

**CALM DOWN DEAR!**

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

Edinburgh  
April 2012

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank all the organisations and individuals that have facilitated and participated in this project.

In particular we would like to thank: consultants Lisa Kapur (for Phase One) and Jane Hogg (for Phase Two); the members of the project Advisory Group including Dominic Hill, Maggie Kinloch, Alexandra Mathie, Adrienne Scullion and Gerda Stevenson; all the individuals who took part in the in-depth interviews, both face-to-face and by phone between May and June 2011; Kate Wimpres (North Edinburgh Arts Centre), Jackie Wylie (The Arches), Julie Ellen (formerly Playwrights' Studio Scotland) and Ros Maddison and Deborah Richardson-Webb (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, formerly RSAMD) for their invaluable support in encouraging a wide range of people to attend the mini-groups in June 2011; all the organisations who circulated the online survey in July 2011 to their members, friends and associates, particularly the Federation of Scottish Theatre, Playwrights' Studio, Scotland and Equity - Scotland; the 267 individuals who took part in the online survey; and finally the 30+ individuals who contributed to the SCOT\_NITS online debate and kept the discussions so lively.

Thank you to Creative Scotland for financial support to undertake this project under its former incarnation as the Scottish Arts Council (Equalities Department).

---

## **CONTENTS**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction	
Project Scope & Methodology	
Key Findings: Phase One and Phase Two	
<b>2. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. PROJECT SCOPE &amp; METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>9</b>
Scope	
Methodology	
Limitations of the Research	
Definition	
<b>4. PHASE ONE: DESK-BASED RESEARCH</b>	<b>12</b>
Context	
Report	
<b>5. PHASE TWO: QUALITATIVE &amp; QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH</b>	<b>21</b>
Introduction	
Report	
<b>6. CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>43</b>

---

### ***REPORTING CONVENTIONS AND GLOSSARY***

SQ – Stellar Quines: CS – Creative Scotland

---

### ***APPENDICES***

Appendix 1: Theatre companies surveyed for Phase One

Appendix 2: List of in-depth interviewees

Appendix 3: In-depth interviewees topic guide

Appendix 4: List of mini-group participants

Appendix 5: Mini-group topic guide

Appendix 6: Online survey questions

Appendix 7: Scot-Nits theatre forum responses

---

# 1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## 1.1 **INTRODUCTION**

Stellar Quines Theatre Company (SQ) was established in 1993 to facilitate the creative work of women in Scottish theatre. Now 18 years old the aim of this research was to provide the basis for SQ to test its existing purpose and refocus its vision for the future.

In February 2010 SQ commissioned Phase One of the project, a piece of desk-based research to review secondary data related to gender in the performing arts and also assess the output of a series of Scottish building-based and touring companies in 1993 and 2009. This snapshot of two typical Scottish theatre seasons 18 years apart explored to what extent women were represented as directors, writers, actors, lighting, set and costume designers and composers/music directors and was intended as stimulus material for the Phase Two research.

Phase Two of the research commenced in April 2011 and involved consultation with, and a survey of, a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations that both had a relationship with SQ, or were relevant to the work of the company; as well as those who may not have had an existing relationship with the company but did have an interest or opinion on the future priorities for the development of women in Scottish theatre. The intention was to draw conclusions that could be used in the re-focusing of SQ's future vision and purpose.

The project was funded by the Scottish Arts Council Equalities Department.

## 1.2 **PROJECT SCOPE & METHODOLOGY**

The **Phase One** research was desk-based and used secondary data to build an opinion-based picture of the role of gender in the performing arts. It combines **a historical account of the role of women in theatre, with an analysis of gender in a variety of artistic roles from two typical Scottish seasons** – one in 1993 when SQ was founded, and one in 2009, the last full Scottish theatre season before the research was commissioned.

Data for Phase One was sourced from academic research papers, documents, essays and newspaper articles as well as print materials produced by several key Scottish theatre venues and the companies that toured to them during the periods in question.

An advisory group was formed to guide the approach to the Phase One research and review its progress throughout 2010. The group included a range of individuals representing different viewpoints and experiences within Scottish theatre and those who had a demonstrable interest in gender issues in theatre.

The **Phase Two** research involving **consultations with a wide range of individuals** from the Scottish theatre world. Prior to consultations taking place a core group of questions for use within the context of the research were developed and a revised version of the Phase One report drawn up to provide stimulus material for participants in Phase Two. These were reviewed by the Phase One Advisory Group.

The Phase Two consultations involved a range of both quantitative and qualitative

---

research techniques including: 16 one-to-one in-depth interviews; 4 mini-groups; an online survey circulated using a snowball technique with a total of 267 responses; and an additional 33 un-moderated online comments via the Scot-Nits theatre forum.

### 1.3 KEY FINDINGS: PHASE ONE

The research surveyed 33 (1993) and 41 (2009) productions from Scottish building-based and touring companies. It looked at the number of directors, writers, performers, lighting, set and costume designers and composers/musical directors for each of the productions on offer, where the information was provided, broken down by gender.

From the data gathered one can see that **by 2009 the gender balance in a typical Scottish theatre season was more female than it was in 1993**. However, it was still the case that in no one category were women represented at a level of 50% or more, and **in all but one category (performers) women's representation remained at around, or below, a third (34%)**.

In 1993 12% of the productions surveyed had female directors. This increased to 26% in 2009 with a range of work presented by companies such as Theatre Cryptic and Lung Ha's, all with female Artistic Directors. However it was also noted that in both 1993 and 2009 all of the building-based companies surveyed had male Artistic Directors.

2009 included two world premieres and a range of other high profile works by female writers. This tallied with data that showed the most significant increase between 1993 and 2009 was the proportion of female writers increasing from 2% to 26%.

Female performers made up 47% of the parts surveyed in 2009, up from 35% in 1993. It was not possible to fully analyse the nature of the roles that were on offer.

In 2009 there were around 16% of women lighting designers, compared to 9% in 1993, while set designers increased from 17% of the sample in 1993 to just over a third (34%) in 2009. However costume designers decreased from 44% in 1993 to 33% in 2009, although this was taken from a low total sample in both cases.

Female composers/music directors fell from 10% in 1993 to 7% in 2009.

In general **comparable data from UK, European and international sources showed an increase in women represented in theatre generally** and across a range of artistic roles. However in Scotland this trend towards equal representation was still slow in many areas and tended to be more pronounced in non-building based companies than building-based companies. In general, research by the Federation of International Artists in 2007-08 across a range of European countries revealed **more fundamental issues facing women in the performing arts** – that of the prospect of **shorter careers, earning less money** than men and the double whammy of both **age and gender stereotypes**.

### 1.4 KEY FINDINGS: PHASE TWO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Phase Two of the research project was commissioned by SQ, from consultant Jane Hogg, in April 2011. The qualitative research involved 16 in-depth interviews and several mini-group discussions, with participants drawn from a list of individuals responsible for

---

cultural policy, running theatre companies, actors, writers and people producing work within the Scottish theatre industry.

**Participants in the research were able to clearly articulate the purpose of SQ and had a fair grasp of what the company did.** Of note were comments that the development of SQ's work for women was not at the expense of men and this was considered a very positive approach.

**The majority of participants could describe the range of activity the company engaged in, focusing on the production of plays, touring and script development.** However the younger participants in the mini-groups were less likely to have any understanding of SQ's role or to be aware of its work. As many were working outside 'traditional' theatre-making models, they felt less of an affinity with the company.

**SQ was clearly considered to have played its part in developing the role of women in Scottish theatre,** but despite this the imprint of the company was seen as small and there was an appetite for larger-scale or higher-profile activity. A considerable number of people saw the role of SQ as just one part of a number of interventions that had created a cumulative effect on the role of women in theatre over the years.

The majority of respondents felt that **SQ did serve a purpose,** but also that the creative work of the company and the quality of that work must continue to take precedence over any political agenda seeking to raise awareness of equality issues. Even those who did not know the work of the company were supportive of its principles and the need to see more work with a female-centric agenda, with the emphasis on rapid turn-over, rather than full-scale production.

**Promoting and sharing in the success of women in Scottish theatre** was considered **very important for the development of women artists** and practitioners, as was a greater understanding and encouragement of **collaborative ways of working** that championed co-creation rather than more traditional theatre-making models.

**Governance** came through as a strong theme and linked with comments concerning the need to see an approach to equality and gender issues such as that pursued by SQ running through every organisation. The top level of an organisation, the board, was seen as needing to champion equality of opportunity and support women to take on senior positions.

The development of **more roles for women, in particular work that challenged stereotypes,** was also seen as essential for the future and SQ was regarded as having a strong role to play here. Its commitment to commissioning and getting work in development seen quickly was also regarded as essential to help talent rise to the surface.

**The majority of participants responded positively to the Phase One research,** and regarded the summary data as a fairly accurate reflection of the gender balance in Scottish theatre. However, participants did comment that it reflected only one part of the theatre-making ecology and that the development of co-production and co-creation of work appeared to encourage a more equal balance of genders.

---

For all participants **the inter-relationship between gender, sexuality, ethnicity and disability was complex** and it was hard to distinguish one issue from another. **The need to promote equality throughout a whole organisation was seen as essential**, rather than an add-on.

## 1.5 KEY FINDINGS: PHASE TWO QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The quantitative section of the research involved an online survey in which 267 individuals participated and an additional 30+ comments via the Scot-Nits theatre forum.

The top-line results for the survey were as follows, noting that the majority of respondents were female (79%), aged between 24-44yrs (56%) and either living in Glasgow or Edinburgh (72%).

- 65% thought **more men were represented than women** in Scottish theatre today
- **Existing power networks, lack of opportunity to develop one's career and childcare or pregnancy** were considered the top three factors influencing gender inequality in Scottish theatre today
- **Personal experience of equality or inequality was split**, with nearly equal numbers indicating that their gender had/hadn't inhibited their careers
- The top three answers as to what could help eradicate gender inequality were **more women in senior creative positions, more job opportunities for women and a higher profile for existing female practitioners**
- **75% of people were clear about the role of SQ** stating that it was to 'provide strong roles for women', followed by supporting new writing and then mentoring
- **54% of people considered SQ had played a sizeable or hugely significant role** in supporting the development of women artists in Scotland
- **92% of people agreed that SQ still served a purpose today**
- The top three priorities for the development of women artist and practitioners were to **raise the profile of women** in a range of roles in theatre in Scotland, **develop stronger roles for women** and encourage more women to **take up governance roles** in cultural organisations

Possibly the most interesting aspect of the quantitative research was the unprompted range and depth of online discussion generated via the Scot-Nits theatre forum as follows: **controversial** – simply asking key questions evoked passionate and explosive debate; **complex** – the discussion points appeared multi-dimensional, with numerous connections to other issues; **non-stereotypes** - the development of roles for women that were not stereotypes was considered essential; **women at the top** - while more women were starting out in careers, it was still the case that few were making it to the top.

---

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Stellar Quines Theatre Company (SQ) was founded in 1993 and exists:

'To facilitate the creative work of women in Scottish theatre. To discover, nurture, produce and promote the work of women playwrights, directors, actors, designers and technicians giving particular attention to work that is of relevance to women. To produce bold, high quality theatre with an emphasis on new writing that tours to a wide geographical spread.'<sup>1</sup>

In 2010, in response to changes in the social and political landscape since the company was founded, SQ decided to undertake a research project that would help interrogate its remit and investigate attitudes to both the company and gender in Scottish theatre more generally. In doing so the project was intended to help re-focus the organisation and its direction for the next 5-10 years of its life.

**Phase One** of the project began in February 2010 when SQ commissioned a piece of desk research from consultant Lisa Kapur. This phase of the project was intended to review secondary data related to gender in the performing arts and also to assess the output of a series of Scottish building-based and touring companies in 1993 (when SQ was founded) and autumn 2009 (the last full theatre season before the research took place). This snapshot of two typical Scottish theatre seasons, 18 years apart, was designed to help explore to what extent women are represented as directors, writers, actors, lighting, set and costume designers and composers/music directors. Its purpose was to act as stimulus material for the Phase Two research.

**Phase Two** of the research was commissioned from consultant Jane Hogg and commenced in April 2011. The objectives of this work were to consult with a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations that both had a relationship with SQ, or were relevant to the work of the company, as to their own opinion on the future priorities for the development of women in Scottish theatre; and to consult with those who may not have had an existing relationship with the company but did have an interest or opinion on the future priorities for the development of women in Scottish theatre. The key purpose of this phase of the research was to draw conclusions that could be used in the refocusing of SQ's vision and purpose.

Once both phases of the project were completed in December 2011, SQ added its own observations to the final report and completed this introduction and an executive summary.

This research project was funded by the Scottish Arts Council Equalities Department, with grateful thanks.

Mary Paulson-Ellis  
Stellar Quines Theatre Company  
April 2012

---

<sup>1</sup> Stellar Quines Theatre Company Business Plan 2009-11

---

### **3. PROJECT SCOPE & METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 SCOPE**

The aim of the research was to provide the basis for SQ to test its existing purpose and refocus its vision for the future.

#### **3.2 METHODOLOGY PHASE 1: DESK-BASED RESEARCH**

The Phase One research was desk-based and used secondary data to build an opinion-based picture of the role of gender in the performing arts, both in Scotland but also within a UK and international context. The final report combines a historical account of the role of women in theatre at some of the most significant moments in time over the last 40 years, with an analysis of gender in a variety of artistic roles in theatre taken from a 'snapshot' view of two typical Scottish seasons: one in 1993, when SQ was founded; and the other in autumn 2009, the last full Scottish theatre season before the research was commissioned (see Appendix 1).

A variety of existing sources were used to build the historical account of the role of women in theatre over the last 40 years including academic research papers, documents, essays and newspaper articles.

The information for the analysis of gender roles in 1993 and 2009 was obtained from print materials (such as event programmes, leaflets and posters) produced by several key Scottish theatre venues and the companies that toured to them during the periods in question. The data were sourced from existing archive material held within the Scottish Theatre Archive at the University of Glasgow, the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh and the archives of individual companies where these are made available. This material was examined to determine the gender makeup of the personnel involved in the creation of each production, where possible, to include: playwrights, directors, designers, actors and composers/musical directors.

An Advisory Group was formed to guide the approach to the Phase One research and review its progress throughout 2010. The group included a range of individuals representing different viewpoints and experiences within Scottish theatre and those who had a demonstrable interest in gender issues in theatre. The members of the group were: Dominic Hill, Artistic Director of the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow (Artistic Director of the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh at the time of the research); Professor Maggie Kinloch, Vice Principal of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (then RSAMD); Alexandra Mathie, actor and SQ Associate Artist; Professor Adrienne Scullion, James Arnott Chair in Theatre, University of Glasgow School of Culture and Creative Arts; and Gerda Stevenson, actor, writer, director and founder member of SQ. The advisory group met twice in 2010 to review and discuss the proposed research method and the final report, as well as being consulted on draft material for Phase Two via email and phone.

#### **3.3 METHODOLOGY PHASE 2: QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH**

The Phase Two research used a range of both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to engage with individuals responsible for cultural policy, the running of venues and theatre companies, performers, writers and other people producing work in

---

and around theatre in Scotland.

Prior to consultations taking place the consultant reviewed and ordered the Phase One research so that it could be presented as a stimulus for discussion with respondents for the Phase Two research, developed a core group of questions for use within the context of the research, and consulted with the Phase One Advisory Group regarding the revised Phase One report and the planned Phase Two consultations.

During the consultation process the consultant undertook a total of 16 one-to-one in-depth interviews conducted both face-to-face and via telephone (see Appendix 2 for participants and Appendix 3 for questions), recruited and ran a total of 4 mini-group sessions at North Edinburgh Arts Centre (NEAC), The Arches in Glasgow, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow (then RSAMD) and Creative Scotland (see Appendix 4 for participants and Appendix 5 for questions), produced and circulated an online survey (see Appendix 6 for questions) using a snowball technique with a final response rate of 267, and collated an additional 33 un-moderated online comments through the Scot-Nits forum for Scottish theatre practitioners (see Appendix 7 for responses).

The consultant subsequently summarised the key findings of the Phase Two research to determine the direction of the study, to prepare the recommendations and present the findings to SQ.

### **3.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The research undertaken in Phase One of the report was never intended to be an academic exercise, or to produce statistically significant evidence or longitudinal research charting women artists in every production across every venue in Scotland in 1993 and 2009 and should not be viewed in this way.

While every effort was made to secure data from identical theatre venues and companies in both 1993 and 2009, this was not possible in all cases due to the closure of some in the intervening years. In addition print material for all productions that a particular venue or a company might have presented in both the relevant seasons were not always available, nor did those that were always identify the full range or identities of those who undertook the key artistic roles.

As such, Phase One of the report provides research material that was primarily intended as a stimulus for discussion and the consultations that took place in Phase Two of the report, rather than for any other purpose.

The opinions outlined in Phase Two of the report were sought through qualitative research exploring views on the Phase One research, the roles of women in Scottish theatre and the issue of gender in theatre today. The results of this primary research should be considered as indicative of the opinions of the respondents, rather than a representative sample of the Scottish population.

Where possible Phase Two tried to consult with people who were aware of SQ as well as those that were not. However in recruiting people the consultant did need to provide details of the purpose of the research and that of SQ. In many cases respondents did undertake their own online research of the company prior to attending a

---

mini-group. Responses could, therefore, be affected by specific details seen online prior to attending. The reporting highlights the differences between participants that were aware of SQ and those who were unaware. This has also been done by gender where relevant.

The sample of people contacted for inclusion in the in-depth interviews and mini-groups was weighted towards those participating in arts activities at a professional level and also female participants. Male participants were not at any point excluded from the process and were included in all but one of the mini-groups.

The snowball sampling technique for the online survey was used to generate a quick and relevant sample. However there are limitations to this as groups of people who have many contacts are more likely to be recruited to complete the questionnaire. It is widely believed that it can be impossible to make unbiased estimates from snowball samples and this should be taken into consideration when reviewing the findings.

The gender split of the respondents to the online survey was heavily weighted towards females, although it was never the intention of the research to exclude male respondents. However this should be noted when considering the findings. Furthermore, it could be argued that the nature of the online discussions were more likely to solicit responses from women rather than men and again this must be taken into consideration as a gender split biased towards men may review a completely different set of results.

### **3.5 DEFINITION**

Our definition of the performing arts was restricted to theatre, both scripted and devised, and work performed both inside venues and elsewhere.

---

## 4. **PHASE ONE: DESK-BASED RESEARCH**

### 4.1 **CONTEXT**

In 2010 SQ commissioned a piece of desk-based research to review secondary data related to gender in the performing arts and to assess the output of a series of building-based and touring companies in a typical Scottish theatre season from 1993 and 2009.

The findings from the research were intended to inform the future development strategy of SQ and to act as stimulus for further research, debate and discussion around gender in the performing arts.

The research was undertaken by consultant Lisa Kapur in 2010 and what follows is an extended summary of her report produced in April 2011 for the purposes of providing further information to those involved in the consultation process detailed in Phase Two.

### 4.2 **REPORT**

#### **GENDER IN SCOTTISH THEATRE: an observation by Stellar Quines Theatre Company**

##### **Historical Context**

Stellar Quines was founded in 1993 to address the creeping invisibility of female practitioners in Scottish theatre, and in particular older women.

Its origins should be seen within the context of a women's movement which had gathered pace in the 1970s, with an escalation of the fight for equal pay and equality of opportunity. In this period, feminist theatre makers began to set up their own companies and run their own spaces. The Women's Project in New York was set up as a result of research by Action for Women in Theatre which showed that 'only 7% of the playwrights and 6% of directors during 1969-75 were women'.<sup>2</sup> It has also been argued that the creation of companies such as Monstrous Regiment and The Women's Theatre Group (later to become Sphinx Theatre Company) gave opportunities to emerging female playwrights who may not have been picked up by the mainstream of British theatre at the time.

In the 1980s female artists such as Caryl Churchill and Timberlake Wertenbaker began to make high profile inroads into the male-dominated theatre establishment and there was a significant emergence of female writers in Scotland too. The 1980s has been described as 'a sort of a renaissance period of women's playwriting tradition in Scottish drama'<sup>3</sup> with the emergence of a number of significant women playwrights such as Liz Lochhead, Rona Munro, Anne Marie Di Mambro, Sharman MacDonald and Sue Glover. Horvat argues that their work was concerned with 'probing into what it means to be Scottish, but more distinctly, into what it means to be white, Scottish, female and working-class'. This was also the period when, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, other female-led theatre companies such as Foursight Theatre emerged. Companies such as

---

<sup>2</sup> Malnig, Julie. 'The Women's Project: A Profile.' *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 1: 1 (1983): 71—73.

<sup>3</sup> Horvat, Ksenija. 'Scottish Women Playwrights Against Zero Visibility.' *Études écossaises* 10 (2005).

---

this were less overtly political than their seventies counterparts, but they shared an aim of promoting the empowerment of women within the industry.

Contrasting the 1980s and 1990s, playwright David Edgar notes: *“In the 1980s, women playwrights challenged the presumption that ‘if it’s domestic, it isn’t political’ in free-form plays, often with all-women casts...while the great subject of mid-1990s ‘in-yer-face theatre’ is masculinity in crisis.”* Director Dominic Dromgoole describes the 1990s as a decade which was dominated by ‘a rather dull masculinity’.

However the 1990s did see a boom in new writing and new drama by women, with Sarah Kane and Abi Morgan receiving critical acclaim for their plays produced by Paines Plough and Graeae. In Scotland there was the emergence of writers such as Nicola McCartney, Linda MacLean and Zinnie Harris, while writers in other genres such as AL Kennedy and Jackie Kay were exploring the territory of the stage. This was also the era when new, female-led companies such as Cathie Boyd’s Theatre Cryptic began to take shape.

Stellar Quines also emerged during this period and Gerda Stevenson, one of the founders, notes: *“One aspect of being female is that, unless you’re careful, you can become invisible. I founded Stellar Quines Theatre Company in 1993 because I felt that Scotland’s female theatre practitioners – particularly women of around 35 and over – were prone to this fate.”*<sup>4</sup>

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a significant growth in children’s theatre in Scotland, through the work of companies such as Catherine Wheels, Wee Stories and Licketyspit supported by the international children’s festival, Imagine. The growth of this sector has, in part, been led by significant female practitioners such as Gill Robertson, Virginia Radcliffe and Shona Reppe, amongst others. The growth of site specific work in the last 10 years has also seen the emergence of significant female practitioners such as Judith Doherty (Grid Iron) and Sandy Thomson (Poorboy).

In 2003 the Scottish Government announced the establishment of a National Theatre of Scotland. The pioneering commissioning model and commitment to working without a dedicated building was broadly welcomed, as was the appointment of Vicky Featherstone as Director in 2004. Commenting on Featherstone’s appointment the Deputy Director of the Scottish Arts Council noted: *“The appointment of a woman to this senior artistic position should give added encouragement to women artists, who are currently under-represented in leadership posts in the sector.”*<sup>5</sup> Following her appointment, Featherstone was named as number 29 in the *Scotland on Sunday* list of Scotland’s top 50 powerful women.

By 2010 there were women running several major theatres across the UK, including the Liverpool Everyman (Gemma Bodinetz and Deborah Aydon), Birmingham Repertory Theatre (Rachel Kavanaugh), Northern Stage (Erica Whyman), the Bush (Josie Rourke) and The Gate Theatre (Carrie Cracknell/Natalie Abrahami). In the same year the Tricycle Theatre in London ran a high profile season looking at Women, Power and Politics and featuring new plays by Joy Wilkinson, Bola Agbaje, Zinnie Harris, Sam Holcroft and Sue

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gerdastevenson.co.uk/stellarquines.htm>

<sup>5</sup> SAC Press Release: First Director of the National Theatre of Scotland appointed 29/07/2004.

---

Townsend, while Clean Break Theatre presented six new plays about women, crime and justice written by EV Crowe, Sam Holcroft, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Chloë Moss, Winsome Pinnock and Rebecca Prichard.

In Scotland too there have been further appointments of women to senior artistic posts in Scottish theatre. These include: Nikki Milican, Artistic Director of New Moves, who has been a major initiating force in the development of Live Art in Scotland; Julie Ellen appointed inaugural Creative Director of the Playwrights' Studio, Scotland in 2004 and most recently appointed to lead the new Beacon Arts Centre in Greenock; Jackie Wylie appointed as Artistic Director to the Arches in 2008; Jemima Levick as Associate Director of Dundee Rep Theatre in 2009; and Rachel O'Riordan to Perth Theatre in 2010, amongst others.

In 2009 Jemima Levick went on to win Best Director at the CATS awards 2009 for *The Elephant Man*; Ursula Rani Sarma's world premiere of *The Dark Things* at the Traverse won Best Production; and journalist Lyn Gardner described Director Nic Green's 2009 *Trilogy* (supported by the Arches Theatre) as work that "*puts women and feminism firmly and joyfully back centre-stage*".

Despite these gains however, Gardner also adds a note of caution when reviewing the recent rise of women in theatre by noting that "*the history of the last 40 years tells us that what is won is very easily lost too*". Ceri Goddard, Chief Executive of the Fawcett Society writing in 2010 said, "*The dearth of women in leadership roles limits the depth and breadth of cultural output... the lack of women in this sector is no less important than in politics or the law, and should be addressed with equal vigour.*"<sup>6</sup>

### **Stellar Quines**

Over the last 18 years Stellar Quines has matured and developed its vision for the company. It makes theatre that is driven by women and where women are at the forefront of all the creative roles. It is the only company in Scotland to work with women in this way, and it does this in collaboration with the men who share its vision. It is driven by its vision to be bold, relevant and brave and is held in high regard by theatre-makers, promoters and audiences across Scotland for its critically acclaimed and award-winning productions. It prizes collaboration, both at home and abroad, and strives to bring new writing to as many people as possible.

Stellar Quines Theatre Company provides a valuable source of opportunities, advice, support and information for theatre-makers in Scotland, particularly women and particularly those who are in the early stages of their careers. It initiates projects where these individuals' voices and concerns can be heard and facilitates opportunities that help them gain experience and develop their skills.

Over the years there have been some notable achievements including:

- Winner of a Peggy Ramsay Award in 1997 for *Refuge* by Janet Paisley
- Barclays Stage Partners funding for *The Clearing* by Helen Edmundson in 1999
- *The Reel of the Hanged Man* by Jeanne-Mance Delisle translated into Scots from Quebecois by Martin Bowman in 2000

---

<sup>6</sup> 'All the Globe's a stage – even for women writers', *The Independent*, 5 September 2010.

- Site specific co-production, *Sweet Fanny Adams* by Judith Adams in 2003 with Pitlochry Festival Theatre
- Co-production of *Three Thousand Troubled Threads* by Chiew Siah Tei with the 2005 Edinburgh International Festival
- Winner Best New Play, Critics Awards for Theatre in Scotland (CATS) 2007 for *The Unconquered* by Torben Betts, originally commissioned by Stellar Quines
- Nominated Best Ensemble, Stage Awards for Acting Excellence 2009 for *The Girls of Slender Means* by Muriel Spark, adapted by Judith Adams in association with Assembly Theatre Ltd
- Winner Best Director, CATS Awards 2011 – Muriel Romanes for *Age of Arousal* by Linda Griffiths, in co-production with the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh. Also nominated for Best Production, Best Design (set/costume and lighting) and Best Ensemble in CATS Awards 2011 and Best Director in Theatre Awards UK 2011 (formerly TMA Awards).
- International, bilingual co-production of *ANA* with an integrated Scottish/Quebec cast, crew and creative team

Stellar Quines has also pursued a programme of work over the years that has included: 15 Rehearsal Rooms (workshops and live play readings) profiling works-in-progress by over 45 writers, of whom 90% have been women; at least 10 commissions of new work, of which 80% have been by female playwrights; and a wide range of different roles for actors of which at least 75% have been for women.

### **Secondary Research**

Despite the work of Stellar Quines and the developments noted in this report, Christine Hamilton writing about theatre directing in Scotland in 2006, notes that: *“You do not have to undertake any kind of survey to see that the situation regarding the gender balance in our major companies remains as uneven as it did two decades ago and it is difficult to see how new voices can be heard”*. The report goes on to say that *“more prevalent is a perception that not only do you have to be male to get the chance to run a building, but you also have to be white and from a particular class background”*.<sup>7</sup>

Writing in 2009, Ed McCracken of the Glasgow Herald states that: *“Drama in Scotland suffers from a dearth of female directors, playwrights and venue chiefs, is unwieldy when it comes to accommodating women having children and is disproportionately down on female writers”*.

It is internationally recognised that women continue to be under-represented as artists and we have reviewed various secondary studies undertaken since the early 1980s in order to illustrate this view and explore some of the issues.

### **England**

In 1980, the Conference of Women Theatre Directors and Administrators was formed, which had the aim of promoting research into the status of women in British theatre. Research undertaken by Sue Parrish in 1982-83 showed that 12% of artistic directors were women and 11% of plays produced were written by women.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately this

<sup>7</sup> Hamilton, Christine. 'Theatre directing in Scotland: an investigation into training and development needs', The Centre for Cultural Policy Research, January 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Parrish, Sue. 'Conference of Women Theatre Directors and Administrators: The Status of Women in British Theatre, 1982-1983' (from a total of 119 theatres and a total of 1024 productions in England and Wales during the period. These figures are a rough guide. There is considerable variation between categories of theatre).

---

data excluded Scotland, although it is unlikely that at this period there would be widely differing data.

In 1994, a survey of building-based and touring companies conducted by Jennie Long found that the average proportion of produced plays written by women had only increased to 20 per cent, and among building-based companies only 15%.<sup>9</sup>

In 2006 Sphinx Theatre noted that out of 140 productions sampled, only 9% were written by women (16% including collaborations), an increase from 3.2% from when they conducted the research in 1983. Furthermore they noted in 2006 23% were directed by women, up from 12% in 1983.<sup>10</sup>

### **International**

Research undertaken in Ontario between 1978 and 1981 showed that 10% of work was produced by women playwrights and 13% of Directors were women.<sup>11</sup> However follow up research 21 years later showed that between 1999 and 2002, 33% of work was produced by women playwrights and 28% of directors.

In the USA research illustrated a slightly different picture and it showed that in 2008-09 only 12.6% of Broadway and 17.8% of off Broadway shows in New York were written by women.<sup>12</sup>

Marsha Norman, writing in *American Theatre* in 2009, states: *"We have a fairness problem, and we have to fix it now. If it goes on like this, women will either quit writing plays, all start using pseudonyms, or move to musicals and TV, where the bias against women's work is not so pervasive."*<sup>13</sup>

Since 2006, the Svensk Teaterunion has led the way in documenting the output of Swedish Theatre in relation to gender balance, and the organisation has been promoting and encouraging debate around gender, representation and power bases within the performing arts industries. Figures from Sweden show that in 2009 39% of theatre Directors were female, 23% of lighting designers and 10% of sound designers.

In 2007-08 The International Federation of Actors (IFA) commissioned research to investigate age and gender issues in the performing arts in Europe. It was conducted by the University of Warwick and is one of the most rigorous pieces of research reviewed for this survey. This found that there are age issues in the performing arts sector, with female performers being predominantly represented in the younger age groups and lower income brackets. Furthermore it showed that women's careers do not last as long on average as men's and they do not earn as much, or as consistently, as men across

---

<sup>9</sup> Long, Jennie. 'What share of the cake now? The Employment of Women in the English Theatre' (1994), in Goodman and de Gay (1998), pp. 104-6.

<sup>10</sup> Sphinx Theatre Company Women in Theatre Survey, January 2006 as reported in 'Vamps, Vixens and Feminists: The Elephant in the Room' a conference hosted by Sphinx Theatre Company, June 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Fraticelli, Rina. 'The Invisibility Factor: Status of Women in Canadian Theatre', *Fuse*, September 1982, pp. 114, 122. (Fraticelli looked at the years between 1978 and 1981, analyzing 1156 productions by 104 theatres across Canada.)

<sup>12</sup> Glassberg Sands, Emily. 'Opening the Curtain on Playwright Gender: An Integrated Economic Analysis of Discrimination in American Theater',. Submitted to Princeton University Department of Economics April 15, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Norman, Marsha. 'Not There Yet: What will it take to achieve equality for women in the theatre?', *American Theatre Magazine*, November 2009.

---

age categories. These results were seen as being 'attributable to differences in regularity of access to work and size of roles'.<sup>14</sup>

The report also found that women more often saw their gender and age as being a disadvantage across all relevant dimensions of employment opportunity, whereas male actors did not. Unsurprisingly being a minority-ethnic women was seen as compounding disadvantage in employment.

The research also looked at what would improve employment opportunities and a recurring theme was the need for 'more, and a broader range of, roles for women/older women', coupled with a repeated emphasis on the importance of connections, networks and the challenging of both gender and age stereotypes.

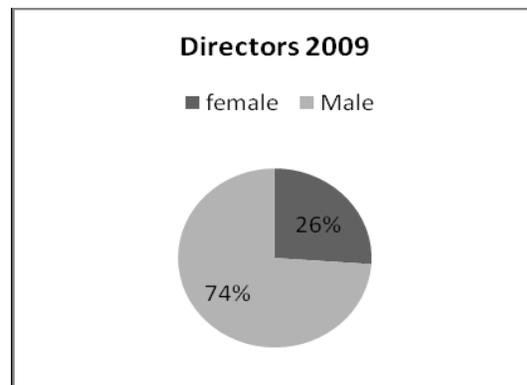
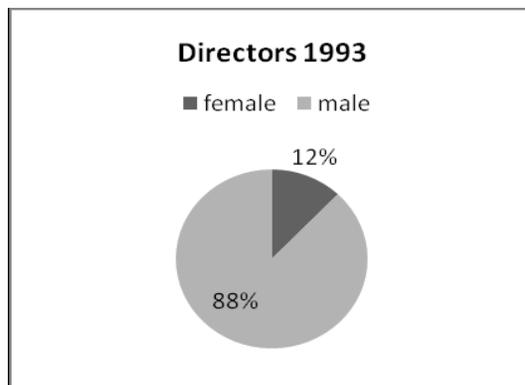
### Scotland

Stellar Quines gathered data from two typical Scottish theatre seasons – one from 1993 when the company was founded and another from 2009, the last full season before the research was commissioned. The data were not meant to present a comprehensive guide to every production in a Scottish theatre season, but provide a snapshot of the work presented at key venues by a range of touring and in-house companies.

It surveyed between 33 and 41 productions with data coming from the season programmes of building-based companies (such as the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow and the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh) and non-building based companies (such as TAG, Communicado, The National Theatre of Scotland and Vox Motus) (see Appendix 1). Stellar Quines looked at the number of directors, writers, actors, designers and composers/musical directors for each of the productions on offer, where the information was provided, broken down by gender.

The results are shown in the pie charts below.

### Directors



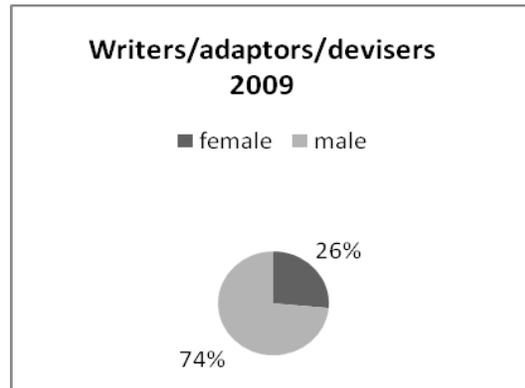
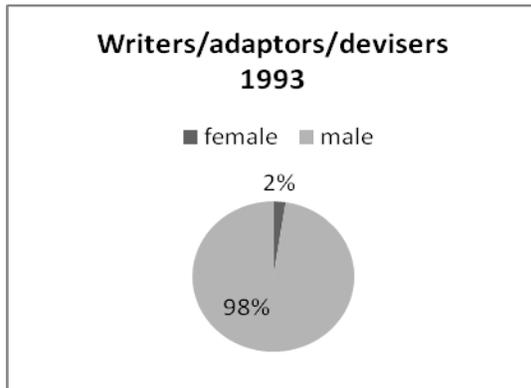
Total sample: 33 (1993); 46 (2009)

---

<sup>14</sup> Dean, Deborah. 'Age, Gender and Performer Employment in Europe' (University of Warwick, 2008), a report on research for the International Federation of Actor's (FIA) project 'Changing Gender Portrayal: Promoting Employment Opportunities for Women in the Performing Arts'.

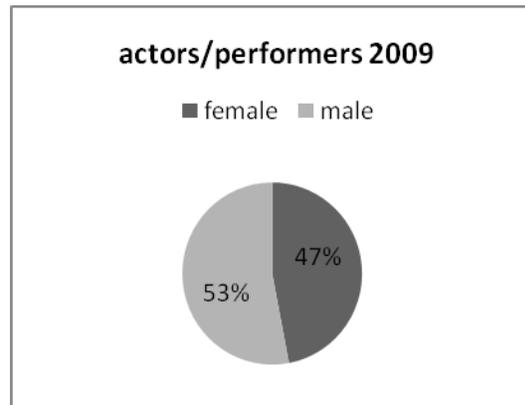
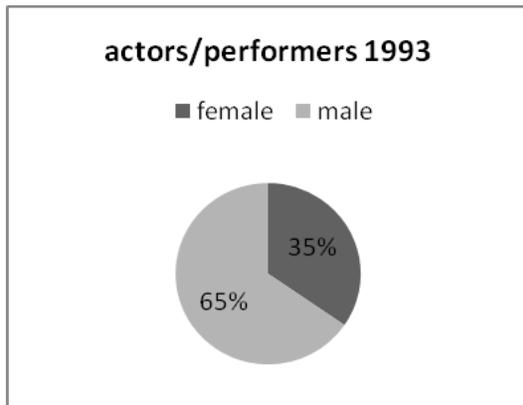
---

### Writers/adaptors/devisers



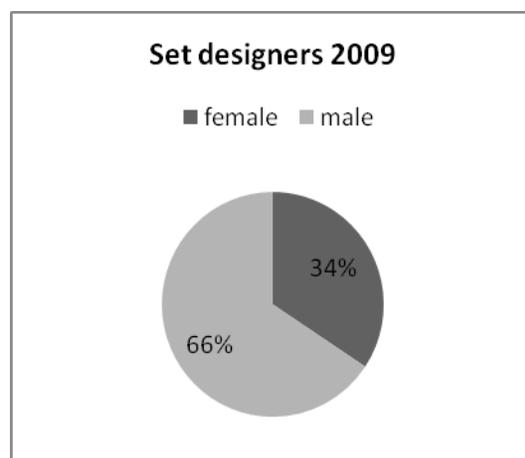
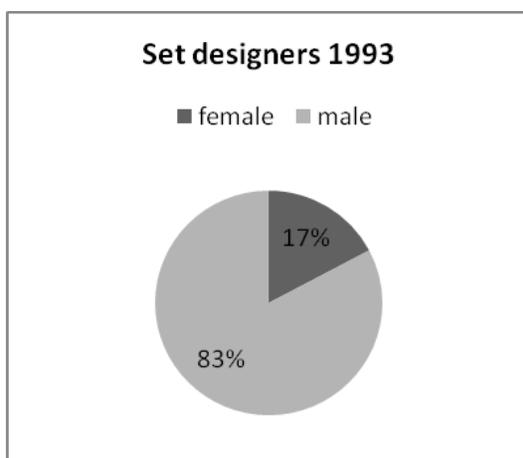
Total sample: 41 (1993); 53 (2009)

### Actors/performers



Total sample: 295 (1993); 251 (2009)

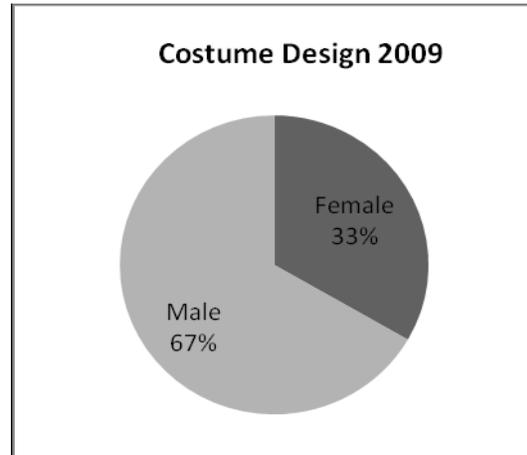
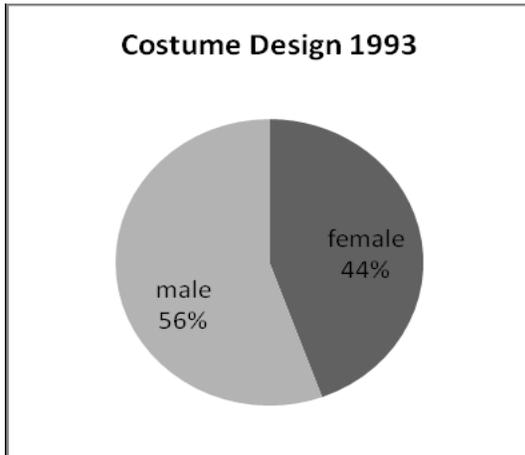
### Set designers



Total sample: 29 (1993); 35 (2009)

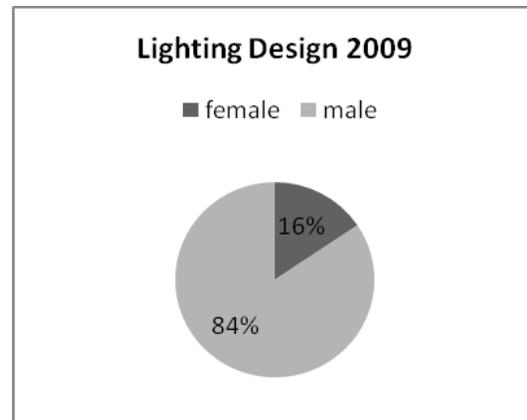
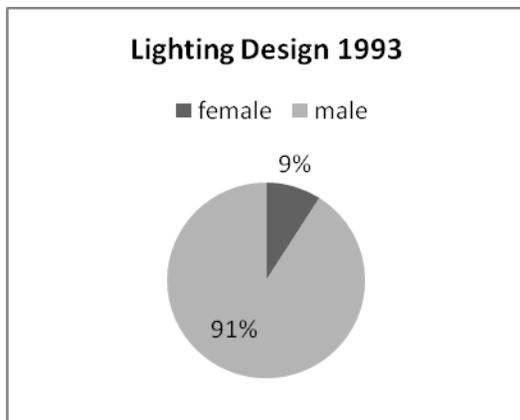
---

### Costume designers



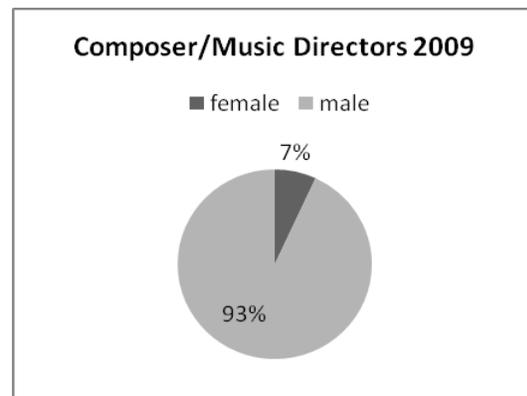
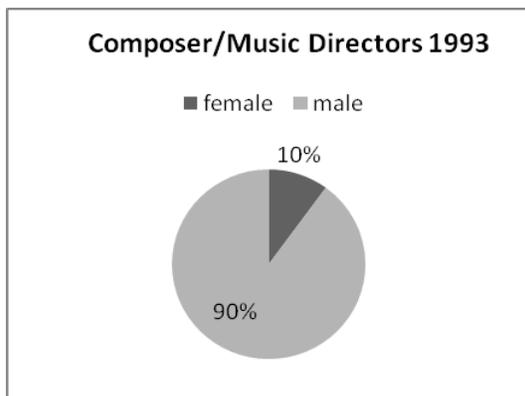
Total sample: 9 (1993); 12 (2009)

### Lighting Designers



Total sample: 22 (1993); 32 (2009)

### Composers/Music Directors



Total sample: 20 (1993); 29 (2009)

---

## **Observations**

An initial view of this snapshot data shows that by 2009 the gender balance in a typical Scottish theatre season was distinctively more female than it was in 1993. However, it was still the case that in no one category were women represented at a level of 50% or more, and in all but one category (performers) women's representation was still at around or below a third (34%).

In terms of writers, adaptors and devisers 2009 included two world premieres by female writers, both presented by the Traverse, and other high profile works by writers including Polly Stenham, Jackie Kay, Rona Munro, Muriel Spark adapted by Judith Adams (Stellar Quines) and Liz Lochhead. This tallies with the data that shows the most significant increase between 1993 and 2009 has been the proportion of female writers, increasing from 2% to 26%.

Set designers too have increased from 17% of the sample to just over a third (34%). However this should be seen with the context of statistics from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (2008) which show that female students made up 63% of the Technical and Production Arts course. In addition the snapshot shows that in 2009 there were fewer than 16% of women lighting designers while female composers/music directors only made up 7% of these roles. Costume Designers have decreased from 44% in 1993 to 33% in 2009, but this is taken from a low total sample in both cases.

In the 2009 season there was a range of work presented by companies such as Theatre Cryptic, Theatre Jezebel and Lung Ha's all with female Artistic Directors. However, it was also noted that in both 1993 and 2009 all of the building-based organisations surveyed had male Artistic Directors, although the Tron had two female Artistic Directors (Irina Brown and Ali Curran) during the 1990s. There is anecdotal evidence to show that women have traditionally been more represented at Associate Director level, or as General Managers or Executive Directors with financial and administrative duties, but this survey has not set out to report in detail on this.

## **Summary**

Comparable data from UK, European and international sources has shown that over a considerable time period there has been an increase in women represented in theatre, and across a range of artistic roles. However in Scotland it should be noted that this trend towards equal representation is still slow in many areas and tends to be more pronounced in non-building based companies where women appear more frequently in senior or artistic director level roles, than for building-based companies. This is particularly true of companies that produce work for children and young people.

In general, the 2009 FIA research reveals more fundamental issues facing women in the performing arts – that of the prospect of shorter careers, earning less money than men and the double whammy of both age and gender stereotypes. As society continues to ponder the prospect of an ageing work force and considerable growth in the age of the population overall, gender and age issues would appear to be as pertinent in 2011 as they were when Stellar Quines was founded in 1993.

---

## 5. **PHASE TWO: QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH**

### 5.1 **INTRODUCTION**

Phase Two of the research project was commissioned by SQ in April 2011 to build on the desk-based research undertaken in Phase One. Phase Two was undertaken by consultant Jane Hogg and the following comprises her full report.

### 5.2 **REPORT**

#### **STELLAR QUINES AND GENDER IN SCOTTISH THEATRE: Phase Two**

##### **IN-DEPTH CONSULTATIONS**

A total of 16 in-depth consultations were completed, 7 were telephone interviews and 9 were face-to-face. Interviewees were agreed with SQ from a prepared list of individuals responsible for cultural policy, running venues and theatre companies, actors, writers and people producing work within the Scottish theatre industry. (See Appendix 2)

All consultations were conducted using an agreed guide to prompt further discussion. Topics covered included: awareness of SQ; the significance and relevance of SQ; and interventions that have in the past, or might in the future, enable the work of women theatre practitioners. (See Appendix 3)

The findings of the in-depth consultations are as follows and have been organised into key themes in order to inform the conclusions and recommendations.

##### **A clear understanding of purpose**

The majority of people were able to fully explain the purpose of SQ unprompted and with a considerable degree of clarity of thought, most often describing the company as a company that promotes the work of women in theatre in Scotland but not at the expense of men. It was considered a great advantage that the approach did not exclude men from any aspect of the work of the company.

*“Stellar Quines never comes along and shoves feminism down your throat. They are more sophisticated than that, more mature, with an approach that has both a political and social agenda.”*

However there were some comments made by people based outwith Edinburgh indicating that there was possibly an East/West divide which meant they were less aware of SQ and that they wouldn't naturally consider it as one that could support their own creative practice. Moreover, until the most recent production, *Age of Arousal*, they were not aware of the 'political agenda' associated with the company.

##### **A fair grasp of what the company does**

The majority of people could describe the range of activity the company engaged in, focusing on the production of plays, touring and script development. Fewer people were aware of the mentoring role SQ has taken in recent years, or workshop activity.

---

### **The role of SQ in facilitating the development of women theatre artists and practitioners in Scotland.**

There was something of a mixed response to this question. For some respondents SQ had taken a major role in raising awareness of gender issues, producing work that is relevant to women and also developing the careers of a great many younger directors, writers and performers in Scotland. However it was acknowledged that the impacts were on a small scale and there should be more opportunities to develop a greater awareness of what the company has achieved.

On the other hand some were more measured in their ability to give a definitive answer to the question and felt that it was almost impossible to highlight one company when there can be highs and lows in the quality of any work over a 10–18 year period. Indeed some people noted that recent developments such as Nic Green's production *Trilogy* had a far greater impact on the development of female-centric work in Scotland. However they did add the caveat:

*"..but then, if we didn't have Stellar Quines would any of this have happened?"*

Some responses, although they were in the minority, felt that strong and successful women in theatre would probably have emerged with or without such a company, although the company had made a considerable impact on shifting perceptions of the role of women in Scottish theatre.

#### **SQ does have a purpose**

Respondents felt that SQ did serve a purpose, but also that it was essential that the creative work of the company and the quality of that work must continue to take precedence over any political agenda seeking to raise awareness of equality issues.

*"We've all seen work that batters you over the head with a message – SQ is more stimulating, more multi-dimensional and more subtle in its presentation of values, ideas and thoughts. These principles must be retained"*

*"Muriel (Romanes) is a role model – a fine director, a capable and highly creative person. It is simply a bonus that she is also a woman!"*

Indeed some respondents noted the importance of keeping SQ's work at a high level, in larger theatres and on the main stages to guarantee that the issues didn't get moved to the periphery of Scottish theatre.

For some the relationship that SQ has with more 'traditional' theatres seemed at odds with a more contemporary approach to theatre-making.

*"The relationship with the Lyceum seems to be at odds with how I see SQ. I feel that a more natural partnership would be with companies that have a more urgent approach – they are beginning to feel more like the Lyceum and less like SQ."*

It was also noted by some respondents that the issue of equality is something that must run right through an organisation such that a company should adopt the values of SQ as essential to any theatre operating in Scotland today. Furthermore it was noted that issues surrounding equality also begged questions about the status of black, Asian or any other creative from an ethnic minority.

---

### **Interventions – numerous moments in time that create a cumulative effect**

Respondents noted that it was very difficult to pinpoint a single intervention that had been instrumental in the development of women in Scottish theatre, more that over the years a cumulative effect had begun to have a positive influence on their role. Some interventions that were noted included: the role of the Playwrights' Studio, Scotland in supporting new writers to share their work, in particular through rehearsed readings (it was also mentioned that SQ had contributed to this through its Rehearsal Room programme); the mentoring programmes delivered by the Playwrights' Studio, Scotland; and the mentoring and bursary programmes offered through the Federation of Scottish Theatre. The BBC mentoring programme for writers was also noted.

The appointment of a female Director to the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) was, and still is, considered a significant moment in the development of women in theatre today, as was the collaborative nature of how work is increasingly developed. This was cited as representing a significant shift in the role of an Artistic Director - most notably through an approach that champions strength in numbers to achieve success and the importance of co-creation as a movement that is beginning to see the rise of 'auto-creators' ('auto' being defined from the Greek meaning 'self' or 'same') used to describe the way that a number of people contribute to the final artistic outcome. This was seen in contrast to a more traditional theatre producing model based on a hierarchy with the Artistic Director at the top, followed by a succession of well-defined roles for individuals e.g. Lighting Designer, Set Designer, Composer etc.

This collaborative approach was noted as a very positive way that venues like The Arches in Glasgow had supported and nurtured new and emerging talent, although not in particular women. This approach was also mentioned in the mini-groups as articulated below.

### **Interventions in the future**

Respondents noted that if equality for women in Scottish theatre was a priority, then a clear strategy should be developed to highlight the aspirations of SQ in influencing this. More importantly, however, it was seen as essential that this priority should be delivered collaboratively rather than simply being the responsibility of one organisation.

When asked what was essential for the development of women in Scottish theatre the following emerged:

- Promoting and sharing in the success of women in Scottish theatre was considered very important, although more than just through the presentation of simple historical case studies of career progression and successes. In particular there was a desire to see profiles of individual women that were transparent, showed a career path or route-map and also shared with others the more subtle approaches to developing a career, how to build networks, essential training, the highs and lows of careers, a demonstration of how people had navigated through difficulties and their future aspirations
- Active support for those who chose to be freelance was also considered important, as they represented such a large part of the sector and were responsible for their own financial security

- 
- Development of a greater understanding, promotion and encouragement of collaborative ways of working that championed the development of co-creation, rather than more traditional theatre-making models
  - The encouragement, support and nurturing of women to be more confident in senior positions
  - An awareness of the issues facing women as they get older and practical advice and steps to help develop a career beyond the age of 40, in particular the need to build complementary skills and a solid professional network
  - The development and support of writers so that work can be shown quickly, cheaply and with maximum feedback from audiences and the practitioners' peer groups, including encouraging writers to develop parts for women that expand on stereotypical roles
  - A showcase of returning talent, in particular those returning to work or needing to develop new avenues for working as they get older

### **Reflecting on the SQ Phase One research findings**

Initially people were surprised by the findings of the Phase One research as it challenged their own perceptions of who they worked with. The majority of interviewees did not really feel that there were fewer women working with them than men. However, many interviewees subsequently reflected on their own answer to then highlight the fact that the higher you went up an organisation, the less likely you were to see a woman. In particular interviewees observed that there was often a male Artistic Director, followed by a female in the administration role.

*"Women in creative positions must work hard to NOT be a bureaucrat. It is very easy to fall into these roles and never return to a creative role again."*

Discussion in this area highlighted a certain degree of gender stereotyping in such roles, with the male Artistic Director being described as a 'creative maverick', poor at administration and then managed, organised and protected by female administrators, although these comments are only anecdotal.

The nature of the Phase One 'snapshot' data analysis was also challenged, with the majority of respondents noting that the research only illustrated one part of the theatre ecology in Scotland, leaving out more collaborative ways of working and the growing trend for co-producing work. This was particularly true in relation to the development of 'super groups' such as OnAtFife, Horsecross in Perth, and Falkirk and Lanarkshire local authorities which are developing collaborative relationships to produce work that can then be toured across Scotland. All four of the above are driven by women rather than men.

The role of governance in arts organisations was also highlighted as an important element in encouraging more women to feel confident in positions of authority, with respondents noting, anecdotally, that men were very often in the majority on Boards. Here it was considered essential that Boards should be truly representative of the population, although not at the expense of finding the right people for the right role.

---

## **MINI-GROUP CONSULTATIONS**

A series of mini-group discussions were held with people to explore their views on gender in Scottish theatre and the current and future role of SQ. The sample for the discussion groups was split into four broad segments, with a maximum target of 8 participants per group, as follows:

- people involved in local arts organisations, community arts or on the edges of professional theatre - 5 participants
- college/university students entering the profession as performers, producers and technical support - 5 participants
- emerging companies - 7 participants
- investment body - 5 participants

The groups were co-ordinated with support from North Edinburgh Arts Centre (NEAC), the Royal Scottish Conservatoire (formerly RSAMD), The Arches (Glasgow) and Creative Scotland (see Appendix 4).

Prior to each mini-group session the individual participants were issued with the Phase One research report produced by SQ. During the sessions participants were asked a series of questions to prompt further discussion including: how well the Phase One research reflected their own view of women in Scottish theatre; what issues in relation to equality they felt were relevant; the purpose and significance of SQ; and possible past and future interventions that had, or would, enable the work of women theatre practitioners (see Appendix 5).

The findings of the mini-groups were as follows and have been organised into key themes in order to inform the conclusions and recommendations.

### **Reflections on the SQ Phase One report**

The Arches group, who were predominately younger people under 30, felt the Phase One research did not adequately reflect the world that they worked in. The majority of the group were operating outside 'traditional' theatres in Scotland and were far more used to a collaborative approach to producing work that allowed for greater equality of opportunity and less rigid roles for women/men. As a result they all felt that they actually worked with a lot of women. However it was acknowledged that once they looked at the 'establishment', men very often seemed to take the senior positions.

*"Maybe people feel safer when a man is in a senior role?"*

*"Assumptions are made that women always want to do backstage work or marketing rather than directing. We should really challenge this."*

*"A lot of people on the ground are women. In community education it is sometimes difficult to find a guy. But go up a level or look at who is in charge and it's a man. What happens to them (the women)?"*

---

*“The majority of work being produced in traditional venues is text-based, historical and the perceptions of women are traditional. Until there is radical reform of this type of theatre then the same issues will always be there.”*

Following this, and commented on by all groups, was the need to develop more roles for women, including those that moved away from stereotypes, and the need to produce plays that were dominated by female casts.

The need to develop and create work for older women was also noted as equally important and linked to that came comments regarding the limitations that can be placed on a career when women have children.

*“There are deep psychological shifts that happen when you have a child – it defines you – and trying to work becomes almost impossible at times. Then once they (the children) are older you realise that you are light years away from getting your career on track. The journey to reconnect is long and I don’t think there is a mechanism for it.”*

### **Awareness of the issues in relation to gender and equality**

It was considered important by all groups that people could discuss the issues around gender and equality openly. All participants mentioned the value in coming together as part of the research. It was also mentioned that issues around gender and equality were often,

*“not really discussed anymore”.*

The younger group from the Arches, some of whom were regularly working with young people in drama groups, thought it important to raise the issues in education.

Linked to this came the discussion (from all groups) about where women go as their careers progress, as was also raised in response to the Phase One report. Mini group participants were all aware that they worked with a lot of women and that there were a lot of female graduates at the Royal Scottish Conservatoire, but they also noted that the numbers of women appeared to trickle off at a senior level in organisations.

This issue was then linked to comments made by those in the local arts organisation group (NEAC) that there was a significant gap in the levels of support for women to continue developing careers once they had a family. This in turn fed comments, once again, about how hard it can be for older women to find work and sustain a career.

*“It can be so difficult to reconnect or stay on top.”*

*“In many ways they often have to start from scratch again after having children; this never happens for a man.”*

Stereotyping women, both in relation to the types of characters they play on stage and the types of jobs they take in the arts, also came through again from all groups.

*“Women are often pushed into an admin role. When I took a work placement in New York I wasn’t even asked what I wanted to do. It was assumed I wanted to do marketing or admin. I actually wanted to learn how to direct. So I asked them that and they were fine about it.”*

---

Here the groups acknowledged that it was important for women to be confident and assertive about what they wanted from their careers and to try hard to guide their careers if they did not want to work in an administration role.

In the Arches group the issue of male stereotyping also emerged, with the suggestion that men were forced to be dominant and macho and that being sensitive to other people was often not considered a strong point for them. In fact the group discussed in detail the idea that good leadership was about being dominant, rather than sensitive, thoughtful and intelligent towards the feelings of others.

*“There are clearly less rewards for having less of an ego”.*

This group also discussed the fact that they were finding it hard to isolate gender inequality from a wider range of other issues that also led to exclusion such as ethnicity, sexuality and disability.

### **Levels of Awareness of SQ**

All mini-groups apart from the Arches group had a great level of awareness of SQ and had seen some of their work, mostly recently *Age of Arousal*. They were also aware that the work was female-centric and that the company supported female artists. They were surprised, however, by the role that the company took in commissioning new work, developing ideas and supporting artists.

For the emerging artists in the Arches group there was a distinct lack of awareness of SQ. No one had seen the company’s work and the majority described it as a company that they wouldn’t seek out to support their own work.

### **Does SQ serve a purpose**

All groups noted that it was essential that SQ continue to produce work with artistic integrity rather than presenting a purely political message about equality. It was considered very important that the company should continue to be inclusive about who it worked with, be they male or female.

*“It could be really easy to fall into a hole with women’s shows about women’s things.”*

*“SQ should be the guardians of the idea that women must have an equal opportunity in theatre and be presented equally.”*

However, broadening access for practitioners through a greater understanding of other equality issues was also noted by the emerging artists as important too. They saw gender equality as only one part of much bigger picture and difficult to divorce from other issues.

### **Interventions**

Once again, the development of playwrights who wrote parts for women that challenged gender stereotypes was considered important, along with the simple fact of more roles for women.

---

There were discussions about the need for transparency in seeing how people developed their work, networked, built relationships with other practitioners, navigated funding and remained confident in a challenging environment.

Significantly, all the groups could see greater merit in SQ developing its role collaboratively to deliver its agenda in relation to commissioning work, developing writers and supporting artists.

### **ONLINE SURVEY OF INDIVIDUALS**

An online survey of organisations and individuals involved in the performing arts was conducted from 1–29 July 2011. It was not intended to sample audience members but people predominately involved in the performing arts industry in Scotland. Each participant was asked to complete a structured questionnaire (see Appendix 6).

The questionnaire was distributed using snowball sampling whereby existing respondents in the research project (both in-depth interviewees and mini-group participants) were asked to recommend other individuals to whom the survey could be distributed. In addition the survey was sent to a range of email and mailing contacts via the following organisations:

- Stellar Quines Theatre Company
- Federation of Scottish Theatre
- Creative Scotland
- Scot-Nits Theatre Forum
- Playwrights' Studio, Scotland
- Equity – Scotland

It was also posted using social networking sites Facebook and Twitter, both on the SQ accounts and further afield via the SQ friends and associates network.

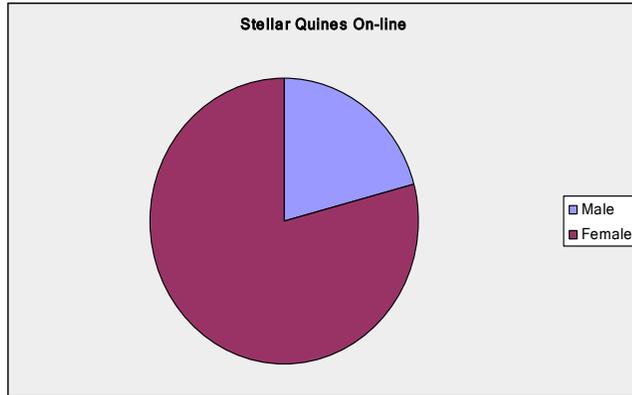
At the end of the collection period there were a total of 267 responses, with 189 people completing all questions.

In addition, following posting on the Scot-Nits theatre forum there was a considerable amount of online discussion regarding the questions posed, with a total of 33 comments from individuals. These have been collated (see Appendix 7). Neither SQ nor the Phase Two research consultant took part in the Scot-Nits discussion while it was underway.

The online survey results were as follows:

## Online Survey Results – Respondents

- Table 1: Gender of Respondents (Sample 188)**  
 The majority of respondents were female – making up 79% of respondents, with 21% male (As noted in section 3.3, the high response rate by females respondents must be factored into the findings.)

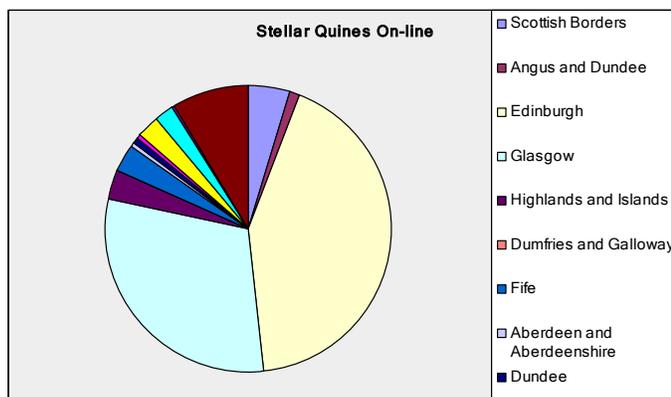


Answer Options	Response Percent
Male	21%
Female	79%

- Table 2: Age of Respondents (Sample 198)**  
 Over half of the respondents were aged 25-44yrs (56%)

Answer Options	Response Percent
15-24yrs	8%
25-44yrs	56%
45-64yrs	31%
65-69yrs	4%
70+	1%

- Table 3: Location of Respondents (Sample 189)**  
 The majority of respondents lived in either Glasgow or Edinburgh (72%)



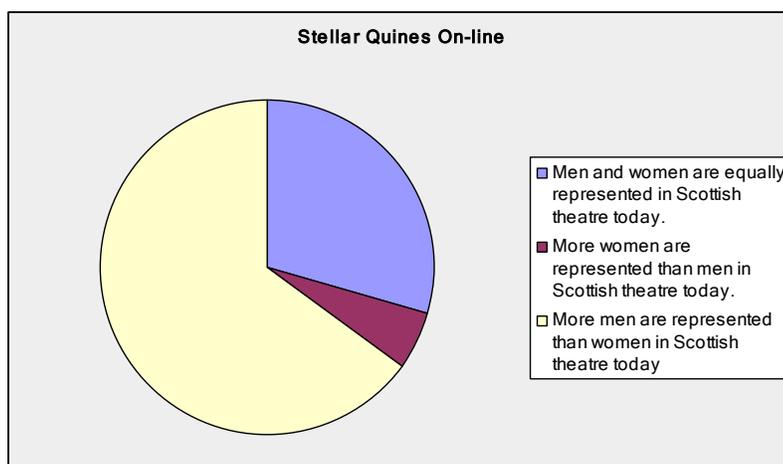
Answer Options	Response Percent
Scottish Borders	5%
Angus and Dundee	1%
Edinburgh	42%
Glasgow	30%
Highlands and Islands	3%
Dumfries and Galloway	0%
Fife	3%
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire	1%
Dundee	1%
Argyll and Bute	1%
Perthshire	2%
Ayrshire	2%
Stirling	1%
Other (please specify)	8%

### Online Survey Results – Familiarity with SQ

- 73% of respondents had attended a Stellar Quines event and 27% had not. It would be fair to say that the majority of respondents were in some way familiar with the work of the company.
- From the 73% who had attended an event (137 respondents) 95% had attended a production, 42% a rehearsed reading, 15% a workshop and 11% a talk.
- From the 27% (53 respondents) who have not attended 32% had never heard of the company and 36% had not found out about events in advance.

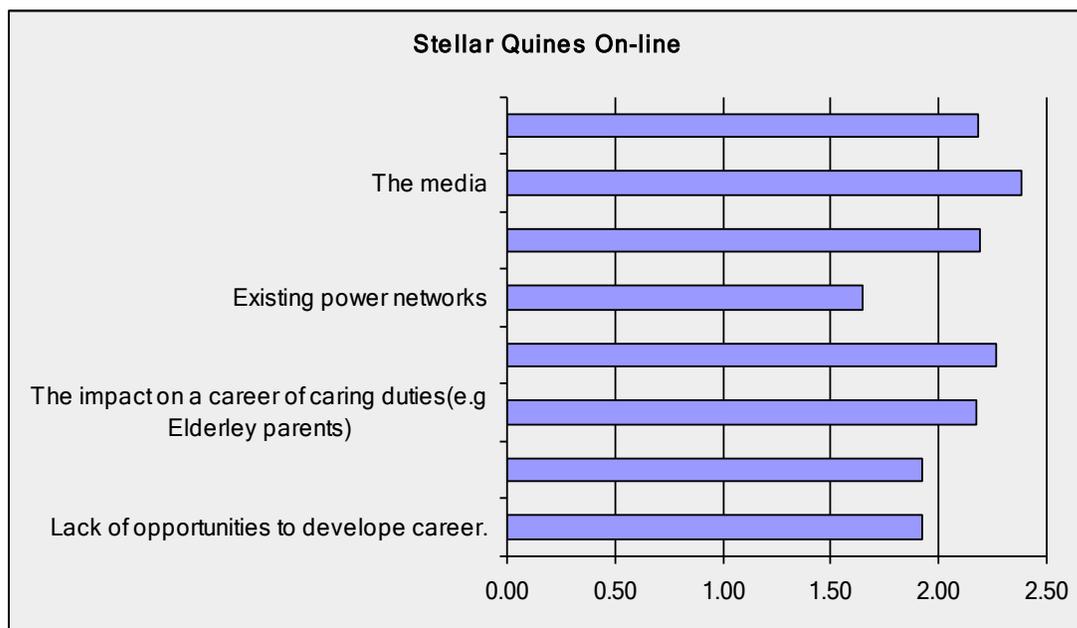
### Online Survey Results - Gender Equality and Representation

- **Table 4: Representations** (Sample 266)  
65% of respondents agreed with the statement that more men than women were represented in the creative roles (writer, director, performer, designer etc) in Scottish theatre today.



Answer Options	Response Percent
Men and women are equally represented in Scottish theatre today.	29%
More women are represented than men in Scottish theatre today.	6%
More men are represented than women in Scottish theatre today	65%

- Table 5: Factors Influencing Gender Inequality (Sample 189)**  
 Respondents were asked to select three factors that they felt might influence gender inequality in Scottish theatre and then rank them 1-3 with 1 being the most important. Existing power networks, the impact on a career of pregnancy and childcare responsibilities, and lack of opportunities to develop a career were the three answers most often selected as number 1.



Answer Options	1	2	3	Rating Average
Lack of opportunities to develop career.	27	39	20	1.92
The impact on a career of pregnancy and childcare.	42	40	33	1.92
The impact on a career of caring duties (e.g. Elderly parents)	6	8	10	2.17
Self confidence of individual artists.	18	30	42	2.27
Existing power networks	75	34	27	1.65
Age	11	24	22	2.19
The media	7	15	25	2.38
Personal financial pressures	12	8	19	2.18
Other (please specify)				

---

There were a further 11 comments from respondents around this issue.

*“Appearance e.g. plastic surgery or lack thereof, height, weight.”*

*“My cultural heritage and identity has been a complex part of my gender identity, another layer of assumptions both helpful and not helpful.”*

*“History: theatre started as a male-only profession and the imbalances of the Jacobean stage have never been subsumed. Nor have women ever been allowed to dominate history, which theatre tends to reflect.”*

*“Preponderance of English/male/Scottish privately educated artistic directors in the buildings; the deep, profound conservatism of the institution of theatre; ageism - etc. but all of this falls within the power networks question.”*

*“I don’t think there is any inequality.”*

*“Lack of opportunities for artists to meet companies fairly. Too much closed door behaviour.”*

*“A misogynist and patriarchal culture.”*

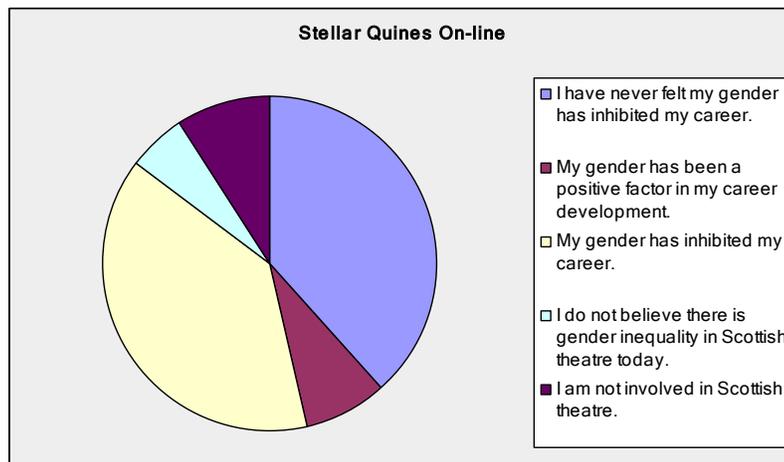
*“Class.”*

*“The fact that the norm is still to use theatre to tell stories about men.”*

*“Perhaps not enough ‘cross-fertilisation’ between forms i.e. novelists/radio writers/theatre - how to cross the floor and find a welcome in a new medium.”*

- **Table 6: Experience of Equality/Inequality (Sample 198)**

Respondents were split on the question regarding their own personal experience of either equality or inequality in Scottish theatre, with equal numbers indicating that their gender had/hadn’t inhibited their careers.



Answer Options	Response Percent
I have never felt my gender has inhibited my career.	38%
My gender has been a positive factor in my career development.	8%
My gender has inhibited my career.	39%
I do not believe there is gender inequality in Scottish theatre today.	6%
I am not involved in Scottish theatre.	9%
Other (please specify)	

This question solicited the most number of free-form comments (28 in total - 15% of the sample), possibly illustrating that an answer was hard to define without providing additional information and that there are other factors to bear in mind in relation to equality issues.

*“My gender has been a positive factor as well as an inhibiting factor at different scales and stages so far in my trajectory.”*

*“Career development is more complicated than any of these factors; but me being male has meant that there have been more opportunities for me because there have been more roles available to me.”*

*“I am a woman and not from the majority ethnic communities. There are even fewer opportunities therefore not sure to what extent gender has played a part in this.”*

*“Class and being Scottish hasn’t helped either! (see power networks!) - or perhaps what I mean is the class, gender, age, nationality and attitudes of those who employ has perhaps been the problem rather than my class, age, gender - it comes back to conservatism, lack of awareness, power networks etc. Also, as a woman, I think the ageist (i.e. conservative/reactionary) attitudes of those in power can be a particular problem especially if you wish to develop your career out of sync with usual male models of “progress” (e.g. its ok to start something new aged 50 - but there is a deep conservatism which wonders why you haven’t started sooner.”*

*“As in all things individuals set the culture of organisations. Gender inequality is acceptable in some organisations and not in others, largely due to the outlook and attitude of the long term or lead staff.”*

*“I made choices to create new work with women to attempt to address the inequity and created a women-focused theatre company in Canada - Maenad Theatre. So my gender has been a positive but it has impinged on my career development. No doubt on that.”*

*“Sexuality is as important - gay mafia etc.”*

---

*“As a transsexual woman, there is no question about it. In two ways that largely affect women too: (1) internalised oppression leading to lack of self-confidence and a sense of not being able to take leadership roles (2) covert discrimination (of a kind no-one would ever admit to; and perhaps not even be aware of).”*

*“Just as a note, in my experience, women can quite often be a hindrance to other women. Particularly in instances of older women in a position of power interacting with others in more junior positions that are up and coming. But I don't think that is an industry specific problem, it happens across the board sadly.”*

*“I have encountered sexism.”*

*“Family responsibilities affected my freedom to move on from job to job.”*

*“I am not involved in "conventional" theatre. I work in the street theatre sector and in cabaret. I actually feel there is a shortage of men in the sector. Why are they deterred? No idea.”*

*“As a 68 year-old man, had I been a woman, I would not have met with as much success.”*

*“As a male I don't think I have been inhibited but I am not sure my gender has been a positive factor.”*

*“I try not to think about it in such stark terms as it's too depressing... but yes, probably my gender inhibits my career.”*

*“I don't think I have experienced inequality, but I do think it exists.”*

*“I wouldn't say that my gender has inhibited my career but I feel that on the odd occasion people haven't taken me seriously as a young female practitioner and I have to work harder to prove my worth.”*

*“There are, and have been, some successful women in Scottish theatre and I've been lucky enough to work with some, but I'm aware that there is much more to be done about improving the ratio of women to men in potent positions within Scotland.”*

*“My gender has inhibited my career now as it is age-related.”*

*“It has I believe affected my wages in the past.”*

*“I believe more creative opportunity is offered to men-although the programming and co-ordination of the arts seems to be more equal.”*

*“I am in the middle ranks of my profession, I do not feel that gender is an issue at this level, but it is if I am to think of senior positions.”*

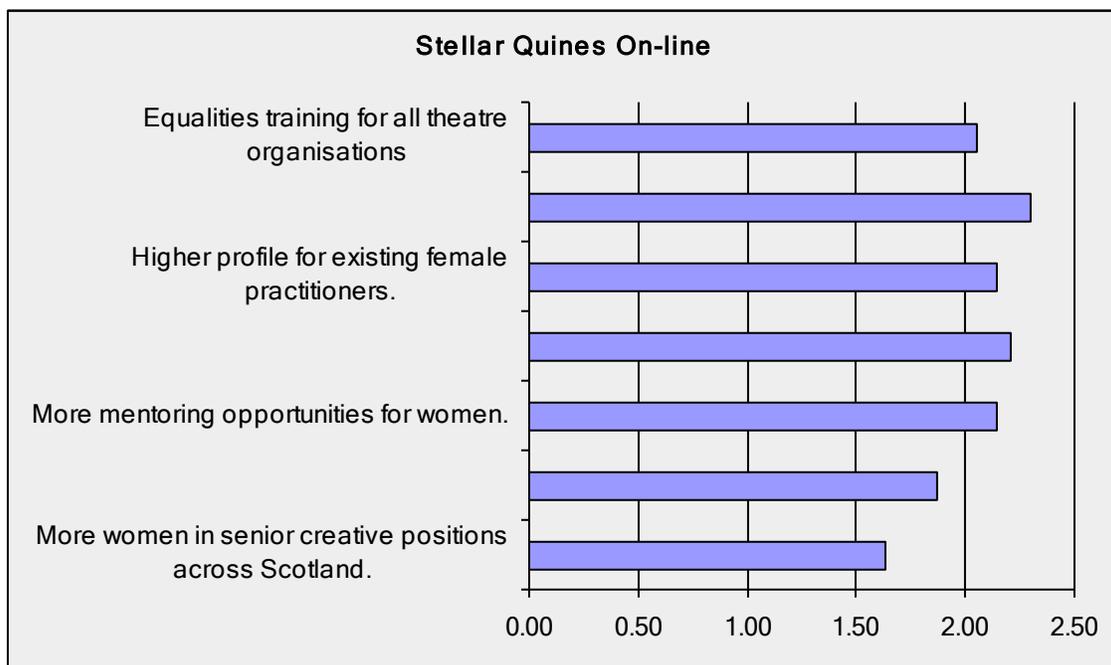
*“Impossible to state fully given age/circumstance, but ‘not being a man’ has limited many endeavours where having a pub chat helped male writers/actors to get commissions.”*

*“My physical disability has inhibited my career...”*

• **Table 7: Eradicating Gender Equality/Inequality (Sample 198)**

Respondents were asked to select three options that they felt could help to eradicate gender inequality in Scottish theatre and rank them 1-3 with 1 being the most important.

Here the top three answers were more women in senior creative positions, more job opportunities for women and a higher profile for existing female practitioners.



Answer Options	1	2	3	Rating Average
More women in senior creative positions across Scotland.	69	33	23	1.63
More job opportunities for women.	42	30	29	1.87
More mentoring opportunities for women.	18	32	29	2.14
Stronger support networks run by and for women.	18	23	34	2.21
Higher profile for existing female practitioners.	24	48	40	2.14
Lobbying campaign across a range of influencers.	11	9	24	2.30
Equalities training for all theatre organisations	16	23	19	2.05
Other (please specify)				

---

There were a further 23 comments from respondents and where possible they have been grouped around similar themes/comments:

*“Childcare is number one and follow up support as the children age.”*

*“The problem lies (for actors) principally in the repertoire, which has been four hundred years in the making. Things are certainly better now than they have been, but one cannot, surely, avoid Shakespeare because of the lack of opportunities for women. The change is occurring but inevitably slowly.”*

*“More staging of plays with lots of parts for women - Black Watch and Dunsinane were fantastic theatre - but woeful in terms of employment for female actors.”*

*“In film and TV there are many women in senior creative positions, yet they have not effected enough change in attitudes to gender inequality regarding - age, size and disability - so I have little faith that 'equalities training' or 'more women in senior creative positions' will have enough impact. It has to come from the work = writing, production, casting.”*

*“In my experience, women do not 'put themselves forward' alone, as readily as creative men do; much of my commissioned writing work has come about after being invited to think of a project for a specific time slot or medium or occasion; only in the last 10 years have I felt the 'idea' itself was valuable enough to warrant my pushing to get stuff done, based on my reputation/skill. I'm not aware of having ANY clout within the arts world in Scotland, tho' by comparison see many men who assume it with great confidence - I reckon that is generational but also part of the historic attitude about women in the arts, that their stories are deemed 'not big enough' or (especially in Scottish TV world of the 80s/90s) that women's stories are still seen as marginal, domestic, small.”*

*“Hmm - well having been actively involved in and since the women's movement and having fought hard for women in theatre and then having been sidelined by women in powerful positions I think eradication is going to take the demise of patriarchy and patriarchal mindsets, influences and attitudes in men and women and that aint going nowhere!!! Then after gender you would have to deal with class, age etc. It's a wider mindset - probably hugely influenced by patriarchy, but also ingrained mentalities and life experiences associated with class, imperialism, feudalism and capitalism (see ageism and value through productivity and linked concepts of retiral ages therefore age-linked diminished value etc. - glad you asked!???) I think what would help reduce it would be an awareness of one's own internalisation of many of the values - just because someone is a woman does not stop them being ageist for example or stop them having a dog-eat-dog mentality - it DOES mean they are likely at some point to have been adversely affect by stereotyped attitudes towards women all the way along the line to outright misogyny if women stopped believing there is any.”*

*“Lobbying should be as creative as we are though not boring pedantic post cards with no wow factor. The advertisers are looking at our art and claiming the ideas for their own purposes - let's use our own art to get the business happening and strut our stuff.”*

*“Significant increase in funding for theatre.”*

*“More mentoring for both women and men.”*

*“Changing the make-up of charitable Boards of Directors. That's where a lot of the inequality begins - check out how many female Chairs there are on arts organisations' Boards? They (the Chair) usually sit on recruitment panels for all senior jobs.”*

*“I think the strongest factor which is currently preventing gender equality in society is our inability to come up with a way of accommodating all the following popular expectations: 1. all men and women are entitled to have a full life-long professional career if they so wish; 2. everyone is entitled to be a parent and have a family if they so wish; 3. everyone is entitled to juggle professional and family priorities as they feel appropriate; 4. working practice on the whole is unable to provide space for family life and has few models for such provision in its careers structures; 5. market forces push everyone to the limit to prioritise work before family; 6. grandparents are no longer automatically available as child-carers; 7. maiden aunts are no longer available as parent-carers; 8. travel to work distances are ever increasing and work hours for the ambitious go through the roof; 9. women more than men are expected to address the above problems.”*

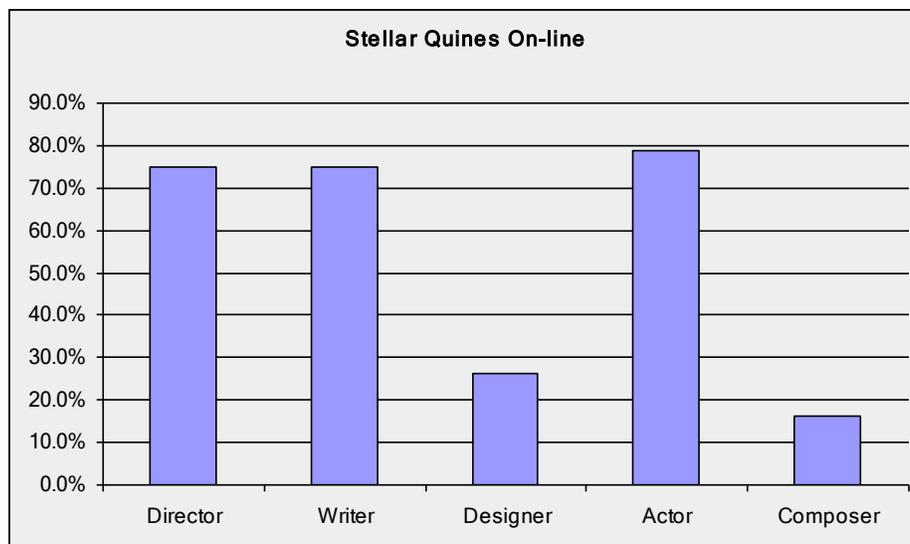
*“Strategic equalities training for not only theatre organisations but practitioners across the board. Particularly writers, directors and commissioning programmers.”*

*“Women's networks are a good thing if they support and empower women and lead to more opportunities, but women don't always support other women. These networks should not become whinge-fests or female 'ghettos'.”*

*“That women in senior positions are more willing to talk and share experiences of how they got there, and how it feels to be there.”*

• **Table 8: Seeking Out Female Artists in Scottish Theatre** (Sample 198)

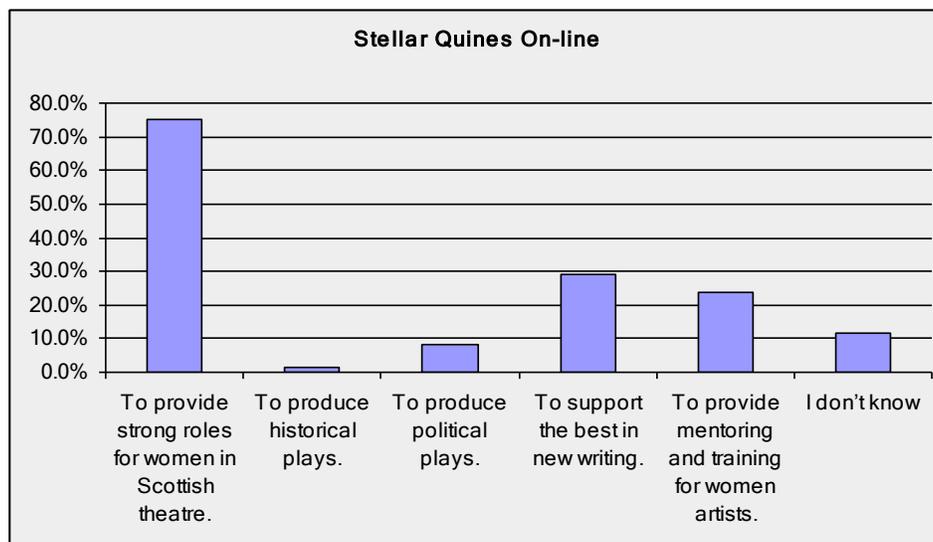
The majority of respondents had never sought out the work of particular artists in Scottish theatre because they were female. However of the 85 respondents who did, the majority were looking for directors, writers and actors.



Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	43%
No	57%

### Online Survey Results – SQ Vision, Values and Activity

- Table 9: Core Vision of SQ (Sample 190)**  
 Respondents were very clear regarding the role of SQ, with 75% stating that it was to provide strong roles for women, followed by supporting new writing and then mentoring. Few people (12%) were unclear of their vision although some of the comments do illustrate this point.



Answer Options	Response Percent
To provide strong roles for women in Scottish theatre.	75%
To produce historical plays.	2%
To produce political plays.	8%
To support the best in new writing.	29%
To provide mentoring and training for women artists.	23%
I don't know	12%
Other (please specify)	

There were a further 5 comments:

*“To produce plays that mainly apply to women and historical events centering around women; but yet the end productions are enjoyable to diverse audiences.”*

*“All I know about Stellar Quines is it is all about women.”*

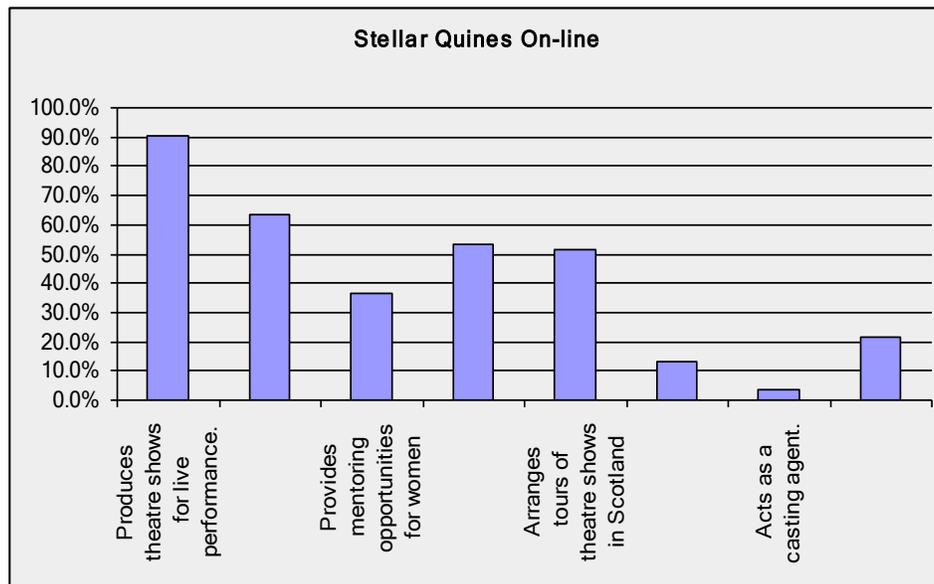
*“To explore feminism and the role of women in society through historical and contemporary contexts.”*

*“At the time to be a strong female voice - maybe you have grown up and achieved that!”*

*“I do not think 'strong roles for women in Scottish Theatre' excludes strong roles for men in Scottish theatre, but I appreciate the attempt to switch the focus and make good work relevant beyond the familiar Scottish tropes.”*

**• Table 10: Specific Activities (Sample 190)**

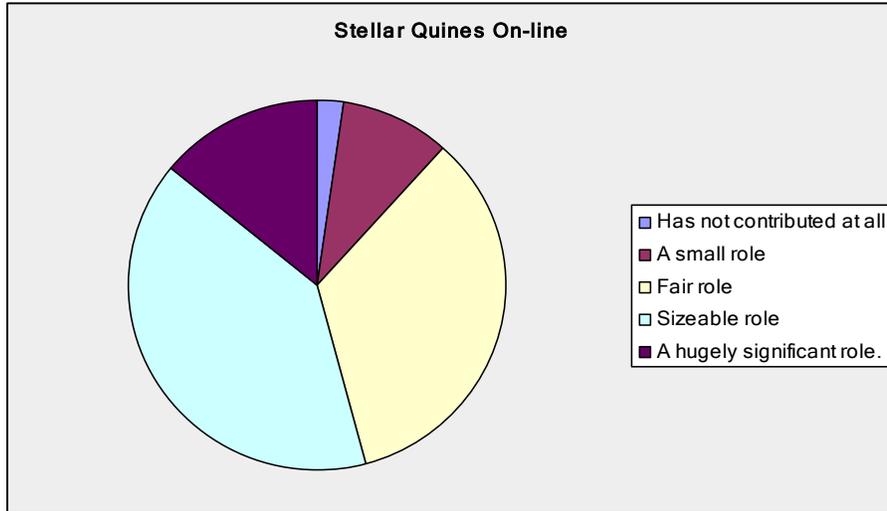
On being asked to select up to three specific activities that SQ did, respondents were clear on the activities generated by SQ – producing live productions, touring, supporting new writing and organising new play readings.



Answer Options	Response Percent
Produces theatre shows for live performance.	90%
Supports new writing through commissions.	64%
Organises play readings.	53%
Arranges tours of theatre shows in Scotland and abroad for live performance.	52%
Provides mentoring opportunities for women artists.	37%
Manages events.	13%
Acts as a casting agent.	4%
Provides networking opportunities for women.	22%

• **Table 11: Role of SQ in developing women artists (Sample 190)**

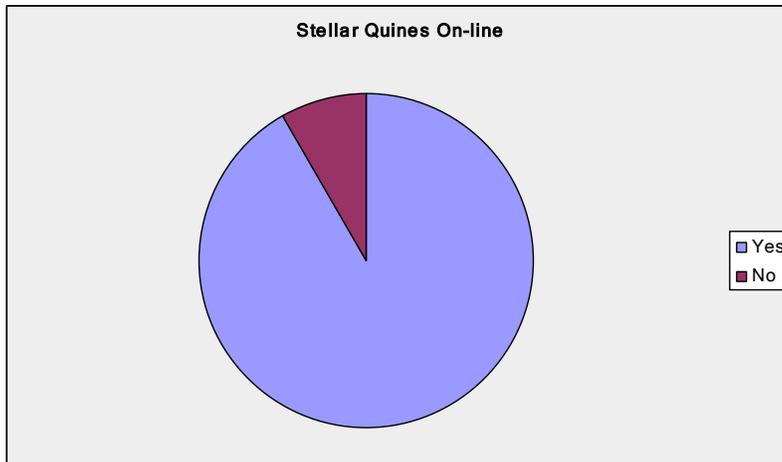
Over 50% thought SQ had played a sizeable or hugely significant role in supporting the development of women artists in Scottish theatre, with a further 34% noting it had played a fair role.



Answer Options	Response Percent
Has not contributed at all	2%
A small role	9%
Fair role	34%
Sizeable role	40%
A hugely significant role.	14%

• **Table 12: Relevance of SQ (Sample 198)**

In response to the question of whether a company with a female centric agenda serves a purpose in Scotland today, there was overwhelming agreement with 92% believing it did and 8% that it did not.

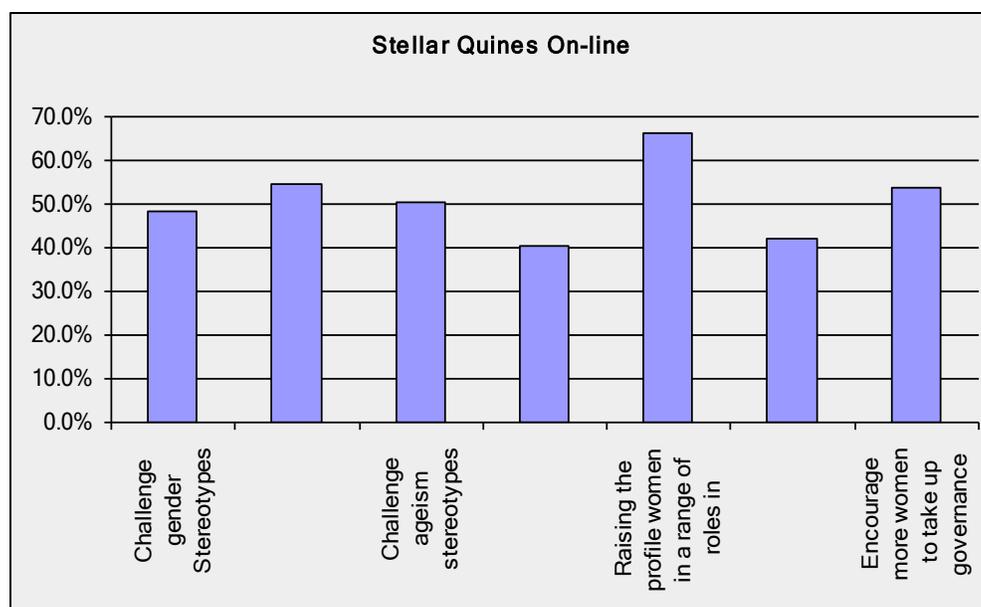


Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	48%
No	55%

### Online Survey Results - Development of women artists

• **Table 13: Essentials For Development of Women Artists** (Sample 190)

The top three priorities for the development of women artists and practitioners were to raise the profile of women in a range of roles in theatre in Scotland, secondly to develop stronger roles for women, and thirdly to encourage more women to take up governance roles in cultural organisations.



Answer Options	Response Percent
Challenge gender Stereotypes	48%
Stronger roles for women	55%
Challenge ageism stereotypes	50%
A stronger support network for women	40%
Raising the profile women in a range of roles in theatre in Scotland	66%
Greater mentoring opportunities for women	42%
Encourage more women to take up governance roles in cultural organisations	54%
Other (please specify)	

---

There were a further 3 comments:

*“More complex and non gender specific representation of women. No more simple wives, girlfriends, mother of a male protagonist archetypes. Can we see some female murderers, intellectuals, visionaries please.”*

*“Really question the dog-eat-dog approach - raise awareness of how heavily influenced by Thatcherism some women in power in theatre have been (they don't know 'cos they are Thatcher's children and think it is a good thing - wide shoulders and sharp elbows).”*

*“Public policy changes with regard to unpaid caring work. Attitude changes of employers so that female artists who have taken career breaks to care for children or other relatives are not discriminated against. More fairly paid employment opportunities. More consideration of what female audience members want and need.”*

---

## 6. **CONCLUSIONS**

### 6.1 **Gender in Scottish Theatre – Phase One research & Phase Two response**

From the Phase One research one can see that by 2009 the gender balance in a typical Scottish theatre season was more female than it was in 1993. However, it was still the case that in no one category were women represented at a level of 50% or more, and in all but one category (performers) women's representation remained at around, or below, a third (34%).

Participants who took part in the Phase Two research were surprised by the picture presented in the Phase One report, as it challenged their own perceptions of who they worked with. The majority of in-depth interviewees or mini-group participants did not really feel that there were fewer women working with them than men. However, many then commented that the higher one went up an organisation, the less likely one was to see a woman as Chief Executive or Artistic Director.

*“Women in creative positions must work hard to NOT be a bureaucrat. It is very easy to fall into these roles and never return to a creative role again.”*

*“Assumptions are made that women always want to do backstage work or marketing – rather than directing. We should really challenge this.”*

Linked to these comments came further discussion from all participants and groups about where the women in the profession went. All participants were aware that they worked with a lot of women and that there are a lot of female graduates from organisations such as the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (then RSAMD), but they all acknowledged that numbers appeared to trickle off when at a senior level in organisations.

The nature of the Phase One research statistics was also challenged in terms of the type of theatre organisations surveyed, with the majority of respondents noting that the research only illustrated one part of the theatre ecology in Scotland, leaving out more collaborative ways of working and the growing trend for co-producing work.

### 6.2 **Gender in Scottish Theatre - broader questions**

Respondents to the Phase Two online survey agreed with the statement that more men were represented than women in Scottish theatre today. Key issues regarded as influencing this inequality included existing power networks, the impact on a career of childcare and pregnancy, and lack of opportunity for career development. However, respondents were split on the question of how their gender had impacted on their career, with nearly equal numbers indicating that their gender had/hadn't inhibited their careers.

Many additional comments in this area also referenced appearance, cultural heritage, class, sexuality and age as reasons for inequality within theatre in Scotland, as was also raised by participants in the mini-groups, highlighting that for many the issue was complex and multi-layered.

In terms of helping to eradicate gender inequality the quantitative research highlighted the need for more women in senior creative positions across Scotland, more job

---

opportunities for women, and higher profiles for existing female practitioners. Additional comments highlighted the need for better childcare, more parts for women and the need for women to be more confident in pushing themselves forward. The role of governance in arts organisations was highlighted as an important element of encouraging more women to feel confident in positions of authority, with respondents noting, anecdotally, that men were very often in the majority on Boards.

In general these findings were echoed in the unprompted range and depth of online discussion generated via the Scot-Nits theatre forum (see Appendix 7) following a posting by someone who had received the online survey. Simply asking some key questions evoked passionate and explosive debate. On the whole people acknowledged that there was an appetite for discussing the issues and raising awareness of where the industry is in relation to gender equality. The discussion points and arguments appeared multi-dimensional, with numerous connections to other issues including history, politics, the economy, sexuality, ethnicity and disability. The development of roles for women that were not stereotypes was considered essential. The argument for supporting women to stay longer in the sector was something to consider given the realisation that while more women were starting out in careers, it was still the case that few were making it to the top. The need for greater equality at Board level so that more women were involved in the appointment of senior staff and the strategic direction of cultural organisations was also noted.

### **6.3 Stronger profiles, stronger roles and more women in the boardroom**

Responses to the Phase Two qualitative research indicated that if equality for women in Scottish theatre was to be a priority, then a clear strategy needed to be developed highlighting the aspirations of SQ to define their role in the next wave of change. It was seen as essential that this strategy should be delivered collaboratively, rather than simply becoming the responsibility of one organisation.

From the online research the top three priorities for the development of women artists and practitioners included raising the profile of women in a range of roles in theatre in Scotland, developing stronger roles/parts for women, and encouraging more women to take up governance roles in cultural organisations. Promoting and sharing in the success of women in Scottish theatre was considered very important. In particular there was a desire to see profile pieces that were transparent, showed a career path or route-map and also shared with others the more subtle approaches to developing a career, building networks, essential training, career highs and lows, how people navigated through difficulties and their future aspirations.

The continued support of writers who develop roles for women and finding a way to show their work quickly, cheaply and with maximum feedback from audiences and peer groups was seen as important in relation to this. Encouraging writers to develop parts for women that expanded on stereotypical roles was crucial:

*“More complex and non gender-specific representation of women. No more simple wives, girlfriends, mother of a male protagonist archetypes. Can we see some female murderers, intellectuals, visionaries please.”*

Additional activities to support the development of women artists and practitioners mentioned in both the qualitative and quantitative research included active support for

---

those who chose to be freelance, the development of a greater understanding and promotion of collaborative ways of working that championed co-creation, rather than more traditional theatre-making models and greater awareness of the issues facing women as they got older and practical advice and steps on how to develop a career beyond the age of 40, including developing complementary skills and solid professional networks.

*“There are deep psychological shifts that happen when you have a child – it defines you – and trying to work becomes almost impossible at times. Then once they are older you realise that you are light years away from getting your career on track. The journey to reconnect is long and I don’t think there is a mechanism for it.”*

#### **6.4 Stellar Quines – purpose and role**

From the Phase Two qualitative research there was a good understanding of SQ’s purpose and the types of activity undertaken by the company. However from the mini-groups with younger participants and those outside of Edinburgh, there was less of an understanding. Furthermore these groups were less likely to see the relevance of the company in relation to their own career development or artistic practice.

However, from the quantitative research people were very clear regarding the role of the company with 75% stating that it was to provide strong roles for women, followed by supporting new writing and then mentoring. They were also clear on the types of activity the company engaged in.

*“I do not think 'strong roles for women in Scottish Theatre' excludes strong roles for men in Scottish theatre, but I appreciate the attempt to switch the focus and make good work relevant beyond the familiar Scottish tropes.”*

A common comment in relation to the purpose of SQ was the importance of the company not excluding men, or limiting its vision to only a political dimension, which was relevant when considering the findings in relation to the broader questions around equality. For many the issue was complex, multi-layered and could divide opinion.

The significance of SQ’s role in facilitating the development of women theatre artists and practitioners in Scotland over the years received a mixed response from the Phase Two qualitative research. There was acknowledgement that the company had played a part, albeit on a small scale, but it was also noted that other interventions outside of SQ had possibly had a greater influence on an individual’s perception of the strength of women in theatre. This highlighted that change cannot, and should not, be attributed to one company, one moment in history or a single high-profile female appointment in theatre.

*“..but then if we didn’t have Stellar Quines would any of this have happened?”*

However, in the quantitative research over half of the respondents (54%) considered that SQ had played a sizeable or hugely significant role in supporting the development of women artists in Scotland.

There was overwhelming agreement from respondents to the online survey regarding the question of SQ still serving a purpose, with 92% agreeing and 8% disagreeing.

---

From the qualitative research people noted that SQ does have a future, but also that it was essential that the creative work of the company and the quality of that work must continue to take precedence over any political agenda seeking to raise awareness of equality issues.

*“We’ve all seen work that batters you over the head with a message – SQ is more stimulating, more multi-dimensional and more subtle in its presentation of values, ideas and thoughts. These principles must be retained.”*

It was noted that the issue of equality was something that must run right through an organisation and that any theatre company operating in Scotland today should adopt the values of SQ as essential.

*“SQ should be the guardians of the idea that women must have an equal opportunity in theatre and be presented equally.”*