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EDITED BY

Guro Gravem Johansen,
Norwegian Academy of Music, Norway

REVIEWED BY

Eleonora Concina,
University of Padua,
Italy
Una M. MacGlone,
University of Edinburgh,
United Kingdom

*CORRESPONDENCE

Leon R. de Bruin
✉ leon.debruin@unimelb.edu.au

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Director perspectives to equity, access, and inclusion in the school jazz ensemble

Leon R. de Bruin*

Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Faculty of Fine Arts and Music, University of Melbourne,
Parkville, VIC, Australia

Arts and culture are increasingly acknowledged as pillars of society in which all of humanity including people who identify as' LGBTQIA+ can contribute in 21st century society. United Nations and individual country initiatives continue to promote the notion of inclusive, egalitarian values that promote equal access and opportunity to chosen careers and passions. Jazz as an artform has evolved as a form of cultural expression, entertainment, and political metaphor, subject to societal and populist pressures that have created both a canon and popularized history. Jazz education has moved from largely informal to almost wholly formal and institutionally designed methods of learning and teaching. The jazz ensemble or stage band remains an enduring secondary education experience for most students learning jazz today. This qualitative study of music directors investigates their approaches, perspectives and concerns regarding attitudes and practices in the teaching profession, the promoting of inclusive practices, access, and equity, amidst a pervasive masculinized performance and social structure that marginalizes non-male participation. The study provides implications for how jazz education may continue to evolve in both attitude and enlightened access in the education of jazz learners.

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jazz education, music pedagogy, women in jazz, qualitative study, gender studies, sociology

Introduction

Equality and equity in education have become bywords in cultural and creative discourse throughout much of the world. Contemporary societies espouse knowledge of all kinds, economic, sporting, cultural and creative dimensions accessed to, developed upon, and performed with an equal basis to participation regardless of gender. Many nations in the West now include labor and anti-discrimination laws in the workplace such as those across the EU and United States (EEOC, 2009; EC, 2022) and in education systems and workplace opportunity (OECD, 2022). This continues to be a deeply forged and hard-won struggle for equality and equity across male, female, and non-binary identification in what is an enduring part of societies' rich tapestry. This infers an equality to individual access to the same resources and opportunities, whereas equity

accounts for specific and enduring disadvantages and obstacles groups or individuals may experience on their path to obtaining the same outcome. Whilst not changing history or its narratives of male dominance and female subjugation, after 100 years of right to equality, the 21st century now provides a re-defining of what equality and equity aims to achieve. This reflects an evolving influence and culture in the ways and activities we communicate, collaborate, and professionally and socially habituate with.

Gender politics are present in various worlds, including music where women are more integrated, such as classical music, but also in the way they navigate overtly sexist and cultural narratives that permeate jazz and rock (Bull, 2018; Scharff, 2018). This is at odds with legislation that has helped pull apart gender-role divisions (Mac Kinnon, 1991).

Women have never been in a stronger position to lead, change, and shape the economic, social, and political landscape. As a result, women are far more economically independent and socially autonomous, and professionally free to pursue careers of their choice unfettered by history or convention (Gilman, 2018). Attitudes and prejudices continue to be deconstructed and made obsolete. Male–female binary arguments extend to include a replete diversity that reflects humankind. Antiquated arguments such as Crouch's homophobic claim of a link between Avant pianist Cecil Taylor's identity orientation and "inability" to play the piano properly (Gill, 1995) widespread misrepresentation and systematic historical discrimination (Van Vleet, 2021) highlights how stereotypes have been imposed on the music, and not just by its musicians.

Yet, despite 21st century reimagining of gender equality, there remains lingering remnants of disproportion. In business, the 'glass ceiling' continues to withhold female passage into the upper bastions of management (McKinsey and Associates, 2021). In the arts, the vast majority of art exhibitions favor men by over 35% (McMillan, 2019). Observing significant entry point into arts careers in United States, educationally the share of women earning Bachelors' degrees is growing, and those earning qualification in the arts has increased to 56%, though women completing Bachelor degrees in music has decreased to 45% (National Endowment for the Arts, 2017).

This precarious participation of women in music worlds reflects a negotiation of forces that form various oppositions, repressions, and control (Pendle, 1991). Whilst there now exist equal pathways and career options for women, they are often exposed to various forms of negative gender biases, horizontal and vertical segregation, harassment, and greater job insecurity (Ravet and Coulangeon, 2003; Buscatto, 2018). Lazar (2008) saliently refers to how womens' emancipation is measured from a male perspective, and that the ideological structure of gender systematically is gauged from a male vantage point that privileges men as a social group. This is maintained through long held customs, and unconscious biases that arise from the implicit assumptions, beliefs, and expectations that we all have about others.

Gender stereotyping

There is research outlining structural, societal, and cultural asymmetries within the musical performing industry, and music education. Both of these areas continue to mediate inequalities driven by binary distinctions of gender (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), specific stereotyping within genres (Bowers and Tick, 1986; Steiblin, 1995; Tucker, 2000; Macleod, 2001; McGee, 2008), masculine tropes of strength and dominance in jazz performance, and modes of learning *via* often combative and competitive 'cutting contests' (Berliner, 2009). Little wonder then, that jazz remains a male dominated field (Ake, 2002; Caudwell, 2010; Dobson, 2010), and despite recent improving of participation numbers, females remain a minority in the field of jazz (Gibson, 2006; McKeage, 2011).

Difference in experiences of jazz performance due to gender emerge in relation to socio-psychological variables such as confidence, attitude, anxiety, peer support, shared learning climate and motivation (Wehr-Flowers, 2007). A study of British secondary school students (Hargreaves et al., 1995) discovered that females of any age in secondary schooling express a more positive attitude toward music in general but held a dislike for jazz music, suggesting that tastes were being developed at this formative level. Of those that do participate in high school music programs, in particular jazz bands, Rowe (1995) found females less open to improvising and given less opportunity to take solos. McKeage (2004) found that not only did females hold feelings of discomfort performing in jazz ensembles, but also that their career orientations towards a creative music career were negative, and that they harbored disillusionment toward pursuing jazz study. McKeage (2004) also found drastic attrition rates of females in jazz ensembles due to expectations for improvisation—a cornerstone of creative and collaborative output in jazz ensemble music.

Educational models and expectations

Early educational research on jazz education and gender perspectives present in the learning and teaching of jazz suggests gender inequity in jazz ensemble participation at the secondary level is due to a lack of female role models, an imbalance in the selection of jazz instruments, and a parental stereotyping of instrument appropriateness for gender (Lawn, 1981). Greene (2008) asserts how females dominated early jazz output, recordings, and popularity, but by the 1920's had virtually disappeared from sight in the emergence of ragtime and jazz genres and soloists that were dominated by men. Greene posits that the ghosting of female jazz performers "occurred to such an extreme, that books on the history of jazz overlook women artists, save perhaps references to Billy Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald" (2008, p. 17). Berger (1996) further offers insights into the limits of historical templates for what jazz ensemble is, noting that "at least 95% of modern-day large ensemble jazz playing comes out of three traditions: Count Basie's band, Duke Ellington's band and the orchestration of small groups, highlighting

that the long history of both the Duke Ellington Orchestra and Count Basie band presented no role model for female instrumentalists. This mode of unacknowledged and perhaps tokenistic female presence continued until only recently within the highly prominent Jazz at Lincoln Centre Orchestra (JALC, 2021) with jazz artist Camille Thurman becoming the first female to perform a full season in 30 years with this ensemble (NPR, 2020).

Such limiting, publically recognised professional level activity has profoundly impacted choice and desire by young women to participate in jazz. Evidence suggests expectations and attitudes to instrument affinity and participation can begin early and at home, with Abeles and Porter (1978) finding parents who were asked to hypothetically choose instruments for sons and daughters showed significant differences; flute, clarinet and violin were most frequently selected for daughters; and trumpet, trombone and drums were most frequently selected for sons—an attitude mirrored by high school student attitudes (Delzell and Lappla, 1992). North et al. (2003) claimed that high school students in their study perceived jazz as the most sex-typed and predominantly male genre of music.

Raferly and Valiulis' (2013) study revealed internationally prevailing cultures of practices and processes that contribute to the gendering of music and music education study. They claim student-oriented pressures to conform to heteronormative models and the adopting of stereotypical ideals of gender and sexuality impacts how students perceive their identity and their role within instrumental jazz education (Eros, 2008). Emphasizing this phenomenon, Butler (1993) sees performativity and identity “understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act,’ but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (p. 20). Learners performatively enact gender norms both consciously and unconsciously, intentionally and unintentionally, and these are either reified or modified by environment, influences, context and culture.

Hallam et al. (2008) assert that gendered patterns of learning are relatively consistent across primary and secondary phases. Barber (1998) found a direct correlation between co-educational high school student participation in jazz band and instrument selection, in which parental perceptions of jazz and blues history may impact initial decision making towards female jazz participation.

Studies on action and engagement in studio teaching and band rehearsals have revealed that the very teachers themselves act as modelling arbiters of who and what is allowed, with pedagogical approaches privileging masculinity (McCord, 1996), and even acts of discrimination (Teichman, 2020). Bergonzi (2015) attests that ‘schooling not only reflects dominant discourses about identities, including those related to gender and sexuality “but constitutes them” (p. 223). Learning environments emphasize the ingrained and often unrecognized, highlighting the cultural values, behaviors and actions that influence students, teachers and learning communities.

Despite these prevailing attitudes, throughout the 20th century women have played an active role in the creation and performance of jazz. Many women have inhabited the world of solo artist and leader (Melba Liston, Jane Ira Bloom, Vi Redd, Peggy Gilbert,

Valaida Snow to name a few) subverting jazz terminology of ‘sideman’ or ‘journeyman’ player along the way and paving the way for an increasing number of empowered 21st century female jazz artists. One of several ‘girl’ bands, ‘The Sweethearts of Rhythm’ forged pathways for bands today such as the renowned all-female group ‘Diva’. Such bands continue to exist successfully, and to acclaim. However the focus of this study focuses on equity, access, and inclusion to jazz education, highlighting attitudes and approaches that impact diversity of opportunity and success in jazz performance from an educational perspective.

Jazz, and jazz education maintains complex paradoxes of honoring its history and traditions, and maintaining perpetual creative innovation. Taking the past musically, socially, and culturally ‘imitating, assimilating and innovating’ upon the greats (Terry, 1992), their place in the canon, their attitudes and creative process ignites learners’ passion to engage and invest in the acquiring of knowledge. This research points to educational innovations, the breaking of traditions and finding new ways to learn, to evolve, and involve gender diverse equity as learners and performers.

Pedagogical approaches to inclusivity

Scholarly research has addressed gendered issues inherent in studying instrumental jazz improvisation. Various pedagogical approaches in jazz education have been called into question as to whether they facilitate an inviting and positive formative learning experience. Wehr-Flowers (2006) questions improvisation tasks for beginner students, and the ensemble directors’ encouragement toward students to improvise in front of other students, claiming anxiety feeding to already existing doubts about suitability with the genre. McCord (1996) develops this further claiming girls creating with boys may be seen or perceived as being too masculine. Specifically pertaining to schools’ music education from a sociological perspective, Green (2002, p. 142) asserts that ‘girls and boys on the whole, respectively, tend to choose particular activities and styles that already symbolically affirm conventional discursive constructions of femininity or masculinity in the wider world outside the school’.

This highlights the challenges for music education, the social cultures they create and the eco-systems they operate within. As de Bruin (2022, p. 2) attest, through a “musical ecologies [approach] we explore the relationships of musicians with each other and their environments ... their embodied encounters remain mediated in complex and often conflicting ways that are shaped by agencies of power and knowledge.” Such power and knowledge in the music department is largely held by music teachers, and jazz ensemble directors.

There have been numerous calls for educators needing to be willing to take action and effect change, such as all girl jazz-spaces (Teichman, 2018). Björck (2011) additionally calls for single-gender spaces to reduce the pressure on girls to ‘perform normative femininity correctly’ (p.94). Yet, such solutions may

be financially, organizationally, socially, and even philosophically inappropriate in a co-educational setting. Though cemented in inclusive education, the mantra ‘nothing about us without us’ (Charlton, 1998) resounds just as powerfully within the sociology of jazz music education, proffering a way forward that is pedagogic, attitudinal, and philosophically imbued. It implies one that promotes democratic, empathic, collaborative, and educationally enlightening ventures for jazz learners in schools to learn jazz together, and for teachers to be equipped to do so (de Bruin, 2018a). Instrumental instruction is a “site of negotiated and dynamic behaviors and interactions where learning is intrinsically social and communicative” (p. 84) (de Bruin, 2018b). Rogoff (2016) posits that learning and development is enacted through the interactions between teachers and students, and that these interactions reflect the cultural and social practices of learning communities.

This study adopts a contextual understanding of learning and teaching, investigating the kinds of cultures, processes, and behaviors cultivated in and through studio and jazz ensemble direction. It questions, what are the prevailing attitudes and beliefs held by secondary school instrumental teacher/big band directors towards inclusionary practices, and what actions/inactions are being taken to address equity and access? The study is interested in scrutinizing long held musical and social values, and the considering of consequences of actions and attitudes enacted by teachers with students that legitimate and privilege gender-specific roles, capacities, and prospects. It also seeks to discover ways teachers may challenge gendered paradigms, and how they forge innovative ways of *learning and being* in jazz education.

Methodology

For this study, a qualitative inquiry was a most appropriate method for analyzing the educational processes of participants and their reflections on teaching, and the dynamic and fluid experiences of teacher and student as a ‘complex, nuanced process of sense and meaning-making’ (Smith et al., 2009, p. 191). Collective case studies facilitate the examination of a phenomenon, population, or general condition’ (Stake, 1995, p. 437) that can analyze theories not only ‘set within real-world context’ (Yin, 2009, p. 18), but also ‘for refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p. 156). Gathering reflections and perspectives of experienced professional educators and stage band directors can reveal similarities, differences, and ‘natural co-variations of happenings’ (Stake, 1995, p. 22) that may reflect ‘the idiosyncratic more than the pervasive’ (Stake, 1995, p. 24).

Recruited through purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews of the educators provided a richness of description and detailed experiential accounts. Significantly, for measures of transparency the researcher provides substantial insider perspective; a secondary school instrumental music teacher and

jazz educator in a co-educational setting for 22 years, who identifies as male/he/him.

Based in Melbourne, Australia, ten secondary school jazz ensemble music directors’ reflections on practice form the basis of this study. The five male/five female teachers have over 10 years’ experience directing jazz ensembles (called stage bands in Australia), with one male and one female with over 20 years’ experience; have crafted and cultivated numerous jazz ensembles (e.g., junior, intermediate, senior) within the school they teach at. Each have large initial high school intakes from which they recruit large numbers of students that participate in instrumental music lessons once per week during school time, and ensembles before or after school. All participants are professionally accredited teachers, with the five most experienced working in one school, the other five operating in at least two schools in a peripatetic activity commonplace to most instrumental music teachers in Victoria. Students participating in ensembles in senior secondary years usually are studying ‘music performance’ as a subject, involving external solo or group examinations across a wide range of styles and genres. Experienced qualified teachers in this study are adept at teaching high level repertoire, improvisation skills and band direction. The sample represent both Government and Independent (Private) schools, seven of which are co-educational, and one all-female, that ran lessons during school hours, but ensemble rehearsals before or after school, often with additional sectional rehearsals at lunchtime.

Data collection and analysis

This phenomenological study sought to describe and evaluate the perspectives to teaching stage band. Mixed ensembles of 20 students offer insights into the inter-interrelations and developing social systems apparent as a “framework of sociocultural learning” (Yin, 2009, p. 3). Ethical approval was gained to seek data collection and reporting of findings, that included one individual 30-min semi-structured online zoom interview per participant. An interview scheme and protocol of questioning was pre-designed to provide direction for the interviews, though in order to encourage the free expression of participants, the questioning was adjusted to facilitate a conservatory style. Participants reflected on their capacities and facets of teacher practice they felt helped promote skill, knowledge, community, and respect, as well as creative development and function as a confident musician. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim to “convey the meaning of the oral presentation in an interview” (Moustakis, 1994, p. 57).

A four-step coding procedure (Yin, 2009) firstly familiarized and organized transcript segments into incidents. A second process of ‘abstraction and interpretation’ (Spencer et al., 2014, p. 279) analyzed data for general themes, meanings, and key phrases. These key incidents/phrases were extracted and drawn up in a table of preliminary interpretations from which emergent themes were grouped together and placed into ‘distinctive categories of

experience' (Nixon et al., 2013, p. 217). This categorization was further substantiated through validity and checking by an independent researcher who verified the coding of categories and affirmed specific learning categories (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Findings

The analysis of the data revealed diverse but consistent themes that spanned engagement, culture, relationality, and expectations. These are all represented in the data. Pseudonyms are used to anonymize participants. Data is presented across the themes of: recruitment and de-gendering initial music roles; improvisation, safe spaces, differentiation and empowerment; and, role modelling of cultures.

Recruitment and de-gendering initial music roles

Participants reflected on their recruitment procedures and personnel involved in recruitment of instrumental music students at the beginning of the first year of high school. Mark reflected that:

The concept of equity is something that I've only really thought about recently. I've just thought that I was doing enough but my bands were still very male heavy. We can't create something out of nothing and if most of my beginners are on typically gendered instruments, I can't change that.

Further probing of this issue and the recruitment process revealed Justin arguing that:

I've got largely male teachers on areas where I would like more girls- I can see why equality of access is perhaps not working

Justin has all male brass and percussion teachers. Whilst men may want more balance to participation, they may not have the drive, skills, or female representation in the recruitment/interview process to action this. Gill and Arnold (2015) assert a more sociological dimension, in that perceptions of gender codes—"such as what men *were expected to do as men*" invoked constraints on their behavior, and the resultant disconnection and imbalances that eventuate in student recruitment and teaching workforces (p. 21).

Anna described the recruitment process at her private school as an 'Expo' held over a few days. Her observations of this process were telling:

We get students to try various instruments and let them know if they have a proclivity for a particular instrument. We register a grading which we use as staff to jointly organise what we think is a balanced band. Some girls are surprised to hear their immediate positive experiences on trumpet or trombone, but something happens when they get home – it's

like memories have been wiped and they steadfastly announce the next day they want to do flute or clarinet- and sometimes when we pursue the issue, they say they would rather not participate at all than be told what to play by teachers.

John works in an outer-suburbs government school, a low socio-economic environment, but one where the school has invested in a now established music department and resources. John and his colleagues have crafted a recruitment night where decisions are made:

Our job is to recruit the student, but also the parent – they are on this journey too. The students will have been introduced to all the instruments briefly in classroom presentations and heard our senior concert band and stage band. Recruitment night they hear our year 8 band – exactly one year down the road. I get girls to come out and demonstrate trombone and percussion, I get boys to demonstrate flute and clarinet. I educate parents that we as experts seek to find the instrument that best suits them – and then we line them up, they all play a brass and woodwind instrument and parents and students see, hear, and evidence these positive experiences. For most we make a selection immediately, and they buy their instruments that night with the retailer. When girls make a great sound on trombone, it's plain for all the students and parents watching and listening of what that success means to the student and the teacher.

This evidences a range of awareness to how and when students perceive whether an instrument is male or female oriented, and to what extent this plays a significant part in gender imprinting those instruments culturally for students. Simon added that:

It's only when I had a female staff member contributing to recruitment and demonstrations that I was brought around to acknowledging the attitudes to instruments I was setting up. I thought I was doing enough but I realise now that more needs to be done- and I've changed, and so has my staff.

Foley (2021) argues a pervading masculine performance of leadership that is detrimental to equality and equity. The dominance of males in leadership has been argued to promoting hegemonic masculinity and stereotypical binary distinctions of gender in adult populations (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), and school music departments are no different. When potential recruits observe a more senior band performing for them and they only see minimal female representation in the group, or one of a few in a social setting, gendered attitudes are already being formed. McKeage (2004) argues that perceived tokenist approaches is common for females participating in jazz, particularly as jazz study becomes more advanced.

Bronfenbrenner's (1989) social-ecological model recognizes multiple factors of individual, interpersonal and community/societal pressures impacting on the ways teachers and music

departments recruit, but also how students receive and act on this information. Initial experiences in recruitment strategies are a powerful influence on first impressions of both student, parent, and perceived success as part of the community of learners in ensembles. Given already embedded prejudices and attitudes in parents, the impact of recruitment and presentation of instruments—from teachers, students, retailers, and the balance of ensembles demonstrate an equity, access and success that contributes to shaping student minds. It highlights the potential flow-on effects such as diminishing participation in schooling, higher education, and then as teaching and performing professionals.

Improvisation-safe spaces, differentiation, and empowerment

Unsurprisingly, the majority of these jazz educators considered improvisation as an essential skill learned as a foundational part of reading, playing and creating. They urged that such a skill is not a secondary ‘add on’ that may be investigated in middle or last years of high school but is an essential part of expressing and developing as a musician. Kelly said:

Establishing confidence and skill means allowing equitable opportunity early, ensuring everyone gets a go, has a voice instead of the more assertive males dominating.

Whilst getting female students on brass, and rhythm section instruments is an initial challenge, keeping them there to grow as part of the fabric of ensembles for the duration of their schooling is an added facet of teacher work. The words uttered by teachers, and comments permitted to be said by fellow students all contribute to the lexicon of interaction and cultural rules of engagement that underpins music department cultures and values. Jane, a trombone teacher recalled how one teacher said to a large senior male student in the band:

You look like a trombone player.

This attitude was further enhanced by the director of the stage band explaining to the female cohort that:

You can't be a trumpet player and play high notes because your lungs aren't as big

A consensus of ideas was articulated regarding the ways teachers felt jazz, and in particular improvisation education should operate. Jane urged that engaging in improvising and workshopping creative ideas should:

...be in a safe supportive environment that is not competitive. It needs to be emotionally and musically supported, in a collaborative forum where everyone's voice is valued.

Mark placed great emphasis on experimenting and developing creative process even with early, developing learners. He asserted that:

Developing improvisatory skills is like working in a laboratory – we are all metaphorically wearing white coats and doing experiments. It needs to be a safe place for shared risk-taking.

Participants recognized that improvisation exposed student performance to greater risks. It framed discussion of creative process with students not as an ‘innate’ talent, but as a specific technique to be learnt with time and experience, gradually understanding its logic and embodying its praxis (Gibson, 2006). Katherine reflected on this aspect of motivation with her jazz ensembles:

The girls are all in, eager, enthusiastic, and then in senior years something happens- I think its imposter syndrome- of not being good enough, but they just fade to the background and the boys' dominance takes over

Phillips asserts how “children’s subjective perceptions of their abilities bear a critical association to their achievement motives and orientations” (Phillips, 1984, p. 2012). Directing a stage band is more than teaching ‘style and inflection’. It involves engaging students in learning activities mindful of the fragilities of learners, and that learning processes have an individual as well as collective dimension. This supports the contention that the stage band should be a protective environment for its members by nurturing performance beyond constraints, prescriptions and embedded canons with an insightfulness that supports learning and confidence in all young learners’ minds.

Role modelling of cultures: Equality, biases, and sexism

The music department and the stage band it operates in are a formative and deeply powerful mode of presenting information. The teacher acts as a modeler of behaviors, values, ideals, and attitudes. Aspects of imbalance toward equitable opportunity were discussed by participants. Some teachers felt that socially and collectively boys and girls engaged differently to discovery, experimentation, and process. Kelly said:

Girls like collaboration and engage more in a socially shared situation that is equal, and transparent in goals and aims. Boys tend to go alone and want to stand out.

Katherine added that:

Boys are more dominating verbally and performatively, taking time and teacher attention. I can mediate this in my bands, but

I've seen numerous male colleagues allow the status quo- they condone through tacit (in)action.

Jane reflected further on observing male stage band directors:

Ive seen band directors with a particular bias. They give all the solos to the boys ... they speak in male chauvinist tones that is demeaning to the girls in the band.

Katherine added:

I think its prevalent in teaching jazz and improvisation, but actually across all styles- there is a gravitation of male teachers to the strong alfa male students. Teachers seem to think that a physicality and self -confidence of adolescent boys trumps careful reasoned practice and creative thinking from some of the girls I've taught

Anna suggested that:

Boys tend to thrive in competitiveness, whereas girls are less willing to engage in combative behaviour with boys. I think this promotes the elitism of pushing boys in jazz

John, an experienced teacher who had worked in a number of school music departments asserted how prevailing cultures and ignorance plays a part in exclusionary practices, saying:

I ve seen teachers start out with good intensions, but the culture of the school, or the Head of Department is such, that they just 'tow the line', they don't assert themselves, or the rights and abilities of their female students.

This sentiment was echoed by Jane, who said:

Ive brought up the issue of getting more girls on brass, but the male teachers just considered me being difficult and emotional. It wasn't until another female teacher, and a respected mid-career male teacher offered this observation that the Director took notice and acted. Music departments can be boys' clubs for teachers.

Anna felt that:

I think teachers get set in their ways after only 5 years of teaching, which damages attitudes of a generation of students they will influence, both male and female.

Sergei suggested that creating an atmosphere of equality was important:

Im always welcoming to all my students, I tell them in stage band that they all bring something, they are all creative. I back

this up by ensuring that everyone solos, everyone has a go, and everyone's development is valued.

Jacinta pointed to teacher education and the qualities of staff she had experienced in music departments:

My experiences with a number of generalist classroom music teachers were that they didn't seem to have the time, the energy, or the inclination to make a stand for female instrumentalists in their classes, who were dominated by boy talk and masculinity. I've found specialist instrumental teachers in charge of ensembles to be more aware and active in supporting attitudes of equality.

Kelly, a brass teacher, and Music Head for 20 years offered this remark:

I have success in gender balance in my music department. But it's hard work, needing constant vigilance with the student body, directors, teachers, and especially parents.

All part of an interconnected ecology, music departments, ensembles, and the studio music class each represent different modes of teacher-student engagement, and possibility for favoritism and prejudice (Peterson et al., 2016; Heffernan, 2022). Everything the director does and says is transmitted and absorbed by students, and the wider community network of parents. Whilst a range and blend of male/female teachers may be optimal, their effectiveness is in the unity and concerted effort to promote egalitarian attitudes and accessibility to all instruments and opportunity within the ensemble. Acting in inclusionary ways as a role model and shaper of attitudes and cultures, however, is only part of the complexity involved in the pedagogy and practice of equitable and accessible jazz education.

Discussion

This study resonates with extant findings concerning attrition rates for women in high school jazz education (McKeage, 2004), elaborating on the results of gendered instrument choice studies (McKeage, 2014). Building on Wehr-Flowers (2006), this study points to precursors and promoters of events that induce physiological states of anxiety, social climate, de-motivation, and negative impact on females' self-efficacy, addressing specific attitudinal and pedagogic re-calibrations of teacher approach. Acknowledgement of the structural nature of gender inequalities in music education- though commendable is not enough in providing equal access and opportunity.

The study reveals teacher perspectives to formal secondary school jazz education; in that despite awareness and some attitudinal change, there remains musical and relational practices and teaching repertoires that under-represent, undervalue and under-support non-male participation. Furthermore, these

reflections provide qualitative insights to the assertions of previous studies in which females' participation amounts to patriarchally minded tokenism (McCord, 1985; Dobson, 2010) perceived in education and beyond. Jazz carries endemic markers of overt masculinity across performance identity (Monson, 1995). These are rendered in educational settings *via* gender stereotyping of instruments that impact recruitment (Wehr, 2016), engagement and self-efficacy to performing in a male domain (Solmon et al., 2003), female (in) visibility (Collier et al., 1994), as well as access, equity, and student visions of success.

This study points to ideological concepts inherent in the system that need to be dismantled. Rowe (1995) recounts that "I think more young women would be comfortable expressing themselves if there wasn't a fear of being stereotyped as a 'feminine' player if they chose to play more sensitively or lyrically" (p.6). The reflective gaze obtained in these rich recollections and experiential accounts helps point to the need for more sophisticated and considered ways in which inclusive environments promote self-confidence and strength in personal voice for all (de Bruin, 2016). Rather than offering a prescriptive approach, jazz education and the students that enter it would be better served by teachers understanding gender dynamics and having the training and knowledge to impact pedagogical adaptation, modelling of behaviors, and positive engagement for all.

This requires more than acts of segregation, or adjustment of the numbers of boys and girls on instruments as outlined in aforementioned research, but more a re-appraisal of the way in which we engage, include (boys/girls/people identifying as LGBTQIA+) as well as those with physical and sensory disability. Initiatives to assert 'women only' learning and performance yields a dilemma; by claiming a separate space such actions further problematize the issue of women as equal cultural producers within a segregated construct (Tucker, 2000), whilst at the same time risk labelling female jazz as operating under special provisions (Björck, 2011).

This study provides nuanced detail supporting quantitative approaches and psychometric indications of attitude. Storb's (1995) revealing research on male oriented psychological responses to females, and the categorization of women as a 'helper', as a 'receptive' being, and 'responsive' to male authority reveals how males may bring biased attitudes to their teaching. Kanter's (1977, 1993) workplace-oriented schema of 'woman' as the caring, vulnerable, cute, or strong willed, captures male perceptual phenomena and interaction dynamics that may be enduring aspects of sexist and binary hegemony in jazz education and scholarship (and perhaps society at large).

The findings of this study offer implications for initial teacher jazz education. The study points to innovations that may be applied to ongoing professional development throughout the lifespan of teachers involved in jazz education, general ensemble work, as well as approaches to student and staff recruitment. Findings point to ecologically minded actions across music personnel involving intra-, inter- and whole school approaches, but also the need for initial teacher music education and ongoing professional development to approach the practice of teaching in ways that is thoughtfully

relational, empowering, and positive for all learners. These changes reflect the evolving sociological necessity of inclusive and equitable opportunity to participation and reappraisal of decades old ideas and prejudices. It also involves pedagogical adaptations that place creative music making as central to young musicians' lives, wellbeing, and flourishing in music education settings.

Society represents a rich tapestry of people, cultures, abilities, proclivities, and challenges to learning. Whilst acknowledging that for some learners, single gender environments may be successful, schooling and the social, behavioral, and emotional benefits that it produces may be best served in an environment that reflects the society we live in. One may argue that in the dismantling of decades long dominance of masculine perspectives, it is incumbent on educational approaches that mandate access and equity to approach jazz education with more sophisticated relational and cultural perspectives (de Bruin, 2017, 2020).

This study builds upon previous research highlighting a persistence of structural gender asymmetries in recruitment of young instrumentalist learners at crucial times in students' lives (Steiblin, 1995; Steinberg, 2001). These imbalances set in motion a limiting of girls' opportunities in ensembles, and thus the flow on to music performance as a subject, tertiary jazz education, and then as part of a teaching workforce influencing the next generation of learners. The dearth of female jazz educators and performers thus comes as no surprise. The education sector represents an ecological component within a wider interconnection of practice that includes industry access and opportunity, as well as visibility, creativity, equality and power in education and society (Harris and de Bruin, 2018).

Conclusion

Jazz continues to find its identity and place in formal music education, and like the music itself is changing and adapting to circumstance and context. With prevailing male canon, rote repetition, stylized forms of learning, polishing of notes on the printed page rather than true creative expression in a 'jazz' sense, "jazz education remains a puzzling paradox between creative and re-creative urges" (de Bruin, 2022).

Jazz has emerged from elemental beginnings of freedom, expression, and identity, to become a national artform that has international popularity beyond the United States (Rasula, 2005). Jazz communities across the world reflect local influences, folkloric, Indigenous, and immigrant music involving dynamic social contexts. As a unique artform, society, education, and its practitioners grapple with how we institutionally interact with it – through the stance of hermetically sealed museum piece or perpetually creative catalyst. What is evident, from an educational perspective, is that schools and the teachers in them are mandated to activate creative, accessible jazz education practices that also deliver on educational guidelines (de Bruin and Southcott, 2022). This relies on practices in jazz education to help to produce learners connected to an in-the-world community, where they learn to reason, value, and negotiate improvisational practices (Mantie, 2007).

This study provides lived accounts of how Music departments – and the teachers that operate within, remain masculine in population, and that certain prevailing attitudes must evolve. To dismantle ideological assumptions of masculine systems of musical order and taken for granted conventions, McClary (1991) argues a repositioning of the female storyteller in jazz, and jazz education promoting more powerful and prescient envisioning of narrative structures that articulate and assert female perspectives.

Pedagogical exploration of the implications of inclusive practices, from the creative to critical, subversive to the political, focuses teacher influence not just on jazz education, but also the cultivating of interpersonal relationships that inform gender attitudes and social networks. Over one hundred years since its evolutionary beginnings, jazz remains a challenge for all music educators in its continued creative development, pedagogical and ideological re-invention, and the ways we today effectively engage with jazz in formal music education.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/Supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author/s.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the University of Melbourne Ethics Committee. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. The participants provided written informed consent for the publication of potentially identifiable data, with the understanding that pseudonyms would be used to deidentify themselves and the institutions at which they work as far as possible.

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Author contributions

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Supplementary material

The Supplementary material for this article can be found online at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2022.1001971/full#supplementary-material>

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