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Challenges for Women in Jazz Education: Annotated Bibliography

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Challenges for Women in Jazz Education: Annotated Bibliography

Berliner, Sasha. "An Open Letter to Ethan Iverson (And the Rest of Jazz Patriarchy)."

Sasha Berliner (blog). September 21, 2017,

[http://www.sashaberlinermusic.com/political-and-social-commentary-](http://www.sashaberlinermusic.com/political-and-social-commentary-1/2017/9/21/an-open-letter-to-ethan-iverson-and-the-rest-of-jazz-patriarchy)

[1/2017/9/21/an-open-letter-to-ethan-iverson-and-the-rest-of-jazz-patriarchy](http://www.sashaberlinermusic.com/political-and-social-commentary-1/2017/9/21/an-open-letter-to-ethan-iverson-and-the-rest-of-jazz-patriarchy)

This blog post by then 19 year-old jazz vibraphonist/percussionist Sasha Berliner was written in response to an interview between Ethan Iverson and Robert Glasper, published on Iverson's *Do The Math* blog. Berliner spends time addressing particular sexist comments made in that interview. The majority of the text is made up of stories and examples of the blatant sexism Berliner and her female colleagues have experienced growing up as female jazz musicians and in higher education. She also explores the history of sexism in the genre and explains jazz's patriarchal construction. This blog post emphasizes the importance for jazz musicians to actively break deeply engrained practices that perpetuate inequality.

Boeyink, Natalie L. "A Descriptive Study of Collegiate Female Jazz Instrumentalists."

D.M.E. diss, Indiana University, 2015. ProQuest LLC

This dissertation focuses on the study of women instrumentalists pursuing undergraduate or graduate jazz degrees. After an extensive review of literature on the subject, Boeyink focuses in on her research, which was primarily conducted with a written survey, completed by female collegiate jazz students. She provides analysis of

these surveys and common ideas that were consistent throughout the survey responses. This dissertation provides a lot of methodically collected data about the problems women face in higher education as they pursue jazz degrees and the frequency with which these issues are occurring.

McKeage, Kathleen. "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 4 (December 2004). <https://doi-org.du.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/002242940405200406>.

This article compares the results of a survey taken by 628 male and female students in high school and college level ensembles regarding their attitudes towards participating in jazz ensembles and what factors led them to quit (if they did). The study analyses the gender breakdown of participation in jazz ensembles in high school, college, post-college, and of participants who had never partaken in a jazz ensemble. Data from the survey questions is presented, again by gender breakdown regarding factors like comfort in jazz environment, role models present, and the level of encouragement given to musicians to pursue jazz further. The article provides significant data and analysis about the stark differences between male and female participation, attitudes, and obstacles pertaining to jazz.

Porter, Lewis. "You Can't Get Up There Timidly: Jazzwomen Part II." *Music Educators Journal* 71, no. 2 (October 1984): 43-52. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3396332>.

This article, from 1984, is an in-depth look at three females jazz musicians; Alice Coltrane, Mary Lou Williams, and Carla Bley. Written in 1984, the piece offers an

interesting look into how women jazz musicians were perceived by their peers and the people writing about them at that time. The author often inserts opinions about the women's playing and style, comparing them to their male contemporaries. At times, the article becomes more of a music review than a detailing of the women's lives and accomplishment. Quotes are included from all of the women throughout the article, providing insight into their perspectives about their music and their influences. In a wide study of the history of gender in jazz, this article is useful in capturing the framework and mindset of the time it was written, especially because it was by a male author.

Provost, Sarah Caissie. "Bringing Something New: Female Jazz Instrumentalists' Use of Imitation and Masculinity." *Jazz Perspectives* 10, no. 2-3 (September 2017): 141-157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17494060.2018.1443966>.

This journal article explores the history of sexism in jazz, specifically about the need for women to embody masculine characteristics in order to succeed or be taken seriously. Provost spends time explaining the context in which jazz became such a male-dominated discipline and the ways that women at the time had to compensate. Musicians like Lil Hardin, Mary Lou Williams, and Valaida Snow are discussed, in particular about what masculine characteristics they adopted, or who they knew in the jazz scene in order to achieve some kind of notoriety as jazz musicians. This article mainly discusses the history of male-dominance in jazz, but connects this history to how it affects women jazz musicians today.

Rizzi, Marguerite Claire. "The Education of Women Jazz Musicians: Insights Into Effective Teaching." Ph.D diss, Boston University, 2000. RILM Abstracts of Music Literature (1967 to Present only).

The main purpose of this doctoral dissertation is to understand what teaching methods successful women jazz musicians have found most effective both in formal educational settings and less conventional settings. The author conducted a detailed study of eleven women who are all career jazz musicians from four different age ranges. The main body of the text is broken up into eleven sections detailing the lives and perspectives of the subjects and their background regarding formal education, family musical history, participation in enrichment programs, and other factors. Rizzi then compares answers and presents the most prevalent ideas about the most effective ways to educate successful women in the field of jazz.

Suzuki, Yoko. "Two Strikes and the Double Negative: The Intersections of Gender and Race in the Case of Female Jazz Saxophonists." *Black Music Research Journal* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 207-226. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/538630>.

Suzuki's article is an in depth study of female jazz saxophonists of different ethnic backgrounds and how their race and gender has affected them in their pursuit of careers in jazz. Interviews were conducted with working saxophonists living in New York City. Through these interviews, many differences in opinion are presented. Attitudes towards sexism in jazz are approached differently depending on the race of the interviewee, and parallels are drawn between setbacks of women in jazz and setbacks of black men in a progressively whiter discipline. This article illustrates the importance of

considering race in a discussion about gender and jazz.

Tucker, Sherrie. "Where is the Jazz in Jazzercise?" *Women & Music – A Journal of Gender and Culture* 19, no.1 (2015): 18-26. <https://search-proquest-com.du.idm.oclc.org/docview/1768185518?accountid=14608>

Sherrie Tucker's article is a playfully written exploration of what it means to be a feminist jazz scholar, through the lens of what exactly jazz has to do with Jazzercise. She discusses her personal history as a feminist musicologist and the lack of approval from colleagues who did not consider women jazz musicians to be valid or worthy of study. Throughout the article, Tucker imagines comical scenarios of conferences discussing the meaning of Jazzercise, while still making important assertions about who should or should not be considered a "worthy" female jazz musician to study. She touches on the divide between singers and instrumentalists and that women vocalists are often considered less study-worthy than women instrumentalists.

Vandever, Kalia. "Token Girl." *Medium* (blog). March, 2018.

<https://medium.com/@kaliamariev/token-girl-564457c86f13>

This blog post by jazz trombonist Kalia Vandever details her personal struggles as a jazz musician and focuses on her time as an undergraduate student at Juilliard. She explains in depth her uncomfortable and unprofessional interactions with particular faculty members and clinicians and how these encounters affected her as a student and person. Vandever proposes her ideas about the role of institutions in preventing situations like the ones she experienced and in dealing with matters of sexual harassment. This

piece provides a current outlook from a contemporary jazz woman who is actively dealing with gender discrimination in the field.

Wahl, Chelsea, and Ellingson, Stephen. "Almost Like a Real Band: Navigating a Gendered Jazz Art World." *Qualitative Sociology* 41, no. 3 (September 2018): 445-471. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11133-018-9388-9>.

This article is an in-depth and current exploration of the challenges that women jazz musicians have endured throughout history and continue to deal with. Authors Wahl and Ellingson analyze interview data from the Hamilton College Jazz Archive in order to show the systematic challenges women have faced throughout jazz history that men did not encounter. Topics like the gendering of particular instruments and the gendering of performance are discussed. Also running through the article is the idea of inclusion vs. exclusion, the ways women navigate jazz culture, and the importance of meritocracy in gaining a positive/accepted reputation as a woman in jazz. The article contributes to a broader topic regarding women in male-dominated career fields.

We Have a Voice. "Open Letter." <http://wehavevoice.org/English>

The Open Letter was inspired by the "#MeToo" movement and addressing inequality for women. The letter was composed by the "We Have Voice Collective", a group of 14 musicians from different racial backgrounds, gender identities, and cultures. In this letter, the authors challenge all musicians participating in any kind of ensemble or institution to work to create environments where all people, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, etc. feel comfortable and safe. The letter also challenges individuals to

consider their behavior relating to these issues and invites readers to sign the letter in solidarity with the collective. This movement demonstrates the progress that is being made to counteract deep-rooted inequality in all musical disciplines, including jazz.

Wehr-Flowers, Erin. "Differences between Male and Female Students' Confidence, Anxiety, and Attitude toward Learning Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 337-349.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4139755>

This article presents a study conducted through surveying middle school through college-aged musicians studying jazz. The surveys focused particularly on understanding gender differences in levels of confidence and anxiety while learning about jazz improvisation. Data analyzed reveals that females on average were significantly more anxious, less confident, and had more negative attitudes about learning jazz. Wehr-Flowers points out that there are no significant differences in actual skill level or ability to learn the music, but that the social constructs and ideas about gender put women at a disadvantage.