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Creating Inclusive Environments for Women in Jazz

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ABSTRACT

Since its inception in the late 19th-century, women have typically been underrepresented in the jazz idiom. Despite making many contributions to the genre, prominent female instrumental figures in the jazz world are often overlooked in the study of the music. Even with great improvements in including female jazz artists in recent years, the effects of this phenomenon can be felt today as the rates of female participation in jazz at both the educational and professional levels are still lower than the rates of male participation.

This study was created to gain insight into the reasons why female participation in jazz is less than that of their male counterparts and to provide music educators with resources to foster inclusive learning environments for female students in the hopes of increasing their participation. A historical analysis was conducted in order to understand reasons for lack of female inclusion in the idiom as well as to provide examples of prominent female instrumentalists throughout the years. Results of a survey of collegiate music students, interviews with professional jazz musicians, and analysis of existing literature were also examined in order to provide educators with an extensive set of information to improve their own programs and resources for creating inclusive programs.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

As a female trombonist, I have participated in jazz ensembles since I was in middle school. With each transition to a new grade level, middle to high school and high school to college, I found myself surrounded by fewer and fewer female colleagues in jazz ensembles. By the time I got to college there were many instances in which I was the only female in an entire big band or small combo both in the school setting and on gigs.

For much of my musical career, the vast majority of the connections I had in the jazz world and the music world in general were male. While I have been very fortunate with the men around me, I often felt out of place as the only female in musical settings. Although I was part of the band, I was often not included in the jokes that were told and sometimes found it hard to form the close relationships with bandmates that I saw my colleagues have. I also struggled with building my confidence in my musical abilities and had trouble believing that I was good enough to pursue jazz at a high level.

Two years into my college experience, I was able to join a community of female jazz musicians through which I had the opportunity to make personal and professional connections with women across the country. I learned that I was not alone in my experiences and feelings. I also realized I had been missing out on having connections with women in my life in general since I spent most of my time playing music. Being part of this community had such a positive impact on my musicianship and confidence that I wondered why it took me so long to seek it out in the first place.

As I continued to benefit greatly from connecting with other female musicians, I started to reflect on my experiences and question why so few females participate in jazz at the collegiate level. Was it something about the classroom environments that was not attracting female students? Was it teaching methods, or even the music itself?

My personal experiences and these questions resulted in my desire to research the ways in which we could improve jazz education at the lower levels to increase female retention at the upper levels and in the professional world.

Rationale

While there is no question about whether women are underrepresented in jazz, there has not been a strong consensus about ways to improve the issue. Literature suggests that one barrier women may face to participating in jazz is instrumentation (McKeage, 2004). The instruments typically found in jazz settings (trombone, trumpet, saxophone, bass, drums, guitar) are often associated with masculinity and women typically play those instruments at lower rates than men. Furthermore, in the cases in which instruments such as flute or clarinet, instruments associated with femininity, are included in the big band, they are often played by a doubling saxophonist, which further limits the opportunities for players of those instruments.

Another proposed barrier for participation is the tokenization of women in jazz (Wehr, 2018). Tokenism perpetuates the idea that there can only be one or very few females in any given jazz setting. For many female students, the experience of being either the only or one of few girls in a jazz ensemble is inevitable. Since the rates of female participation only continue to decrease

as the level of playing increases, this can be off-putting for female students who are looking to enjoy the social aspect of being involved in music ensembles (McKeage, 2004).

Tokenism also applies to the ways in which women are marketed in performance and studied in jazz history. Often jazz history curricula will focus on the contributions of significantly fewer women than men, leading people to believe that women were not contributors to the genre, even though this was not the case. Furthermore, in promoting concerts in which women are featured on rare occasions, students learn that women can only participate in the music if the space is overtly created for them to do so (Watrous, 1994).

Researchers also theorize that women participate at lower rates than men due to intimidation. Intimidation can often come from stereotype threat which is the fear of confirming a negative stereotype about yourself (Wehr, 2018). It can also come from the fear of improvising and the soloistic style of jazz in general as it forces students to be vulnerable and play at the individual level (Wehr, 2006). Intimidation can also come from the fact that jazz is viewed as a masculine art form, so before they even play their first notes women feel like they do not belong in jazz settings (Teichmann, 2018).

While there are many theories about why women participate in jazz at lower rates, I feel there is a significant gap in literature that provides educators with concrete suggestions and resources for implementing more inclusive practices in their jazz classrooms. Through this thesis, I aim to bridge that gap by providing educators with resources for incorporating women in their curricula, data about what women's experiences in jazz, and clear tips for improving their own classroom environments.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This project was created to gain an understanding of women's experiences in jazz professionally, in the educational setting, and historically. While research in all three areas is certainly not abundant, it primarily focuses on ways in which women have contributed to jazz historically and the current experiences faced by professional musicians. There are few sources that discuss female participation in jazz in the educational setting.

Wehr, 2015

Wehr focused on the ways in which people can understand the experience of a woman in a jazz setting. The study was conducted through an in-depth analysis of reading material pertaining to women in the field of jazz. The author attempted to generate some ideas as to why female participation and retention in jazz programs is so poor. This produced three main concepts that could potentially explain this phenomenon: tokenism, stereotype threat and low jazz self-efficacy. Tokenism is when one person is viewed as the sole representative of a certain group, or one of few. Stereotype threat is the fear of confirming a negative stereotype. As pertaining to women in jazz, there are four types of stereotypes: the mother, the seductress, the pet, and the iron maiden. Self-efficacy is a person's belief about whether they could be successful at a task. This often ties into self-confidence which is typically lower in women than men. Any one of these concepts could lead to the "jazz avoidance" in women and a combination of any two or all three typically resulted in "jazz avoidance" in women.

Wehr, 2006

This article presents a psychological argument for why women choose to participate less in improvisation. Some of the reasons they found are: women have less confidence to men, creative individuals tend to shy away from societal norms while teenage women tend to want to conform to them, and reports of women's relationship with music to be social rather than personal. This article, like many others, highlights the perceived masculinity of the genre of jazz in general. That combined with a young girl's desire to fit in with the social norms would discourage her from participating in the jazz idiom in order to maintain her femininity. This research also consisted of a survey sent to jazz musicians at the middle school level and beyond which asked questions about their own personal beliefs about their improvisation abilities and anxiety about improvising. The findings were that the male answers displayed much more confidence in improvisational abilities than the females.

McKeage, 2014

This research article attempts to answer the question of why female representation in collegiate level jazz programs is low. The research presented is based on the interviews of three collegiate level female instrumentalists who dropped out of jazz programs after their first year. The author found three common themes that explained the lack of female participation. These themes are lack of female role models and mentors, pressure to play both classical and jazz music and negative environments surrounding jazz ensembles. This research was prompted by a high school student who visited a collegiate jazz program for the day and questioned "Where are all the girls?" to which the researcher had no good answer. This article is particularly interesting

as it follows the experiences of female musicians who are currently in school whereas most other articles focus in mainly on the “success stories,” or those females who “survive” jazz programs and go on to be professional musicians.

McKeage, 2004

McKeage’s work included a survey of college-aged students majoring in music and music education. In the beginning of the article, the author reveals that female participation in jazz ensembles is much more significant at the high school level than at the college level. The specific focus of this survey was identifying college students’ perceptions of gender and jazz and the possible reasons for gender inequity in the field. The study found that there was a significant drop-off in female participation in instrumental jazz ensembles between high school and college. The study concluded that time, instrumentation, feelings of inadequacy, and intimidation were all factors that influenced the decline in participation.

Teichmann, 2018

This source is a reflective analysis of a male high school jazz band director’s experience with the gender biases associated with jazz. The main point of this article is to theorize why there is such a lack of female representation among the jazz greats through historical and cultural analysis and how to improve the culture in schools based on this teacher’s reflections of his own experience. A few theories that are mentioned as to why there is a lack of historical representations of female jazz greats are the cultural association of certain instruments to certain genders (jazz instruments are typically male-gendered), gender roles that pushed women away

from performance (which was un-lady like) and into other careers, and female's lack of self-efficacy and confidence when it comes to improvisation. The author proposes the idea that creating spaces for girls to perform jazz in schools at a younger level creates an association of femininity and less of an association with masculinity in jazz. Thus, girls in general would be more willing to join jazz ensembles when the female representation is greater.

Tucker, 2000

In this book, Sherrie Tucker attempts to create a narrative about the “hundreds” of all-girl big bands that were around in the 1940s. However, when starting her interview process of women who were in those bands, she found that women would have some of the same prejudices against other women that men and the outside world would have. They preferred the term all-girl bands as opposed to all-women bands which was shocking to Tucker as she wanted to tell the story of women coming together to be successful in a time of gender oppression. Additionally, she found that women would say that all-girl bands were not good except for the one that they were in and would agree that all-male bands were more authentic. Tucker attempts to highlight how these women were in a sense heroic during this time and bring attention to the fact that there were many all-girl big bands present throughout the 40s.

This book provides an interesting perspective as it is filled with interviews and stories from women who were a part of all-girl big bands in the 1940s. It also shines a light on the ways in which women's opinions of themselves and other women could have been damaging for creating an accepting culture for women in jazz.

Course, 1995

This book provides background information about women and their involvement in jazz. The first chapter focuses in on the ways in which women were involved in jazz prior to the mid-1980s. The author stated that to be involved in jazz in any capacity—instrumentalist, composer, singer, or even management—a woman had to know somebody personally who would be able to offer her a job opportunity. However, as the 80's progressed, women slowly integrated their way into these performance and managerial positions in ways that they never had before. For example, often women who played piano or were vocalists who were able to accompany themselves on piano had an advantage in the performance scene. As time went on, women began to play “non-traditional” instruments like horns, percussion, and guitars. This author also outlined the scene in “modern times” (which was the 90's in the case of this book) and shared how there were many improvements in women's representation in the field of jazz. The author also interviewed many female musicians of the time and shared their experiences in the field.

Willis, 2008

This article focuses in on the ways in which “jazz language”—the means through which jazz is discussed—leads to the exclusion and subversion of women from the genre. Willis states that jazz language has become widely spoken through the white male's voice. When jazz was accepted into academia, its language became exclusive to those who could speak in the academic tongue, being mainly white men. Jazz language is also comprised of phrases and terminology that stems widely from the vocabulary of black men. Willis argues that the concept that jazz is a masculine art form has been the norm for so long that it has created the loss of female voices

within the genre. She claims that masculine jazz musicians and scholars treat women who can speak the language as oddities and intentionally exclude them from the idiom.

Kernodle, 2014

This research article explores the idea that the portrayal of black women in today's media as competitive and unable to get along is rooted in the ways in which women were viewed and portrayed in jazz settings. While the competitive nature of men in jazz settings is often deemed necessary for reaching a higher level of creativity, the same cannot be said for women. In fact, instead of portraying women's competition as a means for more creativity it became the means through which the idea of the "exceptional woman" was developed. This refers to the idea of tokenism and the ways in which women were only included in jazz settings if they had a relationship with one of the men in the group. This research is intended to discover the ways "exceptional" women were able to work together to get ahead and create support systems by analyzing the relationship between pianist Mary Lou Williams and trombonist Melba Liston.

Summary

While women have been part of jazz since it was created, their achievements have been often overlooked and they have faced many barriers to participation as a result of their gender. A common theme that is present throughout these works is the perceived masculinity of the genre of jazz and instruments typically found in jazz ensembles. Furthermore, the language used to

describe and teach jazz takes on masculine undertones which could be a contributing factor to the lack of female representation in the field.

The literature also highlights the phenomenon of competition among women as a result of the perception that there are limited spaces for women to participate in jazz. The idea that there can only be a single “token female” perpetuates the stereotypes that women must be exceptionally good at their instrument to be represented and extremely competitive with other women in order to earn that spot in the band. It is also clear based on the evidence presented in the literature that providing many examples of female jazz musicians for students to look to as role models can help to encourage female students continued participation in jazz.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This descriptive study includes analysis of a survey, three interviews, existing literature pertaining to women's experience in jazz and jazz education. The survey was distributed to female collegiate music students through mass-email and word of mouth. There was no preference for either undergraduate or graduate responses nor was there specificity in the major concentration of respondents. The survey was made up of multiple choice and short-response questions which asked students about their experiences, or lack thereof, in jazz programs at the high school and collegiate level. The survey also included an area for students to give their input as to how their teachers succeeded or could have improved at creating inclusive classroom environments for female students. Responses to the survey were entirely anonymous and were collected through Qualtrics™. Results were analyzed in order to find commonalities in experiences across respondents.

Three interviews of professional female jazz musicians were also conducted over the course of the study. Each consisted of an hour-long session that was held virtually over Zoom™. Interview subjects were chosen based on their membership in an organization geared towards the promotion of women and non-binary individuals in the jazz idiom. Interview subjects were recruited via email and all correspondence occurred virtually. The participants were asked questions about their experiences as women in jazz at both the educational and professional levels, their experience being part of their female-community, and their suggestions for educators looking to make classroom environments inclusive.

In combination with the responses to the survey and interviews, existing literature about women's experience in jazz and jazz education was analyzed with the goal of understanding why women participate in jazz at a lower rate than that of men. The literature also provided insights about ways educators can make their classrooms more inclusive for female students.

Chapter 4

Historical Analysis

Throughout history female instrumentalists were often excluded from the jazz idiom or had their contributions overlooked. It is not uncommon to see a list of the historical “jazz greats” that is devoid of the names of any female instrumentalists. The idea that women did not have an active role in jazz historically is false, as they have been contributors to the genre since its birth. This section will examine the ways in which female instrumentalists were contributors to the genre of jazz. Examples of female figures who were particularly influential on each instrument typically present in a big band as well as examples of all-female big bands and small groups will also be provided. This section will also examine the reasons why some women may have had easier access to jazz than others.

It is important to note that this section of the study focuses primarily on the inclusion and representation of female instrumentalists rather than female vocalists. Although many vocalists have also been denied their due praise for their contributions to jazz, the group is historically more well-represented than female instrumentalists.

Prominent Female Jazz Instrumentalists Throughout History

Dottie Dodgion - Drums

Dottie Dodgion was introduced to jazz by her father, Charles Giaimo, who was a jazz drummer. After getting her start as a vocalist in guitarist, Nick Esposito’s band, Dottie sang with Charles Mingus’ group for one year. Dodgion got her start drumming while playing and singing

with the Mary Kaye trio (Dodgion, 2021). After moving to New York City, Dodgion began playing in bands led by jazz greats such as Benny Goodman, Marian McPartland and Tony Bennett. Dodgion also toured Asia with Melba Liston's group, *Melba Liston and Company*. Dodgion remained an active drummer in California until the age of ninety when an injury prevented her from playing further (Sandomir, 2021). Dodgion was well-known for her melodic style of drumming and great sense of time.

Melba Liston - Trombone

Melba Liston was one of the first female trombonists to be accepted into all-male big bands. Born in 1926, Liston got her start in music when her mother bought her a trombone at age seven (Kaplan, 1999). A student of the great music educator, Alma Hightower, Liston began working professionally at sixteen years old when she was hired at the Lincoln Theatre in Los Angeles as a trombonist in the pit. Her career truly changed after playing in trumpeter Gerald Wilson's big band where she got her start arranging and composing and introductions to the biggest names in jazz of the day.

Melba became a first-call trombonist and was known to play in big bands led by the likes of Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Dexter Gordon, Benny Carter, Fletcher Henderson and Dizzy Gillespie. Her relationship as an arranger for the composer, Randy Weston, lasted the span of forty years and is one of her best-known roles. Honored as a NEA Jazz Master in 1987, Melba Liston can be heard on her only solo album, *Melba Liston and Her 'Bones*, her collaboration

with Randy Weston, *Volcano Blues*, Dizzy Gillespie's *Dizzy in South America, Vol. 1 & 2*, and Quincy Jones' *Q Live in Paris* (National Endowment for the Arts, N.D.).

Marian McPartland - Piano

English-born Marian McPartland was an accomplished jazz pianist, producer, educator and radio host. During the 1950s, McPartland was best known for the trio she led at the Hickory House which included piano, drums and bass. McPartland continued her work as a pianist through the recording industry and her compositions can be heard on numerous records including *McPartland with Strings: Silent Pool*. McPartland started her own record company, Halcyon Records, in the 1960s when jazz became less popular and record labels did not want to sign jazz artists. An advocate for women in jazz, McPartland befriended many prominent female jazz musicians of the time such as Mary Lou Williams and Dottie Dodgion and even started her own all-female band in the 1970s. Her project, *Now's The Time*, featured female musicians of the era in order to give them a voice in the industry (Hansson, 2006).

As a radio host for NPR's *Piano Jazz*, McPartland provided insights into the process behind jazz improvisation. She interviewed many of jazz's most important musicians such as Bill Evans, Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, J.J. Johnson, Christian McBride, Ray Charles, and Dave Brubeck. McPartland's educational skills were also used at the collegiate level as she was known to give many lectures about jazz (Contreras, 2013).

Vi Redd – Saxophone

Born in 1928 to jazz drummer, Alton Redd, music was always a part of Vi Redd's life. Both a singer and a saxophonist, Redd was the first female instrumentalist to headline at a jazz festival when she performed at the Las Vegas Jazz Festival in 1962. Redd performed with jazz greats such as Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Max Roach, Al Grey, and Marian McPartland. While she did not as extensive a recording career as her performing career, Redd did release two solo albums, *Bird Call* and *Lady Soul*. Vi also appears on the albums of others including Dexter Gordon, Gene Adams, Johnny Almond, and the Count Basie Orchestra (Suzuki, 2013).

Clora Bryant - Trumpet

Hailing from Denison, Texas, Clora Bryant is one of the few examples of female jazz trumpet players throughout history. Born in 1927, Bryant was known to play with jazz giants such as Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker and was a prominent figure in the Los Angeles jazz scene from 1940-1990. Early on in life, Bryant saw a value in playing jazz with other women and chose to attend Prairie View A&M University where she participated in their all-female jazz band.

Continuing this trend later in life, Bryant went on to play trumpet in the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. She later learned drums just to fill a gap in the personnel of the Queens of Rhythm Big Band. Also known for collaborating with Melba Liston, Bryant came into her own as a band leader in the 1950s (Russonello, 2019).

Thelma Terry - Bass

Originally born Thelma Combs, Thelma Terry primarily grew up in Chicago where she met many of the musicians that would later populate her band, “Thelma Terry and Her Play Boys.” Backed by the Music Corporation of America (M.C.A.) Thelma and her group were able to go on tour which later led to her appointment as front of Berlyn Baylor’s Troubadours in 1928. The groups name would later be changed to “Thelma Terry and Her Play Boys” as well. Thelma later recorded with Columbia Records upon her return to Chicago (Raichelson, 2017) .

Mary Osborne - Guitar

Born in 1921 North Dakota, Mary Osborne made her mark all over the United States, especially when she moved to New York. Known for playing with artists such as Dizzy Gillespie and Mel Torme, Osborne was a highly accomplished guitarist. Her playing crossed many boundaries including performing straight ahead jazz, sometimes with all-female groups, and venturing into the R&B world and playing with artists such as Big Joe Turner. Also part of Marian McPartland’s, *Now’s The Time*, Osborne aimed to try to avoid the stereotypical tropes that female jazz musicians were often thrown into by marketing companies (Johnson, 2021).

See Appendix A for a list of selected discographies for each of the musicians presented here.

All-Female Big Bands and Small Groups

International Sweethearts of Rhythm

With many men away during WWII, women took over the jazz scene in the 1940s. Many all-female groups were formed to fill the gap that the men left behind. One such group was the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. As the first racially-integrated all women's band, the group often did not receive the historical attention it deserved due to prejudices of white male critics. However, this group was one of the most in-demand of the time and featured musicians such as Clara Bryant, Tiny Davis, and Vi Burnside (Sher, 1987).

Marian McPartland's Now's the Time

Marian McPartland recorded the album, *Now's the Time*, in 1977 with a band comprised entirely of female musicians. Her goal was to give a voice to women, as she faced the effects of their underrepresentation for her entire career. The group included musicians such as Dottie Dodgion, Vi Redd, Mary Osborne and Lynn Milano.

Historical Accessibility of the Jazz World for Women

Access to the jazz world was typically limited to those who had male connections for female musicians prior to the 1970s (Course, 1995). Women who had husbands or fathers in jazz bands were much more likely to be able to participate in mixed gender big bands than those who

did not. This same concept rang true for managerial positions as women were typically underrepresented in music business as well.

Those women who did happen to have a personal connection to a male bandmember were typically vocalists, pianists, or both (Course, 1995). The literature highlights that a big factor that influenced the change in this trend was the women's rights movement. As a result of the newfound freedoms women across the country were granted, female musicians had more opportunities to pursue jazz professionally and attend higher education to study it.

Furthermore, the dynamic of gender roles often played into women's lack of participation in the music. Being a full-time musician is a time-consuming career which often requires late night performances and rehearsals in addition to the many hours spent practicing required to be proficient enough on an instrument to be a professional musician. Since women were historically expected to stay at home and manage the house and care for children, it was not feasible for them to take on such a demanding career.

It is also important to note that since jazz was for so long dominated by men, people began to associate the music with masculinity. While it was acceptable for women to play piano or become singers because that was considered feminine, it was often considered not lady-like for a woman to play the other instruments found in jazz ensembles, especially horns. At a time in which women were expected to present themselves in certain ways, many of them would not have been able to play an instrument other than those that were deemed acceptable by men. When looking for examples of female players on each instrument to provide for educators, there were many more pianists to be chosen from than horn players.

It is also important to note that while women began participating in jazz at higher levels after the women's rights movement, they were still subject to discrimination and micro-

aggressions that may have discouraged many women from participating. These issues persist today as many women still experience mistreatment and judgement as a result of being a female musician.

Chapter 5

Survey

Goals

This survey was created with the goal of better understanding the reasons why female collegiate students may or may not participate in jazz at the collegiate level. I also wanted to understand how the rates of jazz participation at the high school level compared to those at the collegiate level and analyze whether there was a trend in continued participation or lack thereof. To accomplish this, questions were formulated to gain insight into the respondents' high school jazz experiences, learn the ways in which their prior educators were successful or unsuccessful in creating inclusive learning environments in jazz settings, and hear their thoughts on ways jazz classrooms could become more inclusive in the future.

Participants and Recruitment

The target participant group of this survey was female-identifying collegiate level musicians. There was no preference for the participation of either undergraduate or graduate students and the survey was open to participants of any major or minor, so long as they were studying music in some capacity. The only limiting requirement was that all respondents had to be 18 years old or older.

Survey participants were recruited through a mass email that was sent out to all students at a collegiate school of music. The email was sent one time, and any further recruitment

occurred through word of mouth. The school through which the survey was distributed was chosen due to the accessibility and convenience that it provided.

In order to maintain confidentiality, the survey was conducted through Qualtrics™, and all responses were completely anonymous. I never had personal contact with any of the participants other than through the mass email, which was sent out by a school coordinator, in which I provided a brief explanation of what the survey entailed and what the study was about. Survey participants received another explanation of the survey and study within the actual survey and were required to read that prior to providing their consent for their participation in the study.

Survey Design

Before beginning the survey, participants were required to read through the purpose of the study. This included details about why they were being asked to participate, what would be done with the information, and who they could contact if they had questions. Respondents were required to provide their consent to participate in the study before moving on to the primary questions.

The survey was comprised of seven questions all related to the participant's experiences in jazz at both the high school and collegiate levels. The questions consisted of both multiple choice and extended response options and some questions were dependent on responses to prior questions.

The first group of questions ask about whether participants were involved in a jazz ensemble at the high school level and to outline the reasons as to why they did or did not choose to participate. The second group of questions follow the same format but pertain to the

participant's college experiences. These questions also ask participants to share the reasons why they chose to continue playing in a jazz ensemble in college or not.

The last group of questions asks participants who never participated in jazz at any level to share their thoughts about the ways in which educators could have been more inviting to them. It also asks participants who did participate in jazz at either level to elaborate on the ways their previous directors were successful in creating inclusive learning environments, and areas where there was room for improvement.

Data Analysis

As most of the questions included on the survey were open-ended, analysis of the data was primarily qualitative. I was able to gather statistical evidence about whether students participated in jazz at the high school or collegiate levels, as those questions only had two choices, yes or no.

When interpreting the data created by the extended response questions, patterns started to emerge within the responses. For example, when asked about why students chose to participate in jazz at the high school level, four main categories of responses emerged: teacher encouragement, desire for experience, enjoyment of the music, or lack of participation. In these cases, where responses primarily stated the same ideas, I created broader categories based on those trends and tallied the number of responses that fell within that larger category. Many responses expressed sentiments that fell into more than one category and were tallied in whichever categories they did reflect. The tallies were then used to create the bar graphs that display the data which can be found later in the chapter. The bar graphs are meant to show trends

that emerged within the responses and are not meant to present statistical evidence, as some responses were utilized in the counting of tallies for multiple categories. For this reason, many of the graphs display numbers that when added all together exceed those of the total number of participants.

If there happened to be a response that did not fit in to a specific category, I did not include that in any of the categories I created and left it as its own category. An example of this can be found in Figure 4 in which one student stated injury as their primary reason for not participating in jazz at the collegiate level, which was left as its own category.

Results

The survey was distributed to about 325 students in a collegiate school of music. However, since male-identifying individuals and individuals under the age of 18 were not asked to participate, it is unclear what the response rate was, as I do not have access to demographical information about the school of music through which this was distributed.

In total, the survey received 21 responses. However, one of the respondents only responded to Question 3: “Do you currently participate in a jazz ensemble in college?” Thus, the results for that question vary by one response as compared to the rest of the survey which is based on the responses of 20 participants.

As illustrated by Figure 1, of the 20 people surveyed who responded to all questions, 65% (13 students) indicated that they were a part of a jazz ensemble in high school. 35% (7 students) indicated that they were not a part of a jazz ensemble in high school.

Participation in Jazz in High School

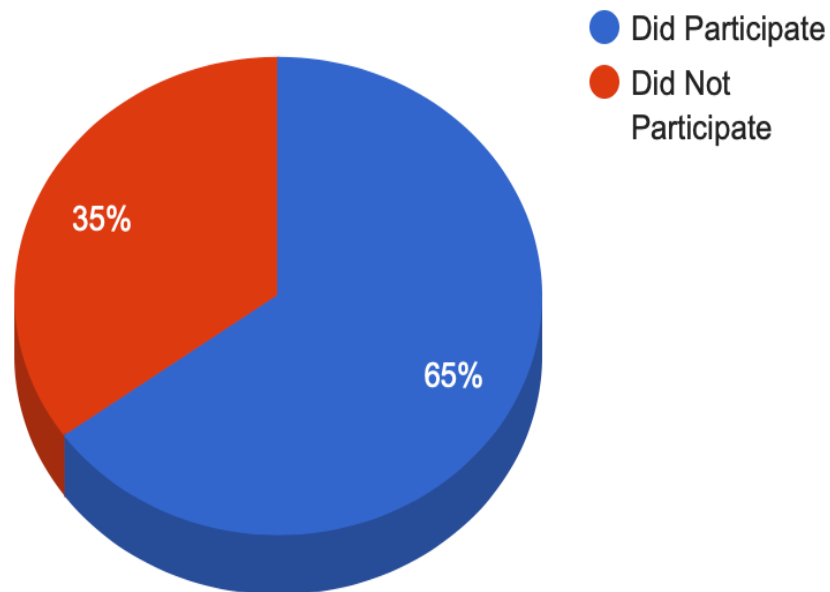


Figure 1. Participation in Jazz in High School

Figure 2 displays results based on the responses of 21 participants, as compared to the 20 that are represented in Figure 1. Of those surveyed, only 33.3% (7 students) currently participate in a jazz ensemble at the collegiate level. 66.7% (14 students) currently do not participate in a jazz ensemble at the collegiate level at the time they were surveyed. These numbers represent a __% decrease in participation in jazz ensembles from the high school to collegiate level.

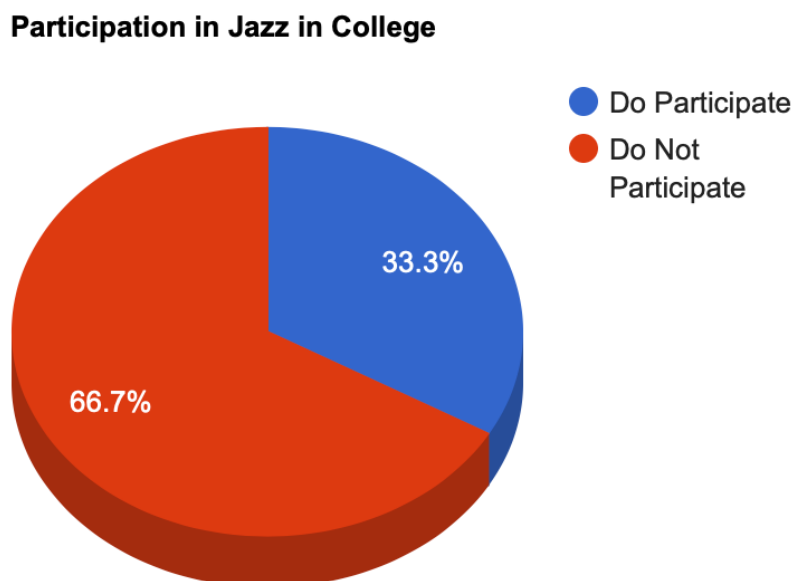


Figure 2. Participation in Jazz in College

In order to understand the reasoning behind this significant drop-off in retention and what keeps those who stayed involved in both high school and college engaged, participants then answered questions about their experiences with jazz at both the high school and collegiate levels.

The first open-ended question asked those surveyed to share why they chose to participate in a jazz ensemble at the high school level, if they did. If they did not participate in high school, participants were asked to provide reasoning as to why not.

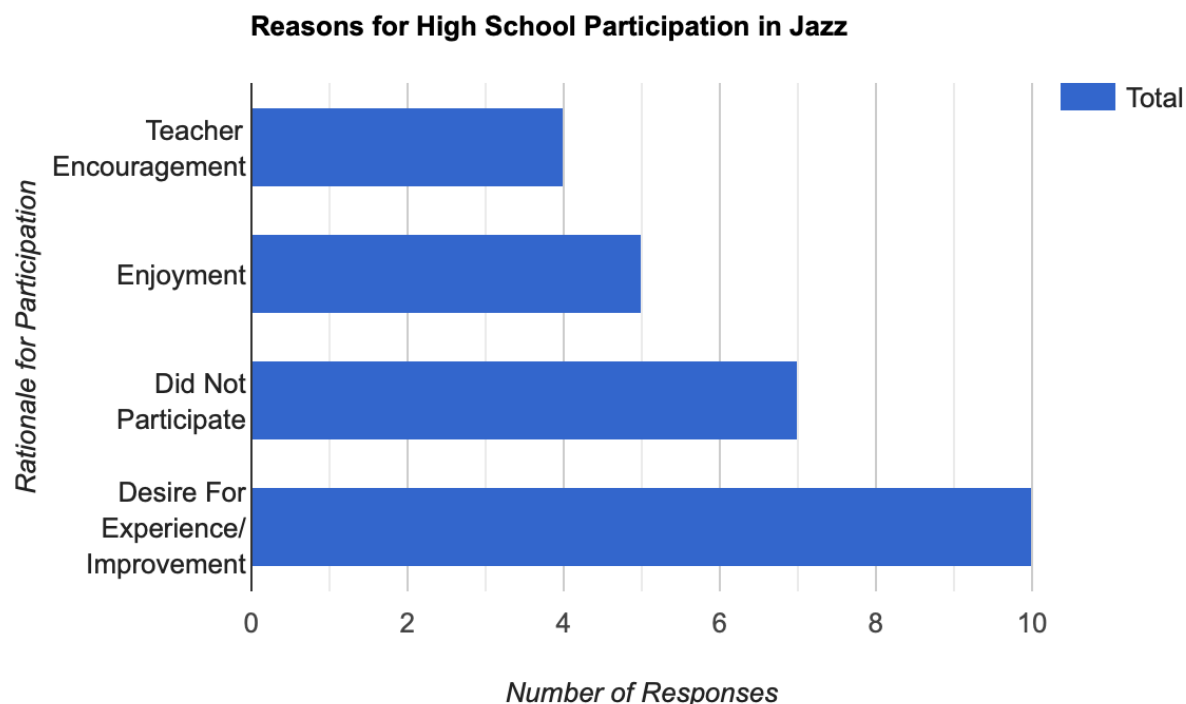


Figure 3. Reasons for High School Participation in Jazz

Figure 3 emerged as a result of the responses to Question #2 on the survey: “Based on your response to question 1: If you did choose to participate in jazz ensemble, why? If you did not choose to participate in a jazz ensemble, why not?”

The responses to this question almost exclusively fell into four categories: participation as a result of teacher encouragement, participation as a result of enjoyment, participation as a result of a desire for musical experience or improvement, or a complete lack of participation.

The most common answer from the respondents as to why they chose to participate in jazz as a result of their desire to improve and gain more musical experience. Eight out of the ten responses indicated a desire to learn jazz in order to have a broader range of musical knowledge. Three out of ten responses indicated a desire to learn or improve on other instruments. For

example, two respondents wanted to learn to play all the saxophones, while one wanted to further studies on bass, despite being a trombonist.

For those who indicated that they participated as a result of enjoyment, the primary motivator was jazz music itself. Participants shared that they did not have other opportunities outside of the high school jazz ensemble to interact with the music. Two respondents indicated that they just enjoyed being part of ensembles and playing music with other people.

The four participants who indicated that they joined their high school jazz ensemble due to teacher encouragement did not elaborate on why or how their teacher encouraged them and why it was effective. This is something I would be interested in exploring in a future research study.

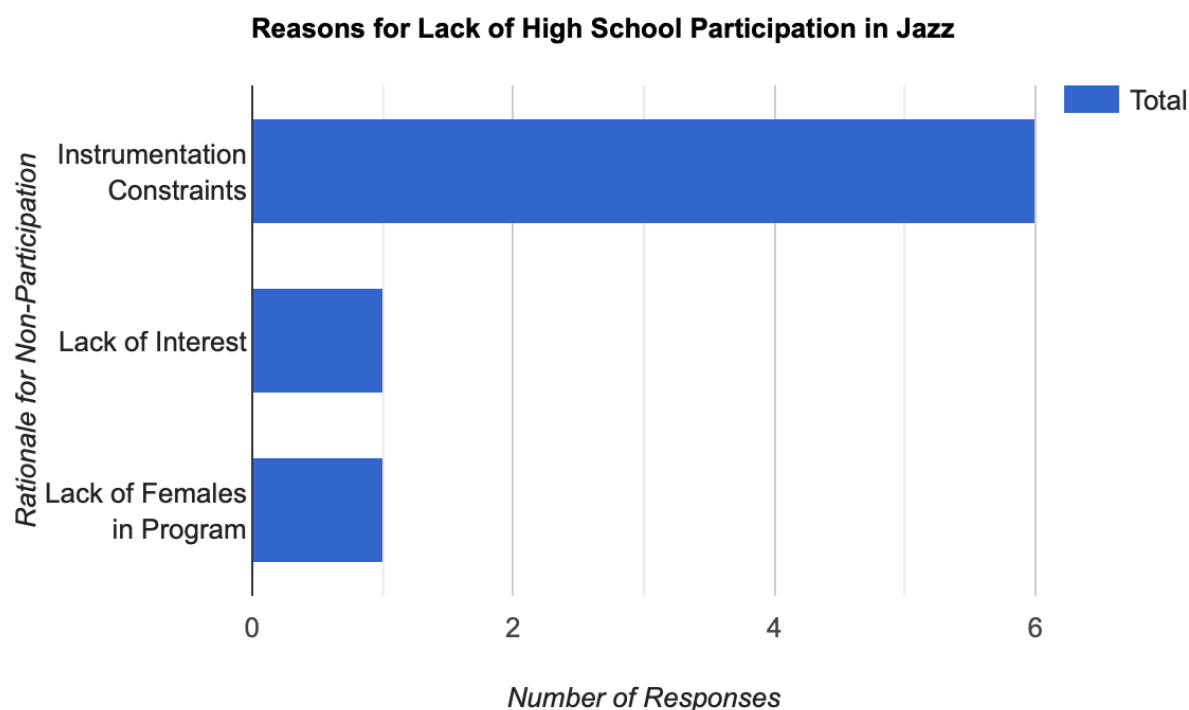


Figure 4: Reasons for Lack of High School Participation in Jazz

The last category included seven responses indicating that the participant was not part of a jazz ensemble in high school. The primary barrier for participation for those surveyed was instrumentation. Many participants indicated that they were singers, and their school did not offer jazz opportunities to vocalists. Others played an instrument that is not part of the typical big band setting such as flute. Only one participant indicated that they did not join a jazz ensemble solely because they did not have interest in doing so. One participant also stated that they were less inclined to join their jazz program because there was only one other girl and a perceived the environment to be negative amongst the male students.

Participants who indicated that they currently participate in a jazz ensemble at the collegiate level were then asked to describe the reasons why they chose to continue participating.

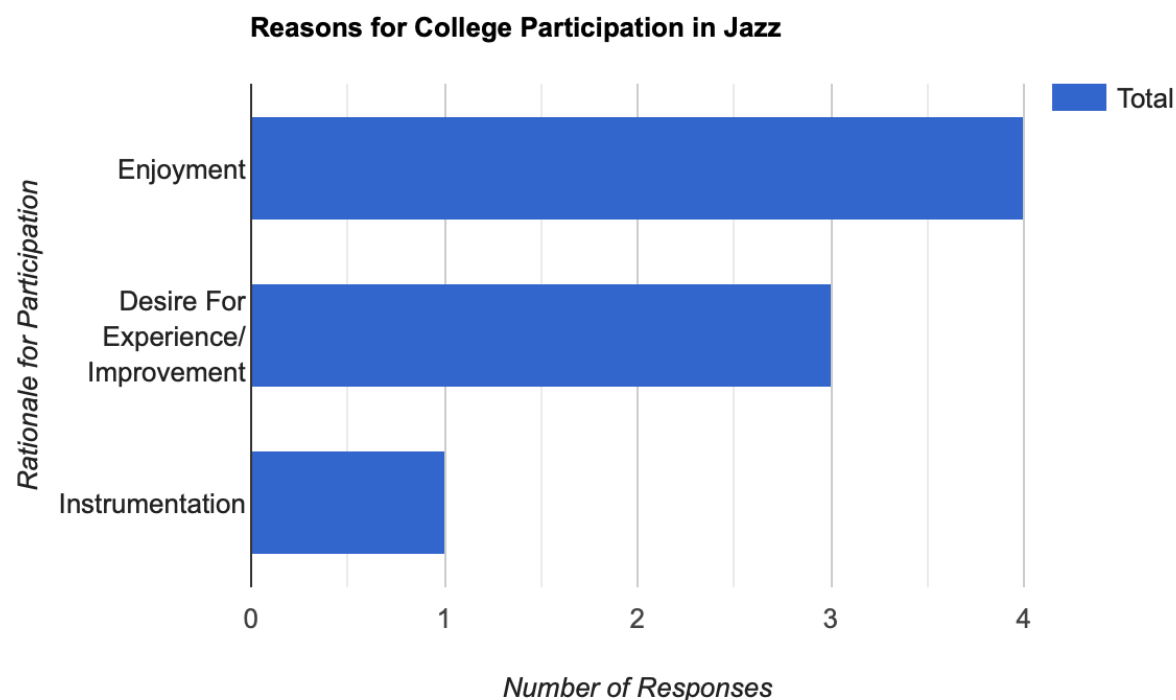


Figure 5: Reasons for College Participation in Jazz

As illustrated by Figure 5, responses revealed three categories: participation as a result of enjoyment, participation as a result of a desire for musical experience and improvement, and instrumentation. These responses were interesting as the first two categories reflected the same motivation for being part of jazz ensembles at the collegiate level that participants indicated drove them to be part of jazz at the high school level. Of the seven respondents, five indicated that enjoyment was a factor in their continued participation in jazz at the collegiate level.

Three participants indicated a continued desire for experience and learning. However, as compared to the responses for participation at the high school level, the desire for learning was more specific. At the college level, respondents wanted to learn about jazz theory, jazz improvisation, and how to teach jazz, whereas the high school responses primarily pointed to the desire to just be exposed to different styles of music. The last category, instrumentation, represents a vocalist who was able to participate in a vocal jazz ensemble at the collegiate level.

The 14 respondents who chose not to participate in jazz ensembles at the collegiate level were asked to share their reasoning as well. As demonstrated by Figure 6, six categories emerged from the responses: lack of enjoyment, time constraints, lack of self-efficacy, teacher-related issues, injury, and instrumentation.

For three respondents, jazz was just not enjoyable enough to continue devoting time to. Time constraints prevented another three respondents from participating in jazz. Time constraints included involvement in other ensembles, work obligations, and prioritizing a primary instrument that is not part of the typical jazz setting, such as clarinet.

The third category, lack of self-efficacy, refers to one's belief about whether they can accomplish something (Wher, 2015). Three respondents indicated that they felt that they were not good enough at jazz or their primary instrument to participate in a jazz ensemble.

This category also ties into the teacher-related issues category as one respondent felt that their high school teacher did not prepare them well enough to feel comfortable participating in jazz at the college level. Another respondent shared that faculty played into their decision to not participate in jazz but did not elaborate further as to why.

One respondent indicated that they did not know they could participate in jazz ensemble as a flutist and missed the audition, another indicated that injury prevented them from participating in ensembles at the time of the survey.

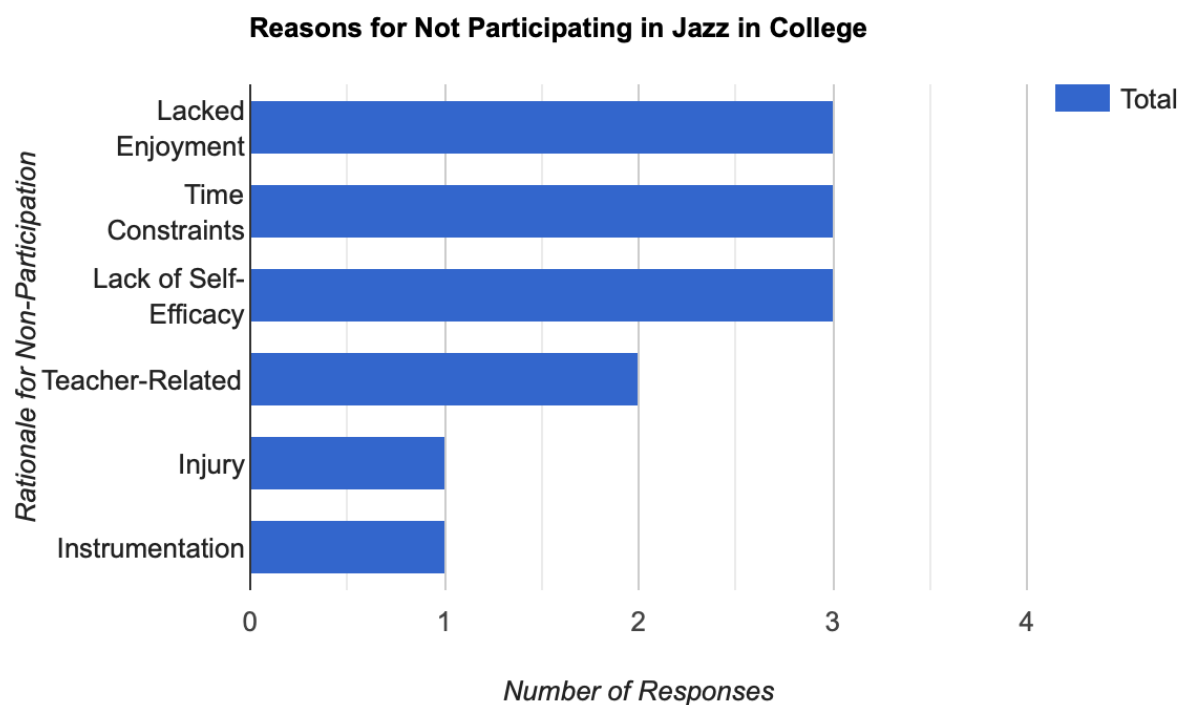


Figure 6. Reasons for Not Participating in Jazz in College

Next, participants who had experience in jazz ensembles were asked to share the ways in which their previous directors were successful at creating inclusive environments for women, and ways in which they could have improved in doing so. Participants who had never been involved in a jazz ensemble were asked to share ways in which directors could have been more inclusive or encouraging of their participation.

While four respondents felt that they were part of inclusive programs, Figure 6 highlights the ways in which respondents felt that their directors could have been more inclusive of female students in their jazz environments.

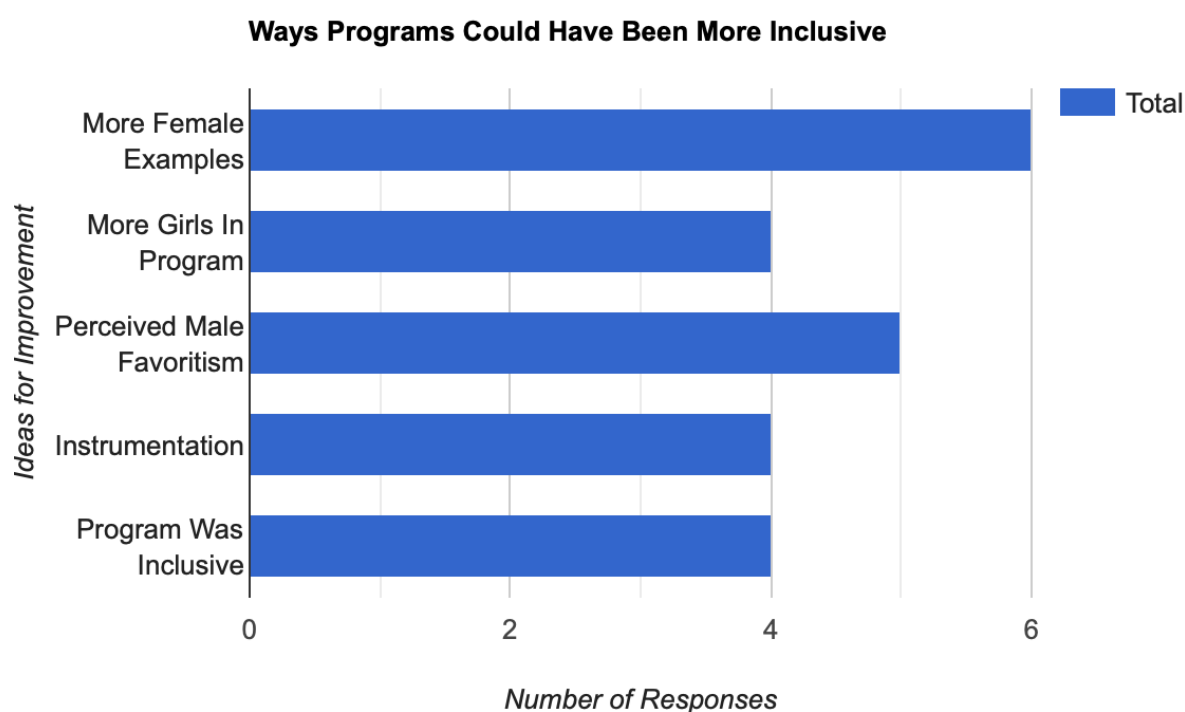


Figure 6. Ways Programs Could Have Been More Inclusive

The most frequent response as to ways in which directors could have been more inclusive is through the incorporation of female examples in the curriculum. Six participants state that

even in cases in which the director promoted a healthy environment in the band room, the repertoire and curriculum were devoid of female examples. Respondents frequently suggested programming more music written by women, providing female musicians as examples for the sound that the band is trying to achieve, and highlighting women's accomplishments in the same way that they would those of males. Some respondents expressed the sentiment that women's achievements were talked about only in instances in which females were overtly being highlighted rather than all the time like their male counterparts. Additionally, a theme of wanting directors to introduce students to female musicians emerged in the responses.

Four respondents perceived favoritism of the males in their programs. One participant felt that males in the program progressed faster than females and had more opportunities to shine. Other participants felt excluded as a result of the use of male-based language and the development of "boy's club" cultures in which male students were offered more opportunities both socially and musically in jazz settings.

Four responses also indicated that they would have felt more comfortable if there had been more girls in their program. Often being the only girl or one of few led participants to feel left out despite being included in the program.

Finally, respondents who had never participated in jazz ensembles almost exclusively indicated that creating more opportunities for instruments not typically part of the big band setting would allow for more women to be involved in programs. Many of the participants indicated they did not feel welcome because of the instrument they played and even felt that they would have to learn a new instrument entirely to participate in jazz at all. Time restrictions prevented them from doing so and ultimately excluded them from participating in jazz.

Chapter 6

Interviews

Goals

The interviews were created with the intention to understand the experiences of professional female jazz musicians both prior to and during their professional careers. In order to do so, I wanted to learn about what experiences the professionals had prior to the collegiate level that led them to pursue music professionally. Based in their experiences as women in jazz, I also hoped to get a sense of what they would suggest to educators who are trying to create inclusive classroom environments. Finally, I hoped to learn about the impact that being part of a community of female musicians had on them both musically and personally.

Participants and Recruitment

I interviewed three professional female jazz musicians who were recruited based on their affiliation with an organization that was made to support women in jazz. There was no preference for age, geographical location, or instrument played, when selecting the interview participants. I originally reached out to five total musicians and received three responses.

Participants were recruited for the interview through email in which I sent each individual an invitation to participate, a summary of the research, and an explanation of why they were being asked to participate. Once the participants indicated an interest in participating, we then met over Zoom™ for the interview which lasted approximately one hour. In order to

maintain confidentiality, the identities of the interview participants' names are not included and any identifying information that may have been shared in the interview was removed from the transcripts.

Interview Design

Interview subjects were asked to provide written consent for their participation in the research study upon reading a summary of the purpose of the research, which was provided prior to the interview. Once consent was provided and a date was set, interview subjects were notified that our meeting would be recorded on Zoom™ and that their responses would later be transcribed for use in this study.

The interview subjects were first asked questions about their experiences as women in jazz in the professional world. The questions provided opportunities for the interview subjects to reflect on both positive and negative experiences they may have had as a result of being female jazz musicians, instances in which they felt they were stereotyped, and their take on what could be done to improve the level of inclusivity for female musicians within the jazz world.

Next, subjects were then asked about their experiences in music settings prior to college (primarily middle or high school) which made them want to pursue jazz. They were also asked about their personal suggestions for any educators who are looking to create more inclusive environments for their jazz students.

Finally, subjects were asked about the impact of female community on their lives. Questions prompted subjects to consider how their affiliation with their organization changed

their perceptions of jazz or being a woman in jazz. They were also asked to reflect on the ways in which their relationships with other women may have changed as a result of their immersion into a community of female musicians.

Results

Overall Experience

Respondents were first asked to reflect on what their experience as women in jazz has been like, overall. A common thread woven through all responses was that being a female jazz musician comes with many challenges.

One respondent shared that when entering the field of jazz, she did not realize how she would always be singled out as a “woman in jazz” rather than just being a jazz musician like her male counterparts. As she elaborated on that idea, she shared that any accomplishment she had was always tied in with the fact that she was a woman, rather than just being acknowledged solely for her achievement. This, in combination with often being the only or one of few women on a gig or in the community at large, led to feelings of isolation and loneliness. She did note that a positive element to her experience has been connecting with other female jazz musicians as a result of the commonalities that many of them face.

Two other respondents both shared that while being a female jazz musician has many challenges, they feel attitude has a lot to do with success in the industry. For one respondent, the negativity she faced served as fuel for improvement throughout her career. She shared that a positive aspect of music in general is that there is no finish line and musicians are always

pushing themselves to see how far they can go and how much they can achieve. She shared that seeing how far she can go in spite of being a woman in jazz is a great motivator for her.

The third respondent shared that her experience has largely been shaped by community, both with musicians in general and with female musicians, more specifically. She also shared that her experience has been fun as a result of the music she has been able to play and stated that the pros of the career outweigh the challenges that come with being a woman.

Positive Experiences

When asked to reflect on positive experiences interview subjects had as a result of being female jazz musicians, responses overwhelmingly indicated that one of the highlights is the connections that are built with other women in the field. 2 out of 3 respondents said outright that the most rewarding part of being a woman in jazz is the community and comradery they experienced with other female-identifying and non-binary jazz musicians. One of those respondents also noted that the opportunity to connect with other female musicians, particularly those who are younger and are just entering the field, was especially gratifying.

Furthermore, one respondent noted an opportunity in which they were able to perform in an all-female big band as one of the most positive experiences they have had. They shared that this was one of the only times they felt that they could just focus on the music completely and noted that they felt fully included in the group, which is not always the case in ensembles primarily composed of men.

The third respondent shared that they were able to take a group on tour as a bandleader, which was something they were excited about. While on the tour, she learned that her group likely had the highest ever percentage of female musicians on the main stage at one time at one of the festivals where they performed.

Negative Experiences

Interview subjects were also asked to talk about negative experiences they may have had as a result of being women in jazz. A theme that emerged throughout each response was the idea of being tokenized or feeling singled out as the only female or one of few. One respondent noted that a common issue she faces as a woman in jazz is not having a place to change while at gigs or on tour.

Typically, only one dressing room space is allocated for the band. When the group is primarily made up of men, this leaves female members having to search for private areas such as restrooms or closets to change in. While some may argue that it is not the band's fault that there is only one space, this common situation further highlights the assumption people have that women will not be present in these musical settings, making it unnecessary to have more than one space. This respondent also shared that there have been instances in which male bandmates have attempted to watch as she got changed, even after she moved to a different space to do so.

Another respondent noted an instance in which she was the only female on a gig and was the brunt of all the jokes made by the band leader. The jokes primarily focused on the fact that she was a female instrumentalist and did not belong in the setting. While the musician who made the jokes apologized and claimed to be joking, this did not erase the fact that she was repeatedly singled out and not taken as seriously as her male counterparts.

The last respondent stated that she experienced abuse of power at the hands of educators while she was a minor. This included inappropriate communication and sexual assault by the educator. She shared that this experience was very isolating as this was an educator she admired, who she ultimately had to report. This is not an uncommon experience for female musicians in any setting to have, and the respondent graciously shared her experience in order to bring awareness to this issue.

Stereotypes

Participants were also asked whether they had felt that they were stereotyped as a result of being a female jazz musician. All three respondents stated that they had been stereotyped as a woman in jazz and noted instances in which they were made to feel as if they only got a gig because of their looks. This in turn made them self-aware of the clothes they wore and the way they behaved in musical settings moving forward.

One respondent shared that people will often assume that she is a vocalist just because she is the only woman at the gig. Furthermore, people have made assumptions that she has gotten gigs based on her looks, expressed surprise upon learning she was an instrumentalist in a jazz ensemble, and even stated that she must be really good in order to be in that position. She has also experienced being asked if she was a male band member's girlfriend.

A second respondent had many similar experiences. While she noted that she felt stereotyped much more often when she was younger, she shared that she had been told by many people that her instrument was for boys to play. She also experienced people assuming that she got gigs because people were interested in her romantically and was even told that she only got gigs because she was "unthreatening."

The third respondent felt that she was stereotyped as “one of the guys” and was put in situations in which men adopted her into the male group even though she was a woman. She shared that this was very uncomfortable because she often had to be subjected to conversations that she found to be inappropriate and highly uncomfortable. She also experienced people assuming that she could not play jazz well and completely ignoring her because she was a woman. Furthermore, she too shares that she was often objectified for her looks and even found herself playing into it and wearing more revealing clothing as she thought it would allow her to have more opportunities.

Changing the Environment

Next, participants were asked to consider the things that they felt needed the most adjusting within the jazz world to make it a better environment for female musicians. One participant shared that the key to moving forward in a positive direction is through more conversations and room for understanding, especially between generational gaps.

A second respondent echoed these ideas sharing that she thinks that moving toward constructive conversations rather than destructive arguments is the key for progress. She too felt that there needs to be more cooperation and understanding between different generations. She also noted that there needs to be more respect in debates as people are often quick to judge others. Both respondents did indicate that they noticed the environment shifting for the better in general during recent years.

The third respondent shared that making people in general, but males more specifically, understand why they would benefit from female inclusion in jazz is crucial for forward motion. She highlights that since women are underrepresented in the field, there are missing voices in the

jazz world. She questions how many other Charlie Parkers or Dizzy Gillespies there might have been if women had the opportunity to not only play jazz but excel in it. She also notes that diversity in thought is what leads to innovation in music. If bands are manned by players who represent one type of individual, how can they continue to create in ways that are diverse and evolving? She shared that allowing women to make the contributions that they have to offer now that they have more of an opportunity to do so will show the world why they should be equally valued in the field.

Educational Experiences

Participants were then asked to reflect on their experiences in education prior to college that may have led them to pursue jazz professionally. All three participants noted the important role that teachers play in engaging students in music. One participant stated that supportive teachers understood her in a way that even her family could not, and their mentorship and influence led her to pursue music professionally. Another shared that she had teachers who encouraged and rewarded hard work and exposed her to a variety of styles jazz playing which sparked her love for the music.

Another common thread within the responses is the importance of giving students the opportunity to engage in jazz outside of the school setting. One respondent noted her participation in local festivals and gigs, which were made possible by her band director, was a real source of fun and encouragement for her. Another shared that she had opportunities to travel with her school's jazz bands to places like New York and Europe in addition to participating in

local festivals. She said that these experiences allowed her to envision herself living the life of a professional musician which allowed her to set the goals she needed to get there.

One respondent also shared the importance of treating students as professionals, noting that the environment created in her band room significantly prepared her for life as a professional musician. She shared that her teacher taught her how to actively listen to music and think critically about what she was consuming. This provided her the opportunity to learn at a young age that one of the best parts of jazz is the individual styles that are encouraged and celebrated. She shared that her director would lend her the CDs of different professionals, and this helped her to pick out her favorites and in turn, develop her own sound.

Educational Suggestions

Respondents also shared their suggestions for educators who are trying to make their classrooms more inclusive for female students. All three respondents shared the importance of providing a diverse set of role models, including women, for all students to look up to. One participant noted the importance of distinguishing that female role models are not just for female students. Teachers should make a point to show students that this person, whether a guest or listening example, is a great example for all students in the room. By normalizing the incorporation of female role models for all, female participation will become less of a novelty.

Another respondent noted the importance of showing diverse models to demonstrate that there are many ways to be a musician, there is not one correct path or type of person. She also stressed the importance of meeting students where they are and considering individual needs when providing instruction. She notes that until recently, all educational successes in jazz have

been on male subjects, she wonders if there are different approaches that can be taken to be more effective for female learners.

The third respondent highlighted the importance of avoiding gendered terminology in teaching. This can allow students to feel represented no matter how they identify. She also suggested creating unique ways to “trick students into improvising.” Often, improvising is presented in a way that is very intimidating. Having students stand up and play a solo that they made up individually, when all they have ever experienced is playing in the ensemble context can be very off-putting. She shared that by getting kids comfortable in a less-threatening way, retention rates may increase.

Female Community and Jazz Perceptions

Lastly, the participants were asked about their experience with their organization and how it impacted their perceptions of jazz and being a woman in jazz. They were also asked about the ways in which their relationships with women in jazz changed since being part of this sort of community.

One respondent shared that upon joining this community, she realized that she had finally found something that she did not even know she was missing. She shared that she felt excitement to have the opportunity to talk with other women who had similar experiences and felt seen by fellow musicians in a way that she had not experienced previously. She also stated that the sense of community changed how she approached and interacted with other women on gigs. In the past, she noted that there was a hesitation about whether to acknowledge other women on gigs, but after joining the community she felt excited and more comfortable connecting.

Another respondent learned that there is no right way to create change. Women in jazz is not an all-encompassing term that can describe the wants and personalities of all female jazz musicians. The women she met all had different experiences and their desires for change varied greatly. For this reason, she shared that when enacting change it is important to look on to the individual level as well to ensure people are comfortable with accommodations that may be made. She shares that while some women seem to have the desire to deconstruct the entire system as it is now, she wants to work to change it from within, and that both viewpoints are valid.

The last respondent shared that she prior to joining the community, she felt a strong desire for connection with other women who shared common experiences in the jazz world. Once she found that community, she felt that she had many more opportunities to share how she was feeling professionally and socially with other musicians, which filled a gap in her life. She was able to connect with people who she did not previously think she even necessarily liked as a result of the competitive nature of being tokenized as women in music. She also shared that as a result of being exposed to more women, the idea that women must be pitted against each other in musical situations, or in life, has started to go away.

Through all the responses, it is evident that being part of a community of female musicians had notable social, personal, and professional benefits. The connections made resulted in more performance opportunities, a network of colleagues to rely on, and friends to confide in. There also seemed to be a trend that as a result of having more female connections, these musicians felt more confident in their abilities and their right to pursue music professionally as a woman.

Chapter 7

Conclusions: Suggestions for Music Educators

Although there has been great improvement in the representation of women in jazz throughout the years, it seems clear that jazz is still a male-dominated field. Today, musicians are bringing attention to the fact that there is still a disparity in the representation and portrayal of women in this idiom and creating outlets for women to use their voices and create music together. However, while this work is important, inclusion of women in jazz must start in the classroom or there may be few women in the field to advocate for in the future.

In recent years, studies have been conducted in the hopes of determining why female participation in jazz educational programs is significantly lower than that of male participation. The present study confirmed and echoed conclusions from the previous studies. Factors that greatly influence female participation in jazz educational settings are the presence of tokenism, stereotypes, lack of self-efficacy, and intimidation. In this chapter, I aim to provide the reader with ways to combat these inhibitors to female participation using the results from both the survey and interviews I conducted in combination with existing literature.

Incorporate Female Role Models for All Students

As evidenced by the results from the survey of collegiate music students, one of the top motivators for female students to continue participating in jazz is the presence of female role models. All three interview subjects also noted that their suggestions for educators trying to create inclusive classroom environments would be to have as many female role models as

possible. However, as stated by one of the interview subjects, it is essential that female role models are provided for all students, not just female students. By showing young students of any gender identity at young ages that there are many types of people who can participate in jazz and be successful at it, you begin to dismantle the idea that jazz is for one type of person, males.

The incorporation of female role models comes in many forms. These can include programming of music composed by females, providing listening examples of female musicians, displaying photos of female musicians in the classroom, or bringing in female musicians as clinicians or guest speakers. Teachers should also take note of female musicians that live in the area in which they teach in order to be able to provide references for female private teachers.

While creating spaces for inclusion in curricula, teachers should make efforts to avoid the tokenization of female jazz musicians. Tokenism can be described as an instance in which one is the either one of few or the sole representative of a minority group in a setting (Kanter, 1997). While Kanter's definition of the word tokenism is functional for describing the experience of women in jazz, Merriam-Webster's Dictionary describes tokenism as "the policy or practice of making only a symbolic effort (as to desegregate)" (Merriam-Webster, 2021). Tokenism is still so prevalent in jazz education as many efforts to include women in the curriculum are only surface level.

In order to reduce the experiences of tokenism among young female jazz musicians, we must reduce the use of token females in our teaching of jazz history. Women should be included in the curriculum all-year round, not just during women's history month or other special occasions. When women are only included during certain times of the year, this further perpetuates the idea that female musicians are a novelty. Furthermore, programming all-female concert can be of the same disservice as it promotes the ideas that females need special

marketing for their voices to be heard in jazz (Watrous, 1994). This is not to say that women should not receive extra attention during special occasions such as women's history month, it is just to make the distinction that this should not be the only instance in which women are spoken about.

Inclusions of females in the curriculum should be meaningful and given the same amount of time as that of their male counterparts. Meaningful inclusion can consist of examination of the woman's works, life experiences, and teachings. It can also consist of discussion about the reasons why examples of female musicians in jazz have been limited, historically. By showing students that there was a reason for the lack of female representation throughout history, the notion that women do not participate in jazz just because they are not good enough to do so can be dismantled.

It is also important to note that when sharing female musicians with a class, a teacher should aim to share models of all instruments. Too often exposure to women in jazz is limited to vocalists and piano players. There are countless successful female musicians on all instruments associated with the jazz idiom and showing students that may inspire horn players who often are not shown examples of women playing their instruments.

Building Healthy Communities for All Students

Another way to dismantle tokenism in the classroom can be through the process of community building. As demonstrated by the survey discussed in Chapter 3, rates of female participation in jazz programs often decline greatly between high school and college. One of the contributing factors to this trend is intimidation (McKeage, 2004). By promoting a healthy

community environment more students, especially female students, may be influenced to join a jazz ensemble and stick with it.

One interview subject shared that she felt it was important to “trick” students into improvising at an early age. As improvising can be a scary and vulnerable experience for students, especially at the younger levels, it is important to create classroom environments in which students feel safe to try things out. Often, band directors will give improvising opportunities to students who demonstrate abilities in that area. This can lead to strong feelings of intimidation for students who do not typically get solo opportunities. As evidenced in the literature review, female teens are more likely to shy away from improvising as they tend to view jazz as a masculine activity and have a strong desire to conform to societal norms (Wehr, 2006). If you encourage all students to begin improvising early in their jazz careers, regardless of their ability levels, it takes away the novelty of the act and shows students that they are all capable of doing it.

It is also important to facilitate and encourage community building amongst female members of the jazz program. The third highest response generated by the survey about suggestions for creating inclusive environments was simply having more girls in the program. Participants felt that they would have been more comfortable to join if there were some other girls that they could relate to.

Encouraging female community building can help to mitigate this issue and can occur through the creation of a club for all the females in a jazz program or a mentorship situation in which the older women in the program create relationships with younger women in the program. By socializing the girls in a jazz program, they will see that they are not alone in their experiences as a woman in jazz and possibly create some relatable allies.

All interview respondents noted a drastic change in their confidence and growth both socially, professionally, and personally as a result of their participation in female jazz communities. They also noted the importance of having the opportunity to share experiences with other women. If there happens to be a situation in which female students are made to feel uncomfortable as a result of their gender, they may be more likely to share their experience with other females rather than keeping it to themselves and letting the issue go unaddressed.

Removal of Gendered Language

Respondents in both the interview and the survey noted that gendered terminology in the jazz classroom often led them to feel left out. It is important to consider the language that teachers are using, and the language used in method books and how they may impact student's perceptions of whether jazz is for them.

David Baker's jazz improvisation book, *Jazz Improvisation: A Comprehensive Method for All Musicians*, teaches the basics of improvisation. While this may serve as a great resource for educators, it is important to note that throughout the book he uses pronouns like "he" to refer to jazz musicians. For example, "The player plays only things that he has heard before; memorized patterns, certain scales which are securely a part of his repertoire, etc." (Baker, 60, 1998). While the information presented may be both useful and valid, it completely excludes half of the population from seeing themselves in the literature as he only acknowledges male musicians. As educators, it is essential to consider the ways in which language can impact your students and their perceptions of their abilities and jazz.

Flexible Instrumentation

A common barrier to participation in jazz found in the survey was the traditional instrumentation of the big band. Many respondents, who could be identified as flute, clarinet, or string players based on their answers, felt that they could not participate in jazz because they did not play an instrument that is part of the big band full-time (saxophone, trombone, trumpet, bass, guitar, piano, drum set). Others noted that they did not feel they had the available time to put in to learn one of the traditional instruments in order to participate.

In my own experience, the jazz ensemble with the highest number of female participants that I have ever been a part of in the school setting was in my middle school band. I believe this can be attributed to the fact that the director included all traditional big band instruments in addition to flute and French horn. Additionally, when there was a student who wanted to participate that did not play a traditional big band instrument, the teacher made accommodations to arrangements so that they were able to get the same experience as everyone else. This also rang true in a jazz band I helped to teach at the middle school level in which there were six girls participating. One girl switched from flute to alto saxophone to participate in the band but there were other students playing instruments not typically found in the jazz ensemble, such as baritone horn, which allowed more students to get experience in the setting.

In the middle and high school settings especially, it would benefit programs to have flexible instrumentation for their big bands. Exposing students to the music is more important than maintaining the traditional big band structure at the younger ages. Furthermore, if a student has the opportunity to play jazz and loves it, they may consider taking the time to master one of the traditional big band instruments. There are many arrangements and compositions that already

exist for bands with unique instrumentations and educators can mitigate any disparities themselves by arranging for any instruments that are not included by doubling parts.

Final Conclusions

Jazz is an art form that can and should be played and enjoyed by people regardless of their gender. While there have been considerable improvements in female representation in the music since it was born, there is still a long way to go to make this genre a truly equitable environment for women. By promoting more inclusive classroom cultures, creating healthy learning environments, and incorporating women into jazz curricula at equal rates to men, I believe we can change the narrative surrounding women's participation in jazz.

Appendix A

Selected Discography

Dottie Dodgion:

(Referenced from Dodgion's Memoir)

Dottie Dodgion, *Dottie Dodgion Sings*, Arbor Records, 1994

Dottie Dodgion, *This Is What I'm Here For*, Envirophonic Records, 2003

Dottie Dodgion, *From the Heart*, Monterey Mattress Marke, 2007

Dottie Dodgion, *Dottie Dodgion Trio, Live from Kuumbwa Jazz Center*, 2015

Melba Liston:

Dizzy Gillespie, *Dizzy in South America, Vol. 1 & 2*, CAP, 1956

Melba Liston, *And Her 'Bones*, Fresh Sounds Records, 1956-58

Quincy Jones, *Q Live in Paris*, Warner Brothers, 1960

Randy Weston/Melba Liston, *Volcano Blues*, Verve, 1993

Marian McPartland:

Marian McPartland, *Bossa Nova + Soul*, Time Recordings, 1962

Marian McPartland, *From This Moment On*, Concord Jazz, Inc., 1979

Marian McPartland, *Willow Creek and Other Ballads*, Concord Records, Inc., 1985

Marian McPartland, *Contrasts*, Concord Records, Inc., 1994

Marian McPartland, *Just Friends*, Concord Records, Inc., 1998

Vi Redd:

Vi Redd, *Bird Call*, Capitol Records, LLC, 1962

Vi Redd, *Lady Soul*, Atco Records, 1963

Clora Bryant:

Clora Bryant, *Gal with A Horn*, Mode Records, 1957

Thelma Terry:

Thelma Terry and Her Play Boys, *How Low Can You Go? Anthology of String Bass*, Columbia Records, 1925

Mary Osborne:

Mary Osborne, *A Girl and Her Guitar*, Warwick LP, 1959

Appendix B

Survey of Female Collegiate Music Students

Welcome to the research study!

Consent for Exempt Research
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Creating Inclusive Environments for Women In Jazz

Principal Investigator: Alexandra Biancoviso

Telephone Number: 917-525-7241

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Eric McKee Faculty Advisor

Telephone Number: 814-863-2122

You are being invited to volunteer to participate in a research study. This study, Creating Inclusive Environments for Women In Jazz, aims to provide resources for educators to assist in making their jazz programs more inclusive of their female students. This research will include a brief historical background about women and their participation in jazz, data from interviews with professional female jazz musicians and a survey of female collegiate music students, and an analysis of existing research on female participation in jazz.

Your participation will include a survey about your experiences as with jazz throughout your schooling. The survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. This survey is completely anonymous. Information collected in this project may be shared with other researchers, but we will not share any information that could identify you.

If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you should contact Alexandra Biancoviso at 917-525-7241 or Dr. Eric McKee. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject or concerns regarding your privacy, you may contact the Office for Research Protections at 814-865-1775.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

I consent, begin the study

I do not consent, I do not wish to participate



Did you participate in a jazz ensemble in high school?

Yes

No

Based on your response to question 1: If you did choose to participate in a jazz ensemble, why? If you did not choose to participate in a jazz ensemble, why not?

Do you currently participate in a jazz ensemble in college?

Yes

No

Based on your response to question 3: If you are currently participating in a jazz ensemble and also participated in high school, why did you choose to continue? Why did you choose to start if you did not participate in a jazz ensemble in high school? (If you do not currently participate in a jazz ensemble, move on to Question 5)

Based on your response to question 3: If you are not currently participating in a jazz ensemble but you did participate in a jazz ensemble in high school, what factors led to your decision to not participate in college?

If you have experience in a jazz ensemble, in what ways were your ensemble directors successful in creating inclusive environments for female students in their programs? In what ways could your ensemble directors have been more successful in creating inclusive environments for female students in their programs?

If you have never participated in a jazz ensembles, in what ways could ensemble directors have been more inclusive/encouraging of your participation?

Appendix C

Interview with Professional Female Jazz Musicians

Interview Guide

Introduction: The video and audio from this interview will be recorded. Recording will start now. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. Please do not provide any identifiable information about other people in your responses to the following questions.

Question 1:

What has your experience been like as a woman in jazz?

Question 2:

Tell me about a negative and a positive experience that you have had as a result of being a woman in jazz.

Question 3:

Tell me about any experiences you may or may not have had in which you felt like you were stereotyped because you were a woman?

Question 5:

Is there any one thing that you feel needs the most adjusting in the jazz world to make it a better environment for female musicians?

Question 6:

Tell me about the experiences you may have had in middle school or high school that led you to pursue jazz professionally.

Question 7:

What are your suggestions for educators who are trying to make their classrooms inclusive?

Question 8:

How has your experience with your organization changed your perceptions of jazz or being a woman in jazz?

Question 9:

How has being a part of this community of women in jazz compared to your experiences and relationships with women in jazz prior to being a part of this community?

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ACADEMIC VITA

Alexandra Biancoviso

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EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University

University Park, PA

Schreyer Honors College

May 2022

Bachelor of Music Education

Thesis: *Creating Inclusive Environments for Women in Jazz*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Student Teacher - Altoona Area School District

2022- Present

- Teaches guitar and modern band style general music courses at the middle and high school levels.
- Teaches a variety of instrumental ensembles including jazz and concert bands at both the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Stagehand - Penn State Recital Hall

2021-2022

- Managed concert venue, including lighting and sound design, and ensured necessary equipment and aid was provided to performers.

Ralph's Famous Italian Ices

2017-Present

- Works collaboratively to ensure customer satisfaction.

VOLUNTEER WORK/LEADERSHIP

Founder/President of Penn State's Women in Music Organization

2021-2022

- Provides personal and professional development opportunities for female-identifying and non-binary students pursuing music.

Through The Staff Teacher

2021-Present

- Provides free weekly music lessons for student in financial need.

The Penn State School of Music's IDEA Committee

2020-2022

- Created and carried out initiatives that support inclusivity, diversity, and equity action.

Treasurer of the Penn State Trombone Choir

2020-2021

- Managed funding for the organization and purchased three new trombones for club use.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Participant in the Women in Jazz Organization Mentors Program	2020-Present
Music Activities Scholarship Recipient	2020-Present
University Park Provost Scholarship Recipient	2018-Present
Invited to present research at the 2022 PMEA Conference	2022
Invited to present research at the 2021 NYSSMA Conference	2021
College of Arts & Architecture Research and Creative Activities Fund Recipient	2021
Schreyer Honors College Research Grant Recipient	2021
Featured composer in the Penn State Empow(h)er Concert	2021
Participant in the International Women's Brass Conference Mentors Program	2020-2021
Featured composer in the Penn State Trombone Choir Concert	2019

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

New York State School Music Association
Pennsylvania Music Educators Association