



# women's voices women and work scotland 2016

Challenges experienced by women  
working in music and the performing  
arts sectors

stuc



women's**voices**  
women**andwork**  
scotland**2016**



The Women and Work Partnership Project was funded by Scottish Government and based at the STUC.

Project Worker, Aleksandra Webb

## Introduction

Recent years have brought some optimistic statistics for general employment as well as female employment in the Creative Industries<sup>1</sup>. The number of jobs in the Creative Industries (which refers to jobs in both creative and support capacities), increased by 5.5% between 2013 and 2014 to 1.8 million jobs<sup>2</sup>. However, since 2011, the overall increase of employment in the sector was noted as 15.8%. In Scotland alone – as Table 1 demonstrates, 102,000 jobs in creative industries were generated which substantiated 5.6%<sup>3</sup> of all creative industries jobs in the UK. One of the Creative Industries' subsectors, 'Music, performing and visual arts' generated 18,000 jobs in Scotland in 2014 (Table 2).

*Table 1: Jobs in the Creative Industries 2014, by region and devolved administration*

<b>Region</b>	<b>Jobs in Creative Industries</b>	<b>Proportion of UK Creative Industries jobs</b>	<b>Proportion of all jobs in region or devolved administration</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	102,000	5.6%	3.9%

*Table 2: Scotland: Employment in Creative industries by region and devolved administration 2011-2014*

<b>Creative Industries Group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>% Change 2013-14</b>	<b>% Change 2011-14</b>
<b>Music, performing and visual arts</b>	18,000	14,000	16,000	18,000	10.6%	0.0%

<sup>1</sup> Creative industries are commonly defined as industries “supplying goods and services that we broadly associate with cultural, artistic, or simply entertainment value” (Caves, R. E. (2000). *Creative industries: Contracts between art and commerce*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press. [pp.2000: 1]), and that “have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent” (DCMS, 1998/2001. *Creative industries mapping document*, London: DCMS [pp.1998: 3/2001: 5]). The UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport refers to thirteen specific industries under the term ‘creative industries’. The classification of creative industries given by DCMS (2001) includes advertising, architecture, art and antiques markets, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio. Since 2012, the Scottish government has adopted a slightly different definition of the Creative Industries provided by the DCMS, to include: Visual art: Advertising; Architecture, planning and building design; Visual art and art dealers/ commercial galleries; Crafts; Fashion and Textiles (includes designer fashion); Design and design-dependent industries. Performance: Performing arts including arts facilities and support. Audio-Visual: Music including sound recording, music publishing and distribution and instruments; Photography; Film and video; Computer games etc.; Radio and TV. Books and Press: Writing and Publishing. Heritage: Museums and galleries, archives, libraries, historic sites. Digital Industries: Software/electronic publishing. Cultural Education.

<sup>2</sup> This increase compares with a 2.1 % increase in the total number of jobs in the wider UK economy between 2013 and 2014 as per estimates based on the Annual Population Survey published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/articles/676.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> In comparison London itself generates 31.8% of all creative jobs, Wales 2.8%, Northern Ireland 1.5%.

The Creative Industries are also relatively highly skilled. They employ 60.5% workers with a 'Degree or equivalent', in comparison to the wider UK workforce (31.8%). 'Music, performing and visual arts', earned 4th highest place in the overall number of workers with a 'Degree or equivalent' (61%), more than 'Crafts' (25.2%), 'Design: product, graphic and fashion design' (43.4%), 'Film, TV, video, radio and photography' (53.5%), 'Museums, galleries and libraries' (57.3%) and 'Publishing' (58.1%). Such positive profile (in terms of growth rate and quality of workforce) explains why these industries have gained a considerable strategic interest of both the UK and the Scottish governments.

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) reported that in 2014 36.7% percent of jobs in the Creative Industries in the UK were filled by women<sup>4</sup>. 'Music, visual and performing arts' sub-sector has been identified as the largest sector for working female creative professionals (a fifth of all women working in the Creative Industries work in this sub-sector)<sup>5</sup>, with further predictions for that figure to grow. There were 146,000 women and 139,000 men working in 'Music, performing and visual arts'<sup>6</sup>.

The above described profile suggests that Creative Industries, and perhaps even more so music and performing arts, are a desirable context for female workers. However, a cluster presentation of labour data in 'Music, performing arts and visual arts' prevents from opportunity to build an in-depth gender profile in each of this sub-sectors separately, their respective genres (i.e. across different genres of music, theatre, dance etc.) and with a geographic focus on Scotland alone. The cluster data does not distinguish between different types of roles in the sectors, instead it groups together creative occupations, support and administrative staff working in the sector's organisations. Music and performing arts alone employ a wide range of creative occupations (i.e. actors, entertainers, directors, dancers, choreographers, musicians, singers etc.)<sup>7</sup>, however these are being commonly clustered with the sector's administrative workforce, and hence the overall gender statistics tend to present a skewed and more optimistic yet illusory view of gender balance in arts.

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<sup>4</sup>DCMS (2015) Creative Industries: Focus on Employment, available on: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/439714/Annex\\_C\\_-\\_Creative\\_Industries\\_Focus\\_on\\_Employment\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439714/Annex_C_-_Creative_Industries_Focus_on_Employment_2015.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Music, performing and visual arts employed 49.8% females in 2011, and 51.2% in 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.25

Such grouping, therefore, prevents from understanding individual sub-sector characteristics and its potential barriers to work and employment for different groups of workers, and particularly for women.

In the context of on the surface positive, albeit limited, statistics on female employment in arts, and with an objective of building better understanding of the challenges which female musicians and actors in Scotland experience and have to cope with, the Women and Work Partnership Project collected insightful qualitative evidence. The project learned about significant underrepresentation of women in music, about hidden occupational segregation and prolific gender inequality of opportunities in theatre; it also learned about real barriers which the organisation of work and career in the arts imposes on women's ability to work and have successful careers in their chosen fields.

While researching this sector, it came to the surface that the position of women in music and performing arts<sup>8</sup> is far from ideal and exemplifies an overarching problem in mainstream discussion around female labour and employment across all economic sectors, such as powerlessness, occupational segregation, conscious and unconscious bias, gender inequality of work opportunities and invisibility of women. A closer look into music and performing arts also showed that these sectors are hugely important in the change-making process for two reasons. Firstly, like any other industry, they demonstrate evident barriers women face in the making of their careers and obstacles which prevents them from experiencing their work without daily encounters of bias, misogynistic attitudes and a reminder of glass ceiling. Secondly, analysis of these two sectors shed some insight on society - its values, norms and attitudes. Thus, on the one hand this industry exemplifies work, career and employment problems experienced and shared by women in general.

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<sup>8</sup> A narrative of this case is written on the basis of information obtained from conversations with Lorne Boswell, Equity's Scottish Secretary and Sheena Macdonald, Musicians' Union Regional Organiser for Scotland and Northern Ireland, and is substituted by other referenced sources. Both unions are also the founding members of Federation of Entertainment Unions. Visual arts were dropped from analysis as so far it remains largely non-unionised artistic profession.

However, it also speaks volumes about marginalisation of women, who remain to be silent, invisible, undermined or disadvantaged in choices and opportunities they are able to make for themselves across public and private realms alike.

Many members of the public believe, and whilst the theatre profession prides itself on being gender-neutral, a closer look into this sector presented a rather different picture. In the context of efforts by the Fair Work Convention to define 'fair work', and a committed effort by Equity - the UK's trade union for professional performers - in making a gender audit a compulsory activity for performing arts sector in Scotland, it is worthwhile to describe performance work (incl. music and performing arts) from a gender viewpoint, and with an aim to critically consider an underutilised potential of arts (existing in the public realm) as an agent for changing the social frames of reference. It is hoped that this paper will stimulate a reflection about women's self-worth and confidence that seems to be at stake if the world of staged performance (music, theatre and film) continues to limit chances and entrench work opportunities for women. The paper also aims to build up a sense of urgency that is needed to address unfair career systems in arts and ineffective childcare provisions that are preventing female performers to have sustainable and fulfilling careers.

This paper will firstly characterise music and performing arts as a context of female work and careers, and it will discuss how the precariousness of work and culture of the industry impacts on women's chances to have sustainable and fulfilling careers in music and performing arts. Secondly, the paper will describe persisting gender-based inequalities of work opportunities in the performing arts and will highlight a campaign calling for a gender audit in Scottish theatre.

## ***Music and performing arts sectors as a context of work***

Music is a strategically important sector of the Creative Industries which in 2014 contributed £4.1bn to the UK economy<sup>9</sup>. Music is a diverse sector in terms of employment. According to Creative & Cultural Skills research, in 2010 the UK music industry employed 124,420 people across areas of: live performance; production, retail and distribution of musical instruments and audio equipment; retail and distribution of recordings; recording; composition of musical works and music publishing; and promotion, management and agency related activities<sup>10</sup>. Live performance is the largest employer, with just over 51,000 employed in this area (41% of the total), and followed by production, retail and distribution of musical instruments and audio equipment (27%). The music industry, as the creative sectors more widely, is densely concentrated in the South East of England (and primarily in London) which accounts for 40% of total employment in the sector. The music sector is characterised by high levels of self-employment, freelance and part-time working. Average earnings in music are low, therefore, holding a second or multiple jobs is common. In the UK, 39% of people involved in the sector earn less than £10,000 per annum, with only 5% earning more than £41,000. 84% of part-time workers earn less than £10,000 per annum.

Scotland accounts for 11% of the UK's live music revenue<sup>11</sup>. The Music Sector in Scotland employs 10,790 people (2010/11). It is the second largest sub-sector of Creative Industries (19% of the Creative Industries)<sup>12</sup>. 40% of the Scottish music workforce is self-employed<sup>13</sup> and 45% of employees work on a part-time basis in approximately 400 relatively small businesses (98% of them have less than 50 employees). More than half of the workforce (54%) is under 40 years old.

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<sup>9</sup> This figure refers to GVA (Gross Value Added) measure as in: UK MUSIC (2015). MEASURING MUSIC: METHODOLOGY. Report available on [http://www.ukmusic.org/assets/general/Measuring\\_Music\\_-\\_Methodology2015.pdf](http://www.ukmusic.org/assets/general/Measuring_Music_-_Methodology2015.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Creative & Cultural Skills, Music 2010/11.

<sup>11</sup> Music Week, Scotland Feature, 25 November 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills, Creative Choices, *Scotland: Impact and Footprint 2010/11*, May 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Music Review 2014

The Musicians' Union (MU) is the industry's main union<sup>14</sup>. It represents 30,000 members in the UK and 2,456 members in Scotland with 30-70% female - male gender split amongst members. Scottish MU members are working musicians across genres of performing, recording, composing and teaching. 90% of them work as freelancers. Secure employment opportunities for musicians in Scotland exist within teaching and orchestras (with full-time work on short-term contracts), but are limited and therefore competitive. A great majority of Scottish-based MU members are 'jobbing musicians' who earn much of their living from jobs aimed to entertain audiences.

Two main sources of income are partaking in small-scale public events/gigs (in pubs, clubs, hotels or restaurants etc.) or in private functions (wedding parties, conference entertainments, memorial events etc.)<sup>15</sup>

The performing arts sector is also vibrant and economically important. Creative and Cultural Skills research informs that in 2010 the sector contributed £4.5 billion to the UK economy<sup>16</sup>. Employment in the sector grew by 20% between 2006-2007 and 2008-2009. There were 101,593 people working in the performing arts sector; of these a minimum of 34% are employed in onstage occupations, such as acting or dancing. Nearly half (45%) of all those working in performing arts work in London and the South East of England; in Scotland performing arts employ 7% of the workforce. 73% of the performing arts workforce earns less than £20,000 a year. The performing arts industry is predominantly young; nearly 50% of the workforce is under 40 years of age, and evidence suggests that people drop out of the sector in significant numbers in their thirties and forties. In 2012-2013, 31% of the sector's workforce worked part-time (69% worked full-time), 54% worked as self-employed<sup>17</sup> and on varied patterns and hours dictated by needs of specific projects<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> For more information on Musicians' Union see [www.musiciansunion.org.uk](http://www.musiciansunion.org.uk).

<sup>15</sup> Craig Macleod 2010: Musicians' Union Report - M Litt Music Industries cited in: [http://www.creativescotland.com/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/21470/Creative-Scotland-Music-Sector-Review-v1-2.pdf](http://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/21470/Creative-Scotland-Music-Sector-Review-v1-2.pdf) (p.28)

<sup>16</sup> Creative & Cultural Skills. (2010). Performing Arts Blueprint. Creative & Cultural Skills. <http://ccskills.org.uk/downloads/1319721588-Performing-Arts-Blueprint.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> The Creative and Cultural Industries: Performing Arts 2012/13 - See more at: <http://creative-blueprint.co.uk/statistics/reports/industry-statistics#sthash.CP7MMbqC.dpuf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/actor.aspx#sthash.WR0C8vPf.dpuf>



The most traditional and secure terms of employment are limited, they exist within the national/regional companies (theatre, dance and opera across the UK's arts institutions)<sup>19</sup>.

Equity is the UK's trade union for professional performers and other creative workers in the entertainment, creative and cultural industries.

Equity's primary focus is workers with performers' skills (actors, dancers, singers, comics, etc.), but it also represents workers with some other skillsets, for example, in theatre it represents directors, designers, choreographers, managers, backstage people, etc. Drama (on stage and on screen) is a major field in which Equity works and chooses to put a focus on, because drama as a context of work manifests serious equality issues about which the union is highly concerned. Equity negotiates with employers of performers in respect of minimum rates of pay across different performance genres - Entertainment, Theatre, Cultural sector, Film, Television and Radio - and supports around 45,000 members (including around 5,000 student members), with advice in all areas related to work and terms and conditions in the entertainment industry<sup>20</sup>. In Scotland there are around 2,000 members, with 50.4% female representation amongst Equity's Scottish membership.

### ***Visible and hidden female underrepresentation***<sup>21</sup>

Equity informs that female members substantiate more than a half of the union's membership, but this does not seem to provide them with more performing opportunities. The 30-70 MU membership ratio, on the other hand, represents a poignant gender misbalance in music careers.

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<sup>19</sup> There is a lack of most recent data on the size and productivity of the performing arts' sub-sectors. Dance UK shares some descriptive statistics but no detail information was found on theatre employment. The workforce in these two subsectors often overlaps hence capturing individual profiles of performing arts subsectors is always going to be limited. Creative Scotland's Annual Review of Performance informs about the number of funded organisations in the Scottish performing arts sector, which currently includes 8 funded organisation representing Dance, 22 organisations representing Theatre and 24 organisations representing Music. Creative Scotland's Annual Review 2014-2015, available on [http://www.creativescotland.com/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/33447/Creative-Scotland-Annual-Review-2014-15.pdf](http://www.creativescotland.com/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/33447/Creative-Scotland-Annual-Review-2014-15.pdf)


<sup>20</sup> For more information on Equity see [www.equity.org.uk](http://www.equity.org.uk).

<sup>21</sup> Some of the problems discussed in this paper describe the character of performance work more generally. This means that, for example, precarious work impacts on economic status and well-being of both genders, however, female performers are the focus of this paper and this is why only impact on women's working lives is discussed.

The MU says that, although there are many successful female musicians who are having or have had fabulous careers in the music industry, it is definitely more difficult for women to find suitable work opportunities, because the majority of them have to combine work with caring responsibilities. The work and career-related challenges induced by caring responsibilities are real barriers to work and employment for women across all industries. Music and performing arts are no different – male performers are more visible and much more likely to sustain successful careers in music and the performing arts.

An invisibility of older female performers is another form of underrepresentation seen in Music, Theatre and TV. Equity and MU confirmed that their older female members often experience a double discrimination on grounds of both gender and age<sup>22</sup>. This overwhelming absence of older women on stages and TV is incompatible with a current demographic make-up of society, and in particular with a clear trend of ageing population. This invisibility of older women in arts suggests persisting systemic problems which older female face just tend to disappear.

However, the professional arts world is as difficult in the context of work for young women at the start of their careers. Young female performers often fall victim of the same set of prejudices and old mentality that affirm an order of things based on male-perspective and discriminative attitudes.



GENERALLY SPEAKING, TWO-THREE GENERATIONS AGO WOMEN WOULD HAVE CAREER IF THEY WERE YOUNG, PRETTY AND THEN THEY HAD TO GO AWAY UNTIL THEY BECAME OLD AND HAGGARD WHEN THEY WERE ABLE TO DISPEL WISDOM OR BE A WITCH OR WHATEVER.

EQUITY

The emerging misbalances and problems with underrepresentation of female performers in the arts world are often related to how work in the sector is allocated and obtained. Recruitment in the performing sectors has a peculiar character and dynamics, because of a very subjective process of choosing musicians and performers through castings and auditions. A director (or a creative team) makes choices subjectively on the basis of one's values, perceptions, judgements and artistic vision. Furthermore, in some projects a role is built around a specific performer's talent and qualities.

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<sup>22</sup> Jean Rogers, Equity Vice-President is passionately and continually arguing the case for older women in theatre who experience double-discrimination against gender and age.

In comparison to other industries, the subjective nature of recruitment in arts makes principles, such as fairness, equality and transparency, even harder to monitor and assess.

Commonly, a lot of work is also secured through the personal contacts and professional networks (personal recommendations). Women often struggle to break through “male circles”, which are a form of mutual support groups formed over long period of time (often developed at the conservatoire/acting schools or through working on the same projects).

Therefore, getting a job, especially at the beginning of one’s career, or after time away from work (e.g. returning after maternity leave) is a real barrier for female musicians and performers. Working in a male-dominated industry also pressurises many women who feel they have to be exceptionally good to stand any chance of getting work. Equity says work in the sector is a “brutal business”, in which supporting women’s careers and progression doesn’t truly happen. Thus, individual confidence and ability to market oneself is an important career skill. However, maintaining confidence in the male-centred world of work is a challenging task for many women. Industry stakeholders admit women struggle to remain confident, particularly during non-performing job activities, such as networking, self-promotion, running a business, negotiating better pay etc. which are essential to a successful career for today’s performers.

There are some signs of a positive change in societal judgements and perceptions slowly penetrating the arts world. For example, there are more women choosing careers in music production (that is in more technical roles) and more female musicians are seen to play instruments traditionally perceived as reserved for men (e.g. a trumpet or a horn in favour of a violin or a harp). Also, an increasing number of women work in orchestras, whereas historically an orchestra workforce has been dominated by middle-class white men. This change is indeed an important opportunity for women, because orchestras offer the most stable form of employment in the music industry and benefits women with better conditions of work and higher job security<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Orchestras are particularly strong areas of the MU’s negotiating activities, therefore there are particular benefits for women working in orchestra employment.

However, although some positive changes have been noted, the way the work in music and performing arts is organised remains a big challenge, which often excludes female performers and ignores their specific employment and career needs.

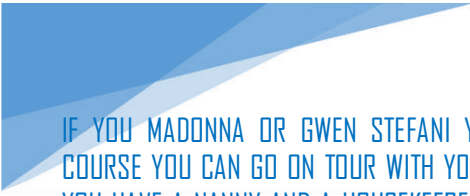
### ***Work-life responsibilities in the face of irregular patterns of work***

There are similarities in organisation and patterns of work of musicians, dancers, actors and other performers. For the purpose of this paper, we will refer to musicians, actors and dancers under a common term 'performer' (i.e. engaged in performing work). The patterns of performing work are irregular, changeable and outwith standard school or office hours.

Performers are required to work during the day, in the evenings and at the weekends, which in many more traditional sectors are still considered as unsocial hours and one's private/leisure time.


One week they might be working mornings, afternoons and

evenings, and another week only evenings or not at all. Performers are also expected to



IF YOU MADONNA OR GWEN STEFANI YOU CAN DO IT. OF COURSE YOU CAN GO ON TOUR WITH YOUR FAMILY BECAUSE YOU HAVE A NANNY AND A HOUSEKEEPER BUT IF YOU ARE A JOBBING MUSICIAN? I KNOW PLENTY OF THEM, PARTICULARLY IN THE FOLK INDUSTRY IN SCOTLAND, THAT'S JUST NOT POSSIBLE!

MUSICIANS' UNION



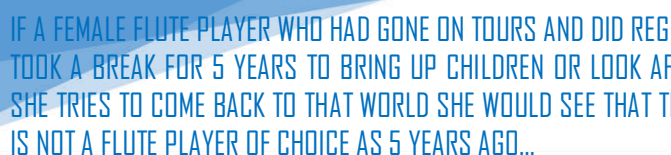
WHEN THE CHILDREN ARE LITTLE THIS IS NOT EVEN AN OPTION (FOR WOMEN). BUT FOR A MAN – NO PROBLEM!

MUSICIANS' UNION

travel regularly and go on tours. Freelance performers are often employed for very short periods of time, which in theatre might mean 6-8 weeks of work, in film/tv it might even mean only a day of work, and in music, just one concert. In addition, a highly competitive

and oversupplied creative labour market makes scarce work opportunities even less certain. Such highly variable and unpredictable patterns of work are precarious and have an impact on female performers wanting to combine their professional and family lives. In today's highly insecure and demanding labour market, many professionals and workers across different industries struggle with securing and maintaining work, and balancing work with life responsibilities.

The Women and Work Partnership Project learned that the situation of performers is even more challenging, as they have no luxury of stable employment contracts, hence their struggle with managing work and family seems to be greatly intensified. As freelance performers have no guaranteed pay cheque at the end of the month, they have to go and find work. They have to actively run their small businesses, continuously chasing for work or having to create their own performance opportunities. This demanding self-driven nature of performing work is the biggest challenge to a fulfilling career, particularly for women, who tend to have more non-work responsibilities and hence less time for entrepreneurial activities. For many women such stressful and unpredictable work reality is discouraging. On the one hand, female performers might appear to have more job flexibility as they can choose projects they want to take up. They might do teaching (if that suits them), or work evenings (if they have a partner/family members who can care for kids in that time). On the other hand, more stable forms of employment are limited and choice over a pattern of work seems illusory. For example, to work at an evening concert, a commitment and availability for morning or afternoon rehearsal might be an important prerequisite. Both unions organising in the performing sector confirm the reality of work often leaves women with 'no choice' rather than 'more choice'.



IF A FEMALE FLUTE PLAYER WHO HAD GONE ON TOURS AND DID REGULAR PERFORMANCE WORK THEN TOOK A BREAK FOR 5 YEARS TO BRING UP CHILDREN OR LOOK AFTER AN ELDERLY PARENT, WHEN SHE TRIES TO COME BACK TO THAT WORLD SHE WOULD SEE THAT THAT WORLD HAS MOVED ON. SHE IS NOT A FLUTE PLAYER OF CHOICE AS 5 YEARS AGO...

MUSICIANS' UNION


### ***Industry with a young face***

The whole system of female performing careers seems very fragile. Women are still the primary carers, both for elderly parents or young children, and for that reason alone they are more likely to take career breaks. For many women who chose to have children, or are forced to look after a parent, a performing career takes a complete back step, because unsupported caring responsibilities are incompatible with the organisation of work in music

and performing arts. For an average performing parent-carer, it is impossible to meet demands of inflexible schedules or frequent travel.

The rising costs of living also limit choices of many mothers-performers. In addition, childcare costs exclude many women who have small or no support network in the place they live, for making their work an economically viable option. Therefore, a choice of dropping out or suspending one's career is not a rare career event for female performers. Female career breaks are often an unwanted choice. Sadly, these breaks seem to have wider reaching consequences, as they impact on female performers' chances to get back to what they were doing before the career break. Equity and MU shared their observation of temporary career suspension of female performers which with time often leads to a complete withdrawal from a performing career.

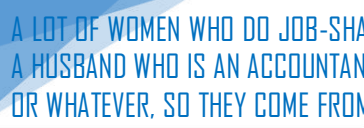
With an oversupply of performers, the industry is unforgiving. It requires a top



ONE OF THE KEY OBSTACLES FOR WOMEN WORKING IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY IN SCOTLAND IS INFLEXIBLE (CHILD)CARE PROVISION BASED ON THE "NINE TILL FIVE" PATTERN OF WORK.

MUSICIANS' UNION

performance, which means continuing to practice daily. The industry's internal rule says




A LOT OF WOMEN WHO DO JOB-SHARE MIGHT HAVE A HUSBAND WHO IS AN ACCOUNTANT OR A DOCTOR OR WHATEVER, SO THEY COME FROM A PARTICULAR SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP. THEY DON'T NEED TO WORK FULL-TIME, AND THEY CAN DEAL WITH A BIT MORE COMPLICATED CARING ARRANGEMENTS AS THERE ARE MONEY AT HOME THAT CAN COVER THE COSTS OF NANNY, OR THERE IS A BIG ENOUGH HOUSE TO ACCOMMODATE HER.

MUSICIANS' UNION

*"You are only as good as your last performance!"* Even the most successful female performers, who managed to establish their careers before taking a longer career break, return to a changed environment, where somebody else would have filled their place. Other highly embodied performers like dancers, whose careers have an extremely short span, can never even consider breaks as long as 5

years, as it would be impossible for them and their bodies to stay at the top of their game. Teaching or performance work locally (with flexible enough arrangements) is sometimes the only real work opportunity for female parent-performers.

This is why the performing sector shows itself to be an industry with “a very young face”, and this statement is particularly applicable to the situation of female performers, whose career prospects proportionally decrease with increasing family/and other caring responsibilities.



THERE ARE VERY FEW PEOPLE WHO ARE SINGLE PARENTS AND WHO ALSO HAVE A LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE CAREER INSIDE OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY. IT'S VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE - REALLY HARD TO DO UNLESS YOU'RE RICH!

MUSICIANS' UNION

### ***Care dilemmas: economic and career choices***

Apart from general problems related to working in an overcrowded competitive industry, there are particular challenges for parents and female performers, especially who, like women in any other industry, tend to pick up a greater amount of caring duties and childcare responsibilities. Performers who have childcare or other caring commitments have to either use their support network or find very flexible childminders, which in itself is increasingly difficult, as childminders are reluctant to work unpredictable shifts. A lack of flexibility in care provision is a real obstacle for sustainability of performing women's careers in the sector. Socio-economic status of performers determines whether and how much work female performers are able to take on. Insights from the industry experts suggest that female musicians who come from much better socio-economic backgrounds are able to often afford live-in childcare (e.g. a nanny or an au-pair), or are in a position to work part-time or consider a job-share. On the other hand, those women who come from less well-off families are unable to take on job-sharing roles, due to low economic stability in their households and inability to pay for childcare.

Thus, like in any other industry, it seems work and career opportunities for women depend on alignment of their personal-professional systems. For example, it is important whether female performers have partners or family nearby, it is important what their partners do professionally, where they work, what is their pattern of work, how much they earn, etc.

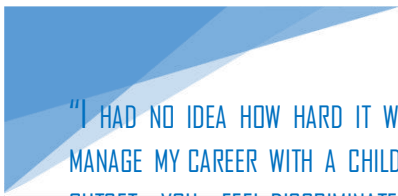


AFFORDABLE, FLEXIBLE CHILDCARE IS A BRICK WALL TO CREATIVE INDUSTRY WORKERS. OUR JOB IS CREATING FANTASY. CHILDCARE SHOULD NOT BE ONE.

Performer, Equity speaker at TUC Congress 2015

If there are opportunities for synergies between the personal-professional systems of female performers, it is possible for them to work (although it is not always easy and straightforward to manage work and life).

Because of unpredictable working patterns, last minute recruitment practices, low earnings and regular travel, which often mean working away from home, and working during so-called “unsociable” hours or periods (e.g. evenings, Sundays, Christmas), parents face significant difficulties in accessing affordable, flexible childcare. As late evenings/early mornings and generally long hours of work are incorporated into the nature of entertainment work, a lack of childcare solutions compatible with a performer’s pattern of work means that 74% of respondents had missed out on work<sup>24</sup>. For parents-performers with young families, and especially for female performers, these challenges related to the organisation of work in the arts and creative industries are a massive, often irreconcilable issue. Mothers working in the theatre feel discriminated against. They admit being disadvantaged at work, and deprived of opportunities, and yet once they have secured work, the next enormous challenge lies in finding childcare solutions to cover their work during rehearsals (mostly daytime), but also during the night (during performance time). Finding suitable and reliable childcare at night, in order that they know their children are



“I HAD NO IDEA HOW HARD IT WOULD BE TO  
MANAGE MY CAREER WITH A CHILD. FROM THE  
OUTSET YOU FEEL DISCRIMINATED AGAINST.  
NOBODY WILL HIRE YOU IF YOU’RE PREGNANT SO  
YOU KEEP IT SECRET AS LONG AS YOU CAN.”

“IF PEOPLE HEAR THAT YOU HAVE A KID AND  
CAN’T DO SOMETHING ONCE, YOU FEAR THEY’LL  
NEVER ASK AGAIN.”

Anonymous, performers

being put safely into bed, remains to be a major problem. Another challenge is the cost of childcare. The most recent research informs that 179,290 people work in the performing arts industry and the average annual wage in the creative industries across the UK is £16,575, while the average cost of a full time nursery place is almost as high as their wages<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Laura Wells carried an independent survey for PIPA in 2015 which included over 500 parents in the creative industries.

<sup>25</sup> For example, the cost of a full time nursery place in London is £14,750.

<http://creativeblueprint.co.uk/statistics/reports/industry-statistics>;

[www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/sites/default/files/files/Childcare%20cost%20survey%202015%20Final.pdf](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/sites/default/files/files/Childcare%20cost%20survey%202015%20Final.pdf)  
p.3. No specific data for Scotland were found.



Given this consideration and assuming little state/employers support for performers, it is absolutely possible to predict an emergence of a dangerous trend, whereby music and arts becomes an arena for the wealthy. The Musicians' Union observed that young women who join orchestras can increasingly do it only because they have a partner who has a job with a traditional pattern of work and who is earning enough to enable them to pursue their passions. In contrary, a position of 'single mother' musicians, actors and dancers, continues to be highly insecure as they struggle to manage flexibility and cost of care and shelter with what they realistically can earn for their performance work. For many of them, these daily struggles force them to change career or to supplement their performance work with other jobs/employment, or push them out of a performing career all together. This is why parents working in arts started a campaign calling for recognition of their difficult position as unsupported precarious labour.

### ***Call for change and childcare action plan***

Equity is fully aware of all these challenges which parents working in the entertainment industries face on daily basis. In the Equity Childcare Motion presented at TUC Congress in September 2015 (seconded by the Musicians' Union), the unions called for action to change and encouraged parents in the arts to stage a childcare revolution. Equity is appalled with the lack of information and clarity regarding rules and entitlements to tax free childcare, Universal Credit, child tax credits and the Government's commitment to providing 30 hours of free childcare for 'working parents'. In addition, the lack of support during and post pregnancy - particularly for those seeking to return to work - means that many parents, and again particularly female and lone parents in the creative industries, are at risk of dropping out of the workforce.

In October 2015, out of concern with limited, inflexible and expensive childcare solutions for people working in the performing arts, a campaign called Parents in Performing Arts (PIPA)<sup>26</sup> supported by Equity and the Family Arts has been launched to raise awareness about the challenges facing parents in the arts.

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<sup>26</sup> PIPA's Official Campaign has been launched in London on 16.10 2015.

Unions, practitioners and arts organisations held a panel discussion to kick-start a call for a radical rethink in working practices for parents. PIPA's research revealed a widespread lack of understanding of the challenges parents in these key industries face and a massive shortfall in the collective creative industries' conscience around flexible terms of employment and childcare for parents wanting to continue working in the sector. PIPA's aim is to help parents find solutions to crucial arrangements for childcare, which for many women in particular is a predicator of whether they can or cannot take up work. PIPA's manifesto (Appendix A) calls parents working in the performing arts to demand from employers and the entertainment industry bodies taking the lead in meaningful change that is focused on a delivery of appropriate childcare support and application of innovative employment practices that allow performers to manage work and parenthood (as in any other professions). By raising awareness for supporting parents working on stage and screen, PIPA points out gross inequalities in rights and status of parents working in the performing arts and calls for institutional change with regards to thinking about parenthood in the arts.

When more 'theatre professionals' and performers speak openly about the need for a new industry code of conduct focused on transparency, accessibility, fairness and efforts to develop good practice across all matters of diversity and equality, performers in Glasgow associated with PIPA, are also raising awareness, but also trying to come up with a small scale solution. For example, establishing a network of performers who would get to know their own children, to then help each other with the evening care. This obviously is a parent-driven initiative of building the informal support network, but apart from their own collective investment, the group would love to encourage Glasgow Theatres to secure and pay for one or two nursery places at all times. Parents and children who take these places might change, because artists work commitments change, but it would always help with daytime care to a particular geographically spread collective of parent performers.

PIPA's campaign and initiatives place performing arts at the forefront of attention which helps to exemplify the importance of different approaches and patterns of childcare needed in the world of work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This sector with work patterns outside of the normal “9 till 5” demonstrates that flexibility in care provision is absolutely essential for supporting women’s careers. Therefore, comprehensive policy measures, such as the introduction of universal free childcare, granting each child a place in the care/educational context regardless of employment status of parents, is a sound solution which would benefit all working parents, including freelance and self-employed workers and those who work shifts and unsociable hours (also in arts, the creative industries and freelance sectors).

### ***Career progression***

The opportunities for promotion and formal career progression for performers are limited, because the majority of them work from project to project. Project work does contribute to skills and reputation development, and it might lead to higher quality or better paid work (e.g. for female actors it could mean taking on leading roles, working with distinguished and respectable directors or acting parts made specifically for them). In organisational careers chances for progressions are rare, as there are very few ‘top’ jobs in prestigious arts organisations. For example, there are a few roles at the front of the orchestras. Musicians who secured them tend to stay in those top jobs for a long time, which prevents a regular rotation and opportunity for career advancement for others. Similarly, with dance, corps de ballet dancers might stay their entire careers in the same role and on the same salary. Due to those limitations, there is little clarity about what one can expect at different career stages. In terms of remuneration, full-time orchestra musicians starting their career in their early twenties earn only little less than at the end of their careers<sup>27</sup>. Unlike in many of other professions (doctors, teachers, engineers, etc.), time and effort put into developing skills and capabilities necessary to become and remain a confident performer remain often unappreciated and undervalued by the industry and society, despite the fact that performers start learning their craft as children/young people, and continue to develop their performance practice throughout their training in music conservatoires and further throughout their professional lives.

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<sup>27</sup> The project learned that orchestra musicians often start their annual salary around £25.000 and at the end of their career they might be earning around £30.000.

This opaqueness of career progression, lack of development opportunities and inadequate remuneration in music and the performing arts is another serious challenge for female performers, who in their mid-career (and by then often looking after their families) are forced to leave the sector.

## Theatre and its historic equality problem<sup>28</sup>

Based on the insights from Equity and Equity members, it seems the performing arts sector mirrors gender inequality we find across society. Historically, the canon of theatre work has always disadvantaged female performers, because stories, which have been and continue to be written and staged, are told through the eyes of men. This male-focused canon of work means in practice a substantial misbalance of parts available to women, which drastically limits their work and career opportunities<sup>29</sup>. A significant gender imbalance of opportunities shows itself also in the quality of parts available for female actresses. Amongst available female parts, there are very few with well-developed interesting and strong characters. In

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*If you're a male actor, when you're young you're either going to be a hero or the hero's best friend. So hero is a good-looking one, and friend is a less good-looking one. There is no equivalent for women though. You're either Cinderella or you are a Godmother. There is nothing in between!*

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contrary, a majority of these acting opportunities represent incidental parts. Moreover, they often portray women stereotypically as “young and pretty but stupid” or “wise but old and crinkly”, or always as “somebody else’s [means male actor’s] wife or girlfriend”.

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<sup>28</sup> Aforementioned problems are not limited to theatre and performing arts but are widely observed in the artistic world, as well as in the wider world of creative professionals. Just 8% of public art in central London was created by women. 83% of the artists in Tate Modern and 70% of those in the Saatchi Gallery were men ([www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/the-womens-blog-with-jane-martinson/2013/may/24/women-art-great-artists-men](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/the-womens-blog-with-jane-martinson/2013/may/24/women-art-great-artists-men)). The World Press Photo Foundation report revealed photojournalists as profession dominated by men, with women more likely to be better educated (82%) but poorer paid. Just 15% of the photojournalists surveyed were women and 42% of those earned less than £6,600 per year (compared with 34% of men), whilst many more men earned over £52,000 than their female counterparts. For more see: Hadland, A. Campbell, D. Lambert, P. (2015) The State of News Photography: The Lives and Livelihoods of Photojournalists in the Digital Age.

<sup>29</sup> For example, the Shakespearian plays tend to offer several male roles, but a maximum of three parts to be played by women.

Audiences who go to theatre today are not constrained solely by the old playwrights. The emerging scene of new plays is ambitious and exciting, yet based upon conversations in the sector, the work of women playwrights are still struggling to filter through. Female playwrights feel pressurised about types of stories they should write and what perspective is “sellable”. Writers’ Guild informs that in 2013, women writers contributed only 31% of plays staged in UK theatres. Plays by women writers had shorter runs in smaller theatres, were less well attended and accounted for only 13% of box office takings<sup>30</sup>. Similarly, translations and adaptations also showed the lower proportion of women authors. Research suggests, however, that at the entry level, women writers outnumber men. 53% of women writers submitted to the UK’s largest playwriting competition. In comparison to male counterparts, the amount of plays written by females and staged successfully confirms the general struggles of women in performing arts as across other industries. It seems the reasons for such gender imbalance is a belief that women playwrights are incapable of writing on political subjects or comedy and men are seen as “a safe pair of hands” when it comes to commissioning the work about big subjects. This is outdated, but still a highly ingrained perception in the institutionalised theatre. Writer’s Guild’s investigation informs that it is highly probable that women writers suffer a higher attrition rate in the journey from page to stage because, although most literary managers are now female, artistic directors (mostly male) still tend to take the final decisions. Many new writing competitions and some theatres started to employ a practice of anonymising a script reading process to combat that discrimination and to ensure all plays are judged solely on their merits.

The theatre sector aspires to become more equal and representative place by 2020. A simple counting task of actors successfully casted and a proportion of scripts / choreographies / parts submitted / developed / played by women writers/choreographers/female actors, etc., is the first step to scan and stamp the reality with honesty of what it looks like today. If the aspiration of the sector is to be realised, timely changes have to be made on the basis of information gathered.

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<sup>30</sup> John Morrison “Why do women playwrights lag behind?” available on: <https://writersguild.org.uk/why-do-women-playwrights-lag-behind/>, accessed on 21.01.2016.

The world of theatre-makers unites in thinking that 50/50 gender balance through commissioning of quotas is the most positive way forward to enforce equality. However, it also argues that process of levelling the field of opportunities for women should not be reserved to boards, senior management and employees in artistic organisations, but rather

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*"Anecdotal evidence suggests that they appear to lack the confidence or even the desire to choreograph the kinds of large-scale work that attracts international funding; that those who want to have children, can find the time-pressured schedules of an international career brutally unworkable. Some women feel there is a persistent, lazy bias among programmers, directors and the media towards the promotion of a few predictable male names in the dance world, and some women feel their careers have been thwarted by more direct, deliberate sexism".*

(ibid)

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it should be applied across the entire artistic production. Aligned with a repertoire problem observed in theatre, dance sector has a similar one. Female presence in the dance leadership tends to be concentrated in small-scale organisations (both in terms of size and profile), and comparably small amount of work that is being created by female dance artists/choreographers, despite the fact the number of women entering vocational dance training vastly outnumbers that of men. The choreographic world shows a predominance of men, and the repertoires of most celebrated dance companies internationally is overwhelming "man-made". It seems that some of the same historic institutional and societal barriers that hamper opportunities for women in drama and other industries also apply in dance. Dance critic, Judith Mackrell, noticed a parallel between a women-led development of contemporary dance from experimentatory and fairly invisible artistic form to a mainstream genre (i.e. suitable for larger stages and hence able to generate greater financial returns) and a gradual disappearance of women from leading roles.

The wider professional world of dance today (both nationally and internationally) seems to manifest a range of inequalities<sup>31</sup>. The following quote comments the position of female choreographers and dancers:

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*There are so many talented female choreographers out there, but they're much less quick than men to accept work. Some of the women I approached had little children and decided it was too much to deal with. Some felt they were not ready for a big London commission. I find it's the same with the choreographic workshops in the company. There's no shortage of men who want to experiment and put themselves forward, but we have to go out to find the women!*

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Tamara Rojo, a renowned dancer and Artistic Director of the English National Ballet believes that the dance world's stage needs more women's voices. Her commitment to that belief can be seen in her programming choice for 2016, which is all female choreographers' work. She admitted the socio-economic and individual factors still prevent women to be successful in dance, and her commitment to helping shine the light on female choreographic talent became the most difficult programme to put together because as she explained<sup>32</sup>:

Experiences of women working as choreographers became a focus of a recent industry debate entitled "How do we level the playing field for female choreographers?"<sup>33</sup> A female choreographer who took part in this debate complained that the dance industry was "a vertical pathway that's very hard to climb for women", and "condescension and a lack of credibility" standing in the way of female and ethnically diverse choreographers was more than outright discrimination.

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<sup>31</sup> Judith Mackrell, How can we give female choreographers a lift?; <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/dance-blog/2015/oct/12/dance-female-choreographers-rambert-debate>, accessed on 20.01.2016

<sup>32</sup> Mackrell, J. (2015) The Tamara Rojo revolution: bringing ballet into the 21st century. Available on: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/feb/17/the-tamara-rojo-revolution-english-national-ballet>

<sup>33</sup> The event took place on 14 October 2015 in London, at Rambert's premises. The panellist included: Judith to give their views on the debate, including Tamsin Fitzgerald, Brendan Keaney, Shobana Jeyasingh, Patricia Okenwa, Peggy Olislaegers, Rupert Thomson, Didy Veldman, and Charlotte Vincent. The host, Rambert Dance, is the oldest (its history dates back to 1914) and one of the most ambitious and highly renowned contemporary dance companies in the UK. It employs 22 dancers, tours its work nationally and internationally, and delivers extensive school and community-based work. See more on <http://www.rambert.org.uk/>

In addition, a debate with practitioners confirmed that even in the artistic context of work, women are being perceived from “a specific lens, which often means inferior and dubious. A panel of industry figures discussing the state of play for female choreographers in the UK criticised the lack of women creating “high profile” work and called for a “shift change” within the industry to improve career opportunities for female choreographers. This shift change is about encouraging venues and companies to look at their programming and commissioning practices by necessarily paying attention to the gender make-up of the artists and artistic work they stage and promote. Mark Baldwin, the artistic director of Rambert Dance, which hosted a debate, emphasised the importance of embracing equality at all levels. He wants his company [Rambert] to continue embracing diversity in all its choreographing and programming choices, and this includes staging work made by and danced by women and artists of mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Not every artistic director, however, holds such aspirational commitments to change. There are voices that disagree with such imbalance of opportunities for women<sup>34</sup>, yet on the other hand, they admit the dance sector has its deeply worrying and institutionally embedded problems, such as quality of contemporary dance training to match a calibre of highly creative and skilled choreographers, or attitudes amongst mostly male choreographers “to treat women as bendy toys, depersonalised faceless acrobats to be yanked about to extremes.”<sup>35</sup> Other commentators point out an historic and somehow universal correlation between pioneering work of women and the mistreatment they suffer once their work has become accepted by the public and professional circles and then “men must take over”.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, a panellist of the conversation held at Rambert openly called dance companies to bring issues of equality into board and leadership meetings, but also to offer more direct support for parents within the dance sector, for example, through financially supporting

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<sup>34</sup> Ismene Brown, 19.01.2016, “I’m having trouble finding an anti-woman conspiracy in dance” *ibid.* (accessed on 20.01.2016), Available on: <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/01/im-having-troubling-finding-an-anti-woman-conspiracy-in-dance/> (accessed on 20.01.2016).

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Mackrell, J. 27.10.2009; Vanishing pointe: Where are all the great female choreographers? <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/27/where-are-the-female-choreographers> (accessed on 20.01.2016)



childcare, offering crèche facilities and accepting shorter working hours for choreographers and dancers with care responsibilities.<sup>37</sup>

## ***Gender Audit***

In the context of this open call for support, conducting systematic gender audits in theatre to allow the dance ecology and the wider ecology of performing arts to change, seems even more poignant and purposeful. Although all theatres profess to have an equal opportunities' policy, the Review of Theatre in Scotland<sup>38</sup> (2012) showed that less than a half actually monitor that policy. Due to the fact that many women find employment in theatre administration, marketing and front of house roles, the general public might think theatres deliver on gender equality promises. Yet, over-representation of females in administrative arts jobs disguises the reality of limited and shrinking opportunities for female actors, thus challenging the assumption that women do play a full role in theatre in Scotland<sup>39</sup>. Equity's research suggests a substantial imbalance of work for men and women, with instances of employment of male actors almost three times higher than employment of female actors<sup>40</sup>. Equity's analysis of cast lists from directors/employers also suggests that a vast majority of productions that happen in Scotland have worse gender balance than 20 years ago. Anecdotal evidence gives even a clearer picture of gender inequalities within the industry. Equity aspires to change this situation and make the work in the industry fairer and more accessible for female actors, dancers, singers and other performers. Equity is currently in

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<sup>37</sup> Georgia Snow, Dance must overcome 'condescending' attitude to female choreographers <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2015/dance-must-overcome-condescending-attitude-to-female-choreographers/>, accessed on 20.01.2016

<sup>38</sup> Hamilton C. (2012) Review of the Theatre Sector in Scotland for Creative Scotland.

<sup>39</sup> An event entitled "Women in Theatre Scotland: Where Next?" took place on 26 Sep 2013 in Traverse Theatre, organised by Christine Hamilton Consulting and supported by the Equity Union, Federation of Scottish Theatre, Playwrights' Studio Scotland and Scottish Society of Playwrights. This event focused on debating, and how the Scottish context compares to the situation elsewhere in the UK and Europe. Speakers at this event included: Max Beckmann, Equality Organiser, Equity; Christine Hamilton, arts consultant and author of the Review of Theatre in Scotland 2012; Blandine Pélissier, founding member of the H/F association for gender equality in culture in France Chair, Sheena McDonald, journalist and broadcaster. Panellists talked about how lack of female presence affects the work in the sector and how it impacts on audiences and their perceptions and judgements.

<sup>40</sup> Equity calls for more research into gender inequality in the theatre in Scotland, press release from 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013. This research does not include "quality analysis" of parts. Rather, Equity conducted only a simple preliminary counting analysis of female parts, (i.e. whether female role is incidental to the story or whether it drives the story) without exercise of comparing roles because this is much more complicated tasks that requires more time and resources.

conversation with Creative Scotland, the industry's governing body, about conducting the gender equality audit in the Scottish theatre sector. Equity is asking Creative Scotland to help them monitor what has been happening on, off and around stages in Scotland. The "on stage" gender audit is to involve simply an exercise of counting a number of female and male performers, while the "off stage" audit is to count the gender make up of artistic leaders, directors, designers, choreographers, and the rest of backstage personnel.

Equity argues that monitoring of gender balance in the performing sectors is a very simple exercise, but important and absolutely necessary, in order to know precisely what this professional context looks like and how it can be improved. Often institutions, organisations and individuals seem unsympathetic towards audits of this kind. The union offered an example of an artistic organisation, whose director was thought to be offering fair opportunities, unbiased auditions and equal employment opportunities for both men and women, until he audited his own selection choices. A terrifying discovery of imbalance led him<sup>41</sup> to a complete re-evaluation of recruitment practices in terms of how and where his castings and auditions are organised, and what opportunities are offered specifically for women.

Equity hopes that mandatory audits could offer artistic organisation across Scotland the same opportunity to revalue, challenge and change - if appropriate - the selection practices for female performers. Artistic freedom has been mentioned as one of the major obstacle in the equal recruitment process in the sector. A uniquely subjective nature of auditioning/casting for parts, and often an informal process reserved to a network of acquaintances and frequent collaborators, complicates the situation. While artistic freedom is important for creativity and sustainability of the arts and culture, Equity wants it to be exercised in an informed way.

Publicly available information on gender derived employment figures seems to be an important benchmark for reflection and interventions, when trends become dangerously disproportional. A freelance status of most of performing artists is another challenge to gender monitoring as pointed out by the industry body, with whom Equity would like to

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<sup>41</sup> No names quoted to protected anonymity.

collaborate on this matter, but which remains unconvinced. Presumably, saving the resources of small artistic organisations, and mainly, the time needed to carry out a “boring, non-artistic activity”, such as the gender counting exercise, concerns the industry body. While it might be not as straightforward to monitor employment of artists as opposed to permanent employees of any single organisation, Equity argues it is not an impossible task. It requires no more than willingness to regularly capture a gendered profile of all employed, including freelance artists and those working on short-term engagements. Equity also argues that the exercise is driven by an aspiration to make the sector a better place for female performers, and therefore the industry body’s worry of overloading the sector’s organisations with a bureaucratic task should not prevent or delay these efforts. Few senior appointments of women in the arts world neither fully address nor solve the problem of female underrepresentation and Equity believes a meaningful change has to start from the gender balance on stage and then upwards.

### ***Gender: an equality priority***

Interestingly, the union has a very unique perspective on the priority of equality strategy and interventions. Equity argues that out of all the protected characteristics, a focus of public sector bodies and arts organisations alike should be placed on gender<sup>42</sup>. Such focus can make the biggest change, as it will affect the majority of the population. An independent consultant, Christine Hamilton, reconfirms such position. She states: “gender is the only area where we are not looking at a minority”<sup>43</sup> (according to a continuing demographic trend), and she supports Equity with her own efforts to collect, collate and publish data on gender balance within roles in the theatre sector.


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<sup>42</sup> The gender focus of the union resembles the priority of the Equity’s Regional Committee - a democratic entity with an energetic group of activists representing the unions’ membership overall. These activists fight for and help the union to push gender agenda. As Equity relies on activists, and moreover, disagrees with taking on a campaign or issue without members’ and activists’ support, hence the gender has a priority in the union’s equality work in Scotland, and not issues of black and minority workers, or artists with disabilities.

<sup>43</sup> For further information on Christine’s research and consultancy see: <http://christinehamiltonconsulting.com/women-in-theatre/>

The union emphasises that all other equality strands are important, but in the union's view, addressing gender inequalities can make the biggest difference and, therefore, should be addressed and resolved immediately. Focusing on one task at hand can help to achieve real outcome for women. So far, Creative Scotland, however, has given no extra weight or effort to this specific priority.

Approach to an equality audit taken by the body complies with the current Public Sector Equality Duty requirements shared by all public bodies, but sadly limits publication of gender data to Creative



PEOPLE AUTOMATICALLY ASSUME THAT WE'VE MADE PROGRESS IN 20 YEARS BUT ACTUALLY WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE CAST LISTS, IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY. THIS IS WHY WE NEED AUTHORITIES TO MONITOR IT! THAT'S ALL WE NEED TO DO: COLLECT THAT DATA AND PUT THAT DATA OUT THERE IN A PUBLIC AND THAT WILL FORCE CHANGE.

EQUITY

Scotland's internal audit. Artistic organisations funded by the body are to deliver gender information on their boards and amongst their permanent employees (within 2 years' deadline!). This approach means that there is no information available on the gender of those in freelance creative roles. For example, freelance directors, writers, designers, musical directors, choreographers and, of course, performers who truly are the essence of the sector, are all excluded from the current audit. For Equity, focus on artists is a matter of high priority, not only because they are the union's members, but importantly because artists are the sector's workers seen by audiences. The general public knows very little about the gender balance in the sector and this fact disappoints Equity, who strongly believes that collecting basic data as a part of a national audit could enable publicly-funded arts organisations to raise gender issues and become a tipping point of an important change-making process<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Equity believes initiating a monitoring exercise with over hundred funded organisations is the best starting point, giving gender equality issue a critical mass which can effect change.

## ***Conclusions***

This paper characterised work in music and performing arts and drew attention to problems and challenges in the sector that impact on the position and ability of female performers to find work and sustain their artistic careers. It established that a tough competition for work in the oversupplied creative labour market is particularly challenging for women and it seems an emerging new entry route into the industry might further deepen struggles for finding performance work and making it pay the bills. The analysis of music and arts highlighted a unique nature of precarious work, where job competitiveness and insecurity (with frequent periods of unpaid “in-between of jobs” status), as well as unpredictable work patterns with frequent travel appears to be extremely challenging, especially for female parent-performers who have to juggle the precarious nature of their work and insufficient, inflexible and expensive childcare with providing a stable nurturing environment for their children.

Female performers are highly devoted to their artistic endeavours and intrinsically-motivated labour but sadly, throughout their careers, they are exposed to a range of discriminative behaviours and practices, from exploitative contracts, unequal opportunities, misogynistic discriminating culture (towards their gender, pregnancy, parenthood, etc.) and inflexible career systems. Young female performers want to be taken seriously, for their skills and not their looks; middle career performers want to have chance to return to their work; older women want to be equally visible and valued. All female performers, therefore, need different supportive structures throughout their career spans. There are moments in female performers’ life courses when expectations of them to remain self-sufficient and entrepreneurial are simply unrealistic. It seems employers take no effort in helping women out, neither by monitoring and levelling the field of opportunities, mentoring and supporting them, nor by providing practical help with care arrangements.

Society today appears to be more accommodating to women, yet as soon as further analysis is conducted into the realm of women's work, many gender inequalities emerge. Today young women are encouraged to follow their dream careers, however, these empowering messages often lack a real sufficient support structure which should be corresponding with different stages of female careers. The analysis of music and arts sectors showed that "selling a dream" and making promises of a successful fulfilling career in the sector might do more harm than good until proper supportive structures become fully integrated within more flexible career systems. Otherwise, young women with passion and a degree in arts start their careers and gain a few years of experience, but, as soon as they choose to have a family, the careers have to suffer or end. It is also very regressive to make women in 21st century dependent on their partners in pursuing careers of their choice.

This paper highlighted the reality of work as it is experienced by female performers. It showed that the sector mirrors inequality and work problems we find across different economic sectors and society in general. It is hoped that descriptions contained in this paper will initiate further discussion around appropriate and effective policies to address struggles and dilemmas of female performers. The change is needed now, as a lack of support for musicians, artists and theatre-makers might lead to a dangerous shift of making work in life performance a possibility only for the wealthy and powerful. As for the sector existing strongly in the public domain, a refusal to implement change might further preserve archaic societal norms and propagate gender inequalities. Performance is a unique context of work, because it mirrors frames of references and norms widely accepted and preserved by society, even if these frames happen to be expressing unequal and damaging associations. This is why largely invisible problems of female performers have to be made visible and addressed by appropriate policies, if the strategic socio-economic value of arts and creative industries is to be sustained and narrated as a true success story.

This paper, therefore, supports the focus on gender equality expressed in the 2016 Manifesto of the Scottish Federation of Entertainment Unions<sup>45</sup> (Appendix B), which aspires to raise awareness of the imbalance of professional opportunities in the performing arts based on gender. This paper also appreciates Equity’s campaign for a national gender audit in Scottish publicly-funded arts organisations and theatres. Equity admits to have a strong sense of responsibility for its female members and for the future of society, and this is the reason for pursuing an agenda of gender equality. This responsibility for being the agents of change, however, the union would like to share with theatres, broadcasters, founders and all range of stakeholders.

This paper recommends to employers in the music and performing arts sector, the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland, the Scottish Federation of Entertainment Unions, artists and creative employees to share responsibilities in relation to organisation of work and careers in the sector. An honest open debate with all stakeholders should be organised to initiate conversation and plan short and long-term action to address the outlined problems preventing women to have sustainable and rewarding careers in the sector.

The paper also recommends to all stakeholders to consider “policing” effectiveness of policies in making sure that progressive equality policies are not just devised, but implemented for the benefit of working women and men.

Where there is a will, there is a solution!

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<sup>45</sup> The Scottish Federation of Entertainment Unions (SFEU) Manifesto 2016 has been launched in the Scottish Parliament of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. SFEU is a collective body made of four unions – BECTU, Equity, Musicians’ Unions and National Unions of Journalists – all organising in music, arts and creative industries.





## **Appendix A: Parents in Performing Arts Manifesto<sup>46</sup>**

### **Aims**

1. Campaign for cultural change towards parents in entertainment by:

- Identifying and raising awareness about the child-related challenges facing parents working in theatre and on screen
- Supporting parents in the industry by providing information, help and practical solutions

2. Effect greater access to theatre for parent audiences

### **Objectives**

1. Hold a campaign launch event to galvanise support from public bodies, unions, directors, theatres, producers, actors, writers, casting directors, agents, broadcasters, studios and drama schools

2. Publicise the campaign as widely as possible within and without the industry

3. Use research findings to support the case for cultural and institutional change

4. Establish best practice in the entertainment industries and principally in theatre, film and TV

5. Establish industry supported 'back to work' schemes and training programmes that are parent friendly including affordable crèches for working parents and audiences

### **Actions**

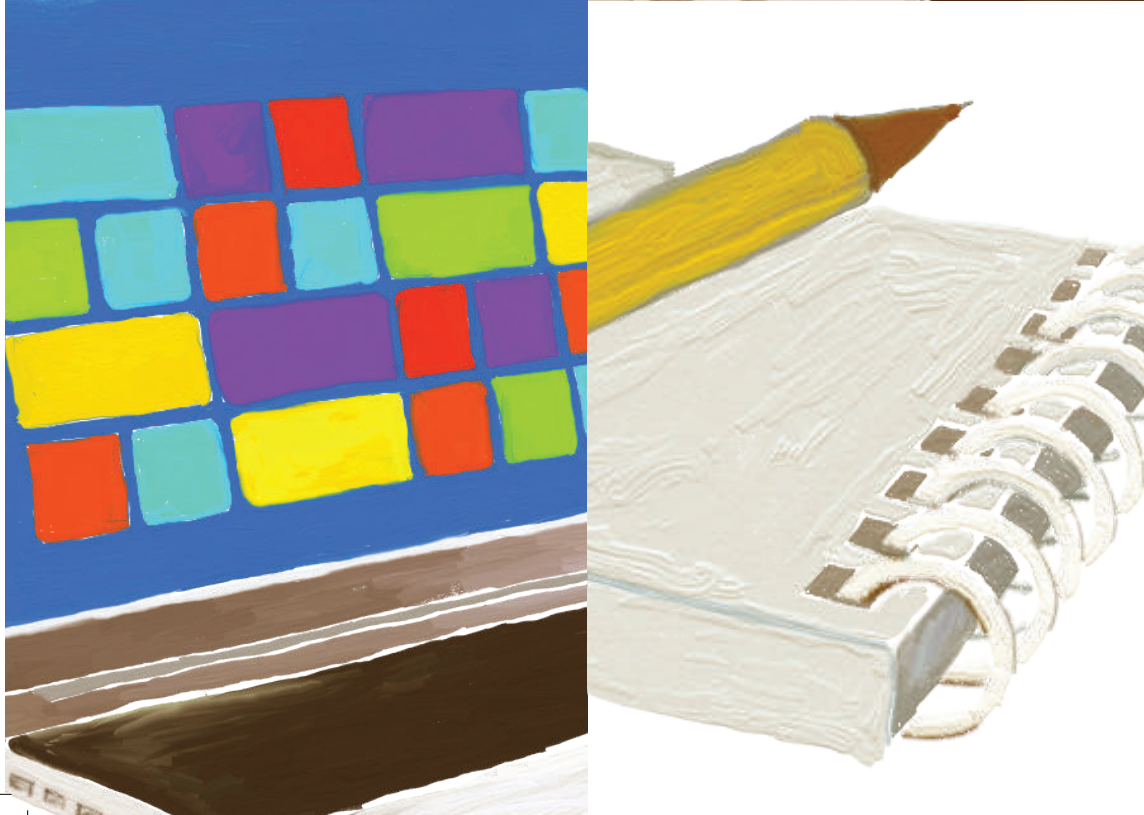
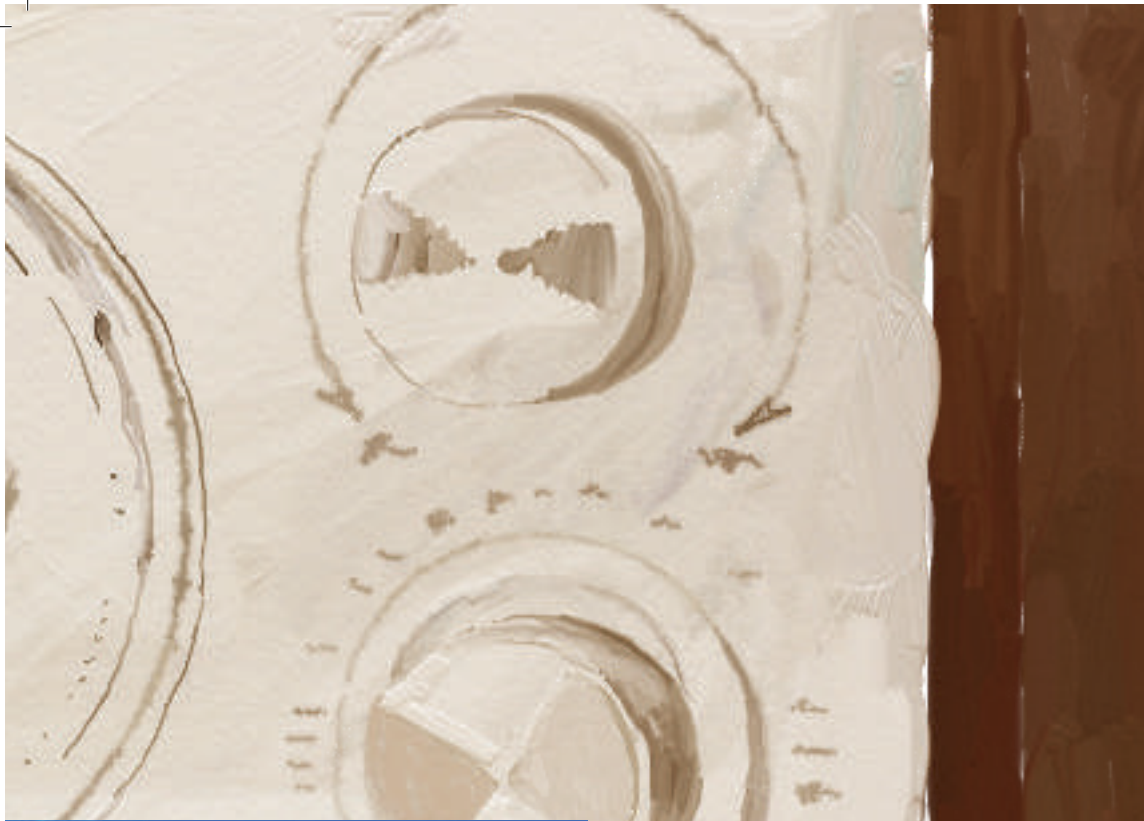
1. Create and maintain a website with information for parents working in the entertainment industries that includes:

- Links to information and advice about maternity, paternity and parental legal rights
- Links to childcare providers, local last minute nanny recommendations, west end / theatre crèche updates, local meet-ups and support groups such as Mothers Who Make
- An online discussion board for practitioners and parents to get in touch with each other

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<sup>46</sup> Supporters: Equity, Stage Directors UK, Family Arts Campaign, Ian Rickson, Polly Teale, Piers Haggard, Samuel West, Matilda Leyser, Sue Emmas, Lyn Gardner, RADA, John Simm, Lucy Kerbal, Katie Mitchell, Simon Startin, Laura Wade, Carrie Cracknell, Ed Hughes, Romola Garai, David Mercatali, Milan Govdarica, Debra Gillett, Steve Unwin, Vicky Featherstone, Meera Syal

- A list of and links to theatres and companies that have best practice in supporting parents
  - Advice on how actors and agents can work together to balance the demands of work and the responsibilities of parenting
2. Campaign for childcare benefits to be more reflective and inclusive of the needs of parents working in the entertainment industries, including perhaps a fund to cover additional childcare costs
  3. Campaign for affordable crèches – inclusive of working parents and audiences
  4. Campaign for specific parent friendly performances in theatre



**Appendix B:**  
**The Scottish Federation of Entertainment Unions**  
**2016 Manifesto**



Musicians'  
Union



Design by Shields Design, [www.shieldsdesign.co.uk](http://www.shieldsdesign.co.uk)  
Illustrations: Shields Design

# SFEU

## MANIFESTO

FEBUARY 2016





## Funding and policy

### ● Arts and Cultural Policy

- Accessing and taking part in culture is a fundamental human right which is core to a flourishing Scotland.
- That cultural value should inform all policy areas through a specific Outcome for Culture within the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.
- The support of local authorities for the performing arts creates significant employment and income generation across Scotland.

### ● Arts Funding

To protect and grow arts funding, provided by the Scottish Government, for the National Companies and Creative Scotland, to ensure that arts organisations are able to plan and develop on a sustainable basis.

### ● Live Music and Theatre, at Home and Internationally

Supporting the live music and theatre sectors in Scotland through investment in touring networks, small to medium sized infrastructure and an Expo Office to develop artists' ability to export and tour outside of Scotland.

### ● Lead Body for Screen Industry

Resolve the issues between SE and CS to ensure that one body has exclusive responsibility for developing the Screen Sector in Scotland.

### ● Film Studio

Deliver on the promise of a Film Studio to attract incoming films.

### ● Attract Inward Investment

Enhance financial and other proposals to make Scotland an attractive location for film makers.

### ● Development of Home Based Industry

Provide dedicated 'research and development' funding to help grow the industry based in Scotland.

### ● Gender Equality

To raise awareness of the imbalance of professional opportunities in the performing arts based on gender.



## BBC

- Support the BBC being accountable to the Scottish Parliament for its spending in Scotland.

- Ensure that the proposals in both the Smith and Calman commissions are enacted to ensure the Scottish Parliament has a meaningful involvement in the setting of the BBC Licence fee.

- Support the continuation of the BBC Licence fee.

- Advocate that the BBC spend in Scotland should relate to the Licence fee raised in Scotland.

- Advocate that the Licence fee income should keep pace with inflation.

- Commitment to increased production spend across BBC Scotland. This is best served by folding in the Network Supply Review funding in with the BBC Scotland programme budget to fund programs which are originated, commissioned and produced in Scotland (both in-house and independent production companies).

- Devolve all programmes making to Scotland with the emphasis on serving Scotland first but also being able to show any programmes on the network and enable them to be sold abroad.

- Provide a commitment to an expanded news and current affairs delivery for BBC Scotland by retaining Reporting Scotland on BBC One but creating an hour long news programme at peak time every night, covering Scottish UK and world news from a Scottish perspective.

- Create a second radio station [BBC Scotland 1 & 2] enabling more music and drama on one station and debate and news on the other.

- Demand investment across all genres, commissioning Scottish writers for drama, comedy, entertainment, factual and music programmes for all audiences.

- Funding for education content would be provided directly to BBC Scotland instead of bidding for money from BBC Learning in Salford.

## OFCOM

- Change the definition of an out of London TV production to include front of Camera talent.

## Fair Employment

### ● Living Wage

Implement the living wage for all arts organisations in receipt of Scottish Government/Local Authority/Creative Scotland funding (and /or grants or Arts organisations who have a contractual relationship to manage venues.) Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Government are living wage employers yet a great many Arts organisations and Theatres are run by trusts funded principally by the local authorities and/or Creative Scotland, neither of which requires any obligation to observe the living wage.

## Education

### ● Music Education

Free instrument tuition in schools for all young people, not just those studying for SQA qualifications, and a commitment to making Music Service provision in local authorities a core service and continuation and expansion of the Youth Music Initiative.

### ● Expressive Arts in the Curriculum in Scotland

Ensure Local Authorities provide adequate resources so that the expressive arts are a key component in the Curriculum for Excellence and that all young people get the opportunity to participate in and access the expressive arts through school.

- Provide ongoing support for the Digital Journalism Modern Apprenticeship scheme, while encouraging employers to work with the unions on Scottish Union Learning projects.







**women's voices**  
**women and work**  
**scotland 2016**



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