

# Women Make Music

PRS Foundation

## Evaluation 2011 - 2016



PRS  
Foundation

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## ABOUT WOMEN MAKE MUSIC

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Women Make Music is a PRS Foundation initiative launched in 2011 in response to the low representation of professional female songwriters and composers in the UK. **In 2011, only 13% of PRS for Music members were women and 16% of applications for commissions received by PRS Foundation featured female composers and songwriters.**

Women Make Music grants are available to any female music creator, with a professional track record of 18 months or more, whose project fits with PRS Foundation's aims to enable talented music creators of any background to realise their potential. Women Make Music grants have supported a range of activities that help female artists to develop their careers including tours, recordings, commissions, residencies, promotion and marketing, new collaborations and childcare.

Women Make Music aims to:

- Raise awareness of the gender gap amongst songwriters and composers
- Encourage more female music creators to come forward for funding
- Increase the profile of women who are creating new music in the UK and support role models for future generations.



The fund addresses the imbalance of how things have worked for so long. It sheds light on people who are doing something. This needs to become normalised. Hopefully one day it won't be needed.

**Women Make Music grantee**

## VANESSA REED

CEO, PRS Foundation



Our key aim at PRS Foundation is to enable composers and songwriters of all backgrounds to realise their potential. When we recognised in 2011 that only 16% of the commissions we were funding involved female music creators we decided to set up a fund that would tackle this imbalance and encourage female composers and songwriters to come forward for support. The results of our evaluation and case studies about some of the talented women we've supported confirm why this positive action has been so important:

- In our first year of running Women Make Music, 86% of applicants had not applied to us before, demonstrating the increased reach of targeted initiatives
- Demand was high - we could only support 12% of the 1,300 applications we received
- 82% of grantees rated the creative impact of receiving support as significant or very significant
- 79% of grantees interviewed confirmed the fund had increased their confidence
- 85% of grantees interviewed would not have been able to realise their projects without our support
- 38% of applicants were not PRS for Music members, suggesting that women are less likely to register as professional songwriters than their male counterparts (16% of the UK's registered songwriters and composers are women)
- For those reporting on business development, seed funding from Women Make Music generated 100% return on investment and a 27% increase in overall income.

Our evaluation also explored the current barriers faced by music creators and solutions that respond to these challenges such as the continued importance of awareness raising across the music industry, the need for more women in the industry workforce, involvement of men and women as ambassadors for change and investment in targeted initiatives like Women Make Music in response to specific barriers. This feedback informed a roundtable discussion that we organised in March 2017 at Portcullis House in Parliament. This was attended by MPs, Women Make Music grantees, representatives of the music industry, BBC, Arts Council England, Creative Industries Council and GLA. I'd like to thank everyone who took part in this event which has shaped the recommendations summarised on page 23.

Based on everything we've learnt from this evaluation, there's no doubt that our Women Make Music fund is still needed in the short term; our commitment to developing it further with new partners forms part of this report's recommendations. In the longer term, the success of this fund will be determined by how soon it becomes redundant.

At the Foundation we are setting ourselves the target of achieving a 50-50 balance of male-female music creator applicants by 2022. This report calls on government, fellow funding agencies and other industry partners to work with us on this goal by endorsing and investing in good practice, and positive action, like our Women Make Music fund, promoting role models for the next generation and improving working conditions for women in music. Only then can we be sure that a broader range of talent will be empowered to develop a career in writing music and that the music industry will better reflect the world around us.

# SUMMARY

This evaluation shows how Women Make Music, as a strategic intervention in artist development, is playing a vital role in building confidence, supporting career development, and positively endorsing female talent in an industry which has significantly lower female representation than men, particularly amongst artists and also within the workforce.

In year 1, **86% of applicants had never applied to PRS Foundation. 79% of selected music creators interviewed** for this evaluation **say the fund has had a positive effect on their confidence** mainly because Women Make Music has enabled music creators to grow, e.g. through recording new work, touring or building a stronger profile. It has also provided endorsement of talent and signalled the potential for more women to flourish in the music industry.

**Women Make Music has played an important and for some, transformational, talent development role.** As demonstrated by this evaluation's case studies, it has offered seed funding for activities which may not otherwise have been possible, it has helped women gain control of their careers, and it has invigorated professional and creative development. Women Make Music has also, for some, given music creators a renewed sense of purpose and instilled a sense of responsibility to act as role models for other female artists.

These outcomes have been delivered in a music industry which, based on the findings of this evaluation, is still challenging for a large proportion of women:

- **78% of interviewees said they had experienced sexism in the industry**
- **Many of those interviewed felt pigeon-holed** – often, for example, as performers rather than writers and producers; or as sexual objects rather than artists
- **Classical music composers point to the lack of role models; artists in other genres recognise that the industry itself is male dominated.**

While some of the supported music creators expressed initial reservations regarding Women Make Music - because they wanted to be recognised for their talent and not their gender- all have come to appreciate that without such support they might have struggled to overcome gender barriers in the music industry. This is where Women Make Music has had its most powerful impact: it has highlighted gender issues in the music industry and demonstrated that **with a small amount of investment and support, the music industry can back female talent to succeed.**

## WHAT NEXT?

This evaluation concludes that **ideally, Women Make Music would not be necessary** and that the music industry would be gender neutral in talent progression. But the music industry does not operate in isolation. Many of the challenges for women in the music industry are part of much wider societal challenges of gender discrimination and sexism.

The place to start overcoming these is in schools, giving girls the confidence to overcome the barriers and crucially letting them know that careers in all parts of the music industry are possible for women. However, **for women who've embarked on a career, support like Women Make Music is equally crucial and still required.** This fund has had a significant impact. It has responded to a specific imbalance in the professional

landscape of the music industry, and it has done something about it. The challenge going forward is:

- **To continue to highlight gender issues** in the music industry and to influence others to work collaboratively for change
- **To nurture female talent through targeted interventions** if the sector as a whole is not sufficiently inclusive
- **To work toward a situation where the success of such approaches renders them obsolete** because the industry is investing in talent of all backgrounds and women and men are putting themselves forward in at least comparable numbers.

There is a long way to go and for the foreseeable future, Women Make Music and other initiatives which support female talent, will be vital for a healthy, inclusive and innovative music industry.





**Women  
Make Music**  
PRS Foundation

## Women Make Music fund 2011-16



Applications  
received  
**1,300**



Awarded in grants  
**£522,790**



Received funding  
applications  
requesting in total  
**£5.89m**



Female songwriters,  
composers and music  
creators supported  
**157**

## Women Make Music grantees since 2015



First time PRS  
Foundation grantees  
**77%**



Non-white British  
women supported  
**47%**



First time applicants to  
any funder  
**over 50%**



Non-PRS members  
when applying  
**38%**

# From the Women Make Music grantees surveyed:

## The impact of the grant on:



**Creativity**  
as significant  
or very significant  
**82%**



**Confidence**  
as significant  
or very significant  
**79%**



**Business development**  
as significant  
or very significant  
**47%**

## The grant allowed them to:



Increase income  
through commissions  
and bookings  
**27%**



Secure more  
bookings  
**82%**



Attract new  
commissions  
**64%**



Saw their  
team increase  
**54%**



Increase annual  
income by,  
on average  
**£3,513**



Average grant awarded  
£3,600, representing  
**96% ROI**



Said it was unlikely  
or would have been  
impossible for their  
project to have  
happened without  
Women Make  
Music funding



Said they had  
experienced sexism in  
the industry

# KEY FINDINGS

## DEMAND

From 2011 to 2016, the Women Make Music fund supported 157 projects which focussed on female songwriters, composers and music creators. Demand for the fund continues to far outstrip available funding. **A total of 1,300 applications have been received, with 12% of applicants (157) awarded a grant.** £522,790 has been awarded over the five years with nearly £6 million of funding requested.

## REACH

Women Make Music reached a large proportion of new applicants: In year 1, **86% of applicants had never applied to PRS Foundation**, since 2015 **77% of women funded by Women Make Music had not been previously funded by PRS Foundation and over half had never applied.**

Applicants and recipients of Women Make Music were very diverse: **47% of the Women Make Music grants have been made to non-white British women** suggesting that targeted schemes are more inclusive and welcoming than open funds.

**38% of Women Make Music applicants were not PRS for Music members when they applied** – suggesting the potential lack of confidence amongst female songwriters and composers not registering as professionals with their collecting society.

## IMPACTS

**82% of the women surveyed rated the creative impact as significant or very significant.**

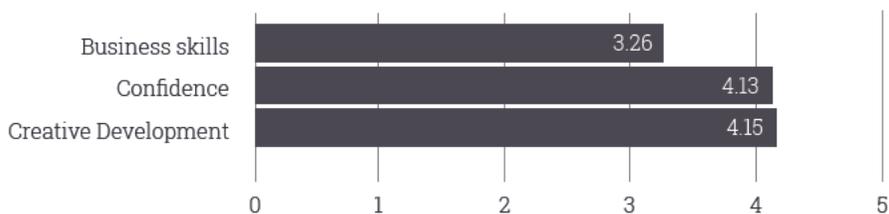
Having even the relatively small grants that Women Make Music provides, allows female artists and composers to try new things and reach new audiences stimulating new industry interest.

79% of the women in the survey rated the impact of the Women Make Music grant on their **confidence** as significant or very significant.

47% said that their grant had a significant or very significant impact on their **business development**; the increase in commissions and bookings resulted in a **27% increase in income overall** for the women funded (an average annual increase of £3,513). From a relatively small grant amount (average £3,600) **this represents almost a 100% return on investment from the Women Make Music fund.**

The Women Make Music fund 'opens doors' and helps with being recognised as a leading composer, songwriter, performer: **54% said their team had grown; 64% of grantees surveyed said being funded by Women Make Music had allowed them to attract new commissions; 82% had secured more bookings following their Women Make Music grant.**

## Impact of Women Make Music grants on key development areas



Scale 0-5, 0 is no impact and 5 very significant impact

The highly competitive nature of Women Make Music has helped to position it as a prestigious award that **raises the profile of grantees**, gives them a 'badge of quality' and delivers a powerful message on the talent and excellence of women in the music industry.

**85% of Women Make Music grantees said it was unlikely or would have been impossible for their project to have happened without Women Make Music funding:** 49% of unsuccessful applicants said they had been unable to complete the project they requested support for. 41% had only partially completed the project. Many scaled down their ambitions producing less music, or not touring as widely. Others worked for free.



# CHALLENGES



In-built behaviour and unconscious bias is present from early on in life. I think it is important from an early age for all to know that women are composers - and that women use technology, and for this to be seen as completely normal (because it is!).

**Women Make Music grantee**



Gender based inequality continues in all walks of life. However, this evaluation of Women Make Music suggests that barriers within the music industry are particularly acute with **78% of Women Make Music applicants saying they had experienced sexism in the music industry.**

**Lack of recognition of what women contribute and achieve within the music industry** and the **pressure on women to conform to an image of being beautiful and sexy** were recurring themes in the interviews and surveys for this study.

The perception of most interviewed artists is that **the music industry is still very male dominated.** This is particularly the case 'behind the scenes' in production, where women creators are often working in all male environments. This can mean needing to work and push much harder to get your voice heard.

Linked to this, the lack of **strong female role models and recognition of what women do and have achieved in music** in the past, is a real issue in terms of shaping the ambitions and confidence of young women entering the industry.

In classical music, the lack of role models e.g. **female lecturers in higher education** was viewed by some consultees as an issue (in particular for composition). This gender imbalance in academia feeds through to industry too, as women are less confident to pursue a career as a composer. Some mentioned the route as being even harder for female conductors.

One consultee reinforced the perception of gender imbalance by pointing out that **there are no compositions by women in the music curriculum at any level**. While there may well have been women composing in previous centuries, very few written records remain as it wasn't a woman's place to compose.

“

I'd been composing for five years before I heard the work of another woman composer.

**Women Make Music grantee**

One consultee suggested that male commissioners have often come through the same academic traditions where women do not feature, so they continue to commission in their own image:

“

A new generation of commissioners would also help. The BBC Proms was described as 'awash with oestrogen' when there were three female composers!

**Women Make Music grantee**





# POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS



To change a paradigm deeply entrenched in the psyche of established practice will require a monumental overhaul of systematic convention.

**Women Make Music grantee**

Consultees were clear that PRS Foundation and other funders/policymakers should **continue to raise the profile of women music creators of all genres**, at every opportunity. Female music role models are vital in giving others the confidence and belief that they too can succeed. Women role models from a greater diversity of backgrounds are also important in shaping different women's roles, voices and identities across the music industry.



We need to stop thinking that women are automatically supportive of other women, and openly discuss how male directors and male heads of arts organisations can own opportunities to enact feminism.

**Women Make Music grantee**

Consultees were also clear that PRS Foundation and others in a position to do so should **continue to raise the public debate about the ongoing barriers faced by women in the music industry**, many perpetuated by media. Men need to be leading the debate too.



Start at a young age to encourage girls who are interested in music to look at all the avenues available, not just that they have to be a singer.

**Women Make Music grantee**

When asked what else PRS Foundation/ others could do in addition to supporting women who are developing a career as a songwriter/composer, a strong collective message from the women interviewed and surveyed was that the place to start overcoming stereotypes is in schools, giving girls the confidence to overcome the barriers and crucially letting them know that careers in all parts of the music industry are possible for women.

It is beyond the remit of the PRS Foundation to work in schools but starting young to raise awareness of music industry careers, not just as singers but as composers, producers, mixers and engineers was a recurring call.

Pressing for a greater gender balance among lecturers at music colleges and conservatoires and studying more music by female composers is also seen as essential.

# POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS



Interviewees consulted for this evaluation also suggested some potential practical interventions for PRS Foundation and other partners that would complement any additional investment in the Women Make Music fund.

**A programme to support female engineers, producers and technicians.** There are very few women in these roles in the music industry. Engineering, in particular, is viewed as an almost entirely male 'closed shop'.

**Networking and access to industry contacts for female composers and songwriters** was an intervention that Women Make Music grantees really welcomed but would also like to see more of.

**Marketing support and specialist business and funding advice** was requested by around a quarter of the Women Make Music grantees surveyed and interviewed. This ranged from general advice on publicity and promotion, advice with social media, to support with budgeting, legal advice and identifying and securing funding.

**Mentoring** is an intervention a quarter of women surveyed would like to see PRS Foundation and other organisations facilitate.



# METHODOLOGY

## About this evaluation

This evaluation, undertaken by Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy, assesses the impact of Women Make Music for the women funded in the first five years of the fund (2011 to 2016). The aims of our evaluation are to:

- Assess the impact of Women Make Music grants on the women funded
- Increase understanding of current conditions for women developing a career in music
- Understand what mechanism and interventions are needed to make a dedicated fund for women unnecessary in the future.

Evaluation research methods have included:

- Interviews with 18 female music creators funded by the Women Make Music fund
- A review of all applicant and grantee summary data provided by PRS Foundation and compiled from information given in applications to the Women Make Music fund
- A review and analysis of survey responses from 39 grantees (27% of grantees) and 70 unsuccessful applicants (6%). The two surveys were carried out by PRS Foundation and the data provided to Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy.



# JESSICA CURRY



Jessica is an internationally acclaimed BAFTA-winning composer of contemporary classical music and is also co-founder of renowned games company The Chinese Room. Her work has been performed in high-profile venues such as the Barbican, The Sydney Opera House, Sage Gateshead and MOMI New York plus more unusual spaces and organisations including Great Ormond Street Hospital. She wrote the music for the genre-defying *Dear Esther* – a game about love, loss and redemption, which won awards for Best Audio at the TIGAs, a GANG Award and nominations for Best Audio at the BAFTAs.

The Women Make Music grant in 2015 allowed Jessica to take her composing in a new direction by supporting her collaboration with Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy on a large scale-choral and brass band work, *The Durham Hymns*. This was premiered at Durham Cathedral in July 2016.



It was an amazing commission - I got to work with the Poet Laureate! It pushed my writing skills and opened many doors.

The *Durham Hymns* was commissioned by the Northern Regional Brass Band Trust in partnership with Durham County Council to commemorate the Battle of the Somme. The artists were inspired by the accounts and artefacts from the people of Durham.

The *Durham Hymns* commissioners suggested Jessica apply to Women Make Music. Ordinarily she probably wouldn't have applied to a woman only fund, preferring to compete on a level playing field as a composer. As this was a high-profile project with a high profile woman – Carol Ann – she felt it was appropriate.



Despite having some reservations, I was really grateful to get the Women Make Music grant. It eased the load on a tight budget project... Women Make Music fund has a high profile, so if you have been part of it people take notice.

The *Durham Hymns* and the Women Make Music fund has opened doors and possibilities for Jessica to compose music outside the games field again, something she is keen to do.

Jessica has recently received support through PRS Foundation's Composers' Fund, which she probably wouldn't have applied for if she hadn't gone for and got the Women Make Music fund. Arts Council England has also said they are interested in her submitting a touring fund application.



It's about accessing networks and making connections which PRS Foundation and Women Make Music help you to do. It's the less tangible things that are often the most important outcomes.

Since *The Durham Hymns*, Jessica has secured two new commissions from the London Gay Men's Chorus and by Glasgow Madrigals. A sold-out *Dear Esther* Live, recently premiered at the Barbican with the game played real-time with musicians and BAFTA nominated actor Oliver Dimsdale. Some key music industry people attended knowing Jessica is a Women Make Music awardee.

## CASE STUDY

# ESKA



ESKA is a Mercury Prize nominated singer songwriter from south east London. She studied violin at The Conservatoire in Blackheath, gained a Masters Degree in Maths and did her teacher training before starting a career in the music industry. In the early days, she was a vocalist in the seminal jazz band Quite Sane. She went on to perform with and write for an array of artists including Zero 7, Tony Allen and Grace Jones. After well over a decade of almost non-stop work as a collaborator, she stopped to take stock, taking time away from the industry to find her own voice and style.

The Women Make Music grant in 2013 supported the tour Gatekeeper across the UK. This was her first EP released on her own label Earthling Records. This set the ball rolling for her solo career.



Touring, I met my audience. I was able to showcase my music to invited guests. My career gained momentum as a result. It was a game changer and I wouldn't be here with the solo career I have if it wasn't for Women Make Music.

ESKA applied for Women Make Music having sought advice from PRS Foundation and receiving encouragement from a female colleague.



The grant allowed me to cut my teeth as an independent creator. I didn't have management but I had set up my own label. It enabled me to focus on specific tasks and get my product out there. There weren't too many objectives involved; it related only to touring which was perfect for me.

The EP received huge critical acclaim. BBC Radio 6's Gilles Peterson called her "one of the most important singers in the UK right now", with Jamie Cullum saying the title song was "an unbelievable track that will be hard to beat in 2013". ESKA's first full-length album, the eponymous ESKA, was released in 2015 and nominated for the Mercury Music Prize. At the same time ESKA collaborated with UNKLE to create and perform the music for Rick Owens' headline-grabbing show at Paris Fashion Week.

ESKA now sees the industry bodies and funding agencies like PRS Foundation as her allies. Being an independent with an unorthodox career path she feels she owes a huge gratitude to them for enabling her to develop how she wanted to and take and keep control of her direction. She sees funds like Women Make Music as vital.

ESKA now has a new team round her, with management and a live performance agent. She has just secured PRS Foundation's Momentum funding for her next album, giving her career and confidence a further boost.



Women Make Music enables and encourages women to get the confidence they need to make steps to play live and record. It's a unique opportunity to develop a career with the agenda being creative ambition first and foremost.

## CASE STUDY

# CARLEEN ANDERSON



Carleen Anderson has been in the music industry for over 25 years. She originally had no intention of having a career in music but with family in the business just drifted into it. Her Godfather was James Brown. Her mother Vicki Anderson and step father Bobby Byrd both performed with Brown. Carleen joined a worldwide tour with her parents and other members of the James Brown Show in 1989. It was on this tour that she met Marco Nelson and Femi Williams in London and together they formed Young Disciples, whose 1991 album Road to Freedom brought the group international recognition. Carleen has remained in London since. She became an independent artist in 2001 and is widely known for collaborations with celebrated artists such as Paul Weller, Nigel Kennedy, Ramsay Lewis, Courtney Pine, Omar, Incognito and more. She was the winner of Jazz FM's 2013 Best UK Vocalist Award.

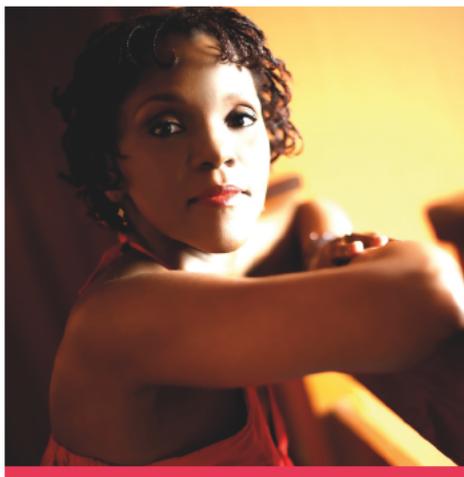
The Women Make Music grant in 2015 supported Carleen with the recording of her latest album Cage Street Memorial – The Pilgrimage. Having the grant attracted other support and funds. Falmouth University's Academy of Music and Theatre Arts (AMATA) provided their studio services and engineers in kind because PRS Foundation were supporting the recording through Women Make Music.

The album launched to great acclaim in November 2016 with two shows at the Jazz Café presented by the London Jazz Festival and nominated by Gilles Peterson's World-Wide FM Album of the Year. Having secured a 50/50 album deal with Freestyle Records Carleen explains the Women Make Music grant allowed her to take full control of the production of the album:

“

Without the Women Make Music grant I wouldn't have had such full control. I would have had to rely on established industry practices that often doesn't respect creative direction from women... I was able to bring on board people I wanted, people without gender barriers and I could say how I wanted the album procured and the compositions arranged.

Carleen feels there are definitely still barriers for women in music, they are often seen merely as 'eye-candy'. But she is quick to point out that not all men she has worked with have such an outlook. In fact, she credits a number of them with giving her the confidence to take her solo career as a music creator forward as they treated her as an equal.



## CASE STUDY

# HOLLY BLACKWELL



Holly has been in the music industry since the age of fifteen and is now half of critically acclaimed music duo The Lovely Eggs. The husband and wife two-piece is a Lancaster based garage pop band that has been making strides in the industry since 2006.

No stranger to the music business, Holly was previously lead singer and guitarist for the girl-band Angelica where she enjoyed success at festivals such as Leeds and Reading with airplay on BBC Radio 1, all whilst still at school. The band were doing well on paper, but this did not translate into making a living and good working life, something that Holly says is difficult to attribute to gender alone; age and inexperience can also play a role.

Feeling disillusioned with the music industry, Holly took a break and moved to Paris where she would later start the band The Lovely Eggs with husband David. Their first gig together was in New York. They were quickly picked up by Mark Riley from BBC 6 Music, as well as Radio 1 and XFM. It was during this period of growing success that the couple started their family. Determined not to let this stop them, they added more seats to their touring van and were accompanied by Holly's mother to help with childcare on the road. However, this was not sustainable in the long term.

The Women Make Music grant supported The Lovely Eggs with touring logistics by making it possible to tour as a family with suitable childcare and accommodation. This allowed them to continue building momentum with the band. It was also an example to other women that achieving a balance between career and family was possible.

For Holly the funding was perfectly timed:

“

I had already decided that having a baby was not going to stop me being in a band. This is where the fund came in

The fund really supported the growth of The Lovely Eggs as a band and allowed them to get out and gig more and grow their audience. Holly really appreciates having a fund specifically for women from all musical genres. She gets the sense that many funds seem too often to favour men over women, or classically trained artists as opposed to bands, and can be very London focused.

“

The fund has been great for me. I would love to see more working class artists from outside London get the same opportunity

Since receiving the grant, the band has continued to tour successfully with a string of sold out shows around the UK. Recently, they were approached by American record producer and musician, Dave Fridmann. He is keen to work with the group. Being able to get out on tour means getting the music out there to all kinds of people. Having the Women Make Music grant has helped Holly and The Lovely Eggs do that.

## CASE STUDY

# DEE BYRNE



London-based Dee Byrne is a saxophonist, composer and bandleader for her quintet Entropi. Describing herself as having 'quite thick skin', Dee is achieving growing success as an improviser and composer on the UK jazz and creative scene. Having performed in 2016 at London, Cambridge, Lancaster and Manchester jazz festivals and having radio play on a plethora of radio shows such as Jamie Cullum on BBC Radio 2, Dee continues to make strides in establishing herself as an artist and composer. Three years ago, Dee co-founded LUME, an artist-run organisation with a focus on the creation of new original / improvised music with Cath Roberts. Together they also run the DIY offshoot Luminous Label.

For Dee, the Women Make Music fund helped to produce her second album, which will be released on Whirlwind Recordings in September 2017.

She has a great sense of optimism about receiving funding:



The possibilities are endless! It's such a prestigious fund and a terrific endorsement to be chosen for the grant, Women Make Music gives a really positive signal to female artists.

Although Dee had previously applied for the Women Make Music Fund a few times before succeeding, she had no reservations in applying again and commends the process as simple and straight forward. Even though the fund is gender specific, the openness and the inclusivity with regard to age and genre is something she counts as a good thing – "It helps to spread the net wide".



The fund has helped me to record my second album supporting things like recording, studio time, rehearsal, mixing, mastering. The record label will support the distribution and PR. When considering applying for the grant I knew that these two processes relied on each other to complete the project, so for it to work out, it's been amazing!

Since graduating from a Masters in Jazz Performance from Trinity Laban in 2011, Dee has noticed positive changes in the music industry, with each new generation of male artists being increasingly open and supportive. Whilst the issue of gender in music is layered and complicated, Dee welcomes the opportunity to present an alternative image of how female artists can present themselves. Realising that more women are getting attention for their musical endeavours, Dee welcomes the fact that many are also taking the way they want to be perceived into their own hands.

Dee thinks the Women Make Music fund helps to raise an artist's profile, leading to increased opportunities that are a direct result of the funding. Dee also highlights the bigger effect of the fund in addressing imbalances in the industry as a whole.

## CASE STUDY

# SADIE HARRISON



Described as creating music which is both 'passionate' and 'distinctive', Australian-born Sadie Harrison is an internationally acclaimed composer. Her work has been broadcast internationally on television and radio and released to critical acclaim on Naxos, Metier, NMC, BML, Toccata, Clarinet Classics and Sargasso. Taking the traditional academic route to a music career (BMus, MMus, PhD), Sadie has worked in both industry and academia, joining the music faculty of Goldsmiths College as the only female lecturer in 1993. After becoming somewhat disillusioned with the creative restraints of academia, Sadie took a complete break from music in 2008, completing a degree in archaeology and working as a field archaeologist. Since returning to full time composition 6 years ago, things are now going 'very well' for Sadie who is working on various international projects.

The Women Make Music grant, combined with other funding, supported Sadie's 2016 The Rosegarden of Light Project European Tour with US ensemble Cuatro Puntos showcasing her compositions written for the students of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, in particular the Ensemble Zohra, the country's first female ensemble.

Although Sadie received funding from multiple sources, there is still a sense of pride and confidence associated with support from Women Make Music:



I am so grateful... It has made a real difference... it's cultural currency which people respect

Finding the application process very straightforward, Sadie highlights one of the fund's particular virtues as its openness to funding more established women, not just young emergent artists. Together with the range of genres that the fund supports, this acknowledgement of the older artist promotes inclusiveness within the artistic community.



Some composers only hit their stride in later life, sometimes only after having children. The fund is particularly valuable because it does not discriminate.

Sadie has noticed a 'sea change' over the years in the way that female composers are viewed, particularly crediting her own teacher Nicola Lefanu as creative inspiration and mentor, not just for herself but also for younger generations. She also notes that the gradual demise of male domination within academia is allowing 'space for new blood'. There is still work to be done from the earliest years of musical education to redress the balance, however an increase of women seeing composition as a viable career option is now certainly feeding through to industry level.



The fund was just magical! It felt like a passport to new projects...doors open because of it.

## CASE STUDY

# LITTLE BOOTS



Victoria Christina Hesketh aka Little Boots, is a singer-songwriter and DJ. From a young age Victoria was singing in choirs and learnt to play piano, flute and harp. By 13 she was writing her own songs. She sang with the Lancashire Youth Jazz Orchestra and performed around the north of England with a jazz trio. While at University in Leeds she met Lucy Catherwood and Marie France and became the lead singer of the band they formed, Dead Disco. For three years, 2005-2007, the band performed and gained recognition finally travelling to Los Angeles to begin recording their debut album with Greg Kurstin. Victoria left the band in 2008 to pursue a solo career and started her stage name Little Boots. Her debut album *Hands* was released in 2009 peaking at number five in the UK album charts. Her second album *Nocturnes* was released in 2013 following international tours and the release of a number of mix tapes and tracks for digital download and on limited edition vinyl.

The Women Make Music grant supported the recording and mixing of an EP in 2015, a follow up to her critically acclaimed third album *Working Girl*. The album was cited as being “a celebration of British Womanhood”, as it explored themes of female empowerment and struggle in modern society.

In her application for the Women Make Music grant, Victoria commented on the title of the album *Working Girl*, marking it as a significant part of her voice as a woman in music. It is a conceptually-driven album about trying to live in a hyper-active, paranoid and posturing modern world.

She goes on to speak about her role in the music industry, but also in a wider context of sexism: “The album’s called ‘Working Girl’ because it’s very much inspired by my journey from the beginning to the present, where I am essentially CEO of my own business and run an independent label,” Hesketh explains. “It’s also fun and empowering to turn the traditional associations of ‘working girl’ on their head.”

Getting the Women Make Music grant has had a big impact for Little Boots:



It meant I was able to release an EP and app I wouldn't otherwise have been able to. This has secured me a year of DJ touring internationally.

Victoria has been vocal in the press about sexism in the music industry and feels a dedicated fund for women in music is needed to help redress the balance of the underrepresentation of women across the music industry, particularly in fields like production. She would like to see more diversity on festival bills, more women in all areas of music industry, especially in A&R, production and DJing.

The lead single from the Women Make Music funded EP was premiered on *The Line of Best Fit*, and she finished 2016 with a huge American DJ tour.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

A roundtable discussion, at Portcullis House in Parliament, was organised to give some Women Make Music grantees and industry professionals a chance to share their experiences and brainstorm further solutions with ministers and industry representatives. The following recommendations have been proposed as a result of this discussion:

## Government should:

- Work in partnership with PRS Foundation/ Arts Council England/ industry partners to widen **data and evidence based research** (e.g. on economic impact of increasing music industry's female representation) alongside UK Music diversity survey
- **Endorse good practice** including results of Women Make Music, support relevant communications campaigns and initiatives in schools which tackle gender equality
- Ensure that this evaluation's findings and roundtable recommendations feed into the **Industrial Strategy**
- Assist industry partners to explore feasibility and need of a Women in Music Council/working group akin to the Women in Business Council

## Arts Council England should:

- **Explore opportunities to work with the PRS Foundation and industry partners** to increase gender equality in music
- **Continue to widen the evidence base on diversity and gender equality through data and research**
- Scope further ways to work towards gender equality in the number of funding applications and successful awards made, responding to a widening evidence base
- Continue to consider gender equality alongside all aspects of diversity through its work on **cultural education and talent pathways**.

## BBC should:

- Work with PRS Foundation to **champion songwriter/composer role models** through dedicated communication campaigns backed by high profile BBC talent
- Work with PRS Foundation, industry partners & Government to encourage involvement, alongside prominent women, of more **male ambassadors** in high profile #heforshe campaigns
- Monitor gender balance of broadcast output across all stations and of media writers commissioned for television

## UK Music and BPI should:

- **Coordinate and develop broader work on diversity in music** to improve working conditions for women
- Monitor and **communicate music industry progress against CIC Diversity Strategy**
- **Explore recommendations of Women and Work APPG Returners Policy & Women and Equalities Select Committee Gender Pay Gap report** as part of UK Music Diversity Group's action's.

## PRS Foundation will:

- **Collaborate with all partners** on recommendations outlined above including the setting up of a Women In Music Council
- **Reconvene the roundtable group** in 6 months to establish an action plan
- **Work with PRS** (our core donor) on significantly increasing its female membership within 5 years
- Work with partners to identify **networking & mentoring opportunities for women**
- **Continue to fund Women Make Music, increase resources with new partners** and achieve a 50-50 balance of grantees by 2022.



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See <http://www.prsformusicfoundation.com/funding/women-make-music>  
for a full list of Women Make Music grantees.



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