

WATCH THIS WITHOUT READING AHEAD!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_YoDGz2dZo

Before, I launch into this... I know many of you would say on a typical forum “she’s good but I wouldn’t listen to this”. Duh. I know that... for most of you. That’s not what this forum post is about.

The first question I want you to answer: Be honest. Did you notice that it was a woman playing a saxophone? Like “oh, that’s a woman playing as opposed to a man”.

This one is a little longer and a little more complicated. If you are one to only want to skim the surface, I’ll sum it up for you within the first few sentences:

Sexism is rampant everywhere. Music is no different. And for today’s discussion, we’re not even referring to non binary gendered people. I can’t imagine those statistics. In a study of major symphony orchestras (roughly 2500 in study), 69% of the musicians were male, 31% female. The article breaks it down by instrument and it’s even more alarming. The jazz world is among the worst. 82.5% of “jazz studies” majors in US universities are male. That’s insane. And when you grill folks on their favorite female instrumentalists, they scramble. Their beady little eyes dart. (My eyes dart! We are all guilty. It’s a very tricky topic.) They can name dozens of vocalists, but not many instrumentalists. We are in a better era now than ever before, but we are still rolling around in the grass when it comes to equality. You are likely familiar with some of the discrepancies within pop music with how the Grammy’s roll out and pay differences between top female/male artists. It’s messy there too. Though I do think there’s more of a balance in the pop world than the classical/jazz world. Just as there’s more of a balance in the vocal world than the instrumental world.

I feel our school is in a really good place with this. Not that we can’t always be working at it. One of my best friends is a community organizer, activist, feminist, trombone player. She’s an incredible person with some very interesting stories to tell. Throughout her whole life, men have come up to her and said things like “wow, you’re pretty good at trombone for a girl!”. She has some excellent responses to this crap. She’s remarked on multiple occasions how incredible the balances are within our section. We have an abundance of incredible female brass musicians. Female jazz musicians. At our high school, roughly 52% of our instrumental music program is female. Our trumpet section is 60% male, 40% female.

1) Questions: Why do you think there is such an imbalance within the instrumental music world?

2) Check out this [graph](#). Why do you think the balance is so much larger between

instruments?

3) Why do you think our school has a better male/female gender balance than the national average?

4) What other thoughts might you have on this topic?

This is a woman talking about the issue in jazz more in depth. I don't agree with everything she says but she says some interesting things. At one point she suggests that girls deliberately give up things they are good at to attract boys. That makes me feel sick inside. I wonder what you think of that?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2N9zzecj2k>

Article about imbalances in orchestras:

<https://qz.com/work/1393078/orchestras/>

Some more relevant pop music related articles:

<https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/8096196/new-report-shows-major-lack-representation-women-music-industry>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/25/arts/music/music-industry-gender-study-women-artists-producers.html>