THE MUSIC PRODUCTS INDUSTRY AFTER #METOO

Presentation by Sarajean Reinert
Research by Dr. Mike D’Errico & Sarajean Reinert
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BEHIND THE RESEARCH: WHY THIS TOPIC MATTERS
The Research & The Researchers

- This presentation covers research that Dr. D’Errico and I conducted in Interim of 2020 through Albright’s Creative Research Experience (ACRE).

- As a female engineer and lead singer-songwriter of a rock band, this topic is of high interest to me and was one that both Dr. D’Errico and I were curious about, so we researched it together through our ACRE.

- We conducted our research through reading academic articles about various topics such as gender philosophy & women and technology to gain a foundation on our topic. We then combined our academic research with contemporary articles from blog posts, websites, and music magazines as well to gain information from women and female identifying individuals in the field currently.

- We compiled this information into a conference paper and started the foundation for a website called The Plugin that will be a resource for women in the music industry.
The #metoo Movement

◦ The #metoo movement was a recent movement within the entertainment industry to bring awareness to the high number of sexual assault cases and the gender imbalance within the industry. It was spurred by famous film maker Harvey Weinstein’s case, in which he was accused and recently found guilty of rape.

◦ This movement caused an outpouring on social media of women sharing their stories of sexual assaults that occurred were tied to their work within the entertainment industry. As a result, many people realized the gender imbalances within the entertainment industry and in turn, started trying to make it a more inclusive industry.

◦ This led to the growth of female inclusion in advertising and female supporting non-profits within the music industry. It also provided the foundation for multiple large-scale inclusion initiatives including, The Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.
The Annenberg Inclusion Initiative: Why This Matters

- In 2018 The Annenberg Inclusion Initiative published a report of a study of six hundred popular songs. In this study only 22% of those artists were female, 12% were songwriters, and only 2% were producers (Annenberg Inclusion Initiative).
- As a result of this research, large responses within the music industry began, including The Grammy Foundation’s formation of their Diversity & Inclusion Task Force.
- This report highlighted the severe lack of representation within the music industry and has provided a cause of change for many within the music industry and provided a foundation for our research.
GENDER & TECHNOLOGY: THE ROOTS OF GENDER CODING
Where It All Started…

- The foundational gender biases come from a long history of philosophy, in which the mind and all the matters associated with it are seen as masculine due to their complex nature. Conversely, emotions and the body as seen as feminine because they were viewed as inferior to the mind.

- This dichotomy has led to deep gender biases and resulted in technology being coded as masculine for centuries. This is one of the multitude of reasons that technology related fields are still male dominated to this day.
Music Technology- Just a Man’s Game?

- Many areas within music have imbalances within gender coding such as music composition & music technology because fields are viewed as complex and intellect based. Whereas, areas of music that are viewed as more emotion based like performance are viewed as feminine and are not perceived as skilled as the other technology-based areas.

- This leads to a host issues including gender biases within music education classrooms globally. A study that took place in England at a music school found that the boys were given more opportunities from their teachers to learn instruments and software than the girls. The girls were also more prone to insecurities within their skills and were not given the same amount of attention as the male students. While this was one study, similar experiences have been shared on multiple accounts showing that unfortunately these experiences are not uncommon.
WOMEN IN THE MUSIC PRODUCTS INDUSTRY: THE TRUTH OF THE TRIALS
A Woman’s Place: The Stage vs. Behind The Board

- Within music historically, women are viewed as purely singers and performers because these areas were viewed as their place within entertainment due to the false perceived lack of complexity. This one of the many reasons that women are not often seen playing instruments on stage and especially guitar in live settings.

- This also creates an issue for women for who want to be apart of the behind the scenes technical work-spaces such as running live sound and studio engineering because these jobs are viewed as masculine and as male dominated spaces, women aren’t encouraged to go into these careers. Often when they do, they encounter mansplaining and competition that make it a toxic environment for them.
Within the Music Products Industry, there are multiple products that portray misogynistic tendencies through marketing and product design. There are guitar pedals that are named after female body parts and instruments that are shaped like female bodies to encourage feelings of “mastery” within the user which is terrible.

There are also instances in which many products, such as Digital Audio Workstations, Guitars, Guitar pedals are only marketed towards male customers and so their advertisements only reflect male users.
PREVIOUS & CURRENT STRATEGIES: INCREASE IN NUMBERS VS. SUSTAINABILITY
Non-Profits & Current Resources

- In response to movements like the #metoo movement and the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, many non-profits have formed to support women within various sectors of the music industry.

- These non-profits provide valuable and often free resources to women such as webinars, networking events, and weekly blogs to help keep women in the loop on the newest advancements in the industry.

- Some of the most notable ones are: Women In Music, She Rock She Rock, Beatz By Girlz and Women’s Audio Mission.

- There is also a directory called EQL that was created purely for female identifying workers in the music industry to encourage people to hire more women for production and engineering positions.
Behind The Misconception: There Aren’t Women In The Music Products Industry

- All these resources provide great resources within the music industry; however, the lack of female representation remains. There have been many approaches discussed to tackling this issue and one of them is to simply put more women into the music industry.

- However, we found through our research that the issue is not simply that there aren’t enough women in the music products industry, it is that the women that are in it aren’t getting the opportunities they deserve.

- The other flaw within the approach of simply adding more women to the industry is that since the industry contains these deep biases, many women don’t feel supported or valued and so they leave. The question should not be how do we up the numbers of women in the industry but rather, how do we help them stay in it?
OUR SOLUTION
The most useful resource that women reported in a study by Berklee are networking opportunities.

This study found that these events and means of connection were the most valuable to women and the longevity of their careers.

This led us to the creation of our networking website called The Plugin, in which women will be able to stay up to date on the newest developments in the music products industry and connect with each other via a public forum.

The website is still under construction but will hopefully launch Fall of 2020.
CONCLUSION
All this research is important because it gives validation to the struggles that many women face within the music products industry today. In doing this research, I read a multitude of stories in which women were looked down on, mansplained to, and even sexually assaulted because of being a part of this industry. I say this because this research and these experiences are real.

While there are changes being made on the surface, as seen through more women in advertisements, the true root of many of these issues still remains. Misogynist ideas are still apparent through various products and through the treatment of women in this industry in general.

That is why this research shows the reality of gender biases in the music products industry and the deep necessity of change for true equality to become a reality. It is only in becoming aware of an issue first that it can truly be confronted.

It is my hope that through reading this you can become more aware of the imbalances of gender dynamics within this industry as I did through researching and being a part of it.
Citations

Thanks for Viewing!
Have any questions or want to discuss this topic further?
Feel free to email Sarajeann.reinert001@Albright.edu