
Where are the Women? Part 2

Analysis of creative roles by
gender in Scottish theatre
2019/2020
Commissioned by Stellar
Quines

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Consulting and Fraser
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Introduction from Stellar Quines

We were delighted that Christine Hamilton accepted our commission to revisit her 2016 *Where are the Women?* research piece. The delivery of its first iteration landed on my desk in the first few months of my starting at Stellar Quines, and has since proved invaluable for our organisation's strategic thinking and planning. Our M*****classes series was created as a direct response to her findings, and this refreshed version will, I have no doubt, invigorate our thinking again. I'd like to think that other organisations might use it in the same way.

This research piece enables us to benchmark where we've moved from and to in the space of 5 years, exploring our 'baseline' charitable interest: women in theatre. What we do know, whatever the outcome, is that this just the beginning of Stellar Quines' research enquiry. Intersectionality and how this speaks to the position of women within the sector is central to our focus and progress as an organisation. This alongside further understanding of the roles that aren't recorded here (Production crew, Producers, Engagement roles etc etc), the size of productions worked on by women, how decisions are arrived at and how projects funded via other means, all contribute to this picture. Of course, gathering qualitative data is key to this, so the next steps are already on the horizon.

Last time Christine published her report, she shared with me that people were surprised that things 'weren't as bad as they thought' they might be. In our post Covid world, let's hope we move on even further. Either way, whatever progress has taken place is testimony to the changes that people (like Christine) have campaigned for over the years. We stand on their shoulders and continue their work, as there is always more to be done.

Jemima Levick, Artistic Director & Chief Executive, Stellar Quines

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Headlines

This report follows a similar exercise that examined women in creative roles in Scottish theatre in 2014/15. Headline figures are given below with the 2014/15 figures shown for comparison.

In 2019/20, in Scottish publicly funded theatres:

- 48% of creative roles across all categories went to women (39%)
- 54% of theatre companies had women in artistic leadership roles and 55% of identified artistic directors were female (38% had women in artistic leadership roles)
- Half of Scotland's 26 publicly funded theatre companies were artistically led solely by women (4 out of 24 (17%))
- Women were cast in 52% of the 523 roles (46%)
- Women made up 48% of directors of shows (47%)
- 41% of commissioned playwrights were women (39%)
- 63% of set and costume designers were female (29%)
- 28% of lighting designers were female (6%)
- Women made up 27% of composers, musical directors and sound designers (11%)
- This information was gathered from 26 theatre companies and included 1,338 roles (24 companies/1,698 roles)

Further analysis is provided below but in headline terms, these figures mark a continued growth in the representation of women in creative roles in Scottish theatre. As we will discuss later, this suggests that in terms of opportunities for women Scottish theatre is, by some way, in a better position in terms of this measure of equality than similar organisations in England and in some other European countries.

In our conclusions, we explore the reasons for this.

Introduction

On 8 March 2016 Christine Hamilton Consulting published a report *Where Are the Women?*¹ that analysed the place of women in creative roles in subsidised theatres in Scotland in 2014/2015. The analysis was based on quantitative data gathered from the records of the theatres done by volunteers or provided by the theatre companies themselves. It was then analysed and a report written by Christine Hamilton.

This work was done to fill a perceived gap in data: neither the Scottish Government nor Creative Scotland gathered nor published this data.

In 2019 Stellar Quines commissioned Christine Hamilton to repeat this work for the years 2019/2020 in order to provide a comparison and to identify what, if anything had changed.

This report includes an outline of what was done, the assumptions made, an analysis of the data and the conclusions for theatre in Scotland that can be drawn from this.

Context

The original plan for data gathering was to request theatre organisations to complete and submit their own data with contingency to plug any gaps. This would be followed up with qualitative data to be gathered through interviews and focus groups. However before this could be started, Covid-19 arrived with an impact on all our lives.

Theatres closed from week beginning 16 March and at the time of writing there is no clarity on when they might re-open. With a devastating impact on those working in the cultural and creative industries – and on audiences- the first question we considered was ‘should we go ahead with this project at all?’ and ‘Are there not much bigger issues to be dealt with?’.

The proposal to undertake qualitative work was dropped and we made the judgement that we could not expect the theatres to submit data as originally planned. This was now done by Christine Hamilton and Shilpa T-Hyland from Stellar Quines with support from Jemima Levick, Artistic Director, who approached companies directly for any gaps and for links to online information. Fraser White of Consult:Result, who was originally engaged to analyse the raw data, continued as a key member of the team. Because theatres closed within weeks of the end of the financial year, we judged that we had a good enough picture of 2019/20 to proceed.

However there was and is a bigger question about the relevance and importance of this work. Our view is that this provides a pre-lockdown benchmark and, as theatres re-open in whatever form that might take, we

have a picture of where things stood before Covid-19. Only time will tell if this is useful or not.

Aims of the Project

This project has three aims:

- To examine the professional opportunities for women in creative roles in Scottish theatre in 2019/20 and compare with data from 2014/2015.
- To identify areas where women working professionally are under-represented in creative roles in theatre.
- To demonstrate that gathering data is the starting point for developing equality, diversity and inclusion strategies.

What We Did

It was important that we started from using the same or comparable data from the previous report so changes could be identified.

Scope

Organisations

The 26 theatre companies surveyed were all publicly funded in the year 2019/2020. The list includes Regularly Funded Companies of Creative Scotland.

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

Excluded from the list surveyed were companies who did not work with professional artists, those who focussed on development or programming and not on production. See Appendix for full list.

Programme

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

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

Time frame

Only shows produced in the financial year 2019/2020 were included.

Method

This was a counting exercise identifying women and men included in a theatre production. A proforma was produced for each. (see Appendix).

Roles

The analysis covered 11 roles in theatre – artistic director, director (of each production), associate/assistant director, playwright (living or dead and included those who ‘devised’ or ‘created’ a show), designer (including set and costume designer), lighting designer, movement/choreographer (including fight director), music/sound designer, translator/adaptor and, of course, performers. The latter category included musicians.

There were other roles that were identified and counted under ‘other’ but separately identified in this report. These include video/film/av, dramaturg, BSL interpreter (where they were not included as performers), puppets, voice and dialect.

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

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

Source(s) of information

Most of the information was taken from the companies’ own websites. Where this was incomplete or missing, other online sources were found or the companies themselves were contacted and asked to provide cast lists and information about the creative team for each production.

Timescale

Most of the data gathering was undertaken between April and May 2020.

Assumptions

Gender Assumptions

Throughout this project, assumptions have been made about the gender of those included in the data gathering. This is usually indicated by the name of the person, the role they play as a performer or, where this is not immediately obvious, from simply using a search engine to look at their biography online. Through this method it was possible to identify those who do not identify as male or female. However we accept that this approach might have mis-categorised some. The most robust way of ensuring the accuracy would be via the individuals themselves and one of the reasons we originally planned to have the theatre submit their own data was to be able to draw on their own information on those they contract.

Assumptions on roles

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

Size of roles

This survey does not distinguish between the size and scope of the creative roles. There is a big difference in terms of profile and financial rewards between a commission from The National Theatre of Scotland to write for large theatres, and having a play presented by A Play, A Pie and A Pint for a week to a 150 capacity audience. However both are counted in the same way for this report.

Other equality factors

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

Scotland and from Scotland

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

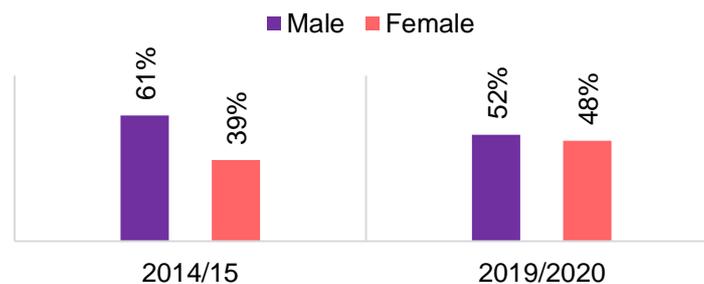
General Findings

Our research identified 1,338 male and female creative roles within Scottish theatre in 2019/20. Most of these roles were distributed across 10 clear categories of creative theatre practice. A further cluster of roles has been consolidated under an 11th category heading, 'other roles'.

In total, 692 roles (52%) went to men and 646 (48%) to women. This represents a significant shift from our comparable analysis of creative roles in Scottish theatre in 2014/15, when 39% of roles were taken up by females. It should be noted, however, that the total number of creative roles in 2019/20 (1,338) was lower than in 2014/15 (1,698).

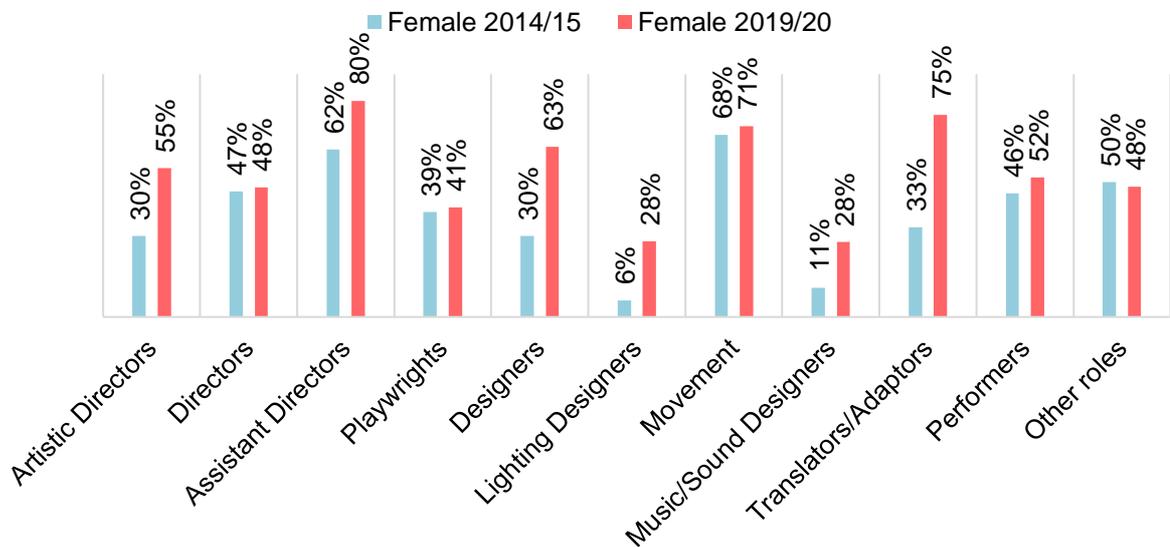
In addition a very small number of roles (fewer than 5) were undertaken by people who do not identify as male or female.

All roles By gender, 2014/15 & 2019/20



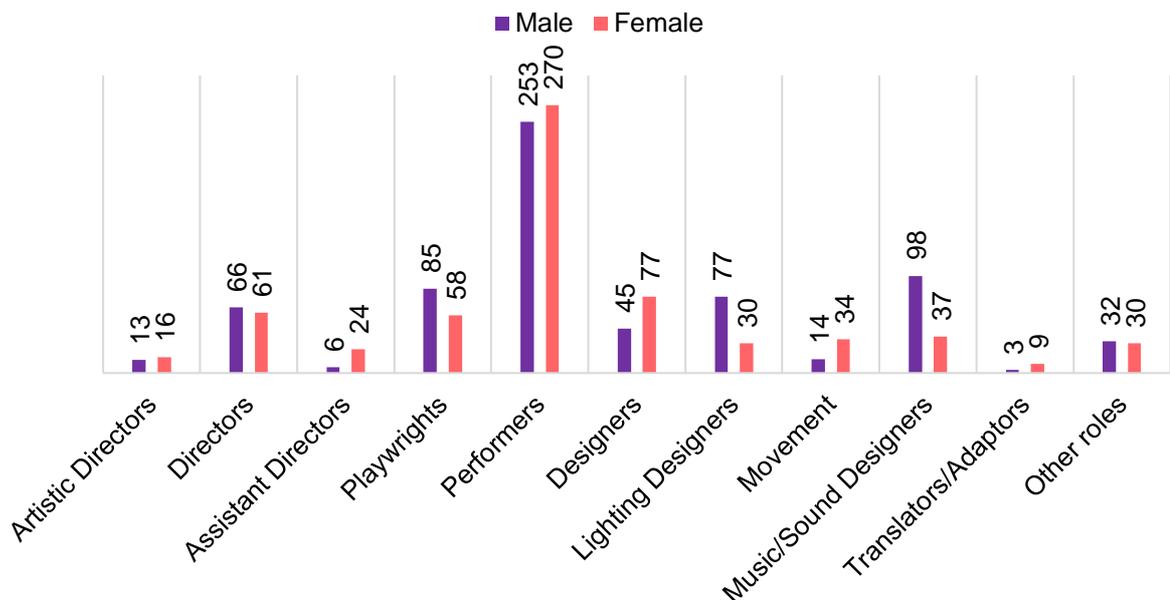
The following chart compares proportional female representation in each of the 11 creative role categories in 2014/15 and 2019/20. The percentage of roles occupied by women has increased in all categories except 'other roles', although it should be emphasised that in some cases the absolute numbers have fallen by virtue of the fact the total number of creative roles was lower in 2019/20 than it was in 2014/15.

Proportion of roles occupied by females, 2014/15 & 2019/20



The chart below shows creative roles in Scottish theatres in 2019/20 by gender. Performers represent the largest single category of role, making up 40% of the total, with slightly more female performers than males over the course of the year. Men were more likely to take on musical or sound design, lighting design and playwriting roles than women, while women were more likely than men to take up set and costume design or movement roles.

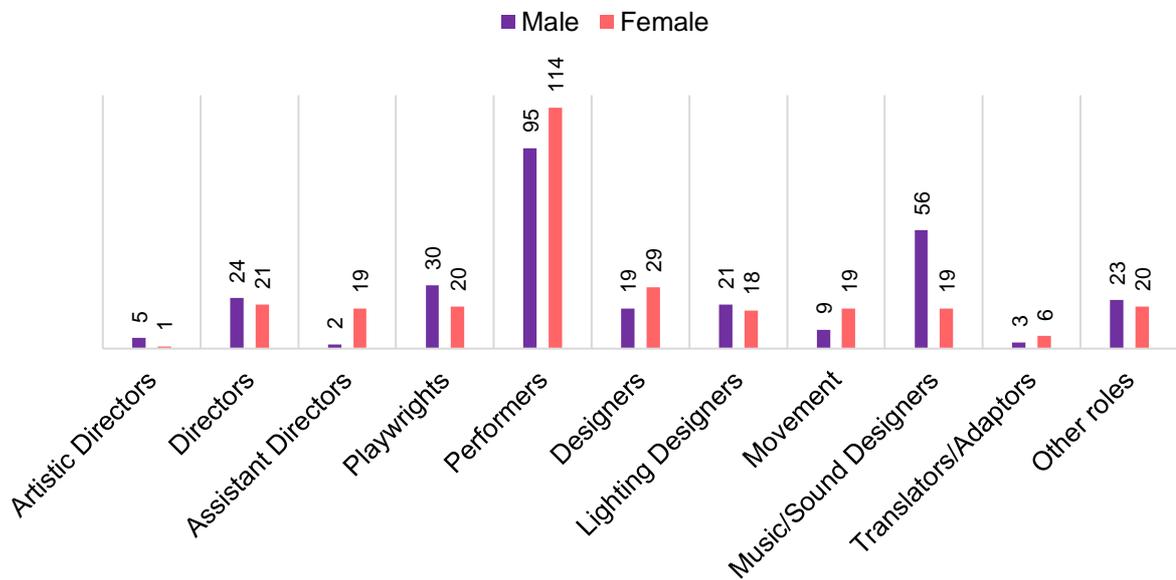
Roles by Gender, 2019/20



Men dominated artistic leadership of the six highest-funded Scottish theatres in 2019/20, occupying five of the six artistic director roles. This is in contrast to the sector as a whole, where women make up 55% of artistic directors. That caveat aside, the gender make-up of the highest-funded theatres'

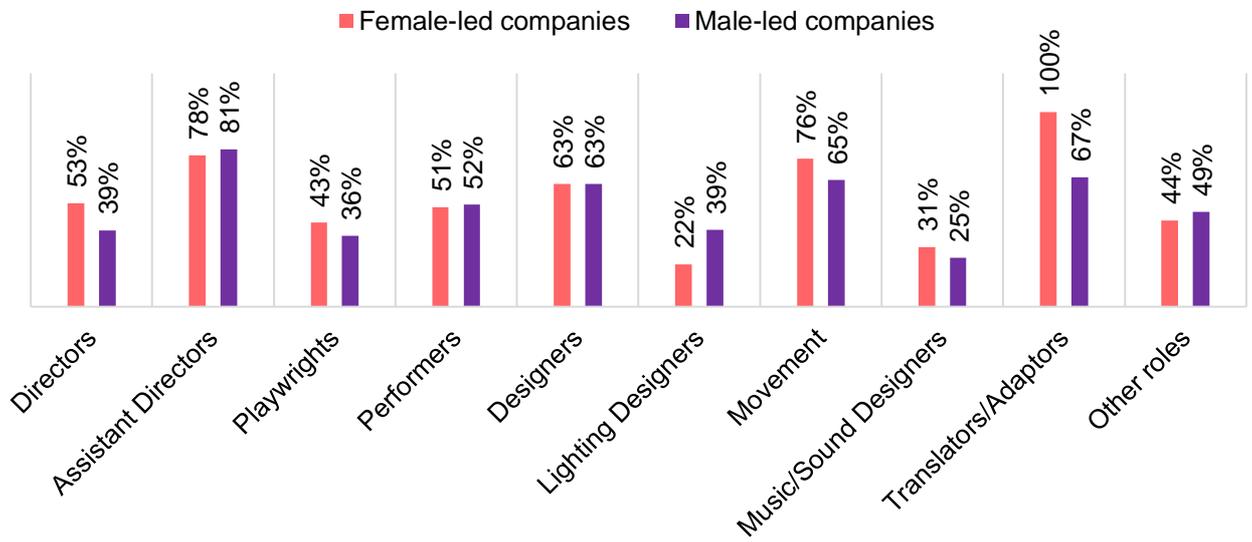
productions is broadly reflective of Scottish theatres' creative roles as a whole in 2019/20. Overall, 286 of 573 roles at these theatres (50%) in 2019/20 were taken up by women.

Gender in six highest-funded theatres, 2019/20



The chart below shows the proportion of roles occupied by women in Scottish theatres led by male and female artistic directors in 2019/20. 12 of the theatre companies included in this study are led solely by men and 13 are led solely by women, while one is led jointly by a man and a woman (and it should be noted that for the purposes of comparison throughout this report, the jointly-led company has been classed as 'female-led'). This is examined in detail in the 'specific creative role findings' of this report that follow.

Proportion of roles Occupied by Females in Male and Female-Led Companies, 2019/2020

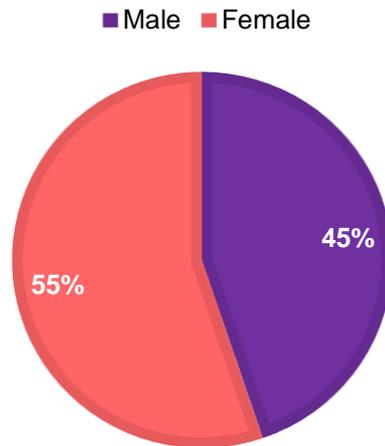


Specific Creative Role Findings

Artistic Directors

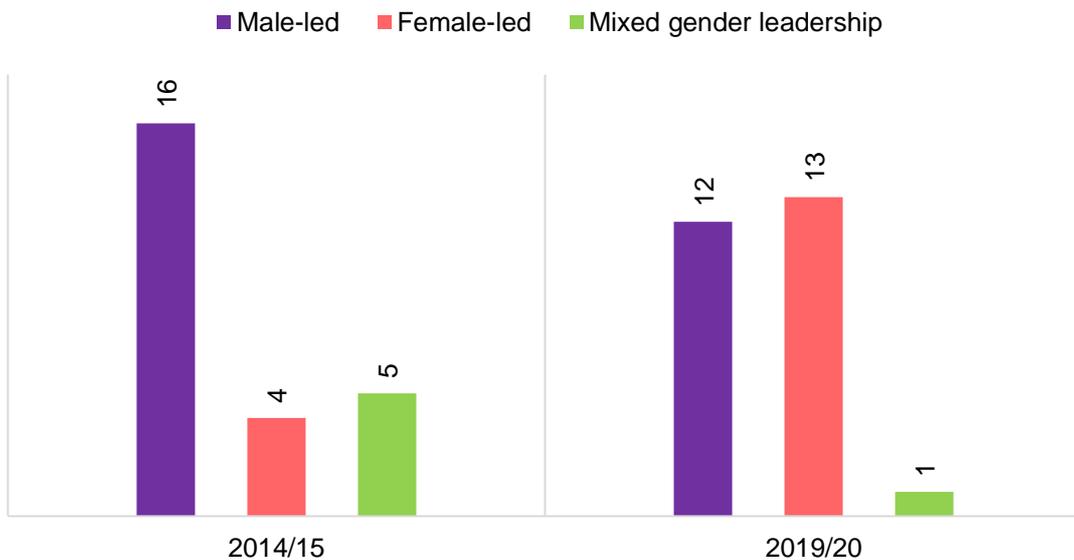
55% of artistic directors at publicly funded Scottish theatres were female in 2019/20.

Artistic Directors, 2019/20



There has been a marked shift in the overall artistic leadership of Scottish theatres over the past five years. In 2014/15 four out of 25 companies (13%) were led solely by women, and by 2019/20 this figure had risen to 13 out of 26 companies (50%). Taking joint-leadership into account, 16 out of 29 Scottish artistic directors (55%) were female in 2019/20 representing 14 out of 26 companies (54%).

Artistic Directors, 2014/15 & 2019/20



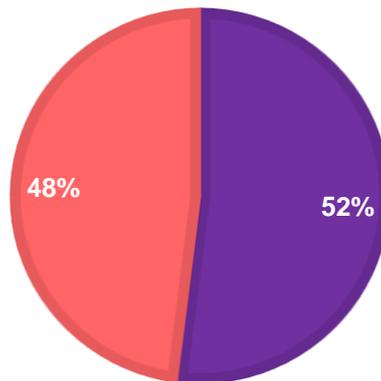
This shift has not been replicated within the six highest-funded theatres, however. In 2014/15 four of the six were led solely by men, one was led solely by a woman, and one was led jointly by a man and a woman. In 2019/20 five of the six theatres were led solely by a male artistic director and the other had a female artistic director.

Directors of Shows

The proportion of directorial roles taken up by women was a little higher in 2019/20 (48%) than it was in 2014/15 (47%). However, the absolute number of female directorial roles (61) was lower in 2019/20 than in 2014/15 (66) due to the fact there were only 120 productions in the 2019/20 survey compared with 137 in 2014/15.

Directors

■ Male ■ Female



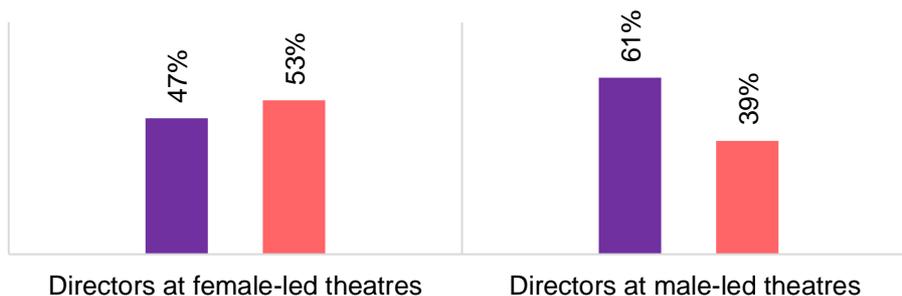
Among the six highest-funded theatres females took 21 out of 45 directorial roles (47%) in 2019/20, which was a small increase on the 2014/15 proportion of 43%.

43 out of 81 directorial roles (53%) at female-led theatres in 2019/20 went to women compared to 54 out of 77 (70%) in 2014/15.

At theatres led solely by men, 18 out of 46 directors (39%) were female in 2019/20.

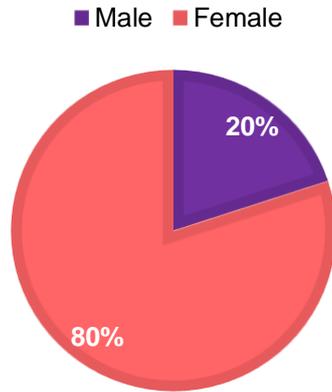
Gender of Directors of Shows at Female and Male-led Theatres, 2019/20

■ Male ■ Female



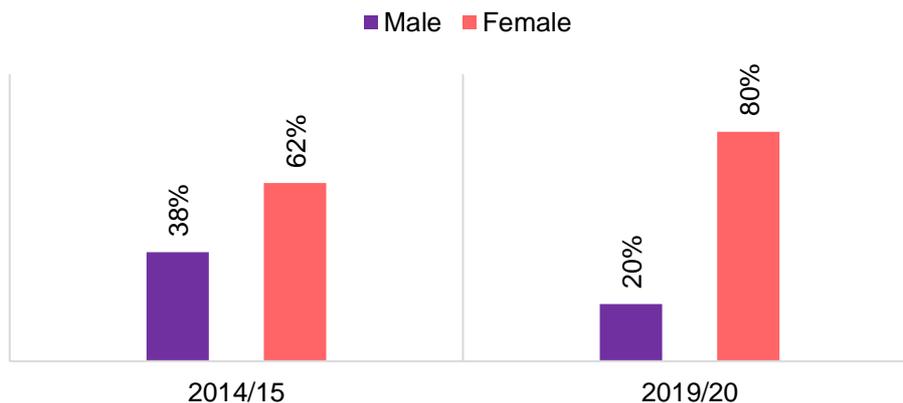
Associate and Assistant Directors of Shows

Associate and Assistant Directors, 2019/20



The 2014/15 study found that associate and assistant directorial roles were 'dominated' by women, and the evidence suggests this dominance has increased over the intervening years. 24 out of 30 associate or assistant directors were female in 2019/20 (80%), which compares with 31 out of 50 in 2014/15 (62%).

Associate & Assistant Directors, 2014/15 & 2019/20



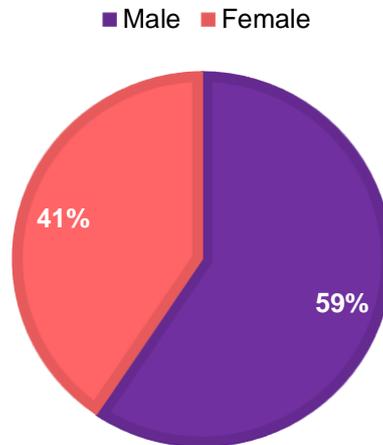
19 out of 21 associate or assistant directors (90%) were female at the six highest-funded Scottish theatres in 2019/20.

At female-led theatres seven out of nine associate or assistant directors (78%) were female in 2019/20, while 17 out of 21 (81%) were female at theatres under male artistic leadership.

Playwrights

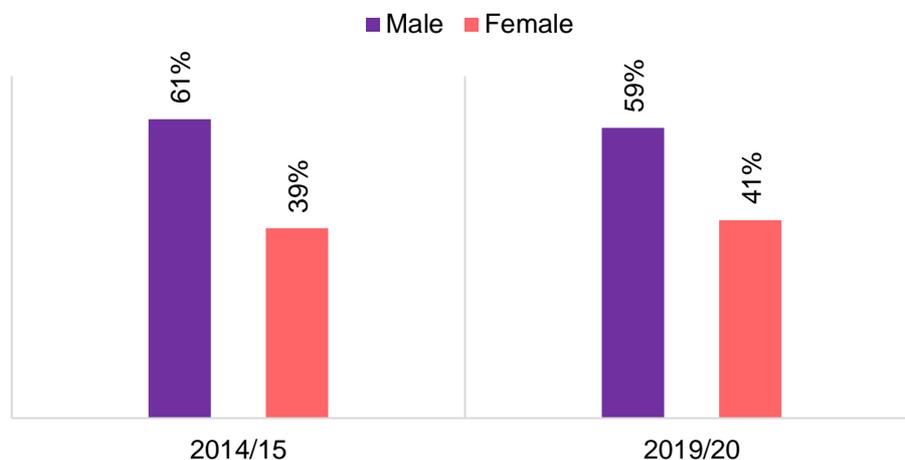
The survey identified 143 writers of 120 shows at Scottish theatres in 2019/20. Of these playwrights 85 (59%) were male and 58 (41%) female.

Playwrights, 2019/20



The 2014/15 survey identified work of 170 playwrights shown in Scottish theatres that year. 39% of those writers were female, compared to 41% in 2019/20.

Playwrights, 2014/15 & 2019/20

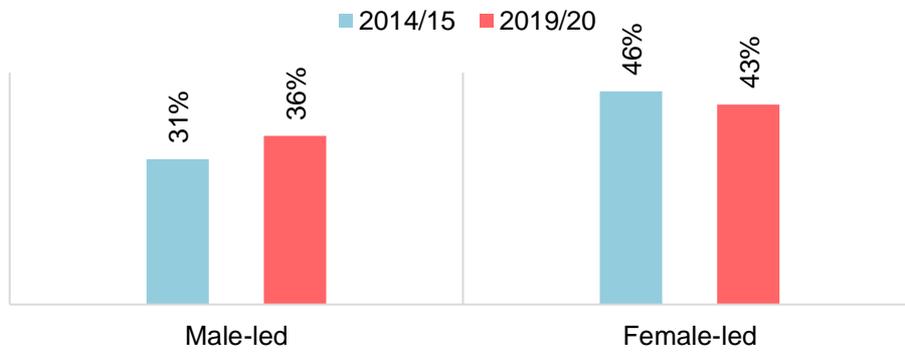


40% of writers of plays shown in the highest-funded Scottish theatres were women, which is similar to the proportion across Scottish theatres as a whole. This is higher than in 2014/15 when 35% of writers of shows at the six highest-funded theatres were female.

The proportion of work attributable to female playwrights was higher at female-led theatres in 2014/15 and 2019/20 than at male-led ones. However, the disparity between them was less pronounced in 2019/20 than it was in 2014/15: the latest survey found 43% of writers were women at female-led

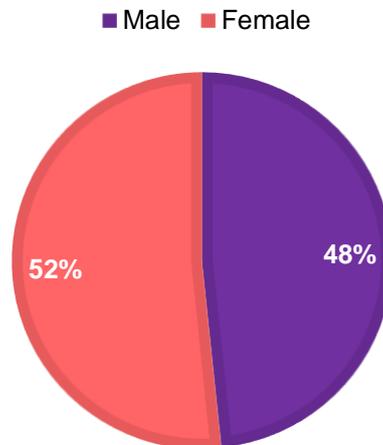
theatres and 36% were female at male-led theatres; in 2014/15 46% of writers were women at female-led theatres while 31% were female at male-led ones.

Female writers of plays at male and female-led theatres, 2014/15 & 2019/20



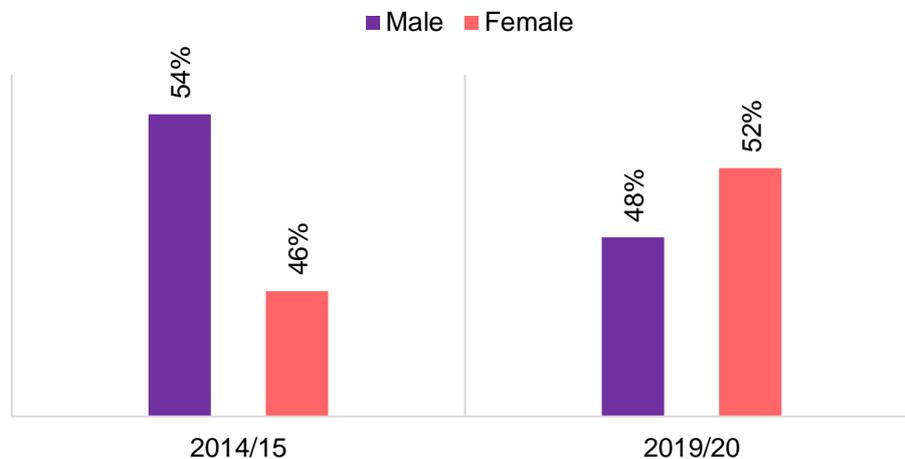
Performers

Performers, 2019/20



The total number of performing roles in Scottish theatres in 2019/20 (523) was significantly lower than in 2014/5 (811). However, female representation as a percentage of all performer roles was higher, up from 46% in 2014/15 to 52% in 2019/20.

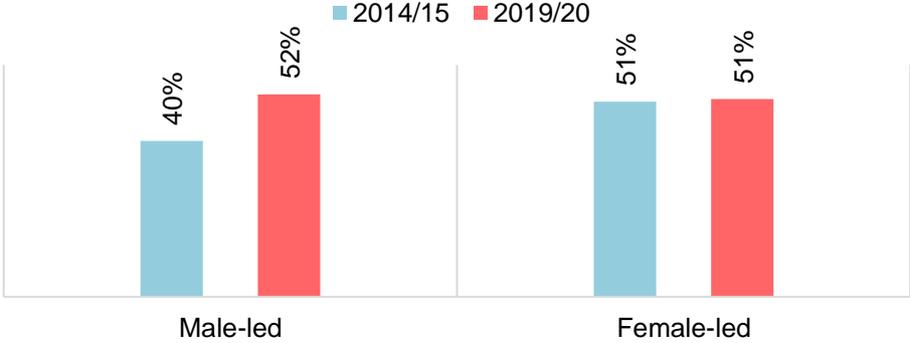
Performers, 2014/15 & 2019/20



The proportional shift in numbers of male and female performers was even more pronounced at the six highest-funded theatres. Whereas females accounted for 41% of roles in these theatres in 2014/15, women were cast in 55% of roles in 2019/20.

The 2014/15 survey found that only four out of 10 performance roles went to women in theatres led solely by a male artistic director compared with 51% in female-led theatres. However, women were cast in marginally more roles than men in 2019/20 in both male and female-led theatres.

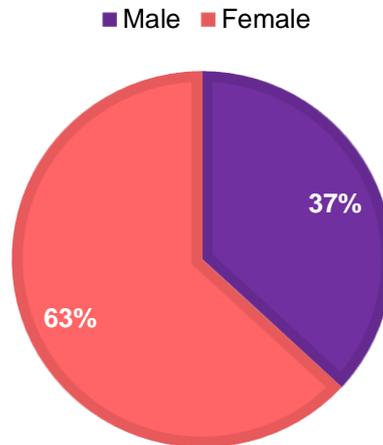
Female Performers at Male and Female-led Theatres, 2014/15 & 2019/20



Designers

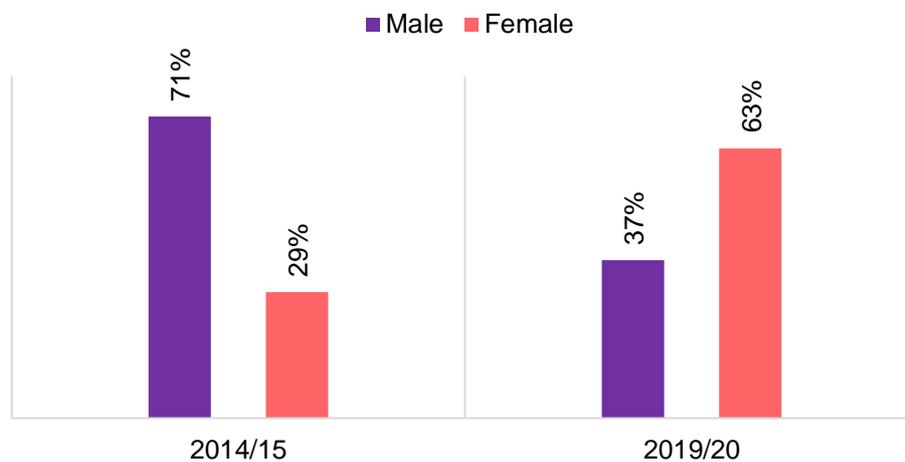
77 out of 122 set and costume designers (63%) were women in 2019/20.

Designers, 2019/20



The difference between the survey findings in 2014/15 and 2019/20 is profound: in 2014/15 only 43 out of 146 set and costume designers (29%) were female, which makes the considerable female majority in this field of work in 2019/20 even more remarkable.

Designers, 2014/15 & 2019/20

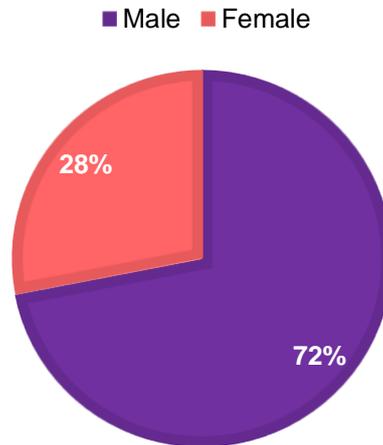


The 2019/20 findings are similar when analysed across the three main groups under consideration in this report: 60% of set and costume designers were female at the six highest-funded theatres; 63% were women at female-led theatres; and 63% were women at theatres where the artistic director was male.

Lighting Designers

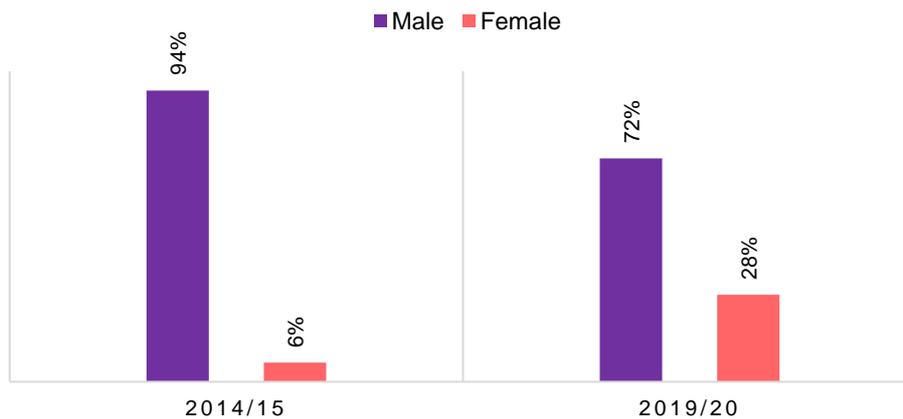
Lighting design is a field of work in Scottish theatre that sees most roles taken up by men. Out of 107 roles in 2019/20, females only accounted for 30.

Lighting Designers, 2019/20



The 2014/15 data comparison provides additional context, however, that suggests there has been considerable progress over the past five years in re-balancing the gender divide in terms of theatre lighting design in Scotland. The 2014/15 survey found that just six out of 98 lighting design roles were undertaken by women that year.

Lighting Designers, 2014/15 & 2019/20

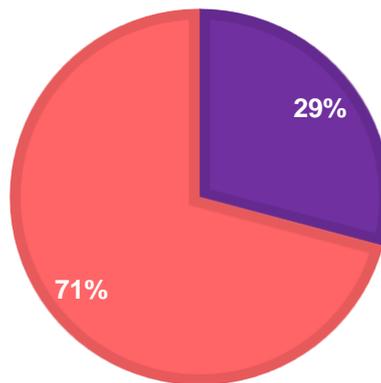


Movement

There were 48 movement roles, which include choreography and fight direction, identified in Scottish theatre in 2019/20, with 34 of these (71%) taken up by women.

Movement

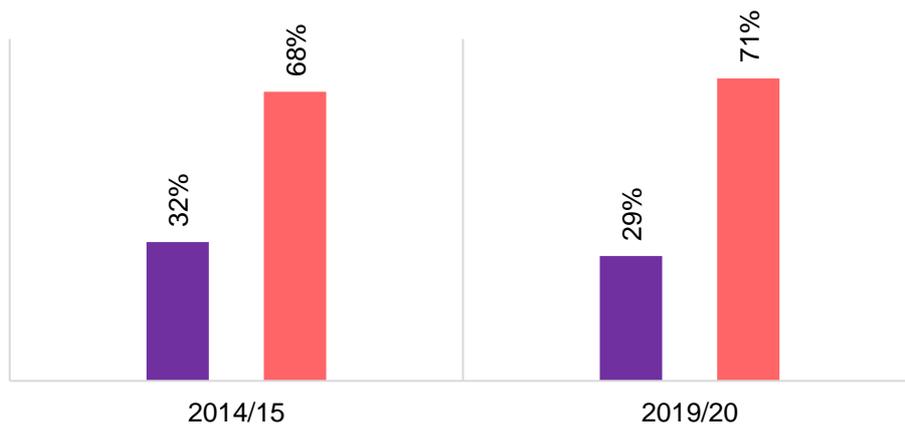
■ Male ■ Female



The findings were similar to 2014/15, when females accounted for 25 out of 37 movement roles (68%).

Movement, 2014/15 and 2019/20

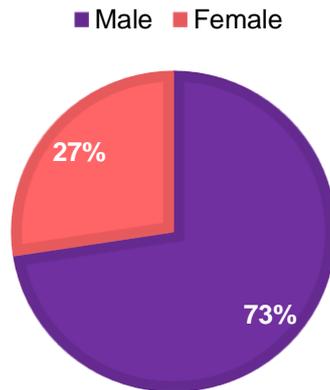
■ Male ■ Female



Music and Sound Designers

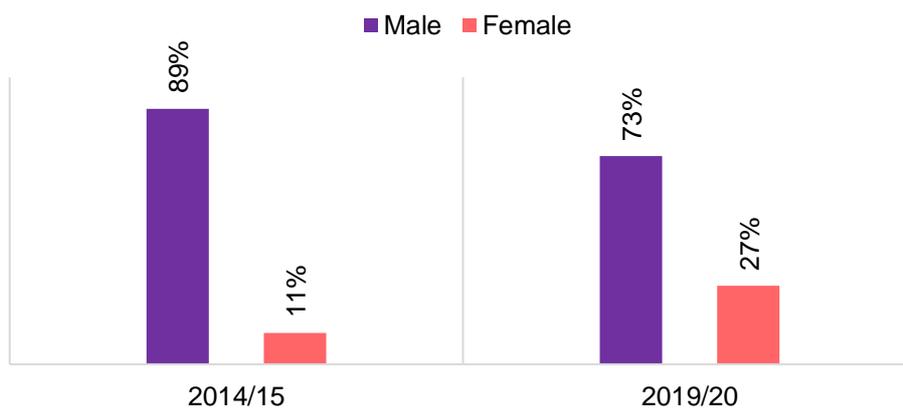
This category includes composers, musical directors and sound designers. 135 such roles were identified in the 2019/20 survey, with women accounting for 37 of them (27%).

Music and Sound Designers, 2019/20



Although men still significantly outnumber women in taking up music and sound design roles, the comparison of 2014/15 and 2019/20 surveys suggests a considerable shift in the direction of more women taking up such positions over the past five years.

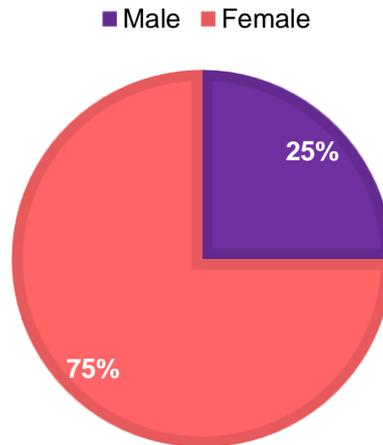
Music & Sound Designers, 2014/15 & 2019/20



Translators and Adaptors

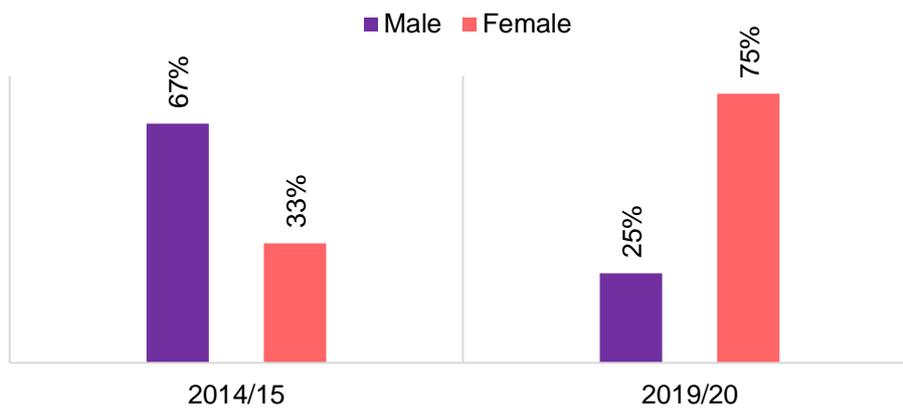
The numbers of roles translating and adapting plays are small, with 12 such roles identified in the 2019/20 survey. Nine of these (75%) went to women.

Translators & Adaptors, 2019/20



As with most areas of creative theatre practice examined in this report, there is evidence of a shift towards greater female representation in this field. In 2014/15, seven out of 21 such roles went to women (33%).

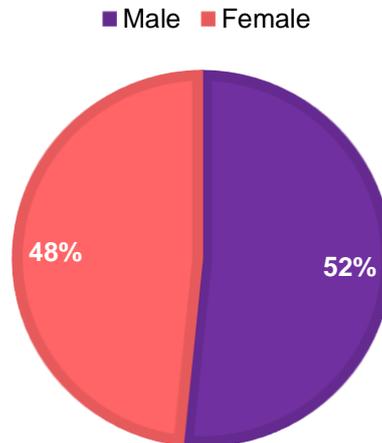
Translators & Adaptors, 2014/15 & 2019/20



Other Roles

There were 62 roles in total that were categorised under 'other roles' in 2019/20, and 30 (48%) of these went to women.

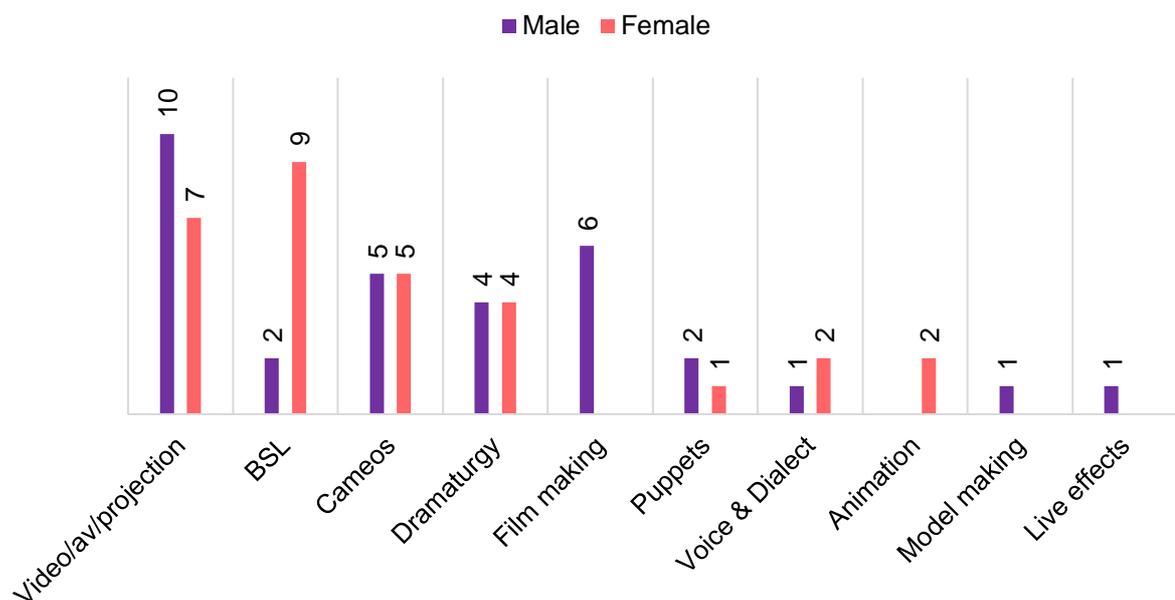
Other roles, 2019/20



The number of roles categorised under the 'other' heading was substantially lower in 2014/15 when 20 roles were allocated to this group, with half going to women and the other half to men.

The table below shows the breakdown of other roles in 2019/20. The biggest gender disparities within these relate to British Sign Language, which was female-dominated, and filmmaking, which was male dominated.

Other Roles, 2019/20



Conclusions

Lessons from 2014/15 report

The most common reaction to the 2014/15 report from women in the theatre community was 'it is not as bad as I thought it would be'. Indeed in the categories of directors and performers, women consistently took up over 40% of the roles. For playwrights, the percentage was 39%. This was regarded as significant.

It told us that it would not take much for that percentage to be pushed to 50% and that was a matter for theatre managements themselves. It also highlighted areas where women were significantly under-represented, for example design and lighting design and the conclusion was that there was need for a response from Creative Scotland and the training sectors.

So the conclusions of the previous report were that theatres themselves could do a bit more to push the figures for some areas over 50% but in some areas more strategic approach was required across the sector.

The data from 2019/20 imply that these lessons were taken on board at least in part.

Lessons from 2019/20 - what has changed and why?

Without some further qualitative work it is difficult to give definitive reasons for the gradual improvement on some areas and the dramatic increase in others. However the data hold some clues worthy of further investigation and from our combined knowledge of the sector, we can draw some conclusions.

Rising to the challenge

Theatre companies themselves have responded to the challenge to address the question of gender balance. This was already happening as companies adopted Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategies as required by Creative Scotland; and the publication of the previous report put the issue back on the agenda.

One possible driver is the dramatic rise in female artistic directors. With a relatively small number of organisations (24 in 2014/15 and 26 2019/20), even a small shift in recruitment by boards delivers a big percentage shift. It should also be noted that there have been some changes in the list of companies analysed as Creative Scotland ceased funding some and introduced new ones into their portfolio of companies. Many of the new organisations have female leaders.

However what has not changed is the category of six highest funded theatres – Citizens, Dundee Rep, Lyceum, Traverse, Tron and The National Theatre of Scotland. Five out of six are led by men. Here we see 50% of the creative roles taken up by women. The obvious conclusion is that these theatres have responded positively to the challenge of gender balance. Behind these figures

we can point to seasons that specifically focussed on women playwrights and directors, most notably the Citizens Theatre's, *Citizen Women*.² As Dominic Hill, Artistic Director said in introducing this season on the website,

'The shows I have chosen for 2019 are both a response to the current media debates regarding empowerment and equality for women, and what I feel is the most exciting and ambitious work that we should be presenting to audiences in Scotland.'

Other initiatives

Women are still under-represented in lighting and sound design. And this is a systemic issue that requires a fresh approach in training and development. After publication one theatre director said that he tried to engage a female lighting designer for his next project 'but she was busy'. He was not being facetious. There was and still is, a lack of female lighting designers in Scotland – although figures suggest in both lighting and sound design, as in all others, the number of women is growing.

In a bold move Stellar Quines undertook a development project called *M***** Classes*³ that specifically focussed on developing female lighting and sound designers. It may be that we are seeing this paying off.

Remarkably in 2019/20 women made up 63% of the designers (set and costume) compared with 29% in 2014/15. Without further qualitative research it is not possible to identify if this due to more female designers emerging in Scotland; a rise in the number recruited from elsewhere; a statistical 'glitch' or simply that directors are more aware now of recruiting women as designers.

The canon – or lack of it?

Overall, as the data show, the percentage of women engaged in creative roles has grown in the last five years. This is particularly marked in performers – a rise of 46% to 52%. The gap between male and female playwrights has also narrowed although still below 50% (from 39% female/ 61% male to 41% female/59% male).

The Theatre Sector Review⁴ published by Creative Scotland in 2012 identified new work as 'the lifeblood of Scottish theatre' (p.2). This conclusion was derived from an analysis of theatre repertoire over several decades. New work dominated the output of theatre in Scotland work rather than work from 'canon' of British, American and European theatre: Shakespeare, Williams, Chekhov, Molière – for example. Even when great classics of English and European literature are programmed into the repertoire, they are often 'inspired by' or 'after' the original and many of them are devised by women – see *Mrs Puntilla and her Man Matti*, *The Duchess (of Malfi)* and *Nora* in 2019/20.

There is evidence to suggest that the production of newly commissioned work is still a key aspect of Scottish theatre. This, it could be argued, opens up opportunities for women and has an impact on the gender balance – particularly regarding playwrights and cast lists although the former still does not reach 50%.

In the previous report, we highlighted from figures published by Playwrights' Studio Scotland that women tend to receive the smaller commissions (less than 30 minutes) and men dominate in the category of longer plays (more than 90 minutes). Updated research from Playwrights' Studio Scotland/ Scottish Society of Playwrights confirms this still to be the case. ⁵

How does Scotland compare?

In comparison to figures for English theatre the situation in Scotland is better balanced. *What Share of the Cake?*⁶, an analysis of English theatre commissioned by Sphinx theatre found that in 2017/18:

- 31% of Artistic Directors of theatre funded by Arts Council England (National Portfolio Organisations) were female.
- 63% of theatres looked at by Stage Directors UK in 2017 employed more male directors than female

and amongst those that received the greatest subsidy:

- 0% of RSC productions from December 2018 – September 2019 were written or adapted by women (0 productions out of 16).
- 25% of productions in the National Theatre's autumn November 2018 – April 2019 season were by women (3 productions out of 12).

The French movement HF (Homme/Femmes) which promotes equality across the performing arts, audio visual and film first inspired the 2014/15 report, *Where Are the Women?*. The analysis of gender in the arts in France *Où sont les femmes?* by la Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatique (SACD) reveals that in the five years from 2012 to 2017 only 27% of directors were female and women ran only 12% of the national theatres and 20% of the national drama centres.

La Asociación Clásicas y Modernas ⁷ in Spain has similar aims to HF and has used government published data to make its case. While strict comparisons are difficult because of the categories that are measured, we can see a similar pattern of under-representation of women. In 2019 of the 75,600 employed specifically in drama and music in 33.5% were women.

It could be argued, therefore, that theatre in Scotland is leading the way when it comes to gender parity – perhaps for the reasons outlined above.

Unlike the work done in France, we have looked only at theatre – and not across the performing arts as a whole or indeed other artforms. The report for England highlights that according to Arts Council diversity figures data 46% of National Portfolio Artistic Directors across all art forms being female, for NPOs in 2017/18 (February, 2019), suggesting that theatre in England lags behind other art forms in terms of gender parity.

No published data are available from Creative Scotland so it is not possible to draw any similar comparisons with other artforms.

Other observations

Opportunities

The clearest change over the last five years affecting all who work in theatre is the drop in the total number of creative roles: 1,338 in 2019/20 compared with 1,698 in 2014/15 – 360 fewer opportunities. This is matched by a drop in productions from 137 in 2014/15 to 121 in 2019/20.

More detailed work for Playwrights' Studio Scotland and Scottish Society of Playwrights over the last three years, has shown a heavy decline in the recorded numbers of professional contracts: 60 in 2014/15 to 29 in 2018/19. In addition the 2019 survey found the most common category of commission length was 'up to 60 minutes'.

We believe that this change in opportunities – particularly for larger and longer productions -- is in part to do with co-productions. We counted each production once even if, as a co-production, it appeared in more than one theatre.

On first look this appears to be a serious decline in theatre but looking at funding levels and number of companies, this does not appear to signal a decline. Rather it indicates a more collaborative approach, sharing resources, longer runs, affording longer contracts to those working on a production, and, crucially, giving audiences in different parts of Scotland the opportunity to see work. NTS was established to work in partnership with other Scottish companies and it appears that this level of partnership working is happening across the sector – particularly in the larger theatre companies.

Others can judge if this is a good or bad use of resources. What is true is that a drop in opportunities has not led to a reduction on the percentage of women working in creative roles overall - an outcome that might have been expected.

BSL

In 'other roles' we have included BSL signers. These are signers who are identified separately in the companies' cast lists. However it was noted that there were performers using BSL and they were included in the 'Performer' category. The work on the previous report did not throw up any in the category of BSL interpreter and it is a small but encouraging sign of greater engagement with disabled, and in this case, deaf performers. Again we have not conducted further research on this but one theory is that the BSL acting course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is having an impact.

Web information

One of the areas which has not changed over the last five years is in the archiving on websites. What we said then, still applies:

'What did emerge from the process of data-gathering was the

inconsistent way in which theatres archive their material on their websites. Some were excellent with full details about shows and dates as well as the cast list and names and roles of the creative team. However, others did not. While many will have deposited their hard copy archive with Scottish Theatre Archive or the National Library of Scotland, it is regrettable that more do not make details of productions easily accessible on line. This would have potential benefits not just for researchers but also journalists and others working in theatre wishing information on cast and creative team.’ (p. 22).

Theatres use their web sites as a marketing tool and most of the ‘splash pages’ this time round were understandably dealing with Covid-19. However it is worth bearing in mind in the future that the website archives are an important place for recording the contributions of all of those working in freelance roles in theatre.

Where Next? Collect and Publish

The third aim of this project is ‘To demonstrate that gathering data is the starting point for developing equality, diversity and inclusion strategies.’

This is the same as in the 2014/15 exercise and is the area where the least progress has been made.

Theatre companies themselves have embraced the importance of data and it was made clear in the 2014/15 report that there was no expectation of companies slavishly sticking to numbers:

‘It is not nor ever has been the intention of this project to invite a prescriptive approach to artistic policy in Scottish theatres. It would be as unreasonable to suggest Gregory Burke’s *Black Watch* have 50:50 men and women as it would to suggest the same for Sue Glover’s *Bondagers*. There is no ‘one size fits all’. Yet it is important for theatres to reflect on the effects of their approach to commissioning, casting and recruiting of a creative team within the context of gender.’ (p.21)

However data are an important starting point for policy-making and here there is little evidence of progress. Creative Scotland gathers data from its Regularly Funded Organisations to monitor how far the organisation has met its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. However these data sets are not analysed, aggregated nor published. While we have been able to gather information from websites to allow the analysis of women v men in creative roles, it is not possible to do the same for other protected characteristics without some mining of data provided by the companies themselves.

It is vital that if we are to understand how Scottish theatre – and other artforms- are addressing the issue of representation of those who are disabled, black, gay, lesbian, transgender – that a more robust process is needed.

At the time of writing, there are huge issues for both Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government as we live through a very uncertain time for the arts in Scotland. It is hoped that as things start to open up, those involved in cultural strategy in Scotland will embrace the positives and challenges for women in creative roles in Scottish theatre; build on that using the lessons here to address other artforms; and tackle areas where there is need for development.

No going back

Overall the picture for women in creative roles in Scottish theatre is improving. The challenge now is to hang on to these achievements and to face up to the challenges. This is not over. As Liz Lochhead said, 'Feminism is like housework, you have to re-visit it every ten years'. Perhaps a decade is too long to leave it and constant vigilance is required as the issues of under-representation of other protected characteristics are tackled to create theatre – and other artforms -- which can be truly described as equal, diverse and inclusive.

POSTSCRIPT

In May 1988, as arts officer of the STUC, I organised a conference entitled Missing Culture which included contributions from actor Elaine C. Smith, broadcaster, Kirsty Wark and curator of the People's Palace, Elspeth King alongside Mark Fisher MP who was at that time the UK Arts Minister and had launched the campaign which gave its name to our conference. This was the first occasion I was involved in the issue of female representation in the arts.

Today I have several box files that over 32 years have been filled with reports, speeches, talks, research documents all on this topic. I have also met women from all over Europe at conferences in France and Spain.

I am grateful to Stellar Quines for commissioning and contributing to this latest report and for the work done on data analysis by Fraser White. It is fitting that this will be the last piece of consultancy work I intend to undertake. The struggle is not over but we have made real progress. Good moment to bow out.

Christine Hamilton
July 2020

List of Companies

A Play, A Pie and A Pint (Glasgow Lunchtime Theatre)
Beacon Arts Centre
Birds of Paradise Theatre Company
Catherine Wheels
Citizens Theatre
Comar
Dundee Repertory Theatre
Grid Iron Theatre Company
Horsecross Arts (Perth Theatre)
Imaginate
Lung Ha Theatre Company
Macrobert Arts Centre
Magnetic North Theatre Productions
Pitlochry Festival Theatre
Platform (Glasgow East Arts Co)
Royal Lyceum Theatre Company
The National Theatre of Scotland
Solar Bear
Starcatchers Production
Stellar Quines Theatre Company
Theatre Gu Leòr
Toonspeak Young People's Theatre
Traverse Theatre
Tron Theatre
Vanishing Point Theatre Company
Visible Fictions

Endnotes

- ¹ http://christinehamiltonconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Where-are-the-women_-8-March-2016-1.pdf
- ² <https://www.citz.co.uk/site/info/citizens-women>
- ³ <https://www.stellarquines.com/artist-development/masterclasses/>
- ⁴ <https://www.creativescotland.com/resources/our-publications/sector-reviews/theatre-sector-review>
- ⁵ https://www.playwrightsstudio.co.uk/media/962824/final_playwrights_survey_report_2018_-19.pdf (pp31-33)
- ⁶ <https://sphinxtheatre.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/What-Share-of-The-Cake...pdf>
- ⁷ <https://clasicasymodernas.org/>
<https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:1feaebe0-1303-4c9f-af12-f71e383cf2c3/datos-estadisticos-artes-escenicas.pdf> (p6)