

Gender & Jazz Education Roundtable

Introduction

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Jazz institutions were first established in the U.S. in the 1940s, at which time the formalization of jazz learning sparked debates about the potential artificiality of formal education and its impact on the divide between professional and academic spheres.¹ Prior to their introduction into the academy, jazz learning processes were traditionally informal, relying on mentor-apprentice dynamics, active concert attendance, aural transcription of recordings, and participation in informal performance settings like jam sessions², spaces where anyone other than straight-presenting cisgender men often encounter significant difficulties. By the 1980s, jazz institutions became increasingly important and central learning spaces for contemporary jazz musicians worldwide. Despite the growth of jazz education opportunities, women and gender minorities have continued to face considerable challenges within institutional spaces.

Recent research underscores jazz educational institutions as crucial sites for analyzing early structural barriers to gender and diversity and for enacting more inclusive practices.³ Informed by fourth-wave global feminism, feminist and

¹ Ken Prouty, "Jazz Education: Historical and Critical Perspectives," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, ed. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nichole Rustin-Paschal and Tony Whyton (Routledge, 2019); Pinheiro, "Past, Present and Future Jazz"; Tony Whyton, "Birth of the School: Discursive Methodologies in Jazz Education," *Music Education Research* 8 no. 1 (2006): 65-81.

² Ricardo N. Pinheiro, "Past, Present and Future Jazz," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 54, no. 2 (2023): 269-298; Daniel Murphy, "Jazz Studies in American Schools and Colleges: A Brief History," *Jazz Educator Journal* 26 (1994), 34-38; Paul F. Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (University of Chicago Press, 1994).

³ Tracy McMullen, "The College Jazz Program as Tradition Making: Establishing a New Lineage in Jazz," *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 27 (2023): 32-50; Paula G. Broughton, "(Re)Imagining Jazz Education through the Lens of Black Feminist Pedagogy," *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 27 (2023): 51-61; Dan DiPiero, "Race, Gender, and Jazz School: Chord-Scale Theory as White Masculine Technology," *Jazz and Culture* 6 no.1 (2023): 52-77; Rebeca Muñoz-García, "Professional Trajectories of Women in Jazz: A Qualitative Research in Spain and the United States" (PhD diss., University Carlos III of Madrid, 2023); Clare Hall and Robert Burke, "Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity in

gender studies have critically examined these institutions, sparking vital debates on universal access and human rights in education. These analyses, supported by findings and practical examples, contribute to a critical interrogation of educational institutions as “reproducers of social inequality,”⁴ particularly with regard to patriarchal jazz cultures. The persistent underrepresentation of women—encompassing students and educators, notably within specific instrumental disciplines and composition—coupled with impediments to their access and career progression, complexities in the learning and development of improvisation, and the persistent need for safer environments that protect women and girls from harassment and sexual abuse, constitutes significant issues requiring further scholarly and institutional attention.

Furthermore, we need to consider that jazz, originating in the United States, has long transcended geographical boundaries to become a transnational artistic expression. This multi-sited and multi-form phenomenon was not merely created and subsequently exported, but rather, as some scholars argue, “invented in the process of being disseminated.”⁵ The analysis of jazz as a transnational sociocultural practice inevitably raises crucial questions about educational institutions and practices: Do transnational jazz education spaces perpetuate exclusion and gender inequality, or are they fostering inclusive and safe environments? What challenges arise when analyzing transnational jazz cultures through a still-developing jazz studies framework, particularly from gender and feminist perspectives? What gender equality and diversity challenges are evident in contemporary debates, such as those spurred by Berklee’s Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice? Do transnational contexts offer significant opportunities to transform increasingly popular musical institutions through specific research and practical initiatives? Do these contexts provide adequate resources and support for implementing safer and more inclusive educational environments for all?

This issue offers a three-paper “roundtable” on gender and jazz education. The contributions to the roundtable engage with several of the questions posed

Australian Tertiary Jazz Education,” in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender*, ed. James Reddan, Monika Herzig and Michael Kahr (Routledge, 2022), 336-347; Marie Buscatto, *Women in Jazz: Musicality, Femininity, Marginalization* (Routledge, 2022); Tracy McMullen, “Jazz Education after 2017: The Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice and the Pedagogical Lineage,” *Jazz and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2021); Eric Teichman, “Pedagogy of Discrimination: Instrumental Jazz Education,” *Music Education Research* 22, no. 2 (2020): 201-213.

⁴ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Sage, 1990).

⁵ Bruce Johnson, “The Jazz Diaspora,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, ed. Mervyn Cooke, and David Horn (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 39.

above by addressing local issues with global resonance. Consequently, it provides a necessary space—a room of one’s own⁶—for reflecting on educational environments within transnational jazz contexts.

Beatriz Nunes explores how, beyond individual choice, gender structures significantly influence young Portuguese students’ musical preferences and performance in academic settings. In “‘If Girls Don’t Want to Study Jazz, We Can’t Force Them’: An Ethnography of Gender Balance in a Jazz School,” Nunes employs qualitative data analysis to address key issues for deconstructing traditional gender roles and ideas of jazz authenticity in educational spaces.

Offering a reflective call to action, Dave Wilson’s “Restorative Approaches in Jazz Education: Structural Initiatives for Cultivating Safe and Supportive Environments” proposes practical strategies for safer, more supportive learning through restorative care ethics and community building, strategies applicable to both educational and professional practice. Examining the challenges of implementing more inclusive practices at the New Zealand School of Music, Wilson demonstrates how educators’ agency in educational settings can shift structural dynamics.

Finally, through the testimonies of two women whose pedagogical practices challenge oppressive power hierarchies, Ulagh Williams and Nishlyn Ramanna’s article, “Towards an Inclusive Jazz Pedagogy: Lessons from Post-Apartheid South Africa,” reveals significant changes in South African tertiary jazz education. Williams and Ramanna’s insights provide a foundation for future research, identifying critical challenges to patriarchal structures in transnational education institutions facing support barriers and limited institutional awareness of gender inequalities and the need for diversity.

⁶ To borrow a phrase from Virginia Woolf (Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (Penguin Books Ltd, 2004 [1929])).

“If Girls Don’t Want to Study Jazz, We Can’t Force Them”: an Ethnography of Gender Balance in a Jazz School

Beatriz Nunes

In 2020, I co-authored a study examining female participation in a major Portuguese jazz festival between 2003 and 2018.⁷ Our findings revealed a stark gender imbalance: only seven percent of the musicians who performed were women, with no consistent increase over the 15-year period. We also analyzed participation in the festival’s affiliated jazz school competition and found that the cycle of underrepresentation begins early. Female students were not only fewer in number than their male counterparts, but they also participated overwhelmingly as vocalists, whereas male students were primarily instrumentalists. This pattern raised deeper questions about how gendered norms shape jazz education and professional trajectories in Portugal and what cultural and institutional dynamics sustain this imbalance.

As a female jazz musician and educator active in the Portuguese jazz scene, I have long observed how gender subtly and overtly shapes jazz educational contexts. Coming from a classical background, I was surprised to find myself, when I began studying jazz, in a class with only one other female student. This experience, later reinforced during my years as an educator, echoed the arguments of feminist critics who have long contended that structural dynamics within the field of jazz may discourage female students from pursuing it.⁸ It has been long discussed how gendered perspectives within music education significantly influence students’ instrument choices, musical style development, self-perception of ability and career aspirations.⁹ Considering the foundational

⁷ José Dias & Beatriz Nunes, “Festa do Jazz: A Case Study on Gender (Im)Balance in Portuguese Jazz,” *Jazz Research Journal* 14, no. 2 (2020): 138-159, <https://doi.org/10.1558/jazz.42077>.

⁸ Erin L. Wehr, “Understanding the Experiences of Women in Jazz: A Suggested Model,” *International Journal of Music Education* 34, no. 4 (2016): 472-487, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761415619392>; Kelly Gathen, “Gender Bias and Music Education” (Master’s thesis, University of Delaware, 2014); Marlene Kollmayer, Barbara Schober & Christiane Spiel, “Gender Stereotypes in Education: Development, Consequences, and Interventions,” *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 15, no. 4 (2018): 361-377, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2016.1193483>.

⁹ Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education* (Cambridge University Press, 1997); Erin L. Wehr, “Playing the Part: A Social-Psychological Perspective on Being a Girl in Jazz,” in *The Routledge*

role of music education in the professionalization of musicians, it is critical to reflect on how gender disparities at the educational stage shape and sustain subsequent female underrepresentation in professional contexts. At the same time, it is also important to acknowledge that the underrepresentation of female jazz musicians is not exclusively determined by the lack of female jazz students, but rather shaped by broader power dynamics within the field. These power structures have been long critiqued by feminist scholarship as contributing to gender disparities in jazz, portraying it as a traditionally male-dominated and heteronormative musical culture where masculine values continue to influence the discourses of musicians, critics and educators.

Following the 2010 introduction of tuition free jazz programs at an intermediate level in Portugal, optimists suggested that increased jazz education would naturally attract more female students and gradually expand the number of women playing jazz professionally. However, the ongoing underrepresentation of female jazz students, particularly instrumentalists, remains a reality. Educational institutions often attribute this gender imbalance to a perceived lack of interest among female music students in pursuing jazz as an academic option. While, on one hand, the institutionalization of jazz education may have a significant impact on the emergence of more women as jazz professionals, it is essential to consider the role that jazz education plays in either reproducing or challenging gendered canons rooted in stereotypical narratives and expectations about the values of jazz performance and its traditions.

This article presents an ethnographic field study based on participant observation in a tuition free Portuguese intermediate-level jazz program. It explores how music students' academic choices are influenced not only by individual preferences but also by structural dynamics that significantly shape their musical aspirations and performance behaviors. This study aims to understand how jazz students—the future generation that will play a key role in shaping the development of jazz in Portugal—perceive the current underrepresentation of female students choosing jazz as an academic option. In the first section, I introduce the research setting and methodology, highlighting the gender imbalance among students and faculty and its implications for students' experiences. The second section reflects on the institutionalization of jazz education as a “serious” and canonized genre, examining the construction of a musical tradition that is deeply tied to values of masculinity, shaping students'

Companion to Jazz and Gender, ed. Michael Kahr, James Reddan and Monika Herzig (Routledge, 2022), 143- 155; Gathen, “Gender Bias and Music Education.”

behaviors and self-presentation on stage. The third section explores students' perceptions of gender imbalance, focusing on the tension between students viewing women's underrepresentation as a "natural" outcome of individual preferences and considering affirmative policies as artificial interventions. The concluding section identifies key factors contributing to gender disparities, such as gender-coded perceptions of instruments, the late introduction of jazz education in the Portuguese musical curriculum, and entrenched gender norms, emphasizing how traditional imagery and role models perpetuate these inequalities discouraging reflection or institutional changes to address these issues.

"THAT WILL BE SO GOOD FOR M. THAT YOU ARE HERE!": ENTERING THE FIELD

I conducted this study in the *Escola Artística do Conservatório de Música de Coimbra*, a public music conservatory located in central Portugal and established in 1986 that primarily specializes in Western classical music education. In 2011, the conservatory expanded its offerings by adding a three-year high school jazz program, named *Curso Profissional de Instrumentista Jazz* (Jazz Instrumentalist Professional Course). The *Curso Profissional de Instrumentista de Jazz* has been a tuition-free music education program integrated into the Portuguese public education system since 2010. Supported by European funding and in alignment with decentralization policies, these programs began to be offered outside major urban centers such as Lisbon and Porto. This educational option complemented the existing offerings at private, independent jazz schools that had been established in the country since the late 1970s.¹⁰ The jazz program at the *Conservatório de Música de Coimbra* was my first choice for fieldwork, not only because it is one of the oldest jazz programs within the Portuguese public education system, but also because it was among the first to be integrated into a conservatory with a long-standing tradition of exclusively teaching Western classical music. Additionally, the *Coimbra* program enjoys widespread recognition among its peers.¹¹ Its students have achieved notable success, winning numerous awards and gaining admission to prestigious undergraduate programs both nationally and internationally.

¹⁰ Pedro Mendes, "Ensinar o Jazz como Forma Musical Característica e Autónoma: a Criação da Escola de Jazz do Hot Clube de Portugal" (Master's thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2016).

¹¹ Other *Cursos Profissionais de Instrumentista de Jazz* are integrated into institutions such as the *Conservatório de Música da Jobra* (the first, established in 2010), the *Escola das Artes da Madeira*, the *Escola de Música do Conservatório Nacional*, and the *Agrupamento de Escolas da Bemposta*.

Between February 2022 and March 2023, I visited the conservatory regularly to observe group classes and individual instrument lessons. In addition to classroom observation, I engaged in informal moments during students' breaks, music rehearsals, and practice sessions. I also had the opportunity to observe jam sessions, masterclasses, recitals, and student concerts organized by the jazz program, which I documented through note-taking and audiovisual recordings. Furthermore, I conducted twenty-one interviews with students from the jazz program, including eight female-identified students and thirteen male-identified students ranging in age from sixteen to eighteen years old.¹² All thirteen male students were instrumentalists, while the instrument distribution among female students included one bass player, one drummer, one guitarist, and five vocalists. I approached the analysis of my data through a reflexive and interpretative lens, with a thematic analysis, identifying recurring patterns and themes that emerged from the students' narratives, my observations, and the cultural and social dynamics of the jazz program.¹³ This involved a continuous process of engaging with the material, field notes, audiovisual recordings, and interview transcripts, while acknowledging my own position and the interpretative relationship I hold to the subjects and context of the study. As a female jazz musician and educator, adopting a situated perspective was particularly useful, as it acknowledges the relational and contextual nature of my understanding of the field.¹⁴ Furthermore, throughout this article, I discuss gender dynamics regarding codes of masculinity and femininity, which risks narrowing the analysis into a binary perspective. However, what I have observed is that these concepts are constantly being invoked in the contexts of gender conformity or transgression among jazz students. This gender negotiation is rooted in how external gendered expectations, regarding how jazz students should behave or present themselves according to their gender, are experienced through conformity or transgression.

From the very first contact with the jazz program coordinators, my research was met with generosity and interest from my colleagues, who always welcomed me as one of their own. I soon became aware that the topic "gender" was often mistaken by the faculty for an exclusive focus on women or girl students. And

¹² All students identified within a male/female gender binary.

¹³ Jane Singer, "Ethnography," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (2009): 191-198, <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900908600112>; Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, "Writing the Ethnographic Story: Constructing Narrative Out of Narratives," *Fabula* 59, no. 1-2 (2018): 8-26.

¹⁴ Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575-599, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>.

even though I was interested in female jazz students' experiences, I was also interested in male students' perspectives on gender in jazz, as their views may provide valuable insights into how gender dynamics operate in these contexts. Moreover, I was interested in exploring interactions and narratives from all the students within the jazz program to reflect on how gender influenced their relationship with jazz.

I recall a male teacher who received me with excitement in one of my first visits: "That will be so good for M. that you are here!" The teacher told me that M. was a girl, a guitar student in her final year of the program, who had recently asked a female Portuguese singer-songwriter, who had been invited by the jazz program, whether she had faced challenges working in a field where men generally outnumber women. This teacher was very surprised with her student's question, since M. never gave any clue that she was worried about this issue. I anticipated that probably M. felt safe to broach that subject to another woman, considering that the program had only two female teachers in a group of thirteen faculty members. In other words, female underrepresentation in the jazz program occurred at both the student and faculty levels. Although female teachers in the jazz program were a minority, during the years I conducted my fieldwork, the program was led by a female trombonist.

When I began my research in 2022, the conservatory had 1,005 students, the majority of whom were enrolled in the classical program. With only 35 students, the jazz program represented a clear minority. After observing a lower participation of girls in the jazz program, I wanted to compare that program with the gender distribution in the classical music courses. Among middle school students in the classical program, there were 278 males (50.55%) and 272 females (49.45%). In the classical high school program, overall enrollment was lower, with sixty-four males (51.2%) and sixty-one females (48.8%). In the jazz program, which is an intermediate-level program equivalent to high school, there were thirty-five students, of whom twenty-six were male (74.29%) and nine were female (25.71%).

Music Program	Male students (%)	Female students (%)
Classical (Middle School)	50.55%	49.45%
Classical (High School)	51.2%	48.8%
Jazz (High School)	74.29%	25.71%

Table 1. Gender Distribution of Students in Classical and Jazz Music Programs

While the data shows a balanced representation of female and male students in the classical program, that does not mean that the classical program is free of gender inequalities, particularly regarding instrument choice. Gendered participation in the classical program is notably evident in the singing program, which includes four male students (16%) and twenty-one female students (84%). There was also an evident gender imbalance regarding instrument distribution in the jazz program. All twenty-six male students were instrumentalists (74.29%), whereas only three female students (8.5%) were engaging the program as instrumentalists.

Jazz Program - instrument distribution	Male students (%)	Female students (%)
Instrumentalists	74.29%	8.5%
Vocalists	0%	17.14%

Table 2. Instrument and Vocal Role Distribution by Gender in the Jazz Program

The *Curso Profesional de Instrumentista Jazz* only becomes accessible at the high school level, meaning there is an absence of jazz education opportunities for younger students in middle school. Nevertheless, it is meaningful to compare the gender distribution of students between classical and jazz programs at the high school level. This comparison reveals a more balanced gender representation within the classical music program, highlighting a notable gender disparity in jazz. These results reflect some ideas that were also reinforced during the interviews, specifically the notion that certain instruments and musical practices are perceived by students as being more feminine or masculine. For example, singing is often perceived as a more feminine activity, leading to greater participation among female students than male students. Although these gendered perceptions and stereotypes around instrument choice have long been studied, it was significant to see these narratives still being reproduced.¹⁵

¹⁵ Gina Wych, "Gender and Instrument Associations, Stereotypes, and Stratification: A Literature Review," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 30, no. 2 (2012): 22-31, <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123312437049>.

THE ROLE OF TRADITION IN GENDERED PERSPECTIVES ON JAZZ EDUCATION

Music education contexts provide a valuable framework for exploring authenticity, transmission, canonization and tradition.¹⁶ Scholarship has particularly noted that classical music education and conservatories place a high value on the Western art music tradition.¹⁷ Given this, it is critical to consider how the institutionalization of jazz education had to negotiate both its identity and legitimacy when entering pre-existing educational institutions. The first sites of jazz institutionalization in the U.S. after World War II deployed narratives positioning jazz as “serious” music, marking a shift from its previous status as an underground or subcultural genre.¹⁸ As Dale Chapman notes, “the institutionalization of a music genre is, above all else, the formalization of a narrative about the genre, and of the value system that the narrative embodies.”¹⁹ In this context, it is essential to examine how jazz education contributed to the legitimization of jazz as part of a broader musical tradition, supporting its transformation into a “serious” music, one that could be canonized, systematized and formally taught. According to Kenneth Prouty, jazz’s legitimacy has, to some extent, may have relied on a narrative around its tradition.²⁰ The tradition of jazz was constructed by critics and musicians through historical narratives about the racial struggle of African Americans, as well as through a perspective of the U.S. as a Western leader promoting a certain vision of peace and democracy.²¹ This perception of jazz as a music of resistance, drew an analogy between music and society in which jazz represents a free society that is present in much of the literature.²² However, little attention has been paid in mainstream

¹⁶ Bruno Nettl, “Music Education and Ethnomusicology: A (Usually) Harmonious Relationship,” *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online* 8, no. 1 (2010): 1-9; Henry Kingsbury, *Music, Talent and Performance: a Conservatory Cultural System* (Temple University Press, 1988); Patricia Campbell, “Ethnomusicology and Music Education: Crossroads For Knowing Music, Education, and Culture,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 21, no. 1 (2003): 16-30, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X030210010201>.

¹⁷ Bruno Nettl, *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music* (University of Illinois Press, 1995).

¹⁸ Kenneth Prouty, “The History of Jazz Education: A Critical Reassessment,” *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 26, no. 2 (2010): 79-100, <https://doi.org/10.1177/153660061203300204>.

¹⁹ Dale Chapman, “The Institutionalization of Jazz,” in *Jazz and American Culture*, ed. Michael Borshuk (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 173.

²⁰ Prouty, “The History of Jazz Education: A Critical Reassessment.”

²¹ Mario Dunkel, *The Stories of Jazz: Narrating a Musical Tradition* (Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag, 2021).

²² Jennifer Ryan, *Post-Jazz Poetics: A Social History* (Springer, 2010); Ingrid Monson, “Oh Freedom: George Russell, John Coltrane, and Modal Jazz,” *Course of Performance: Studies in the*

discourses to how the construction of jazz tradition, and especially jazz education itself, has been shaped by deeply gendered and sexualized narratives that value masculinity and heteronormativity, thereby creating their own discriminatory structures. As Mario Dunkel notes, “The idea that there is something inherently masculine about jazz has proven to be significantly persistent and continues to shape jazz discourses in the 21st century.”²³ In many ways, the dominant narrative of freedom and empowerment associated with jazz has made it more difficult to critically engage with the underlying subtexts of masculinity embedded in what remains a predominantly male and heteronormative musical space. In light of this, it becomes essential to examine how such narratives continue to inform jazz education, as they significantly influence students’ perceptions of the genre and shape the pedagogical approaches adopted by educators. These gendered perspectives persist in shaping students’ ideas of what constitutes an authentic jazz performance, positioning male and female students differently in relation to these gendered conventions.

These historical paradigms seem to also impact how students depict men and women in jazz, as well as in shaping how they should behave and present themselves in performances. In one conversation about a big band class, M., a female vocal student, told me:

The guys were asking, “Ah, so what are we supposed to wear?” And he (the teacher) said, “It can be this, this, or whatever,” and then he said to me, “Oh, you’re the singer, instead of pants you can wear a skirt, if you want”... but it was cool, If I had said, “I also prefer to wear pants, I don’t want to look too extravagant,” he would have been fine with that too. But since this happened in history, the female singers were more... extravagant.

The teacher’s comment may reflect the persistence of gender norms that continue to shape musical performance and identity. In jazz, as in many other musical genres, these gendered conventions are not just a matter of style but a performance of social roles, deeply embedded in the history and tradition of the genre. Although M. was reinforcing the individuality of her choice, the underlying message of her teacher reinforces the stereotype that female performers are expected to meet a higher standard of visual spectacle. This echoes a long-standing tradition in jazz, and performance more broadly, where female musicians, particularly vocalists, have been compelled to embody femininity through their outward appearance. It implies that in order to fit into

World of Musical Improvisation, ed. B. Nettl and M. Russell (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 149-168.

²³ Dunkel, *The Stories of Jazz: Narrating a Musical Tradition*, 8.

the established gender roles, women are encouraged, if not outright expected, to conform to a more overtly feminine appearance on stage.

The expressive codes of jazz authenticity also apply to male students. I was particularly curious about the underlying motivations behind R.'s clothing choices for his recital. This saxophone student presented himself very formally, wearing a buttoned-up white shirt, a vest, a tie, and a fedora. When asked about his outfit, he stated that he: "wanted to look sharp! I wanted to look really good.... I imagined all that context, that old-fashioned context, like Dexter Gordon and all, the style they used in their gigs." R.'s statement reveals a significant engagement with the visual and performative codes that have long been associated with jazz, particularly within the context of Black masculinity. The idea of looking "sharp" is not merely about personal appearance but speaks to a broader cultural and historical narrative about how Black men, especially jazz musicians in the early 20th century, may have used fashion as a means of asserting their identity, challenging primitivist stereotypes, and claiming legitimacy in a genre that was historically racialized.²⁴ For Black musicians, cultivating an image of sharpness, through style, performance and conduct, may have become one way of elevating jazz and claiming its place in the cultural mainstream. The student's desire to embody this "sharp" aesthetic seems to be tied to a certain idea of jazz tradition, which underscores the present emphasis on Black masculinity in the construction of jazz identity. Nevertheless, the program was predominantly attended by white students, pointing to how imbalanced dynamics within Portuguese jazz education intersect not only along gender lines, but also along racial ones, shaping who is represented within these contexts.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT GENDER IMBALANCE IN JAZZ

Considering the lack of female participation within the jazz program, I wanted to further explore how students perceive the existence of gender disparities both within their jazz program and in jazz more broadly. I asked jazz students how they saw the role of women in jazz. From the several topics that emerged, I highlight issues of female underrepresentation and gender stereotypes related to musical roles.

Like, what is the role of women in jazz? Well, I think... I've always thought there are fewer women in jazz. There are fewer women in jazz, I don't know

²⁴ Monica Miller, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (Duke University Press, 2009).

why, but when there are these women, they are usually singers. (T., male bass student)

On several occasions, it seemed that this was the first time students, and especially male students, had reflected on the gender disparity within their program or in jazz more broadly. Often, after becoming conscious of this discrepancy during our conversations, they would respond with remarks like “I’ve never thought of it,” “I don’t know why,” or “Why is that so?” This lack of awareness, especially among male students, may be understood not simply as individual oversight, but as a reflection of their position within a patriarchal system that renders such imbalances less visible to those who benefit from them. On the other hand, girls seemed obviously aware they were a minority in a male-dominated environment. They showed several levels of consciousness and strategies to navigate it:

You see yourself there, surrounded by boys... I wasn’t very used to it. I was more used to being with girls, that’s what I was more accustomed to. Suddenly, only boys, and it was just me and I. who were girls. Suddenly, I was there, a bit like... now, who am I going to hang out with? (M.S. female voice student)

Experiences of isolation or discomfort for being a minority are very commonly reported by girls studying jazz.²⁵ M.S. shared some sense of alienation, recognizing the lack of representation and its impact on their experience.

There was also the perspective of A., a female bass student, who shared a sense of higher responsibility and awareness regarding gender representation as an instrumentalist:

We are the only female instrumentalists in the course. There are the singers, but... I think it’s more responsibility for us because, well, I think the better we are, the more other women who see us might see that as a reference. (A., female bass player)

As a newcomer in the jazz program, A. mentioned that sometimes she felt judged and perceived as less capable, potentially due to her gender or inexperience, saying that she feels she “have to prove more.” At the same time she feels that she is equally treated by the faculty as her male peers:

Well, because I’m a woman and a bassist, I think that if I’m going to play, if I’m going to do a concert, people will look and think, “Wow, a female bassist.” So, there’s more pressure. But what I like about this program is

²⁵ Erin L. Wehr, “Playing the Part: A Social-Psychological Perspective on Being a Girl in Jazz.”

that it doesn't matter if I'm a woman; if I do something wrong, people will criticize me regardless of whether I'm a woman or not. (A., female bass player)

But other perspectives from female students emerged regarding the underrepresentation of women in the program:

So, I was like the only girl. And when I found out, I was kind of like... I mean, I wasn't sad or happy, it was just like OK. But it was a strange thing because in my previous regular classes, there were thirty people, lots of boys and lots of girls, you know? But well, the boys also... like, I don't know, there are people who discriminate a lot... I don't know, maybe some girls feel uncomfortable being surrounded by so many boys, but the truth is that boys and girls are the same. Like, I didn't feel much of a difference. (M. female voice student)

In this statement, it seems that M. negotiates her initial sense of strangeness by quickly dismissing it, asserting that "boys and girls are the same." M. positioned herself in a way that minimized gender distinctions by reinforcing the idea of equality between boys and girls, choosing not to focus on gender at all. Ultimately, each student's response shows different strategies for coping with being a minority, and they may reflect the different dynamics they encountered within the jazz community and how they felt integrated.

While students who had previously been in classical music programs were more aware of this difference, as they had experienced a more balanced gender representation in their classical education experience, they nonetheless acknowledged that instrumental practice in the classical program was also gendered, as I understood through a conversation I had with both S. and A. together. One of the female students noted that, "there were many more women in classical music!" while the other added:

Even instrumentalists! But there's also something to consider... girls tend to gravitate a lot, I think, towards the flute. I don't want to say they all go for the same thing, but they tend to choose that area in music, like piano, classical acoustic guitar, and singing, of course. But, for example, drums and bass are more commonly seen with boys.

Students tended to associate the practice of certain instruments with either men or women, largely based on their experiences of seeing those instruments played by certain genders. Their perceptions were mainly shaped by the representations of teachers, peers, and music history that they had observed. For her part, M., a female voice student, noted that, "the most common thing to see

is boys playing guitar, boys playing bass, boys playing drums, it has a lot to do with history,” and J., a male bass student shared:

If someone says to me: “imagine a jazz quartet,” I might think of more men than women. But I don’t think that’s negative; I don’t think it’s due to something internal... like... I don’t think it’s something that’s difficult to change. It’s just the image.

Through these conversations, it became clearer how deeply the historical representation and imagery shaped students’ perceptions about the role of men and women in jazz. M. and J’s statements emphasize how the visual representation of men in these musical roles has become the norm. At the same time, students seemed unlikely to question this gender imbalance, as they tended to naturalize the absence of women by attributing it to the belief that women have historically not participated in the development of jazz or played a leading role. As Eric Teichman stresses, there is an ongoing perception within jazz education that there were no relevant female instrumentalists and that women played a subsidiary role in shaping jazz history.²⁶ This historical discrimination seems to remain unchallenged in most jazz mainstream educational contexts. I asked T., a male bass student, why he thought we did not see as many women as men in jazz, and his answer was succinct: “Because there weren’t, there weren’t that many women.”

Students explained the absence of women as a result of historical gender discrimination and the status of women’s rights during the key eras of jazz tradition, often adding that “things are better now.” Considering that the social situation of women improved across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and that female students currently appeared to pursue classical music studies more equally, I wanted to understand how they perceived the remaining lack of female students choosing jazz as an academic option. The contribution from J., a male guitar student, was particularly insightful:

I also think there are a lot of people in classical music simply because... most people usually start studying it at an early age, right? But for someone who chooses jazz... the chances of having a structured jazz education at such an early age are very low or even nonexistent, right?

²⁶ Eric Teichman, “Pedagogy of Discrimination: Instrumental Jazz Education,” *Music Education Research* 22 no. 2 (2020): 201–213, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2020.1737925>.

J. emphasizes that there are probably more girls in classical music education because they often start studying it as children, likely due to a decision made by their parents. Since these public jazz programs are only available at the high school level, this raises the question of whether gender conformity becomes stronger by the teenage years, making it less likely for a teenage girl to choose to study a musical genre or instrument that may seem to transgress norms of femininity. J. goes on, evaluating students' backgrounds before studying jazz, as well as their motivation to choose the program:

In my class, there are a lot of people like me who came from rock. And there are very few girls that I see playing rock guitar or drums or bass... like, there are some, obviously. But sometimes I look around and think... the majority are all men, just guys playing rock, and then... "OK, I'll go to jazz because there aren't many other options," and that's very much the case... because if we really look at my class, there are people who came from classical, some who came from rock, some who didn't have any practice in music, others who already had some background in jazz, so each case is different.

Many students agreed that they were studying jazz because that was the only option to have a formal structured musical education beyond classical music. These students would rather study rock or pop, if that option was available, but they also acknowledged that jazz would offer a strong foundation in terms of performance and compositional skills that they could use within other musical genres. According to J., the fact that many students in the program came from other male-dominated musical genres, such as rock, could also explain the absence of female colleagues.

In conversations with female students, I asked how they would perceive the introduction of policies aimed at encouraging more girls to study jazz. M.S., who had previously shared experiences of discomfort for being a minority in the program, expressed a favorable perspective towards affirmative policies aimed at increasing female participation in the jazz program to promote greater diversity: "I think it should be encouraged, also to have more variety." M.S. also emphasized the role of parents who discourage female students from pursuing jazz, or even music studies in general, steering them toward other career opportunities that seem more reliable and stable. A., a female bass student, also believed that it would be beneficial to have not only more women enrolled in the program, but also more access to female instrumentalists role models.

Not every female student approved of such policy changes. In these cases, students believed that the motivation to study music, an instrument, or a musical

style was driven solely by personal and individual choices, as can be seen in the following statements:

I don't think that would make much of a difference. It was my decision to come and study music, to learn music. I think I was born with a passion for music. It was truly born within me. (I., female drum student)

I think that in an ideal society, there wouldn't be... forcing people to be anything. It's more a matter of not imposing anything on the person, and they end up doing what they naturally want (S. female guitar student)

According to I. and S.'s perspectives, incentives for girls studying jazz may be perceived as an imposition, interfering with the natural course of individual choice. In other words, if the current structure of gender participation is primarily male, the students might argue that it reflects a "natural" outcome of individual preference, and any attempt to change this might be seen as disrupting the freedom to choose freely, as seen in M.'s remark, "I think that if no girl *wants* to study jazz, that is ok."

These latter perspectives reflect a strong sense of individualism and personal agency in musical choices, ultimately locating the causes of underrepresentation in the choices made by underrepresented individuals themselves. From this point of view, implementing measures to encourage more diverse musical choices or greater female participation in jazz education is perceived as forcing an artificial reality, rather than addressing systemic inequalities.

CONCLUSIONS

The gender disparity observed in the jazz program at the *Conservatório de Música de Coimbra*, particularly regarding the underrepresentation of female students in instrumental roles, reflects the well-established notion that certain instruments and musical practices are culturally coded as masculine or feminine. However, it seems that both students and institutions reproduce these dynamics without questioning or challenging them.

The absence of jazz education at the middle school level may be an important factor in the lower female participation in the jazz program at the high school level. Since female music students often begin classical music studies at an early age, they are more likely to continue with these studies into their teenage years. In Portugal, access to specialized music education is largely limited to music conservatories, which typically begin accepting students around the age of ten. These institutions follow a competitive admission process, often requiring previous musical training. Outside of this specialized framework, music

education within the general public school system is limited in both scope and duration. Public schools offer mandatory music instruction for only two academic years, usually between the ages of ten and twelve. These classes are generally constrained by a strict national curriculum that emphasizes theoretical knowledge, basic music notation, and the practice of the recorder. Choral singing or instrumental performance is not systematically integrated into the general curriculum. Public, tuition-free jazz education in Portugal is institutionalized only at the high school level. This delay may discourage girls from choosing jazz, as by their teenage years, they may have already internalized gender norms or lack the support from their families to pursue jazz as a viable option.

Overall, the gender disparity within the jazz program at the *Conservatório de Música de Coimbra* reflects broader societal and cultural constructs surrounding gender roles in music. The traditional imagery of jazz as a male-dominated field continues to shape perceptions, perpetuating the underrepresentation of women in instrumental roles. Moreover, the implementation of positive measures promoting gender balance is not consensually accepted among students, as some perceived such initiatives as being imposed or forced.

To address this imbalance, it is essential to consider both the societal narratives that influence students' choices and family support, as well as the potential benefits of earlier, more inclusive jazz education programs that challenge these stereotypes and create a more equitable environment for future generations of musicians.

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Restorative Approaches in Jazz Education: Structural Initiatives for Cultivating Safe and Supportive Environments

Dave Wilson

Music is often understood to be inherently good, powerfully bringing people together in safe and supportive spaces. But musical activity can generate many types of spaces and relationships, including harmful ones. As William Cheng acknowledges, “human relationships with music... resonate with the just *and* unjust relationships among people” and music can “heal or harm, bring people together or break communities apart.”²⁷ In music institutions, addressing harm can be uncomfortable, particularly for those who have not been aware that it has occurred. Widespread awareness of harm taking place in a community emerges, in many cases, only after it has come to light publicly. For those who have been harmed in music institutions, and for those who have witnessed how music organizations can foster harmful behavior and fracture community relationships, it is without question that harm in music settings is pervasive.

In recent years, especially since the #MeToo hashtag went viral in 2017 and made it seem safer for survivors to come forward, countless reports of sexual harassment in music contexts have been brought to light.²⁸ Many of these instances had long been “open secrets,” situations in which it was well known that harm was occurring but no action had been taken to address it.²⁹ In addition

²⁷ William Cheng, *Loving Music Till It Hurts* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 5, emphasis mine.

²⁸ There are too many to name them all, but a few prominent examples of sexual harm allegations since 2017 include those against conductor James Levine of the Metropolitan Opera, Liang Wang and Matthew Muckey of the New York Philharmonic, R. Kelly, and, most recently, Sean “Diddy” Combs. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, where I live and work, recent examples include allegations against pop artist Thomas Oliver, the deceased composer Jack Body, and a number of secondary-level music teachers whose stories made the national news.

²⁹ Open secrets about sexual and other types of harm persist because of structures of power that manifest in at least two types of situations. In one, individuals harming others are in powerful positions, bringing prestige (and income) to an organization and/or having the ability provide or withhold career prospects for others. In another, institutional systems designed to address harm (such as HR processes) end up supporting the status quo and its existing structures of power that perpetuate harm, instead of addressing the systemic elements that produce harmful environments. An indication that music institutions are perhaps understood as typical settings for the persistence of unaddressed harm is the fact that such settings and subject matter feature in recent Hollywood films, e.g., *Whiplash* (2014) and *Tár* (2022).

(and often related) to sexual harm, harm in music institutions based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and other social categories is also common.³⁰ While individuals are responsible, so too are the systems they inhabit; behavioral norms and policies cultivate unsafe environments and help sustain them.³¹ For example, processes for auditions, hiring, leadership development, and tenure can powerfully make an educational music environment more harmful or, alternatively, more supportive. In this article, I outline some of the ways that such harmful environments are maintained in jazz education and identify concrete strategies to foster safer spaces, in which students can thrive as they learn collectively with their instructors.

Vibraphonist, composer, and educator Sasha Berliner offered one of the clearest testimonies of gender-based harm in jazz spaces when she wrote “An Open Letter to Ethan Iverson (and the Rest of the Jazz Patriarchy)” and posted it to her website in 2017.³² Both a critique and a call to action, Berliner’s open letter gives several examples of gender-based discrimination directed at her. She tells of university performance instructors lowering expectations for her in a group of comparably high-skilled musicians, of sexual harassment occurring at jam sessions, and of established musicians taking retribution against her for her refusals of their sexual advances. In her words:

If you turn away a male musician who is interested in you sexually and has been on the scene longer as to enhance credibility, then he can tell everyone (before they hear you for themselves) that he doesn’t like your playing—out of anger for you not being sexually compliant.³³

In these and other examples, musicality is intertwined with gender in a way that centers cisgender men while pushing women and people of all other genders to the periphery. In cases where women’s refusals of romantic or sexual advances of men have negative impact on their careers, Berliner demonstrates how heteronormative misogyny is normalized to maintain what are often referred to as “boys clubs.”

³⁰ Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright, “Introduction: Radical Care,” in *Sound Pedagogy*, ed. Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright (University of Illinois Press, 2024).

³¹ For an autoethnographic example in a university (but not a music) setting, see Lynn Fujiwara, “Racial Harm in a Predominantly White ‘Liberal’ University,” in *Presumed Incompetent II*, ed. Yolanda Flores Niemann, Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, and Carmen G. González (Utah State University Press, 2020).

³² Sasha Berliner, “An Open Letter to Ethan Iverson (and the Rest of the Jazz Patriarchy),” September 21, 2017, <https://www.sashaberlinermusic.com/an-open-letter-to-ethan-iverson-and-the-rest-of-jazz-patriarchy/>.

³³ Berliner, “An Open Letter.”

A number of recent studies have detailed specific elements of jazz environments that generate gender-based harm, tying experiences like Berliner's to systemic factors in jazz settings.³⁴ In a study of undergraduate jazz students in Australia, Clare Hall and Robert Burke demonstrate how longstanding hegemonic masculinities persist, strengthening gender inequities.³⁵ Kirenan Steiner and Alexandra Manfredo advocate for a more robust documentation of the experiences of women in higher jazz education, recognizing that raising awareness of the damaging impacts of negative experiences is an important element in moving toward greater equity.³⁶ Natalie Boeyink breaks down several elements of women's experiences in higher jazz education. Her research not only analyzes women's experiences of sexual harassment and discrimination, but also examines barriers related to curricula, repertoire, and stereotypes, as well as women's perspectives on improvisation and the broader field of jazz performance. She offers practical solutions in several areas, including access to role models, pedagogical approaches, curriculum and repertoire choices, guest artists and festivals, and hiring practices.³⁷ These studies focus on settings that have been made unsafe due, in part, to the normalization of behaviors that serve to marginalize anyone not exhibiting traits associated with a narrow definition of masculinity. Hall and Burke, for example, describe a jazz masculinity constituted by "virtuosity, leadership, hostility, authority to be heard, and

³⁴ Scholars have also addressed harm in non-jazz music education settings; see, e.g., Kimber Andrews, and Kristy Swift, eds., *Trauma-Informed Pedagogy and the Post-Secondary Music Class* (Routledge, 2025).

³⁵ Clare Hall and Robert Burke, "Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity in Australian Tertiary Jazz Education," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender*, ed. James Reddan, Monika Herzig, and Michael Kahr (Routledge, 2022).

³⁶ Kirenan Steiner and Alexandra Manfredo, "In Her Own Words: Documenting the Current Realities of Women-in-Jazz," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender*, ed. James Reddan, Monika Herzig, and Michael Kahr (Routledge, 2022).

³⁷ Natalie Boeyink, "Jazzwomen in Higher Education: Experience, Attitudes, and Personality Traits," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender*, ed. James Reddan, Monika Herzig, and Michael Kahr (Routledge, 2022), 355. Boeyink also suggests solutions for improving the experiences and success of women in university jazz programs. See Yoko Suzuki, "Two Strikes and the Double Negative: the Intersections of Gender and Race in the Cases of Female Jazz Saxophonists," *Black Music Research Journal* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 207–26, for a discussion of the experiences of female jazz saxophonists with regard to the intersection of gender and race; James Reddan, Monika Herzig, and Michael Kahr, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender* (Routledge, 2022) for a range of studies related to jazz and gender; and Kathleen M. McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (Winter 2004), 343–56, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345387>, for an earlier study.

competitiveness,” which in their study contributed to a culture that excluded those not exhibiting those traits.³⁸

Individuals in such settings who are not cishetero white men experience a requirement or pressure to conform to (musical) behaviors associated with majoritarian identities. Along these lines, Sara Ahmed, in a study of institutional diversity programs, likens inclusion in institutions (and in other social formations) to being “folded in” to existing norms: “To be included can thus be a way of sustaining and reproducing a politics of exclusion.”³⁹ I have heard reports from women jazz instructors in higher education that they have jokingly advised women students to “imagine that you’re a white alpha male” as a strategy to build confidence in performing improvised solos in university jazz environments, though they have indicated that they feel uncomfortable suggesting this to students.⁴⁰ Following Ahmed’s argument, to be truly included in many jazz settings perhaps requires limiting oneself to the forms of masculinity normalized in those settings and excluding all other forms of gendered behavior. Centering these narrowly-defined forms of masculinity typically also centers cisgender/heteronormativity, ableism, and, in many jazz education spaces, whiteness. Jazz spaces where sexist behaviors and structures are normalized thus also tend to propagate other forms of oppression, such as racism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia, among others.

As in any institution or organization where harm is pervasive, in music institutions it typically remain unaddressed. However, new efforts to confront harm have begun to take shape in recent years. After publishing her book *Class, Control, and Classical Music*, which analyzes the processes by which classical music in England remains white and middle-class, music scholar Anna Bull turned her attention to the broader issue of sexual harassment in higher education.⁴¹ She co-founded the 1752 Group, a UK-based research consultancy and campaign organization dedicated to ending faculty sexual misconduct.⁴² Soundcheck Aotearoa and Safer Spaces in Music Education Aotearoa are two

³⁸ Hall and Burke, “Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity,” 344.

³⁹ Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 163. For a study of musical/social norms as related to exclusionary practices in institutions, see Aslan Rowlands, “Improvisational Inqueery: Inclusion, Intercorporeality, and the Classical Music Institution,” M.M. Thesis, Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.25097105>.

⁴⁰ This anonymized anecdote is shared with permission.

⁴¹ Anna Bull, *Class, Control, and Classical Music* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁴² Susan Oman and Anna Bull, “Joining up Well-being and Sexual Misconduct Data and Policy in HE: ‘To Stand in the Gap’ as a Feminist Approach,” *The Sociological Review* 70, no. 1 (2022): 21–38, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261211049024>. See also “The 1752 Group,” accessed October 10, 2024, <https://1752group.com/>.

recent initiatives in Aotearoa New Zealand, where I live and work, that aim to train music professionals in sexual harm prevention.⁴³ In worlds of jazz and related musics, a significant number of interventions have been initiated by musicians that address not only the dearth of women and nonbinary individuals active in those worlds, but also the lack of environments that support those who are present. Some examples include: the We Have Voice Collective, a group of women and gender non-conforming musicians who established a code of conduct for safe(r) spaces in music in the wake of MeToo; Mutual Mentorship for Musicians (M³), a platform co-founded by Jen Shyu and Sara Sherpa to empower and increase visibility of women and non-binary musicians, particularly those of color, through non-hierarchical mentorship; and, notably, the Berklee Institute for Jazz and Gender Justice (hereafter, JGJ), founded by Terri Lyne Carrington in 2017, which has developed a comprehensive educational and community engagement program focused on addressing gender inequity and racial injustice, welcoming students of all gender and sexual identities.⁴⁴

Writing based on her research as a scholar-in-residence at JGJ, Tracy McMullen describes the program's intersectional educational activities as grounded in Black feminist approaches that resonate with pianist Billy Taylor's definition of an "Afro-American value system" in jazz that prioritizes collectivity, care, and function.⁴⁵ She shows how university structures can overemphasize individualism (rather than the *collective* relationality of jazz), a competitive and unsupportive environment (rather than one in which musicians *care* for one another), and a separation of musical sound from what it does in the

⁴³ See also "Soundcheck Aotearoa," accessed October 10, 2024, <https://www.soundcheckaotearoa.co.nz/>; "Safer Spaces in Music Education Aotearoa," accessed October 10, 2024, <https://saferspaces.nz/>.

⁴⁴ "We Have Voice," accessed October 10, 2024 <https://too-many.org/>; "Mutual Mentorship for Musicians," accessed October 10, 2024, <https://mutualmentorshipformusicians.org/>; "Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice," Berklee College of Music, accessed October 10, 2024, <https://college.berklee.edu/jazz-gender-justice>. For a list of additional initiatives, see Kaitlyn Van Vleet, "Women in Jazz Music: A Hundred Years of Gender Disparity in Jazz Study and Performance (1920–2020)," *Jazz Education in Research and Practice* 2, no. 1 (2021): 211–27, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jazzeducrese.2.1.16>. Parallel initiatives have also launched in the spaces of jazz festivals, see Kristin McGee, "Gendered Interventions in European Jazz Festival Programming: Keychanges, Stars, and Alternative Networks," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender*, ed. James Reddan, Monika Herzig, and Michael Kahr (Routledge, 2022).

⁴⁵ Tracy McMullen, "Jazz Education after 2017: The Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice and the Pedagogical Lineage," *Jazz and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2021), 28, <https://doi.org/10.5406/jazzculture.4.2.0027>. For an additional partial list of African American musicians who have asserted and echoed the value system outlined by Taylor, see McMullen, "Jazz Education," 45n5.

world (rather than understanding the *function* of the music as actively moving people both in their bodies [e.g., dance] and in social action). In contrast, she sees JGJ as working to re-insert pedagogies that center the relationality embedded in how jazz is performed and learned (collectivity), the nurturing character of jazz modeled by generations of mentors grounded in a Black feminist ethic (care), and the notion that in jazz the music is always *doing* something in society, that it is always *for* something (function).⁴⁶ In its activities that counter “the dominant narrative of the music as a formal art that reaches perfection through competition between singular, heroic individuals, innovating and leaving their competitors behind,” JGJ opens up space for the widest participation in the music.⁴⁷ It does so across the spectrum of gender and with regard to other categories (e.g., race, sexuality, and ability) through which power is often harmfully exerted in jazz spaces.

JGJ provides an exemplary model for how to work toward comprehensive change. Housed within Berklee College of Music, it has substantial financial and institutional support available to facilitate transformation. Most university jazz programs do not have the same financial resources, prestige, or institutional support to launch or revamp a program at the same scale; however, they do have access to mechanisms that, at least in theory, can assist in initiating change. Among the tools typically available to these jazz programs are university offices which seek to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) university-wide through a variety of programs and policies.⁴⁸ And yet, even considering the presence of these offices and the best intentions of faculty and administrators to address gender inequities and harm, jazz programs often continue to maintain student and faculty populations dominated by men (lacking diversity), provide disproportionately greater opportunities to men that compound their privilege in the field (lacking equity), and cultivate environments that are experienced as boys clubs (lacking inclusion).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ McMullen, “Jazz Education,” 38. With the term “functionality” McMullen, via Taylor, points to the music having a purpose.

⁴⁷ McMullen, “Jazz Education,” 37–38.

⁴⁸ For a brief history of DEI in U.S. higher education, with a celebratory narrative that also recognizes limitations to DEI programs, and written just before the U.S. Supreme court issued its ban on affirmative action programs in universities in 2023, see J. Brian Charles, “The Evolution of DEI,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 23, 2023, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-evolution-of-dei>. At the time of writing (early 2025), the DEI sector in the U.S., and elsewhere in the world, is in a state of flux, as the sector has been subject to numerous challenges from governments, legislative bodies, and judicial systems.

⁴⁹ For examples of how jazz programs are dominated by cismen, compound the privilege of cismen in the field, and cultivate boys clubs and other exclusive environments, see, e.g., Hall and Burke, “Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity”; see also Chris Robinson, “A brief history of the

In the face of these persistent intersectional gender-based injustices in jazz education, this article takes a hopeful stance. In the sections that follow, I argue that positive change toward a more equitable and safer jazz education for students of all genders, with their many intersecting identities, is possible. I suggest that, even in settings with limited resources, structural initiatives that cultivate safer spaces, where students flourish, can be implemented. While I happen to be addressing a setting from Aotearoa New Zealand, in an institution where I work, I consider (and experience) this setting as participating in a broader sector of university jazz education, common across settler colonial and other societies characterized by dominant white cishetero patriarchal systems.⁵⁰ This sector of jazz education was largely inspired by approaches to teaching that began at the University of North Texas (UNT, then called North Texas State Teachers College), and continued at Indiana University and elsewhere as jazz education proliferated in the 1970s. Jazz programs in this legacy tend to be structured around teaching harmonic and melodic elements of improvisation, skills for big band performance, and performance of styles that feature in canonical jazz history (e.g., bebop, hard bop, and modal jazz, with others such as swing, Latin jazz, jazz-funk fusion, and New Orleans jazz in supporting roles).⁵¹ At UNT, and in programs that followed its template, McMullen argues that,

origins of jazz's sexism," *Medium*, March 9, 2019, <https://medium.com/@CRMUSICWRITER/a-brief-history-of-the-origins-of-jazzs-sexism-3ee4278bcff0>. For a recent university-wide example of some shortcomings of DEI, see also Nicholas Confessore, "The University of Michigan Doubled Down on D.E.I. What Went Wrong?" *New York Times Magazine*, October 16, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/16/magazine/dei-university-michigan.html>. See also Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Duke University Press, 2012); Ariana González Stokas, *Reparative Universities: Why Diversity Alone Won't Solve Racism in Higher Ed* (Johns Hopkins University, 2023).

⁵⁰ Similar programs certainly exist beyond white settler colonial settings, with perhaps similar structures of gender injustice. Here, I limit the discussion to societies and institutions where dominances of whiteness, patriarchy, and heteronormativity intersect.

⁵¹ Scholarly discourses on these types of jazz programs have highlighted their internal contradictions and their ambivalences towards the institutions of which they are a part, even as they have aligned themselves with the structures of those institutions. This alignment has often played out in modeling curricula and modes of teaching after the classical performance programs that often exist at the center of such institutions. See, e.g., Eitan Y. Wilf, *School for Cool: The Academic Jazz Program and the Paradox of Institutionalized Creativity* (University of Chicago Press, 2014); Kenneth Prouty, "The 'Finite' Art of Improvisation: Pedagogy and Power in Jazz Education," *Critical Studies in Improvisation* 4, no. 1 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.21083/csieci.v4i1.346>; David Ake, "Jazz Training: John Coltrane and the Conservatory," *Jazz Cultures* (University of California Press, 2002), 112-145.

white male musicians established a new lineage in de facto or de jure segregated colleges and universities where they could have a safe (for them) segregated space to translate the music into their terms.... This new lineage instantiated jazz education based on white male desires that placed Black students and female students on the outside.⁵²

In short, I consider the Aotearoa New Zealand case to be in general continuity with these jazz programs, with similarities in gender and racial discrimination that can be identified relatively easily, alongside similarities in curriculum, canon, and modalities of teaching.

Recognizing these persistent challenges, and in the spirit of both preventing harm and fostering more broadly supportive environments in jazz education, the remainder of this article points to pedagogical practices grounded in restorative justice principles as part of a constellation of possible structural interventions. Restorative practices and perspectives, I suggest, are well suited to the collectivity, care, and function at the heart of jazz, in part because such practices are always designed to address both the needs of each individual in a group and the needs of a collective as a whole, much like the music itself.

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES, GROUNDED IN CARE

As this article has suggested so far, institutions of higher music education, including jazz institutions, have stubbornly resisted efforts to transform their harmful environments into ones where it is safe for students to learn while fully expressing the many facets of who they are. Dylan Robinson, in an open letter to music school leaders and faculty members, states that the small, incremental changes typically made have not been effective in “truly transform[ing] systems of music education into spaces where different epistemologies and values of music and world views are equally supported.”⁵³ While he sees that needed steps have been taken in terms of diversification of curriculum and hiring of Indigenous, Black, and other scholars and artists of color (he uses the acronym IBPOC), he recognizes that these types of changes are “additive” rather than structural, and they have thus not transformed institutions of music education.⁵⁴ In the face of institutional resistance to structural change, some educators have turned to pedagogies of care, recognising that “music, as it functions in higher

⁵² Tracy McMullen, “The College Jazz Program as Tradition Making: Establishing a New Lineage in Jazz,” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 27 (2023), 33.

⁵³ Dylan Robinson, “To All Who Should Be Concerned,” *Intersections* 39, no. 1 (2019), 137. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1075347ar>.

⁵⁴ Robinson, “To All,” 137.

education, can be a profoundly *uncaring* place.”⁵⁵ In the introduction to their recent edited volume *Sound Pedagogy*, Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright outline how the uncaring nature of higher music education is related to the intersecting oppressions of imperialism, white supremacy, capitalism, ableism, colonization, and patriarchy, some of which Robinson also identifies as structuring elements of schools and departments of music.⁵⁶ Of note, they demonstrate that characteristics from Tema Okun’s definition of “white supremacy culture”—the concentration of power, individualism, perfectionism, and progress—are typically shared by music education programs in higher education.⁵⁷ It is no coincidence that notions of collectivity, care, and function, as understood by McMullen in her study of JGJ’s alignment with Black feminist values, stand in direct contrast to white supremacy culture as described by Okun, intertwined as racism is with sexism and misogyny. Renihan, Spilker, Wright, and their collaborators argue that uncaring environments are generated by many intersecting forms of oppression, and that care pedagogies can intervene to keep oppressive systems out of music education spaces.

Jazz programs in the U.S. and in other white settler colonial environments often demonstrate the coexistence of an uncaring music education and multifaceted oppression in the difficulties they have recruiting women as well as Black, Indigenous, and other students of the global majority. Among the obstacles to these students enrolling are their systemic exclusion in secondary music education settings, as well as the prevalence of what Dan DiPiero calls the “white-masculinist technology that performs various functions to reinforce

⁵⁵ Renihan, Spilker, and Wright, “Introduction,” 4 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁶ Renihan, Spilker, and Wright, “Introduction,” 3. They reference the following, among others: Patricia Shehan Campbell, David E. Myers, and Edward W. Sarath, “Transforming Music Study from Its Foundations: A Manifesto for Progressive Change in the Undergraduate Preparation of Music Majors,” *College Music Society*, November 2014, edited January 2016, <https://www.music.org/pdf/pubs/tfumm/TFUMM.pdf>; Loren Kajikawa, “The Possessive Investment in Classical Music: Confronting Legacies of White Supremacy in U.S. Schools and Departments of Music,” in *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness across the Disciplines*, ed. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Luke Charles Harris, Daniel Martinez HoSang, and George Lipsitz (University of California Press, 2019); Philip Ewell, *On Music Theory, and Making Music More Welcoming for Everyone* (University of Michigan Press, 2023); William Cheng, *Just Vibrations: The Purpose of Sounding Good* (University of Michigan Press, 2016).

⁵⁷ Tema Okun, “White Supremacy Culture,” accessed October 3, 2024, https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture.pdf. With Okun’s permission, this essay was adapted in Emily Yee Clare, Emil Briones, Kira Page, and Philippe Angers-Trottier, *White Supremacy Culture in Organizations*, adapting Tema Okun (Centre des Organismes Communautaires, 2019), https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet-rcdec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/white_supremacy_culture_in_organizations_0.pdf.

patriarchal jazz cultures and white supremacy” in various elements of university jazz programs.⁵⁸ While gender has often been the most striking category for exclusion in jazz and jazz education spaces, leaders such as Carrington recognize that sexism intersects with racism and other forms of oppression, so they need all to be dealt with. In her words, the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice is committed to “educate with gender justice *and* racial justice as guiding principles.”⁵⁹ Carrington and other educators, such as the editors of *Sound Pedagogy*, understand that the most impactful interventions are those grounded in care that account for intersecting forms of injustice and thus (ideally) avoid unintentionally reinscribing one form of oppression or another.

In my work in jazz leadership at the New Zealand School of Music—Te Kōkī (NZSM), I turned to another approach steeped in intersectionality in order to foreground collectivity and care: restorative justice. Restorative justice is a form of activism that focuses on repairing relationships rather than inflicting punishment as a response to harm. As the field has grown, restorative practitioners have developed concrete frameworks for communities to practice ways of living well together. When harm or conflict occurs, restorative justice addresses it by bringing together those who caused the harm, those affected by the harm, and impacted members of the community. Together, these individuals collaboratively generate ways to move forward where no further harm is done to any party. Restorative justice practitioners and scholars around the world have developed practical processes for when conflict and harm occur. Detailed facilitated formats (with flexibility to suit each situation) have emerged from this research and practice, and have powerfully repaired harm in institutional and criminal settings.⁶⁰ Restorative approaches have also been applied in educational settings to prevent harm by building restorative relationships.⁶¹ Resonating with pedagogical principles developed in other fields, restorative practices involve being attentive to the needs of all individuals *and* of the collective, approaching individuals holistically and with dignity, balancing power, and reducing

⁵⁸ Dan DiPiero, “Race, Gender, and Jazz School: Chord-Scale Theory as White Masculine Technology,” *Jazz and Culture* 6, no. 1 (2023), 53, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5406/25784773.6.1.03>.

⁵⁹ Terri Lyne Carrington, “Black Lives Matter,” accessed October 3, 2024, <https://college.berklee.edu/jazz-gender-justice/black-lives-matter>. JGJ’s intersectional Black feminist approach to jazz education is outlined in McMullen, “Jazz Education,” 41–43.

⁶⁰ See, e.g., Sarah Roth Shank, “Institutionalizing Restorative Justice in New Zealand’s Criminal Justice System: Gains, Losses and Challenges for the Future” (PhD diss., Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.14195555.v1>.

⁶¹ Lindsey Pointer, Kathleen McGoey, and Haley Farrar, *The Little Book of Restorative Teaching Tools: Games, Activities and Simulations for Understanding Restorative Justice Practices* (Good Books, 2020); Katherine Evans and Dorothy Vaandering, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice in Education: Fostering Responsibility, Healing, and Hope in Schools* (Good Books, 2016).

possibilities for abuses of power.⁶² When I began to work with members of the restorative justice community in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, I immediately sensed that this attentiveness to both individuals and the collective would make these practices well suited to cultivating supportive environments in jazz education spaces.⁶³

I moved to Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington in 2016 after I had been hired as a faculty member in the Music Studies program at NZSM to teach required jazz history classes and other courses related to my research. In 2020 I became the Jazz Performance Program Director, having been asked in part due to my activities as an artist (saxophonist/multi-instrumentalist, composer) and to my familiarity with the skills taught in university jazz performance curricula. Here, I observed dynamics common in jazz settings, particularly with regard to gender, race, and sexuality. In 2019, 93% of the 70 students in the program identified as cismen, and all permanent and adjunct faculty members were straight, white, cisgender men, other than me (a queer and white cisgender man) and one woman of color who had recently begun leading a group workshop for vocalists every other week.⁶⁴ I offer this data not to suggest that all straight white men are harmful, as I am of the conviction anyone can cultivate a supportive environment of care and generative of collectivity for a wide range of individuals, regardless

⁶² McMullen, Taylor, and Carrington all offer examples of pedagogical principles that resonate with restorative approaches. The critical pedagogies of scholars such as Paulo Freire and bell hooks also share much in common with restorative practices. I have outlined some of the relationships between restorative approaches and music elsewhere; see Dave Wilson, "On Music, Relationships, and Making Music Spaces Safer for Everyone; Part III: Restorative approaches to musical-relational conflict," SOUNZ Centre for New Zealand Music, May 22, 2024, accessed February 20, 2025, <https://sounz.org.nz/articles/music-relationships-and-making-music-spaces-safer-everyone-1>. See also Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Bloomsbury Academic, [1968] 2018); bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (Routledge, 1994); Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, "Kindness as Universal Design: Rethinking the College Music Classroom from Within," in *Sound Pedagogy: Radical Care in Music*, ed. Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright (University of Illinois Press, 2024).

⁶³ I was trained in restorative justice facilitation by Aspen Restorative Consulting, a restorative justice company founded and led by Haley Farrar; see "Aspen Restorative Consulting," accessed October 25, 2024, <https://www.aspenrestorativeconsulting.com/>.

⁶⁴ Students' sexualities, especially in environments of heteronormativity such as those typical of university jazz programs, are often not presented unless they align with heterosexual norms, so this intersecting element of oppression evades measure through university data metrics, which rely on how students identify in their university student profiles. With regard to the teaching profile of the program, the principal vocal teacher was a straight, white, cisman. For more on singing as a gendered area of jazz practice, see Lara Pellegrinelli, "Separated at 'Birth': Singing and the History of Jazz," in *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies* ed. Nichole T. Rustin and Sherrie Tucker (Duke University Press, 2008).

of their gender, race, sexuality, or any other category of identity (just like anyone can cultivate an environment of harm regardless of their identity). Rather, I suggest that the environment of this program, similar to many jazz programs, constituted a narrow but dominant bandwidth both of life experience and of ways of being in the world (and ways of being, musically) amongst the program's teachers and students.

I stepped into the role believing that the music flourishes when individuals of a range of identities are involved in making it, akin to what George Lewis has called the “new complexity.”⁶⁵ Additionally, this jazz program was at quite a different starting point than JGJ in terms of resources and possibilities for institutional program-building. Aside from the fact that we were not led by an internationally known musician like Terri Lyne Carrington, we, like many jazz programs in university schools of music, did not have the budget or institutional support required to launch an initiative at the scale of JGJ. But the need for change was similar to what Robinson and the editors of *Sound Pedagogy* had identified in their analyses of institutions of higher music education. The program director role allowed for some, even if limited, agency to respond to that need. In the absence of institutional resources, I looked to find common ground with colleagues so that we could together identify areas for possible development of initiatives that were systemic, grounded in care pedagogies, and generative of a collective approach to the music rather than an individualistic one. Among colleagues there was a shared desire to cultivate a focus on the communal elements of how the music is performed, which requires, as McMullen notes when describing Billy Taylor's experience, the “nurturing care of mentors” as a key element in creating “a jazz world of camaraderie, not ruthless competition.”⁶⁶ In addition, performative or tokenistic diversity work would not make a difference without, as Carrington has stated, “everyone rolling up their sleeves, digging in, widening their viewpoints, further stretching their

⁶⁵ Referring to the powerful possibilities in bringing together people with a wide variety of identities and experiences, Lewis moves away from politicized and fraught discourses of “diversity,” instead borrowing and extending a term describing the music of composers like Richard Barrett, Brian Ferneyhough, and Michael Finnissy. He writes: “Multiplication of perspectives means multiplication of possibilities’ [referencing philosopher Arnold I. Davidson]... I fear that diversity discourse leads us to a prosthetics of inclusion—like a clunky metal knee replacement.” George Lewis, “New Music Decolonization in Eight Difficult Steps,” *Van Outernational*, 2020, <https://www.van-outernational.com/lewis-en/>. See also George Lewis, “George Lewis – Composer and Trombonist,” interview by David Norville and Shea Scruggs, *Black Music Seen*, Black Orchestral Network, September 19, 2024, <https://blackorchestralnetwork.podbean.com/e/george-lewis-composer-trombonist/>.

⁶⁶ McMullen, “Jazz Education,” 39.

compassion and understanding that this must be addressed and changed in order for their daughters and sons to have a better, more equitable world to live in.”⁶⁷

In that spirit of finding common ground and digging in, faculty and staff colleagues and I worked to develop a number of intersectional initiatives to address gender inequity and injustice. I focus here on three of those initiatives, specific to jazz performance and education environments, whose restorative principles could be applied in other educational settings. These initiatives are just a few of many, together designed to cultivate safe and supportive environments that avoid the pitfalls of isolated DEI projects, such as the introduction of tokenism rather than structural change, or the inadvertent maintenance of existing status quo social hierarchies.⁶⁸ Rather than serving as cookie-cutter recommendations for others to emulate in their own contexts, they are examples of applying intersectional restorative justice principles to address the needs of a particular jazz education setting.

RESTORATIVE INITIATIVES IN A JAZZ PROGRAM

The first initiative was the most straightforward. We hired a number of women to teach in the program, making it the first time a woman instrumentalist instructor had taught in the program in at least six years. The teaching staff in the program at the start of my stint as program director included permanent faculty members who were all straight, white cismen (from New Zealand and around the British Commonwealth), and a set of adjunct instructors called Artist Teachers in the same identity categories, teaching individual instrument/voice lessons and leading small ensembles (combos) and some of the large ensembles (e.g., big bands, a guitar ensemble) on precarious term-by-term contracts, as well as the ciswoman adjunct instructor mentioned above, who was leading a group vocalists’ workshop every other week. Other than her, no female-presenting or nonbinary instructor was teaching any class in individual or group performance, theory, or improvisation.⁶⁹ A number of qualified women instrumentalists were

⁶⁷ Quoted in McMullen, “Jazz Education,” 40; see also Terri Lyne Carrington, “Sexism in Jazz: Being Agents of Change,” *Huffington Post*, April 10, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sexism-in-jazz-agents-of-change_b_58ebfab1e4b0ca64d9187879.

⁶⁸ For examples of how diversity initiatives diversity initiatives alone often serve to maintain the status quo, see Nancy Leong, *Identity Capitalists: The Powerful Insiders Who Exploit Diversity to Maintain Inequality* (Stanford University Press, 2021). For examples of faculty-level diversity initiatives with such negative impacts, see Sara Ahmed, *Complaint!* (Duke University Press, 2021), 65–67.

⁶⁹ This had been the case for several years to that point.

active in the community of musicians living in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington at the time, though none of them were among the Artist Teachers being hired annually to teach in the jazz performance program.

In the absence of institutional resources to create new faculty positions that could lead to more permanent change, the most immediate way to diversify the learning experience of students was to hire new women instrumentalists and composers in Artist Teacher roles.⁷⁰ In the process of implementing a new curriculum structure, I worked closely with the School Manager (a non-academic role similar to a business manager, whose responsibilities include monitoring adjunct teaching budgets) to first identify several areas lacking sufficient teaching staff and then create new Artist Teacher positions to staff those areas with minimal budgetary implications. I consulted heavily with colleagues on permanent faculty and with current adjuncts to fill the new positions in various areas of the program's teaching. As a rule, we did not replace any of the current Artist Teachers but used the new curriculum and budget structure to, as a first step, expand the number of Artist Teachers. Hiring women to teach some of the combo classes required of all students ensured that everyone took part in a performance class led by someone other than a white hetero cisman. Most of this work involved many unglamorous hours dealing with spreadsheets and having lengthy conversations about pedagogy with colleagues as we built trust with one another about developing the teaching profile of the program.

In some ways this initiative simply diversified the teaching staff of the program without eliminating the risks of tokenism. Other risks also remained, including the negative impacts of persistent social norms in which certain forms of masculinity are celebrated and other gendered behaviors are marginalized or shamed.⁷¹ We mitigated these risks in a few ways. The women we hired, simply by being present in the space, increased the likelihood that more students might identify with their instructors' experiences in terms of gender. They also, alongside men we hired, helped generate an environment more broadly

⁷⁰ This is one of the key premises of this article: that some change is possible even in the absence of significant institutional resources. I acknowledge that creating precarious work environments can add exponentially exploitative dynamics for individuals of minoritised genders, individuals of different abilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and Black, Indigenous and other individuals of the global majority. Though this created a precarious work environment for these instructors, no new permanent (i.e., tenure-track) positions were projected to be created, and in the program director role I was not able to successfully propose a new permanent position, though not for a lack of trying.

⁷¹ This is in reference to the exclusionary forms of inclusion identified in Ahmed, *On Being Included*.

supportive for students.⁷² All of these teachers had demonstrated intuitive ways of fostering supportive educational spaces, but we recognized that some professional development could further bolster their effectiveness in the classroom. So we designed both formal and informal ways of mentoring Artist Teachers as they acclimated to teaching at the university level for the first time.

It was also clear to colleagues and I that a significant element of cultivating an inclusive environment where students of all genders could thrive was doing so among students themselves. The addition of women instructors did not guarantee change. For example, we continued to receive reports from women and nonbinary students that their learning spaces were dominated by the voices of straight white men, particularly in their jazz combo ensemble classes. The tendencies of these men to dictate the musical direction of their combos replicates jazz's gendered dynamics that lead to career barriers for non-cismen as well as forms of harm such as those outlined by Berliner, Boeyink, and others mentioned above.⁷³ In addressing the domination of certain individual voices and silencing of others in student spaces (which suggests that collectivity and care were not broadly experienced in those spaces), it seemed that strategies grounded in restorative justice principles could be effective.

One way to understand restorative justice principles is through a model called the Social Discipline Window (Figure 1.).⁷⁴ It describes four approaches to relationships in a group, along axes of increasing levels of support and increasing levels of expectations for behavior. Environments with high expectations for behavior and low support are punitive, while those with low expectations for behavior and high support are permissive. Settings with low expectations and low support are neglectful, while those with high expectations and high support are restorative, because they cultivate environments that are both nurturing *and* have clear behavioral expectations.

⁷² The Artist Teachers we hired at that time were only ciswomen and cismen. In the years since that time, other instructors have been hired whose gender identity does not conform to a man/woman binary.

⁷³ See, e.g., Berliner, "An Open Letter"; Boeyink "Jazzwomen in Higher Education"; Steiner and Manfredo, "In Her Own Words"; and Hall and Burke, "Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity."

⁷⁴ Ted Wachtel, "Restorative Justice in Everyday Life: Beyond the Formal Ritual," paper presentation at the Reshaping Australian Institutions Conference: Restorative Justice and Civil Society, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, February 16–18, 1999, <https://www.iirp.edu/eforum-archive/4221-restorative-justice-in-everyday-life-beyond-the-formal-ritual>; see also Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel, "In Pursuit of Paradigm: A Theory of Restorative Justice," *Restorative Practices EForum*, August 12, 2003, <https://www.iirp.edu/images/pdf/paradigm.pdf>.

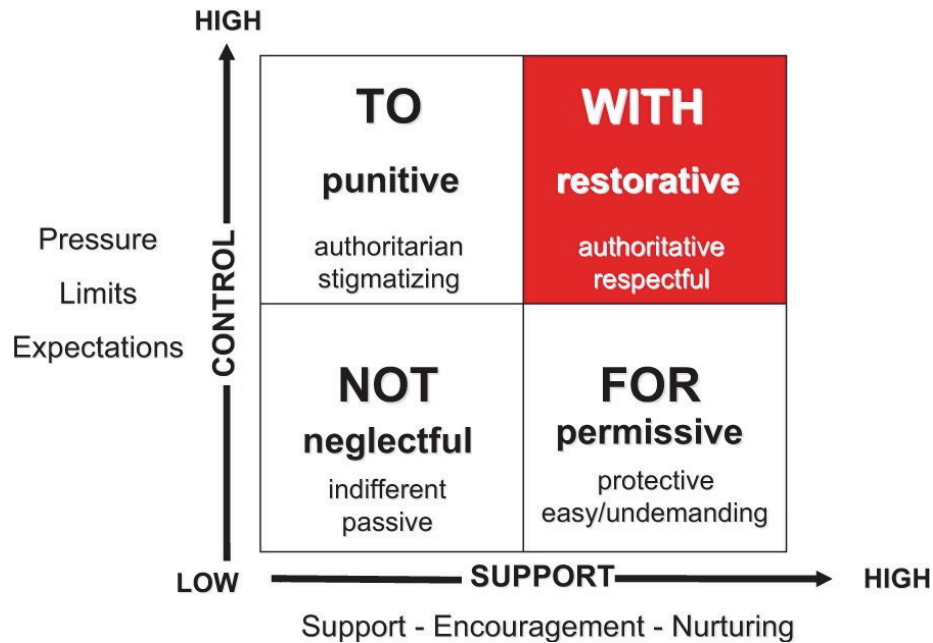


Figure 1. The Social Discipline Window (adapted from Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel). Used with permission of International Institute for Restorative Practices.

One of the strategies for building relationships in restorative frameworks is called a connection circle or, sometimes, simply a circle. Connection circles offer a concrete framework for a group’s members to design ways that they want to be well together, in terms of how individuals’ behavior can attend to the needs of each individual and of the group. A circle allows for individuals in a group to express what they need to be supported, and it enables a group to come to a consensus on behavioral standards. In a facilitated format, connection circles begin with each person in a group voluntarily committing to certain actions, such as listening respectfully, speaking honorably and only when it is one’s turn, and not sharing anything from the circle with people outside of it after it comes to a close. Then, going around the circle one-by-one, each person responds to a question posed by the facilitator (or can decline to speak). The group proceeds through a few rounds of questions designed to build trust incrementally and that allow participants to share what they need from the group as it goes about its

activities, potentially enabling the group to establish shared values, if it desires to do so.⁷⁵

At NZSM, we first attempted to address male students' dominance in combo classes and other program spaces by implementing once-per-term all-student training sessions on professional respect, delivered by trained social workers on university staff. This had some positive impact as students gained awareness and relational skills in setting healthy boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others, but many hierarchies in student spaces remained unaddressed. With the support of the team of social workers, and in discussion with members of the teaching staff, we decided to facilitate connection circles in the combo classes at the start of a term. By this time I had been trained as a restorative facilitator, so the lead social worker and I, alongside two teaching colleagues, co-designed a circle structure for the combo classes. I first facilitated the circle with the combo teachers and trained them in how to facilitate this circle with students. We then conducted a circle with each jazz combo (five to eight students each) in the program on the first day of the semester. The questions, which we designed to suit the jazz combo environment, asked each student to express what their work (e.g., their singing, their listening, their playing, their musical-interpersonal interaction) looked like when they felt supported, and to share what they needed in order to feel that they were included in a combo group.

In the circles I facilitated, I observed a flattening of the hierarchy in action. Each person, regardless of their musical experience or training, was allotted the same platform to have a voice. Individuals with tendencies to dominate a space agreed not to interrupt others (high expectations for behavior), and in so doing willingly gave space to those who might be reticent to speak up (high support). Those who preferred not to speak were allowed to pass, but, in many of our circles, everyone chose to speak. In the circle, their contributions collectively shaped how group interaction—verbally, musically, in every way—would proceed in that particular musical ensemble during the term. This was a shift from previous semesters, in which some students felt disempowered with regard to shaping their ensemble environments, other than in reacting to and reporting unjust behavior after it had occurred. With the introduction of circles, we witnessed individuals of dominant identities and positionalities listen and

⁷⁵ For more on connection circles, see, e.g., Barry Stewart, Mark Wedge, and Kay Pranis, *Peacemaking Circles: From Conflict to Community* (Living Justice Press, 2003); and Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Kay Pranis, *Circle Forward*, revised edition (Living Justice Press, 2020).

understand the desires of those who found it challenging to voice their perspectives due to gendered and other structural constraints.

I was inspired by the implementations of circles that term. In my casual observations, the combo classes during the term had notably fewer challenges related to gender and other hierarchy-related dynamics. But circles are not a one-time cure-all for environments in need of repair. They need to recur as a tool for a collective of people to habitually nurture its space, the individuals in it, and the group as a whole. If connection circles become a habit of a collective, such as a jazz combo program, that collective can establish familiar paths to cultivating a restorative environment characterised by high expectations for behavior and high levels of support for all. The colleagues leading the combo program have continued to implement connection circles to this end, providing students with recurring opportunities to practice the ways they want to relate to one another in their ensembles and in their broader music communities.

For the third initiative, we changed a performance assessment procedure that had been perpetuating systemic inequity. Every semester, end-of-term performance assessments required students to perform with or as part of a rhythm section, which they formed themselves by asking peers to volunteer their time and labor. This worked well for the more skilled players and vocalists, and for those with privileged dominant identities, who had established social networks among others with the same skill sets and/or identities. Students outside these networks had less access to the more experienced rhythm section players, and so they tended to perform their assessments with less experienced musicians. This typically held their performance back, and semester after semester they tended to receive lower grades, grow less musically, and remain perpetually outside the circles of more proficient players. In addition, the rhythm section players with more experience, or who played instruments with fewer players available (especially bass players in this case), typically volunteered to play ten or more assessments to support their peers. When it came time for their own assessment, their physical and mental wellbeing had suffered. In my first semester as program director, a woman who was a first-year student approached me in tears at an all-program performance workshop one week before her assessment, telling me she had no rhythm section to play with her. After I walked with her to approach a kind fourth-year rhythm section player who helped her form a group (an individual solution, not a systematic change), I shared this incident with colleagues, and we decided we needed to alter the program requirements.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ This anonymized anecdote is shared with permission.

First, I sat down with the School Manager and described this problem to her. As a woman who had recognized the gender-based systemic discrimination occurring in this case, she was inspired to help address this problem. She also knew the budget lines that paid experienced classical piano accompanists for every performance assessment in the classical performance program each semester provided a precedent for the jazz program to do the same. We managed to implement a system in which we hired house rhythm sections composed of recent graduates and third- and fourth-year students via a standard university hourly employment contract commonly used for individuals at those levels. In consultation with the other permanent faculty, I chose the players for each rhythm section, with the criteria of having the musical skills to support students and exhibiting kindness and professional conduct. We tried to hire rhythm sections comprising individuals with a range of experiences regarding their genders and other identity categories as well.

A number of the more proficient instrumentalists among the students initially resisted this model, and many asked us if they could instead perform with their friends. We took this feedback to heart and gave third- and fourth-year students the option to choose their own players, though we were wary of the risks posed to the wellbeing of those volunteering. For the first- and second-year students who had requested to play with their friends, we acknowledged the relational discomfort that might come from playing with musicians they didn't know well. But we encouraged them by telling them they would likely perform better when playing with hired rhythm section musicians and potentially enjoy the experience to a greater degree. With this new approach, barriers were removed for students who were less socially positioned to recruit a highly-skilled rhythm section. This system continued after I stepped down from the program director position, morphing into different forms as student needs changed, and it is an initiative the School Manager and I look back on fondly in the history of our collaborative work.

Taken together, these and a number of other initiatives correlated with the increase in the percentage of female and gender non-conforming jazz majors from 7% in 2019 to a peak of 33% in 2023, out of an average (mean) of 74 total jazz performance majors during that period.⁷⁷ Part of this increase had to do with retention of women and gender non-confirming students from year to year. In addition, news about positive experiences of women in the program and about women instrumentalists serving as Artist Teachers began to spread within the

⁷⁷ This data comes from university enrollment records, where students self-identify as either male, female, or gender non-conforming. The total number of jazz majors ranged from a low of 68 students in 2022 to a high of 84 students in 2021.

tight-knit network of New Zealand high school music teachers and among high school students and parents. This shift in reputation may have also impacted decisions for students to enroll in the program. Though we do not have evidence to demonstrate that the initiatives directly caused an increase in participation in the program across a wider gender spectrum, these numbers indicate a potential correlation between the initiatives and an increase in non-cismale participation. But even if there is a correlation, the peak at 33% suggests that these efforts were only able to partially address the systemic, institutional, and societal barriers to a broader participation in jazz across spectrums of gender and other intersecting identities.

All three of these initiatives were grounded in restorative values of providing high levels of support *and* having high expectations for behavior. Hiring the additional Artist Teachers (providing support) was accompanied by training and mentorship (providing a high bar for the quality of their work). Training students in relational skills and implementing connection circles allowed all involved parties to define shared expectations and support one another. By hiring rhythm sections for assessments, we increased support for students of all experience levels and raised expectations both in terms of their performance skills and actions towards one another. With these and other interventions flowing in confluence with one another, we saw a reduction of the risks inherent in isolated DEI initiatives such as tokenism and the inadvertent perpetuation of harmful environments.

Though we saw positive impact as a result of these initiatives, each had its imperfections. For example, the cohort of new Artist Teachers, by definition, had little to no experience teaching at the university level and had high needs for training and mentorship. While we did provide that, we did not have the staffing capacity to do so to the extent many Artist Teachers felt they needed, and some expressed that they lacked adequate support. The majority of students and Artist Teachers embraced the connection circles, but that has not been universal. Even though circles are always fully voluntary, the power dynamics inherent in educational spaces are still present, and there is a possibility that some individuals may have participated in a begrudging or disingenuous manner. The effectiveness of circles in building trust and restorative relationships may have thus been limited. Administering the rhythm sections for assessments has also been challenging, as coordinating schedules and arranging the hiring of players is a time-intensive task for an already overworked administrative team.

These imperfections notwithstanding, the three examples also represent how we implemented interrelated approaches that were broad enough to begin destabilizing harmful hierarchies that had been shaped not only by sexism, but also by racism, homophobia, and other intersecting forms of discrimination. By

focusing on care and collectivity in developing strategic interventions into the institutional systems within which we did have agency, we were able to begin addressing the intersectionally unjust structures that have shaped jazz education. In taking these first small, and sometimes imperfect, steps on a longer journey toward just and equitable educational experiences, we have been able to catch glimpses of, to extend the words of JGJ, what jazz might sound like without patriarchy and the other forms of oppression with which it intersects.⁷⁸

CONCLUSION: AN INVITATION

In early 2023, after I had stepped down from the program director position, one of the young women among the jazz majors came to my office hours for help on an essay, and I made small talk by asking her how things were going for her overall in her studies. She shared joyfully that she was loving her experience and had been bragging to her secondary-school siblings about how great her teachers are. Hearing this was encouraging, as it provided a glimpse of a world of jazz without patriarchy, and some concrete evidence that these intersectional initiatives were producing positive results. But the barriers to ending discrimination persist. In 2024 the incoming class of jazz majors had just one woman, and the overall jazz program student body was 88% white. (For comparison, from 2019 to 2024 the overall student population at the university was between 65% and 70% white.) The systemic gendered, heteronormative, whiteness-centric obstacles to participating in this music remain prevalent. Initiatives in university and other professional environments are attempting to intervene in systems where the impacts of injustice and inequity are significant and ongoing.

Because harm based on gender, sexuality, race, and other intersecting categories for belonging pervades jazz worlds, interventions for justice need to be similarly pervasive.⁷⁹ This article aims to provide encouragement towards channelling effort and energy into making change at a systemic level, even where resources might be limited. It outlines the need for restorative approaches and care-based pedagogies in addressing injustice at the site of a university jazz program, and it tells the stories of some of our collaborative attempts to strategically intervene in systems that perpetuate injustices. Guided by commitments to the collectivity and community care at the heart of jazz, and

⁷⁸ See “Berklee Institute.”

⁷⁹ For a related argument focused on broader public education in the U.S., see Jennifer Gale de Saxe, “Complicating Resistance: Intersectionality, Liberation, and Democracy,” in *Educating for Critical Consciousness*, ed. George Yancy (Routledge, 2019).

grounded in practical strategies to cultivate restorative environments that combine high expectations with high support, effective systemic change in jazz environments is possible. These efforts are needed in every setting where the music lives, and can be implemented by any range of individuals. In addition to those in higher education, people can draw on these principles to cultivate justice from any number of positions: as high school teachers, concert promoters, venue owners, managers, employees of festival organizations, journalists and others in media, parents of young musicians, and, of course, musicians themselves.

In a sense, this article is an invitation to you, the reader, to participate in expanding what jazz might look and sound like by joining a global, collective effort to strategically dismantle prevailing structures of injustice. Regardless of your own identity, there are ways that you can contribute to this effort to make jazz worlds, which are interrelated with all of the worlds we live in, into places of healing and liberation rather than places of harm and limitation. For those motivated to pursue this work, keep your eyes and ears open for others in your community who want to think and act in restorative ways steeped in care. Build trust with one another, learn together, and think deeply together about how you might intervene in concrete ways that address structural injustices in your particular community, even at what might seem like a small scale. Your cultivation of collectivity and care, regardless of whether it seems significant or not, will have an impact on the lives of those involved in the creation of the music. Your action joins you to the efforts of others everywhere, working together to bring jazz spaces closer to the heart of what the music is all about.

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Towards an Inclusive Jazz Pedagogy: Lessons from Post-Apartheid South Africa

Ulagh Williams and Nishlyn Ramanna

In 2020, the University of Cape Town posted a music video celebrating the institution's annual staff awards. The video captures a monumental shift in one of South Africa's foremost university jazz programs. Framed by looming pillars, the all-women Lady Day Big Band performs on the campus steps against the backdrop of Table Mountain.⁸⁰ The University's Head of Jazz Studies, Amanda Tiffin, and fellow vocalists Lana Crowster, Leah Joy Adams, and Anathi Mobo sing in isiZulu, their harmonies perfectly balanced with the band's infectious groove and punchy horn lines. "Ayo Ayo" (music by Tiffin and lyrics by Phatiswa Magangane) heralds a new era in South African jazz: less than a decade ago, the sight of a multi-racial, all-women big band on those imposing steps would have been highly unlikely. Suits, ties, "bro culture", and blistering bebop licks have made way for innovation, inclusion, and a proud celebration of South African culture. The tide is turning.

Across South Africa, women are creating pockets of empowerment in professional jazz spaces, both on the bandstand and in classrooms.⁸¹ Two women in particular occupy high-profile positions historically held by men: pianist-vocalist Amanda Tiffin is the first and (to date) only woman heading a tertiary jazz program in South Africa (University of Cape Town) while Wits University jazz voice and double bass lecturer Chantal Willie-Petersen is the first woman (and woman of color) to serve as president of the South African Association for Jazz Educators (2022-2024). This article highlights the ways in which Tiffin and Willie-Petersen are transforming tertiary jazz education by moving beyond American-centric conceptions of jazz culture and the canon. More importantly, they use their respective platforms to dismantle systemic patriarchy, misogyny, racism, and colonial narratives that continue to straitjacket jazz education.

⁸⁰ Lady Day Big Band, "Ayo Ayo," University of Cape Town South Africa, December 2, 2020, YouTube video, 4:48, <https://youtu.be/ZREc2PZKfVc?si=zwgKTOGuU0XELOiZ>.

⁸¹ Nomfundo Xaluva and Shannon Mowday have made significant contributions to jazz education in South Africa and abroad. For an overview of their pedagogical interventions and gender activism, see Ulagh Williams, "Beyond Mastery: Jazz, Gender and Power in Post-apartheid South Africa" (PhD diss., Rhodes University, 2023).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF JAZZ PEDAGOGY AND PATRIARCHY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Historically, South African jazz education programs have been modeled after American programs. Darius Brubeck founded the country's first tertiary jazz program at the erstwhile University of Natal in Durban in 1982, and between the late 1980s and early 2000s several other universities followed suit.⁸² At the first and arguably most recognized of these institutions, the South African College of Music at the University of Cape Town, the curriculum foregrounded the technical mastery of bebop and post-bebop repertoires. This propagated the discourse of jazz as a (largely instrumental) masculine domain, side-lining various other forms of jazz and jazz-adjacent genres. During the 1980s and 1990s, the city's (mostly white) "schooled" jazz musicians—those with the means to afford university tuition—rarely occupied the same professional spaces/stages as jazz musicians of color.⁸³ In a country where jazz played an integral part in the struggle against apartheid—and remains inextricably linked to narratives of colonialism, race and class—this disconnect between jazz education and jazz as a social practice is particularly glaring. This disconnect shares some commonalities with international patterns of the institutionalization and classicization of jazz in universities. Dan DiPiero argues that to be recognized as a serious field of study, jazz education became more attuned to the "language, signifiers, and values of European classical music" than its original "aural and/or participatory practices."⁸⁴ According to DiPiero, this institutionalized model of jazz is compliant with a template of legitimacy determined by "white men as its primary practitioners."⁸⁵ Moreover, the prioritization of music theory and aggressive technical displays of power "decontextualizes jazz from sociopolitical considerations, performing a transmutation that attempts to wrest the music into alignment with the way that Western theory has traditionally operated: as pure formalism, centered on 'the

⁸² Darius Brubeck and Catherine Brubeck, *Playing the Changes: Jazz at an African University and on the Road* (University of Illinois Press, 2024).

⁸³ During the 1980s, this divide was largely due to apartheid laws that prohibited racially integrated bands, but it can also be ascribed to the rise of academic, institutionalised jazz. Shannon Mowday describes the chasm between self-taught jazz musicians of color and white male gatekeepers in the Cape Town jazz scene, both during the apartheid era and thereafter (Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 109-110). Amanda Tiffin similarly refers to the dominant, white "bro network" in the city's jazz scene, a phenomenon that remains widespread (Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 170).

⁸⁴ Dan DiPiero, "Race, Gender, and Jazz School: Chord-Scale Theory as White Masculine Technology," *Jazz & Culture* 6, no.1 (2023), 56.

⁸⁵ DiPiero, 55.

music itself.”⁸⁶ To this end, not only is jazz constituted as a masculine domain, but also the foregrounding of jazz theory “serves as a white-masculinist technology that performs various functions to reinforce patriarchal jazz cultures and white supremacy.”⁸⁷

This pervasive culture of “masculine competitiveness” and “cutting contests” associated with bebop which DiPiero describes as the “historical pinnacle of jazz practice” is also evident in the South African jazz academy.⁸⁸ Until very recently, women’s experiences of “othering” were firmly linked to their inability and/or unwillingness to participate in aggressive musical displays of power that required the execution of “burning” solos and the ability to “play like a man.” Numerous women have described the mastery of bebop as the musical currency that determined their legitimacy throughout the late 1980s, the 1990s, and 2000s respectively.⁸⁹ This phenomenon is closely linked to a more insidious tradition of toxic misogyny and displays of “hyper-masculine ego” as described by Marc Röntsch.⁹⁰ Others have similarly explored how women have to turn a blind eye to—or conform to—the status quo in order to be accepted.⁹¹

SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE ACADEMY (AND BEYOND)

Women have comprised between thirty and sixty percent of jazz student cohorts at six South African universities over the past half-decade but because of the dynamics described above they remain under-represented in the country’s professional jazz scenes.⁹² This is in line with international patterns of exclusion that prevent women from pursuing jazz careers.⁹³ More importantly, despite the

⁸⁶ DiPiero, 55.

⁸⁷ DiPiero, 53.

⁸⁸ DiPiero, 58.

⁸⁹ Williams, “Beyond Mastery,” 227, 263, 269.

⁹⁰ Marc Röntsch, “Disruption: Gender, Jazz and the Lady Day Big Band,” *South African Music Studies* 40 (2020): 472.

⁹¹ See Ceri Moelwyn-Hughes, “Women, Gender and Identity in Popular Music-Making in Gauteng, 1994-2012” (master’s thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2013); Aimée George, “An exploration of the gender and sexual dynamics for women performers in the Cape Town jazz community” (master’s thesis, University of Cape Town, 2020); Williams, “Beyond Mastery,” 174-179; Gwen Ansell, “South African Music: Time for our Very Own Weinstein Moment?,” *Sisgwenjazz*, 24 October 2017, accessed 5 April 2019, <https://sisgwenjazz.wordpress.com/2017/10/24/south-african-music-time-for-our-very-own-weinstein-moment/>.

⁹² Williams, “Beyond Mastery,” 2.

⁹³ According to Kathleen McKeage, women “may not be able to connect participation in [high school and college] jazz ensembles with career possibilities” (Kathleen McKeage, “Gender and Participation in High School and College Jazz Ensembles,” *Journal of Research in Music*

repeal of apartheid in 1994, systemic racism and social stratification continue to compound women's experiences of "othering" in professional jazz. Gwen Ansell writes: "Where students of color experience alienation, exclusion and racism, female jazz students experience alienation, exclusion and sexism. Aspiring black female scholars encounter both."⁹⁴ Historically, most women teaching in South African tertiary jazz programs have been employed as vocal lecturers.⁹⁵ Ansell describes South African jazz faculties as white "boys' clubs" where women are over-represented as singers:

Not only are their faces predominantly white, they are equally predominantly male—even more heavily so when vocal practice lecturers are removed. We still suffer the continuing—and international—assumption that women instrumentalists... still have to prove that they have the "balls" to be authentic jazzmakers. Oh, there are interesting features, sometimes sections, in jazz magazines on women in jazz, but the attitude is often that of *noblesse oblige*, like making sure there are enough blacks on television sitcoms.⁹⁶

Education 52, no. 4 (2004): 354). Ariel Alexander's study of women's under-representation in the jazz academy reveals that 52.8% of respondents believed their "choices on classes, combos, private teachers [and] advisors" were limited by discrimination. 56.7% reported further discrimination after graduating and entering professional spaces (Ariel Ann Alexander, "Where are the Girls? A Look at the Factors that Limit Female Participation in Instrumental Jazz" (DMA diss., University of Southern California, 2011), 40-44). Chelsea Wahl and Stephen Ellingson argue that the "relative sterility of academic admissions procedures has changed the way young musicians enter the jazz art world. However, the degree to which these programs actually increase opportunities for women is unclear" (Chelsea Wahl and Stephen Ellingson, "Almost Like a Real Band: Navigating a Gendered Jazz Art World," *Qualitative Sociology* 41, no. 3 (2018): 464). This echoes Robin Desmeules' argument that "[while] it is doubtless a sign of change that there are more women coming through the ranks, this increase in numbers may not point to an actual change in attitudes towards women making jazz." Desmeules found that "post-secondary jazz programs point to many structural aspects of the institutionalization of jazz as being gendered (and misogynistic)" (Robin E. Desmeules, "(Re)Gendering Jazz: Women Instrumentalists in Toronto" (master's thesis, Carleton University, 2010), 42).

⁹⁴ Gwen Ansell, "Who Should Teach Jazz in South Africa?" *Sisgwenjazz*, August 8, 2016, accessed October 23, 2019, <https://sisgwenjazz.wordpress.com/2016/08/08/who-should-teach-jazz-in-south-africa/>

⁹⁵ Between 2017 and 2022, prominent jazz programs at the University of Cape Town, Rhodes University, and Tshwane University of Technology employed women solely as vocal lecturers. Between 2014 and 2018, jazz vocal lecturer Ulagh Williams was the first (and only) woman teaching jazz at Nelson Mandela University (formerly the University of Port Elizabeth) since the program was created in 1994. At the time of publication, most women studying jazz at the institutions mentioned here were vocalists (Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 4).

⁹⁶ Ansell, "Who Should Teach Jazz in South Africa?"

Male gatekeeping and gender stereotyping remain prevalent in prominent educational spaces and the wider performance scenes within which they are embedded.⁹⁷ By way of example, the UNISA (University of South Africa) Jazz Festival has only included women as vocalists since its inception in 2018, despite the presence of several internationally acclaimed women instrumentalists in the wider Johannesburg area. Obligated by festival organizers to perform in a peripheral capacity with all-male bands, Zoë Modiga (2018), Gloria Bosman (2019 and 2022), and Karen Petersen (2023) have been corralled into perpetuating women's role as "songbirds" or "features" (guest performers, often with limited creative control in the band) rather than leaders (musical directors, composers, or instrumentalists). In 2024, singer-educators Nthabiseng Motsepe (a lecturer at the University of Pretoria) and prolific recording artist Natalie Rungan (who holds a PhD in jazz education and curates jazz festival programs) were invited to perform with the (all-male) big band. Even when women occupy high-profile positions as educators and composers, they can be subjected to gender bias.

WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ DISCOURSE

Writing about South Africa where jazz formed a powerful soundtrack to the struggle against apartheid, Christopher Ballantine describes the genre as "aspiring to the status of an international musical vernacular of the oppressed."⁹⁸ In international jazz discourse, jazz exemplifies ideals of freedom, plurality, and empowerment. Duke Ellington famously stated that "jazz is a good barometer of freedom."⁹⁹ However, these freedoms are typically blind to, and exacerbate, patriarchal forces; professional jazz is widely acknowledged as a hostile domain

⁹⁷ This aligns with Chris Robinson's description of jazz as a male-dominated field: "Jazz critics, journalists, and editors are overwhelmingly male, as are university jazz professors and the ensembles they direct. The music's gatekeepers are, and have always been, disproportionately male. As such, jazz has been shaped by gendered attitudes and privileged those qualities and characteristics conceptualized as masculine" (Chris Robinson, "A Brief History of the Origins of Jazz's Sexism," *Medium*, March 9, 2019, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://medium.com/@CRMUSICWRITER/a-brief-history-of-the-origins-of-jazzs-sexism-3ee4278bcff0>).

⁹⁸ Christopher Ballantine, *Marabi Nights: Early South African Jazz and Vaudeville* (Ravan Press, 1993), 8.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Geoffrey C. Ward and Kenneth Burns, *Jazz: A History of America's Music* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), vii.

for women.¹⁰⁰ Chelsea Wahl and Stephen Ellingson provide a succinct appraisal of this paradox:

Historically, the jazz art world has followed norms of meritocracy, which promote equality across boundaries of race and class. At the same time a culture of exclusivity, anchored in gendered essentialism, has severely limited female participation.¹⁰¹

Women have played a significant role in South African jazz history, yet with the exception of a handful of scholars,¹⁰² they have typically been described as oppressed figures.¹⁰³ Mainstream jazz discourse has paid more attention to patriarchal dynamics than women's success stories; likewise, an earlier generation of international feminist jazz scholarship mostly comprises emancipatory research (studying women's resistance to patriarchal forces) and reparation work (advocating for the inclusion of women in the jazz canon and

¹⁰⁰ Eric Teichman "Pedagogy of Discrimination: Instrumental Jazz Education," *Music Education Research* 22, no.2 (2020): 201-213; Sarah Caissie Provost, "Bringing Something New: Female Jazz Instrumentalists' Use of Imitation and Masculinity," *Jazz Perspectives* 10, no. 2-3 (2017): 141-157; Jayne Caudwell, "Jazzwomen: Music, Sound, Gender, and Sexuality," *Annals of Leisure Research* 15, no. 4 (2012): 389-403; Christa Bruckner-Haring, "Women in Contemporary Austrian Jazz," in *Jazz, Gender, Authenticity*, Proceedings of the 10th Nordic Jazz Research Conference Stockholm, ed. Alf Arvidsson (2012), 127-143; Cecilia Björck and Cecilia and Åsa Bergman, "Making Women in Jazz Visible: Negotiating Discourses of Unity and Diversity in Sweden and the US," *Journal of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music* 8, no.1 (2018): 42-58; Jasna Jovičević, "Gender Perspectives of Instrumental Jazz Performers in Southeastern Europe," *MUZIKOLOGIJA-MUSICOLOGY* 30 (2021): 149-164; Teresa Maria Marques de Matos Ferreira (Teresa Gentil), "More than Singers: Biography, Gender, and Agency in the Voices of Four Women Singer-songwriters in Contemporary Portugal" (master's diss., Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2017).

¹⁰¹ Wahl and Ellingson, "Almost Like a Real Band," 445.

¹⁰² There are two notable studies that focus on women's resilience and self-empowerment in South African jazz and popular music. Lara Allen highlights the subversive strategies of the country's most celebrated (and maligned) women in the early jazz and popular music industry (Lara Allen, "Representation, Gender, and Women in Black South African Popular Music, 1948-1960" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge 2000). Carol Ann Muller and Sathima Benjamin provide rich descriptions of Benjamin as an empowered woman navigating a career as a jazz musician, composer and record label owner (Carol Ann Muller and Sathima Benjamin, *Musical Echoes: South African Women Thinking in Jazz* (Duke University Press, 2011)).

¹⁰³ South African studies exploring patriarchal forces in jazz culture include: Christopher Ballantine, "Gender, Migrancy, and South African Popular Music in the Late 1940s and the 1950s," *Ethnomusicology* 44, no. 3 (2000) 376-407; Ceri Moelwyn-Hughes, "Women, Gender, and Identity in Popular Music-making in Gauteng, 1994-2012" (master's diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2013); Nishlyn Ramanna, "Experiences of Belonging and Exclusion in the Production and Reception of Some Contemporary South African Jazz: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis," *South African Music Studies* 34, no. 1 (2015): 22-289.

historiography).¹⁰⁴ This article draws on a more recent wave of jazz scholarship rooted in feminist post-structuralism (as described by Joan Scott), that deals with plurality and difference.¹⁰⁵ Sherrie Tucker (arguably the most prolific scholar in this tradition) deliberately resists grouping women together as a sisterhood sharing universal experiences of exclusion and oppression.¹⁰⁶ To this end, this article does not only aim to document similarities between the educational practices developed by Amanda Tiffin and Chantal Willie-Petersen but also the unique lived experiences that shaped each woman's approach to teaching.

AMANDA TIFFIN (BORN 1972)

When Tiffin enrolled in jazz studies in the early 1990s, the fledgling program at the University of Cape Town only provided instrumentalists with specialized tuition and mentorship in jazz improvisation. Whilst there was no shortage of role models for (predominantly male) instrumental students, Tiffin did not have access to a jazz vocal lecturer. She was compelled to major in jazz piano but resisted her lecturers' suggestion to choose a more convenient option than singing as a second instrument. Her determination and the support of a woman who lectured in Western classical voice allowed her to develop as a singer on her own terms:

[They] didn't want me to [major in jazz voice] because there was no jazz singing teacher at that time. There was no jazz voice program at all, so I had to take classical singing lessons... They were trying to convince me to take guitar [as a second instrument] because they had a jazz guitar teacher and I already played a little bit of guitar. And I *insisted*. "No, I want to *sing*." Eventually they said, "Okaaaaaay!" and let me do singing. Thank God. I did classical singing all the way through varsity [and] the [jazz and pop] singing thing, I kind of figured out by myself a lot.... I went through a few different teachers and then I was given a teacher, Hanna van Schalkwyk

¹⁰⁴ See Sally Placksin, *American Women in Jazz, 1900 to the Present: Their Words, Lives, and Music* (Seaview Books, 1982); Robin E. Desmeules, "(Re)Gendering Jazz: Women Instrumentalists in Toronto" (master's diss., Carleton University 2010); Linda Dahl, *Stormy Weather: The Music and Lives of a Century of Jazzwomen* (Limelight Editions, 1996 [1984]); Leslie Gourse, *Madame Jazz: Contemporary Women Instrumentalists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁵ Joan W. Scott, "Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Post-structuralist Theory for Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 33.

¹⁰⁶ Sherrie Tucker, "Bordering on Community: Improvising Women Improvising Women-in-Jazz," in *The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation and Communities in Dialogue*, edited by Daniel Fischlin and Ajay Heble (Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 246.

and she was the first teacher I had that never tried to make me into something that I wasn't.¹⁰⁷

Tiffin actively sought out the mentorship of influential women working in the popular music industry. In this context she was able to work as a pianist, bandleader and arranger, roles that, at the university, were reserved for her male classmates:

I've heard... when other female musicians said, "I didn't get the job opportunities because of my gender. I was good at what I did, so I made my own projects, I made my own bands, my own work and I was the one booking the men." That's how I built my career. I made my own work and built respect from doing that, because I was *leading* all the time and I did well. [During] my student days, there were people forming bands and projects and stuff, and I was just not included in that. Never. It was never even entertained that I would be included... I mean, my first instrument was piano, but I was seen as "the girl singer." [It] was fine because I got a lot of work out of it, but at the same time I also wanted to be taken seriously as a musician and it just wasn't the case. So, one just gets on with it and do what you do and create the work for [yourself].¹⁰⁸

Her growing success as a bandleader, pianist, singer and arranger allowed her to work across various genres including musical theatre and popular music, a professional choice that was frowned upon by institutional gatekeepers. Tiffin believes that her hybridized style later contributed to her repeated exclusion from the Cape Town International Jazz Festival during the 2000s:

I wasn't "in" with the hip cats, you know? I think [it was] the fact that I had done a lot of pop and tribute shows in my career, and hadn't dedicated my career to *only* being a jazz musician... That's the thing that really used to bother me about some of the individuals... definitely in Cape Town certain individuals had this real purist approach. But the thing is, jazz has always *been* about hybridization, that's how it came to *be*. It's hybridization of all kinds of things and every new style of jazz that came out was always about incorporating new sounds and influences from what those musicians were hearing around them at the time.¹⁰⁹

In 2018, Tiffin co-founded the all-women Lady Day Big Band. In addition to playing instruments, all the band members also sing at times, blurring the gendered lines between instrumentalist and vocalist. As a musical director, Tiffin

¹⁰⁷ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 167.

¹⁰⁸ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 168.

¹⁰⁹ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 220.

is committed to showcasing compositions by women (including her own) and contributing to the diversification of the South African jazz canon. Tiffin is devoted to projects that empower women and girls to pursue jazz careers:

I think there's still a perpetuation of the gendering of instruments in some school environments... but that's one of the main drives for the Lady Day Big Band... there are a lot of amazing schoolteachers that are encouraging young female learners to take up whatever instrument they want and encouraging them to take it seriously, and then teaching them.... I think it's very important that young women see other women modelling what's possible. This is what's *possible* for you, you know? You can be a drummer, a saxophone player, a bass player, and be a successful professional musician... and do interesting and exciting things!¹¹⁰

In 2018, she was thrust into the spotlight as the first woman to direct the Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Band, the flagship ensemble of the country's most prominent jazz development program:

The fact that I was the first female national bandleader was outrageous in 2018—*outrageous*—and it was mildly annoying that I had to be branded like that. It wasn't just, "Here's the next National Youth Band director." Rather, "First female, first female." Which is good in some ways because it highlights the problem, but at the same time you just want to be chosen or booked for that job because you are good at what you do.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, she acknowledges the impact of the #MeToo movement on South African jazz culture:

I accepted a lot more [as a student] than I would accept *now*... and I think it's taken the younger generation to highlight that stuff and make me realize in retrospect that there was so much that was dysfunctional... and that one just went along with it, because what *else* would you do? If you wanted to work, that's how you had to operate... looking back, I think there were definitely a lot less opportunities offered to me. It was only really in recent years, with the whole bubbling up of the #MeToo movement, that I really started to become a lot more educated. And it was my students, my younger generation students, who were discussing these things and talking about this... and some of my younger friends. And... it sort of woke

¹¹⁰ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 171-172.

¹¹¹ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 170.

me up... I looked around and [I realized], "I'm in a position of authority now, where I can actually make *changes*."¹¹²

Tiffin is confident that her work is making an impact and that her jazz students are being equipped to affect change:

I see how much of a difference I'm making even in a few years... modelling a way of leading and a way of interacting for younger colleagues and students that is new and different and more consultative, more collaborative... I think there's a hell of a lot of people... who are still perpetuating the "bro" network. There's still a lot of that. *A lot*. But the students who are graduating now and going off into the professional space are the ones that are more woke and more aware, and more interested in equality in terms of whom they work with.¹¹³

She also believes that inclusivity is on the rise in the music industry:

I see the shifting of the media focus to some extent, [towards] artists that are...not only male jazz artists. [Women's visibility is] still a lot less, but there is more focus, more exposure, more opportunities. I do see things changing in the industry. I see it changing in terms of when you see a new project coming up, there's a mix of gender... because those young people decided that they want to work together.¹¹⁴

Tiffin's own experiences have motivated her to develop an educational culture where excellence can be achieved without misogyny and toxicity. Her commitment to "cleaning up" jazz education has been met with strong resistance:

There has been pushback... you know you're doing something right when people push back. I'm sure that there are labels for me now... labels that say I'm a man-hater or whatever, because I've laid down a line... particularly where this kind of [sexist] behavior is *not* okay anymore. In the past, it would've just been swept under the rug or laughed off as "boys will be boys," or "a lecturer can be a bully, because they're in a position of authority" and that kind of thing... Some of the lecturing staff left, because they don't like..., to quote one person, he said, "I don't want to teach in a place where the tail is wagging the dog." Which is fine. That's okay. You can take your bullying tactics elsewhere. It's not a healthy place for young people to learn.

¹¹² Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 171. For more on the #metoo movement, founded by Tarana Burke, visit the following website: me too., <https://metoomvmt.org/>.

¹¹³ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 170-171.

¹¹⁴ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 173.

How do you learn when people are shouting and screaming at you? *You don't*. You just shut down, and that dysfunction is not okay.¹¹⁵

She believes that many women in the South African jazz scene are reluctant to tackle patriarchy head-on:

If they're seen to be advocates or seen to be vocal about being a feminist and advocating for gender equality, [they feel] that they won't get booked in the men's spaces... and it's true. They won't. But for me... I don't care. I'm in a position where I've made my own work, I have my own projects, I'm in a great job, so I'm not dependent on anybody else... I can create the work that I want to create and work with the musicians that I want to work with, without fear. I have the luxury to be able to speak out without it affecting my bottom line. [Some people really shy away] from having any part in the whole gender activist movement in music and in jazz and being on panels and things like that... because of that pushback. Because [they] play so much in male spaces and [they] don't want to be seen as the angry, loud, shouting woman. I just have the luxury of not really giving a toss about that anymore. I'm old enough not to care. I'm not starting my career.¹¹⁶

Tiffin embraces being older and more experienced, and is committed to providing mentorship and support to those starting out in the field:

There were certain people in my career who have mentored and encouraged me, so it's nice to be able to pass it on. It makes a difference to people, having someone in their corner... I'm almost always the oldest in the room these days... I still remember being the youngest! People see you in a different light, so they treat you a different way. There's a measure of respect [that comes with my job] so they expect me to take a leadership role even if it's not necessarily my project alone, or something like that. People look to you for guidance.¹¹⁷

In terms of the curriculum, Tiffin's students are encouraged to embrace musical hybridity and cultural "difference." After years of side-lining popular music to gain recognition as a "serious" jazz musician, she has reclaimed pop music as a powerful tool for musical learning, storytelling, and social commentary. More importantly, she has disrupted the narrative of jazz as a field where men lead, and women follow:

¹¹⁵ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 172.

¹¹⁶ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 174.

¹¹⁷ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 171.

[Jazz is] about pushing boundaries and envelopes and experimentation and exploration... let's try to change the [old] framework, let's improvise over different sounds and try some different things. [When men do this] they're so innovative, they're breaking boundaries!¹¹⁸

Thanks to the legwork done by Tiffin over three decades, young jazz musicians (regardless of gender or race) in South Africa have greater access to role models, development opportunities, and a more even playing field than their predecessors.¹¹⁹ As a white, Zimbabwean-born woman who started her musical career as a classical pianist and aspiring popular music composer, Tiffin followed an untraditional path towards her current position as a highly regarded jazz educator. She has embraced her own musical hybridity and inspired others to move beyond outdated notions of jazz mastery that favor masculine dominance and perpetuate outdated models of legitimation.¹²⁰

CHANTAL WILLIE-PETERSEN (BORN 1978)

In contrast to Tiffin, Willie-Petersen's experiences of "othering" as an undergraduate student at the University of Cape Town were tempered by a changing political and social landscape in the late 1990s and early 2000s; whereas Tiffin was isolated and vastly outnumbered by her male counterparts during the 1990s, Willie-Petersen teamed up with her twin sister Denay to form an all-women vocal group, circumventing the hostility experienced by Tiffin. The group provided a safe space where she could develop her jazz skills and agency as a musician: "We had a *communion* in the ensemble... that joy with the other vocalists... That was tremendous, because it also opened doors and we played with really good musicians and learned different things."¹²¹

Willie-Petersen was a classically trained pianist, and unlike fellow students who had been involved in jazz programs since high school, she found the transition to jazz piano challenging. However, performing as a gospel singer and piano accompanist in church since childhood provided her with a solid foundation for improvisation and ensemble work. She also decided to take up the double bass, a new instrument she was determined to master:

¹¹⁸ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 220.

¹¹⁹ In addition to her education outreach work with the Lady Day Big Band, Tiffin has acted as curator and director for various women-empowering festivals in South Africa, including the Artscape Jazz Masters Concert Series and the Artscape Youth Jazz Festival.

¹²⁰ By way of example, Tiffin's former student (and later colleague at the University of Cape Town) pianist/vocalist Nomfundo Xaluva, is an award-winning jazz composer and recording artist who fights publicly for women's rights in the music business.

¹²¹ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 181.

I knew *nothing* about the repertoire, the composers, arranging, but...I give tribute to my schoolteachers... I had some skill in understanding how to internalize a new genre and what needed to be done, although the practice base was different. I had to really use my ear and transcribe, and not only focus on notation. I had to understand, “What is a lead sheet? Where do I improvise?” It was a *steep* curve, the first year... I already had an interest in musical direction, arranging and composing... I used my [piano playing technique] to get through voicings, get through the rubrics. [I had to] make sure that the time I had put in since I was six or seven... was [transferable] and beneficial to the *other* subjects that were not so easy for me to acclimatize to... I was at six to eight hours [of piano practice] a day to try and make up for not having [a jazz] background. Then I started studying double bass... because I really loved the instrument, and I always knew that at some point I was going to make a switch.¹²²

After one year, Willie-Petersen accepted a scholarship in Belgium where she completed master’s degrees in both jazz voice and double bass. Exposed to a more diverse curriculum, she soon gravitated towards hybridized music projects, ranging from traditional big band and avant-garde compositions to film and folk/jazz crossover music. Between 2003 and 2007, she toured and recorded with the all-women Belgian supergroup, Zap Mama, the epitome of creative freedom and empowerment:

With Zap Mama, it wasn’t jazz, it was world music. It had a jazz approach because there was improvisation and the music was at a very high level, but it wasn’t... bebop. And it wasn’t the Brussels Jazz Orchestra. And it also wasn’t that third stream [of jazz] that you find in Europe... it was just *different* and beautiful.¹²³

Since her return to South Africa in 2009, she has been active as a performer, bandleader and festival curator. A stalwart in jazz education circles and church music, her work has been described as “jazz cosmopolitanism,” often fusing jazz with indigenous African music traditions, gospel music, and hip hop.¹²⁴ Willie-Petersen is currently on the jazz faculty at Wits University in Johannesburg, where she teaches jazz vocals and double bass. She leads with care: the qualities that typically marginalize women on the bandstand—being too feminine or soft or not aggressive enough—are at the core of her identity as an educator. She

¹²² Williams, “Beyond Mastery,” 181.

¹²³ Williams, “Beyond Mastery,” 240.

¹²⁴ Examples include the SA/Ghana collaborative Jazz Cosmology, The Cape Town Goema Orchestra, and the USA/SA jazz collaborative, the Soweto-Englewood Exchange, led by American saxophonist and composer Ernest Dawkins.

believes that being more mature and being a mother has changed the way she approaches her teaching and how she is perceived by her students:

I've heard from the students that the space was very paternalistic before I arrived and that outside of the teaching, I have brought a very maternal presence... Everybody assumes it's mostly women [who sing or teach singing], so there are these genderized spaces already... that bring preconceived perceptions that need to be changed. I happen to be in a department with more women than men... there's a real mentoring that happens, which is also emotional and psychological.¹²⁵

Willie-Petersen is deeply committed to showcasing women's compositions and contributions to jazz. In tandem with her current PhD research, she regularly leads seminars, workshops, and performances on issues of colonialism, gender inequality, social justice, and music education. In 2022, the world premiere of her composition, "Kloppe Roep - Calling Bells"¹²⁶ for carillon bells was performed at the University of Michigan.¹²⁷ Commissioned as part of a project interrogating colonialism and patriarchy in music, the piece forms part of the first collection of carillon works by Black South African composers.¹²⁸ The composition draws heavily on jazz harmony and is particularly symbolic: the only playable carillon in South Africa—and on the African continent—is in Cape Town where Willie-Petersen was born. As an inheritor of various layers of oppression herself, she dedicated the piece to "the enslaved women at the Cape."¹²⁹ This refocusing on the social rather than what DiPiero describes as "paper-based concerns" (the decontextualization of jazz in favor of white, "masculinized," and "technocratic" music theory practices when analyzing bebop), is a vital step towards transforming jazz education in South Africa.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Williams, "Beyond Mastery," 185.

¹²⁶ The Dutch title, "Kloppe Roep" (Calling Bells) is a reference to Dutch colonial Cape Town during the 1600s. It is also the language Willie-Petersen needed to learn whilst studying in Belgium.

¹²⁷ Tiffany Ng, "Your Rhythm is Rebellion: Ringing in Postcolonial Carillon Solidarity," University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance, April 1, 2022, YouTube video, 38:09, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4U7TyydbFVQ&t=275s>.

¹²⁸ University of Michigan African Studies Center, "Your Rhythm Is Rebellion: Ringing in Postcolonial Carillon Solidarity on the Sixty Bells of the University of Michigan Carillon Tower," *umich.edu*, September 3, 2022, accessed December 30, 2022, <https://ii.umich.edu/asc/news-events/news/search-news/your-rhythm-is-rebellion.html>.

¹²⁹ University of Michigan African Studies Center, "Your Rhythm Is Rebellion: Ringing in Postcolonial Carillon Solidarity on the Sixty Bells of the University of Michigan Carillon Tower".

¹³⁰ DiPiero, "Race, Gender, and Jazz School," 56.

SOCIAL AWARENESS, ADVOCACY AND JAZZ EDUCATION

The foregrounding of social awareness and activism is central to feminist pedagogies. Paula Grissom-Broughton writes that “when feminist pedagogy is activated in an engaged classroom, educators become agents of social change, and students are empowered through their presence and contributions to the learning process.”¹³¹ For Grissom-Broughton, feminist pedagogy “offers an instructional approach for a more democratic and diverse curriculum and pedagogy.”¹³² Black feminist pedagogy, in turn, offers a “more specialized instructional approach for underrepresented populations in education.”¹³³ It is also a framework for “broadening and minimizing the assumed norms and stereotypes—regarding not only gender but also race and class—within any learning environment.”¹³⁴ Grissom-Broughton adds that “what should matter to (jazz) music educators is not only *who* and *what* we teach but also *how* we teach this art form.”¹³⁵

Willie-Petersen, for example, draws on her own lived experiences as a woman of color to inform multiple aspects of her pedagogical practice, from curricular design to the creation of nurturing learning spaces both within and beyond the classroom. Like Tiffin, Willie-Petersen encourages a culture of camaraderie and collaboration rather than competition and technical wizardry. They have not sacrificed excellence but rather foregrounded the qualities that have historically side-lined them (and women more generally): self-expression, sensitivity, and “otherness.” As educators, they empower their students to experiment without fear of being marginalized or viewed as inauthentic jazz-makers. Central to both women’s work is reclaiming the voice (women’s voices in particular) as a powerful instrument, rather than an inferior medium of musical expression. They and their students sing jazz in local languages and boldly infuse traditional jazz styles with elements of gospel, pop, and indigenous genres.

Some of the strategies employed by Tiffin and Willie-Petersen mirror those of multi award-winning American drummer, Terri Lyne Carrington, who leads

¹³¹ Paula A. Grissom-Broughton, “A Matter of Race and Gender: An Examination of an Undergraduate Music Program through the Lens of Feminist Pedagogy and Black Feminist Pedagogy” (DMA diss., Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2015), 50.

¹³² Grissom-Broughton, “A Matter of Race and Gender,” 160.

¹³³ Grissom-Broughton, “A Matter of Race and Gender,” 160.

¹³⁴ Paula Grissom-Broughton, “(Re)Imagining Jazz Education through the Lens of Black Feminist Pedagogy: (Presented at the 2021 Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Studies),” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 27 (2023): 55.

¹³⁵ Grissom-Broughton, “(Re)Imagining Jazz Education,” 57.

the Berklee College of Music's Institute for Jazz and Gender Justice.¹³⁶ Tracy McMullen argues that Carrington's approach to jazz education expands "beyond the technicality of jazz into the effort to make the world better."¹³⁷ McMullen explains how the institute

connects innovation and creativity in jazz with social awareness. It is a broad definition of artistic awareness that includes social, ethical, and historical cognizance and responsibility, aspects that need to be woodshedded just like tone production and altered dominant scales.¹³⁸

Jazz programs can no longer afford to be out of touch with current social and ethical developments; according to McMullen, Carrington "understands jazz as an ethics passed down through mentorship, and her commitment to work for social justice is indistinguishable from her identity as a musician."¹³⁹ Even without the level of established institutional support enjoyed by Carrington and her colleagues at Berklee, Tiffin and Willie-Petersen have succeeded in opening the field of jazz through activism and progressive educational styles. Their agendas of empowerment are often met with resistance, yet they are central to their identities as musicians and educators. Like their counterparts at Berklee, they too are committed to the provision of mentorship by women role models; the collection, distribution, performance, and recording of compositions by women; engagement in school outreach projects; and collaboration with other institutions dedicated to ethical practices and equality.¹⁴⁰ Tiffin and Willie-Petersen's work reflects McMullen's notion of jazz as an ethical practice: "We are moving away from a world where a masculinity based on power over others is prized... to be the nurturer, the one to help heal the trauma rather than to continue to pass it on, is jazz."¹⁴¹

CONCLUSION

It remains important to acknowledge the challenges women face in jazz education and in wider jazz culture, but it is even more crucial to document

¹³⁶ Terri Lyne Carrington, "Sexism in Jazz: Being Agents of Change," *Huffington Post*, April 10, 2017, accessed on October 1, 2024, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sexism-in-jazz-agents-of-change_b_58ebfab1e4b0ca64d9187879.

¹³⁷ McMullen, "Jazz Education after 2017: The Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice and the Pedagogical Lineage," *Jazz & Culture* 4, no. 2, (2021): 34.

¹³⁸ McMullen, "Jazz Education after 2017," 34.

¹³⁹ McMullen, "Jazz Education after 2017," 28.

¹⁴⁰ McMullen, "Jazz Education after 2017," 28.

¹⁴¹ McMullen, "Jazz Education after 2017," 44.

success stories. South African jazz scholarship about women (and indeed undertaken by women) has long been aligned with compensatory research traditions, with very little focus on the impact of empowered individuals like Tiffin and Willie-Petersen. Documenting their stories will broaden and enrich jazz discourse in South Africa and contribute to growing international scholarship that moves beyond long-accepted narratives of patriarchy and colonialism. This article offers a starting point for South African jazz scholarship that is more in tune with current social dynamics and that highlights the value of (feminist) pedagogical practices.

As DiPiero states, “[It] is worth paying attention to humility, curiosity, and other noncompetitive/nonmasculine cultural values in conversations about what feminist jazz pedagogy *could* look like.”¹⁴² Willie-Petersen and Tiffin have democratized the jazz curriculum, shifted classroom power dynamics, and created music that celebrates inclusivity and innovation. Their astute self-presentation, dedication to mentoring, and the genuine ethic of care that defines their teaching practices prove that jazz education in South Africa is transcending narrow aestheticism and its long legacy of exclusion.

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¹⁴² DiPiero, “Race, Gender, and Jazz School,” 67.

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