

Title:

The Sound of Misogyny: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in the Music Industry

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Abstract (Standard example):

The cultural and creative industries are the fastest growing industries in the UK (Webster et al., 2018). Stakeholder engagement, media reporting, anecdotal evidence and emerging research suggests endemic levels of sexual harassment and sexualised violence within the music industry that it can be described as widespread, systemic and normalised. This article reviews the literature on sexual harassment and sexualised violence in the music industry examining gender stratifications and inequalities within the music industry with a focus on UK, Australian and US studies. The music industry is not a singular entity but instead, is an agglomeration of many different sub-sectors predominantly comprised of three interconnected spheres of music recording and distribution, music publishing and licensing, and live performance. It references Kelly's (1988; 2007; 2016) theorisations on conducive contexts and the continuum of violence to argue that historical and entrenched misogyny and sexism along with the lack of regulation, process and governing frameworks creates conditions for both the maintenance of gender inequality and the perpetuation of sexual harassment and sexualised violence within the music industry. Consequently, both the cultural context and the practice of misogyny (in this case sexual harassment and sexualised violence) within the music industry are mutually supporting and reinforcing.

Key messages (if applicable):

(Summarising the main messages from the paper in up to four bullet points)

Emerging evidence shows that sexual harassment is endemic in the music industry.

Live music is a transgressive space.

Kelly's conducive context framework highlights how characteristics of live music spaces (e.g. gender inequalities, unregulated work environment, lack of policies) and the cultural context within the music industry facilitate sexual harassment.

Key words/short phrases:

Music Industry; Sexual Harassment Sexual Violence;; Gender Inequality; Conducive Context, Continuum of Sexual Violence

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The Sound of Misogyny: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in the Music Industry

Introduction

The emergent literature documenting sexual harassment and sexualised violence within the music industry in addition to stakeholder engagement, media reporting and anecdotal evidence suggests endemic levels. Crabtree (2020) argues that sexual harassment can be described as widespread, systematic and normalised within the music industry (Baker et al., 2020; Hill et al., 2020; Jones and Manoussaki, 2022). This has also been reflected by recent reports which have revealed that nearly half (48%) of the musicians who participated in the UK Musicians Union survey (2019) have experienced sexual harassment at work and that 40% of women under 40 who participated in the Brown (2021) study have experienced sexual harassment at live music events in the UK. The growing evidence base documents the scale where two thirds of surveyed female music creators identify sexual harassment as a major issue globally (MIDIa Research, 2021). Reporting and research have documented sexual harassment and violence in music industry in different contexts including Nigeria (Aborisade, 2021), Spain (Beltrán and Calvet, 2020), Australia and New Zealand (Crabtree, 2020; Wadds, et al., 2021), Cuba (Bodenheimer, 2022) and India (Balakrishnan, 2019). Focussing primarily but not solely on UK, Australian and US research, this article examines sexual misconduct and offers a feminist informed critique of the music industry. Surprisingly, despite the fact that cultural and creative industries are the fastest growing industries in the UK (Webster et al., 2018) this has not yet been done. We postulate that this may be a consequence of the complexity of the music industry itself, which is not a singular entity but instead, is an agglomeration of many different sub-sectors mainly comprised of three interconnected industries, namely music recording and distribution, music publishing and licensing, and live performance (Crabtree, 2020). For example, as well as musicians and music writers it involves booking agents, stage crew, DJs, managers, media, those involved in producing and marketing merchandise, music producers, promoters of musician / bands / events / festivals, music publishers, those working in studios, involved in the trade associations, working in education and a whole host of other outlets. Some of these areas are semi-autonomous, with their own governing structures such as for those working in education settings but even within these there are different roles and regulations for those working as peripatetic teachers, personal tutors, home workers and so on. We also want to consider the role of the patrons – those who consume the music and financially support the industry through the purchase of music and attendance at live music events.

This article draws on Kelly's (1988; 2007; 2016) theorisations on the continuum of violence and conducive contexts to argue that historical and entrenched misogyny and sexism along with the lack

of regulation, process and governing frameworks creates the conditions for both the maintenance of gender inequality and the perpetuation of sexual harassment and sexualised violence within it. Consequently, both the cultural context and the practice of misogyny (in this case sexual harassment and sexualised violence) are mutually supporting and beneficial.

The Continuum of Violence

Kelly's (1988) continuum of violence thesis explicates how all forms of interpersonal violence perpetrated against women are serious and that it can be inappropriate and unhelpful to create hierarchies or scales of abuse/violence. Sexual harassment can have the same impact on a woman's sense of safety, bodily integrity, workplace inclusion as any other form of abuse and should not be diminished as a less severe form of abuse (Kelly, 1988). Further, as Kelly later developed, and is discussed below, the prevalence, and suggestion, of sexual harassment, and other forms of abuse or violence creates a cultural climate of threat for women; it is this this climate that maintains gendered power inequalities (2007; 2016). The existence therefore of sexual violence, or threat thereof, is what maintains the inequality which, in turn, creates the climate for the perpetration of sexual violence (see McCarry and Jones, 2021). Kelly (1988) also argues that understanding interpersonal harassment and violence as a continuum locates women's definitions of their experiences as primary, rather than to impose meaning and can: "enable women to make sense of their own experiences by showing how "typical" and "aberrant" male behaviour shade into one another" (Kelly, 1988: 75). This articulation of the continuum of sexual violence provides a foundational framework to understand the range of sexualised abuse and violence for women in the music scene and the impact of this on the women involved (or excluded) and the functional role it has in maintaining the subordination or exclusion from women in the music arena (Vera-Gray and Kelly, 2020). We argue that the 'continuum of violence' is extremely important as an analytical tool and conceptual framework for understanding the range of male violence and for identifying the interconnectedness of this behaviour and also the commonalities of both prevalence and impact across the myriad dimensions of the music industry as a whole.

Prevalence of Sexual Harassment in the Music Industry

It has largely been charities that have conducted research on music industry workplace sexual violence which have provided an important starting point evidencing the problem. The limited available data demonstrates that sexual harassment is a significant issue for women in music with a 2013 report by the UK Federation of Entertainment Union (FEU) finding that 40% of participants drawn from the live music industries have experienced bullying, discrimination and harassment, with 46% of women

disclosing incidents (in comparison to a third of male respondents) and the majority (three quarters) going unreported. In 2018, a UK YouGov survey of festival goers found that 43% of under 40s had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour at UK music festivals, of which only 2% had been reported to the police (BBC News, 2018). Of those that were assaulted 19% of men said they reported incidents to event staff whilst only 1% of women did (BBC News, 2018). The 2021 UK Musicians' Union survey with almost 800 members reported that 48% of respondents had experienced sexual harassment, 58% had witnessed sexual harassment and 10% witnessed sexual harassment on a regular basis (Musicians' Union, 2021). Similarly, reporting rates were very low with over 85% of respondents stating they had not reported their experiences of sexual harassment (Musicians' Union, 2021). However, many of these studies are small scale and for example, the Musicians' Union (2021) research assessed prevalence through only one question. A more encompassing set of questions could produce a more nuanced and accurate review and, thus, current data are most probably underestimations. The sample sizes and unclear methodologies of these studies leave open to question the true extent and impact of sexual harassment in the Western music industry.

We are aware of two studies which have employed replicable methods including Crabtree (2020) which used a validated survey questionnaire to collect data from 171 Australian music industry workers. Crabtree (2020) found that 74% of their participants reported they were pressured into behaviour that was sexual in nature and 53% were subjected to teasing, joking or innuendos that were sexual in nature. In the UK, Jones and Manoussaki (2022) conducted a survey that captured 474 UK music industry workers responses where nearly all the female participants (96%) reported that they had been sexually harassed. Two studies have focused on audience members' experiences of sexual harassment at festivals, with one UK study (Bows, King and Measham, 2022) finding that approximately one-third of women participants had been subjected to sexual harassment and one Australian study (Fileborn, Wadds and Tomsen, 2019) finding that 95.1% of participants thought sexual harassment occurs at festivals. Research in the countries of the Global South have largely utilised qualitative methods (Aborisade, 2021) or surveys with smaller cohorts (Balakrishnan, 2019), although authors of these studies have nevertheless arrived at similar conclusions about the widespread incidence of sexual harassment and violence in the music industry. Across these studies, there is a convergence of findings that sexual harassment is a widespread problem amongst music industry employees and audiences.

Perpetrators

Congruent with all studies of sexual harassment, research has found that sexual harassment in music spaces is primarily perpetrated by men towards women; both women as performers and as patrons (Crabtree, 2020; Hill et al., 2020). Recent UK research found that 65% of survey respondents had experienced harassment perpetrated by a man or multiple men (Jones and Manoussaki, 2022). Researchers have also documented the levels of harassment and violence perpetrated by patrons towards performers where the UK Musicians' Union (2021) survey found that 47% of their musician respondents reported experiencing harassment by a third party and recent Australasian research found that female musicians experience heckling, verbal abuse, groping and sexual violence by patrons (Crabtree, 2020). Research has found widespread tolerance of sexual harassment within the music industries, which is reflected by incidences of victim-blaming and colleagues supporting the perpetrators (Crabtree, 2020). Event staff, including promoters, security and bands, have been found to trivialise reports of sexual harassment and are also perpetrators themselves (Hill et al., 2020). Bystander silence contributes to the continuation of male hegemony and normalisation of the widespread sexual harassment within the music industries (Crabtree, 2020). Whilst promoters and managers may be unsure of how to respond to incidents of sexual harassment this lack of awareness, sexist stereotypes, and the adherence to rape myths can reinforce the conducive context contributing to the further entrenchment of sexual harassment and sexual violence with relative impunity for perpetrators (Hill et al., 2020; Kelly, 2007; 2016; McCarry and Jones, 2021).

The Conducive Context of the Music Industry

Kelly's ground-breaking work on the conducive context of sexual harassment and sexual violence (2007; 2016) describes it as the framework where "forms of gendered power and authority and matrices of domination are in play" (Kelly, 2016, [no page number]). In brief, she refers to the culture of the organisation, whether it be academia (see McCarry and Jones, 2021) or the music industry, where the structures preserve male entitlement and privilege (Kelly 2007; 2016). Additionally, Kelly argues that it is precisely this framework that permits sexual violence both in terms of creating the cultural norms that facilitate it and maintaining the barriers for reporting (Kelly, 2016).

Economic Inequalities

Gender inequalities within the music scene have been identified as a longstanding problem where the mistreatment of women is so entrenched it is a normalised feature (De Boise, 2019, Crabtree, 2020; Strong and Rush, 2018). One outcome is that the current UK music scene maintains a substantial gender pay gap; the average gender pay gap in the top three UK record labels is 29.6%, which is nearly

double the 15.5% gender pay gap among all UK employees (Stassen, 2021; Office for National Statistics, 2021). This is exacerbated for Black women with an even greater average monthly pay gap (Black Lives in Music, 2021a, 2021b). Music industry also reflects other intersecting inequalities in the society; the FEU (2013) research reported experiences of racial discrimination (17.9%), discrimination and bullying on the grounds of disability (8.3%), ill-treatment related to religion (4.6%) and the witnessing bullying incidences in which sexuality was a factor (14%). Furthermore, UK *Black Lives in Music* (2021a, 2021b) found race discrimination as the most widespread issue affecting all Black music professionals, followed second by gender discrimination.

The UK music industry has been described as a landscape of economic pressure and uncertainty, where long hours of work are met with poor financial returns (Crabtree, 2020). The digital revolution in the music industries has only increased the precariousness experienced by music makers (Crabtree, 2020). This precarity means new artists are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and the impact of covid-19 has exacerbated this with one third of live music employees losing their work (BBC, 2021a; Crabtree, 2020). Others have likewise argued that high rates of self-employment, insecure employment and competition for work can increase risks for sexual harassment and bullying (Hennekam and Bennett, 2017; Jones, 2020). UK live music census found that 78% of professionals in the music industry were self-employed, and that 54% of professional musicians had worked unpaid in the past year (Webster et al., 2018). It has been argued that women within creative industries are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment at the beginning of their careers (FEU, 2013) where women are pressured and coerced into unwanted sexual encounters with threats of losing future work or career opportunities (Crabtree, 2020; FEU, 2013).

“Boys Club”

Creative industries have been described as a “boys club” and are often structured such that few individuals, typically men, hold most of the power. Indeed, in the UK music industry 68% of professional musicians are men (Hennekam and Bennett, 2017; FEU, 2013; Webster et al., 2018). UK music festivals are also often dominated by male performers, while in contrast, the majority of attendees are women (Bows, King and Measham, 2020). Similarly, it has been reported that the Australian music industry is largely male dominated, with women being under-represented in radio play and festival line ups, underpaid and less likely to be employed in management positions (Fileborn et al., 2020).

In addition to male dominance in the music world, the fragmented infrastructure, the absence of professional organisation and lack of formal policies creates the conducive context for workplace

sexual harassment and abuse (Crabtree, 2020; Jones, 2020; Kelly 2007; 2016). The hierarchy of power among music festival employees is rarely defined or documented (Jones, 2020). Frith (2010: 3) argues that:

“The promotional business is a mess of contradictions – a contract-based business without contracts, an exploitative business based on face-to-face goodwill, a highly regulated business which often seems close to chaotic (and criminal), contradictions which remain even with the recent rise of a new sort of live music corporate oligopoly.”

Indeed, the Musicians' Union (2021) data demonstrates that 55% of their survey respondents said that the workplace culture was a barrier to reporting incidents of sexual harassment. This also chimes with the wider data on workplace sexual harassment which reflects gendered power imbalances, poor organisational culture and the normalisation of sexual harassment (Fawcett Society, 2020; Hennekam and Bennett, 2017; McCarry and Jones, 2021).

It has been argued that female artists are being actively silenced, as women not only receive less support for their careers but are also further disadvantaged by other female artists' lack of success (Strong, 2011). Others have likewise described the music industry as a “boy's club” characterised by homosocial networks, where women are made to feel unwelcome, positioned at the margins or excluded from music making (Crabtree, 2020). This exclusion and bullying of women has been theorised to reinforce the male hegemony and pervasive misogyny within the music industry (Crabtree, 2020). Gender discrimination, sexist and patronising interactions and objectifying remarks from audience and colleagues (band members, vendors, contractors, event staff) along with sexual harassment, assault, rape and threats of rape (Crabtree, 2020) all create a hostile environment for women.

Misogyny in Music

In the UK, there has been a historical erasure and underrepresentation of female role models (De Boise, 2019) whereby women's contributions to music have often been diminished, marginalised and reduced to the role of sexualised singers (Larsen, 2017; Strong, 2011) or consumers and fans (Larsen, 2017). Despite the progressive reputation of the music industry, the sexism in music journalism has been argued to be self-perpetuating reproducing gendered stereotypes about women as hysterical, especially when women take steps to gain more control over their careers or challenge abuse (Davies, 2001). Take for example, the recent case of the conservatorship over Britney Spears who at first was situated/constructed as mentally unwell, an unfit mother, hysterical and then as her fans spotlighted

the archaic misogyny of her father's control of her life and career and the protracted, but ultimately successful, legal action to remove the conservatorship, the repositioning to support Spears' autonomy (Stephen, 2020/21).

It has also been argued that the 'groupie' nomenclature (which is only ever used to describe female fans) has been used to exclude women from participating in the creative production of music (Hill, 2016; Larsen, 2017) and position them as sexual objectsⁱ. Representations of 'hysterical' women are evident through the ridicule and trivialisation of female fans going back to how women were seen to be screaming themselves into orgasmic frenzies over Elvis Presley (Wise, 1984), or into unconsciousness over the Beatles (Cura, 2009), to fans declaring their support outside the courtroom of the trial of serial sexual predator R. Kelly (Leung and Williams, 2019). Juxtapose this with the behaviour of male fans: whilst angry women are frequently perceived as being unreasonable, men's expressions of anger are seen to conform to the rebelliousness that underpin subcultures such as the rock music genre, and actually furthers their credibility (Davies, 2001). Indeed, women have historically been regarded as "muses" in the musical arts as in other fields (not to mention the fact that women have often been graphically murdered as well as raped in opera) but male sexual promiscuity is also part of "canonical" rock history and something which contributes to the treatment of women in a way that is different from sport, for instance. Similarly, women's concomitant dismissal and devaluation as "groupies" as a construction both contributes to the sexual exploitation of women as fans by bands as well as by other male participants at live music events. These features of music mythology, whilst perhaps less evident now, are still relevant to the contemporary music industry.ⁱⁱ

It has been argued that women performers in music find it difficult to evade or avoid sexualised objectification (Krenske and McKay, 2000). This analysis is somewhat problematised by the false homogenisation of the music sector as the evidence suggests that this relegation of women is particularly acute within certain genres of music. It has been argued that genres like indie which commonly attract young, educated and liberal audiences actually make space and provide platforms for women to share their experiences and to be heard (Coleman, 2017). Some genres like grunge have featured explicit anti-sexist standpoints with women portrayed as equal band members and the explicit links to feminist movements like *Riot Grrrl* (Strong, 2011). However, Strong (2011) argues that the anti-sexism of grunge has been largely forgotten, with it reinscribed as a form of "masculine" rock. Rock music itself has been described as an expression of masculine sexuality manifest through aggressive performances with misogynist and objectifying lyrics and negative attitudes towards women (Larsen, 2017; St. Lawrence and Joyner 1991). Indeed, heavy metal has been described as "aggressively heterosexual", with its lyrics, language, bodily practices, artwork and dress endorsing a hegemonic masculinity that simultaneously denigrates both women and gay men (Krenske and

McKay, 2000). Other genres like hip hop and rap have also been said to contain “obscene amounts of sexist talk and images” (Rebollo-Gil and Moras, 2012: 120). Black women in particular have often been marginalised in hip hop and rap through white patriarchal commodification of black sexualities although women have also begun creating their own spaces of empowerment within these genres (Rebollo-Gil and Moras, 2012), which is exemplified by the visual and lyrical content of artists like Beyonce and Nicki Minaj (Halliday and Brown, 2018). Nonetheless, the sexism perpetuated by musical practices and popular content can be argued to contribute to continuums of sexual violence in the music industry through normalising male aggression and threat of violence (Kelly, 1988).

It has been argued that the notions of credibility and authenticity are practically unattainable for women who participate in certain genres such as rock (Leonard, 2007). Ethnographic research in heavy metal music clubs led authors to argue that these spaces are gendered, and gender and sexuality are spaced and function to keep women ‘in their place’ with women often having to rely on friends and male partners to avoid sexual harassment and gain peripheral space in these venues (Krenske and McKay, 2000). These examples demonstrate how certain music genres, with their conventions and power relations, contribute to shaping physical spaces and sub-cultures which can be conducive to sexual violence and harassment (Kelly, 2016).

Spaces of Everyday Sexism

The available qualitative research in this area clearly articulates the intersection of “everyday sexism” and sexual violence with Hill and colleagues (2020) finding that women’s experiences of sexual harassment takes place within a wider “live music context of everyday sexism” (Hill et al., 2020: 374). Their research investigated experiences of sexual harassment at indie, rock, punk and funk music gigs in small venues in Leeds and the ways in which venues responded to these incidents (Hill et al., 2020). Their participants reported incidences of groping, drink spiking, controlling behaviours and performers singing sexually violent lyrics and perpetrating violence against (female) fans (Hill et al., 2020). However, this is not unique to England or the UK, with research on Australian music festivals reporting verbal harassment, groping and unwanted touching against women festival goers (Fileborn et al., 2020). Likewise, research from Nigeria has attributed women’s vulnerability in music concerts to the “prevailing *culture of silence* that trails sexual victimisation” (Aborisade, 2021: 68).

Creative industries and festivals have been described as spaces for homosocial bonding and hegemonic masculinity which can work to exclude women and endorse and obfuscate sexual violence (Bows and Fileborn, 2020; Hennekam and Bennett, 2017; Larsen, 2017; Wadds et al., 2021). Whilst

sexual violence within the music world cannot be disconnected from other forms of violence against women, live music spaces can be conducive to violence in particular and unique ways (Fileborn et al., 2020). Music festivals have been described as paradoxical transgressive spaces and “sites of expression, experimentation and release from everyday constraint” (Wadds et al., 2021: 9) where normative gender relations can be either subverted or reinforced (Fileborn et al., 2020). Music festivals can provide a “cultural scaffolding” (Gavey, 2005) which normalises and enables sexual violence (Wadds et al., 2021).

Some have argued that the gig context of performance, socialising and drinking crosses boundaries of nightlife and cultural event (Hill et al., 2020) and this urban nightlife is therefore characterised by a cultural atmosphere which normalises unwanted sexual contact and harassment (Bows et al., 2022; Kavanaugh, 2013; Sundari et al., 2021). Hennekam and Bennett (2017) and Crabtree (2020) argue that the blurring of boundaries and the role of alcohol in music events can increase risks of sexual harassment in the music industries, as audience intoxication can contribute to disinhibition and impulsive behaviours which constitute sexual harassment. Furthermore, Crabtree (2020) also argues that audiences can perceive live music environments differently to their every-day environments, which can reveal or lead people to normalise behaviours which would be unacceptable elsewhere (Crabtree, 2020). However, given the levels of sexual harassment documented in other workplaces, sexual harassment in the music scene should not be dismissed as alcohol fuelled misconduct. Sexual harassment may be opportunistic but it is very much controlled, planned and targeted behaviour by perpetrators; it is no coincidence that women are usually the intended victims.

Music festivals have been characterised as: “distinct social, cultural and spatial settings that serve as carnivalesque spaces for many young people, situated as a ‘time outside of time’, and distinct from the routines of ‘everyday’ life” (Wadds et al., 2021: 2). Whilst immersing oneself in music and the crowd is part of the appeal of live music events, women may not be able to embrace this due to ongoing vigilance of threats of sexual harm (Wadds et al., 2021). Risk of sexual harassment and sexual violence can prevent women from enjoying the health and well-being benefits of live music, including enhancing social bonding, creativity, positive mood, and the role of live music in people’s identity (Webster et al., 2018). Indeed, the crowded, chaotic and dark spaces, limited surveillance and the focus on performers at music venues are factors which can conceal and enable offending in live music spaces (Fileborn et al., 2020; Crabtree, 2020; Wadds et al., 2021; Aborisade, 2021). These conditions can also mean that sexual harassment goes unwitnessed (Crabtree, 2020), and victim-survivors may experience difficulties in identifying the appropriate person whom to report incidents of sexual violence (Fileborn et al., 2020).

Reporting Sexual Harassment

Male dominated cultures can normalise sexual violence and contribute to the historic and chronic underreporting (Fileborn et al., 2020; McCarry and Jones, 2021). The music landscape is no exception to this with precarity and competitiveness creating further barriers. The 2019 Musicians' Union survey found that 40% of respondents cited the fear of losing their work as a reason for not reporting incidents of sexual harassment, and 61% of respondents felt that they were at increased risk of sexual harassment because they worked freelance (Musicians' Union, 2021). This reflects research data on sexual harassment in workplaces more widely, which found that only 15% formally reported incidents of workplace sexual harassment (42% for repeated harassment), out of which over 19% said that there had been no consequences for the perpetrators (Government Equalities Office, 2020).

Fileborn and colleagues (2020) research on music festivals in Australia found that perceptions about the seriousness of the incident, inaction and victim blaming by security staff and police officers, and delays in processing the experience of sexual harassment due to intoxication, self-doubt and the nature of live music spaces were identified as key barriers to reporting. Whilst some considered security staff, rather than police, to more immediately and effectively address incidents of sexual violence, the lack of training, and hypermasculinity of security staff were considered to be barriers (Fileborn et al., 2020). A feature of live music festivals is the consumption of alcohol and illegal drugs and Fileborn and colleagues (2020) argue that this drug and alcohol usage at festivals can impede reporting due to concerns about being 'caught' taking illegal/excessive substances, the endurance of rape myths and victim blaming, victims feeling responsible for their victimisation, and worries about police perceptions of their credibility (Fileborn et al., 2020). This was also affirmed by the findings of the Musicians' Union survey (2021) which found that 27% had not reported incidences of sexual harassment due to fears of not being taken seriously, and 31% due to expectations that the situation would not be appropriately handled. Nevertheless, Fileborn and colleagues (2020) argue that non-reporting should not be taken as synonymous with inaction in cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence because although incidents were rarely reported to the authorities, all participants had disclosed to friends or confronted the perpetrator in some way (Fileborn et al., 2020).

However, there is a growing movement to respond to sexual harassment and sexual violence within music spaces and to acknowledge and support victim-survivors as demonstrated by, for example, the recent announcement of the national consultation process on experiences of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in the Australian music industry (Gwee, 2021). In the UK, the Musicians' Union (2021) has created a hotline for everyone involved in the UK music industry to report sexual violence and harassment. There are also other positive developments such as the local initiative *The BIT Collective*

in Scotland which works primarily to address gender inequalities in the Scottish Traditional Arts and has a confidential email address for reporting instances of sexual harassment and other sexual abuse and assault (BBC, 2021b). Elsewhere in the UK, there has also been an emergence of social movements seeking to challenge sexual harassment, assault and misogyny in the UK live music scene, including *Safe Gigs for Women*, and *Girls Against* (Safe Gigs for Women, 2017; Girls Against, 2021). Similar work can be found in the United States where the charity *Face the Music Now* provides support to victim-survivors of sexual abuse and harassment in the music industry (Face the Music Now, n.d.) and the *#meNOMore* hashtag created in 2017 to challenge sexism in the Australian music industry. High profile legal proceedings in the U.S., including the successful prosecution of the sexual predator R. Kelly have drawn attention to the prevalence of sexual harassment in the music industry (Mokoena, 2021; Strong and Rush, 2018). The lawsuit filed by artist Kesha against her producer for sexual violence and emotional abuse has been similarly high profile (Ellis-Petersen, 2016; Hill and Megson, 2020). In Sweden, almost 3,000 women signed an open letter to condemn sexual violence in the Swedish music industry which led to the cancellation of the *Bråvalla* music festival in 2018 after there were four rapes and 23 sexual assaults reported at the 2017 event (Baker et al., 2020; The Guardian, 2017) at the same time as the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* published the testimonies of 2912 women about the sexual violence endured throughout their music careers.

Conclusion

The cumulative impact of sexual harassment and sexual violence can lead to a multitude of immediate, medium and long-term consequences on mental, physical and sexual health, work productivity and social wellbeing (McCarry and Jones, 2021). Women have described being subject to sexual harassment as dehumanising and objectifying, resulting in feelings of fear, powerlessness, anger, shock, loss of dignity, loss of confidence, loss of control over personal space, negative sense of self-worth, difficulties in trusting others, depressive symptoms, symptoms of PTSD, panic attacks, claustrophobia and inability to work (Crabtree, 2020; Hill et al., 2020). The impact on work is also reported by the FEU (2013) who found that 55% of their respondents who disclosed experiencing bullying, discrimination or harassment in the workplace reported a negative impact on their career. As a result, women experience negative career and financial impacts and leave the music sector (Crabtree, 2020). It has been estimated that overall, workplace bullying costs UK employers up to £2 billion per annum in lost revenue and dealing with fall out (FEU, 2013).

It has also been argued that the UK has traditionally adopted an “arm’s length” approach to cultural policy and, consequently, actions to address gender inequalities in the music industry have been

largely driven by industry organisations and grassroots actors (De Boise, 2019). Lack of regulation, increased competition and precarity reinforce and exacerbate gendered inequalities across creative industries (Hennekam and Bennett, 2017) with the impact of Covid-19 being a further aggravator (BBC, 2021a). The paradox of regulation in the live music scene has been raised by Cloonan (2010) who argues that it is simultaneously heavily regulated (especially in relation to flyposting, alcohol licensing and disorder), and one of the least regulated areas of the music industry (see also Frith, 2010).

Lack of proactive venue policies and reactive procedures against sexual harassment have been identified as a problem in music venues (Hill et al., 2020). The lack of structural accountability, and the audience awareness about the lack of repercussions to patrons who harass performers contribute towards the continuation of the problem (Crabtree, 2020). The UK Live Music Census reported that 66% of venue survey respondents, and 87% of promoter survey respondents said venues lacked sexual harassment policies (Webster et al., 2018). Similarly, results of the Musicians' Union survey show low levels of proactive policies on sexual harassment, with only 19% of respondents reporting that their contracts included policies or procedures to address sexual harassment (Musicians' Union, 2021). In addition to lack of policies, inadequate enforcement of policies on workplace safety increases workers' risks of experiencing sexual harassment (Crabtree, 2020). It has been said that tackling sexual violence in live music events requires a dual approach which focuses on both dealing with incidents of sexual violence and wider cultural change within the industry (Hill et al., 2020). Safe space policies can have a preventative effect and phone and web-based apps for reporting have also been suggested as a way of overcoming the spatial challenges to reporting in crowded music venues (Fileborn et al., 2020; Hill et al., 2020). Crabtree (2020: 314) writes that the response to sexual violence "reinforces a gendered order of social and cultural power" and Wadds and colleagues (2021: 12) argue that women's actions in music events are largely governed by wider "logics of a rape culture." Sexual harassment and sexual violence can deny women the social and cultural benefits of participating in live music events as both performers and as patrons (Hill et al., 2020).

Historically, the music industry has protected abusers and failed victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence and continues to maintain gendered structural inequalities. The outcome is societal where we all lose out on the talents of the women who are held-back, let down and forced out.

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ⁱ See *Look Away*, Sky Documentaries, 2021 for an expose of late 1980s/1990s rock world and how 'groupies' (often young girls) were 'procured' for the male band members by those in the industry

ⁱⁱ With thanks to Reviewer 3 for raising the salience, and relevance, of this historical context.