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New York/London, Bloomsbury, 2019

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Catherine Strong, Sarah Raine (eds.), *Towards Gender Equality in the Music Industry: Education, Practice and Strategies for Change*, New York/London, Bloomsbury, 2019, 220 p.

- 1 Towards Gender Equality in the Music Industry: Education, Practice and Strategies for Change is a collection of 14 essays curated from submissions to IASPM@Journal vol 8 issue 1: Gender Politics in the Music Industry. Dr Sarah Raine and Dr Catherine Strong edited both, and each offer an intersectional lens, bringing welcome nuance to understanding gender equality in the music industry.
- 2 Covering a wide range of music sectors and practices, the book presents contributions from popular music industry and education research, sociology, queer and gender theory, and musicology; offering in-depth academic scrutiny of wide range of situations in popular music, jazz, punk and noise scenes, live sound, studios, festivals, venues, and media composition. In particular, it is comprised of research involving a range of music industry communities: education, artist professions, management, policy development, and audiences, guiding us through a tapestry of insights and a collection of salient themes:
 - evidence of persistent heteronormative cultures and practices, how such practices are embedded and sustained in the music industry, and also within the 'hidden curriculum' of music education;

- insights on how these cultures and practices exclude and mediate careers, through social situations (that are pervasive in the music industries), offering an insider perspective on the impact of social capital: networking, and a need for ‘contacts cultures’ that serve more diverse beneficiaries;
 - scrutiny of how policy developments respond to gender equality priorities, with particular focus on issues that appear easy to address (such as self-confidence) established rather than adjusted to cultures and systems;
 - a particularly in-depth discussion of the benefits and problems of positive action and gender mainstreaming interventions,
 - that women are not missing, rather operating in alternative spaces;
 - the importance of understanding the benefits of all-women and gender non-binary spaces, such as festivals, events, and projects;
 - and the values, practices and infrastructures that might inform and shape changes within the broader music industry.
- 3 The book is presented in three parts: Education, Current Practice and Strategies for Change, though I feel the more nuanced emphasis is around education, industry infrastructure and systemic change, then artists and activist case studies; most contributions offer strategies for change. The opening chapter offers an introduction to the edition, and here part two is described as industry experiences, followed by part three, insider/outsider approaches and activist spaces.
- 4 Blyica & Wright open part one, ‘Education’, with a detailed history of popular music in North American education discussing: communication, replication of culture, and technology. The work documents ways in which popular music learning spaces and pedagogical approaches could better support gender minorities, highlighting how a masculinization of traditional popular music pedagogy is normalized (for example, ‘Lyrical insinuations, objectification and sexualisation of women, and the relegation of women to restrictive gendered musical roles—as singer or bass player’ (p. 19)). In chapter 3, ‘Preparing for the ‘Real World’? Exploring Gender Issues in the Music Industry on the Role of Vocational Popular Music Higher Education’ Helen Elizabeth Davies explores how specific practices can be endorsed by a heteronormative ‘hidden curriculum’, offering broad areas of concern: gender norms and stereotyping, networking and opportunity. Davies asks educators to consider the ways in which we are ‘complicit in perpetuating gendered stereotypes of popular musicking’ (p. 22) since inclusion is not simply about encouragement. Blyica and Wright discuss how heteronormativity in popular music group dynamics, spotlights the challenges felt by minority genders in this field, in particular showing how a situation such as this can motivate students to seek opportunities to work with friends as friends are also more likely to be girls (and Davies also observes that boys may be more drawn to male peers than they might realise). Music education research has shown that familiarity and friendship groups do benefit collaboration and creative output,¹ so I can’t resist wondering if this insight around gender, familiarity, societal norms, and collaboration might inspire interdisciplinary sociological/musicology research on this particular intersection in popular music.
- 5 Strategies for addressing gender equality within and beyond education, include various kinds of positive action initiatives; such all-women and minority gender centering events, Gender Mainstreaming (GM), and gender led recruitment. These initiatives respond to extremely different contexts with diverse aims. Hopkins and Berkers

highlight particular hazards of positive action in ‘Engineering a Place for Women: Gendered Experiences of the Music Technology Classroom’, observing that recruiting more females creates negative feelings around tokenism and that encouragement through gender-based ‘positive’ empowerment (i.e. women are better because of...); is another harmful microaggression. I also recognize this as an extension of Puwar’s ‘super-surveillance’² in the sense that women are already expected to accomplish a higher standard. An issue also being raised and addressed around women in audio.³ Hopkins and Berkers also observe that women (staff but also students) can adopt a caretaker responsibility for addressing toxic behaviours, while complaints of misogyny are simultaneously dismissed/diminished (causing particular harm as such complaints require enormous courage). Their work digs further into the ‘hidden curriculum’, explaining how masculine norms are affirmed and reinforced, also suggesting that these might be made explicit and addressed. To me this feels risky, as it draws attention to issues that some students might not wish to be highlighted (at all or too often), preferring to focusing on their music education. This chapter advocates a range of excellent practical strategies, though this does include a more problematic strategy; that ‘the phenomenon of ‘bedroom production’ should not be underestimated as an alternative form of music technology education’ (p. 35). While solitary practice can appear to bypass immediate concerns raised around misogyny and related issues such as toxic behaviour, the home studio must surely be a choice,⁴ rather than a way for women to avoid the problematic heteronormative cultures that marginalize women. It is certainly not a path to a more inclusive industry. Also, online, women are often subject to more violent abuse, anonymous misogyny, and exclusion. This is currently addressed through identity masking, which reinforces an illusion that very few women are working in the industry.

- 6 Strong and Cannizzo’s chapter ‘Qualified Careers: Gendered Attitudes towards Screen Composition Education in Australia’ offers a brilliant, in-depth discussion based on a rigorous mixed-methods study, offering findings that show women to be more highly trained, that male counterparts are more often self-taught, and also likely to hold disparaging attitude to formal education. This work also shows that women do not progress as far professionally without the formal qualifications. Situated on the cusp of education and profession, it provides a nuanced unpacking of the issues in both contexts, offering insights that emphasize, for me at least, the importance of gaining social capital in this field. This is another prominent message supported throughout the book.
- 7 Parts two and three focus on the issues that people of minority genders face within various mainstream industries spaces while also debating the merits and limitations of (GM) inclusion initiatives, and alternative all-women spaces.
- 8 In ‘Gender, Policy and Popular Music in Australia: ‘I Think the Main Obstacles are Men and Older Men’ Maria Edmond presents a brilliant discussion on gender equality policy through analysis of several Australian creative and cultural industry reports. This work summarises concerns around the ‘boys club’, confidence gap, a need for women in leadership positions, gender-based role segregation, sexism and hostile working environments (p. 74). I really welcome Edmond’s focus on a particularly problematic tendency to focus on an idea of lower self-confidence as a core influence on gender inequality; Edmond unpacks how emphasis on creating initiatives that focus on this

(changing women) can distract policy development from prioritizing a focus on the environment (changing the systems).

- 9 Gender Mainstreaming (GM) (a strategy designed to set quotas for addressing the gender balance) does tackle environment, and this approach is debated across the book. In 'The Gatekeeper Gap: Searching for Solutions to the UK's Ongoing Gender Imbalance in Music Creation', Emma Hooper describes the significant influence that gatekeepers (defined here as people 'with a variety of official roles, levels of status and levels of direct connection to content creators' (p. 137), including venue managers, festival programmers, local open night fixers) have over individual careers, emphasizing that quota setting is a necessary strategy for motivating gatekeepers. Hooper summarizes who these gatekeepers are (p. 137), and the risks they navigate, before offering a range of detailed insights around the importance of collaboration and industry barriers facing women in popular music. The work helps illustrate the benefits of GM. Several contributions are more critical, and I feel these criticisms are extremely important; Sarah Raine's 'Keychanges at Cheltenham Jazz Festival: Issues of Gender in the UK Jazz Scene' boldly articulates how the Cheltenham Jazz Festival head of programming is developing strategies to showcase emerging artists. The work shows how festivals might take careful approaches to meeting gender targets in a way that could undermine the key objectives of the Keychange mission; for example bands featuring just one female artist (most likely a singer) meet the gender equity requirement, which does little to support female instrumentalists who might be the intended benefactors. Sam DeBoise's chapter 'Gender Mainstreaming in the Music Industries: Perspectives from Sweden and the UK', provides in-depth scrutiny of GM, observing that this approach often promotes women from more privileged backgrounds, failing on intersectionality by overlooking people of non-binary genders and women of colour. This is such an important insight, and it is a concern that extends to other positive action strategies and feminist activism. By making space for women and gender non-binary people, however, grassroots activist movements address the more nuanced, local and diverse concerns that face women and all non-majority gender people in the music industry. This is unpacked beautifully in the book, offering a valuable intersectional contribution to the issue of gender equality.
- 10 For example one common concern with all-women and minority gender led initiatives is that inclusion should not exist predominantly through the donated labour of those people already marginalized; that too many sub-culture and feminist spaces operate on volunteer time. Edmond (chapter 6) warns against interventions that lean on unsustainable activist movements because of how this ultimately contributes 'to the persistence or worsening of the very issues they seek to remedy' (p. 84). Megan Sharp's 'Queer(ing) Music Production: Queer women's Experiences of Australian Punk Scenes' provides a specific semi-insider insight, which articulates the ways in which queer women 'seek pleasure in resistance'. Highlighting the Do It Together (DIT) perspective she presents 'relationship maintenance, visibility work, (re)claiming credibility and dismantling gendered boundaries' (p. 204) as a *sticky* process of attachment. Sharp summarises several strategies for resistance; including the idea of occupying space (i.e. behind the mixing desk), and sharing opportunities amongst those more usually overlooked by gatekeepers. In 'South-West England Open Mics: Gender Politics and Pints?' Sharon Martin is also revealing a specific local issue that has significant external relevance. Martin examines patterns of participation in open mic nights, amongst women in Somerset and Dorset, sharing local insights on male dominant power

structures. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *masculine domination* Martin describes the pub as a space that is normatively and unconsciously masculine, then illustrating some of the ways in which women-led community events offer more inclusive spaces; through choice of location, time and participation expectations. The work contributes specific experience and insight to a building discussion on the importance of location, curation and space for inclusion in this practice.

- 11 The issue of sexual violence and space in live music events receives a remarkably in-depth and contextualised discussion in chapter 7: 'Setting the Stage for Sexual Assault: The Dynamics of Gender, Culture, Space and Sexual Violence at Live Music Events'. Fileborn, Wadds and Barnes draw on Garvey's concept of 'cultural scaffolding' to provide a concise orientation on the concept of sexual violence, before unpacking it further in the context of gender norms, power and space, and sub cultural norms in music spaces: the mosh pit, music venues cultures and festivals. Their work highlights how women's experiences are 'systematically devalued and 'othered' within the scene' (p. 92), and articulates how the conditions for sexual violence are set in relationship with context; as music festival attitudes, behaviours, expectations and vulnerabilities are distinct from other specific venue situations. There is a building sensation of importance around women gaining agency over space, and that while GM initiatives might unlock some gates, really meaningful gains in sustained gender equality are established through investment in women and non-majority gender led practices, cultures, and spaces.
- 12 Galloway and Sannicandro's brilliant contribution 'Queer noise: Sounding the Body of Historical Trauma' moves more deeply into a specific sub-culture of post punk industrial noise music, explaining how this scene is coded as masculine through presentation of a specific case study on DIY punk noise band *Fistfuck*. In particular, the chapter argues that 'amplifying *Fistfuck*'s subversive practice throws analytic focus on the experimental, relational and social conditions of possibility that enabled their performances, a potentiality that continues to give noise critical edge today' (p. 158). Their work also draws on Ahmed's concept of 'stickyness' discussing the ways in which a movement can be about attachments, and related concerns around embodiment, and space. It provides a theoretically robust scrutiny of subculture issues and perspectives; offering an exceptional contribution to academic scrutiny on our understanding of heteronormative practices at the intersection of marginalized non-majority genders and scenes.
- 13 This final part of the book includes two fascinating case studies that dig further into particular intersectional experiences. Hodan Omar Elmi's 'There is No Money in Record Deals' and 'I'm Not Looking to be Taken Advantage of: Princess Nokia and Urban Feminism in a New Era of Hip-Hop' explicitly marks out the boundaries feminism serves, offering a careful walk through urban feminism in relationship with white gaze on hip hop culture, and glamorized misogyny amongst a particular demographic of white men. Drawing on Bell Hooks, Emi establishes the currency of hip-hop feminism. In particular focusing on how Princess Nokia uses her power for social impact. In 'Kill it in a Man's World: Gender at Stake Intersection of the British Invasion and Bollywood Music Industries' Julia Szivak's insights into British Asian hip-hop artist Hard Kaur presents the traditional Asian music scene axis with the British-Asian music scene, showing how this artists' success in India impacted on her UK standing, showing how 'transnational capital can subvert established structures and open up new

opportunities' (p. 184). These culturally sensitive and carefully nuanced perspectives are so important to understanding diverse experiences of diverse industries, and picking up on DeBois' earlier points, I feel that such contributions should be central in our exploration of systemic change, policy development and gender mainstreaming initiatives.

NOTES

1. MACDONALD Raymond, MIELL Dorothy, "Children's Creative Collaborations: The Importance of Friendship when Working Together on a Musical Composition", *Social Development*, vol. 9, n° 3, 2000, pp. 348-369.
 2. PUWAR Nirmal, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*, Oxford/New York, Berg, 2004, p. 92.
 3. GAVANAS Anna, REITSAMER Rosa, "DJ technologies, social networks and gendered trajectories in European DJ cultures", ATTIAS Bernardo, GAVANAS Anna, RIETVELD Hillegonda (eds.), *DJ Culture in the Mix: Power, Technology and Social Change in Electronic Dance Music*, New York/London, Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 51-78; WOLFE Patricia, *Women in the Studio: Creativity, Control and Gender in Popular Music Sound Production*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2019.
 4. BELL Patrick, "DAW democracy? The dearth of diversity in 'Playing the Studio'", *Journal of Music, Technology & Education*, vol. 8, n° 2, 2015, pp. 129-146.
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