

Jamie Wilde Interview

Todd L. Burns Oct 5

Jamie Wilde is a young Dundee-based music journalist. He's worked with The Skinny, Notion, and NME, and has just finished his dissertation at the University of Glasgow. The dissertation's guiding question was: "How inclusive is Glasgow's underground music scene for female creators?"

Can you please briefly describe yourself and what you do?

I'm currently a 23-year-old music and arts journalist based in Dundee, Scotland. To date, I've written for the likes of *NME*, *Notion* and *The Skinny Magazine*. It's interesting because like so many other interviewees that have been featured in this newsletter, I never really intended on being a music writer or journalist of any kind. It was only when I started writing reviews of local bands for a Scottish music blog a few years ago that I thought, 'this is quite fun, I can do this,' you know. Things have just kind of snowballed since then and I feel really lucky to have stumbled upon such great experiences and opportunities in music journalism from such a young age. I'm very keen to keep building on my portfolio to date and grasp new and exciting opportunities that may come my way.

I've also very recently finished my studies at University of Glasgow in MSc Music Industries. Even though the pandemic decided to intervene on the last few months of my relatively laid-back student life, I met a bunch of highly motivated, unique individuals on my course and I learned a lot about myself and what I plan to do with my future whilst studying there over the past year.

Can you briefly summarize your article?

So, for my 12,000 word dissertation piece that I carried out as part of my coursework during the summer (yes, my summer was spent indoors gazing solemnly at the sun outside my window), I looked broadly at the topic of women in music but more specifically how female musicians may, or may not be, made to feel included within UK music scene contexts. The paper was titled: "How Inclusive is Glasgow's Underground Music Scene for Female Creators?".

For the research, I interviewed a range of both male and female musical creators (which I define in the paper as broadly including DJs, producers and musicians) within Glasgow's underground music scene, and I then compared the various analyses of interview respondents to research conducted within the wider music industries. There were four main themes I explored within the paper to help determine the current state of inclusivity within Glasgow's underground music scene: these included the visibility and audibility of female creators, impacts of associations between masculinity and technology, incidents of sexual harassment and marginalisation within a 'boys club' culture, and also an examination of the ways in which those within the scene are working to create a more inclusive environment for female creators.

Conducting research in the middle of the pandemic was a strange experience. On the one hand, Covid-19 impacted the research from a methodological, ethical and also personal perspective from my stance as a researcher as I have been a key worker throughout the pandemic. However, on the other hand, lockdown restrictions earlier this year arguably allowed me to focus more on my project with less outside distraction, so there were pros and cons throughout.

What about this topic was so interesting to you?

What I found most interesting about this topic was that despite the array of gender inequalities that remain inherent within Glasgow's underground scene, as well as other music scenes across the UK, those currently within the scene are committed towards fostering a working environment that is inclusive not just for female creators, but for all types of people.

The scene thrives on diversity; the city's artistic communities and rich creative heritage arguably allow for people of differing identities and personalities to be more readily accepted than other cities within Scotland, and this is hugely important within the context of the city's underground scene. Collaboration, community spirit and diversity were all key recurring themes expressed by the participants within this research that they argued were helping to foster a more inclusive working environment for female creators. Particularly within the city's electronic circuit, issues of under representation of female DJs as well as misogynistic, discriminatory attitudes

held by male DJs have been broken down significantly over recent years and my research pinpoints that hopes are high within the scene at the moment for things to continue to improve for years to come.

How did you realize this subject was something you wanted to pursue?

As a postgraduate student conducting research into gender inequalities within the music industries, I realised that my stance as a male researcher within this subject area was very rare. Literature written by males on gender inequalities within the music industries is sparse, and I believe that this upholds the dominant ideologies and discourses that are inherent throughout popular music which generally privilege males. As such, in carrying out this research, I aimed to overturn these ideologies by broadening my horizons both as a researcher in popular music and also morally as a human by being a person who believes that both males and females should be treated equally not just within the music industries, but across all areas of society.

Furthermore, by raising awareness of the extent of gender inequalities specifically within Glasgow as a locality, the intention behind this research project was to create a piece of material that could be of value to those working within the scene at present. By highlighting an array of barriers, gaps and opportunities, I hoped that the piece of work had the potential to contribute effectively to the state of inclusivity for female creators within Glasgow's underground scene.

What was the most surprising thing that you found in your research?

Perhaps what was most surprising to me whilst conducting this research was just how prevalent gender inequalities remain within the music industries and society at large. It's hard to believe that we're now in 2020 and gender pay gaps are still an issue – why should men be paid more than women for doing the same job? It's morally wrong on a number of levels and ultimately shows that there is still a lot of work to be done before men and women can work together on an equal playing field in any industry.

Can you point us to any further research on the topic that you think is relevant?

Sure! I'd definitely recommend Vick Bain's Counting the Music Industry Report (2019) for starters. The USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative based in the US have produced several noteworthy pieces of research across the music and cultural industries over recent years and their work was valuable to my topic of study. Creative Scotland's Understanding Diversity in the Arts Report was also crucial in allowing me to gain an insight into gender inequalities across the arts sectors within Scotland.

Elsewhere, I'd also recommend looking at Women in the Studio by Paula Wolfe, Cecilia Björck's Claiming Space as well as various works from Tami Gadir which explore gender inequalities within electronic music scenes across the globe.

Where would you like to see more research done around this topic?

Although I would like to see more research around gender inequalities being conducted on a larger scale across the globe, what became blaringly apparent whilst conducting my research into this topic was that there is a distinct lack of males either writing or participating in research based on gender inequalities within the music industries. Even within my own research, I found that males were much less likely to respond to calls to participate in my research and I only ended up with one male participant by the end of the project – though I had reached out to several potentially suitable candidates.

Thus, I feel that there should be a considerable effort towards having more males conducting - and participating in - further research on gender inequalities in the music industries. Without an increased level of awareness by males working within the music industries as well researchers on such issues, I believe that gender inequalities will continue to persist throughout music scenes as well as the wider music industries.

What's next for you?

Now that my Uni studies are all finished, I'll be keeping an eye out for new and interesting opportunities within music journalism as well as the wider music industries. I know that my chances of finding opportunities will be significantly impacted due to the effects of the pandemic, but I won't let that stop me from reaching out to people and exploring what next steps I can take

in my career. Like I mentioned earlier, I feel incredibly lucky to have already worked with a host of reputable employers across music journalism in the UK and I know that I will try my very best to keep this positive momentum going!

Also, whilst I'm here, if there's any music or arts editors out there reading this and are currently looking for writers at the moment, my full portfolio can be found at www.jamiewilde.com and please don't hesitate to drop me an email if you'd like to get in touch :)