

CALM DOWN DEAR!

**STELLAR QUINES THEATRE COMPANY &
GENDER IN SCOTTISH THEATRE**

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PHASE ONE – THEATRE COMPANIES SURVEYED

1993

BUILDING-BASED	NON-BUILDING BASED
Citizens Theatre, Glasgow	7:84
Dundee Rep Theatre	ATC
Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh	Communicado
Mull Theatre	DV8
Pitlochry Festival Theatre	Fifth Estate
Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh	Strongbox Theatre
Tron Theatre, Glasgow	TAG
	Theatre Theatrical
	Wildcat Theatre Company
	Wiseguise Theatre

2009

BUILDING BASED	NON-BUILDING BASED
Citizens Theatre, Glasgow	The Ding Foundation
Dundee Rep Theatre	Fire Exit
Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh	Less is More Theatre
Pitlochry Festival Theatre	Lung Ha's Theatre Company
Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh	National Theatre of Scotland
Tron Theatre, Glasgow	Plan B
	Random Accomplice
	TAG
	Tangerine Productions
	TheatreBo
	Theatre Cryptic
	Theatre Jezebel
	Top Dog/Underdog
	Untitled Productions
	Visible Fictions
	Vox Motus
	Wee Stories
	XLC

APPENDIX 2: PHASE TWO - LIST OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWEES

Organisation	Name	Position
Catherine Wheels	Gill Robertson	Artistic Director
Confab	Rachel Jury	Artistic Director
Cumbernauld Theatre	Ed Robson	Artistic Director
Dogstar Theatre Company	Matthew Zajac	Artistic Director
Dundee Rep	James Brining	Artistic Director
Grid Iron Theatre Company	Judith Doherty	Artistic Director
Lung Ha's Theatre Company	Maria Oller	Artistic Director
National Theatre Scotland	Vicky Featherstone	Artistic Director
Playwrights' Studio Scotland	Julie Ellen	Creative Director
Random Accomplice	Julie Brown	Artistic Director
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (formerly RSAMD)	Maggie Kinloch	Depute Principal
Stellar Quines Associate Artist	Alex Mathie	Actress
University of Glasgow	Dr Deirdre Heddon	Reader –Theatre, Film and Television Studies
Iron Oxide	Chloe Dear	Director
Writer	Stef Smith	
Writer	Sylvia Dow	

APPENDIX 3: PHASE TWO - IN-DEPTH TOPIC GUIDE

SQ SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Awareness of SQ purpose

Can you (unprompted or prompted if required) describe in your own words the purpose of Stellar Quines Theatre Company?

Awareness of SQ work/activities

Can you (unprompted or prompted if required) describe in your own words the kind of things/activities Stellar Quines Theatre Company does?

Significance of SQ

How significant a role do you think has SQ played in facilitating the development of women theatre artists and practitioners in Scotland?

Relevance of SQ and purpose

Does a company such as Stellar Quines that has a female centric agenda serve a purpose in Scotland today and in the future?

QUESTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN THEATRE ARTISTS IN SCOTLAND

A recent investigation by SQ explored to what extent women were represented as directors, actors and other practitioners in a typical Scottish theatre season. A summary of the conclusions are attached/were sent to you. Please can you reflect on the findings.

Please consider up to three interventions that you think have enabled the work of women theatre artists and practitioners to thrive/develop in Scotland in the past?

Please consider three or more interventions that you think will further enable the work of women theatre artists and practitioners to thrive in the future?

How would these interventions/activities be best delivered?

What do you consider to be essential to the development of women artists and practitioners in Scotland?

Do have any further comments to add to the research or areas for future discussion?

We will be doing further survey work around these topics and would welcome your input.

APPENDIX 4: PHASE TWO - LIST OF MINI-GROUP PARTICIPANTS

North Edinburgh Arts – 9.6.2011

Name	Organisation
Stephen Stening	Mela
Kate Wimpres	North Edinburgh Arts
Val Munro	North Edinburgh Arts
Freda O'Bryne	Community arts participant

The Arches – 22.6.2011

Name	Organisation
Amanda Monfrooe	Ponypie
Nick Anderson	Amplifier
Eilidh Macaskill	Fish and Game
Tom Scullion	Arches Associate
Becky Gerrard	Arches Associate
Jackie Wylie	The Arches
Enid Still	The Arches

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (formerly RSAMD) – 23.6.2011

Name	Organisation
Ellen Ling	RSAMD - Student
Kirstie Byres	RSAMD - Student
Katherine McKinnon	RSAMD - Student
Cate Mackie	RSAMD - Costume Tutor
Lynfryn Mackenzie	RSAMD - Production Manager

Creative Scotland – 15.9.2011

Name	Organisation
Venu Dhupa	Creative Scotland, Director
David Taylor	Creative Scotland, Portfolio Manager
Femi Folorunso	Creative Scotland, Development Officer
Maggie Maxwell	Creative Scotland, Development Officer
Janie Lumsden	Creative Scotland, Development Officer

APPENDIX 5: PHASE 2 – MINI-GROUP TOPIC GUIDE

Stellar Quines – Research Project

Qualitative Research Phase Two – Mini Group Discussion Guide

Phase One Research Material (Show)

A recent investigation by SQ explored to what extent women were represented as directors, actors and other practitioners in a typical Scottish theatre season. A summary of the conclusions are attached/were sent to you.

How well do you think this research reflects your own view on how women are represented in Scottish Theatre?

Are there any other issues in relation to equality that you think are relevant in the discussion?

Can you (unprompted or prompted if required) describe in your own words the purpose of Stellar Quines Theatre Company?

How significant a role do you think has SQ played in facilitating the development of women theatre artists and practitioners in Scotland?

Does a company such as Stellar Quines that has a female centric agenda serve a purpose in Scotland today and in the future?

Please consider up to three interventions that you think have enabled the work of women theatre artists and practitioners to thrive/develop in Scotland in the past?

What do you consider to be essential to the development of women artists and practitioners in Scotland?

APPENDIX 6: PHASE TWO – ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

How do you feel women (within creative roles such as acting, directing, composing, designing etc) are represented in Scottish Theatre today?

- Men and women are equally represented in Scottish theatre today
- More women are represented than men in Scottish theatre today
- More men are represented than women in Scottish theatre today

What factors do you think may influence gender inequality in Scottish theatre today? Please select three and rank them 1-3 with 1 being the most important.

- Lack of opportunities to develop career
- The impact on a career of pregnancy and childcare
- The impact on a career of caring duties e.g. elderly parents
- Self confidence of individual artists
- Existing power networks
- Age
- The media
- Personal financial situation
- Other (please specify)

What is your own personal experience of either equality or inequality in Scottish theatre? Please select a phrase that best describes your opinion.

- I have never felt my gender has inhibited my career
- My gender has been a positive factor in my career development
- My gender has inhibited my career
- I do not believe there is gender inequality in Scottish theatre today
- I am not involved in Scottish theatre
- Other (please specify)

What do you think could help to eradicate gender inequality in Scottish theatre today? Please select three and rank them 1-3 with 1 being the most important.

- More women in senior creative positions across Scotland
- More job opportunities for women
- More mentoring opportunities for women
- Stronger support networks run by and for women
- Higher profile for existing female practitioners
- Lobbying campaign across a range of influencers
- Equalities training for all theatre organisations
- Other (please specify)

Have you ever sought out the work of particular artists in Scottish theatre because they were female?

If yes, in what types of roles?

- Director
- Writer
- Designer
- Actor
- Composer

Have you ever attended a Stellar Quines event?

If yes, what type of event did you attend?

- Production
- Talk
- Workshop
- Play Reading
- Other

If you have not attended a Stellar Quines event can you explain why?

What do you think is the core vision behind Stellar Quines Theatre Company?

- To provide strong roles for women in Scottish theatre
- To produce historical plays
- To produce political plays
- To support the best in new writing
- To provide mentoring and training for women artists
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

What specific activities do you think Stellar Quines does? Please select up to three activities.

- Produces theatre shows for live performance
- Supports new writing through commissions
- Organises play readings
- Arranges tours of theatre shows in Scotland and abroad for live performance
- Provides mentoring opportunities for women artists
- Manages events
- Acts as a casting agency
- Provides networking opportunities for women

How significant a role do you think Stellar Quines has played in supporting the development of women artists in Scottish theatre?

- Has not contributed at all
- A small role
- Fair role
- Sizeable role
- A hugely significant role

Do you believe a company with a female centric agenda serves a purpose in Scotland today?

What do you consider to be essential to the development of women artists and practitioners in Scotland?

- Challenge gender stereotypes
- Stronger roles for women
- Challenge ageism stereotypes
- A stronger support network for women
- Raising the profile of women in a range of roles in theatre in Scotland
- Greater mentoring opportunities for women
- Encourage more women to take up governance roles in cultural organisations
- Other (please specify)

What is your gender?

How old are you?

Where do you live?

Would you like to join the Stellar Quines mailing list?

Thank you for completing our online survey. If you would like to be included in our prize draw for an "Arousal Kit" and have not already completed your contact details please complete them now.

APPENDIX 7: SCOT-NITS THEATRE FORUM COMMENTS

- | Date | Comments |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15.7.11 | <p>From my perspective and as far as I know the industry (and maybe I do not know enough), I do not see gender inequality. But I feel that the survey is biased and that is unfortunate. I started to do the survey but gave up, thinking that it is from women to women, and I, as a member of the lesser gender (and I mean it) shouldn't take part in it. I wonder what percentage of male performing arts practitioners completed the survey.</p> <p>As far as I can see, management of most Scottish arts organizations are in very capable female hands. And audiences go to see a show or exhibition, because of its quality not because the creator is male or female.</p> <p>I strongly believe that we have bigger problems in the Scottish Performing Arts industry and I hope that both male and female practitioners will unite to find solutions. I urge all Equity members to attend the meeting on Monday 18 July!!!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">TB, Artistic Director</p> |
| 15.7.11 | <p>TB – I love you but...</p> <p>Whilst I feel it would be unfair to suggest that there is wide spread inequality in our industry, it is equally unfair to suggest that there are not problems and challenges that are unique to women working in this industry.</p> <p>Might I suggest that you are highlighting the problem by telling us there are bigger problems and therefore suggesting that women cannot set the agenda and raise our own concerns – as a (very lovely) white middle class man obviously you know the most important issues better than the rest of us! The issue of actors not being paid has been FULLY supported and discussed on this forum but it is not the sole reason for the forum. I encourage a bit of banter about something else to be honest.... There is room for more than one debate surely.</p> <p>Best wishes,
L</p> <p>p.s. Article on tips for hiring women during the second world war attached to remind us how far we have come and for general amusement! Perhaps I have just given an example of point 9?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">LS, Practitioner</p> |
| 15.7.11 | <p>Well said LS!</p> <p>I answered the survey as a gay man and didn't think anything of it, there is an imbalance in our industry...we have to discuss it with our Higher students at school under Scottish Contemporary Theatre (Gender) elements. I have had numerous heated debates with my boys in the class as they feel, like TB and S, that why aren't their issues being raised or discussed. It's led to many an argument amongst the class... the only time it didn't was last session when I had an all-female class!</p> |

JN-C

- 15.7.11 My experience, in the theatre world and in the wider world, is that there are jobs with a higher ratio of females and jobs with a higher ratio of males.

Does this show inequality (in both directions) or does it just show that there are some jobs preferred by women and some preferred by men?

As a technician I there is a gender imbalance, with more male than female technicians. However I would also say that of the female technicians we do have in the industry they are probably almost all hard working and well respected. I wish I could say the same of many of the male techs.

Is the imbalance due to them being female? Probably, but probably from their own choice, not because of sexual discrimination within the industry. Being a technician is a very demanding physical job. From my experience men are more likely to be attracted to this type of job than women. It doesn't make either better or worse, just different.

SB, Technician

- 15.7.11 Good for you, S; probably the most sensible contribution to this debate: gender is not about being better or worse but different. You have it totally summed up.

JS

- 15.7.11 I totally agree. Also, sometimes I look about a theatre and wonder if boys still do electrics; sometimes I'm the only girl about. I rarely, if at all, encounter any inequalities in relation to opportunity in the industry – in fact, compared to some other professions, I find the industry to be refreshingly free of it.

S

- 16.7.11 This is shaping up to be a fascinating debate and one that I agree is absolutely necessary. I can understand both the points made by LS and by TB.

On TB's side is the fact that administratively Scotland's theatre is powered by women. Indeed, Scotland's arts institutions in general are filled with capable women. Walk into the Scottish Poetry Library or the Scottish Book Trust, or any number of volunteer organisations and the vast majority of work is done by women. A woman at the head of a festival or institution is nowhere near the column-filler that it once was. It's the same among almost every level of professional, student and amateur production. In the last six years at Edinburgh University's Bedlam Theatre there has been one male president for every three female.

However, if you look at the stories that these organisations are putting on stage how many of those are gender-balanced or female-focussed? It is still absolutely standard to accept two boys into drama courses for every one girl as there simply aren't the roles for women. I was on the Masters in Classical and Contemporary Text at the RSAMD and we were scrabbling around for female roles as we had the unusual curse of having more women than men. This clearly had a huge amount to do with trying to stage Shakespeare, but the same truth still hangs about contemporary drama too. The c.250 person membership of Bedlam was about 70% female, and yet I would see show

after show going up with one woman and four men, or other such balances. Male actors would become superstars in the theatre, cast repeatedly in main roles from the small pool, while women battled for a tiny number of often two-dimensional parts and 'love interests'. When even stalwarts like *The House of Bernarda Alba* or *The Steamie* are staged they are referred to in terms of their all-female casts, while the large monogender of Peter Brook's latest outing at the Tramway, *11 and 12*, goes unmentioned. Try the Bechdel Test on even recent Scottish plays (<http://bechdeltest.com/>). Though the test is for films, the principle can be transferred to theatre without too much loss. To pass the test the story must have at least two women in it, these women must talk to each other, and they must talk to each other about something other than a man.

Now, clearly simply having more women in positions of power, and even, dare I say it, even more women writers, is not going to change the fact that for innumerable historical reasons we still feel that men's stories are more important or more universal than women's. But the truth of the matter is that we're not THERE yet in equality in the Scottish, and UK, and possibly Western theatre community. Let's not pretend that the work has been done, but let's not be lazy when we try to do it either. If we have any hope that theatre serves a purpose to expand the minds and broaden the horizons for its audiences, then we are doing them a disservice if we only tell them half the story.

IM

17.7.11 Brilliantly put, and illustrated IM. I'm also very glad this discussion is happening. Thanks to Stellar Quines for their work.

SD

18.7.11 Nice to say Hello

But can you tell me how many Scottish Theatre Companies are controlled/directed by women?

Not the administrators - not the Stage Managers - but the Artistic Directors? The playwrights? The Directors?

YES - This is an important discussion and I am glad folk have come on board - theatre is - and should be - the societal thermometer. And power, to be healthy, needs to be understood as a share[d] experience. That is what will make us a health[y] community. We are not there yet.

AP

19.7.11 I would like to expand on the debate so far. Firstly I want to point out that there is a difference between women being represented in the arts in a visible context such as actors, production staff, designers, writers and women being represented at higher, strategic levels in the arts. I feel that we have made positive steps towards addressing this in Scotland over the past five years, including the appointment of Vicky Featherstone as our first Artistic Director of NTS, Kath Mainland taking over at the Fringe and Faith Liddell in charge of Festivals Edinburgh.

However at a strategic boardroom level women are still grossly under-represented. Remember that Artistic Directors have to answer to boards and if boards continue to be male-dominated then how can we really tell if the visions and voices of women are being truly represented? I suggest the

phrase behind every great man... is changed to behind every 10 great men there is only room for 4 great women.

Please find below a brief summary of how women are represented in terms of being Creative Heads of cultural companies and organisations in Scotland. I have broken it down by gender and where the information was freely available I have included the breakdown of female:male ratio for the boards of these organisations (in brackets after the appropriate company name).

<u>Female Creative Head</u>	<u>Male Creative Head</u>	<u>Joint Creative Heads</u>	<u>Run by Councils or unknown</u>
All or Nothing	Citizens (2F 5M)	Reeling and	Brunton (3F
Ankur Productions (3F 3M)	Communicado (with female associate) (3F 3M)	Writhing	2M)
The Arches	Cumbernauld	Rowan	Falkirk Town
Beacon Arts Centre	Dogstar (4F 2M)	Tree	Hall
Birds of Paradise	Dundee Rep (with female associate)	Vox Motus	HITN (female
Catherine Wheels	Fire Exit Ltd	Random	led as far as I
Dance Base	Mull Theatre	Accomplice	can tell)
Dance House (3F 2M)	Pitlochry (4F 10M)		Out of the
Edinburgh Fringe (5F 9M)	Royal Lyceum (3F 12M)		Darkness
Grid Iron (3F 4M) (with Male Co-Artistic Director)	Scottish Opera (3F 10M)		Palace Theatre
Horsecross (4F 9M)	Solar		The Space
Lickety Spit (5F 1M)	Bear (2F 3M)		The Tramway
Lung Ha's (3F 3M)	The Tron		The Lemon
NTS (5F 5M)	The Traverse (3F 4M)		Tree
Open Book (led by trio of 2F and 1M)	Untitled Projects		Theatre
Playwrights' Studio, Scotland (4F 4M)	Vanishing		Hebrides
Poorboy	Point (5F 2M)		Aberdeen Arts
Scottish Dance Theatre	Visible Fictions		Centre (male
Scottish Youth Theatre	Wee Stories		chairman)
Stellar Quines (4F 1M)	Seen UnSeen		
The Byre (3F 7M)	Macrobert (3F 7M)		
The Catstrand	Never Did Nothing		
Theatre Broad			
Theatre Cryptic (3F 3M)			
Y Dance			
ZENDEH			
ek performance			
Glas(s) Performance			
Company Chordelia (4F 1M)			

This list was compiled by me using the current list of all FST full members and members' own websites.

I hope this list shows Scotland has a diverse theatre scene in which women are great leaders and contributors. And I acknowledge that some companies

are to be commended for achieving balance on their boards. But I have to ask are we happy with the current representation of women at board level? Especially in Scotland's theatre buildings? Are we not doing enough to attract women onto boards or are women genuinely not interested? Do they not feel they have the appropriate skills to contribute to a board? Can we address this through offering training and making more of a commitment to recruit women. Arts and Business run a project getting young people onto boards, do we need a similar project for women? Or are we amongst many industries that suffer from a shortage of women in boardroom level roles?

(<http://www.lastage.com/2011/03/revealing-numbers-and-raising-the-question-where-are-womens-voices-on-local-stages/>). I know this is a US study but I feel it's easy to draw comparisons this side of the pond. If women make up a majority of audiences then why are they being so poorly represented at the opposite end of the scale?

When you consider there are more than 3 times the number of men on the board for CREATIVE SCOTLAND (2F 7M), an organisation which is currently re-shaping the cultural landscape of an entire country I would like to suggest that the issue of how women are represented in the arts is not over but perhaps needs to be clarified so our energy and passion can be channelled into areas where we can and should be making our voices heard! I believe that is what Stellar Quines are trying to do with their survey and look forward to the results of that consultation.

LS, Practitioner

19.7.11 Hi LS

On behalf of Grid Iron I would like to correct the figures quoted. The Grid Iron Board make up is 4F and 3M. We have 2 Co-Artistic Directors 1F and 1M. Our Chief Executive is F. We have 2 full-time and 1 part-time members of staff – all F. On our current production 'What Remains' we have 5M and 7F.

DC, Gridiron

19.7.11 Is the table meant to show a lack of female support at high level?

It would appear that you have shown there are 50% more theatre companies with a female creative heads than male. (31:20) 13% of these companies have more men on the board than women. Of the companies with male creative heads, there are 10% of companies with more female than male board members.

This tells me that in any one organisation the head is likely to represent the majority of the board.

Are women under represented? only in the companies with more men in.
Are men under represented? mainly in the companies with more women in.
Are these numbers significant? if you talk to a statistician, probably not.

It was proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that in Iran fighter pilots were more likely to have boys than girls as children. Was this because of G force? Was it because of radio frequencies? no, it was because if you look at any group of

people there will, statistically, be a trend of something 'interesting'.

Can you really tell me that with these numbers above, you are not being sexist by trying to help only female artists and administrators?

In the organisations with a high male representation I would encourage you to look at the age of the board members and their background.

We know that women were under represented 20 years ago. These boards are probably made up of people that have been in the administration of theatre for 30 or more years. There were not as many women in the jobs then. Does this mean that the job criteria should be changed from: what is the experience and length of service this person has had in the industry, to 'What sex is the person?'

If you start employing women onto boards or anywhere else, because they are female rather than being the best person for the job, you leave yourself open to sexual discrimination, which can be very expensive.

SB

19.7.11 Hi SB

Thanks for your reply and taking the time to crunch my numbers!

My intention was to add some facts to the discussion. My argument has never been that there are not enough women at top level artistically and quite the opposite I felt it was important to show that in some areas we are very well represented. My table was in a direct response to a post by AP asking for a list of women in top creative positions. I thought it only fair to also show the male side of the story too. I tried to focus my strand of the debate specifically on the creative heads and boards as I felt that would bring a different perspective to the debate. I never claimed to want to help female artists or administrators so I don't think I can be accused of being sexist in this respect. I was trying to break the discussion up a bit because women are represented differently on every level throughout our industry - nothing wrong with this I was just trying to be focused in my response. I didn't want every thread of the debate to be about women feeling disempowered - turns out we don't that much anyway!

My cry was for more women to be represented at board level in Scotland's theatre buildings and institutes such as Creative Scotland. Significant amounts of public money (in terms of arts funding) is given to these organisations and I feel they owe it to their audiences to be trying to ensure that their boards are as diverse (including having BME members too) as possible and truly represent the community and audience they serve. I stand by this and I do not agree that the reason they are not fairly represented is because there are not women out there with the experience because of how things were in the industry 20 years ago. I am pretty sure that board members are legally required to resign and stand for re-election every few years so the hangover from 20 years ago can easily be rectified if this is the reason. I also appreciate that for a lot of buildings their board must include members from local council and in some areas there are more male councillors than female. I absolutely 100% agree that a person should be hired because of their skills not sex. I don't see how having a balanced board contradicts this?

I actually think that in more general terms these figures show theatre as an industry leading the way in terms of female representation on boards. Lord Davies recently published a report which is designed to encourage (not make legal) more FTSE 100 companies to get female representation onto their boards. They are aiming for 25%! Well I think we kick their ass on that score! However there are a few stragglers and I feel they are key companies in our industry which is what I find worrying. Is the increase in female-led companies with high numbers of women on the board because we are reacting to finding our theatre buildings impenetrable? I only ask the question. I have no personal agenda and do not wish to criticise how our theatre buildings are currently being run but I don't (or didn't) see any harm in raising these questions as I think we are all guilty of just accepting the status quo sometimes.

Are women under represented? only in the companies with more men in.
Are men under represented? mainly in the companies with more women in.
I agree with you that essentially statistics mean nothing but one thing I hope they do is probe people to think more deeply about potential reasons for those figures. I also acknowledge that my research is very limited but it's an online forum debate not a House of Lords reform bill we are discussing. I find statistics quite interesting and think that in debates which are potentially emotive they can be useful in giving a common playing field from which people can draw their own conclusions from.... or not?
I simply want people to look around the board table at their next meeting and ask do we have a balance we are happy with? What can we do to change it if not?

My opinions are only mine and were not meant to be anything other than food for thought and a small contribution to the debate. I welcome opposing views, I don't bruise easily!

LS, Practitioner

19.7.11 I just wanted to join the debate purely to relate my general experience as an actress. I can't speak at all as to gender issues in other realms of theatre/film, but certainly, as a female in the acting profession, I am painfully aware of not only under-representation of females on the boards, but also (worse, I think) their gross mis-representation, as has been noted, as "love interest" or "mum". I once heard a famous comedian joke "I cannot think of anything more off-putting than a show advertising itself as "a woman's journey"- and though I love that comedian the joke really grated with me, being all too representative of the lack of weight theatre/film industries put to women's stories. (I speak in general of course, there are notable exceptions - but that we all recognise as exceptions).

I can't recall how many casting briefs I have received (the majority of them, I will add) with a 4 men to 1 woman ratio, the 4 male parts varying in age, physical stature, emotional complexity, and the 1 woman being, universally, "devastatingly attractive, early twenties, main guy's girlfriend, having to be comfortable with nudity" (I am actually not exaggerating this). It is not a mere anecdote that Dame Helen Mirren dedicated her Golden Globe acceptance speech to cracking down on "Hollywood's obsession with the 18-25 year-old penis" - it shows there's still a tremendous amount of work to do for a better, fairer representation of women in the acting profession, and for educating people at all levels, across boards, regardless of gender (as there are many females who also happily buy into this mis/under-representation for business

purposes, my last agent was like that).

Again, I speak solely as a young (ish!) actress, and with much less eloquence I wholeheartedly support Ishbel's message - and Stellar Quines' work.

AZ

21.7.11 Just adding a few observations to this debate, which I've been reading with interest all week. First, I would say it is broadly true that there is not much overt gender prejudice in theatre, and that the position of women in theatre is stronger than it was - say - twenty years ago. People who work in theatre are generally liberal in their views, and would not consciously exclude people on grounds of gender, race or class. It's also true that a new generation of women directors are emerging in British theatre, that the NTS is led by a woman, and that the traditional very disadvantageous gender balance in casting is shifting, although much faster in small, unfunded and informal companies than in big mainstage production. The rise of theatre for children in Scotland has also changed the gender balance, although for the traditional reason that women tend to be more prominent in anything to do with provision for children.

There are, though, some aspects of this debate which do concern me. First, we still take it for granted that many plays, particularly on main stages, will have all-male or nearly all-male casts. The recent Lyceum smash hit *Dunsinane* is an excellent example - one real speaking part for a woman, at least half a dozen for men. *Black Watch* is all-male. *Gagarin Way* is all-male. This is something that seems so "normal" to our eye that we never even think about it, but it still means that when it comes to mainstage shows, male actors in speaking parts normally outnumber women by about two to one, if not more. And women are often included in non-speaking capacities, to bump up the numbers - see the recent NTS production of *Knives In Hens*, which featured an extra woman who never speaks, or the female chorus in *Dunsinane*; the effect of this - men speak, women float about or play an instrument in the background - can actually be worse than excluding women altogether.

Secondly, with a few striking exceptions, Scottish playwriting tends still to be a pretty male-dominated affair, still affected - 15 years on - by the hyper-masculine "in yer face" moment of the mid-1990s. A recent academic book chapter on Scottish playwriting at the Traverse over the last 20 years featured Harrower, Greig, Hannan, Arnott, Clifford and Greenhorn, all of whom were male when they achieved fame, although Jo Clifford is now a woman. It could have added Henry Adam, Gregory Burke, and - beyond the Traverse - Anthony Neilson. Only a few women with a sustained playwriting presence emerged from the same generation - Zinnie Harris, Nicola McCartney - and I think it's fair to say that they have not achieved the same level of recognition as Greig, Burke, Harrower or Neilson.

Finally, I have to say that I am surprised by the petulant anti-feminist tone of some of the contributions to this debate. I would have thought that people on this forum would have understood that the idea that feminism is over, and that women now enjoy fully equal opportunities in our society, is a reactionary myth peddled by - among others - the newspapers of the Murdoch press. If the position of women in theatre is slowly improving, in many other areas of public life it is actually deteriorating; just look at the pathetic number of women in the current UK cabinet, or the declining percentage of women in the

Scottish Parliament, or the four-to-one dominance of men at Westminster, or the total absence of women from a high proportion of Scottish boardrooms. I have written many columns on these subjects, backed by statistics, if people want to look at my blog. I am particularly concerned by the re-emergence of the ancient 1950s style argument that men and women are "just different", and have different preferences, and that this - not prejudice or nurture - accounts for the imbalances in power and influence which are so obvious in our society. This argument has been a cover since time immemorial for those who think it is OK for women to be excluded from public life, and to stick to their own sphere of activity - i.e. making costumes rather than doing tech, raising babies rather than sitting in parliament, and cooking the dinner and organising the household rather than taking part in the big decisions that shape our world.

So just to say it again, loud and clear. A sane world needs both men and women equally represented in its public life, including its cultural and theatre life. For this to happen, women need to be free of the lie that the decision to have a family life - a basic human need, not a consumer option - is entirely their individual choice, and one for which they individually have to carry the can, sacrificing their careers in the process. Women have as good as right as men to both love and work, the two things which make life worth living. I have seen the generations of women who have been forced to sacrifice one or the other, damaging themselves and those who love them in the process, and it is not right. We are slowly making progress away from this world. But in some areas, we are also moving backwards, particularly under the economic pressures of recession; and we will never succeed if we frame this as a battle between men and women, or if we fall for the lie that this is now an old struggle, about which neither men nor women any longer need to bother their heads.

With thanks to everyone who has contributed to a very interesting discussion,

JM

JM, Journalist and Commentator

21.7.11 JM, I have to say that this is one of the most sensible and well-balanced contributions to the debate (not just on this forum but more widely) that I have read for a long time!

PL, Editor

21.7.11 Congratulations JM. Very balance[d] response, and even I would have some comments, I believe that it is most sensible contribution so far.

TB, Artistic Director

21.7.11 Thank you, JM, for writing in this thought-out and well-balanced manner.

I've been wanting to formulate my thoughts in a similar way, but can now give my brain a bit of a rest on this matter as you have really said what I am thinking and said it well.

DF

21.7.11 Thank you JM, for a superb insight into this serious situation, may the debate

continue...

SG

21.7.11 You took the words right out of my mouth' - but a lot more succinctly. I would add that age is also a big factor in gender imbalance.

AP

21.7.11 Absolutely agree with you, AP. JM put it extremely well. And you are absolutely right that age plays a major role in the imbalance.

LC

21.7.11 Like everyone else, I feel grateful [to] JM for contributing to this debate with such intelligence, force and eloquence.

Like her, it concerns me to see how many plays have overwhelmingly male casts. I was lucky in that for a brief time I was able to do something about it. After the success of *Losing Venice* I wrote a series of plays for the Traverse in which a woman was the central character and which had an equal number of men and women in the cast: *Lucy's Play* (1986) *Playing With Fire* (1987) *The Girl Who Fell to Earth* (1988: produced by Great Eastern Stage in 1991), *Inés de Castro* (1989) and *Light in the Village* (1991).

I mention these titles, and with pride, because they have since disappeared from the Scottish stage.

I suspect it was not entirely a coincidence that when I then tried to create work that openly expressed my experience as a transgendered woman I found my work being rejected by the Traverse; or that for the next eighteen years I was unable to write original work for any Scottish theatre.

It is worth repeating that we live in a patriarchal culture where misogyny remains an immensely powerful force. It is very hard to break the mould, as I know to my cost.

It is necessary to break through one's own internalized oppression (in my case, strong residues of fear and shame) not to mention the other obstacles of covert censorship and the occasional outburst of vicious prejudice.

That's why it is very important we have a company like Stellar Quines; and why they are to be congratulated for trying to reach a better understanding of the obstacles women face.

JC, Playwright

22.7.11 I'd like to add to JM's remark that this is something that seems so "normal" to our eye that we never even think about it, but it still means that when it comes to mainstage shows, male actors in speaking parts normally outnumber women by about two to one, if not more.

A few years ago I wrote this short piece for *The Scotsman*. I was writing about cartoons, but I think it's symptomatic of a general blindness to male bias casting. When we tell jokes it's always "this man goes into a bar" never "this woman goes into a bar":

'I've just watched the new Pixar animation, *Ratatouille*, and I'm aghast. In a cast of 16, there is only one significant female character: Colette, a chef, voiced by Janeane Garofalo. Although she starts off with a plucky speech against the male-domination of the food industry, within a few scenes even she has blanded out into the hero's love interest. What kind of message are we sending to our children when every story is about dynamic boys and lovey-dovey girls?

The problem doesn't stop at *Ratatouille*. With the possible exception of *The Incredibles*, which does have two or three juicy female parts, every modern cartoon is unaccountably dominated by men.

Of 45 named characters in *Cars*, a mere seven are female. We're talking cars here: metal things that have no innate gender characteristics. It was the same in *Madagascar*, a film entirely populated by animals with roles for just three women.

Unthinking sexism is to blame, so too is the movie industry's obsession with ambitious sons and dysfunctional fathers. *Ratatouille* is about a food-loving rat misunderstood by his garbage-gorging dad. *Finding Nemo* (six women out of 24) is about a timid father summoning up the manliness to rescue his son. *Chicken Little* (four women out of 24) is about a feeble child proving himself to his macho father.

In most of these, *Ratatouille* included, the mother figure is written out altogether, giving us one-sided visions of the world that are as short in positive role models as they are lacking in satisfying narratives. I say rats to that.'

MF, Journalist

22.7.11 Good morning everyone,

I've enjoyed reading the debate on here and totally support the contributors who have demonstrated very eloquently that gender discrimination is a very real and very serious problem in our society and our industry.

I don't want to repeat anything that has already been said on this so I will be very brief in my comments. The original posts criticising the Stellar Quines survey were arguing that the survey was biased and that there are more important issues that we should be tackling in our industry (I assume this was referring to people being undervalued and underpaid).

I don't think the survey was biased but it was targeted and I don't see any problem with that. Stellar Quines is a great company that produces very relevant work and they were looking for very specific information related to the work that they do. I do however think it would be interesting to have a survey that asks more questions about how both men and women are affected by gender oppression. I believe that women by far are affect[ed] the most by this problem but it is a fact that men too are disadvantaged. I also believe that when any group is discriminated against we all lose out - it's not just female actors that lose out when they are underrepresented on the stage - the rest of the company and the male and female audience members are also left short changed. Because gender discrimination is an issue that affects us all [to] varying degrees I believe it is something that we should all be tackling and so

I'm very pleased to see that there have also be some men on this forum that recognise the reality and importance of these issues and are contributing to the debate.

With regard to the comment that we have bigger problems in the performing arts industry I will say this. Yes we do have a serious problem of members of the performing arts industry being undervalued and underpaid. We also have a problem across our society of women being undervalued and underpaid. So if you are a women in the performing arts industry then you are doubly under valued and underpaid - and if you are an older woman then it's even worse! These problems are all connected and we should all be working together to tackle them.

I look forward to the debate continuing on and off the forum.

LS

22.7.11 This is the first time in a week I've had time to sit and look at ScotNits – no time between children and work.

I would agree resoundingly everything said by JM, JC, LS and AP.

In the last 5 years (and yes it's illegal and you know who you are) I have twice been asked, when pitching for work, how I would manage my childcare if I were to direct a show in Glasgow (I am not even deeming this worthy of an exclamation mark). I strongly doubt any male director has been asked this – please correct me if I'm wrong. Many people working in the theatre still have to shrug off throw-away sexist/homophobic/genderist comments heard in green rooms, rehearsal rooms, and during builds and techs. So, although it may be lovely out front, that does not mean that working practice within the industry is where it needs to be yet in terms of respect and equality at present – although I agree it's a lot better than it was.

Good for Stellar Quines for asking uncomfortable and important questions.

And now, a shameless plug – albeit with a pertinent link to the above! This Fringe we are working in co-production with Assembly producing a play by Jules Horne (woman) directed by me (woman) performed by Pauline Goldsmith and Nicola Jo Cully (both women) designed by Sarah Paulley (woman). So you can see, as per our mission statement, we also champion the work of women. For more info go to <http://www.nutshelltheatre.co.uk/file/welcome.html>

Also anyone out there more widely concerned with the on-going campaign for equality, especially lobbying in relation to the current government cuts and how they are hammering women on low incomes, should go to <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/>

KN, Artistic Director

I have been excited and invigorated by this thread and all the perceptive and passionate comments made so far.

I think one issue that really stands out for me is that, as MF points out, the drip

drip conditioning that seems to allow acceptability of an imbalance in gender representation across the media and the stage, is symptomatic of the bigger problem indeed. We've all grown up with varying degrees of this assumed acceptability of a history and folklore told predominantly through the eyes of men. We are all subtly conditioned by this and the media and arts have a big part to play in this. We're the storytellers and archivists of all that's been and all societies' collective hopes for the future. A big responsibility that demands an accuracy of representation.

It takes a real conscious effort to ask ourselves individually why do we want to tell and hear so many stories where men are our heroes and the women are subsidiary; a love interest, a reward, or at best a quirky best friend that might end up as a love interest in the final act?

Why are we drawn to these stories as artists and audiences?

Are they more 'popular' because we're more familiar with those narratives?

Or do we choose them because they interest us more?

We need to be careful that we don't perpetuate stereotypes of people and stereotypical relationships by accepting the status quo.

These issues I feel are also connected to a deeper imbalance about gender, ethnicity, race and disability in Scotland: I know it's certainly not perfectly balanced down in London but there seems to be a bit more imaginative casting of roles. Would it not be satisfying for us to disconnect conventionality a little and next time we're doing a classical play at one of the main houses not make it an all white, mostly male cast, instead cast against conventional gender, racial, ethnic and ability types. (I know plenty of female actors who'd love a shot at some of the traditionally male Shakespearean roles).

It can't be left to companies whose focus is to facilitate, promote, develop or target specific groups of individuals. The issue affects the whole of society so it needs the whole of our industry to be open to it and challenge ourselves to imagine beyond convention.

It means telling our stories through the eyes of diverse individuals not just the white able-bodied man. And it means searching deeper for other unique accounts of our global history...again, searching beyond the eyes of colonising white man.

(Please excuse any generalisation and hyperbole in this post.)

MH

- 22.7.11 I agree with MF's comment about 'unthinking sexism' and, while I don't want to colour this debate if you'll pardon the pun, it reflects another urgently needed debate around the sorry lack of BME work, whether originating in Scotland or touring here. It's true people in the arts don't like to think they would consciously exclude on the basis of gender, sexuality, race etc. but it happens... to some of us. And from most unexpected quarters and people/organisations, that should frankly know better. And what that makes us feel is very real and deserves to be addressed. Often a lack of empathy or personal experience of these issues leads to an unwillingness, or indeed fear, to tackle them - for perhaps they might say the wrong thing, show their ignorance etc. It then becomes easier just not to deal with it at all.

At such an exciting time elsewhere, with my associates Dharmesh Patel recently becoming the first Asian actor to play Hamlet for the RSC, and Madani Younis becoming the Artistic Director of the Bush Theatre, I can find some hope...

That the head of NTS is a woman is not necessarily enough. It's a rather different animal, I feel. However, I look forward to the day when perhaps somewhere like the Traverse has a female Artistic Director, but one who is fearless at tackling equalities in a meaningful and lasting way. It's not about being right on, it's about being respectful, accessible and importantly producing work for everyone to be proud of. Thanks for the debate, long must it continue.

AG, Artistic Director

22.7.11 I've been following this debate with interest, and just wanted to pick up on a point that KN made about childcare. I have been working professionally for 5 years, during which time I have been pregnant twice and brought up two young children. I was unable to get any work while pregnant, as apparently no character can happen to be pregnant unless the script calls for it. Also, there are too many health and safety issues on film and TV sets which prevent pregnant women from working. Despite walking miles with my two-year-old on my shoulders while 8 months pregnant, and holding down a very physical, full-time non-acting job, I was not deemed safe to act.

As I work a lot in TIE, I have very quickly learned not to mention to employers that I have children until long after I have signed the contract, if at all. Too many auditions were lost when I mentioned the kids. I have done five national tours since having my children, as I have excellent reliable childcare arrangements in place, and I would not commit to a professional job if it would impact negatively on my family.

Unfortunately, a large proportion of society seems to still think that a woman's place is in the home, and that working mothers are acceptable only as long as they do part-time work that keeps them close to home. Male actors with children, and indeed men in many professions, can work away from home for months at a time without anyone questioning their decisions.

Personally, I have always ensured that I am home at weekends, but I would not have an issue with a woman who worked away from her family, as I would assume she would have childcare arrangements in place.

I think that there have been some excellent points made about how roles are scarce for women, especially older women and those from ethnic minorities. However, I think discrimination against women who choose to have children is still a large problem, not just in the arts world, but across many professions.

TW

23.7.11 What the hell, might as well add my two centimes.

Aside from sexism, racism and many other isms prevalent in theatre, I would take slight - only slight mind you - issue with the idea that everyone in theatre is generally liberal and open and would never wittingly do a bad thing.

I'm afraid that I find that to be a bit of a comfort blanket. Many folk in theatre

like to APPEAR liberal, but really - theatre is generally caught in a time warp. I won't get into what passes for acting, direction etc. in many theatres, but the attitudes within it are set in stone.

A major Scottish theatre was looking for a new artistic director, the main candidate was a woman. A board member said in private "we don't want to be represented by a wee girl" - No, seriously.

When asked by an extremely liberal company what my experience with ethnic minorities was, and as an addendum to the answer I added I was currently working with a group of Pakistani kids, I was told the correct term was "ethnic minorities from the Indian sub-continent". I shit you not.

I took my son (at the time a toddler, as opposed to the money-pit émigré he turned out to be) to a production meeting at a large, respected theatre, and you'd think I'd dropped a turd on the table. "He can't touch anything"; "can he be left in a room?" In a fecking room? Yup - liberal and happening to a fault.

And don't get me started on selective racism in casting, or the ludicrous cherry-picking of what ethnic backgrounds we feel all comfy and fuzzy about mocking.

Done. Ta much.

DG

Thank you DG,

That needed to be said. The cosy notion that all theatre people are 'liberal, open and would never do a bad thing' is just that - a cosy notion. Far removed from the reality, complexity and total timewarpedness that I certainly have encountered in theatre and film and television. God forbid that you should actually have children as they completely interfere with the adolescent and self-obsessed world that is Acting.

TM

23.7.11 Wow – a rant I can respect, thanks DG!

We know what we want by way of respect, but how often do we bite our tongues for fear of losing work, appearing intolerant ourselves given current pc trends, or thinking we might be misreading a situation?

Maybe I should just speak for myself and leave out the 'we', but from the discussions here, I don't think I am alone in this.

Glad to have such a debate out in the open.

Thanks to all contributing!

DF

28.7.11 I'm a Janie-come-lately in this whole debate, as I'm busy making some money in the wilds of Canada, but I felt that I needed to make a few remarks.

I'm not as eloquent as JM or AG, but I agree with them wholeheartedly. There's no point in rolling our eyes heavenwards exclaiming "Oh, yeesh, ladies, give it up!" which is how it sounds in some of the Scot-Nits responses. I would like to say that gender inequality is in my head, but I've dealt with it enough in the past winter alone to know that I'm deluding myself when I say it is. The last two productions that I did brought certain prejudices about women in the theatre to my attention.

This first comment that gets used on a regular basis with me, including by other actors is "Wow, how does your husband feel about babysitting the kids while you get to do your theatre thing? He must be a great guy!" Surely a woman can come out of the kitchen and onto the stage without feeling like she is giving up her role as Mother & Wife! "How would you manage rehearsals if you have two kids?" Is this permitted? Why hasn't anyone told the film students that they shouldn't ask questions like this? The point at which I can go to 4 out of 5 auditions for university final film projects that don't require me to tell them how I will deal with childcare, and aren't casting for the role of prostitute/madame or love interest (who is required to be a size 6, with a great rack, and is willing to be partially clothed) will be the point that we can rest knowing that the next generation has a better grasp of the reality of theatre.

And when I invited someone to my last production, I got this little gem "no disrespect, but I'm not really into Feminist literature or plays". Just because the play was written, produced, directed and performed by women, it was immediately pegged as 'Feminist Theatre', something 'separate' or different and "Other than" mainstream theatre. I felt belittled by that comment. Perhaps a term for male oriented work needs to be penned, so that people begin to understand. How about 'Paternalist Theatre' or 'Boy flick', 'Straight Theatre'. Or "White middle aged-Man Theatre". Sounds ridiculous when it's used the other way, doesn't it?

I'm not sure how I should deal with being an older female actress and writer. It's a relatively new thing for me! How do I get past the idea that perhaps in my next production I should actually include a male actor on stage to make it more financially viable? Shame on me, but I thought it. I've considered cosmetic surgery to make myself look younger so that I could actually get decent roles (no, the nose is still mine). I've considered lying when asked when I have children. I'm seriously pissed that I've thought these things. I don't want to harp about the fact that there are more and better roles for men, even for those who are older. I don't want to harp on the fact that the roles out there for women are often semi-naked (where are the semi-naked men, dammit?!), I don't want to harp on the fact that women have to work twice as hard to be respected and paid equally in the theatre world as actors, tech, and administrators. And it seems silly to go into a sermon every time someone holds up my motherhood and acting career for judgment. I just want a goddamn good role that I can sink my teeth into, and I don't want to have to bust my ass doing 15 hour workdays the rest of the year to get it! And it would be nice if I could get said role without being the one to write it!

I look forward to continuing this debate this fall. I hope that some of you might consider attending the weekly Gender and Oppression workshop with LS et al, just once this winter, just for kicks. It might open your eyes.

LDRD

