cis-male]

I'm not sure I've ever felt that my appearance played a role in my musical life, but that may be because I present as cis/white/hetero/male, very much the dominant category in improvised music, unfortunately. [Part 48, 197X N-America-Asia hetero cis-male]

I suppose that middle aged white men don't experience that as often as they 'ought to', in order to understand how it feels for those that do – I think the responses to an ugly old white bloke are equally about appearance, perceptible proximity/distance from the cultural/quasi-tribal identities of the prejudiced (or favourable) view as they are about women everywhere, or non-whites in white culture, or non-members of an orthodoxy anywhere – but they are less voiced and have to be felt for if one seeks an understanding of such matters. I think all cultural acceptance and rejection is about

perceived shared/alien identity of artist/presenter of an idea. It's just that people aren't as frank about their prejudice when talking to middle aged white men as they are to or about a lot of other people. [Part 6, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

This gay man experiences moments of 'switching' between dominant and minority positions:

You see, when meeting me, one can assume that I am a white male and part of the ruling class. Once I am recognised as gay, I am treated as a member of a minority, for good and for bad.

I believe, and recent history somewhat suggests this, that change is possible, and that people will accept different gender people as equal, but it takes time and exposure. I see my role to be part of this exposure, and I make sure people know I am gay, and hope that through my music they will learn to hear differences between specific people and narratives and not between groups of people. [Part 114, 195X Middle-East queer cis-male]

#### **STEREOTYPICAL PERCEPTION OF MALE ARTISTS**

The problems of stereotyping are not unknown to men. Men often have to struggle against expectations to do with violence, dominance, strength, confidence, outspokenness, and a willingness to be controversial. For many, masculinity has an implicitly ambiguous connotation and in some cases, male artists also experience sexualisation.

Occasionally I have received comments expressing surprise or praise at a male artist doing an intuitive, open-ended type of performance; not often. [Part 105, 198X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I am very aware that as a large man, I am prejudged by some women as being not-feminist and so on. This [is something that] I struggle with as any attempt to convince a person that I have not grown up

with casual sexism/chauvinism usually is like continuing to dig a large hole... also, female feminists often say 'men are like x' or 'men think x' and usually I agree on the whole, however its strange to be a man who doesn't think x, agreeing that men do. [Part 112, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I am sure that expectations regarding masculinity and its relationship with success and achievement play into my anxieties regarding my music's quality, although that's not something I experience on a tangible level. [Part 19, 199X W-Europe bi cis-male]

I often have the problem that a hispanic hetero male image carries, which is that when walking into a situation people expect me to fight (aggressively) for dominance which is not the case. [...] If I must make a hard decision for some reason, I can expect someone to say it is because I am a macho latino. People sometimes pre-emptively try to guess what I will decide according to my image. This is annoying as the macho latino image would never be involved in art music to begin with. [Part 149, 197X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

Extremely positive discrimination up until recently, due to presenting as male and being 6'4"/130kgs. Lots of fear-based advantages in various situations, which have sometimes been life-saving but other times have put me ahead of other 'weaker' people in a completely arbitrary fashion. [Part 102, 198X Middle-East-Oceania queer trans-female]

In fact, the worst [sort of remarks] falls in between life and art: where you are judged wholly as a person based on your most recent arts practice. [...] I am also assumed to be technically advanced, angry or opinionated, and serious, or perhaps grave, when in fact my work is often about joking about all 3 of those things. I think the phenomenon of what I call 'Knowledge Battles' among mostly men accounts for some: where people attempt to draw you

out on technical data so as to prove that they have more niche knowledge... this is ironic as my work is about avoiding technical knowledge in the main. I find knowing every damn thing leaves almost no room for the unexpected. [Part 112, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

Plenty of expectations come with being a white American male which extends to all aspects of public and private life. I think these are well known as they are the basis for most gender studies in the Western world.

I guess I should have been driven to earn money and be 'successful' which is kind of a joke in the experimental music/sound art world. [Part 21, 197X N-America-E-Europe hetero cis-male]

In some cases, atypical clothing or presentation can lead to stereotyping for male artists:

Some people say I'm a transgender, others think I'm homosexual, some say I'm everything, other say I'm an alien or come from the future – due to my appearance, including my origins [...] and skin colour. Some remarks [are gender related], yes, when somebody writes about me and tells I'm a transgender (even though I don't see myself so – in some civilisations like the Wodaabe, men wear make-up or in Bangladesh a majority of men wear a lungi – that doesn't make them transgender people).

I mostly don't answer or if some ask me if I'm a man or a woman I answer both. [...] As I often blend things, some people sometimes think I'm a woman, due to some photos, comments, notes and so on. I find it always funny to meet them and see their reactions. [Part 4, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

#### **DEALING WITH NON-ART RELATED REMARKS**

All artists regularly receive remarks that are unrelated to their artistic practice. However, men often don't perceive these remarks as relating

to their gender, while women consider remarks about weight, clothes, behaviour, about being pretty, having a nice outfit, hair, smile, body, almost by default as gender related. None of the participants seem to enjoy such comments, typically because they find the remarks irrelevant to their art.

People notice I have gotten fat and somehow never fail to point it out. [Are the comments gender-related?] No, They are weight related. [Part 31, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I don't wear different clothing than I do when going shopping or drinking beer or something. To some people, that's odd. [...] I'm a performer, so people look at me, and they make comments about how I look. [...] I don't think [remarks are] gender-related. [Part 55, 197X N-America hetero cis-male]

I think people who are less interested in music, generally focus on physical aesthetics of appearance a little more. [Part 98, 199X Oceania hetero cis-male]

Not too often, but occasionally remarks about a nice outfit, hair, smile, etc. probably when someone wants to say hello but didn't actually like the music much! [Gender related?] Not really. [Part 105, 198X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I recently made several performances that involved electrical pulses from electrodes placed on my body. I received a lot of 'positive' remarks on the performance that had more to do with my naked upper body than with the performance itself. At other occasions I received a kind of mocking responses like 'will your next performance be with your shirt on or off?' I'm not sure [if these responses are gender related.] I was a bit frustrated [...] because I wanted the audience to respond to the actual performance and not to my body. [Part 75, 198X Middle-East-W-Europe queer cis-male]

I wear a suit and tie in an area where informal clothing is normal. It's often commented on and can lead to being avoided in social aspects of an event. I also often wear a wig. [Gender related?] No. [Part 28, hetero cis-male]

## The female perspective

Non-male artists are often confronted with a wide array of remarks, discriminating situations, stereotyping, and sexualisation concerning their stage presence, their art, and their person. It is not always clear how much of this is projection or anticipation (once bitten, twice shy), but the survey consistently suggests that the constant need to be aware of and navigate around such issues can make building an artistic career very tiresome.

Women can often hold a difficult and unclear position in this artistic field. Unlike other-gendered artists, women form an integral component to the male paradigm – that of the confirming opposite. Women in the field are thus often in an ambiguous position of both trying to be 'the same' (one of the boys), and to be present as 'other'.

A lot of the discrimination felt by women is latent or indirect, which often makes it more harmful, as it can be difficult to pinpoint and thus difficult to fight. This latent and indirect discrimination includes jokes, condescending remarks, remarks about others, culturally coded stereotypes etc. Deliberate exclusion, as well as being ignored or overlooked can have profoundly destabilising and unsettling effects.

I feel that, being a woman, a female, I have the obligation to surprise people when I play my instrument, I have to be too good for being a woman. And when I cannot do it, it seems that the fact is understood like: 'oh! one more girl that is not strong enough!' Mainly it influences me [by lowering my] self-esteem. [Part 35, 198X S-America hetero cis-female]

As an Asian woman with cute and small appearance, people in general don't take me seriously.

The experimental music scene is still a highly male dominated field. Such an environment can sometimes be very uncomfortable. Perhaps that is the reason why I perform less and less. [Part 46, 197X Asia-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Surely, females still get labelled. So if it is good, you hear: 'oh, look, this is exceptional – a female making music as good as males do'. Or, 'nooo, this is too "girly"', because quiet, or using high frequencies or whatever. At the same time, males have been writing slow, quiet music for instruments of high register for decades now, and nobody ever even thought of calling them on that, saying that their work is too soft or whatever. They usually get the 'sophisticated' label. So the same thing will be perceived differently depending on who made it.

Also, females still tend to get asked less by both male and female theatre & film directors, producers, ensemble directors etc. to work for them/with them. There are prejudices on how we work, and if we are able to deliver work energetic and simply good enough. [Part 47, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

I think that some programmers, directors, reviewers don't fully give credit to women. This I observed luckily only in few situations and mainly in non-western countries. When a woman does good job she is labelled as 'hard working and talented'. When she does something experimental they call it 'messy'.

When a man does good work they call him 'next big thing' and when something experimental, but perhaps not too successful – 'bold'. Subtle, but meaningful differences. [Part 54, 197X E-Europe-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

[I experienced discrimination] more indirectly than directly, for example in assumptions about the kinds of music I'm most interested in. [Part 25, 198X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

There are some prejudices, because of the ignorance of some people. Sometimes it's funny to see guys surprised of seeing a woman on the stage and quickly realising that she's not the singer of the band. There is no band at all. and she's not singing.

I remember a funny reaction of the audience during a noise night where I was invited to DJ. During that night I mixed music and noise wildly and had a lot of fun. At one point many people (mostly men) started screaming of joy, loud as hell, throwing chairs in the air while screaming. They were enjoying it completely. For me it was a funny situation. I felt surprised of their reaction, because it was more like the reaction that you can have during a concert instead of a DJ set. But I was completely pleased of this spontaneous reaction. But later I heard a strange comment. It was something like: she's playing f\*\*\*ing harsh tonight, she's playing like a man. It just surprised me this opinion. I laughed and I thought 'what does it mean? What kind of idea does he have about women and music?' [Part 76, 197X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

Women are not given the same respect. If a room of people are awaiting an artist and a man walks in, he is immediately given respect, assumed to be well educated, his ideas well thought out. It is assumed that he knows what he is doing, knows it well, has experience, etc. A woman in the same situation must prove all of these things. The beginning assumption is that she knows nothing, has done nothing, and is not very good. From here she must prove and demand respect. She must outdo her male peers. She must speak well and have good ideas. She must never say anything that might be interpreted as stupid or anything less than what the best of her male peers might say. She has to do all of this just to earn what a male walks into the room with. [Part 81, 199X N-America hetero cis-female]

Clothes, hairstyle, weight, waistline, cognitive ability, told I must support my husband's wonderful career, assumption that my husband helps me or has something to do with my work,

assumption that my work is not my own, assumption that I got work because I'm having an affair or sleeping with someone or someone's interested in me romantically, assumption that I should stay at home, in the house and never leave it, assumption that I shouldn't be given work because of child bearing age and thought that I have an ambition to start a family. [Part 92, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

When doing concerts, performances, or just musical related meetings I usually find myself in mostly masculine groups. [...] And the remarks I get very often are kind of: 'finally a girl! there are not many girls in music. It's such a pity because girls have a special sensibility'. [...] I consider it doesn't have to do with my music at all, since very often I am told this kind of things before even the person who says it listens to my music.

[I feel that] while all of us have, in a bigger or smaller degree, expectations about the performer's music that are motivated by non musical elements [...], in the case of a female performer and the 'special sensibility' remark, these expectations are just motivated by the fact of being a girl. [Part 153, 198X S-Europe queer cis-female]

I have been told several things through the years by male audience members who perceived my work as being 'shy' or 'timid' simply because it was restrained and quiet. I have been condescended to on a few occasions by male 'critics' who felt confident to speak to me as though I was naive, inexperienced or young simply because of the nature of my work and my femininity. [Part 94, 197X N-America bi cis-female]

I am a girl making very abstract/digital noise. [...] I remember that someone told me once at the end of a live performance that if I was a Japanese man [...] girl my work will be more recognised. [...] Some months ago, I saw by chance a tweet in which a [...] girl (now I know that she is a lesbian [...]) praised some of my work. I answered to her tweet saying thank you [...] and she answered

very surprised something like: 'Oh, you're a girl, and you speak [my language]. I thought that you were an English speaking man'. I get all the time that kind of comments by men, but I thought that it was very odd that even lesbians have that kind of prejudices. Of course, we all have prejudices... [...] At first I thought it was funny, but now I'm a bit tired of having to answer every mail remarking that I'm not a man. [Part 44, 197X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

I had one teacher criticise my musicianship at one point and then say, 'Well, at least you look good! That counts for something.' [...] Also, [...] one peer once commented on how many female composers were at a festival. He said, 'I was surprised when we got here... but then I heard your music and I was like, 'Oh, they're really good!'' He sounded surprised. I had another peer ask me if I thought I was getting the commissions I get because I'm a woman. [...] It's terribly debilitating and frustrating. It makes me feel like I don't have the right to be doing what I am doing. I often feel helpless, wondering if I will ever be taken seriously. [Part 93, 198X N-America hetero cis-female]

A teacher told me I'd do well for myself as a composer, as women are politically emphasised these days. He also made it clear that I was a rather unskilled composer. [Part 86, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I've certainly thought from time to time that if I were of the other gender I would be taken more seriously. [Part 124, 198X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

More bluntly, some women were told that it is impossible for them to be a professional artist for biological reasons

There was once a remark given to me by my male friends, that in any way male are genetically better composers (because during the history all the most famous composers are male), so I have very

little chance, even if I work really hard. [Part 118, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

When I was a child, right when I begun to study music, I wanted to be a composer and a conductor and soon discovered that, being female, being a woman, I wouldn't have any chance to fulfil these goals. That was what was said to me when I was 9 years old. So, after some years, completely in love with music, I decided to choose to play [an instrument] it was a way of doing music acceptable to my gender and sex – I saw women in orchestras playing [instruments]. [Part 35, 198X S-America hetero cis-female]

I have literally been told I wasn't pretty enough to be a professional musician (by a woman). [...] I got a lot of bluntly negative comments about my appearance (being too skinny) from my FEMALE teachers as I was growing up. [Part 22, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

### **EXCLUSION AND BEING OVERLOOKED**

Being excluded and overlooked is a very subtle and often unintentional form of discrimination. It can have an unsettling effect on female artists as it often feels as if it is touching on their personality, rather than on their artistry. Many women have experienced a feeling of being invisible, of being ignored in conversations, not being approached for collaborations, or not getting the credit they deserve.

A lot of female artists are simply overlooked and perhaps not taken as seriously. The field of music/sound is not only dominated by male artists but also by male programmers, curators, writers, and listeners. [Part 94, 197X N-America bi cis-female]

The most common type of rejection that female artists/musicians have to face is simply being made invisible. It is very common to sideline women. [...] Sometimes it is not so much about what is said (although certain remarks actually do create a very hostile

atmosphere) but about how often people pretend you're not there or less entitled to a certain type of treatment or certain opportunities than the guys. [Part 22, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Totally. I am often the only not-dude and often the only not-white person in a group, so I am automatically separated from the group in people's minds. Also people are conditioned to not expect anything from women.

Just a small example of stuff we deal with every day: one time I was chatting with two colleagues (two men) and then one of them turns to the other and says, 'have you seen the new Pittsburgh module?', as if I clearly would never know what the fuck he was talking about even though we were all in the same prestigious computer music program. [Part 85, 199X N-America hetero cis-female]

The biggest thing I hate would be the exclusion: I am in the room, I have just played, a bunch of guys go and talk to the sound tech and say hey man, what's the set up, how does this work, amazing amazing blah blah, and don't say a word to me! [Part 103, 196X Oceania bi cis-female]

This woman was left out of her group unexpectedly after having been an active member of it. Rather than questioning the system around her, she ended up questioning her own character and professionalism.

[...] I had done most of the logistic work and almost all of the same working playing and rehearsing. The only thing I hadn't been able to do was one performance which wasn't a problem for anyone. So often I see men reach out to other men. Even writing this my insecurities come into play and I think that despite all of my work for the group, maybe I was a bad collaborator, a bad friend, a bad musician, a bad organiser. I so often take the blame for sexist acts. I hate to see my female peers do this, but I myself can't help it either. [Part 81, 199X N-America hetero cis-female]

### **DEALING WITH NON-ART RELATED REMARKS**

Contrary to most of their male colleagues who rarely connect non-musical remarks to their gender, female artists tend to interpret comments about appearance, character, behaviour, etc., as gender-related almost by default, even when these comments seem positive.

The fact that people in the audience tell me I'm pretty is in my opinion totally gender related. [Part 42, 198X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

[People tell me] that I should smile on stage as a woman. Should dress more sexy and should take more advantage of my appearance. Nobody asks a man to smile on stage [whereas] necessary outfit or over-played appearance apply to both sexes I think.

So I never smile on stage, and try to find a way around the superficial situation of being exposed on stage, where what they see is not what they hear and what they hear is not what they see. [Part 69, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Oh, all the time... it's always whether I'm smiling or not, friendly enough or not and so on... also the writers, assuming most of them are males for some reason in this music, tend to associate my facial expression or gestures or even the sounds I'm making with my 'emotions' which I'm sure they wouldn't dream of doing it with male musicians. [Part 115, 197X Asia-N-America hetero cis-female]

Mostly positive comments about my character. I guess [that this is gender related:] 'You are really good at organising everything.' [Part 82, 198X Asia hetero cis-female]

Reactions to discrimination can be very different. Some artists are able to ignore, confront, or bypass such prejudices, but for others it can lead toward a withdrawal from public situations.

Mostly I love being a girl as a performer, because somehow I think it's more fun, but I think it's also more work. When men exclude me

from a conversation that is actually relevant to me but they think is too complex for me, my first thought isn't that I would rather be a man but that they should really get their shit together. Almost without exception, professional situations where leadership is shown by both sexes are more productive, and there is more room for imagination.

If I'm in a setting where there are mostly men, especially in these leadership positions, then I feel like to be able to speak out I end up doing it as a woman just to be heard. That's tricky. [Part 73, 199X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

[I developed my work mostly in] private. For a long long time I never felt confident enough to make sound in front of anyone, even friends. It has been a long haul, sometimes very emotionally exhausting. [Did my gender expression influence that?] Probably. [Part 74, 196X N-America bi cis-female]

I usually tend to laugh along and make a joke and get massively annoyed afterwards. [Part 77, hetero cis-female]

Pissed off. Response: hard work. [Part 86, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I've always been comfortable with my gender but can be a little defensive if my opinion is brought into question. I sometimes also speak a little louder when I'm in the company of men. [Part 99, 199X N-America bi cis-female]

One of the most 'official' remarks I got after my one composition exam. From the very first year of study, when asking about my composition exam results (why they are lower than I was aiming for), I would usually get a response that my presentation seemed 'not serious enough'. So, over my 6 years of studies, along with trying to improve my composition skills and make my work a bit more 'serious', I was also trying to improve my behaviour at the exam presentation. I would change the way I talk, the way I act,

the way I dress (trying to be similar to my male colleagues who were brought to me as an example of the perfect behaviour), but I was never getting the highest mark anyway. So, on my last years of study, after one exam when getting the same 'not serious enough' response as explanation, I finally got really annoyed and explained that I don't really understand what it means – I dressed really appropriately, I analysed every composition of mine in detail, I answered in the best way all the questions to the exam board, and I even didn't laugh once at that particular exam (which I used to do, if I found something funny...). So then I got an explanation, that there are always some 'remarks' floating around the members of the board, and in that particular exam it was said that I am constantly flirting with the board members during the exam, trying to make them to like me and therefore get better results (!!!). And that is the reason why I am not getting higher marks. I should say, that at that time there were around 7 members in the board, all male. [Part 118, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

## The non-binary perspective

Those who define themselves as neither completely male nor female, or those who want to reject gender roles, receive a lot of gendered remarks, or are even rejected by the audience as soon their sex, sexuality, and/or gender are discovered. Many are confronted with a confused audience as soon as it is clear that labelling or categorising them is not possible. Attention on their appearance often wins over attention on their art, a situation which can set serious limits to a career.

People feel lost and perplexed as they do not expect my sexuality to be on show. It is not important, to me, that others are in agreement with my sexuality or are of the same sexuality. What matters to me is the work, not my sexuality, though it might be part of it. Some people, while showing an interest in my work at first, when

aware of the fact that I am gay just disappear. [Part 59, 196X S-Europe-W-Europe queer male]

Gender makes it difficult [to find a job], being transgender makes it twice as difficult. The world doesn't like femininity. [Part 102, 198X Middle-East-Oceania queer trans-female]

I have been told by one artist that I am 'too ugly to rape' and had several artists produce work fantasising about raping me. [Such remarks] have changed the kind of music I make and how I choose to perform it. In addition they have led me down the path of self-publishing as I do not wish to be associated with many of these artists by being on the same labels. [Part 10, 197X W-Europe trans-female]

I think that it's generally much harder for people perceived as female to be taken as seriously as people who are perceived as male. For sure we are still living in a patriarchal society which thrives on making a distinction between two genders. In order to create a change we need to reject all binary notions. It's very important to consciously include all genders whenever possible but at the same time not to make that a 'feature'.

A problem I often face is that many people feel basically comfortable in their apparent gender. Such questions are not burning ones for them, so they fail to understand why such questions are important. [Part 34, 197X W-Europe intersex]

[I feel it as] confusion, more likely [than discrimination]. Not being defined by gender tends to lead to curiosity. [Part 38, 198X N-America intersex]

I feel I got credits but no career. People will cite me as an example of an exciting new artist or something like that but I get booked at high level or well-paid events very rarely. [Part 38, 198X N-America intersex]

When I explain my post-gender stance, people get it. But I

understand that if it were totally gender-free or gender-specific (which can mean many things), it would probably be more quickly accepted – either by mainstreams or by ‘non-mixities’. [...]

[My music] is post-gendered. It does not assume a superiority of the human creator, as for instance the object or the computerised transformation of sound can be as much of creating forces than the artist. [Part 84, W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I have benefited greatly from male privilege in some ways but have also been told I’m not queer enough to play queer shows at times. [...] I had a recent concert reviewed where I was playing with a male drummer, who played shirtless (because it was hot under the stage lights). The reviewer spent a full paragraph describing my clothes and then went to talk about my collaborator and said ‘while the other guy prefers to focus on the music.’ There was a comment about my tights and legs but no comment or assumption that this man playing shirtless was showing off his muscles. And no attempt at reviewing my actual playing. [...] I do feel that comments are alluding to the assumption that I must spend more time worrying about fashion and what I will look like on stage than the actual music. This is something my cis-women musician friends have experienced since they were children. It’s new to me since the last few years, but it is classic sexism. All people seem to need to bring out their sexism is the symbology of clothing, I don’t even have to take hormones, shave or have surgery. [Part 39, 198X N-America female trans]

Some artists were raised in a society where they had to hide their gender or sexuality, since disclosing it might have put them in severe danger. This situation and the eventual moving to a different country influenced their art and artistic practice.

I am gay, it has been part of me when the activity was illegal in [...] till I left in the early 80s, through the AIDS epidemic, to today. These dramatic changes influenced my work, and part of its narrative. [Part 114, 195X Middle-East queer cis-male]

If I had performed as a ‘woman’ in [...], I do not think I would be the musician I am now, as the [...] society is extremely homo/transphobic [...]. Even though I am not really a transsexual, I would have been perceived as such. [...]

A woman had to be a woman, feminine, submissive and a man had to be a man, masculine and powerful. Anything other than this binary gender model would be excluded. [...] My parents have never been strict about this model, but I could see their struggle to exist within this model too. [Part 17, 197X S-W-Europe queer trans-female]

## Sexualisation

An important part of the professional life of most musicians and sound artists involves being on stage – being physically and artistically exposed to, and possibly judged by, a listening and viewing public. Depending on cultural contexts, reactions from the public can take the form of blatant sexualisation. It is interesting to note that the same sort of remarks which are perceived as very negative by female and other-gendered artists, often have an entirely different effect on men. Whereas men seem to feel in control of the situation, and can take lightly or even enjoy comments of a sexual nature, most female and other-gendered performers feel uncomfortable or even threatened by such situations and pay close attention not to ‘evoke’ them, or any association with body exploitation. This is especially the case in certain cultural contexts such as South-America, South- and Eastern-Europe.

Although somewhere inside I feel proud that I’m sexy, I also cringe that this needs to be an attribute to perform. I feel the sexiness pulling power towards me that is unwanted. I’ve been sexually abused because of my career. [Part 133, 196X Oceania hetero cis-female]

An academic teacher (male) once texted me after a performance saying I looked very sexy when I played (I was extremely uncomfortable). Audience members I’ve spoken to have sometimes

fallen back to complimenting my appearance if they don't have much to say about the music. In certain performance situations I've been catcalled while on stage. I've been asked to dress a certain way for performances that is outside my comfort zone and to me doesn't fit the music (eg. long flowing dress, stiletto heels), and was once warned against presenting as a 'new music lesbian'. [Part 25, 198X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Yes!!! It's so disturbing! It's terrible. Mainly it's about men that say things with sexual meanings to me like 'how beautiful you are today' or 'oh, today is your birthday, could I know how old are you because a man friend suggested I should marry you' [...]. It's really HORRIBLE. I've also heard: 'she doesn't play so well but she is... pretty.' [...] Or: 'Look, now you have at least a beautiful face to look at'. [...] It's terrible to say that, but along my life I was unaware about that. It was only after getting into research. I noticed that these things were TERRIBLE, violent, aggressive, disrespectful!!! [Previously,] these comments made me stay quite, mute, with no reaction. In the worst situations I smiled back, understanding that this would be a polite way of escaping, feeling strange but mainly guilty for feeling bad. [Part 35, 198X S-America hetero cis-female]

As I play noise music I am often confronted with sexist comments after the performance, which sometimes relate to my sexual preferences (spanking, kink, bdsm), my character (aggressive, possessive, dominant). [...]

If I played a lot of free jazz, squeaky, noisy stuff then it has happened on occasions that men came to me and said things along the line of me needing a shag, liking whips and hardcore and I am just asking for it. [...] I often get defined as domineering. Neither of my band colleagues ever get this (both male), neither is any of them referred to as aggressive. [Part 77, hetero cis-female]

There are people who will try to associate because they have a sexual attraction, for sure. It has happened to me and when it's

not what you want too it's very uncomfortable. It has happened because I'm a female artist. For example, my friend producer is trying to seduce me. If he goes further we will have to stop our collaboration, as I don't want the same thing as he wants. [Part 43, 199 S-Europe bi cis-female]

I don't really know. I just felt sometimes that men I worked with were attracted to me and had some expectations that I did not meet, and they made me pay for it. [Part 123, 198X S-Europe-N-America hetero cis-female]

Very differently, male performers give this account of their experience:

I remember receiving remarks about sexual attraction about my playing (when I was much younger, that is), I interpreted them positive and enjoyed them very much. I still feel these remarks were essential for myself as a performer. [Part 132, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I've been written about in the newspaper as a 'sexy Jew'. Though I am not Jewish. [...] It hasn't gotten me more gigs. [Part 52, 197X N-America hetero cis-male]

Being a large and reasonably cute male artist means that I am put on a pedestal by women and girls who turn everything I say into some sort of poetic/romantic ideal!!! [...] Women fancying me is a waste of time because they do not know who I really am yet and I do not have casual sex. It's flattering, but also stifles a normal relationship. [Part 112, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

The experience of these transsexuals is comparable to those described by female respondents; a feeling of being at the mercy of the situation.

People use 'sexy' and 'hot' as compliments to me. I generally accept them sheepishly, though I generally don't like them. It's not that

these are bad things to be, but that I feel reduced to these qualities. People choose to call me fuckable than talk about me as a creative, intelligent, rounded person – or, in many cases, friend. It hurts to not be taken seriously, and be treated as a sex object, especially when sex is not something that's important or valuable to be. However, [such remarks] make me more determined to represent people like myself in the public eye. [Part 15, 199X Oceania hetero trans-female]

I was playing at a night which included music, poetry and experimental theatre and before I took to the stage another performer called a woman in the crowd a 'fucking cunt' and everyone laughed. I did not feel safe playing that night. [Part 10, 197X W-Europe trans-female]

## Technology

A field in which discrimination of female artists is voiced uni-vocally and takes almost absurd proportions is electronic music. When it comes to technology, editing, cables, and machines, patronising and 'mansplaining' are problems which confront almost all female or trans artists.

Sometimes I have the feeling that the other male DJ's with me on a gig or the sound technician think I can't correctly connect the cables and the jacks. As if they thought a women can't do it totally well... they want to do it for me. [Part 43, 199X S-Europe bi cis-female]

Especially in computer music, people tend to be surprised if there is a girl programmer. [Part 54, 197X E-Europe-W-Europe hetero cis-female]  
In a group experience, the sound tech made comments relaying that we were going to be making macrame with our weird instruments. I think he was excited about the instruments and electronics, but had we been 5 men instead of women, the macrame comment would not have been made. The same tech, at a different show

came up to me and said something along the lines of oh! it's you guys again, you are going to cook some food. [...]

A group of male techs surrounded my set up and explained the reason why the live sound engineer was making my sound excruciating loud was that he was not getting enough signal from me. Rather than tell me this, he cranked up the gain so loud that I no longer had any volume control on my faders – it was all or nothing. The techs surrounding me explained to me what gain was, and Pre fader levels, and then one told me that maybe one day I could be a real sound guy. (I teach workshops on live sound... I know what these terms are.) The trouble arose because the main live sound engineer made assumptions rather than asking me to give him more levels.

I consider [such situations] a result of inexperience on the part of the sound tech and engineers. Not inexperience in their field. They just seem to be inexperienced with women sound artists, musicians, and producers. My feelings about this? I generally suck it up, remain polite, and try to get these guys to give me the best sound. [Part 97, 197X N-America hetero cis-female]

Now I am conscious of my gender expression, after years of psychotherapy. I try to let my intuitive ideas take more space to help me make technical decisions, it's not what I have learned (mainly from men). [...]

I used to [want to be of the other sex], mainly when I was living in Europe as it felt impossible to get an engineer contract as a woman there, except for classical music. In North America, it did not block me. [...]

I do think that's gender-related, like I am not taken as seriously as a man, specifically when it's about technical decisions: some musicians argue with me as if they are equal or superior in subjects that they don't know much about. It's also job-related, sound engineers are not supposed to be creative in most musicians' minds. I have the tendency to be satisfied with the artistic result more than the actual process. Basically I don't expect the artistic

process to be always smooth and painless. I know it's often difficult because it puts us in front of our most intimate challenges. So if the artistic product reaches the level that I expect, I feel good. If the harsh comments/remarks prevented me from going where I wished to go, I am demotivated. [Part 123, 198X S-Europe-N-America hetero cis-female]

The usual interaction is that people (tech support guys) at venues assume I don't know about gear. This happens in very subtle ways. A little bit annoying.

But is it gender-related only because they see a woman and think 'doesn't know about cables'? Or is it because I don't behave as many men do by showing off my knowledge? I did have a weird situation when I was setting up a show with my electronic-improv duo (the other person in the group is an Indian-American man). We were both putting our gear on a table, plugging things in, etc. Then a guy comes up to my duo partner and starts asking him audio tech questions – even though there are many people around setting up all kinds of equipment – including me! Racist and sexist? Or just stupid and random? Who knows.

It's annoying, but whatever. I just stay polite and firm, since I don't need conflict in my mind before a show. And if I get set up as I want, then who cares? I have no need to prove my own technical savvy, I hate that kind of bullshit one-upmanship. [Part 74, 196X N-America bi cis-female]

Once I was setting up a band ready to record. I got the guys in the band to set up their music gear in all the appropriate places. Turned on all the studio gear, put a fresh reel to reel tape on (yep, 'twas some time ago). Got out all the microphones and stands and set them up. Plugging things in, lugging things around, marking up the instruments on the desk for each track for which mic it matched and so on. Once this was all completed I asked the drummer if he could go sit behind the drums and start hitting the drums so that I could do an EQ on each drum. He ignored me and

the boys cracked open beers and lit up doobies. After about half an hour I asked them when they wanted to get started. The response I got was... 'Shouldn't we wait for the sound guy to show up? Maybe you should give him a call?' [Part 7, 196X Oceania hetero cis-female]

## Positive discrimination

Feelings toward explicit positive discrimination, such as gendered calls or quota, are mixed. Not all artists agree that they are useful and positive as tools to straighten an unbalanced situation. Positive discrimination in an artistic field can be especially problematic because equal suitability for the same job is difficult to prove. Positive discrimination is perceived as no discrimination unless it is explicitly used as tool for the correction of an unbalanced situation. Overall, discrimination, in its original meaning 'to separate, to distinguish' (New Oxford American Dictionary), is only perceived when it is taken negatively.

Maybe I got booked once or twice cause I am a woman and they needed one... I bet equally I didn't. [Part 23, 196X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

It's just a sad truth that men are still (or at least were, when I was getting my education) given an upper hand in most things in life, and especially in the world of composition. I continually hear comments about how someone had a piece performed, article published, won an award, etc. 'because they're a woman.' It's bullshit, and I've been lucky enough to not have to deal with that bullshit. Of course the kind of people who say these sort of things would never go out and say that every man who gets something only got it because he was a man, though that's far closer to the truth of the matter. [Part 55, 197X N-America hetero cis-male]

I was once told, surprisingly explicitly, that I was turned down for a doctoral fellowship because the committee preferred to choose a

female candidate. But of course, that's because their department was already skewed male. [Part 105, 198X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

Some calls [...] stipulate at least one woman needs to be involved in the project. This limits what I'm able to submit and I actually feel discriminated against because I'm not a woman. I also find this attitude rather patronising towards women – If I were a woman I'd have thought I'd like to be judged purely on my art, not on my gender. I understand the good intentions behind such a stipulation, but insisting every single submission has to involve a woman is not helpful as it pushes gender into the foreground. [...]

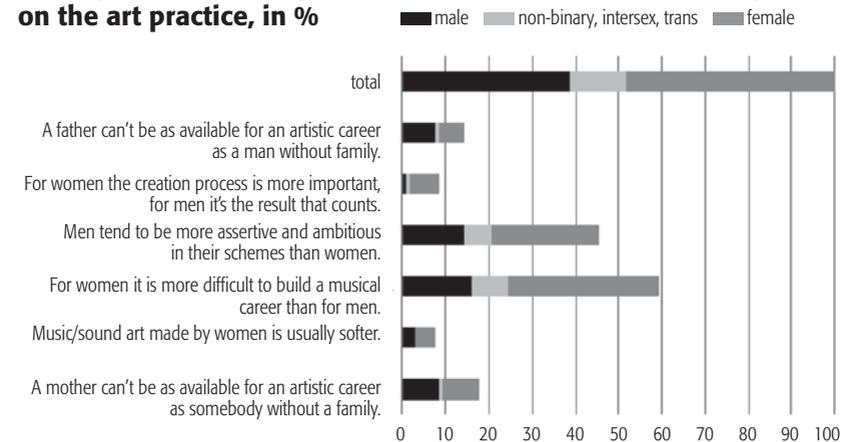
Actually, due to such discrimination, it may even be slightly easier for women in the field I'm in. Having said this there's no denying that men are still in a majority. [Part 36, 196X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

Sometimes I see open calls for only women artists, I once also got asked to join an audition, because they were looking for women musicians, good at improvising, not necessarily needing to play any instrument well. That disturbed me, because the stress is on finding 'women' musicians, and not on 'good' musicians. [Part 53, 198x W-Europe hetero cis-female]

## Common prejudices

To conclude this chapter, we wanted to test the participant's own gender bias. We asked them whether they agreed with six stereotypical reasons for the under-representation of women in this field. These were formulated as simple yes/no questions. The statements were concentrated on the binary between male and female, since non-binary prejudices are less easily identified in such general ways. Male, female, and other-gendered artists seem to have different perceptions about themselves and the others:

### Participants confirming statements about the influence of gender on the art practice, in %



The answers indicate an internalised bias existing also in this field, or, as this participant summarises:

I think prejudices in our field are comparable to the rest of society, even if there is an insidious belief that because we are educated, thinkers and producers we would be able to escape from them. They only take a different colour but they still exist (regarding the relation to technology, to position of leadership, to confidence of expression, etc.). [Part 66, 197X S-Europe bi cis-male]

When asked whether music and sound art can be characterised or perceived as gendered in itself, the amount of confusion, speculation, and imagination amongst participants is high. When asked whether life circumstances, personality, and cultural codes could consciously or unconsciously play a role in the process of creation, however, almost all of the participants answer 'yes'. Logically, we would imagine that this means that the artist's gender would be represented by (or at the least detectable in) his/her work. But such logic seems not to be valid for this field, or else is acknowledged only with a number of conditions.

An array of possible explanations and perspectives are given to explain where and how a connection or disconnection between the creating artist and his/her art might take place. They suggest both that art has the power to transcend the presence of its maker, but also that a complete disconnection between life, the professional field, art, and its reception is neither possible nor really desired. It is an ideal which is outdated.

The four following statements set the tone for this chapter, placing the whole issue in a larger context. Together, they address the idea of art as being a reproduction of a normative society, represented by a traditional notion of the work and the author; the unquestioned and apparently neutral presence of the male body and its connected qualities; the context in and for which sound art is created; and the approach of the field as competitive and hierarchically structured.

The question is vast and it would be too easy to believe that music/sound art is not a production of ideologies and discourses because it doesn't speak. It is not a matter of feminine or virile styles of music, but the fact that music can convey reproductions of normativity and dominance as any other media-based production. I wouldn't be able to state the difference between male and female music in a few words, but I'm convinced that if Maryanne Amacher, Eliane Radigue or Laurie Spiegel have been focusing and searching so deeply into the subtlest interactions of sound phenomena, it

probably has to do with the fact that they were not relating to dominant/male/normative ideologies of the Work and the Author that would have structured their compositions in a different way. [Part 66, 197X S-Europe bi cis-male]

What I experienced: it is not possible to just change the music/art side by curating more female artists. One has to change the entire setting and the audience set-up too. Certain audiences create certain artistic patterns and vice versa. The entire set-up has to be re-constructed. I would love to see different audiences, who listen awake and emancipated. I would like to see artists who are awake and emancipated. [Part 68, 195X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I think there are ways in which gender roles affect approaches to music or sound art. For example, there is a typical approach to sound art which is apparently objective, almost scientific, formal, in which the body of a possible performer is presented as neutral or apparently absent, its position is not questioned, its position is naturalised, universalised... I think that a feminist influenced sound art pays attention to affects, ways of relating, care... asks where is the performer positioned, and what does that mean for what is being done... there can be excess... the body can be central, etc. [Part 106, 198X S-Europe bi cis-male]

This is obviously a discussion with huge historical resonance and potential for differentiation. Music at large is still seen as rather feminine and also as effeminate sometimes. However, professional music and sound art is completely male, both in terms of the actual biological sex of practitioners as well as cultural connotations and – quite importantly I think! – the structures that artists work in. It has often been remarked – without much interest in a real answer, I sometimes feel – that somehow all the girls from high school orchestras and bands get lost along the way until only very few are left taking music degrees at university. As music is

professionalized, the gender balance tips. This still has to do, in my own very personal opinion, with a rather Victorian view of women being less able to fend for themselves, and therefore less suited to a competitive field like the arts.

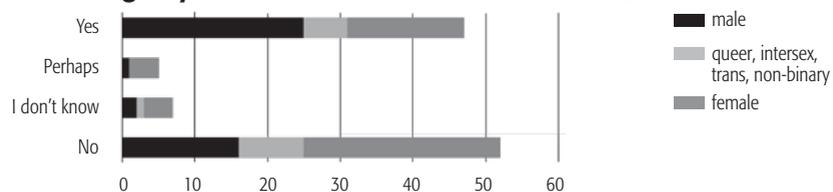
We need to get rid of the whole ‘do women play differently?’. Instead, we need to focus on the structures and institutions where music-making takes place and where there still exists a concept of authority and hierarchy that is sometimes appalling and victimises male and female students alike. [Part 22, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

The question was formulated as ‘do you believe that ‘male’ or ‘female’ art exists and which one do you prefer?’. Several participants reject the dichotomy of the question and observe that personality and life circumstances are more complex than that. A number of alternative points of view were given.

But equally, there are participants who acknowledge and like the existence of a gendered music, but wonder how it can be pinpointed and recognised. Explanations for gendered difference in music were offered such as contextualisation, choice, different approaches to creation, as well as difference at the level of reception.

A third position is to reject the idea, stating either that it is impossible for art to be gendered, or that it is simply preferential not to afford gender a role in the experience or creation of art; that this may tend toward simplification or stigmatisation, or that it is simply not interesting.

According to you, does ‘male’ and ‘female’ music/sound art exist?



## No, but...

### ... BUT YES, ... BUT IT'S MORE ...

A slight majority (47% no, 41% yes, 12% abstained) of participants are convinced that art is independent from notions of gender. Many feel that gender plays a role in art, but not in its essence. For some participants, it is a conscious choice not to attribute a role to gender in the nature or determination of music, instead preferring to see sound and music as genderless, or as a way to transcend the limitations of gender.

Not at all. All minds are unlike. [Part 86, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

No, though gender may play a role, I think that the sonic output a person decides to release into the world is anchored in personality, experience and aesthetics. [Part 97, 197X N-America hetero cis-female]

No. Music doesn't have a gender because gender is how one identifies and music cannot identify itself as a certain gender. How people perceive work by people of different gender identifications is affected by how society stereotypes a very specific (and problematic) gender binary. [Part 85, 199X N-America hetero cis-female]

No. I just think people exist. This business of people trying to divide and divide (both for and against each other) I find distracting to the real issue, which is that of making art.

I think if we blindfold 1000 people, and they listen to 100 artists each, of every gender identity, my hypothesis is that differences will be insignificant. Like how the blind auditions opened up the possibility of women joining orchestras. There are probably many psychological and social processes going on that do influence my perception. I try to block them out, do my own internal blind audition. [Part 32, 196X N-America-S-America hetero cis-female]

No. I think sound can blur those boundaries. [Part 56, 197X N-America hetero male]

Music isn't masculine or feminine for me, but as I am feminine, probably my music also sounds like that. But it isn't important for me! [Part 24, W-Europe hetero cis-female]

No. There are people who identify specific sounds as representing gender (an army march on a snare drum as masculine), and this as Susan McClary has shown is problematic. But as a general statement I can not accept that. [Part 114, 195X Middle-East queer cis-male]

I do not perceive music as gender defined, except when it deliberately is. Though, it might be closer to a masculine construct than a female, simply for having more men building it through history, than women. [Part 104, 198X E-Europe bi cis-female]

I think there is only music and sounds. You can read 'female' and 'male' as social constructions into the musical interpretation, but it will always be a subjective matter. [...] I usually prefer the female art. [Part 37, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Not as defined by society. I would say there is introversion and extroversion. Reflective art may be more thoughtful, confessional, as if one is listening to an artist speak to themselves. Expressive art may be more communicative, sending out a message to others. [Part 38, 198X N-America intersex]

[This] binary is too limiting to accurately explain any differences and why they may come about. [...] Sometimes I think of the cut-up and electronic music production to be our (read: queer) music. And it seems true from a preliminary look, from John Cage up to Terre Thaemlitz. Is that why [...] modern EDM is so boring? It's made by straight people that don't understand the power and potential of the remix because they've never had to remix themselves like queer people have had to. My music is transgendered, dysphoric and uncomfortable. It consists of layers of conflicting references and symbolism, which I've come to understand as an expression

of my gender dysphoria and the anxiety and disassociation that go along with it. [Part 39, 198X N-America female trans]

You of course work with your own experiences and with experiences and labels you get from your environment. You are pushed by life itself to take a stance on those subjects. But the 'style', or a 'language' you use to do it can't really be put in these two drawers, no, every person is a universe of his/her own. [Part 47, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

The way I work comes directly from within and so inevitably expresses a lot about myself, including my gender expression. I have also experimented a little bit with different forms of presentation onstage to express non-typical gender states. Generally, I prefer to avoid any gender expression. On the 'masculine' side many people are impressed by my technical ability. On the 'feminine' side many people are impressed by the way I can express emotions directly. I think all thinking in such binary terms is very simplistic and not a true representation of reality. I reject all apparent notions of 'male' and 'female'. Good art transcends such illusory constructions. [Part 34, 197X W-Europe intersex]

One of the reasons I'm drawn to music is that through it one is able to express feelings beyond human limitations, having the ability to be genderless. [Part 124, 198X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

No. Although the only sound artists I know that use knitting are female. [Part 28, hetero cis-male]

I hope not. If it does, let me know, so that I can avoid it. [Part 55, 197X N-America hetero cis-male]

Nooooo [My music] is gendered queer. [Part 91, 198X N-America bi]

**... NOT REALLY, A LITTLE BIT,... ONLY AS A SOCIETAL CONSTRUCT:**

No. We are a mixture of genders. Gender is a continuum. And the expression of gender is only a societal concept. [Part 54, 197X E-Europe-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I do believe that our gender & sexuality are integral parts of who we are, so certainly there are artists who's work expresses these aspects which I find very inspiring. This is definitely more the case with female artists as I think expressing these aspects of their identities is more political (particularly in the work of the 60's/70's but honestly even today).

I believe that there are certain styles of music/sound art that engage more artists of particular genders but I don't believe that this is a hard rule and for me personally I don't believe that there is MALE music or FEMALE music at all. Often this is related to history. The way a particular instrument may be perceived as feminine for example or the way that a field of music has been predominantly male. [Part 94, 197X N-America bi cis-female]

Only in the way that the cultural coding leads people to different experiences and pushes different expectations. The choices we make and those made for us are informed by our contexts.

But a C major chord is a C major chord regardless of who plays it. [Part 52, 197X N-America hetero cis-male]

I am sure that improvised, electronic and experimental music scenes are all defined by masculinity in various ways. And I feel that, as a woman that I have perspectives and aesthetic tendencies that are valuable, that are still being ignored and left out, that need to be explored. If 'male' and 'female' music/sound art exists? Insofar as musical qualities can be associated with gendered/genderable qualities (e.g., loudness as strong), then yes. But ultimately, no of course not. Gender is a social construct, just as music is. [Part 74, 196X N-America bi cis-female]

Not really, depending on the status of the male or female. When I hear young unknown bands, 15-16 years, I can here a difference between male and female writers in the band. There are some stereotypes that I hear in real life. Female group, softer. More feeling for melodies. Male group, rougher, wanna be loud, make more noise... But from a certain point when people are a little bit older (20) the difference is fading away more and more. And from a certain point there is no male/female music any more. [Part 122, 199X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I am not able to recognise male or female art by listening. Therefore I don't know if it exists.

Music/art is so complex, so related to the physical and cultural environment, that I don't believe that any tiny difference between a female body and a male body would express through artwork (I'm against determinism). But some models/patterns may be socially/culturally transmitted. [There may be] specific ways of creating according to sex/gender. [Part 3, 197X W-Europe-Asia hetero cis-male]

## Yes, but...

This general position is held by many throughout the questionnaire, but participants suggest different reasons or conditions for the response, including that it is an intuitive response but difficult to define further, that gender effects the process of creating work, that art is socially and historically conditioned, or that makers should be able to express gender in their work if they so choose.

### ... IT IS FELT INTUITIVELY, BUT DIFFICULT TO PINPOINT:

Yes, but I'm not sure it is easy to identify or codify it, as individual diversity is too great to hear the signal in the noise. [...]

I prefer the noise to the signal. [Part 19, 199X W-Europe bi cis-male]

I am often inspired by other artists that share my gender, however their gender expression generally has less to do with it than a kind of feminine essence to their performance. [Part 25, 198X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I would say that [gendered music exists]. On the male side it does so from a lack of vision or ability to think beyond boundaries. It is a 'negative'. On the female side I think it is more subtle. I have observed that work by female artists (speaking very generally of course) tends to focus more on content than on the technology. [Part 65, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

Because my work is quite didactic, and often uses science or philosophy as a conceptual basis, I think it plays into expressions of maleness and authority. [Part 121, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

### ... YES, DUE TO DIFFERENT, GENDERED, APPROACHES TO THE PROCESS OF CREATING:

There are male and female, or masculine and feminine approaches to music. The masculine approach involves domination and control of the tool. The tool is at the centre of everything and must be under total control and be used in a highly technical and efficient manner. The feminine approach focuses first on the outcome, and then seeks the tools that could take them towards that outcome. It does not strive for total control.

This can easily be observed, at least for me, in laptop music played by masculine and feminine people. [Part 17, 197X S-W-Europe queer trans-female]

In a way yes, I play with male and female musicians, and it is true that the music and the process to make it, goes differently. [...]

It would be interesting to make a blindfold test and hear different musicians and see if you could tell if they are female or male.[...]

[If my music is gendered?] I don't know. I get more that they tell me

my music is sweet, because my personality is soft. Maybe if you're personality is more tough, you get more tough music?

I have to admit that touring with a bunch of girls, or touring with guys are very different, in my case, I found both super. [Part 53, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Yes. Male sound artists are often more self driven and using loudness or forwarded in their interests in playing music expression.

Whereas female artist are more community driven and using softer or dynamic sound, or music that draws people in.

[I experience the field as] masculine. It's so full of male artists, black outfit and with gear and software oriented work. [Part 82, 198X Asia hetero cis-female]

### **...YES, BECAUSE ART IS CONDITIONED BY SOCIETY AND/OR HISTORY:**

Yes and no – 'male' sound art is the stuff that is more often commissioned and celebrated. If there is or is not an objective difference between the two makes no difference in a society which imposes a difference. [Part 10, 197X W-Europe trans-female]

Even if I tried not to make it so it is born from my own gender identity and its form has developed in reaction to a misogynist society. [Part 10, 197X W-Europe trans-female]

As so often in our time we tend to categorise everything. At the same time there is a deep embedded cultural history of believing in 'female and male sounds'. Classical music of female and male endings, one melody sounds more 'feminine' than another. However much I would like to say no, there is a cultural baggage we have to deal with. I also believe that specific pop artists (male or female) play with those 'gendered musics'. Be it Kanye West or other rap artists: objectifying the woman, hailing gang fights, guns etc. or female artist like Taylor Swift, Beyonce presenting their

bodies in 'traditionally' female uniforms and conforming to male sexual attraction, singing about break ups and so on... [Part 77, hetero cis-female]

Music serves a variety of large social functions and the majority of society values masculine traits & qualities over feminine traits & qualities. I think a lot of 'male' music/sound art can express its maleness in the absence of a focus on the artists' gender, or in a lack of consideration for/of gender as a topic, inspiration, or relevant creative impulse. For the same reason I listed above, I have the luxury of not always needing to address, or feeling pressure to address, my gender within the context of creating something.

I also have on several occasions obscured my gender or worked within paradigms that limit communication of gender (anonymity, video game aesthetics, constructed personas), which to me feels freeing, but also feels like a reflexive masculine impulse to remove my own gender from the equation. [Part 95, 199X N-America hetero cis-male]

### **...AND, ART IS GENDERED IF IT IS ITS MAKER'S CHOICE TO ADDRESS THE TOPIC:**

I write text/ lyrics and sometimes they are personal and I do believe a man would not express exactly like that. Otherwise my music, sound scapes, choices in composition I don't think are [gendered]. I use voice a lot so possibly women are more drawn to that in experimental ways. Men may be shy?

I think ['male' and 'female' music/sound art] can, and does [exist]. Especially due to the rise of the feminist movement; more females are making a point of creating art that embodies their femininity. I also think males are much more interested and open to this art today, than they may have been in the past. It's an exciting time. [Part 23, 196X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I define my work as political. Yes, I include feminist issues into my music. I decided to work with voice and text as a composer. With

this material, ANY choice one makes is political. If one decides not to directly make political statements, that's just another statement. I choose themes which are interesting to me, as a feminist, in some of my works because they are important to me. I feel that as a conscious composer, I re-compose my environment. Literally. I re-shape the sonic patterns of society. [Part 68, 195X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I don't like when stereotypes about what is male and what is female are being repeated without mentioning the politics around them. There exist a lot of stereotypes about what is male and what is female, and I think we should leave that binary.

Usually I enjoy it when [music] is questioning stereotypes. When it is affirming or naturalising them it can make me very angry.

[My music is gendered] because I say it is, I find it a topic that I want to be part of my work. [Part 14, 198X W-Europe bi cis-female]

Some participants also suggest that art itself isn't gendered, but that its reception is:

I can't help my gender so in that sense, yes [my music] is gendered and I am aware that other people will take this into account more than I do. I would like to think that my gender has as little impact on the reception of my work as it does on the production of it. [Part 18, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

It is complicated. I think knowing the gender of a creator/composer definitely shapes how people listen to a work. Perhaps one could say the work isn't gendered, but the reception is.

Often, I can't help but be more interested in works by a woman, if only because they are somewhat rarer. I tend to hear a more subjective expression in music by female composers. But I am also repelled by this tendency in myself, especially as an advocate for more equal representation. [Part 25, 198X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

How could [the gender of the performer] not [influence my perception as a listener]? Anyone who answers no to this question is lying. Of course, the influence is incredibly complex and idiosyncratic, not just about gender. Not even just about gender/sexuality/race/class/nationality. But those can't be written out of the equation. There is no 'universal' artistic perception. [Part 74, 196X N-America bi cis-female]

For several participants, this question also boils down to an atmospheric feel in the field, simply because more men are present:

For a long time, I thought 'experimental music' was only a 'male thing' because so few females were ever present either as artists or audience. [...] Over the years, I see how gender roles are culturally ingrained, but when you start fresh or equally there is no natural disposition toward talent, creativity, or expression in either gender. [Part 21, 197X N-America-E-Europe hetero cis-male]

There's definitely male music; there are female participants (thinking of a lot of branches of Metal music). I'd brand it more as masculine/feminine music - although this'd be a harder thing to conceptualise. [The field is,] as with most social relations, masculine; it is an extension of the power relations between people & society. [Part 26, 199X Oceania hetero cis-male]

The electronic (Dj) sphere is very masculine, too masculine I can say. There are more than 90% of the artist in the clubs and festivals that are male. [Part 43, 199X S-Europe bi cis-female]

I don't feel conscious of my gender expression in my own creation of art. I do feel extremely conscious about my gender expression in navigating the politics of the classical music field. [Part 93, 198X N-America hetero cis-female]

## Summarising the arguments

This table gives an overview of the arguments used to explain whether female or male music exists or not. The colours mark arguments that are basically the same but used in opposite ways. i.e. sometimes the same justification is given by different people to argue both that gendered music does and doesn't exist.

### According to you, does 'male' and 'female' music/sound art exist?

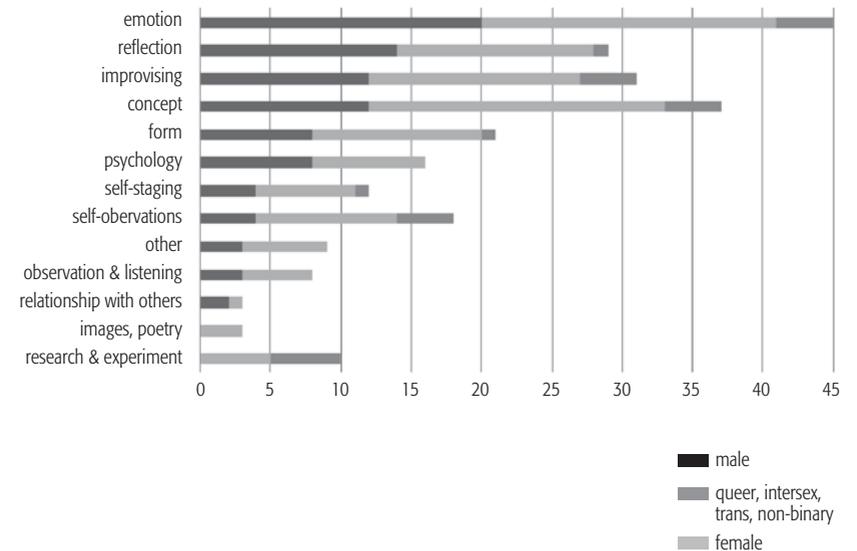
This table gives an overview of the arguments used to explain whether female or male music/sound art exists or not. Sometimes the same justification is given by different people to argue both that gendered music/sound art does and doesn't exist. We ordered the arguments in yes/no duo's to make that clear. An exception to this is that 15 people answered 'no' without an argument. No one answered 'yes' without an argument.

Arguments	Number of participants
No, because thinking in binary terms is too limiting and simplistic	7
Yes, but the differences are not binary	1
No, because you can't hear a difference if you listen	5
Yes, because if I listen I observe a difference	2
No, there are only clichés and stereotypical descriptions in terms as powerful, aggressive, sensitive, delicate, ...	4
Yes, you can describe male and female music in terms as soft, exceptional, holistic, vulnerable, dominant, ...	12
No, music/art is too complex and contextual roots and female/male differences are too small to have that big an influence	4
Yes, because contextual roots are important in the creative process and there are genderpatterns in society	16
No, only the reception is gendered	3
Yes, the reception is gendered	2
No, all minds are unlike	3
Yes, but individual diversity is too great to hear the signal in the noise	1
No, art, sound and music itself are androgynous	7
Yes, art can be masculine or feminine. This is not related to the gender of the artist	3
Yes, due to biological difference between artists	2
Yes, there exist feminist / masculinist music	4
No, no arguments	15

## Different approaches to creating

A different approach to creation is one of the arguments which are proposed in favour of a gendered art. The survey asked 'how do you approach creating?', and found differences among male, female and non-binary artists. The top-6 of important elements to artistic creations for the participants are listed in the following graphic.

### How do you approach creating?



## The bigger picture, inclusion and interconnection of art and life

A number of voices point out a general movement towards a more inclusive relationship between art, the professional field, and the reality of personal life. The participants speak of a situation in which gender and other personal traits of an artist naturally play a role; in which art is seen within a broader personal and social context; in which family and personal relationships are not simply adjacent or an obstacle to an artistic career; and in which the quality of human relationships matter.

I would like to see more women/other-gender artists achieving notoriety. I feel that life is about balance. When life is out of balance we experience much tension and frustration. By bringing these people (women/other-gender) more into the field of endeavour (in the art world) and in life in general we can achieve a greater balance and hence more harmony in our lives. [Part 33, 196X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

It's possible that at an earlier period of my life, had I been more aware of certain gender identity and sexuality related problems, I might have chosen a different path. I have often felt very isolated and outside of the mainstream in society and being a musician has been a way to stay out of too many socially enforced boxes. At the same time the music world has also been a place to hide and avoid showing aspects of myself which I find very difficult to express openly. [Part 34, 197X W-Europe intersex]

[My utopia is] that it's about people and their art - and also that the art is seen in relation to the context people work in. Nobody is a singular genius. We are all influenced and connected. Actually, I hope there will be less and less solo-performances. Art is interesting for me if it is not only referring to itself. [Part 41, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Sometimes I've thought there's a shocking lack of awareness/reflection of one's behaviour/language etc. when it comes to gender, race, sexuality etc. among artists. Maybe because everybody is so full of themselves and so aware of the fierce competition that you completely lose genuine interest in the other. Also, artists convince themselves that art/music is a meritocracy ('it's only about the music') where social interaction doesn't mean anything. This is obviously completely flawed but essential to the self-esteem of many artists. [Part 22, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I think there is a historic cultural imprinting about the roles of men and women in relation to work. Our culture will more openly accept women as great performers of composed work, because they're 'just working' (like if they were sewing clothes in a sweatshop), but is less likely to accept them as composers, conductors, leaders... it's men who we more easily accept as geniuses.

Personally, however, rather than say we ought to elevate female composers to the ridiculous level of the genius in the ivory tower, I'd just like people to recognise that my work is actual work, just like the work done by someone in any other profession. [Part 55, 197X N-America hetero cis-male]

I need to be open to people and chances to play. In my experience, when two people play, they become special to each other. They don't become friends, really. They become mutual creators, which is incredibly valuable. [Part 83, 196X N-America-Asia hetero cis-male]

Now in marriage and motherhood, the time for work, career and life are much more interconnected, [...] it is a conscious choice: to not break any more my life in many roles but seek a balance that does not exclude any aspect of me and anyone that I love. [...] It puts it into right perspective and dimension. [Part 70, 197X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

The whole set-up should also be seen within political structures:

More than the quantity of women in the field I would love to see the quality of feminist/queer theories growing – because they are one of the most efficient tools we have to transform the material relation with our objects of cultural production.

It also has to come with a transformation of the economy of the field, of the way the institutions are made, of the role of the artist in a capitalist-based society. It would have to come from the awareness that the bigger part of the art production today is a by-product of capitalism, and that capitalism is also based upon a hierarchy of gender subordination/domination. [Part 66, 197X S-Europe bi cis-male]

Or, like these two answers formulate, to the question of the significance of power:

[Power] means being able to ask for inclusion and getting it. [Part 32, 196X N-America-S-America hetero cis-female]

Power is best given not taken. Last year I saw an elderly Aboriginal woman being interviewed, and the interviewer said, ‘You are a respected elder in your community’ – she said, ‘Well I wouldn’t say that’ – and the audience all quickly yelled ‘Yes you are’.

Then she could go on and answer the questions with that vote of confidence. That seemed a good use of power to me. [Part 63, 195X Oceania hetero cis-male]

## Artists as parents

For women, becoming a parent has historically been one of the biggest obstacles in pursuing an artistic career. In the survey, parents of all sexes welcome a more inclusive way of connecting life and art. The testimonies do not indicate any significant differences between being a mother, father, or other: all parents are confronted with the same

challenges, such as time and money management, and feel the same responsibility and advantages. They report how being a parent and an artist may demand a different rhythm, and sometimes a different art practice, but they agree that founding a family doesn’t necessarily mean suspending your life as an artist and offers many benefits of its own.

[Having children] made me want to make music that was more fun and approachable. [Part 72, 197X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

My children inspire me a lot! And practically they are an obstacle a lot! [Part 58, 197x W-Europe hetero male]

Art can be anything cant it? It doesn’t have to be some huge performance thing. Sitting with your kid drawing is art no? [Part 49, 196X W-Europe intersex]

From the older generation, they are surprised when a female composer with kids makes a career. Luckily for under 40s it is not a surprise. [It’s difficult], unless he/she has lots of support, but family offers other benefits – family grounds you emotionally and provides support. [Part 54, 197X E-Europe-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I put much of my career on hold while my children were very little. I continued, but only at the teaching level. I did almost no performing, and most of the composition I did was lullabies. [Part 32, 196X N-America-S-America hetero cis-female]

Apart from the fact that children influenced a lot my way of working with other people, it is obvious that I was making restricted choices to go to places, in order to be with [them]. But I always thought that work has to adapt to life as it is and comes and not vice versa. In the residency I am starting up this year and next, there is place for artists with children, I believe it is important they can live together while being creative (they don’t have to participate though). [Part 16, 195X W-Europe-E-Europe hetero cis-male]

Having children has quite naturally enriched my life with many experiences, emotions – and this in turn has had an impact on my work. Conversely, having children also makes it harder to get this work done as there is less time to work. And even when I find the time I'm often too tired (for lack of sleep) to actually work effectively! [Part 33, 196X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

We have a boy. It makes you more conscious of what is important and it makes you focus differently. I think it also 'slows down' your path, but you gain other insights in return. Luckily for musicians, there is no age where you cannot play, so I am very happy to know that one day, when my children are big, I can make a world tour if I want. [Part 53, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

As art forms, music and sound art are very collaborative. It is logical, therefore that inter-human relations play a hugely important role in the structure of the field. For musicians and sound artists, part of their job is to consider how their appearance is perceived, by colleagues, programmers, curators, critics, and audiences. Naturally, this perception is in a large part defined by gender.

The participants observe that their professional field still feels predominantly male, but as direct questions about collaboration and the distribution of roles show, it is not only men who have a natural penchant to team up with people of their own gender.

Artists testify that networking is the most important way to find jobs in the field of music and sound art. The fact that networks are often gendered, and that the field of music and sound art is currently quantitatively dominated by men, may go a long way toward explaining why so many female artists are still unable to bridge the gap between school and the professional field.

## The field as it is observed

Several artists put forward the idea that female and other-gendered artists might be under-represented in the field not so much because they feel discrimination directed at them personally, but because they experience the field as male-dominated and therefore unwelcoming.

From what I have seen, the music and sound art field is predominantly masculine. I am thinking that a lot of females are discouraged, because there are no female role models – and I am also thinking that males can be excluding without being aware of it; it can be the way they talk, encourage their own male friends, only select male collaborators, using their own tribal language etc.  
[Part 37, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Speaking for the field of contemporary chamber music, subtle prejudices exist, but a lot of people are working hard to create

a more equal playing field. The biggest thing is that composers represented are still overwhelmingly male, and also more institutional positions are taken by men. It's changing but much too slowly. [Part 25, 198X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I have the impression that it can be a 'boy's club' and that male-dominated spaces (unintentionally?) can be unwelcoming to women. [Part 48, 197X N-America-Asia hetero cis-male]

Look, I live in a country with a strong male dominance in any field. But in music there is some kind of equal presence. Though certain venues only seem to select the men. [Part 16, 195X W-Europe-E-Europe hetero cis-male]

Several of my colleagues in the jazz world often talk to me as 'one of the blokes'. They say things like 'Hey man' and 'thanks man'. On the one hand this is typical language for a jazz musician (even I speak like this to my jazz colleagues), but on the other hand it also shows they respect me as an equal (I know that sounds weird...). Certainly they don't normally talk to women in that way! [...] I'm happy that they talk in that way to me - as it makes me feel like I am included on the same musical/professional level as them. Weird, I know. [Part 51, 198X Oceania hetero cis-female]

In a collaborative art form like music, it is essential that you 'fit in', preferably with the 'cool cats'. This is much easier for men because guys prefer to 'hang' with guys. Especially in more informal contexts, 'women mean hassle', as one musician is quoted saying in the book 'Women in Jazz'. Although all of this sounds schematic and blunt, I have experienced it at length (and yes, sometimes social interaction is schematic and blunt). If you work with men, you hear a lot of dick jokes, sexist stories, comments relating to sexual attraction/rejection of other women (who just happen not to be in the room) etc... In these situations, you either become 'complicit' by not speaking up or you 'mean

hassle'. (In fairness, a bunch of women are often little better.) I usually opt for becoming complicit and dislike myself for it. [Part 22, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

## Navigating through the professional field

Stage presence, promotional and online imagery, voice inflection, clothing, but also the choice of words, sound, and collaborations, are all subject to interpretation. This can mean that maintaining an awareness and anticipation of the 'right' or 'wrong' images can become extremely problematic or tiresome for female and other-gendered artists. Mostly, the men we surveyed did not report feeling such problems. Common strategies to deal with this situation vary between negation, bypassing, and confrontation. Some artists elect to make such techniques of representation an artistic topic, for others it is a necessary evil.

Here again, three distinctly different perspectives by male, female, and other-gendered artists could be observed. The three participants quoted below speak for similar positions of their peers.

I think the fact that I've never had to think about this carefully or consistently has probably meant I've had energy to focus on other things. One of the very difficult things, though, is for someone who hasn't had to look at these issues to understand how they have played a subtle role in shaping their choices. [...] I think that this has probably had very little to do with the reception of my work. Again, as a white male, I think these extra-curricular things are largely invisible. [Part 147, 198X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

It is difficult for a woman to not be conscious of gender expression. I feel like I am constantly reminded of how I am 'supposed to'

express my gender or how I 'had better not' express my gender. I suppose I do make choices in terms of how I present myself in performances, how I relate to the audience, etc. I feel like I have to be 'careful' walking the line between being too 'sexual' and being too 'masculine'. This awareness might affect how I dress, what type of photos I use for promotions, and how I relate to curators. [...]

I actually hear [discriminating] remarks directed at other female artists all the time, but not at me directly. I perceive this to be an (unconscious) indirect strategy which ultimately has the same effect as if my appearance or behaviour had been remarked upon directly.

I hate this aspect of the work and of the world in general. It feels completely inescapable, too, which makes it more depressing. [...] Perhaps initially I had hoped that performing in the realm of music that existed in the margins of the culture, rather than creating mainstream music, might offer an alternative to the typical problem women face as performers. My thought was that a woman in a more normative role in mainstream society is objectified and must constantly be judged by qualities which are out of her control, including her physical appearance, among other things. I thought that participation in an avant-garde culture might side-step that problem. It has not fully managed to do that, though. Of course there are many other reasons I made the career choices I made, but thinking about it through the lens of gender issues related to appearance is interesting. [Part 148, 197X N-America hetero cis-female]

I think that if I would be more open and direct about aspects of my gender identity my work could be interpreted in the wrong way. Therefore I try to stay neutral and avoid bringing attention to these questions. It can be that I would have more success if I would show more, but then the success might be more about surface presentation and binary concepts which are irrelevant in the end. [Part 34, 197X W-Europe intersex]

## Expressing gender as a sound artist or musician

On many levels of artistic practice, choices can be made as to how far one goes in expressing (or not) their gender identity: stage presence, artist name, pictures, promotion, etc. Some artists choose to confirm or exploit existing gender patterns, whereas others seek to contradict and challenge mainstream gender norms because they actively want to provoke the audience to rethink their ideas about the social coding attributed to sexual difference. Some artists choose to present themselves as gender neutral. Finally, some artists are not conscious of their gender expression at all and do not actively make choices about it in their artistic practice. There can be many reasons for these choices, but for most of the respondents it is either a question of making a political statement – freedom of expression, freedom of gender – or about appearing gender neutral, so as to direct focus toward the music itself.

### STAGE APPEARANCE

For most artists in music and sound art, some sort of stage presence is involved in their artistic practice. Generally, the participating artists are aware of their gender expression whilst performing.

I tend to wear skirts/dresses when performing. I'm aware of a kind of feminine power/presence I have on stage. [Part 25, 198X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Gender expression for me is a big swimming pool of possibilities and choices. [Part 155, 198X S-America-W-Europe intersex]

It is interesting to see how people react when I do things that are typically perceived as more masculine (shaving part of head, not wearing bra, not dressing in a hyper femme way...) [Part 85, 199X N-America hetero cis-female]

I did play with the notion of blurring the borders between the typical gender roles onstage, often assuming characteristics of both of them together (moustache and tights). [Part 75, 198X Asia-W-Europe queer cis-male]

I prefer not to wear much make-up to not be judged as the pretty one. I just want them to hear my music, but since I'm a woman, I know that comments about our appearance are always there. [From the moment] I noticed these things, I wanted even more to pursue an artistic career and do it my way; dressing how I want, being what I want, sounding like I want. It was a matter of taking a position, and I did. It was important for me, to keep doing my sounds. [Part 130, 198X S-America hetero cis-female]

While I was playing male, I would often get musical collaborators making comments about the way I sit, my vocal inflections or other feminine personal habits. I spent a lot of time watching friends and trying to figure out how to act masculine so I could be invisible, or 'normal.' It prevented me from honestly exploring gender in my work, especially in collaborations. That commentary of me was effectively social policing, right? So it served as a reminder of how I SHOULD act and contributed to me staying in the closet. [...]

I've always had facial hair, and have never undergone any hormone treatment or surgery. In order for people to read me as feminine, they have to know me well enough to get past surface readings of my gender. I am hoping to only make choices based on fashion. I am really interested in loud patterns, which is related to my interest in loud and jarring musics. Now that I am more comfortable with my gender expression, I concentrate more on fashion choices than it being a political statement. But that in and of itself is hard as many people assume that putting on a dress for me is intended as a statement. [Part 39, 198X N-America female trans]

In my performing and musical director roles, I deliberately try to not wear dresses or skirts or female tailored clothing, in order

to help disguise my gender. Obviously I still look female to an audience member or colleague, but I try to make it less about how I look, and more about the music. I wear black, which is the standard 'musician's uniform.' I wear long pants and shirts. I wear sturdy black shoes, not high heels.

In all other aspects, I try to be as gender-neutral as possible, particularly in the jazz field, and when being a role model or mentor for my students. [Part 51, 198X Oceania hetero cis-female]

I would hope to be more successful at masking my personal identity – including gender and sexuality – in my art, such that it could achieve an appeal that ran deeper than such matters as self-personification. [Part 6, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I am actively challenging gender stereotypes. I refuse to disclose my gender, and will appear in gender neutral clothing when I perform. [Part 38, 198X N-America intersex]

## NAMES

The choice of names for bands, titles for work, festivals etc. can also be gendered choices. Some artists consider it politically important to express gender in their choice of artist name, some artists prefer gender neutral names.

I am well aware of my gender situation as a gay man (I prefer to say I am queer, old fashioned but more exact). From record sleeves to sleeve notes, titles of compositions and themes (I work with sound and written word), thematic novels and poetry, I exert, not in a fastidious way, the way I am and feel/see the world. What I do reflects well what and who I am. [Part 59, 196X S-Europe-W-Europe queer male]

I find it important that the women artists do not leave the terrain by taking male names and disappear completely. [Part 14, 198X W-Europe bi cis-female]

I tried an experiment to see if my feminine name was an obstacle. I had sent music for release to a label who had [previously] refused one of my pieces saying he had too many at the moment. [The newer music] was of equal quality and same kind, [but I sent it under a male name] and it was accepted. [Part 13, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

My choices have been primarily passive ones, such as altering a band name to become less gendered [Part 95, 199X N-America hetero cis-male]

I recently changed my name so I could have some privacy. I chose a relatively gender neutral name but I haven't thought deeply about it. I just like how it sounds. I've been getting offers from 'all women' events and groups but I don't really like that idea. Sorry. I like being a tom boy amongst men and women. [Part 74, 196X N-America bi cis-female]

## PICTURES

Most of the female participants are well aware of how their sex could position and sell their music, especially through the internet. Because of this, they are often very careful in their choice of pictures. Some artists don't want their sex to advertise their music, and so deliberately won't use pictures of their bodies, or won't use pictures at all. Others try to take care to look good in pictures, with the idea that this is what is needed in order to put focus on the music.

I make choices about what imagery is associated with my creative output. I am adamant about choosing photos that are abstract, and do not use my body or images of myself as a tool to propagate or promote my music-sound art etc... [Part 97, 197X N-America hetero cis-female]

At some point, the 'about' section of my website included a photo of myself, and from time to time I received emails of sound artists and musicians that sometimes were a bit odd, I remember specially one

that instead of Hi or Dear or any other greeting wrote: 'Goddess'. When I deleted the photo (that was very normal, not sexual or explicit in any way) there was no way to know if I were a man or a woman and I stopped receiving these kinds of emails. I don't have any problem with men (or women) feeling sexually attracted to me, but if I feel that they are not really interested in my work, I don't think the attraction is a positive thing.

[This didn't influence] my career choices, but in a way, I think that my online presence is influenced by these remarks. My website has no text, photo, etc. that states if I'm a man or a woman. Even if I find it odd that everybody presumes that I'm a man, I prefer that to a false interest just because I'm a girl. [Part 44, 197X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

I wear some make-up when I perform more often than I used to. I feel very aware that people will be taking photos of me and posting them and I hate to feel that I will look old or unattractive in these photos. So part of my show preparation includes strategising about my appearance in possible performance photos. [Part 74, 196X N-America bi cis-female]

As an artist and human being I am aware [of my gender expression]. I choose not to use my body and expression of gender to promote myself as I find it would not be me even if it succeeded .

A man told me that I was promoting my music 'too much', that I was after success. So I think he criticised my character and behaviour. I was doing no more than male musicians. All my music is free, so I did it only to have more listeners not money. I believe he would not have said this to another male artist, [...] even if he believed the same. Giving advice and critiques not wanted. Maybe I react badly but I refuse friendship on social sites from men who have women friends playing too much a sexy gender role. [Part 13, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

## Gendered networks

Although artists are generally in favour of a more diverse field, networks seem to easily fall into gendered patterns. Most males tend to prefer working with males, most females prefer female colleagues if they are at hand, queer artists feel most at ease when surrounded by other queers. Only 22% of the respondents claim to be working in groups with an equal mix of genders. Since the field of music and sound art is quantitatively dominated by men, however, for many non-males it can be difficult to find gender-alike colleagues.

### GENDER IMBALANCE IN THE FIELD AND THE PENCHANT TOWARDS GENDER-SAMENESS

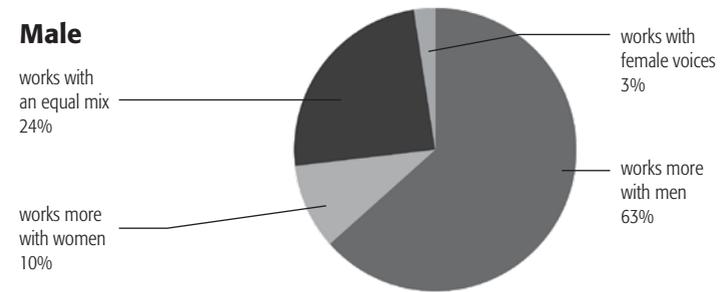
We asked the participants: 'If you are collaborating with other artists, are they more often male, female or of an other gender? Give an approximate estimate.' 48% answered that they work mostly with men. Amongst these statistics, big differences can be detected between male, female, and other-gendered artists:

Both male and female artists work mostly with male artists, but half of the females motivate their answer by saying that this is not a choice but a result of the quantitative majority of male artists. Intersex, trans, non-binary artists work mostly with women and many motivated their answer as a conscious choice not to work with men anymore.

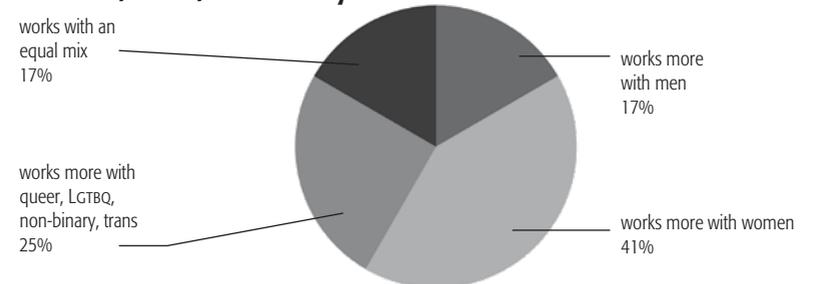
Men tend to programme men, women tend to programme women. [Part 97, 197X N-America hetero cis-female]

Due to the nature of music in general being about 33% women, my collaborations reflect that level. [Part 32, 196X N-America-S-America hetero cis-female]

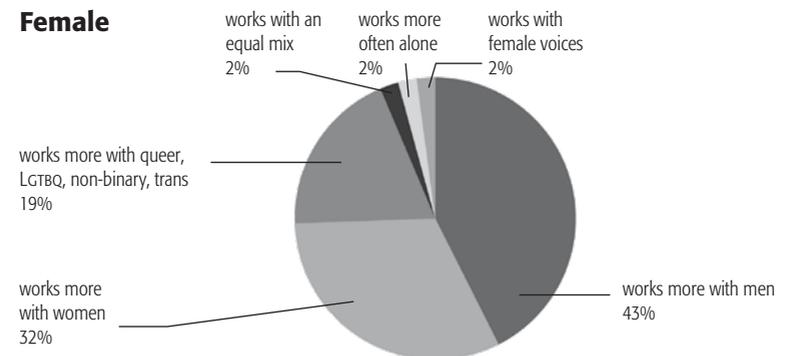
#### Male



#### Intersex, trans, non-binary



#### Female



I think personal networks are inherently gendered and can only become less so through conscious effort, and that people tend to favour people of their own gender (again, unless they consciously work on it). [Part 95, 199X N-America hetero cis-male]

Although I live my life as a cis-gendered male, I have resisted identifying with any particular sexuality. This fluidity has allowed me access to gendered communities (particularly communities of gay-identifying men) that have exerted great impact on my career success, whether I have chosen to participate romantically in those communities or not. [Part 146, 198X N-America]

There are certain male clubs that feel uncomfortable inviting women. [...] In the areas I work in if there is prejudice, it's very subtle. It's more about boys feeling uncomfortable around women and then creating environments that exclude them. Sometimes they are not aware of it. [Part 63, 195X Oceania hetero cis-male]

Some respondents remark that it is not only onstage that there is a quantitative male dominance, but also in the audience:

I am sick of going to a gig and seeing 247 straight white men, 2 straight women, and me. In all the bands in our scene you can count the number of LGBTQI+ people on two hands. You can count the number of trans people on one. The number of women would be under 50. [Part 15, 199X Oceania hetero trans-female]

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF A GENDER-ALIKE SCENE AS A SPACE IN WHICH TO EXPRESS YOURSELF**

Conversely however, a gendered scene can be an important way to find the confidence and support to develop art. This is especially the case for many queer, trans, intersex, and non-binary artists, who describe how finding a scene of artists that are beyond gender norms has liberated them. Similarly, some women feel more comfortable

and supported when working with other women. Artists working around gender and feminism as topics in their practice are often not taken seriously by the 'official', mostly-male scene and so choose to explore these topics in other contexts.

I wanted to be part of a community of musicians and artists. [...] I was appreciated for being beyond gender norms. [...] I feel less alone in my expression when I see other artists breaking through gender stereotypes. [Part 38, 198X N-America intersex]

I consciously make music with other women because I feel more comfortable with them socially. I can't make music with people I'm not close with. [Part 100, 198X N-America queer cis-female]

My male colleagues do not reach out to me to collaborate. I reach out to them but never the other way around. For a while I thought that I must just not be someone that people are excited to work with, not a good enough artist, not a good enough friend. When I started to collaborate with more women though, they expressed excitement to work with me again. The women I work with respect me. The men I work with are respectful and wonderful collaborators during the process, but don't think of me as an artist in the same way that they see their male peers. [Part 8, 199X N-America hetero cis-female]

I was brought up and continue to live in a society which imposes severe limitations on everyone in their gender expression. A society which does not allow one to have fluid and changeable identity. Even if 'trans' and 'queer' etc are apparently becoming acceptable, we're still all expected to have one main gender identity and sexual orientation. If I am honest, my identity and orientation is changing all the time and therefore it's not easy to fit into these restrictive and ultimately boring models. This is a very clear reason for me to work as a musician, because music helps me to escape these restrictions in many ways. [Part 34, 197X W-Europe intersex]

I have been working with gender/feminism/queer/... related subjects and fields. It influenced my career or choices in this manner. [Part 106, 198X S-Europe bi cis-male]

As my work has always been related to gender, sexuality and sex, many critics have related to this and not my music. But, that is why a long time ago I decided to reduce my public to trans-feminist groups and networks which limited totally the expansion of my work but at least I felt secure. [...]

I was not able to perform in cultural institutions, and if I did I was quickly erased after the performance. Also the public had to be very specific, because people don't like to question themselves, and less when it is about their gender and sexualities!! They feel very uncomfortable, and they feel directly attacked. [Part 129, 199X S-Europe intersex]

### THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING TO FIND JOBS

We asked how artists typically go about finding a job. This was a multiple choice question where artists could check more than one possibility without quantifying. More than 50% of job-opportunities were found through informal networks. Finding a job through ways that are not supposed to involve networking (auditions, open calls, an agency) occurs much less often: only 13% of the jobs were found this way, again: without quantification of each box. Another 11% of the jobs came about because artists were invited by programmers of formal venues and festivals.

Since the survey responses indicate both a preference to work in gender-alike networks, and that most jobs are found through informal networking, it seems reasonable to deduce that gender specific networks must exercise a large influence on the gender balance within music and sound art. This could explain the well documented gap that exists between the number of girls participating in school

choirs and school orchestras, and the number of women that are active in the music and sound art field.

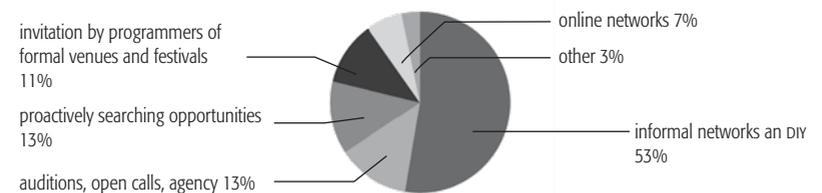
In the classical world (in my country) I am learning that a lot of the opportunities come from who you know and which person might give you a leg up, in a somewhat unprofessional manner (not through working hard and earning it). Traditionally these go to fellow men, as part of a men's club culture. This was openly discussed during a music camp, of which I was one of 4 composers taking part in a prestigious national music camp (I was the only female participant). It was truly eye-opening for me as I had not even considered that this might be a reality in 2015 [...].

Just recently I was networking with an all-male band from interstate and several of them dismissed me because I am a female. It was disheartening but typical for the jazz industry. [...] It is a club built by men. [Part 51, 198X Oceania hetero cis-female]

I observed after the BA and the MA: most women drop out of the art field immediately because they don't have the network. [Part 14, 198X W-Europe bi cis-female]

I am mostly invited through my female network and have to propose my projects when in a male setting. [Part 45, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

### How do you more often find jobs?



**JEALOUSY AND SOLIDARITY**

Jealousy and solidarity cannot be attributed to any specific gender, but are present in the fields of music and sound-art in general. Some of the testimonies give a lucid sketch of how jealousy and solidarity can be two sides of the same coin, which once aware of the mechanisms of the field, can fall on the bright side. Crucial, because solidarity as a 'we'-feeling proves to be one of the most operative tools towards inclusion.

I guess when I was immersed in this highly competitive style, totally unconsciously, I felt more solidarity with men (because, in fact, I wanted to be like them) and felt more jealousy toward women (which were like me, exactly what I didn't want to be). Now I can perform my gender in another way and nourish solidarity with both women and men colleagues. Mainly, I'm paying more attention to my female colleagues and trying to build good relationships with them. [Part 35, 198X S-America hetero cis-female]

I did feel a typical female jealousy from time to time. There is an unspoken rule currently, which we all kind of feel, I think, that there is space for a couple of non-males, just enough for the system to prove that it is tolerant enough, but not for all of us. So instead of working together towards a real gender equality, we fight and compete against each other to get into those rare couple of positions. It is a 'real' issue of the wrongness of the outside system we're trying to fit ourselves into, which we should [...] recognise and fight against. [Part 47, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

I'm very 'proud' of women artists because I know that to dedicate one's life to music is often very complicated for a woman. I identify more with women musicians: I think about their experience, life and career. I'm more curious than about men. I like to work with other women, especially for music projects [which are] solid and durable. I like also to work on poems or

pictures, or on work by women artists because probably I share more their sensitivity... often I seem to understand them better. [Part 70, 197X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

It's tricky. I used to feel more competition with other female composers, like we were more in competition somehow, to get that 'female spot' on the concert program. [Part 80, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Always envied the ease, power, camaraderie, assumption of the right to be mediocre, that seem to go with being a man in music worlds. [Part 103, 196X Oceania bi cis-female]

I am probably more competitive with male colleagues. [Part 72, 197X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

Gender has little to do with it. It has to do with attention, recognition and status. Yes, this goes mostly to men, but I don't think it would change if there was true gender equality. [Part 21, 197X N-America-E-Europe hetero cis-male]

Maybe a little bit more male jealousy...? [Part 58, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I typically feel solidarity towards those who have worked hard, and assume that non-male, non-white, non-cis people have had to work harder to get to their current position. Therefore I would say I primarily feel jealousy more evenly, but feel solidarity towards those with a different gender or race than my own. [Part 95, 199X N-America hetero cis-male]

I feel more solidarity with, and uncomplicated admiration for women artists, certainly, shallow as that may be, now I think of it [Part 6, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I think I can feel more threatened by male artists than by female ones. [Part 75, 198X Middle-East-W-Europe queer cis-male]

I think there is a masculine way of competing, and a feminist way of being together. [Part 106, 198X S-Europe bi cis-male]

## The internet

The internet has had a ground-breaking effect on music and sound art in general, and many participants of this research testify to the advantages the internet has had for them. The internet creates infinite possibilities for visibility and global networking with a dramatically less hierarchical structure than found offline. In addition to possibilities for networking and promotion, the internet provides users with the possibility of distributing music separately from their physical, gendered appearance.

One Eastern-European artist says that for her, the internet was the only platform on which she could share her artwork and discover other people's music. For other artists who had been discouraged by prejudices, online platforms have enabled them to again begin making music.

When I was younger: yes, women were invisible in music, once I accessed internet and made research I found them.

[I mainly distribute my work] publicly on the internet. This was the only opportunity I had. [...] It let me virtually meet other musicians, listen to things I would never know, know what others do, what's happening. [Part 13, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

I think online is a different story as I have found many people of all genders that have the same interest in music. [Part 7, 196X Oceania hetero cis-female]

[I felt] discouraged, I have gradually stopped doing my sound work. Lately I have picked it up again, thanks to the internet and platforms like mixcloud etc. [Part 62, 197X W-Europe trans male]

## Group dynamics

Prejudices about male and female roles in a group are widely spread. Men are often seen to be better leaders, women as good at helping and facilitating. Men are imagined to prefer working in hierarchical structures, women to prefer collaborative work.

We posed the question: 'How are functional roles distributed in the group, related to gender? Do you think stereotypical gender roles in the music and sound art field exist?'

### Do you think there exist stereotypical gender roles in the music and sound art field?

No	36
I see it in other groups, but I don't experience it myself	20
Not for artists, but there are gendered roles in the entourage	2
Yes, but only related to the instruments they play, and not in my group	8
Yes, but only related to the instruments they play, and I experience this	2
Yes, but much less than there used to be	1
Yes	21
Maybe / I don't know	6
total answers	96

Reading the answers more closely, we get a picture of a transforming scene. 69% of the participants say that they personally never worked in a group where functional roles were distributed according to gender stereotypes. Nearly half of the respondents, however, acknowledge the existence of such stereotypical gendered roles in other groups. 25% state that gendered roles are still omnipresent, and that this was an issue they were often forced to deal with. There is no significant correlation between the gender of the respondent and their answer to this question.

Of course, it is possible that those who answer 'no' to this question, are simply unaware of the fact that their groups may unconsciously function according to stereotypical roles. For this reason, we also asked participants to describe the role to which they typically adapt themselves in a group, and whether or not they feel comfortable in this role. The analysis of these answers confirms that indeed stereotypical roles are disappearing and that functional roles are more often attributed according to one's character, skills, musical abilities, etc.

### **STEREOTYPICAL GENDER ROLES IN COLLABORATION**

One out of four artists that answered this question has had experience of working in an environment in which roles had been distributed according to stereotypical patterns.

Summarising the opinions of the respondents, the presumed stereotypes about women could be roughly described as follows: that they are good administrative executives and listeners but are less easily accepted by men in a leadership position. Women may be asked to sing or play piano/keyboards, but they are all too often distrusted as composers or conductors, and certainly for their technical skills. They are emotional and empathetic, and as thus responsible for keeping everybody in the group happy. Sometimes, women's emotions are seen as too overt, and written off as hysterical. Women

who are not pretty have a hard time proving themselves. Women prefer collaborative work.

In the beginning I felt the people from the space didn't trust me booking great stuff – had to show I can do it. I also had to quit the collaboration with my ex-partner of the project, as he systematically only left 'female' work for me – cooking, promo, logistics - and did the booking and organisation himself. [Part 45, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I find a lot of the organisational tasks fall to me, and have felt my male colleagues sometimes take credit for others' work. I feel emotionally responsible quite often to keep everyone in the group happy and working together. [Part 25, 198X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I have to admit that I've noticed that conductors and stage directors are more often male than female, as are most administrative executives. [Part 42, 198X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

I do believe women end up being the organisers, mother hens and so on a lot more often. Men might take a paternal role, but it's often a lot more about control than care or a desire to increase collaboration. I've found myself often tricked by men into believing that staying in musical situations which were psychologically damaging to me was the most 'friendly' or 'healthy' choice, in order for them to continue using my skills as a player and songwriter. [Part 102, 198X Middle-East-Oceania queer trans-female]

It will be straight men on stage, a token woman or two and maybe a queer person and then an entire staff of women running the show and managing all the logistics. This is pretty see-through, traditional sexism, which somehow goes mostly unchecked in many galleries and avant-garde scenes in the world. [Part 39, 198X N-America female trans]

I think in music there are definitely stereotypical roles. For example, I have played in many rock bands where either the bassist or singer was a woman. However, in jazz there are practically no woman bassists. I also think many men don't want to be in a group that is led by a woman. [Part 33, 196X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

Women tend to be better listeners and can be more expressive in terms of ideas and group dynamics. [Part 21, 197X N-America-E-Europe hetero cis-male]

Women organise dates and appointments. Very good. And they are reluctant to make electronic music. They have no problem to pick up a guitar, but somehow working with machines and computers seems not so attractive to girls. Even if they like the music, it's just less than guys. Other than that: girls have to be really good, when they are not pretty. Even for other (non-lesbian) females. Guys not so much. [Part 27, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

The stereotypes of men tend to see them as leaders with natural intellectual skills. They are self-confident, strong and assertive, and often viewed as dominant and aggressive. They prefer to work in hierarchical structures. They are capable of playing instruments, managing technical equipment, and composing. They are good speakers and bad listeners.

Directors tend to be male... [...] I've always been a director... [Part 57, 195X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

A judgemental and aggressive attitude that is often on show amongst the male creative community. Males tend to need to show their 'power' all the time rather than concentrate on the work. [Part 64, 196X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I am musically dominant. It is sometimes uncomfortable, but most of the time not. [Part 26, 199X Oceania hetero cis-male]

I must say I'm usually the guy with the tech stuff. [Part 66, 197X S-Europe bi cis-male]

In the different group projects I have been involved in, either there is a choir director or orchestra conductor, much more often male than female [Part 42, 198X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

But we can detect a change towards gender-equality and the dissolving of stereotypes, especially in the field of experimental music. The majority of the respondents claims never to have worked in groups where the roles were distributed according to one's gender.

[Stereotypical gender roles] exist in the sense that some people maintain old role patterns, but in the productions I was working on I am happy to say that in our small teams the gender role had no relation to the functions. [Part 31, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

[Stereotypical gender roles] are being superseded - I know great women percussionists and conductors and sound engineers whom I would never have met in the circles I knew 20 years ago. [Part 6, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

Confronting the situation 30 years ago (or less!) the situation has really changed. I remember [...] told me that in the 80s she was lonely in the improvised music field. She was sorry for that and it was difficult to be all the time only with men. She was a pioneer! But now there are plenty of amazing musicians, girls and women composing, playing, performing, inventing music, and it is easier to share our art with men outside of the gender differences. I see that in the younger generation of musicians this process advances. So, society is often slow to change the rules and habits, but all the creative fields can help this change. [Part 70, 197X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

Well let's take my group as an example. There are more men, but the group is run by me and a man. I often take on the jobs of

updating the website and sorting out texts, while the man writes a lot of emails and negotiates fees. We do the things we are good at as individuals, I don't feel it is gender defined. The musicians in the group are mostly men, but the instruments they play are not gender-specified. [Part 80, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

We asked also the participants to describe which role they usually adopt in a group, and whether they feel comfortable with that role.

**What role are you easily adopting in the dynamic of a group?**

Role in the dynamic of a group	total %	male %	intersex, trans, non-binary %	female %
leader	28	24	8	33
alternating between performer or leader	21	24	17	20
doesn't work in hierarchical structures	15	10	33	16
helper/supporter/facilitator	8	12	8	4
prefers to work alone	7	5	8	4
always changing	6	5	25	2
specific role	5	5	0	6
organiser	4	2	0	6
the quiet one	4	2	0	6
other (the learner, the foreigner, neutral)	3	7	0	0

The answers to this question do not show any significant difference in roles according to gender. Comparatively more females claim to function in a leader position than males. The male artists that participated in this research more often work mainly in a helper/supporter/facilitator role than their female colleagues.

Similarly, we didn't detect a difference between men and women in their satisfaction with group dynamics. Leaders of all possible genders and sexes sometimes feel happy to take on an organisational role, and sometimes feel frustrated where they feel they have to push everyone to do their work. Not everyone is a born leader. Men, women, and

non-binary people testify to sometimes feeling pushed into the leadership role. Facilitators of all genders and sexes sometimes feel content that they can help the group functioning, and sometimes feel frustrated if their work is not adequately recognised. It is not only women who testify to sometimes being the ones taking care of the ambiance and the overall atmosphere, some men tell us they often play the joker, the supportive guy, the social facilitator, ...

Many artists are constantly changing roles, depending on their function in a particular process. If they initiated the creative project, they more often take on the role of organiser and leader. If they are participating in someone else's project, they tend to be a performer, supporter, facilitator.

As for non-hierarchical working situations, there is a noted prevalence of intersex, trans, and non-binary artists (33%) preferring to work collaboratively, as opposed to 16% of the females surveyed, and 10% of the males.

**DESCRIBING FUNCTIONS AND ROLES – THE POWER OF WORDS**

Where the testimonies do indicate a clear difference between genders, however, is in the terms which people use to express their own role within a group. Respondents use words with very different connotations to describe the same functional role. For example for the role of helper: male respondents tend to use words such as 'supporter', 'social or diplomatic facilitator', the 'get together fellow' or just 'helper'. Females describing the same function use words as 'workhorse', 'mother hen', 'responsible for the communication'. One hetero female described her function as: 'the person in charge of organising and communicating'. In contrast, a hetero male described the same role as: 'an administrative leadership role, and be a public figurehead'.

Me and my friend recently had a discussion, why do we know so little truly happy and radiating women who we appreciate. So we thought, that because females were oppressed for centuries, even given equal rights, they will still carry lots of anger from generation to generation. And it will take a while until the real equality and freedom of being will happen, in equal rights. And so even if a woman was given total freedom of thought and act today (meaning, without rules on what she should do and what she is not supposed to do), she would still have to spend a lifetime building the whole school of self-understanding of what it is like to be a woman, how to understand her inner voice, and how to pass this onto future generations. So it will take quite a few generations of 'equal rights' before a woman will finally learn how to be a woman. And of course, not being able to fully express herself, a woman can rarely become role model to anyone else. That is why, we thought, there are so few of them – yet. [Part 118, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

## Education and role models

Most participants put forward education as a possible tool with which to address inequality in the field. We observe that most people recommend the education of the other gender, that is; women recommend educating men, men recommend educating women. Luckily, many voice the necessity to educate both. Education includes raising children with awareness, giving equal encouragement to students regardless of gender, and working toward increased visibility for female artists so that they can act as role models.

### UPBRINGING

A person's perception of reality is strongly influenced by their upbringing, not only through the opinions and behaviour of their parents, but also through general opinions and social structures in the world at large. Many participants give accounts of how their

private and public cultural heritage has influenced their (artistic) life. In general, those with an upbringing in an seem to have better developed strategies to deal with inequality without feeling victimised or attributing blame to others.

I was brought up in a very male, heterosexual environment that denigrated any other. They were pretty sad individuals. They now form most of the UK government. [Part 79, 196X W-Europe-E-Europe hetero cis-male]

There's no such thing as neutrality unless you are unaware of your own white patriarchal possessiveness. The social imaginary significations of one's own world absolutely shape everything about them to the deepest psychological level. You cannot separate a monad from society. [Part 101, 198X W-Europe-Oceania bi cis-female]

[I had] just an ordinary, tolerant, heteronormative, middle-class, American upbringing. [...] On the bright side, I was exposed to feminism at a young age and have always identified as a feminist. [As a result] I'm not an asshole to women. The women I've worked with have liked working with me. I often push organisers to involve more women and try to work in contexts that are welcoming to women. [Part 48, 197X N-America-Asia hetero cis-male]

I was brought up by my mother and 2 older sisters. I had no male role model, someone to show me, either by example or through bad examples, how to be 'a man'. I am aware that I have less violent tendencies than most men I know; less ego, etc. I am aware that many of my behaviours and movements could be seen as feminine. However I am proud to be noticeably large male who displays 'female' attributes and so exacerbate these at times. [Part 112, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I grew up in [a socialist country] and from my perspective it was a more gender equal upbringing. I was very much encouraged to

perform equally as men. Strong. [It influenced my career as an artist] very much. I was not afraid to enter a male dominated field. [...] I was also allergic to feminism and thought it was obsolete. Well I changed my mind and woke up. [Part 23, 196X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Gender was a huge definer of almost every aspect of life in my upbringing. It still is. I think this is unavoidable. Even if children are now raised with less imposing set rules or to be more tolerant of gender variations, gender is still a large definer of self and other. Gender is a physical construct but also psychological construct but also a societal construct, etc. But, gender is also usually a taboo, so many of the ways people feel and think about it are under-discussed or under-explored or misunderstood. I don't think we have a choice in the environments and times we are raised, so I feel lucky that I have been able to learn there are a lot of different people in the world and each of them is usually trying to realise themselves with sincerity. [Part 83, 196X N-America-Asia hetero cis-male]

[Socialist society] offered great opportunities to women. Now it has changed a lot. It imposes traditional gender roles quite strongly. I was raised by a father in the army, my mother died when I was 5. I had a boy education in hunting, shooting, combat sports, survival in nature. I felt perfect about it. I see it as a gift for a woman. It saved me several times and made me feel very free and not afraid. [Part 13, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

This female artist grew up in America and describes her upbringing as fairly gender equal. She had many role models with the same gender identity as herself. Presently, she works in Brazil. While the Brazilian artists that filled out our query describe their environment as extremely gendered and discriminating, this participant feels that she has experienced no sexism at all. She is, however, aware that a lot of sexism exists, but feels that through her upbringing and education she has found a way to navigate the field without encountering it:

In my specific composition group [...] I am the only woman amongst 5 of us. [...] When I present a reasonable idea, it always gets incorporated, they listen to me as much as they listen to each other. I do not feel left out in any way.[...]

[But] just because I have not experienced sexism, doesn't mean it isn't rampant, it just means I've learned how to steer around it whenever I can and trample over it whenever it doesn't budge. [...] Maybe I've just learned not to keep sexist company, or developed a sense of who to stay away from. [...]

The fact that I haven't experienced it doesn't mean it didn't happen to me, but rather that I was not aware that a result might have happened differently than I expected due to being a woman. But I have achieved everything I ever set out to do in my life. Always. [...] I think that there are different ways of thinking that each gender has, and when we can join together objectively, and open-minded without thinking of the stereotypes, our art highly benefits. [Part 32, 196X N-America-S-America hetero cis-female]

### **ROLE MODELS AND GENDER-EQUAL TRAINING IN ART SCHOOLS**

Various painful memories from artists show the impact that (art-) school has on the building of a healthy self-image. Some remarks also point at the influence this has on how artists learn to deal with experimenting and making mistakes – crucial skills and tools for a creative profession. This issue is exacerbated in fields in which a long education and thus dependence on teachers and institutions is necessary, such as classical contemporary composition, academia, and jazz.

Role models are important in education on every level. We repeatedly had artists claim to have discovered inspiring female or other-gendered artists only after the completion of their studies, through actively and independently searching for them. In art school, female and other gendered artists have overwhelmingly not been considered a part of the historical canon. Some, mostly male, artists claim to

neither need nor want role models, which for men appears like a luxury refusal. There is, additionally, the occasional person who has experienced a lack of positive examples of masculinity.

(In the supplement 'List of role models we sum up the role models that are mentioned by the participants of the research.)

Generally, in hindsight I realise that most of the feedback I got as an adolescent and learning to play instruments was so ill-defined and worded in such a way that it was impossible to work with it constructively and matter-of-factly, but completely aimed at me as a person ('you're playing too shy' etc). When I was younger, I just perceived a general helplessness in applying the criticism I got from teachers to my playing or a general unease about certain types of comment that were very 'lock, stock and barrel' ('that doesn't groove/ swing/ sound good' etc). [Part 22, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

In the jazz world, it is important to be free with your expression and virtuosity – but when learning these skills it is easy to feel like a failure. I'm sure the males feel this just as strongly as women do when they're learning, but they cope very differently. It's as if they've been brought up to think different when confronted with these situations compared to girls who feel like failures when they get it wrong. [Part 51, 198X Oceania hetero cis-female]

I gave up prime years of learning and creating in order to achieve womanly ideals and fit in. I have since had to fight to gain that back and be comfortable with experimenting. Women are not supposed to experiment, but artists are. I had to learn how to define myself in a way that gave me the creative liberties I sought. [Part 81, 199X N-America hetero cis-female]

I teach students, mainly girls. Some are brilliant and creative, and yet I know that the accumulated bullshit of centuries is bearing down on their ambitions every step they take towards success.

Read the letters of Clara Schumann to see the damage of doubt that the patriarchy can inflict. [Part 19, 199X W-Europe bi cis-male]

I aim to challenge my singing students' perceptions of self through gender as a result - particularly in work at the tops and bottoms of their vocal ranges, and in choosing material. I also work a lot more with improvisation, as it allows space to loosen up the concept of gender identity. [Part 125, 199X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I think that as I informed myself on gender and sex related struggles and ideologies, I turned from mostly male artists, theorists, musicians... to more and more women, lesbian, trans, black, arab ones. This has to do with what they gave me at arts university, they never told me about Mierle Laderman Ukeles, so when I found about her I couldn't understand why, and now I keep her as a reference; same for Fatima El-Tayeb, Anne Carson, etc. [...] I have no doubt that at a certain point in my life meeting gay men who were out in the world of music helped me get the courage to do the same myself. [Part 114, 195X Middle-East queer cis-male]

It would be nice if there were more role-models for people in this 'business' which are not predominantly male. Because some people need role-models at certain points in their lives, to see that it is ok to dream about this or that profession. [Part 47, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

I am specifically interested in what they produce, not the people themselves. Looking into the life of someone I admire might influence me to make career decisions but I don't think it influences the way I appreciate their art. [Part 149, 197X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

There is a huge lack of positive male role models in contemporary culture. [Part 112, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-male]

Speaking about gender, I noticed how much works and research made by women are less mentioned than those made by men. In this sense, there is a lack of common knowledge about female contributions in the development of research in the field of music and art. The result is a lack of important references that might influence or inspire the work of other artists. [Part 76, 197X S-Europe hetero cis-female]

In [high-school] the students in general were misogynist and sexist, but we had several feminists teaching, who were politically active and there was a nice group of lesbians. The teachers all lived in the city and came to the countryside to teach. I had a feminist guitar teacher, who also introduced me to Krautrock and other things that seemed like from an other planet to me out there. That is why I expected the city to be a place where everybody would be a feminist, even men. The most macho and misogynist place I encountered in my entire school time was my Bachelor [degree] in the art school and this was a big shock! And it made me very insecure, maybe for the first time in my life. The Masters was not any better at all unfortunately. The art university is still a horrible place in that sense. [Part 14, 198X W-Europe bi cis-female]

## **Awareness in the field, quota, gendered calls, women-only initiatives**

There is a general advocacy amongst respondents for the use of quotas 'to get things moving', whereas women-only initiatives are mostly considered stigmatising or even counter-productive. The most prevalent argument against such initiatives is that artists should be appreciated for their art, not for their gender. Others add that replacing negative discrimination with positive discrimination is discrimination all the same. More visibility for female and other-gendered artists is certainly a general concern, and the responsibility

is pointed out of teachers, programmers, journalists, institutions, etc, to address this balance.

As artistic director, I do make a conscious effort - not when planning but when looking back over what has been planned - to ensure that we represent diversity in our programming, and not just a picture of me, or any of the rest of us. [Part 147, 198X N-America-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

As a teacher and as a programmer, I try to help and promote females as I find it sad and not good that my scene, 'new music', is still so male. [...]

I think in new music that many people, including me, are looking to give females opportunities as a kind of a positive discrimination to change the culture. [Part 72, 197X Oceania-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

I told a friend whom I appreciate a lot that I don't like that she is hosting so many men, even organising concerts and DJ-gigs for them. She was very angry at me first. But then we talked about it. [...] Last week there was a wonderful evening organised by her, mainly starring queer women! [Part 14, 198X W-Europe bi cis-female]

50/50 representation on boards, panels, fellowships, scholarships, awards, prizes, grant and funding opportunities, representation at festivals and other public platforms and outreach. Encouragement of recognition of talented females in public forums, articles, review, magazines, books, online representation. [Part 92, 197X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Affirmative action, awareness, educated concert programmers, and more women in positions of power. [Part 93, 198X N-America hetero cis-female]

I don't want to be invited to girl-only stuff. I also hope women manage to claim the space without repressing men, or doing the same thing they did themselves. [Part 11, 197x W-Europe hetero cis-female]

50-50, because I am organizing also a lot of things, and take care of a gender equal presence. [...] But you have to see this over a period of time, like a couple of years, otherwise you become slave of the quota. [Part 16, 195X W-Europe-E-Europe hetero cis-male]

I sometimes find certain exclusively 'female' art projects problematic, but at the same time I see that they are necessary because there are also simply too many exclusively 'male' art projects where the protagonists are blissfully unaware of any imbalance! [Part 34, 197x W-Europe intersex]

I think there is a tendency to value male artists over anybody else, and this is often expressed in an not so conscious way of selecting and evaluating which ends up producing almost-all-male line-ups. When people are conscious about this, the line-ups change. [Part 106, 198X S-Europe bi cis-male]

## **Raising consciousness and getting informed**

Discrimination is often a result of fear and misconception, or is simply unconscious. Many feelings stay unsaid, questions unanswered. The responses make it clear that opinions and decisions are often based on speculation and a subjective perception, as so little is known and so much is in flux. We could detect however, a want for knowledge and a readiness to question one's own gender-bias.

I know a lot of women that are frustrated with lack of attention/opportunity. But I also know men who feel the same way so how do we separate out how much is gender related? [Part 7, 196X Oceania hetero cis-female]

Yes, [I'm inspired by certain artists because of the way they express

their] femininity, because it's a big doubt for me. What is femininity? How do women communicate? Is it different? Why? Usually the works are very interesting, but I can't tell what is the difference, honestly. I think they're just being honest with themselves and what they want to say, doing what they want to. That's what makes something unique, personal. [Part 130, 198X S-America hetero cis-female]

For me [this discussion] can bring answers to questions I didn't really put myself until now. [Part 61, 198X E-Europe-W-Europe hetero cis-male]

[I wonder:] how do men feel about female artists? About gender studies? Do they feel prejudiced regarding the work of female artists? Do they feel a pressure to work with female artists, does it influence their choice for collaborations? As a man, does the appearance of a female artist influence their interest, choice for collaboration,...? [Part 69, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Awareness [...] is the catalyst for any change [Part 56, 197X N-America hetero cis-male]

Society is still very much fighting against its own blueprint and history about a woman's role in the household. I have many discussions about that in my private life, but it helps me to understand more and gain insight. [Part 53, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Being conscious and informed includes gender critique, talking, discussing, researching, and acting towards empowerment.

Not every curator appreciates critique of social roles and of roles within the art world. I also see that questioning the staging of the work within fixed rules and genres does not speed up any career. But I think it's worth keeping the search up and sharing. [Part 14, 198X W-Europe bi cis-female]

I've been a little involved with [empowerment of girls], and my

partner's been very involved, and I think grassroots organisations like this that take the mystery out of being in a band can go a long way to help the next generation get involved. [Part 100, 198X N-America queer cis-female]

Seeing all those girls at my daughters school who want to be 'top models' pushed me in my artistic career - also to show girls that there are other ways of doing it. I teach electronic music for kids at my daughters school now. [Part 41, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

Sure you have to look harder for women. History is male and told by male. BAD!!!! We must change that. [Part 23, 196X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I begun to study a female composer: [...]. It was through this research that I discovered all these things: gender, gender in music, my own gender condition. It happened between 2012 and 2014. Since last year I'm totally engaged in working with women composers, studying the history of women in music and in thinking about these things and how I can do something about that by playing - my artistic way of expression. And also how I can provoke changes in musical education where it is possible. [Part 35, 198X S-America hetero cis-female]

We need to know as much as we can, look at the details and facts and make an informed decision as to how to continue. [Part 32, 196X N-America-S-America hetero cis-female]

A few years ago, when my opera was premiered, one of my colleagues in it mentioned that it was notable that our group performing it was made up of five women and five men. I hadn't noticed this, but on reflection, realised that it was notable, as so many of these performances are often male-dominated, at least numerically. So, that happened in the case of one performance without us trying for it. I think that's how it should be. However,

just being aware of the larger problem and discussing it is probably a good first step. I think the change might be slowly happening anyway. Of the composers younger than myself who I admire, a much larger percentage are women than was the case just 10 years ago. [Part 55, 197X N-America hetero cis-male]

I think that sound art lacks gender critique; and so there are lots of bearded men and 'objective' approaches, with very little body and affect, and not a lot of interrogation of the position of the one who does, performs or 'knows'. [Part 106, 198X S-Europe bi cis-male]

We need more mentors and support overall for minority groups in the industry, particularly females in male-dominated industries like composition and jazz. This is the home of my research project examining the making of musicians. Right now I'm focusing on female musicians in my home town. [Part 51, 198X Oceania hetero cis-female]

## **Self-awareness, self-respect and respect for the other**

As people become more self-aware about how their sex and gender influences their behaviour, they can begin to reflect about it and, if necessary, check tendencies that might negatively impact on other people, instead acting in a more respectful way to those around them.

When I am critical of women, I catch myself and have to really question myself re: internalised misogyny. [Part 103, 196X Oceania bi cis-female]

I think that there are different ways of thinking that each gender has, and when we can join together objectively, and open-mindedly without thinking of the stereotypes, our art highly benefits. It makes no sense that the world is made of basically 50/50 between

the two genders that we should have a balance towards one OR the other. [This can happen] by talking about it, by acting as examples. By NOT arguing and accusing, but rather getting people to let go of stereotypes themselves. [...] In the past 10 years, I think a lot has happened naturally towards this goal, but it has been going on behind the scenes, at that so-called grass-roots level in culturally sensitive, generationally sensitive ways. [Part 32, 196X N-America-S-America hetero cis-female]

I've toured with a particular band a few times and they have become friends. One of them is quite a rough gentleman. He likes pushing people's buttons when he finds them and one night after a show he looked me in the eyes and said 'you're so pretty.' I thought I was just going to get made fun of, but he stopped and thought for a bit and continued. 'I am just violent,' he said, 'violence is easy, pretty is very hard.' [Part 39, 198X N-America trans female]

Same prejudices as everywhere else. All that comes from women are undervalued. Even by women. [Part 13, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

I became very conscious (maybe even self-conscious) about expressions of my gender in both my artistic work and my day-to-day interactions in 2005, after a performance of my work which motivated audience feedback that was expressed in particularly gendered language (though it's unclear whether audience members attended to the gendered aspect of their experience during the performance). Afterwards, I spent much time analysing their comments and my work to see how the music may have motivated such responses. Since then, I have been very conscious of how expressions of my gender (language, posture, movement, hierarchical position, decision-making, etc.) impact others, particularly in my teaching but also in my creative work. To a certain extent, I also think about this when creating music in determining things like loudness, phrase structure, timbre, timing, etc. [Part 146, 198X N-America hetero cis-male]

## Words and vocabulary

Many participants express a wish for a different, non-binary vocabulary with which to speak about sex and gender – at the same time more detailed and more open – as words have considerable power in modelling reality. Although most people are resistant to labelling, most consider it a temporary necessity to better understand one another.

Speaking of gender, I catch myself being very gender-binary in my explanations. This is maybe something that I and everybody else who is doing it should change. I am not that up-to-date with what's the best way to do it, though. But we should think about it. [Part 47, 198X E-Europe hetero cis-female]

I'd rather see less words and less labels to be honest, but I see the need for the labels at present. [Part 67, 198X W-Europe hetero cis-female]

I prefer less words, more confusion really. There is a freedom in confusion that cannot exist once all is labelled. [Part 39, 198X N-America female trans]

For years in writing one of the features of my personal poetika is to eliminate the first person (singular and plural), and 3rd person (sg). This means it is never obvious whether it is personal or not, male or female. [...] I don't need neologisms or so, just more original patterns and structures. [Part 16, 195X W-Europe-E-Europe hetero cis-male]

I'd like English to have a third person gender-neutral ('epicene') pronoun. [Part 48, 197X N-America-Asia hetero cis-male]

I'd like to make everyone say 'guts' instead of 'balls' when referring to gall or bravery, to use phrases like 'I really dig that!' rather than sexual and sexed phrases like 'I have a boner for that', and to use words like 'tune' to describe a fantastic piece of music rather than

the aggressively sexual 'banger'. [Part 15, 199X Oceania hetero trans-female]

For me it is strange when in a mixed group I'm addressed as 'you guys', in that typical cool American way. It makes me feel an extra, I always wonder for a moment if I'm concerned. [Part 60, 196X W-Europe bi cis-female]

## Summary

The field of the sounding arts, although improving towards gender equality, is still clearly oriented along the cultural codes of a male paradigm. In this paradigm, female and other-gendered artists are often perceived as 'other' – also by themselves. They have to face negative discrimination in the form of assumptions, (indirect) remarks, stereotyping, exclusion and being overlooked, and sexualisation. Male artists meet discrimination to a significantly lesser degree but some are good observers of the mechanisms of gender-imbalance. While male artists can take art-unrelated remarks lightly, female and other-gendered artists often perceive them as unsettling and discouraging, and develop strategies to navigate around them. Especially when it comes to technology, artists with a female gender-expression have a particularly difficult time being included and taken seriously within the field. In general, the field of music and sound art is perceived as (unintentionally) male and can feel unwelcoming for non-male artists.

The question of a possible gendered-ness of music and sound art in itself is addressed. The participant's ruminations give an account of speculation, confusion, and imagination. The answers are often ambiguous and illustrate the complicated interlocking of art, the artistic field as embedded in society and history, and the personality of the artist, including gender. The whole line of testimonies shows a general wish for change in the paradigm, away from the author as a single genius, towards an approach of creation which includes art, the field, and personal life-reality.

The testimonies of the participating parents sketch a very emancipated image, of fathers and mothers being concerned, responsible, and equally benefiting from parenthood. Most found ways to adapt their artistic profession to this change in life rhythm and material needs.

As being an artist in sound and music more often than not involves

stage presence, gender-appearance – including male or female attributes and behaviour – is seriously considered, but much more so by female and other-gendered artists than by male artists.

There is a tendency towards gendered networks. Although most artists are in favour of increased diversity in general and claim to find it more inspiring artistically, they often work more easily with artists who share similar ideas about gender. Networking is the most important way to find jobs in the field of music and sound art. The fact that networks are often gendered, and that the field of music and sound art is still quantitatively dominated by men, might be one explanation as to why so many female artists are unable to bridge the gap between school and the professional field.

The internet has been very important in creating gender-neutral platforms, and as a means to connect artists from all over the world. It makes information available, and can be a gender-neutral platform to present one's work.

The tendency towards stereotyped roles within a group is getting blurred. Artists of all genders are taking up different roles, such as communication, logistics, leadership, production. However, it is possible to perceive in the difference of vocabulary used by male and female respondents a difference in the level of respect that each attribute to these different roles.

Different points of attention are addressed for a change towards gender-balance in the field of music and sound art. Education and gender-equal artistic training are prominent, including more diversity in the canon of art history. Role models for female and other gendered artists are seen as lacking, and several participants also point to an absence to male artists who portray a positive image of masculinity.

Furthermore, there is advocacy for gendered quotas as a means of pushing things forward, but much less enthusiasm for women-only

initiatives. Awareness, consciousness, and self-consciousness are recommended as tools for improvement, and the responsibility of programmers, critics, teachers, policy-makers and others is evoked. Many participants call for a more careful use of language to describe changing conditions.

## Afterthoughts

Working on this project took a long breath. The impetus to undertake this research first emerged from casual conversations around gender topics in the Q-O2 workspace. From here, we started to formulate the remarks into a questionnaire, and then, inspired by the richness of the responses, decided to shape them into the imaginary conversation of this book.

This book would never have come together without the generosity and honesty of the participants. Through them, we discovered that gender is a much larger defining factor in musical creation than we had imagined at the project's outset. For many, it is a notion which carries frustration and confusion, but we also heard a lot of power in the answers we received: the power of honesty, the power of change, the power of difference and of solidarity - and last but not least the power of words. The differences in the sound and tone of the contributions made us aware of how many possibilities there are for how we tell our stories to ourselves and to others. History is starting right now and it matters how it is told and by whom. Carefully chosen words allow us to understand and to share in the experiences of an otherness we cannot embody ourselves. Through speaking, individual experiences and opinions can begin to reflect and to coalesce into broader communal sentiments.

We have been lucky that this project chimes into a historical moment in which gender is but one part of a wider democratic movement where racial, cultural, and socio-economic matters are debated and

brought into relation with one another. The testimonies we collected suggest that feminism has moved away from being a 'women's only' issue. It is rather a concern shared by many, albeit being seen from different perspectives. Questions of gender and sexuality have entered into the realm of music, which for so long had resisted them by declaring itself an abstract and objective art. There is a shift occurring, away from the hierarchical concept of the genius and toward a more inclusive music which comes together with its maker, including her or his culture, gender, race etc. An unbiased approach of listening has to follow, together with a change in expectations and the consideration of context.

We felt ourselves strengthened by the lucidity of the testimonies and at the same time we became more aware of our own, ingrained biases. Acknowledging this fact made us aware of the many choices we have: to take seriously what we like and speak about it; to do what is good for us; to create our own canon and community; to refuse to answer expectations and accept hierarchies; to respect working with children as equal to playing in a big concert hall. Through realising ourselves as an active part of the research, we came to see our own work in a different light and to unlock some of the defensiveness which often comes with this topic.

We see this project also as a tribute to past generations of female musicians and as a way to continue what they have started for all of us, at a moment when the stakes for feminism were higher. Many of our most experimental and visionary sound artists, such as Eliane Radigue, Maryanne Amacher, Pauline Oliveros (to mention only three) have waited too long for recognition and never received the facilities they deserved. Even so, they have found ways to create and discover new artistic dimensions.

Next to many other writers, there were three philosophers whose thinking has accompanied us in this work: Hannah Arendt, for addressing the balance between different human activities and their

attribution to the public and private realm; Sara Ahmed, for her definition of orientation and the alignment to a paradigm against which anyone 'other' is left with the task of operating in a double alignment; and Carol Gilligan, for her analyses of differences in voice as defined not by gender but by theme, highlighting a distinction between two modes of thought rather than between genders. These differences are to be found in a different psychological history, thus leaving space for resistance and for creativity.

Bringing these terms back to the field of artistic production provides us a lot of creative freedom, and a large range of possible modes of being and working; as one participant put it: 'gender is a big swimming pool of possibilities.'

## Survey filled out with quotes of female artists of all times and places

The following section is a thought game, a little leap of imagination: what might have been the answers from women we could not reach with our questionnaire – women who never saw the survey because they are from another historical time or are too far from our circles of communication? How would it sound if the questionnaire could collect their thoughts and experiences as one multiple personality? Through imaginative exercise, we found a place for passages from some relevant books we read in preparation for the project, and a way to provide some of the historical context to the research.

### SELF IMAGE

**How do you relate to your appearance? Has this changed throughout the years?**

**Michelle Haimoff** (in 2010): Black women wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, and see black women. White women wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, and see women. White men wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, and see human beings.<sup>1</sup>

**As an artist, are you conscious of your gender expression? Are you making choices, if so, which ones and why?**

Conductor and pianist **Ethel Leginska** (1886–1970) abandoned gowns in favour of masculine jackets, believing that women had to emulate men in order to succeed in professional instrumental performance venues.<sup>2</sup>

For **Riot Grrrl** (1990s or later) a ‘girlish’ dress code was one way of lashing out against assimilation of male culture via dressing ‘tough.’<sup>3</sup>

**Sarah McLawler** (1928): I demanded everyone to be beautiful; fix yourself up, look nice, be glamorous and play. We were squares.



**Ethel Leginska** Photo the George Grantham Bain collection at the Library of Congress

We went to church on Sunday, we didn't smoke or drink. Other girl groups would ask us, what are you trying to prove? We weren't trying to prove anything other than we could play.<sup>4</sup>

On **Patti Smith** (1946): Her album covers depicted an androgynous persona that was as unusual for women performers of that era as was her music. For women in rock, it was a bold new expression.<sup>5</sup>

**As an artist, did you ever want to be of the other sex? If so, why?**

**Nadia Boulanger** (1887–1979), after being pressed by reporters about what it was like to be the first of her sex to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra: 'I've been a woman for a little over fifty years, and I've gotten over my initial astonishment. As for conducting an orchestra, that's a job. I don't think sex plays much part.'<sup>6</sup>

**Does sexual attraction play a role in your collaboration with or your appreciation of other artists?**

Journalist and historian **Val Wilmer**: I was not surprised to read that in 1959 they [**Margie Hendrix** (1935–1973) and **Ray Charles** (1930–2004)] had had a baby together. Recalling the electricity they generated on stage in their seamless exchanges, and listening to the records, I realized they had been 'doing it' on stage.<sup>7</sup>

**RECOGNITION**

**As an artist, do you sometimes get remarks that have nothing to do with your music, but are about your appearance, your character, your behaviour? Can you give some examples?**

A 2013 study from **University College London** found that when asked to pick eventual winners of international music competitions, the more than 1,000 participants of the study on average chose correctly 53 percent of the time when watching six-second videos of a performance, with no sound, but just 26 percent

of the time when listening to audio of complete live performances. The effect was actually more pronounced among participants who were professionally trained musician.<sup>8</sup>

**If so, do you consider these remarks as gender related? Can you give examples?**

Baroque violinist **Monica Huggett** (1953) was driven to design herself a dress that she found comfortable to play in, only to find her next review compared it to a curtain. As she has complained: 'Is that relevant? If you're a man, you can appear night after night in your 15-year-old, ex-hire tail suit from Moss Bros. and nobody says a word.'<sup>9</sup>

Ironically, **Polly Jean Harvey** (1969) has been championed as the outspoken voice of women in music: in her sheer ability to write songs with a thunderous tone; in direct, explicit lyrics; and, most scarily of all for those boys in the front row, in the way she looks them in the eye. The press, typically, has turned this self-confidence into a rare, marketable commodity. It is seen as almost frightening, rather than empowering. On days when Harvey decides to smile, put on make-up or more recently a dress, the tone has usually been one of victory, 'the taming of the rock chick', rather than simply seeing this as another side to another artist's personality.<sup>10</sup>

**What are your feelings about this? What has been your response to this?**

In her first group of published madrigals **Maddalena Casulana** (1544–1590) wished to 'show the world the vain error of men, that they alone possess intellectual gifts and think those gifts are not possible for women.'<sup>11</sup>

**Fostina Dixon-Kilgoe** (1956): People have always said that I play like a man. When I was a child that was a compliment. Now that I am an adult, it is not. I play like a competent woman.<sup>12</sup>

**In a professional artistic context do you sometimes receive comments that are about sexual attraction or rejection? What has been your response to this? Do you experience this as positive/negative/neutral?**

An 1874 **New York Times** review of the **Viennese Ladies'** Orchestra foreshadowed the type of response that American women's ensembles often received throughout the twentieth century in venues ranging from jazz to rock: 'The orchestra presents a coup d'oeil attractive enough to compel the sternest critic to lay down his pen, supposing he may have anything unkind to say. But, happily, the Viennese ladies, with their uniformity of pretty costumes and (may it be added) their uniformity of pretty faces, are no mere pretenders.'<sup>13</sup>

**Do you think that these remarks consciously or unconsciously have influenced your career choices?**

**Phil Spector's** reaction to meeting **The Ronettes** (1959–1967):

Phil was first taken by their appearance – they wore heavy eye makeup, tight dresses and slacks, and all had matching hairdos piled high on their heads. He quickly decided that he wanted to record them, and later on when he actually heard them sing, was surprised at just how good they sounded.<sup>14</sup>

**Do you think that your gender expression has influenced the reception of your work as an artist?**

Gender also impacts the placement of musical activity in art and popular music spheres. Orchestral and band performance has been historically segregated by gender, with professional groups limited to the male domain. Women's groups have often been considered 'entertainers' even when their ensemble instrumentation and repertoire have been similar to that favoured by men. Similarly, songs produced by women in the Victorian parlour were sometimes published as popular music, even though the compositions were structurally similar to art-music works composed by men.<sup>15</sup>

**Roxanne de Bastion** (in 2015): Ever since I started performing solo, I've been referred to as a female singer-songwriter and it's made me cringe every time. I am indeed female, and yes, I do write – and sing – songs. But I've always been acutely aware that this description is one reserved for a minority: when was the last time you heard someone say, 'Oh look! A male drummer...' or, 'I'm going to see an all-male band tonight'? Are music-making women so rare in 2015 that we still need to point out their existence? Is this a new phenomenon, women playing guitars?<sup>16</sup>

### Do you think your work as an artist has been recognized enough?

About **Barbara Strozzi** (1619–1677): Eight volumes of songs were printed in her name, making her one of the most published composers of her time, male or female. Though she was usually absent in twentieth-century musicological narratives, she was highly regarded during her lifetime, with over one hundred solo vocal works to her credit. She wrote more secular cantatas than any other composer of her era.<sup>17</sup>

Journalist and author **Damian Thompson** in 2015 on the work of Clara Schumann (1819–1896): 'Her mature 'Piano Trio' is more accomplished, though its lyrical passages could have been cut and pasted from one of her husband's works.'<sup>18</sup>

Extract from an interview with **Björk** (1965):

PITCHFORK: When it was originally misreported that 'Vulnicura' was produced by Arca, instead of co-produced by you and Arca, it reminded me of the Joni Mitchell quote from the height of her fame about how whichever man was in the room with her got credit for her genius.

BJÖRK: Yeah, I didn't want to talk about that kind of thing for 10 years, but then I thought, 'You're a coward if you don't stand up. Not for you, but for women. Say something.' So around 2006, I put something on my website where I cleared something up, because it'd been online so many times that it was becoming a fact. It

wasn't just one journalist getting it wrong, everybody was getting it wrong. I've done music for, what, 30 years? I've been in the studio since I was 11; Alejandro [aka Arca] had never done an album when I worked with him. He wanted to put something on his own Twitter, just to say it's co-produced. I said, 'No, we're never going to win this battle. Let's just leave it.' But he insisted. I've sometimes thought about releasing a map of all my albums and just making it clear who did what. But it always comes across as so defensive that, like, it's pathetic. I could obviously talk about this for a long time.

PITCHFORK: The world has a difficult time with the female auteur.

BJÖRK: I have nothing against Kanye West. Help me with this – I'm not dissing him – this is about how people talk about him. With the last album he did, he got all the best beatmakers on the planet at the time to make beats for him. A lot of the time, he wasn't even there. Yet no one would question his authorship for a second. If whatever I'm saying to you now helps women, I'm up for saying it. For example, I did 80% of the beats on 'Vespertine' and it took me three years to work on that album, because it was all microbeats – it was like doing a huge embroidery piece. Matmos came in the last two weeks and added percussion on top of the songs, but they didn't do any of the main parts, and they are credited everywhere as having done the whole album. [Matmos] Drew [Daniel] is a close friend of mine, and in every single interview he did, he corrected it. And they don't even listen to him. It really is strange.<sup>19</sup>

### Does it matter for you how others value your work? Are you easily influenced by opinions of others?

**Keal Minna** (1909–1999): If people had come and said: 'You can't give it up: you are so good', perhaps I would not have given it up, but nobody did [...] So I decided that if I was really good they would have been begging me to stay, and as no-one did I obviously couldn't be much good.<sup>20</sup>

Although **McLawler** and her 1940s combos were treated with respect by other musicians, she feels that they never got the critical

recognition they deserved. 'It made no difference how good we were, we were always seen as a novelty. I've not been recognized for the work and the pioneering I've done.'<sup>21</sup>

## ROLE MODELS

### Who have been your role models throughout several phases in your life? Whom have you emulated as an artist?

**Mary Lou Williams** (1910–1981): One Saturday night I went to a theatre on Frankstown Avenue where all the Negro shows were booked. But I hardly noticed any part of the show, for my attention was focussed on the lady pianist who worked there. She sat cross-legged at the piano, a cigarette in her mouth, writing music with her right hand while accompanying the show with her swinging left! Impressed, I told myself: 'Mary, you'll do that one day.' (And I did, travelling with Andy Kirk's band in the Thirties on one-nighters.)

The lady turned out to be Lovie Austin, who was working with the pit band and making all the orchestrations. It so happened that she was behind time, and hurriedly arranging a number for one of the acts further down the bill.

Another week, the fabulous Ma Rainey came into a little theatre on Wiley Avenue. Some of the older kids and I slipped down-town to hear the woman who had made blues history. Ma was loaded with real diamonds – in her ears, around her neck, in a tiara on her head. Both hands were full of rocks, too; her hair was wild and she had gold teeth. What a sight! To me, as a kid, the whole thing looked and sounded weird. When the engagement ended, and Ma had quit the scene, rumour had it that the jewellery was bought hot and that Ma was picked up and made to disgorge – losing all the loot she had paid for the stuff.<sup>22</sup>

### Do you have role models with the same gender identity as you? If so, who?

**Björk** (1965): I really like fado singers like Amália Rodrigues, but I don't speak Portuguese. [laughs] I really like Abida Parveen from Pakistan, but I don't understand a word she sings either. As for American singers, you know who I've loved almost since my childhood? Chaka Khan. I love Chaka Khan. I've totally fallen in love with a remix album of hers from the '80s. I don't know if it's a guilty pleasure. It's just pleasure. Obviously, I really love Joni Mitchell. I think it was that accidental thing in Iceland, where the wrong albums arrive to shore, because I was obsessed with 'Don Juan's Reckless Daughter' and 'Hejira' as a teenager. I hear much more of her in those albums. She almost made her own type of music style with those, it's more a woman's world.<sup>24</sup>

### Do you experience a lack of role models with the same gender identity?

There is no doubt that women appear to be strangely absent from much of classical music's past. The canon of 'great music' and 'great musicians' that forms the core of classical music education or concert programming is almost exclusively male. Even in the 1990s, **Macmillan's** eight-volume series of books presenting the history of music 'in a broad context of socio-political, economic, intellectual and religious life' is entitled 'Man and Music'. But women have always played a far greater part in musical life than official histories might suggest.<sup>26</sup>

### Do you have role models with a different gender identity than yours? If so, who?

**Mimi Fox** (1956): I had gotten into Jazz and had studied with different teachers in New York, but when I heard Bruce [Forman] it was a different thing altogether. What struck me was the combination of using the blues with Bop, you know with a lot of energy, passion and fire and being the kind of player that I am that really drew me 'cause I had heard some other Jazz Guitar players and they were really cerebral, but when I heard Bruce it sort of came alive for me. And like I said, it wasn't really the studying so much as the talking which I learned so much from and of course the transcribing and

transcribing from him and other instruments. So I really didn't see him a lot but when I did a lot of epiphanies would happen. You know, you're lucky in life if you can find someone who you admire and who provides you with something you can aspire to, so that's been very cool.<sup>27</sup>

### **Are you inspired by certain artists because of the way they express their masculinity, femininity or other gender expression?**

Extract from an interview with **Christina and the Queens** (2010):  
When it comes to playing with ideas of gender, by way of 'alienesque shape-shifting,' there are few artists Christine admires (or, in her own words, 'stalks') more than FKA twigs. The two share a passion for the physicality of performance, their videos and live shows embedded with twitchy dance moves, their lyrics exploring and disturbing the tropes of gender.  
'She's a shape shifter. Playing with femininity and becoming a monster. I'm not overly sensual like her, I'm like the weird cousin,' she laughs, a joyous, staccato punctuation mark that erupts throughout our conversation. 'The sick one, leaving the table to go on Tumblr.'<sup>28</sup>

### **Have these role models inspired you for the gender roles in your private life?**

Extract from an interview with **Joni Mitchell** (1943):  
Q: You stated in the book – Joni Mitchell: 'In Her Own Words' – that befriending two young gay men as a child in Saskatoon helped you realize your gifts.  
JONI MITCHELL: They – Peter and Frankie – taught me to dream big. They were musical protégés. As adults, Peter went into an opera company and Frankie became the choir director at a Montreal church. They didn't play gender roles either. They let me [pretend to be] Roy Rogers. When I played with the other boys, they would never let me be Roy or assume leadership. They'd have me be the German who was to be shot. That's the story of my life. I always had to be the villain because I was the only girl with a pack of boys.<sup>29</sup>

## **MUSIC AND SOUND ART**

### **How do you approach creating: e.g. from emotion, psychology, form, concept, reflection, improvising, self-observation or self-staging, etc. What role does your body play in it?**

Extract from an interview with **Joni Mitchell** (1943):

Q: You've called yourself a musical outlaw because of the way you compose. What would you say is one of your most notorious crimes?

JONI MITCHELL: The two [songs] that stand out that people just hated were 'Ethiopia' and 'Moon' at the Window. I still can't see what is so eccentric about those pieces. I think that work was closer to jazz than I have ever gone but I was working harmonically outside the laws of jazz.

Q: Laws you felt needed to be broken. For example, your use of suspended chords in songs—which you say men cannot wrap their heads around. Why?

JONI MITCHELL: Men need resolution and suspended chords keep things open-ended. You go to a man if you have a problem and he tries to solve it. You go to a girlfriend and she'll pat you on the back and say, 'Oh yeah, I get it.' She doesn't try and come up with some stupid solution.<sup>30</sup>

### **Do you believe that life circumstances, personality, cultural codes consciously or unconsciously play a role in the process of creating?**

**Laurie Anderson** (1947): I see and write things first as an artist, second as a woman, and third as a New Yorker. All three have built-in perspectives that aren't neutral. As an artist I'd choose the thing that's beautiful more than the one that's true. As a woman I happen to think that women are excellent social critics. As a New Yorker, I'm someone who lives on an island and looks across to America. People who've looked at America have done so offshore; Twain on a steamboat, Hemingway, Herman Melville. It seems to be a nice distance and it has something to do with flow.<sup>31</sup>

**According to you, does ‘male’ and ‘female’ music/sound art exist?**

Even the women highlighted in this text strongly disagree as to whether or not a unique compositional style exists among women who compose. **Libby Larsen** (1950) guardedly suggests that perhaps women are more inclusive in their approach to composition, taking into account their potential audiences, and working collaboratively with performers. Others, such as **Shulamit Ran** (1949) and **Joan Tower** (1938), emphatically state that sex has nothing to do with compositional style.<sup>32</sup>

Musically, **Hildegard von Bingen’s** (1098–1179) chant differed in several significant ways from that of her male contemporaries. Hildegard’s intense, symbolic poems lent themselves to musical elaboration, with free verse that suggested irregular, continuous lines rather than shorter strophes. She brought forth the meaning of the text by word painting, using musical gestures to reflect movement and emotion in the text. Her work was also marked by the use of extended melismas, in which there were as many as fifty notes per syllable of text. Like most liturgical musical of her time, Hildegard’s work was monophonic, but while most liturgical chant covered a modest one-octave range, Hildegard’s chant spanned two to three octaves. (Edwards, 2001 b, 47)

It is believed that she wrote in this manner to explore the beauty of the extended upper range of the female voice, to reflect the capabilities of the women in her community, and to metaphorically allow the voices of her performers to address the ‘female voice’ in creation. Many of Hildegard’s texts address the Virgin Mary, St. Ursula, and other women.

Hildegard’s compositional innovation becomes even more apparent in compositions not connected with the Mass. In her ‘Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum’ or Symphony of the Harmony of the Heavenly Relations, she created a collection of chants in a cycle, and specifically addressed the life-giving role of women. Hildegard’s extended range is featured in free verse that unfolds over time. This through-composed technique allows musical flexibility and variation rather than the strict repetition

found when stanzas of text are rest to the same melody. The connection between women, nature, and creation is evident in Hildegard’s original poetry, and the musical setting brings forth its free-flowing beauty.<sup>33</sup>

**As a listener, does the gender expression of a performer influence your perception of music/sound art?**

During the 1970s in the United States, women’s music developed, shaped by feminist and lesbian politics, composed and performed by women, and primarily directed at female audiences. This remarkable application of feminist thought led soon to new record companies and music festivals (Mosbacher 2004). The political character of women’s music accounted for its successes and its image as self-limiting. The music was primarily created by lesbians, for lesbian audiences, and despite the inclusion of African-American musicians, most performers and audiences were white (Hayes 2010). Practices such as the exclusion of men from concert audiences showed strong separatism.<sup>34</sup>

**Is the music/sound art you perform/create/produce, gendered? If so, how?**

**Pauline Oliveros** (1932–2016): [‘Bye Bye Butterfly’] bids farewell not only to the music of the nineteenth century but also to the system of polite morality of that age and its attendant institutionalized oppression of the female sex.<sup>35</sup>

**Ingrid Plum** (in 2014): I find that feminist context emerges as part of my practice through my eschewing of boundaries that would be projected upon my choice of roles, rather than by making work that individually and specifically addresses feminist issues... I do not usually frame my work as feminist in itself. I am a feminist who makes work and my practice infers these issues – not by addressing them directly by subject, but by making work that exists despite and in spite of any gender gap that would deny me a contextual space for my work.<sup>36</sup>

**Does certain music/sound art turn you on? If so, can you describe what music/sound art?**

**Pauline Oliveros** (1932–2016) also questions a one-sided account of listening: Browsing in a psychology text, I came across the idea that music is a phallic phenomenon because it penetrates the body! ... Come now, Freudians, one can receive music but also actively penetrate it, not to mention all the other finer variations.<sup>37</sup>

**PRIVATE ▪ PUBLIC**

**Were you brought up in an environment that imposed implicit or explicit gender related expectations on you regarding your position in the private vs. public domain of society? If so, what were these expectations? And how did you feel about this?**

**Toshiko Akiyoshi** (1929): I started to play the piano when I was seven years old in Manchuria. My father had a business there. After the war was over in 1945, all the Japanese who had settled in Manchuria went back to Japan. My parents lost all of their assets when they went back in 1946. I really didn't want to give up the piano, but my parents couldn't afford it. One day I saw an advertisement that said 'pianist wanted.' The Occupation brought with it many American soldiers, and they needed many halls where they could go to dance. So Japan needed a lot of musicians, and I was hired. That's how I got into the business. My father, especially, was unhappy about my job because he was very traditional. In the average Japanese home, the daughters did not work. They went to school, and if they didn't go to school, they stayed at home until they married. Very few had careers – some of them were designers or painters and that's a different story. But working – and I was – that was a no-no. So, my father was very unhappy; my mother was much more understanding because she knew how much I loved to play.<sup>38</sup>

**How did this influence your career as an artist?**

In 1970, **Pauline Oliveros**, (1932–2016) a composer of experimental music, published a brief article in *The New York Times* (Oliveros 1984, 47-49). Addressing the question why there have been no great women composers, she replies that women historically 'have been taught to despise activity outside of the domestic realm as unfeminine,' and have been valued for the obedience and support they offer to men. Oliveros observes that women presently have more opportunities to participate in professional musical life than before, although contemporary composers confront a musical culture that gives disproportionate attention to the past. She notes that preoccupation with 'greatness' is harmful to appreciation of new compositional work.<sup>39</sup>

**Kay Grant** (in 2016): My mum grew up with two older brothers and perhaps to be heard, always forced her speaking voice as low as possible. My dad maintained that everyone should 'sing from the diaphragm', unaware that the better part of a female voice's range naturally resonates in the head. By the time I was twelve I had less than an octave of functional notes.<sup>40</sup>

**As an artist, did you mainly develop your work in the private or the public sphere? Why?**

As a converted Jew and a woman of some wealth, **Fanny Mendelssohn** (1805–1847) would have compromised her social position, and that of her family, by receiving money for professional musical work of any kind, including composition and performance. While her brother toured Europe, became published, and soared to fame, her work as a professional musician was curtailed by societal expectations regarding her expected domestic role. Unlike some women musicians in this situation, however, Fanny continued to write music, composing over 400 works in her short lifetime. In addition, she had significant influence on a wide range of musical activities that took place in her home.<sup>41</sup>

**Did your gender expression influence that?**

Born in 1910, **Oum Kalthoum** (1910–1975) began to sing, in the 1920s, religious texts and classical love poetry taught by her father, an imam. It is said that he would dress her as a boy to get her into religious gatherings.<sup>42</sup>

**Is your relational life and your career intertwined, either currently or at any point in your life? If so, how and was this a conscious choice?**

Right from the start, **Celia Cruz** (1925–2003) presented herself as the sensual elder sister, sexy but unavailable. She tells how when she first began, she never stayed out late – she would sing her songs, do the show, and then get the bus home. When she auditioned in Havana in the 1930s for the all-male orchestra La Sonora Matancera, she took her cousin along as a chaperone. When she got the job, her cousin went too – travelling with her for several years. She says this was essential if she wanted to remain respected and scandal-free. When she began a romance with the band's trumpeter, Pedro Knight, they kept it a secret until they married, when Pedro – one of Havana's most brilliant trumpeters – sacrificed his own career to be her permanent 'chaperone' and manager. He still fulfils these roles, fifty years later. So Celia was protected from any possible misinterpretation; her sexual potency was transformed by making it obvious she was unavailable.<sup>43</sup>

**If you have children, how did this influence your career?**

**Patti Smith** (1946): I don't mind being called a housewife, though I didn't disappear to be a housewife, I disappeared to be by the side of the man that I loved. It was a sometimes difficult but always honourable position, and I think nothing greater could have happened to me at that time. I learned a lot of things in that process: humility, respect for others. We had two beautiful children, and I developed my skills and hopefully developed into the clean human being that I was as a child.

People like to think that you went and stopped working. There's

no job harder than being a wife and a mother. It's a position that should be respected and honoured, not looked upon as some sappy alternative. It's much more demanding, and required much more nobility than the other work that I did. Hopefully, I can inject some of the things that I learned from that experience into the work that I'm doing now.<sup>44</sup>

**COLLABORATION ▪ COMPETITION****Do you mainly work together or alone?**

**Hannah Marshall** (1982): As a girl I dreamt of being part of a community of artists who, though all different, had a common purpose to push boundaries, and encourage each other to do so with no limit. I read about Paris at the turn of the 20th century, about dada and surrealism, where musicians, visual artists, performers and philosophers got together and collaborated. I wondered if it would be possible to go back in time...

... Having said all that, when it comes to making my own stuff, I am somewhat of an artistic hermit, and have always enjoyed doing things on my own.<sup>45</sup>

**If you collaborate with other artists, are they more often men or women? Give an approximate estimate.**

**Maggie Nicols** (1948): For me to go deeply into other musical relationships would be through the Women Liberation Movement: I felt this desire that I wanted to find other women to improvise with, and FIG (Feminist Improvising Group) was one of my first experiences of this. I met Lindsay Cooper at the Ovalhouse, when I was running workshops. She was doing music with a theatre group, and they would come to my workshop, so we got friendly. I remember saying to her that maybe we could get a women's group together. I think one of the reasons I did, was because I went to this 'Music For Socialism' gig and the wonderful Carol Grimes was there – with a male band. Most of us were singing with male bands;

that's how it was. I remember saying to the organisers, that it would be nice to see some instrumentalists who were women – and not just singers. In response, they said well 'get something together'! I approached Lindsay, and she knew Georgie Born (who was the cello player in Henry Cow). I also contacted Koryne Liensol, this woman I had met on the Women Liberation scene, and then there was Cathy Williams too. So there were 5 of us at the first gig and more women joined after that, namely Irène Schweizer and Sally Potter. The group was based in London, but we worked with other women in Paris and various other places. So FIG was huge.

I then started Contradictions with Koryne Liensol. That was really important, because it was a women's workshop/performance group. It was based on free improvisation, but we also worked with film, movement and theatre – and we devised pieces as well; the bulk of it was free improvisation. Sylvia Hallett was in it and hundreds of other women have also been through it too.

When I think about it, I've worked with a lot of women and it's great. Amongst others: Caroline Kraabel, Charlotte Hug, Sarah Gail Brand and lots of other great women.<sup>46</sup>



Maggie Nicols Photo Feminist Improvising Group (Oct 1977)

### How are functional roles distributed in the group, related to gender? Do you think there exist stereotypical gender roles in the music and sound art field?

Engineer and producer **Leslie Ann Jones** (1951): It's difficult for an all-male staff to suddenly work with a woman who is not in a traditionally female role. Men are used to women acting as caretakers, note takers, studio managers, assistants ... not as the ones making the technical decisions.<sup>47</sup>

A study by Joseph **Michael Abramo** in 2011 found that boys and girls rehearsed and composed differently: Whereas the boys combined musical gestures and nonverbal communication into a seamless sonic process, the girls separated talk and musical production. In the mixed-gendered groups, tensions arose because participants used different learning styles that members of the opposite gender misunderstood.<sup>48</sup>

### What role are you easily adopting in the dynamic of a group? Do you feel comfortable in this role? Why do you or do you not?

**Björk**: After being the only girl in bands for 10 years, I learned – the hard way – that if I was going to get my ideas through, I was going to have to pretend that they – men – had the ideas. I became really good at this and I don't even notice it myself. I don't really have an ego. I'm not that bothered. I just want the whole thing to be good. And I'm not saying one bad thing about the guys who were with me in the bands, because they're all amazing and creative, and they're doing incredible things now. But I come from a generation where that was the only way to get things done. So I have to play stupid and just do everything with five times the amount of energy, and then it will come through.<sup>49</sup>

### In your experience, is there much solidarity amongst artists? And in the artistic field in general?

**Madonna** (1958): [When I was young] I was guilty of buying into this culture that thrives on ripping other people up, and I regret

that, I truly do. People always think that they have to humiliate and denigrate others in order to make themselves appear stronger or better or smarter or cooler, but in the end it has the opposite effect. I'm much more aware now, and when you're aware you have a responsibility.<sup>50</sup>

## CAREER AND MONEY

### Are you making a living from your music/sound art? Is this something you (have) aim(ed) for?

The fact that **Francesca Caccini** (1587–1641) was at one time the court's highest paid musician suggests a court culture that was gender neutral for the Medici artisan-class.<sup>51</sup>

**Pauline Oliveros** (1932–2016): I make my living because I am a composer but not from my compositions. I perform and I teach. Only a small portion of my income is derived from compositional activity. More respect for composing and interest in commissioning composers could be an improvement.<sup>52</sup>

### What does career mean to you? How strategically do you build yours? Do you have a website of your own? Do you show yourself? Why/why not?

**Mimi Fox** (1956): Well you know, I think in a lot of ways, the most stress on a musician is to get gigs...lol...more than anything they need to play... it's kind of like breathing for us. So I think if you have a good manager, a good agent that's important. Like mine, he was responsible for getting me bookings pretty much all over the world in concert venues everywhere, all I want to do is play and compose. But in order to have a successful career you have to be able to do a lot of other things. You know...schmooze, pose endlessly for photographers as they take shots...it's a whole other ball game on the business end and like I said, unfortunately I see a lot of wonderful players who don't have that kind of savvy to make it happen.<sup>53</sup>

### Do you more often find jobs through informal networks, through auditions/open calls? Are you invited or proactively searching opportunities?

Extract from an interview with **Toshiko Akiyoshi** (1929):

**STEVEN MOORE:** Are you saying that you survived as an artist once you got to [New York] largely because of your relationships with these musicians: Bud Powell, Mingus, and this community?

**TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI:** I was already accepted into Mingus's group, for about ten months. So I had a personal relationship. We played almost every night. But in 1967 there was a Town Hall concert the same night there was a black-tie jazz concert at the opera house. And everybody went to the other one. But Mingus came to my concert, to listen and to take some pictures. He really encouraged me. So did Bud Powell. When we were in Paris he was listening to my record, and – he doesn't talk a lot – he asked me, 'Did you write that?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'You're the best female jazz musician player.' That was so wonderful coming from him. When you're feeling down and someone says something like that . . . those little words help. I don't think that Bud or Mingus realized that they have had a big impact on my career. They probably meant these things very casually, but what they said meant many things to me. You have to be very careful about what you say because you can influence people. I think it's important to encourage people and to point out the good rather than the bad. ...

When I came here Miles had a group, and Max Roach had a group, and they used to come to Boston to play. Even Duke's band let me sit in. Dizzy Gillespie had a big band at that time, and he would let me sit in. [...] That kind of thing makes jazz a social art; it's not like classical music. That social aspect of it, the musicians sitting in and playing with you and for you, made me learn how you're supposed to feel. [...] When things swing right. You know, that's kind of it. The whole thing swings right. ...

But sitting in is almost impossible today because the jazz business became so organized and so production oriented. It doesn't have that openness anymore. Today, I could not sit in at all.<sup>54</sup>

**In your experience, how does gender play a role in networking, auditioning or open calls?**

The ‘boy’s club’ tendency of section leaders to recommend and hire their own students for open positions strongly impacted access to knowledge about available work. For decades, job openings in professional orchestras were not even advertised. Lack of invitation to social networking sites, ranging from the bar to the golf course, kept even the most distinguished women out of the hiring loop. ‘Word of mouth’ remains common practice in the music profession today, ranging from jazz gigging to conducting jobs. It is one of the most difficult practices to combat due to its covert nature.<sup>55</sup>

**Generally, do you think gender influences the building of a musical/artistic career?**

**Taylor Swift** (1989) in her 2016 Grammy’s speech: ‘As the first woman to win album of the year twice, I want to say to all the young women out there, there are going to be people along the way who will try to undercut your success or take credit for your accomplishments or your fame, but, if you just focus on the work and you don’t let those people sidetrack you, someday when you get where you’re going you’ll look around and you will know that it was you and the people who love you who put you there. And that will be the greatest feeling in the world.’

**Is money important to you? If so, why? (e.g. surviving, recognition, validation, symbolical value, status, etc.) If not, how do you relate to surviving, recognition, validation, status, etc.**

Extract from an interview with **Nina Simone** (1933–2003): ‘I hate showbiz. I’ve devoted my whole life to being a star and yet I’ve got absolutely nothing to show for it. It’s an ugly business. I’ve got no desire to be involved in it anymore, with everyone out there re-releasing and ripping off my records – I just need the money. It’s as simple as that. I get £20,000 cash for a concert like the Royal Albert Hall and that money goes straight into my pocket. No one can take it away from me. If I don’t force myself to get out there

and perform live, I won’t be able to keep this place up. I won’t be able to carry on.’

To her adoring fans, Simone represents the last living icon of the sophisticated and timeless American jazz tradition. Yet mismanagement of funds and ill-advised choices of business managers throughout her 40-year career have resulted in an incredible lack of financial reward. ‘My Baby Just Cares for Me’, Simone’s last hit, sold more than a million copies worldwide and was used by Chanel in 1987 as part of an international television advertising campaign for its No. 5 perfume – yet Simone was advised by confidantes to sign away her royalties from the record for a mere \$2,000 (US) [...]

‘I was born poor and I don’t need to see a lot more than I’ve already seen. I don’t intend to be poor again for as long as I live.’<sup>56</sup>

**Is money important for your self esteem?**

**Madonna** (1958) There were many years when I thought fame, fortune, and public approval would bring me happiness. But one day you wake up and realize they don’t.<sup>57</sup>

**What does power mean to you?**

**Beyoncé** (1981): To me, power is making things happen without asking for permission. It’s affecting the way people perceive themselves and the world around them. It’s making people stand up with pride.<sup>58</sup>

**OPINIONS AND PREJUDICES**

**Do you believe that a parent (male/female) can be as available for an artistic career as somebody without family?**

Quote from **Time Magazine**, 10 January 1975: ‘Men compose symphonies, women compose babies.’<sup>59</sup>

**Do you have the impression there's many prejudices in the music and sound art field related to gender and sex? What are they about? Can you give examples?**

**Robert Hartford**, (in 1994): I have a problem with female conductors: their antics irritate me.... A woman can do the heavy stuff all right, aping masculine aggression. Let them do more of a man's work-pilot a Concorde, fly to the moon, become Pope, run the country (steady on) but please, for the sake of my mental health, do not let them act out feminine wiles for the minor key passages. Stop them doing in public what is best done in the warm behind closed curtains or astride a Harley Davison. Prevent them, ye immortals, from tripping and flipping, preening and wheening, primping and crimping and swishing and swashing their way through the dainty bits and putting their undulating bodies between me and the music.<sup>60</sup>

#### GENDER AND THE MUSIC AND SOUND ART FIELD

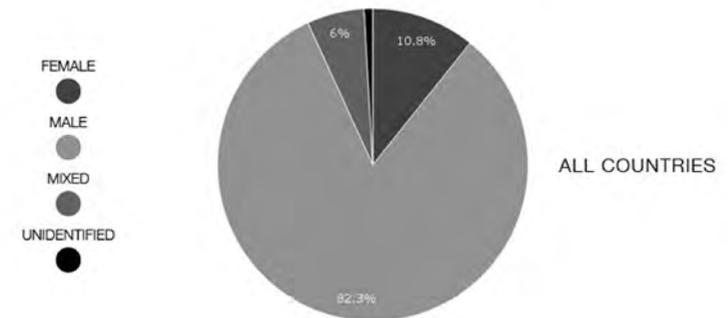
**Throughout your career, did you ever experience positive and/or negative discrimination because of your gender expression? If yes, can you give some examples?**

**Eartha Kitt** (1927–2008): When my career took off in the 1950s it was difficult for women in general, but particularly brown-skinned women. The William Morris Agency said to me, 'Yes, you're a beautiful, talented intelligent woman who's got everything going for you, but we didn't know what to do with you.'<sup>61</sup>

**Do you experience the music and sound art field as masculine or feminine?**

The **female:pressure** survey of 2014 illustrates the gender representation in electronic music festivals, by counting male, female and mixed acts:

#### FESTIVALS



**Would you like to see a change in the gender balance in the music and sound art field? Why/why not?**

The members of the **female:pressure** network operate within a seemingly progressive electronic music scene and its subcultures. However, we find that women are notoriously under-represented in the realms of contemporary music production and performance. The female:pressure group would therefore like to invite you to take a look at the facts and make the mechanisms of this specific market more transparent. [...] We demand a new awareness, an attitude that makes clear that a lack of diversity is uninspired and lazy, socially reactionary and can in no case claim to be visionary – neither presenting the panoply of exciting artists and art of today nor the future. There really is no excuse for the prevalent lack of visibility of a diverse range of competent and exciting artists. Festival line-ups (especially those that enjoy public funding) need to be aiming for a more representative female-to-male artist ratio, thereby reflecting the population they hope to serve more closely. [...] Festival curators, sponsors, label owners, journalists: Give more opportunities to women!

Female festival curators, sponsors, label owners, journalists: Don't try to be the better men by only taking 'risks' on established, male artists! Give more women a chance!<sup>64</sup>

### If so, how do you think this can happen?

**Björk** (1965): Just photograph yourself in front of the mixing desk in the studio, and people will go, 'Oh, OK! A woman with a tool, like a man with a guitar.' Not that I've done that much myself, but sometimes you're better at giving people advice than doing it yourself. I remember seeing a photo of Missy Elliott at the mixing desk in the studio and being like, a-ha! It's a lot of what people see. During a show, because there are people onstage doing the other bits, I'm just a singer. For example, I asked Matmos to play all the beats for the 'Vespertine' tour, so maybe that's kind of understandable that people think they made them. So maybe it's not all sexist evil. [laughs]<sup>65</sup>

Feminism, in fact, is progressively penetrating more areas of the creative sphere, prompting positive action to redress gender balance. In music, **Molly Brunner** sees more possibilities for women. In 2014 she said: 'There are questions coming up like 'How many female DJs have you seen in the last month?' and it's like 'None' so it encourages people to make things happen.' The internet has also become an important resource to share knowledge, meet fellow artists and feel supported. 'There is a really good group on Facebook called Girls Exclusive and it's just for women who make music in different ways. Sometimes I write there for a tip, or if you need a drummer or something.'<sup>66</sup>

### FUTURE

#### What does your future look like regarding the topics discussed in this questionnaire? What do you wish for and what is possible?

**Oreet Ashery** (1966): Things like race, things like gender, all these things that were fought over – we're still so far away from getting anyway near being liberated in that way. So this avant-garde work, this collective work, this experimental work from the 60s and 70s, I think in the West we so much take this for granted as a heritage,

a lineage... Those ideas of changing the world, making it better, or liberating oneself. And art and music as a counterculture, within those I think that there's quite the same kind of issues of race and gender, the same patriarchal structures, and I think that those really echo in PFF [Party For Freedom], that whole gender discourse, that everyone's white, I really wanted to say that freedom is white privilege, and that all those things are, not only in a politically real way, but also in art – all those things still have a long way to go.<sup>67</sup>

**Christine and the Queens** (1988): Once we free women of stereotypes, we can free men as well. Men will be allowed to cry in public, and actually be queer and feminine. Some guys like Young Thug make me believe in the fragile thug, the feminine thug. I'm waiting for gender-fluidity to actually rule the world and then we can all be free.<sup>68</sup>

#### Imagine we would travel 100 years further in time, to 2115. Can you describe your utopia related to the interconnection of sex, gender, music and sound art?

Cultures that label 'women engineers', 'women presidents', and 'women rock bands' are labelling men as normal by default. How strange it would be to encounter a history of 'men in rock.'<sup>69</sup>

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## On gender and sex – a biological and cultural frame

### GENDER

When we use the word ‘gender’ we refer to the socially constructed characteristics of women, men, queer, non-binary, intersex, trans, ... – such as clothes, behaviour, norms, roles, ... These gender roles are culturally defined and can change through time. Whether men can wear skirts at official gatherings or whether women can drive cars, is always dependant on their cultural context. Furthermore, whether women are considered to be strong leaders or men to be sensitive talkers, is similarly dependant on the gendered expectations of a specific culture.

Furthermore, the gender roles which exist in a society are also culturally defined, and can change over time. In Belgium, for example only two genders are officially recognised: people have to choose between man and woman on their birth certificate, their ID and in most public toilets. In Australia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and New-Zealand people can also choose the third gender on their passport and in Germany the third gender is recognised on a person’s birth certificate.

While most Anglo-Saxon and European countries officially recognise only two or three genders, a broader spectrum is medically and (sub)culturally recognised. There is a rich vocabulary to describe all the many complex interactions between one’s biological sex, one’s gender identity (psychological sense of the self), gender expression (communication of gender) and sexual orientation. People may be trans- or cis-gendered; gay, lesbian or heterosexual; queer, straight, bisexual, pansexual or asexual; non-binary, post-binary, genderfluid, intersex, ... Other languages have their own lexicon to refer to different ways of constructing categories. For example in Thailand, where the term ‘Kathoei’ can be used to refer to those who in English would

be called ‘effeminate gay men’ as well as those that would be called ‘transgender’. In Dutch there is no adjective to mark the difference between sexual and socially constructed characteristics.

### BIOLOGICAL SEX

When we refer to someone’s biological sex, we refer to physical attributes such as external genitalia, sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, and internal reproductive structures.

Females typical have the following features: xx – chromosomes, a vagina, a uterus, ovaries, breasts,... . Males typical have: xy – chromosomes, a penis and testicles, ... However, there also exists xx-males and xy-females. Some individuals have an abnormal number of sex chromosomes. Anatomical characteristics are not always distributed in as binary a manner as commonly accepted: 1/2000 people are born with external genitalia of both sexes. They are intersex. Another 0,3% - 0,8% is born with the feeling that their sex is not the same as their gender identity.

Technically, there is no such thing as female and male hormones: estrogen, testosterone and progesterone are found in all people, but are found in different proportions and with unique functions.

Whether biological differences exist between male and female brains is an ongoing discussion. Neuroscientists have discovered some differences in the size of hippocampus and amygdala between male and female brains, both of which are responsible for the hormone balance. The problem with current neurological research however, is that the results can be very open to interpretation. Additionally, the results do not say anything about the cause of these differences. As the brain is a very plastic organ that is influenced by its environment it is impossible to determine whether physical differences are the result of a biological predestination, or of environmental influence.

**SEX OR GENDER? NATURE OR NURTURE?**

It is an ongoing debate as to whether differences between males and females are biologically-grounded or socially-conditioned. Essentialists believe that all social categories can be reduced to biological factors and believe that environment and situation play very little role. At the other extreme of the debate are those who believe that all gender is performed; any differences between men and women can be reduced to social parameters. Both these arguments are backed by social research. Presently, a common belief is thus that it is the constant interaction between biology and environment through which an individual is formed.

**The initial questionnaire**

**SOUND ▪ MUSIC & GENDER ▪ SEX**

**Dear musician, sound artist, composer.**

We would like to invite you to participate in our research on gender and sex in the artistic field of music and sound art. With this research we aim to explore the role which these notions play in the shaping and determining of artistic careers and art works, by asking questions about underlying dynamics, unwritten rules, unconscious psychology, inner and outer barriers.

The research is undertaken by Q-O2, [www.q-o2.be](http://www.q-o2.be), a workspace for experimental music and sound art in Brussels. We receive artists for residencies, organise concerts and develop projects and an annual festival. This research is framed in this year's focus on voice, gender, language and identity.

The following questionnaire was developed in response to a collection of remarks, anecdotes, frustrations and questions, formulated by our artists in residence in recent years. We very much hope to receive input from people of all sexes.

It is a non-academic, qualitative research that gauges experiences and opinions about the undercurrent that is felt by many, but that

is not easy to define. It attempts to pinpoint things that are difficult to understand and impossible to count. That's why we invite you to illustrate your answers with examples of your own experiences. Your elaborate anecdotes and opinions is what we're looking for.

Before starting we'd like to be clear about some definitions: we are considering sex as a sliding scale between the two poles of male and female, with many areas in between. Sex, gender and sexuality form a complex tissue with many layers, consisting of the biological sex (anatomy, chromosomes, hormones), gender identity (psychological sense of the self), gender expression (communication of gender), and sexual orientation (romantic/erotic response).

It will take about one hour to fill out this questionnaire, the deadline is August 1st 2015. The questions are in English, and although we prefer answers in English, they can also be in French, Dutch, Italian and German. In case you encounter problems or have questions, don't hesitate to contact us at [info@q-o2.be](mailto:info@q-o2.be).

**IDENTITY DETAILS**

You can choose whether to stay anonymous or not, but we would like to have some details about the sexual, gender and musical identity of the participants. Because gender is related to the social context, we also ask some geographical information.

Do you want to stay anonymous?

Yes    No    Other

Name and Surname (if you want to share this with us)

If you choose not to stay anonymous, we'll get back to you in case we would like to publish your name.

Contact information

The results will be presented from October 2015 onwards. If you want to be informed about these results, please give us your contact information. Also if you shared your name with us, please give your

email or other possible way of contacting you, so we can ask your permission for publishing.

Year of Birth

Nationality

Country of Residency

Country/ies where you're currently working

In what genre is your working field?

jazz | improvised music | rock/pop | classical music | electronic music | sound art | contemporary music | experimental music | Other

You as an artist mainly work

as a creator | as a performer | as a curator | as a producer | as a teacher  
as a sound engineer | vocally | instrumentally | electronically | as  
an installation artist | individually | collectively | in an hierarchical  
structure

Objectively how much time do you give to each different way of working?

Can you describe how these ways of working relate to each other in matter of importance to you?

What is your familial situation?

Please situate yourself on the scale of biological sex (anatomy, chromosomes, hormones).

male 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 female

Please situate yourself on the scale of gender identity (psychological sense of self).

man 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 woman

Please situate yourself on the scale of gender expression (communication of gender).

masculine 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 feminine

Please situate yourself on the scale of sexual orientation (romantic/erotic response).

women 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 men

### SELF IMAGE

How do you relate to your appearance? Has this changed throughout the years?

Might this have influenced your career (choices) as an artist?

As an artist, are you conscious of your gender expression? Are you making choices? And if so, which ones and why?

As an artist, did you ever want to be of the other sex? If so, why?

Does sexual attraction play a role in your collaboration with or your appreciation of other artists?

### RECOGNITION

As an artist, do you sometimes get remarks that have nothing to do with your music, but are about your appearance, your character, your behaviour? Can you give some examples?

If so, do you consider these remarks as gender related? Can you give examples?

What are your feelings about this? What has been your response to this?

In a professional artistic context do you sometimes receive comments

that are about sexual attraction or rejection? What has been your response to this? Do you experience this as positive / negative / neutral?

Do you think that these remarks consciously or unconsciously have influenced your career choices?

Do you think that your gender expression has influenced the reception of your work as an artist? Explain.

Do you think your work as an artist has been recognised enough?

Does it matter for you how others value your work? Are you easily influenced by opinions of others?

### **ROLE MODELS**

Who have been your role models throughout several phases in your life? Whom have you emulated as an artist?

Do you have role models with the same gender identity as you? If so, who?

Do you experience a lack of role models with the same gender identity?

Do you have role models with a different gender identity than yours? If so, who?

Do you experience a lack of role models with a different gender identity?

Are you inspired by certain artists because of the way they express their masculinity, femininity or other gender expression?

Have these role models inspired you for the gender roles in your private life?

### **MUSIC AND SOUND ART**

How do you approach creating: e.g. from emotion, psychology, form, concept, reflection, improvising, self-observation or self-staging, etc. What role does your body play in it?

Do you believe that life circumstances, personality, cultural codes consciously or unconsciously play a role in the process of creating?

According to you, does 'male' and 'female' music/sound art exist? Explain.

If you believe there's a difference between male and female music/sound art, which do you prefer?

As a listener, does the gender expression of a performer influence your perception of music/sound art? Explain.

Is the music/sound art you perform/create/produce, gendered? If so, how?

Does certain music/sound art turn you on? If so, can you describe what music/sound art?

### **PRIVATE ■ PUBLIC**

Were you brought up in an environment that imposed implicit or explicit gender related expectations on you regarding your position in the private vs. public domain of society? If so, what were these expectations? And how did you feel about this?

How did this influence your career as an artist?

As an artist, did you mainly develop your work in the private or the public sphere? Why?

Did your gender expression influence that?

Is your relational life and your career intertwined, either currently or at any point in your life? If so, how and was this a conscious choice?

If you have children, how did this influence your career?

### **COLLABORATION ■ COMPETITION**

Do you mainly work together or alone?

If you collaborate with other artists, are they more often men or women? Give an approximate estimate.

How are functional roles distributed in the group, related to gender? Do you think there exist stereotypical gender roles in the music and sound art field? Explain.

What role are you easily adopting in the dynamic of a group? Do you feel comfortable in this role? Why do you or do you not?

In your experience, is there much solidarity amongst artists? And in the artistic field in general?

Do you sometimes feel jealous of colleagues? If so, how do you respond to this?

Does gender play a role in your jealousy and/or solidarity? Do you feel solidarity or jealousy towards colleagues with the same or different gender expression?

How does sexual attraction influence a collaboration? Do you have positive and/or negative experiences? Can you give examples?

### **CAREER AND MONEY**

Are you making a living from your music/sound art? Is this something you (have) aim(ed) for?

What does career mean to you? How strategically do you build yours? Do you have a website of your own? Do you show yourself? Why/why not?

Do you more often find jobs through informal networks, through auditions/open calls? Are you invited or proactively searching opportunities?

In your experience, how does gender play a role in networking, auditioning or open calls?

Generally, do you think gender influences the building of a musical/artistic career?

Is money important to you? If so, why? (e.g. surviving, recognition, validation, symbolical value, status, etc.) If not, how do you relate to surviving, recognition, validation, status, etc.

Is money important for your self esteem?

What does power mean to you?

### **OPINIONS AND PREJUDICES**

Do you believe that a parent (male/female) can be as available for an artistic career as somebody without family?

Do you agree or disagree with following statements? If you want, you can substantiate your answer using the 'other'-option.  
music/sound art made by women is usually softer.

I agree I disagree Other

For women it is more difficult to build a musical career than for men.  
I agree I disagree Other

Men tend to be more assertive and ambitious in their schemes than women.  
I agree I disagree Other

For women the creation process is more important, for men it's the result that counts.  
I agree I disagree Other

Do you have the impression there's many prejudices in the music and sound art field related to gender and sex? What are they about? Can you give examples?

#### **GENDER AND THE MUSIC AND SOUND ART FIELD**

Throughout your career, did you ever experience positive and/or negative discrimination because of your gender expression? If yes, can you give some examples?

Do you experience the music and sound art field as masculine or feminine? Explain.

Would you like to see a change in the gender balance in the music and sound art field? Why/why not?

If so, how do you think this can happen?

Do you consider this research relevant? Why/why not?

Is there a question we didn't ask that you would like to add to this query?

#### **FUTURE**

What does your future look like regarding the topics discussed in this questionnaire? What do you wish for and what is possible?

Imagine we would travel 100 years further in time, to 2115. Can you describe your utopia related to the interconnection of sex, gender, music and sound art?

#### **VOCABULARY**

Our vocabulary to talk about complex issues as sex, gender, music and sound art, is quite limited. What words would you like to add to our language, and what would be their meaning?

#### **A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

Do you have an experience (nice, painful, juicy, embarrassing, etc.) related to sex, gender, music and sound art that you would like to share with us?

If we'd like to use this anecdote when we present this research, can we mention your name? If so, please give us your (artist)name.

Abba girls • Abel Ehrlich • Ada Lovelace • Aimee Mann • Akira Sakata • Alban Berg • Alexander Scriabin • Alfred Schnittke • Alice Coltrane • Alisa Weilerstein • Alva Noto • Alvin Lucier • Amanda Stewart • Ami Yoshida • AMM • Amon Tobin • Ana Maria Avram • Andrei Tarkovsky • Andy Warhol • Angela Turner • Anja Plaschg • Anna Göldi • Anna Varney • Anne Quinn • Annea Lockwood • Annemarie Schwarzenbach • Annette Krebs • Annette Vande Gorne • Annie Lennox • Anssi Karttunen • Anthony and the Johnsons • Anthony Braxton • Anthony Magen • Antonio Negri • Arkona • Art Ensemble of Chicago • Beate Gütschow • Béla Bartók • Benjamin Britten • Bettina Berger • Beyoncé • Bifo Berardi • Bill Bruford • Billy Childs • Billy Idol • Björk • Blair Saxon Hill • Blixa Bargeld • Bob Dylan • Bonnie Jones • Brian Eno • Brian Ferneyhough • Brian Molko • Brian Wilson • Bryan Eubanks • Cabaret Voltaire • Camilla Hoitenga • Carl Rosman • Carla Bozulich • Carolyn Connors • Caryl Kientz • Cecil Taylor • Choi Sun Bae • Chris Burn • Chris Knox • Chris Mann • Claire Denis • Clara Rockmore • Clara Zetkin • Clare Cooper • Coco Rosie • Coil/John Balance • Cornelius Cardew • Cosey Fanni Tutti • Courtney Love • Dale Gorfinkel • Daphne Oram • Dave Valentin • David Ahern • David Bowie • David Foster Wallace • David Gilmore • David Lynch • David Sylvian • Dean Blunt • Delia Derbyshire • Derek Bailey • Diamanda Galás • Die Rote Zora • Dmitri Shostakovich • Don Cherry • Edgard Varese • Eduard Artemyev • Egon Schiele • Einstürzende Neubauten • Elena Kats-Chernin • Éliane Radigue • Ellen Allien • Emily Dickinson • Enya • Evan Parker Electro-Acoustic Ensemble • Feist • Fernando Pessoa • FKA Twigs • Florence Foster Jenkins • Francisco López • Frank Zappa • Fred Hystère • Fresh Prince • Friedrich Nietzsche • Gal Costa • Gebrüder Löwenherz • Gemma Hayes • Genesis P-Orridge • Giovanni Somma • Gloria Coats • Gorō Yamaguchi • Grace Jones • Graeme Jennings • Grayson Perry • Greg Saunier • Gudrun Ensslin • Gudrun Gut • Gustav Holz • Haco • Han Bennink • Hank Jones • Hannah Arendt • Hans Arp • Harry Partch • Heather Roche • Helen Bledsoe • Henrik Nordvargr Björkk • Hildegard Westerkamp • Hillary Hahn • Hinnerk Boemsen • Holly Herndon • IAMX • Ian Curtis • Ian Wilson • Ice-T • Igor Stravinsky • Ikue Mori • Ingar Zach • Iris Garrelfs • J.M.Coetzee • Jacky Terrasson • Jad Fair • Jennifer Cardini • Jenny Hval • Jerome Hill • Jim O'Rourke • Joanna Demers • Joe Snake • Joel Rust • Joëlle Léandre • John Butcher • John Cage • John French • John Stevens • John-Paul Jenkins • Jon Hassel • Jon Rose • Jonathan Burroughs • Joni Mitchell • Joseph Beuys • Journey • Julian Anderson • Kaffe Matthews • Kaija Saariaho • Kanji West • Karlheinz Essl • Karlheinz Stockhausen •

Kate Bush • Kate Whitely • Kathleen Gallagher • Kathleen Hannah • Keith Jarrett • Kelvin Pittman • Kim Deal • Kim Gordon • Kim Kashkashian • Kim Myhr • Klaus Nomi • Knud Victor • Kronos Quartet • Kurt Cobain • Lady Gaga • Lady Miss Kier • Laetitia Sonami • Laura Altman • Laura Mulvey • Laurence Dunn • Laurence Rassel • Laurie Anderson • Laurie Spiegel • Leila Arab • Les Reines Prochaines • Linda Austin • Lis Rhodes • Lisa Cheney • Lisa Gerrard • Londa Schiebinger • Louise Bourgeois • Luc Ferrari • Ludwig van Beethoven • Luigi Nono • Mac DeMarco • Madonna • Maggie Nelson • Maja Ratkje • Manon-Liu Winter • Manuela Barile • Marguerite Duras • Maria Schneider • Maria Tipo • Marie Curie • Marie Tharp • Marilyn Crispell • Mary Hallock • Maryanne Amacher • Mats Gustafsson • Maurice Ravel • Mauro Pawlowski • Maya Jane Coles • Mayuko Hino • Mel Herbert • Melt-Banana • Meredith Monk • Merzbow • Micachu/Mica Levi • Michele Lamy • Miss Kittin • Monika Brooks • Morrissey • Morton Feldman • Mother Theresa • Musica Elettronica Viva • N. Katherine Hayles • Natasha Anderson • Natasha Farny • Neil Landstrumm • Nic Endo • Nick Cave • Nicki Minaj • Nico • Nico Muhly • Nigel Butterley • Nina Hagen • Nina Kraviz • Nina Simone • Nivek Ogre • Norah Jones • Olivier Messiaen • Oranj Punjabi • Oren Ambarchi • Oscar Peterson • Pandora's Box • Patrick Nolan • Patti Smith • Patton • Paul Lovens • Paula Temple • Pauline Oliveros • Peter Blarney • Peter Brötzman • Peter Christopherson • Peter Kubelka • Peter Ready • Peter Richardson • Peter Tscherkassky • Pharoah Sanders • Philippe Grandrieux • Pierre Schaeffer • Pippi Langstrumpf • PJ Harvey • Prince • Rebecca Saunders • Richey Edwards • Rick Rubin • Rio Reiser • Robbie Avenaim • Robert Barry • Robert Fripp • Robert Rich • Robert Smith • Robert Van Heumen • Romy Caen • Rosa Luxemburg • Rosalind Hall • Rosemarie Trockel • Rowland S. Howard • Rose • Ryoji Ikeda • Sainkho Namtchylak • Sally Whitwell • Samuel Beckett • Satchiko M • Satsuki Odumura • Sigmar Polke • Sigourney Weaver • Sigur Rós • Simone de Beauvoir • Sinéad O'Connor • Siouxsie Sioux • Siri Hustvedt • Sofia Gubaidulina • Son Lux • SPK • Steve Kilbey • Steve Roach • Steven Feld • Stevie Wishart • Sven-Åk Johansson • Tama Sumo • Team Dresch • Terre Thaemlitz • Terry Bozzio • Thelonious Monk • Thembi Soddell • Thom Yorke • Thurston Moore • Tina Fey • Tino Sehgal • Tom Waits • Tony Oxley • Tord Gustavsen • Tracey Emin • Trent Reznor • Ulrich Philip • Vanessa Tomlinson • Vicki Bennett • Viktor Tsoi • Virginia Woolf • W.A.Mozart • Walter Benjamin • Wendy Carlos • Wendy Warner • William Basinski • Yoko Ono



**The Second Sound** is an imaginary conversation between musicians and sound artists on the role of gender and sex within their field. It gathers testimonies from a variety of artists from different backgrounds into a single stream of (often contrary) opinions. Together, they address questions like:

How do life circumstances find their way into music and sound art? How does music reflect historical and social structures? What does discrimination do, and how can we navigate around it? How to unlock networks? Is the under-representation of women and LGBTQ people in the field a symptom or a cause? Is art itself gendered? And can it reflect the gender of its maker? Is a different way of listening needed to more accurately understand those voices from outside the historical canon?



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