Where are the women?

Analysis of creative roles by gender in Scottish theatre 2014/15

Christine Hamilton
Consulting
8 March 2016
Where are the women?

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Headlines

In 2014/15, in Scottish publically funded theatres:

- 39% of creative roles across all categories went to women.
- 38% of theatre companies had women in artistic leadership roles.
- 4 out of 24 theatre companies were artistically led solely by women.
- Women were cast in 46% of the 811 roles.
- Women made up 47% of directors of shows.
- Women wrote 39% of the plays.
- 29% of set and costume designers and 6% of lighting designers were women.
- Women made up 11% of composers, musical directors and sound designers.

This information was gathered from 24 theatre companies and included 1698 roles.

The data-gathering and analysis was carried out entirely by voluntary effort. Neither the Scottish Government nor Creative Scotland gathers this information.
Where are the women?

Introduction

On 26 September 2013 around 100 people, mainly women, came together at a meeting at the Traverse Theatre to discuss the position of women in theatre in Scotland. Those who attended included women in their 70s alongside young women who had just embarked on a career in theatre.¹

One of the issues – amongst many which were discussed – was the lack of data on exactly the position of women in creative roles. Where are the women? What role do they play?

This was not a new issue: while carrying out the work for Review of the Theatre Sector in Scotland (2012) it was discovered that all theatre companies claimed to have Equal Opportunities policies, but only 50% of them monitored them.²

So, for two years, I and others lobbied Creative Scotland to at the very least collect data on the organisations it funds regularly – something which was done by its predecessor body, the Scottish Arts Council. But to no avail. The last detailed piece of research done in this area was a comprehensive report commissioned by Stellar Quines. This was published in 2012 and included data up to 2009.³

At the end of November last year, I put out a call out on social media and via Equity for volunteers to help me gather data on creative roles in theatre for the year 2014/2015. Very quickly several came forward and volunteered to help.

This initiative has been inspired by external factors. The re-opening of Glasgow Women’s Library after a refurbishment was an inspiration. Those behind Glasgow Women’s Library have been committed to this project over many years – including a time when they received little or no funding.⁴

I was also spurred on by the 4th year of the French publication ‘Où sont les femmes?’ which in stark terms shows the involvement of women in key roles across performing and audio visual arts in France.⁵

We also all witnessed the recent protests by women in Ireland at the announcement of the season for 2016 - the centenary of the Easter Rising - which includes no women writers.⁶

Inspired by all this, and frustrated at having to make the same points again and again over the last 35 years, I thought it was probably time to stop complaining and start acting.

So here it is: an analysis of women in creative roles across theatre in Scotland in 2014/2015. This report includes an outline of what was done, the assumptions made, an analysis of the data and the conclusions for theatre in Scotland that can be drawn from this. It also outlines the position of Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government on this issue.

This report could not have been done without the time and commitment put in by the volunteers - many of whom are actors or playwrights who have little quantitative research experience but who have a stake in the place of women in theatre. It was also supported by theatre companies who responded to specific requests for data. A full list of those who collected data and supported this project in other ways is given
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in the Acknowledgements to this report.

However, I kicked off this initiative, shaped how it was to be done, checked and collated the data and wrote this report. I take responsibility for any flaws in the approach, errors in reporting and conclusions drawn. All comments/criticisms should be directed to me at the email address below.

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8 March 2016
Where are the women?

The Aims of the Project

This project has three aims:

- To examine the professional opportunities for women in creative roles in Scottish theatre in 2014/2015.
- To identify areas where women working professionally are under-represented in creative roles in theatre.
- To demonstrate that gathering data is the starting point for developing equality, diversity and inclusion strategies.

What we did

Scope

Organisations
The 24 theatre companies surveyed were all publically funded in the year 2014/2015. The list includes Foundation, Programme and Annual funded organisations of Creative Scotland. These were the types of regular funding given by Creative Scotland in that year.

To this list was added A Play, A Pie and A Pint. Although they were not in receipt of Creative Scotland funding that year, they have subsequently received funding and so they were included to provide a baseline for any future data-gathering.

The National Theatre of Scotland was added. Although not funded by Creative Scotland, it is directly supported by the Scottish Government from its culture budget.

Excluded from the list surveyed was Ankur Productions as they have closed due to a cut in their funding from Creative Scotland. The Arches were excluded because they are now in administration and, while it is hoped that another organisation will emerge, the precise nature of this has not been decided. The Scottish Youth Theatre was also excluded because the main focus of their work is on developing and supporting young people in drama – not presenting professional work.

See Appendix for full list.

Programme

Only shows produced by the organisation itself are included (i.e. not visiting work). This covers work produced in Scotland and also work which was produced in Scotland but then toured internationally that year. Co-productions between two or more theatres on the list were counted only once (for example a co-production between the Lyceum and the Citizens’ counts as one production).

Excluded from the list of productions were education and outreach work and projects which mainly focused on non-professional participants (usually done alongside main stage productions).

Time frame

Only shows produced in the financial year 2014/2015 were included.

Method

This was a counting exercise identifying women and men included in a theatre production. A proforma was produced for each volunteer to use (see Appendix).
Where are the women?

Roles
The headings used were – artistic director, director (of each production), assistant director, playwright (living or dead and included those who ‘devised’ a show), translator/adaptor, designer (including set and costume designer), lighting designer, musical director, choreographer and, of course, performers.

When the data were collated, there were amendments made to the roles. A separate category of assistant designer was created. The designer category also includes those involved in video and animation that was part of the set design. The choreographer category was extended to include all movement and fight direction. The musical director category was extended to include sound design. Musicians were included as performers. Several theatre productions used voice coaches and there were some contributions from film-makers, photographers, puppet makers and an archery consultant - all of which appear under ‘other’.

Where the same person held two roles (for example: director and designer or musical director for the show), they were counted twice.

Where a company had two artistic directors or where the role changed from one to the other during the year, each was counted.

Source(s) of information
Most of the information was taken from the companies’ own websites. Where this was incomplete or missing, other online sources were found or the companies themselves were contacted and asked to provide cast lists and information about the creative team for each production. Equity also assisted with information. Data were also gathered from hard copy of programmes.

Timescale
Most of the work was allocated by 18 December and returned by 31 January with some additional support enlisted in February. The original deadline for publication was 28 February but was held back to coincide with International Women’s Day, 8 March.

Assumptions

Gender Assumptions
Throughout this project, assumptions have been made about the gender of those included in the data gathering. This is usually indicated by the name of the person, the role they play as a performer or, where this is not immediately obvious, from simply using a search engine to look at their biography online. However, for some, gender is not a binary concept and they prefer not to be categorised in this way. Without asking each person via a survey or interview, it is not possible to reflect this in this project. In addition, Census information is provided only for male and female and so this report can be mapped against the Office of National Statistics population data.7

Assumptions on roles
Creative roles were defined as outlined above. There are other roles in the making of work which make a creative contribution and are essential for the production. However the roles included here are normally categorised by the theatres themselves under the heading ‘creative team’.

Size of roles
This survey does not distinguish between the size and scope of the creative roles. There is a big difference in terms of profile and financial rewards between a
Where are the women?

commission from the NTS to write an epic trilogy for large theatres, and having a play presented by A Play, A Pie and A Pint for a week to a 150 capacity audience. However both are counted in the same way for this report.

Other equality factors
This survey deals with gender alone. There are of course other ‘protected characteristics’ important in the arts, including artists with a disability, black, Asian and minority ethnic artists, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender artists and older artists. Many of them are women too. This report does not attempt to identify those who face ‘double-discrimination’.

Scotland and from Scotland
All the work which has been analysed was funded in Scotland, produced in Scotland and presented in Scotland that year or in a previous year but re-mounted for an international tour. While one of the aims of this study was to identify opportunities for women theatre makers in Scotland, in several cases theatres choose to work with people not based in Scotland. There has been no attempt to identify where this has happened.

Results

Women are 51.5% of the population.

1698 roles were analysed. In 2014/2015 39% of the creative roles across all categories were undertaken by women.

Gender across all categories

[Diagram showing gender distribution]

M = 1032, F = 666, Total = 1698

Across all theatre companies, women were in the minority in all categories except assistant directors and movement (including choreography and fight arranger). In ‘other’, the roles were 50:50. The biggest disparity was in set and lighting design and in music and sound. Below is the breakdown.
Where are the women?

Gender across all categories

Further analysis was done of the gender makeup in the highest-funded and female-led companies (either solely or jointly female-led).

In highest-funded companies, the gender balance across all categories varied only slightly – 62% male to 38% female.

Gender in highest-funded companies

M = 1032, F = 666, Total = 1698

M = 417, F = 255, Total = 672
Where are the women?

In the female-led companies the gender split was 53% male and 47% female.

**Gender in female-led companies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Directors</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playwrights</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performers</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designers</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Designers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/Sound</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M = 416, F = 309, Total = 725

In companies led solely by men, the percentages across all categories were 63% men, 37% women.

**Gender in solely male-led companies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Directors</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playwrights</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performers</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Designers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/Sound</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M = 616, F = 357, Total = 973

The gender of the artistic leadership has an impact in particular on directors of productions, playwrights and performers. An analysis of each category is given below.

**Artistic leadership**

24 theatres/companies were included in the survey.

- 16 had a man/men as their artistic director(s).
- 4 had a woman as their artistic director.
Where are the women?

- 5 were jointly run by one man and one woman.

In other words, 38% of the theatres had women in the key artistic leadership position either solely or jointly. 17% were solely run by women.

This translates into a total of 30 people holding the role of artistic director: 21 men and 9 women.

**Artistic Directors**

![Bar chart showing percentages of M, F, and Joint directors]

M = 16, F = 4, Joint = 10, Total = 30

Of the 6 theatre companies receiving the highest level of public subsidy,
- 4 were led solely by a man;
- one led jointly by a man and a woman;
- one by a woman alone;
- 1/3rd had women in artistic leadership roles;
- 1/6th had a woman in overall charge of artistic policy.

**Directors**

137 productions were included in the survey.
- Men directed 75 plays and women 66 (some productions had more than one director and so the total number of directors exceeds the total number of productions).
- Overall women made up 47% of directors.
Where are the women?

**Directors**

- Of the highest-funded theatre companies, 45 productions were directed by 27 men and 20 women. Women directed 43% of the productions.
- Of the 73 productions from female-led companies, 54 were directed by women, 23 by men. 70% of the total number of directors was female against 38% male.

In the majority of cases, the artistic director of a theatre company will direct most of the shows of that company and that clearly has an impact on the gender balance in directing.

**Assistant Directors**

The survey also looked at the place of women as assistant directors.

The caveat here is that some in this category were described as ‘assistant director’ and some as ‘associate director’. It was not possible to identify the specific role in each case and so these figures were aggregated. It is likely that some of these roles had more influence on the overall artistic direction of the production than others.

Women dominated this category. There were 19 male assistant directors and 31 female across all productions.
Where are the women?

M = 19, F = 31, Total = 50

This has two possible interpretations: there is an emerging group of women directors who are gaining experience working as assistants before directing their own show OR women are seen as being important as assistants but are not awarded their own show. It is not possible to say which from these.
Where are the women?

Playwrights

In our survey, 104 playwrights were men and 66 women: 61% against 39%.

Playwrights

M = 104, F = 66, Total = 170

In female-led companies, the balance was 54% men; 46% women. In male-led companies, 69% of the playwrights were men and 31% women.

Playwrights in male and female-led companies

M: 57, F: 26; M: 47, F: 40

For the highest-funded theatres, the breakdown was 65% men; 35% female.

In all of the organisations surveyed the number of male playwrights exceeded that of female – with the exception of Stellar Quines.

The results in this category could be explained in part by the programming of work from the ‘canon’ of British, American and European theatre: Shakespeare, Williams, Chekhov, Molière – for example. However, what is clear from other research is that new work dominates the output of theatre in Scotland and therefore one might expect a better gender balance in this area. Moreover, from a recent survey of playwrights, it
Where are the women?

It is clear that women tend to receive the smaller commissions (less than 30 minutes) and men dominate in the category of longer plays (more than 90 minutes).

Translators/adaptors

Twice as many men as women were commissioned to adapt or translate a play: 14 to 7.

Translators and Adaptors

Performers

Of the 811 performing roles in Scottish theatre in 2014/15, 439 (54%) were male; 372 (46%) female.

Performers

In the higher-funded theatre companies, the percentages were 59% men, 41% women.
Where are the women?

There is a marked difference between male and female-led companies when it comes to performers. In companies led solely by a man/men, the balance is 60% male (40% female). In female-led organisations, the percentage of performers who were female was 51% (49% men) – in line with the make up of the population as a whole.

**Performers in male and female-led companies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male-led</th>
<th>Female-led</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2013 Equity published a report on the changing opportunities for women in acting roles over the period from 1993 to 2012. The approach was different from this research: Equity chose two unnamed theatre companies as a sample and looked at acting parts only (excluding other performers such as musicians). Their findings indicated that over the 19-year period the number of roles for women had dropped from 7 for every 10 male roles to 3 female for every 8 male. The number of productions from the two sample companies had dropped from 171 in 1993 to 57 in 2012. It is not possible to draw any firm comparisons, although on the face of it the situation appears to have improved for women between 2012 and 2014/2015. There may be a correlation between gender balance in roles and the output of Scottish theatre, and this is an area which warrants further investigation.
Where are the women?

Designers

A bigger gap begins to emerge when the data on set and costume designers are analysed: 103 (71%) men as opposed to 43 (29%) women.

![Designers Chart]

In the higher-funded theatre companies, the figures show 68% men, 32% women. For female-led companies, the breakdown showed: 74% men, 26% women.

The analysis of assistant designers (also including associates) shows a remarkable similarity: 68% men and 32% women across the full sample.

Assistant Designers

![Assistant Designers Chart]

It is even less balanced in female-led theatre companies with 81% men and 19% women. However, for higher-funded theatre companies, the percentages are reversed with 88% of the assistant designers women and only 12% men.
Where are the women?

The percentage of women involved in designing productions is consistently much lower than men – with the exception of assistant designers in the highest-funded companies. Without further research, there is no way of knowing why.

**Lighting Designers**

Across all theatres there were only 6 instances of women being lighting designers on a production against 92 men – that’s 6% against 94%.

**Lighting Designers**

![Lighting Designers Chart]

M = 93, F = 6, Total = 99

These figures include anyone listed as an assistant or associate lighting designer.

Some companies, particularly the smaller ones, have their lighting and sound designers as part of their technical team: people who both design and operate. The issue may rest with recruitment of technical staff. However, again the questions are: (a) is there a lack of female lighting designers and (b) if so, why?
Where are the women?

Choreography/Movement/Fight direction

The figures in this area are low with only 37 instances of engagements to work in choreography, movement or fight direction. Of these, however, the majority were undertaken by women at a ratio of 2:1. This is one area where women dominate.

![Choreography, Movement, Fight Direction](image)

* M = 12, F = 25, Total = 37

Music and Sound Design

Many productions included specially composed music or sound design. Overall women had 11% of the roles and men dominated with 89%.

![Music and Sound Design](image)

* M = 107, F = 13, Total = 120

In the highest-funded theatre companies, the split was 15% female, 85% male and, in the female-led organisations, the percentages were 11% female, 89% male.

As with lighting design, sound design is an area where in some of the smaller companies the technical operating role is combined with the design role. So these
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figures overall are not as reliable as some of the other categories. However what is not in doubt is that women have fewer opportunities than men to work in composing and directing music and designing sound.

Other

This category covers two distinct groups. There were those working on specific areas to support the performance/production. These included voice coaches, puppet coach, BSL interpreter, audio describer and archery consultant.

The other category involved artists from other artforms collaborating on the production. These included filmmakers and photographers.

Numbers in those areas are low and do not provide any real meaningful addition to the gender analysis but for completeness they are included. There were an equal number of men and women.

Other

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{M} &= 10, \\
\text{F} &= 10, \\
\text{Total} &= 20
\end{align*} \]

What does this tell us?

In summary, in almost every category of creative endeavour in theatre, men are in the majority. In the categories of directors and performers, women consistently took up over 40% of the roles. For playwrights, the percentage was 39%.

Women enjoy a higher percentage than men as assistant directors and as choreographers/movement/fight directors.

38% of theatre companies in 2014/2015 had women in a lead artistic role and where that was the case more women were involved in key creative roles of director (of productions) and performer.

Across the board there is a very low involvement of women in set and costume design, lighting design, music and sound.
Where are the women?

The research commissioned by Stellar Quines, referred to above, gives some kind of comparative with these data. It was an extensive piece of work which documented the place of women in Scottish theatre from the launch of Stellar Quines in 1993 through to 2009. Its main focus was historical and qualitative but a starting point was a data comparison similar to this exercise.

In the following areas the engagement of women has risen since 2009:

- Directors: 26% in 2009; 47% in 2014/15
- Playwrights: 26% in 2009; 39% in 2014/15

For performers the percentage has slipped slightly from 47% to 46%. On the other hand, the total number of roles has grown from 251 in 2009 to 811 in 2014/15. So although more women were contracted as performers, the proportion of the total number of roles remains more or less the same.

In the following areas the percentage of women has decreased:

- Lighting design, 16% in 2009; 6% in 2014/15.
- Set and costume design, separated in earlier research: 34% and 33% respectively in 2009; 29% for the combined roles in 2014/2015.

It is worth noting that in 1993 and 2009 all the building-based theatre companies had male artistic directors.

What does this mean for theatres in Scotland?

It is important here to identify the limits of the survey: what it is, and is not.

This is one year only. The most effective use of these data would be to repeat the exercise for 2015/2016 and then the following year thus giving a pattern or trend. This is a snapshot and not a description of trends. Data are a starting point on which a policy can be built. You cannot effect change without it, but it is a part, not the whole process.

It is mainly for this reason that information on individual companies has not been included here. Figures have been aggregated across the whole sector or parts of it. Results for individual companies are influenced heavily by the number of productions it undertakes, the size of these, a decision to do a series of classics or new work. Some companies which might do two or three productions during the year, for sound artistic reasons did only one.

It is not nor ever has been the intention of this project to invite a prescriptive approach to artistic policy in Scottish theatres. It would be as unreasonable to suggest Gregory Burke's Black Watch have 50:50 men and women as it would to suggest the same for Sue Glover's Bondagers. There is no 'one size fits all'. Yet it is important for theatres to reflect on the effects of their approach to commissioning, casting and recruiting of a creative team within the context of gender.

It is assumed that no theatre in the 21st century is acting illegally and discriminating against women, but there is a real concern, which came through at the Traverse meeting, that despite progress made women are not playing their full role in a range of creative roles and these data demonstrate that. The raw data, not published here,
Where are the women?

show that some theatre companies are far from fully embracing the notion of equality.

At the moment all arts organisations are being asked to produce an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy for Creative Scotland. This cannot be effectively done and meaningfully monitored without relevant data. I am happy to make data gathered here on individual theatre companies available to them to assist with this process.

This whole argument centres around fairness and professional opportunities and the chance to earn money from writing, directing, acting and so on. But it is also about the stories theatre tells about us; about how it shapes wider society. Was 2014/15 particularly different or significant? Well, yes. It was the year of the Referendum in Scotland and some of the productions included reflected the debate and looked at Scotland today. Artists from across different media engaged in the debate and took on a lively role in civic Scotland. From this analysis it can be argued that women had a significant role in that but not one which reflected their position as 51.5% of the population as a whole. It is hoped that this report at the very least will raise awareness across theatre about the importance of this issue. Beyond that, I also hope theatre companies will go as far as to collect these data in a systematic way and publish the results on their websites, with a proper contextualisation. This is not about ‘naming and shaming’ but about theatre taking a lead in gender balance.

And a footnote: what did emerge from the process of data-gathering was the inconsistent way in which theatres archive their material on their websites. Some were excellent with full details about shows and dates as well as the cast list and names and roles of the creative team. However, others did not. While many will have deposited their hard copy archive with Scottish Theatre Archive or the National Library of Scotland, it is regrettable that more do not make details of productions easily accessible on line. This would have potential benefits not just for researchers but also journalists and others working in theatre wishing information on cast and creative team.

What does this tell us about policy making?

What is true for women is true of other ‘protected characteristics’. Without BAME voices or people with disabilities or LGBT voice or the experience of older people our theatre is the poorer as well as the artists themselves - literally. In every case the starting point is the data-gathering. For each characteristic the strategy to address the under-representation is different - and different again for those who face the double barrier of being, for example, a disabled woman. This is a matter of public policy and legal obligation. So why are these data not being gathered as part of the ongoing monitoring of arts organisations which depend on public money?

Creative Scotland

There have been several discussions over the last two years with Creative Scotland at a senior level. Reasons for not collecting the data on gender include the following, in summary:

We are being asked by the Scottish Government to focus on other minority areas, particularly black and Asian minority ethnic communities.

There are no data being gathered on creative roles in the other areas either – and women are not a minority.
Where are the women?

We work across a range of artforms and it is not possible to collect these data for all of them in the same way.

Clearly this is true and the categories for music and visual arts organisations would be different. The approach would be different too for festivals and arts centres and for literature publishing and support organisations. There is no ‘one size fits all’. However the film section of Creative Scotland has just announced it is embarking on a data-gathering exercise to look at gender in film. So it appears it is possible.

We do not want to overload arts organisations with more data gathering/reporting.

Admirable sentiment but all are being required to produce an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy which requires a great deal more work. All the organisations we surveyed produced fewer than 10 shows in 2014/2015 – not a hugely onerous task to collect data on each. The only exception being A Play, A Pie and A Pint that produced 39 with small casts and creative teams. From my own discussions with the Federation of Scottish Theatre and individual companies, I can see no reason why this could not happen with proper consultation with the sector.

We are collecting data on boards and employees.

There is no doubt at all that data on both are important. However, even a passing knowledge of the arts would lead to the conclusion that most people who work professionally in the sector are freelance and not employees. The evidence is this. Even the largest employer in theatre employs around 50 people. An SME (small and medium-size enterprise) is defined as ‘up to 250 employees’ so even the largest theatres are ‘small’ SMEs. However most employ only a handful and qualify as a ‘micro business’ i.e. fewer than nine employees. In contrast, we recorded 1698 roles across 24 organisations, an average of 71 roles per organisation that are supported by public funds and are not being monitored.

Scottish Government

Several attempts have been made to raise this issue with the Scottish Government. The most positive and hopeful was a response given by the Cabinet Secretary, Fiona Hyslop MSP, to a question in the Chamber of the Scottish Parliament from Claire Baker MSP, Labour spokesperson on the arts. The question was specifically about creative roles. This is the Cabinet Secretary’s response:

I have long had concerns about the issue and it would be a great shared endeavour if we could make that one of our priorities across all parties, so that we can ensure that women are represented at all levels of our publicly funded organisations and the culture of our country, particularly in creative direction and in freelancing, although it might not be so easy to get reports on that. I am happy to share that endeavour.

There are two points of note from this response. First, this is not a party political nor ideological issue. The Cabinet Secretary recognises that this is something which would attract cross-party support. Second, she hints that there might be difficulty in getting such information. This report demonstrates that, for theatre anyway, it is not that hard.

I followed this up with a letter to her referring to the interchange in the Chamber and enclosing a copy of the French publication Où sont les femmes? I expressed
Where are the women?

disappointment in Creative Scotland’s stand and asked her to put pressure on them to collect and publish data.

Her response was:

They [Creative Scotland] advise that at the moment while something like this [Où sont les femmes ? ] would be useful, it would be complicated for them to collect data on gender across art forms (and the wider sectors including screen and creative industries) currently. Their current Annual Statistical Return for Regularly Funded Organisations focuses on collecting equalities data on workforce and employment patterns rather than monitoring programme details or creative output. They consider that producing a document like this one would be a major and long term undertaking which would require underpinning by longer term strategies to support change and would also carry budget implications.

This was followed by correspondence to Isabella Jarrett, an Equity Council member who was asking for research to be done into women in creative roles. It elicited this response:

The Scottish Government supports the arts primarily through Creative Scotland. As part of Creative Scotland's on-going equalities, diversity and inclusion review, it is improving equalities monitoring, data collection and analysis across all protected characteristics, including gender. Creative Scotland is also gathering more sophisticated data on employment, progression and the representation of women in the arts. In addition, Creative Scotland’s Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2015, published on 30th of April 2015, showed that in the arts bodies that Creative Scotland funded in 2013-14, women made up 58 per cent of the workforce and 65 per cent of operational management.

Two slightly different responses, presumably provided by Creative Scotland. It is not clear from the latter what the ‘more sophisticated data’ are, but this may be a reference to employment data and to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategies, asked of all organisations. As argued above, these strategies while important, require some kind of statistical base.

Both responses included the following paragraph:

The Scottish Government is working to deliver the Programme for Government, which centres on a stronger and fairer Scotland, a strong sustainable economy, protecting and reforming our public services and strengthening our communities. Delivering on gender equality in the public sector sits at the heart of this programme of work and the performing arts, screen and creative industries have an important part to play in this programme.

So there is a policy but not a clear strategy for delivering it.

It should be noted that at no point did the Cabinet Secretary indicate what, if anything, was being done by the Scottish Government to monitor gender and other protected characteristics in organisations it directly funds, including the National Theatre of Scotland.

There is one very big difference between the situation today and that which prevailed 35 years ago when I started campaigning on this issue. In the past one might have
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looked to the gender of those with the power and influence over public funding in the arts and seen only men. Today we have a woman as First Minister whose Government is committed to ‘delivering gender equality in the public sector’; a woman as Cabinet Secretary; a woman at the head of the civil service in Scotland; 50% women on the board of Creative Scotland; a woman as Creative Scotland’s CEO and women as Head of Arts, Head of Theatre and Head of Equality and Diversity in Creative Scotland.

When we ask the question, ‘where are the women?’, the answer is: in positions of power but not exercising it for the benefit of women working in creative roles in professional theatre.

What next?

I do not believe numbers are the be-all and end-all of policy making and have on occasions been critical of those who seek to measure the effectiveness of the arts and make the case for funding in numbers alone. However I also understand the importance of data-gathering as a starting point for policy development. I hope this provides the evidence of its usefulness.

It seems unlikely that the position of Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government is going to change any time soon. As indicated above, my hope is that theatres will see the usefulness of this data-gathering and indeed publish on their website. If helpful, I am happy to discuss how they might tackle this based on this experience. However I do not see me repeating this exercise. Such important work is unsustainable as a totally voluntary project. Yet a key message of this endeavour is that crowdsourcing can, and does, work for data-gathering for an issue people feel is important.

Christine Hamilton
Where are the women?

Notes

1 For a report on this event see http://christinehamiltonconsulting.com/2013/10/women-in-theatre-where-next/

2 See http://www.creativescotland.com/resources/our-publications/sector-reviews/theatre-sector-review


4 http://womenslibrary.org.uk

5 http://www.ousontlesfemmes.org/chiffres-cles-de-la-saison-2015-2016/


8 Citizens’ Theatre, Dundee Rep, Royal Lyceum Theatre, The National Theatre of Scotland, Traverse Theatre, Tron Theatre. These six companies received in total £9,341,800 in core grant from Creative Scotland/Scottish Government.


10 This includes companies where artistic responsibility changed during the year.

11 Stellar Quines is committed to producing ‘live theatre driven by women and where female practitioners are at the forefront of all creative roles.’ http://www.stellarquines.com

12 Survey of playwrights and of repertoire of Scottish theatres for Playwrights’ Studio Scotland and Scottish Society of Playwrights by Christine Hamilton Consulting (not yet published).

13 Research into gender equality in theatre in Scotland available from Equity offices, 114 Union Street, Glasgow, G1 3QQ.


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Kate Nelson
Wendy Niblock
Hannah Putsey
Jackie Wylie
Appendix

List of theatres included in the survey

A Play, A Pie and A Pint (Glasgow Lunchtime Theatre)
Birds of Paradise Theatre Company
Catherine Wheels Theatre Company
Citizens’ Theatre
Comar
Cumbernauld Theatre
Dundee Rep Theatre
Eden Court Theatre
Fire Exit
Grid Iron Theatre Company
Horsecross/Perth Theatre
Lung Ha Theatre Company
MacRobert Arts Centre
Mischief La-Bas
Pitlochry Festival Theatre
Royal Lyceum Theatre Company
The National Theatre of Scotland
Solar Bear
Stellar Quines Theatre Company
Traverse Theatre
Tron Theatre
Vanishing Point Theatre Company
Visible Fictions
Vox Motus
# Appendix

## Proforma for data collection

**Women in Theatre**  
2014/2015

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of theatre</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Number of Productions</td>
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### List of productions included in total

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Performer</td>
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