Resampling Gender in Music Production:
Community Development and Participatory Learning at Play

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ABSTRACT

Women are seriously underrepresented in the field of music production because of a number of social and systemic barriers. These barriers include a lack of access to technology, a lack of encouragement to use technology, shortages of same-sex/same-gender role models, and the marginalization of women’s contributions in the field. In response, I organized the event “Resampled music production workshops for women and trans folks.” My aim was to challenge some of these barriers and to encourage women and trans folk to engage in music production. A team of experienced female facilitators led the Resampled workshops, which covered a variety of disciplines in the music production and technology fields. Women and trans people of all experience levels were invited to participate in the free event, which took place on July 14, 2013, in Toronto.

This paper outlines Resampled’s mission and pedagogical approach, including its goal of working toward social justice through empowerment, community development, and participatory learning. After the event, participants were invited to complete a feedback questionnaire about their experiences at Resampled. Drawing upon this feedback, along with critical discourses on women in music production, this paper analyzes the usefulness of Resampled as an approach for tackling injustice and inequality in the field. My findings demonstrate that although the model has limitations with regard to facilities, funding, and outreach, it was highly effective in fostering a productive learning environment and in empowering participants to further explore music production.

KEYWORDS

music production, gender, technology, community development, participatory learning, role models, counterpublics, feminist theory, feminist/critical pedagogy, women’s studies
INTRODUCTION

“QUIT WHINING. Absolute waste of time,” read a comment by a user identified as “blah” on BlogTO, “the daily weblog about Toronto music, film, arts, people, places and other happenings.”1 “blah’s” statement appeared in response to a July 8, 2013, article with the headline: “New workshop aims to help women, trans folk break into the music industry”. The “new workshop” was Resampled, which I organized as part of my graduate research project. Its goal, as I explained on the Resampled website, was “to empower women and trans people to explore both the technical and creative sides of music production and the recording arts in a safe and encouraging environment”.2

Women are severely underrepresented in the field of music production, a gender imbalance that has been distressingly clear to me as a female producer/engineer/mixer. I have often felt isolated and aware of my outsider status as I pursue this otherwise rewarding practice. My feelings are supported by the data. Recent estimates state that women make up fewer than 5% of professional producers and engineers (Savage, 2012). Further, only six women (some in collaboration with male co-producers) have ever been nominated for Grammy Awards in the non-classical “Producer of the Year” category since it came into existence in 1975. No women have ever taken the prize, and the last female nomination dates back to 2003 (Grein, 2013). Given these statistics, I wonder how an event seeking to advance women in this profession could be written off as an “absolute waste of time”? My online research about the shortage of women in music production yielded numerous links to discussion forums and comment sections that were filled with defensive and often

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misogynistic attempts at justifying the phenomenon. Having to negotiate such overt
discouragement from the “blahs” of society can obviously deter some women who are curious
about exploring music production. But the barriers women face go far beyond such direct
assaults. In this paper, I examine existing research about some of those barriers, beginning with
the gendered nature of early childhood technological socialization and how this process often
leads to young women’s lack of ability or desire to identify with music technologies. I then
consider the literature on the gendered and heteronormative nature of recording studio discourse,
followed by analyses of the problematic nature of female representation in, or its exclusion from,
music and technology publications. As Tara Rodgers argues, the systemic “silencing” of
women’s contributions as producers is another pertinent issue (2010, 11). This silencing adds to
the shortage of visible same-sex role models for young women interested in pursuing similar
work.

Moving beyond the question of why women are underrepresented in music production,
this paper then discusses the important question of how these barriers can be confronted
effectively. My analysis focuses upon “Resampled music production workshops for women and
trans folks,” which I organized. Held in Toronto on July 14, 2013, Resampled was a free event
that featured a number of skill development workshops for women and trans people led by
experienced female facilitators. I encouraged the facilitators to design workshops that would
provide demonstrations and hands-on learning opportunities for participants as a means of
confronting structural and social barriers, which limit women and trans people’s access to, and
opportunities to identify with, technology. Resampled was also informed by critical feminist
pedagogy, which values community-building initiatives based on equal opportunity participation
as a means of confronting social injustice (Webb, Allen, and Walker, 2002). I structured the
event to enable collaborative learning by inviting participants to request specific workshop topics during the registration process, and by enforcing workshop capacities that allowed for active involvement and space for discussion. Finally, I intended the event to increase the visibility of women and trans people interested in music production, as well as to provide a forum where participants could meet potential mentors and role models in the profession. Participation in the event was limited to women and trans people in order to focus on the unique needs that many of these individuals experience in contrast to the dominant group of cisgendered men.³

Roughly 55 individuals of varying experience in music production registered for Resampled. Following the event, I invited participants to complete an anonymous online questionnaire designed to gather information about their personal experiences in the workshops, their feelings about the atmosphere of the event, any organizational concerns they may have had, and suggestions for future events. Due to complexities related to university ethics protocols, which I will address later in this paper, I used the data gathered from participant feedback, rather than ethnographic observation, to inform my discussion of Resampled. Drawing upon the experiences of the event participants, along with critical discourses on women in music production, I will analyze the usefulness and limitations of Resampled as an approach for tackling injustice in the field.

**BACKGROUND**


³ I use “trans” to encompass transgender, transsexual, gender queer, and other gender non-conforming individuals, and “cisgender” to describe individuals whose gender identity matches their biological sex.
studies that explicate the unique obstacles women face in technical domains, and considered the way these obstacles might act as deterrents for women becoming interested or involved in music production—a practice that requires a strong degree of technical competence. Further, I explored pedagogical philosophies and practical approaches to confronting issues of social inequality. As I will outline, these theories and studies helped define the mission of Resampled and inform the structure of the event. The outcome of these structural decisions will be discussed during my analysis of Resampled later in the paper. While I work through some of this background material, it is important that I acknowledge the limitations of these discussions in their tendency to emphasize “women” and “females” as a category without affirming complex relationships and manifestations of sex and gender, or assemblages of class, race, sexuality and ability (see Butler 1993, Puar 2012).

GENDER AND TECHNOLOGY

A regular theme in feminist theory has been how early socialization serves to reinforce an individual’s adherence to gendered norms and practices (Wajcman 2010, Butler 1993). Among these enforced norms are notions of who can and should use technology, and how they should utilize it. Through its associations with power, control and skill, technology has become a masculinized territory (Armstrong 2011) and the resulting socialization practices lead girls to “relate” to technology, while boys are encouraged to “tinker” with it (McCartney 2006, 91). This process also functions to shape the differing attitudes girls and boys often exhibit towards technology, including a lower level of enthusiasm by girls. However, as Kip Pegley argues, to attribute these differing levels of enthusiasm to girls’ inherent disinterest in technology is highly problematic and essentialist (2006, 62). A further manifestation of this gendered technological
socialization process is what Thomas Porcello labels the “deeply entrenched” historical belief that women are technically incompetent (1998, 505), another highly essentialist and troubling notion.

Educational spaces can contribute to this socialization process as well. Victoria Armstrong (2011) describes what she calls a “construction of male expertise” that occurs in music technology classrooms. In her observations she notes a tendency for male teachers to physically control technological spaces and to disengage with female colleagues during that process, giving off an outward appearance of “expertise,” which she labels an “essential part of masculine identity” (2011, 67). She argues that this “expert” identity is not equally available to the female teacher in this same scenario. When asked to discuss their professors’ technical skills, Armstrong found that the students in the class she observed believed the male teacher had higher expertise although, in reality, the female teacher had a comparable level of knowledge, experience, and ability. Armstrong argues that these gendered interactions between male and female teachers in technological spaces influence the students’ construction of their own gender identity in relation to technology.

Considering the estimate that women account for fewer than 5% of professional producers and engineers, it is clear that these gendered social processes impact the technical production side of the music industry. In his ethnographic work on music technology and production, Thomas Porcello describes the music studio and its “sophisticated technologies” as “forcefully constructed… male domains” (1998). He observed that while male musicians in the studio setting often contribute to the production of their own music, any woman present during a session, often the “lone woman” vocalist, is “generally expected to take directions, not give them” (1998, 505). Paula Wolfe furthers this idea by arguing that the studio is “a site gendered as a
male space of creativity and it is these gendered perceptions of technology aided creativity that are cited as a primary reason as to why women have either avoided, or have been excluded, from pursuing a career in music production” (2012). These constructed “masculine” sites might remain intentionally protected as such because, as Armstrong argues, when women perform work that is typically associated with men, the work often becomes devalued and the labour viewed as deskilled (2011).

I designed Resampled to de-masculinize production spaces by inviting women and trans people to gather, build temporary studios, and learn about music technologies and how to be expressive with them. The facilitators incorporated significant participatory components into their workshops in order to allow attendees to “tinker” in a way they may not have been encouraged to do while growing up. By including only female facilitators in the event (although transgendered facilitators would have been welcome), my intention was to thwart the potential for the oppressive gendered dynamics that Armstrong and Porcello witnessed in technology-based learning spaces.

**MUSIC TECHNOLOGY AND IDENTITY**

Music technology is not limited to the recording gear and software found in masculinized production studios. As Beverly Diamond argues, it is important to consider all music mediators as “technologies” including performance tools such as instruments, amps, and PA systems. She asserts that musical instrument selection plays an important role in the construction or reinforcement of one’s identity, and that social norms work to encourage the selection of certain instruments by certain genders (2006). These norms include the association of electric instruments, which require some technical competency, with masculinity, thus leading women to
identify more with traditional acoustic instruments and voice. Whereas a boy’s masculinity is secured by engaging with certain music technologies, a girl’s feminine identity is “at risk” with that same choice (Armstrong 2011, Bayton 1997).

The masculinization of electric instruments also plays an important role in the discursive exclusion of women from entire music genres and cultures, notably rock and DJ cultures. The masculine “aura” of electric rock instruments discourages women from identifying with them, while the subsequent exclusion and invisibility of female instrumentalists in the rock genre has only reinforced the masculine aura of those instruments. Mavis Bayton writes, “To have… a girl on lead guitar would undermine rock’s latent function of conferring ‘masculine’ identity on its male participant. Its ‘masculinity’ is only preserved by the exclusion of girls” (1997, 41). This process has contributed to the historical discursive representation of women as “the demeaned ‘outsiders’ of rock culture,” according to Norma Coates (2003, 67). Initiatives such as Girls Rock Camp are actively working to shift this process by encouraging young girls to identify with rock music instruments and to build their confidence through live performance.4

Mark Katz explores a similar exclusion of women in the world of turntablism, and specifically, DJ battling. He describes the world of battling as a space where young men are encouraged to explore their identity while reinforcing masculine ideals (2006). Further, he argues that the lack of female representation in the world of battling “demonstrates how assumptions about gender and technology can be mapped onto musical instruments, how these assumptions influence the activities of musicians, and how musical competition can be a vehicle for intense identity work” (2006, 594). These technology-related identity struggles that work to marginalize

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4 “Girls Rock Camp”, aka “Rock ‘n’ Roll Camp for Girls”, is the name used by an alliance of day camps around the world with similar missions to “help girls build self-esteem and find their voices through unique programming that combines music education and performance; empowerment and social justice workshops; positive role models, and collaboration and leadership skill building”; Girls Rock Camp Alliance. “About GRCA.” Accessed August 10, 2013. http://girlsrockcampalliance.org/about-2/about/. 
women in rock and DJ cultures are similar to those present in music production spaces. Like Girls Rock Camp, a crucial project for Resampled was to encourage women and trans people to identify with production technology and empower them to use it for their own creative endeavours.

PRODUCTION DISCOURSE

Another potential barrier for women seeking to become involved in music production is the need to familiarize, and even embrace, the gendered and heternormative studio recording “tech talk” (Farrugia and Swiss 2008, Diamond 2006, Porcello 2004, Lamb 1996, McCartney 1995, Turkle and Papert 1990). In her interviews with female musicians seeking to gain knowledge of the production process, Beverley Diamond documented a common frustration at the language barrier between themselves and sound engineers in the studio (2006). Researchers such as Sherry Turkle and Andra McCartney argue that production “tech talk” can be aggressive and that this may deter some women from engaging with it. In her analysis of computer terminology, Turkle writes, “Programs and operating systems are ‘crashed’ and ‘killed’… we write this paper on a computer whose operating system asks if it should ‘abort’ an instruction it cannot ‘execute’” (1990). McCartney emphasizes the gendered and colonial implications of some common recording language: “I use a ‘master’ controller keyboard and a ‘slave’ module. I ‘capture’ a region in a soundfile, ‘bang’ a metro, ‘strip’ a note, ‘punch’ in a new sound, ‘kill’ an unwanted track and mix down my resulting file to ‘virgin’ tape” (McCartney 1995). I will also point out that the entire signal structure of a recording studio is heteronormatively wired with cables containing “male” and “female” connectors.
Regardless of the problematic nature of such terminology, Thomas Porcello reinforces the need to acquire and appropriate this language. Through his ethnographic studio research, he argues that it is vital for music engineering students to partake in studio “tech-talk” in order to gain membership as an “insider” of the studio “discourse community” by exhibiting competence in this area (2004, 735). The students who displayed this competence ultimately had further success in the field (2004). Porcello’s work makes it clear that avoiding problematic studio discourse would likely hinder a woman’s advancement in music production professions rather than secure it. Resampled challenged the potential threat of such problematic language by exposing workshop participants to professional women who have learned to successfully navigate this discursive barrier.

TEXTUAL REPRESENTATION

Another motive for introducing participants to successful women in the field at Resampled was to introduce positive role models. This exposure could help counter some of the historically problematic representations of women in masculinized music domains. Audio production and music publications have been a venue where this problem has materialized consistently. Farrugia and Swiss, for example, point to the way audio technology magazines are shelved in the “Men’s Interest” section at certain major bookstores and how men are most often featured in the articles and ads for production gear (2008, 91). In an article in Electronic Musician, female studio co-owner K.K. Proffitt is quoted as saying, “I often wonder where all the other women audio professionals are when I read music technology magazines, flipping through articles about male producers and engineers, opposite ads only rarely showing a woman who looks like she is actually using the gear instead of lying on it in a state of undress” (2001).
In her study of fifty years worth of professional and consumer audio publications such as *Mix Magazine*, *Electronic Musician*, *Remix*, *Pro Sound News* and *EQ*, Kristine Burns delineates the “offensive or even reprehensible” portrayal of women in the advertisements and articles. She outlines a common progression from women being used as background models to “enhance the aesthetics” of technology products, to women being “overtly portrayed as sexual objects” both in text and images, to a near complete absence of women from advertisements and articles in the eighties and nineties (2003, n.p.).

Similarly, in her analysis of *Rolling Stone* magazines from the sixties, Norma Coates writes that the publication “reflected the gender politics of the day, in its pages as well as in the composition of its staff… almost all of its writers were male, and its general orientation was masculine. Its style, sensibility and subject matter were geared to masculine subjects, readers, and subjectivity” (2003, 78). She continues that “masculinity became naturalized in rock in the 1960s and, as a result, women became marginal and/or subservient to men in rock culture and its discursive formations” (2003, 67). Mavis Bayton discusses the lack of female electric guitar players in rock music: “The trade magazines reflect this relative absence. They also reinforce it, for any novice or would-be female guitarist is still confronted with a solidly masculinist world” (1997, 38). Women continue to face challenges as rock musicians and fans due to this historic, and ongoing, discursive marginalization. Susan Fast draws a parallel argument when she points to the exclusion of women’s work from the canon of critical scholarship on popular music, both as the artist-subjects and as the academics/journalists. She writes, “even when there is good work produced by women musicians or on any artist, genre or movement by women scholars, it is often ignored or marginalized in the discourse” (2008, 48). This consistent exclusion and marginalization forces women to “undo a lifetime of exposure… to gendered discourses that
circulate in popular cultures, social contexts, and educational environments” (Farrugia and Swiss 2008, 79) in order to make advancements in these masculinized music cultures and practices.

THE NOISE GATE

While it is well documented that women must confront numerous social, systemic, and psychological barriers when venturing to practice music production, Tara Rodgers points to the fact that many women are actually performing this work, yet their significant contributions are often rendered invisible. Using the metaphor of a “noise gate”—which is an audio processing tool used to mute sounds below a specified volume threshold—Rodgers argues that similar “thresholds” are applied to silence women’s contributions in historical accounts of electronic music production (2010, 11). In her analysis of production-related texts and discourse, Rodgers refers to the way that a single “tokenized” female will sometimes be acknowledged, but she argues that these isolated references cause inaccurate ideas about a “feminine” aesthetic, which can then lead to reductive comparisons between women’s work. She writes, “what is important to take away is that the public face of electronic music—on CDs, magazine covers, international festivals, scholarly publications—is typically male and does a certain kind of symbolic work” (2010, 15). Rodgers strives to undo this “symbolic work” through her Pink Noises initiative, a book and website that archives interviews and highlights contributions by female electronic music producers.

The female:pressure collective shares similar motivations for “un-muting” women’s electronic music contributions by maintaining an international network and database of female musicians, composers, DJs, cultural workers and researchers. In response to the question “why are there so few women active in the electronic music scene?” female:pressure responds “It’s not
our number, it’s about how and if we are recognized!”. A key project for this collective is to increase female representation as performers at music festivals. In a statement released by female:pressure on International Women’s Day in 2013, they present statistics showing that a 10% proportion of female performers in electronic music festivals worldwide is above average. They argue, “The crucial point of cultural progress and improvement lies in the interaction with an expert audience: performance, exchange, feedback, evaluation, releasing, representation, trial and error are essential steps in the development of one’s craft and creativity” (see female:pressure 2013). Based on the limited female representation at electronic music festivals, this crucial opportunity for professional development is one that is afforded to many male performers and producers, but kept at an overwhelming distance from female producers.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS / FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

While initiatives like Pink Noises and female:pressure work to make women’s production contributions more visible, other projects provide participatory learning opportunities designed to diversify the gender make-up of the music production industry. These include the Women’s Audio Mission in San Francisco, which provides audio training, career counseling and job placement to female-identified (trans-inclusive) individuals; Studio XX in Montreal, “a bilingual feminist artist-run centre for technological exploration, creation and critique”; In The Loop in Hamilton Ontario, a workshop series designed to introduce girls aged 14—18 to the basics of electronic music production; the multi-city Girls Rock Camp, which offers instrument training, music performance, and self esteem workshops for young girls; and the upcoming Gender Amplified festival and workshop in New York City, “a movement celebrating and supporting women music producers” which will feature performances, industry panels, and workshops.

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directed towards high school students of any gender. Beverly Diamond notes that women and girls do not have the same informal venues for gaining skills with technology as males do (2006). That makes intentional, hands-on opportunities like these critical for helping women and trans people develop production experience.

Such community-building initiatives align with philosophies of critical pedagogy that situate learning as a political act and assert that education should promote social justice (McArthur 2010, Sholle 1994). Feminist pedagogy, with its roots in critical pedagogy, advances this philosophy by asserting that education should be applied as a means of empowering the oppressed and transforming unjust relations of class, race, and gender (Manicom 1992, Sandell 1991). Central to these philosophies is also the belief that learning should be social. Many scholars argue that fostering “public space” is a critical means of engaging with society in transformative ways and as a method of community building (McArthur 2010, Sholle 1994, Manicom 1992). Music skill development projects for women are prime examples of the type of educational experiences supported by these philosophies.

Nancy Fraser supports the necessity of separate public spaces for subordinated social groups in her work. In “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” she critiques the concept of the “public sphere”, as articulated by Jürgen Habermas. She argues that the special discursive spaces Habermas advocates in order to achieve “consensus about the common good”, or a closely unified “public opinion”, are inherently flawed. Such spaces cannot be isolated from the effects of social inequality, and their processes will therefore tend to “operate to the advantage of dominant groups” (1990, 66). Fraser points out that there is a history of subordinated social groups in the public sphere.

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groups that have found it beneficial to create parallel discursive publics, which she labels “subaltern counterpublics” (1990, 67). These alternative discursive spaces allow “subalterns” to formulate interpretations of their own needs and identities in opposition to the dominant public. Through a multiplicity of publics, Fraser argues, the ideal of participatory parity is better achieved. It is this idea of movement toward participatory parity that fueled the Resampled initiative.

The creation and maintenance of separate spaces for women is a significant feminist tradition (Browne 2009, Morris 2001). For example, the popular Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival (MWMF) has maintained a policy that welcomes only “womyn-born womyn” since its inception in 1976.⁷ And yet, this long-running festival has also been plagued with a history of tension and controversy,⁸ mostly stemming from criticisms that its policies embody essentialist ideas about gender and sex rather than embracing increasingly accepted theories of sex/gender as performative and mutable constructions (see Browne 2009, Butler 1993).

The Canadian Trans Alliance Society (TAS) challenges essentialist notions of sex and gender through trans education. The TAS, which uses the term “trans” to encompass “all those who cross socially constructed gender boundaries with a gender identity, presentation, or behaviour not typically associated with their real or perceived biological sex”, released a policy manual for women’s organizations on how to be inclusive of trans people (Trans Inclusion Policy Manual For Women’s Organizations 2002, 2). They argue that since women’s organizations are well acquainted with the effects of pervasive violence and discrimination they should recognize that trans people, who are also subject to profound injustice and violence, have

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⁸ The annual protest festival “Camp Trans” is one manifestation of this tension. Camp Trans sets up next to the MWMF land during the festival dates with the intentions of protesting the womyn-born womyn policy and advocating for trans rights. See http://camp-trans.org/about/
a need to access their services and spaces as well (2002). Given this argument, as well as the fact that gender imbalances in technology-related professions are partly caused by essentialist ideas about sex and gender, I regarded it as critical to ensure that trans individuals felt welcome to participate at Resampled.

**ANALYSIS: RESAMPLED MUSIC PRODUCTION WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN AND TRANS FOLKS**

“Sampling” is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “the act, process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population”. In the world of digital audio, “sampling” is the process of taking digital “snapshots” from an analog signal; the higher the frequency or “rate” of these snapshots, the higher the fidelity of the digital representation. These definitions guided my naming of Resampled - an event that seeks to shift the representative sample of those who are producing music to reflect a more diverse population and sound.

My decision to organize Resampled stemmed partly from my own experiences as a woman working in music production/engineering and from my experiences as a female music technology and audio educator. I’ve found myself constantly juggling feelings of isolation and exclusion, experiencing moments of awareness about my limited opportunities compared to those of my male counterparts, having trouble identifying directly with the available male role models, being walked past by those seeking technical support or being overly encouraged when performing basic tasks, and struggling with whether my assertion of competence in this field will be labeled as “pushy” since assertiveness is traditionally characterized as unfeminine (see

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Armstrong 2011, Diamond 2006). Most importantly, however, my decision to organize Resampled came from a desire to meet other women and trans people who are interested, or currently engaged, in this kind of work. It came from my desire to build community and to develop support structures for those of us faced with the challenges of negotiating masculinized musical spaces.

“Resampled music production workshops for women and trans folks” took place on Sunday July 14th, 2013, at the Tranzac – a member supported venue and community organization committed to promoting the arts in Toronto. The event featured five hands-on/ears-on skills development workshops for registered participants: “Home Recording Basics”, “Intro to Analog Sound Synthesis”, “Hardware Looping”, “Mixing Techniques”, and “DJ 101.” There was also a drop-in Max MSP and Jitter “technology playground”. The workshops were led by a team of experienced female facilitators and were open to any woman or trans identified individual, regardless of production background and experience. Registrants had the opportunity to participate in a maximum of two workshops and to come together midday with a free lunch and Skype discussion with Tara Rodgers, author of Pink Noises: Women on Electronic Music and Sound.

In the tradition of feminist community development and in order to address the layers of exclusion women and trans people face in technology-related music professions and cultures, Resampled was a woman- and trans-only event. Within these parameters, however, I worked to make the event as inclusive as possible. First, I emphasized in all publicity that trans individuals, whether male identified, female identified, or other, were welcome to participate. Second, to address potential physical barriers to participation, Resampled took place at a wheelchair

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11 See Resampled schedule, Appendix 1
accessible venue. The registration form also invited participants to outline any additional accessibility needs they may have had so that accommodations could be made where possible. Third, I wanted to eliminate any financial barriers to participation. Since Resampled was part of my graduate research project, I was fortunate to have received financial support from two funding programs at McMaster University. This support enabled the participant registration to be free, for lunch to be provided, and for some participant travel costs to be covered. (This funding also covered technology rentals and honoraria for facilitators.) Finally, I attempted to include participants of diverse musical tastes and interests by offering interdisciplinary workshops that ranged from traditional instrument recording and mixing to electronic music tools and DJ techniques.

The need for this type of opportunity for women and trans people in Toronto became apparent shortly after Resampled registration opened. I publicized the event through a dedicated website (www.resampledworkshops.com); social media event pages; emails to various student, friend, and industry networks; and through word of mouth. Registration was launched on June 20, and by July 6 workshop registration was full and booked slightly above the capacity of 55 requested by the facilitators. Even after capacity was reached, interest in the event continued, and others who wished to participate made contact with me directly. Some women showed their support by offering volunteer time, and a few media outlets published articles to help spread the word as well. Overall the response was inspiring and spoke volumes about the necessity of such a project.

12 The McMaster funding I received was from the programs Forward With Integrity — for projects related to interdisciplinary collaboration in research, and Student Proposals for Intellectual Community & Engaged Scholarship (SPICES) — a graduate funding program encouraging community engaged scholarship.
13 See Press, Appendices 3.a, 3.b, 4, 5
METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the Resampled initiative, it is important to recall the goals of the project. The mission statement that I crafted for Resampled and posted on its website was:

To empower women and trans people to explore both the technical and creative sides of music production and the recording arts in a safe and encouraging environment. Through community engagement and collaborative learning we aim to address some of the challenges that are unique to women and trans people, who remain seriously underrepresented in the field of music production. These include invisibility, lack of mentors and role models, and negative representations in the media.

My method for gathering information about whether these goals were met and for discussing the limitations of the project was to survey participants and to provide my own autoethnographical account of the event planning process. I then analyzed the event’s outcomes using this information, contextualized by the literature on women and music technology, feminist and critical pedagogies, and counterpublics (discussed above in the Background section).

On July 19th, five days after the event, I sent emails to Resampled participants, inviting them to participate in an anonymous, online, password-protected questionnaire about their personal experience of Resampled. I formulated questions to determine the skill level of the participant upon registration, what the individual was hoping to gain from attending the event, whether they acquired applicable skills through the workshop(s), how they felt about the atmosphere of the event space, as well as any additional feedback they cared to provide. My rationale for using participant feedback as my primary method for gathering data about the outcomes of Resampled, rather than observational accounts, is related to the challenges I encountered while attempting to navigate McMaster University’s research ethics protocol,

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14 Approximately 50 Resampled participants were invited to engage in the feedback questionnaire. The first email invitation for the survey was sent on July 19th, 2013, and a follow-up was sent on July 26, 2013. I received a total of 16 responses between July 19 and August 1, 2013.
15 See Appendix 2 for the survey questions.
including the processes of gaining informed consent from research subjects. I will discuss this issue, along with other obstacles I encountered during the planning process, later in my analysis.

**FACING FEARS**

The effects of the gendered technological socialization, which I outlined above, was demonstrated clearly in the responses to the Resampled feedback survey. When asked about their motivation for participating in the workshops, numerous questionnaire respondents pointed to their desire to familiarize themselves with music technology and highlighted their insecurities around gear. One participant who was curious about production equipment explained that they had “no knowledge at all”, while another stated that their reason for attending was to “decrease my fear of technology”. Another participant elaborated on a similar concern; “I feel that part of the intimidation factor for women getting involved in… music production is that there is simply so much to learn and we didn’t grow up being encouraged to tinker with technology”.

Demystifying equipment and building confidence around music production tools was crucial to achieving Resampled’s goal of empowerment. From my own experience in production/engineering and education, a person grows comfortable with technology through trial and error, and through play. The problem is that this familiarization process requires both access to gear and a comfortable environment in which to learn how to use it.

A number of researchers have identified barriers that can inhibit women from investing in music technologies, leading to a lack of access for learning through play. Rebekah Farrugia and Thom Swiss point out that women often experience more financial constraints than men when it comes to purchasing equipment, partly because of pay imbalances in the music industry (and in society as a whole) (2008). Victoria Armstrong found that boys in music classes were more
likely than the girls to have been bought equipment or software by their parents to experiment with at home (2011), and Paula Wolfe discusses the way home studio technology gets marketed to men rather than to women (2012). Resampled confronted the issue of access by incorporating technology demonstrations and hands-on learning opportunities into the workshops. Feedback about the active nature of the event was enthusiastic: “the DJ workshop was extremely hands-on and very energizing”; “I really enjoyed the hands-on participatory aspects of the workshops”; “the looping workshop was really fun in the sense that we all got to have hands-on access to the hardware, and “[the facilitator’s] demos demystified everything and broke the ice for any of us that may have been intimidated.” When asked whether they acquired skills they could apply in the future by participating in these workshops, the questionnaire respondents all indicated “yes”, which leads me to conclude that this hands-on learning was valuable.

**IN/VISIBILITY, ROLE-MODELING**

Beyond the desire to develop confidence around technology, many Resampled participants indentified their wish to meet other women and trans people with shared interests as part of their reason for registering. Post-event participant feedback highlighted this experience: “I generally compose by myself and I loved the feeling of community at this event. It made me want more of that”; “I loved that it seemed to attract a really diverse group of women, and discovering that such a large community of women exists in Toronto who share these interests”; and “I was also really impressed by the diverse roster of accomplished people attending the class”. The in-person community nature of the event functioned to increase visibility for women and trans people interested in music production and to reduce feelings of isolation. As one
participant noted, “I welcomed the chance to be actually taught and shown how to use hardware by practicing musicians and engineers, instead of my usual solitary internet research”.

This notion of learning from professional musicians and engineers is another important topic. Penelope Lockwood, who has studied the importance of same-gender role modeling for women, states,

Female role models may be especially beneficial for women for a variety of reasons: Outstanding women can function as inspirational examples of success… They demonstrate that it is possible to overcome traditional gender barriers… [they] can also serve as proxies, guides to the potential accomplishments for which other women can strive… [and] finally, by demonstrating their competence in traditionally male occupations, highly successful women may undermine traditional gender stereotypes about women, thus reducing the damaging potential of stereotype threat effects (2006, 44).

The shortage of visible female role models and mentors is a major barrier to women interested in music production and being exposed to female professionals had a clear impact on Resampled participants. This statement by one participant emphasizes Lockwood’s assertions about how female role models can serve as guides for accomplishments that other women can strive for: “seeing [the facilitator] use the technology so confidently and in a spirit of fun really helped make it all seem more attainable to me”. The skill and experience of the female facilitators made an express impact on other questionnaire respondents as well: “I loved that [the workshops] were run by women who were very knowledgeable in their fields of work”; “amazing facilitators who more than answered questions I have been wondering for a long time”; “[the facilitator] was down-to-earth and humble and answered all of our questions in a great and easy-to-understand way… incredibly knowledgeable”. The expertise of the facilitators also made the event feel more “official” to one participant, who remarked, “This adds a certain level of validation that says to whoever’s attending ‘this is important. It’s important that you’re here’”. Another attendee
commented on the overall professional nature of the event, writing, “[It made] the difference between a tokenistic event and a useful one”.

**RESAMPLED AS COUNTERPUBLIC**

Fostering a “safe and encouraging environment” for participants was crucial for promoting the inquiry and exploration that made Resampled such a successful space for learning. For this reason, I believed that it was important to reserve the event space for women and trans people. In music production contexts, men, particularly white hetero-masculine cigendered men, receive an abundance of social, and often financial, encouragement whereas women and trans people are often excluded or marginalized (see Wolfe 2012, Armstrong 2011, Farrugia and Swiss 2008, Diamond 2006). These differences in status and access to support often go unrecognized, however. The comment section of the BlogTO article about Resampled, discussed in the introduction, demonstrates this situation. As one user wrote, “Why is this needed? I hope there were no grants involved… If women/trans want to make an album they will!! Nothing is stopping them. I predict an empty booth, make sure you have enough recycling bins for your flyers”.16 Another user asserted that the barriers outlined by Resampled are “in no way ‘unique to women and trans folk’”. Not only do these comments demonstrate ignorance about systems of privilege, but their aggressive tone also contributes to an unsafe (virtual) public space. They thus highlight the necessity of the event and reinforce the need for a separate “safe and encouraging environment” for women and trans people.

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16 This comment was removed from the BlogTO website a few days after it first appeared. This might be due to the BlogTO zero tolerance comment policy for threatening or offensive posts. See http://www.blogto.com/commentpolicy. For a screenshot captures of the original comment, see Appendix 3.b. and Appendix 3.c.
In the feedback questionnaire Resampled’s atmosphere was described as “relaxing and welcoming”, “safe”, “open, easy, friendly and inclusive”, “a celebration of support”, “friendly and accepting”, and “a breath of fresh air”. One participant described how participation in the event revealed barriers of which they were previously unaware: “I generally am not a fan of exclusion, but at this workshop I think that keeping it limited to women and trans people removed an invisible element that I wasn't even aware was there when I work with men on making music.” One production student who attended the event compared the Resampled learning environment with that of their school: “I find that even in my program at school, women don't take an active participation role in learning about the production side of making music or audio engineering in general… it was nice to see everyone who came out and the eagerness to learn, there were no ‘stupid questions’ or pressures that there sometimes are in class”. Another participant also compared the learning environment with those they more commonly experience, “I myself have found that when the usual demographic occurs of many males to few females, the learning environment is very, very different, and becomes an obstacle to force myself to overcome”. It is clear that establishing this counterpublic space was important in achieving Resampled’s mission; as one participant stated, “[It was] essential to getting women and trans folk involved in… music production”.

COMPLICATIONS / LIMITATIONS / THE FUTURE OF RESAMPLED

While much of the feedback demonstrated the value of Resampled as a method of encouraging women and trans people to participate in the masculinized field of music production, it is also important to address the complications and limitations I encountered in the process of

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17 In the feedback survey participants were asked whether the women and trans space increased their motivation to attend the event, to which they responded with a unified “yes”.
organizing the event, as well as the constructive feedback I received from participants. Careful reflection on these discussions will help inform the shape and potential of future Resampled events.

**LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE**

Resampled participation was open to any woman or trans individual who was interested in music production, regardless of their age or experience level. Therefore, the skill level of registrants ranged from “complete beginners” to “over 10 years of recording and producing original music”. Given these diverse backgrounds, it was not surprising to receive feedback pertaining to the complexity of workshop content. While a few participants remarked that some of the content went “way over [their] head”, others wished the facilitators could have “delved a bit deeper” or that we could have offered some “more advanced workshops”. Recognizing the potential for this issue in advance, the facilitators and I attempted to mitigate the situation by inquiring about skill levels during the registration process, as well as by leaving space on the registration form to ask questions or request that specific topics be covered during the sessions. The plan was for facilitators to begin the workshops at a fairly basic level but proceed into more advanced topics according to the specific registration questions. The motivation behind the question space may not have been clear, and, unfortunately, few participants took advantage of the opportunity during the registration process. This left the facilitators to determine a flow that they felt to be most appropriate. When asked for suggestions for improvement, one participant suggested demarcating the level of course content for a particular workshop in advance, and others suggested skill-tiered workshops. While specifying workshop content level is entirely feasible, constraints of time and funding restrict the second consideration, which would require
Resampled to become a multi-day event. This leaves me to consider how best to address the varying skill levels of participants at future events, given the limitation of time and budget.

**FUNDING**

As a single event, Resampled was valuable. However, the impact of this initiative would certainly increase if it became a recurring event. While my intention is to carry Resampled forward as an annual project and to potentially expand the workshops over two days, this will largely depend on whether future funding can be secured. Considering the high cost of music production technologies, gendered pay imbalances in the music and other industries (Farrugia and Swiss 2008), and, for women/trans musicians who attended the workshop to learn about self-production, the incredibly low average salary of Canadian independent musicians ($7,228/year in 2011; see Canadian Independent Music Association 2013), it is crucial that Resampled remains financially accessible. What this means is that registration and lunch at the event should continue to be free in order to remove financial barriers to participation. It is also crucial that facilitators be adequately compensated for sharing their valuable expertise. Other costs associated with the event include technology rentals, supplies, and promotional materials.

Resampled was fortunate to have the venue space donated for the day by The Tranzac. As previously mentioned, it also received significant financial support through two separate funding programs at McMaster University. Since that funding will not available for future events, Resampled will have to turn to government arts council programs and other private funding avenues for financial support if it is to continue.
ETHICS

One major challenge that I encountered in researching, planning, hosting, collecting participant feedback, and writing this report on Resampled was managing the complexities of research ethics protocols. McMaster University maintains a strong commitment to supporting community engaged research projects, which was demonstrated by the financial support I received towards Resampled. In a 2011 letter to the McMaster community entitled “Forward With Integrity”, President Patrick Deane shares the priorities he deems critical to the university’s success at maintaining an innovative learning environment for students, a high level of research results, and the building of an “inclusive community with a shared purpose” (2011, 2). In this letter he states, “We will acknowledge, and seek to integrate in all our work and in ways appropriate to our specific fields, an obligation to serve the greater good of our community—locally, nationally, and globally”, and lists “enhancing the way we see and build connections between McMaster and the community” (2011, 5) as a key priority.

While the President strongly encourages students and faculty to work with communities on social justice projects, there are also ethics protocols that must be satisfied in order to formally engage in these initiatives. The McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB) is responsible for reviewing any research project that involves human subjects to ensure the “safety and well-being of human participants” in accordance with Canada’s Tri-Council Policy Statement: “Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans”. When discussing my project with an MREB representative, I was informed that in order to write a report on Resampled I would have to gain informed consent from each participant, prior to the event, allowing me to perform “observational research” on them as subjects. Informed consent typically requires the

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participant to sign a formal document that describes the observational approach and outlines the potential “psychological and social risks” associated with their participation (see MREB application, 2013). At stake in this situation are the very feelings of comfort and safety that are so crucial to community building projects like Resampled.

While covert observation was never my intention for this project, nor was the direct or indirect identification of any participants in this report, I did feel that these ethics requirements placed me in a bind. How was I to simultaneously respect the ideals and values of a community-engaged research project involving a vulnerable participant group, fulfill Resampled’s mission to foster a “safe and encouraging environment,” and satisfy the requirements of the MREB protocol? My method for managing this challenge was to obtain consent from the participants to use their feedback in this report rather than providing ethnographical accounts of the event. Although I feel this method satisfies my ability to complete a thorough report about Resampled, I do question how other student and faculty projects seeking to contribute to McMaster’s mission of “serving the greater good” in work with vulnerable groups may do so while juggling the demands of ethics protocols that sometimes place the researcher at odds with the communities with which they are engaged.

OUTREACH

I’d like to revisit Fraser’s concept of the “subaltern counterpublic” as a means of discussing an important area where my efforts with Resampled fell short. Fraser writes, “I do not mean to suggest that subaltern counterpublics are always necessarily virtuous… even those with democratic and egalitarian intents are not always above practicing their own modes of informal exclusion and marginalization” (1990, 67). This quotation helps frame the exclusion that certain
participants alluded to feeling at Resampled. Many of the comments I received noted a comfortable atmosphere at the event, but I also received feedback that pointed to the relative absence of racialized and trans individuals, which could certainly lead to feelings of isolation rather than “safety” and “encouragement”. Although I attempted to characterize the event in publicity as welcoming to trans folks, individuals with disabilities, and racialized people, I realize now that this characterization needed to be paired with more active community outreach in order to encourage further diversity among the participants.

A more thoughtful and deliberate approach to outreach will be a major consideration for future Resampled events in order to improve inclusion within this “subaltern counterpublic”. I would love to transform Resampled from my own organizational effort into a collaborative collective, co-organizing with a group of women and trans people connected to various racialized communities and involved in a wider variety of music production work across genres. As a white, cisgendered woman working primarily by myself on the bulk of the organizational tasks and vision for this event, my ability to engage in outreach to a variety of communities was limited not only by my own identity position and the communities with which I am connected, but also by the very real constraints of time and energy that I faced as a solo organizer for the event and full time student.

CONCLUSION

In a rather discouraging BBC interview, studio engineer and associate professor at Berklee College of Music, Susan Rogers, stated, “The bottom line is, women aren’t interested… there are no social barriers to a woman becoming a record producer” (2012). I was disappointed by this statement from a highly successful woman music production educator and engineer, who
has worked with artists such as Prince, India.Arie and David Byrne. Rogers supports her view by arguing that the barriers women face are actually related to the demands of biological reproduction.

One of the most satisfying outcomes of Resampled was that it proved Rogers’ claim to be wrong. The speed at which registration for Resampled reached capacity and the number of individuals who were still eager to participate past this point demonstrated that there is, absolutely, an interest in music production among women and trans people. The fact that these individuals were motivated to attend based on the removal of barriers that typically discourage their participation—lack of access to technology, lack of encouragement to play with technology, lack of visible female role models, and feelings of insecurity around the dominant privileged group—proves that social and structural obstacles are absolutely real. Participants commented: “there was a sense of ‘possibility’ in the air for me”, “I’m going to continue to play and explore!”, “the whole day left me with a sense of purpose and to respect my passions as an artist”, and “I had more of an ‘I can do this’ feeling than I had previously”. These statements demonstrate the potential of community-building initiatives in confronting social injustice through empowerment and hands on learning.


Fraser, Nancy. “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy.” *Social Text* no. 25/26 (January 1, 1990): 56—80.


Lockwood, Penelope. “‘Someone Like Me Can Be Successful’: Do College Students Need Same-Gender Role Models?” Psychology of Women Quarterly 30, no. 1 (March 1, 2006): 36—46.


McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB) Faculty/Graduate/ Undergraduate/ Staff Application to Involve Human Participants in Research”. January 18, 2013.

http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sampling


http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/cisgender


Porcello, Thomas. “Speaking of Sound: Language and the Professionalization of Sound-Recording Engineers.” Social Studies of Science 34, no. 5 (October 1, 2004): 733—758.

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http://www.blogto.com/music/2013/07/new_workshop_aims_to_help_women_trans_folk_break_into_the_music_industry/.


## Appendix 1: Resampled Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MAIN HALL</th>
<th>TIKI ROOM</th>
<th>SOUTHERN CROSS LOUNGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td><strong>REGISTRATION, COFFEE / SNACKS, 10am - 10:30 am</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td><strong>HARDWARE LOOPING</strong></td>
<td><strong>HOME RECORDING BASICS</strong></td>
<td><strong>INTRO TO ANALOG SOUND SYNTHESIS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:30am - 1:00pm</td>
<td>10:30am - 1:30pm</td>
<td>10:30am - 1:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>(Lunch Set-up, 1:00pm - 1:30pm)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>LUNCH IN MAIN HALL, 1:30pm - 2:30pm catered by Hot Mess Hall</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tara Rodgers Talk, 2:00pm - 2:20pm</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>DJ 101</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MUSIC PRODUCTION PLAYGROUND</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>2:30pm - 5:00pm</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2:30pm - 5:30pm</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Drop-In</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Hello Resampled Participants!

This is an anonymous feedback survey that asks for your thoughts about the Resampled event.

There are 2 main purposes for this survey:

1. To use your feedback to help shape/improve any future Resampled events

2. To use your responses towards a research project I (Heather Kirby) am working on about the barriers that women and trans people face in performing music production work. Your feedback about Resampled will be used to discuss models of community engagement and participatory learning, and their effectiveness towards encouraging women and trans people to explore production tools and techniques.

You can find more information about the research project in this letter of information:

Participating in this survey is completely optional, and your identity will not be revealed to any person including myself (Heather Kirby, the researcher).

The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete, and you have to be 18+ to participate. You can choose to skip any questions you don't feel comfortable answering!

This project has been reviewed and cleared by the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB). The MREB protocol number associated with this survey is MREB 2013 079. If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted, please contact: McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat Telephone 1-(905) 525-9140 ext. 23142 C/o Research Office for Administration, Development and Support (ROADS) E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Click "Yes" if you agree to take the survey under the terms outlined in the letter of information:

☐ Yes
☐ No

Did you attend the Resampled music production workshops event on Sunday July 14th?

If "Yes", please continue with the survey.

☐ Yes
☐ No

How did you find out about Resampled?


Please describe your background in music production prior to attending Resampled, if applicable.


List some of the music technologies (hardware or software) you were familiar with prior to attending Resampled, if applicable.

What were you hoping to gain or experience from participating in Resampled when you registered?

Which workshop(s) did you attend at Resampled?

- [ ] Home Recording Basics
- [ ] Intro to Analog Sound Synthesis
- [ ] Hardware Looping
- [ ] Mixing Techniques
- [ ] DJ 101

Did you acquire skills you could apply in the future by participating in these workshops?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

In what way did the workshop(s) you attended stand out to you?

In what way(s) did the event as a whole stand out to you?

Did having a workshop space that was specifically for women and trans identified people increase your motivation for participating in the event?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please provide any further feedback you have about your experience of this women and trans space.

Do you have any organizational concerns or suggestions for Resampled organizers?

Please provide any additional feedback or comments you may have about the event.
New workshop aims to help women, trans folk break into the music industry

Posted by Sarah Ratchford / JULY 8, 2013

Heather Kirby of Toronto–based band Ohbijou notices a serious gap when it comes to the music being produced around her. There is a shortage of women and trans-folk making music, and so she decided to put on a workshop to get people from those groups out and learning about the industry. ‘Resampled‘ is the name of the workshop, which will be held this weekend at the Tranzac. The gathering will help participants to explore the technical as well as the creative aspects of music production in an open, friendly atmosphere, and facilitators will include Maylee Todd, Tara Rogers and DJ Cozmic Cat, among others.

The workshop will explore challenges unique to women and trans folk looking to break into the industry, including "invisibility, lack of mentors and role models, and negative representations in the media." The event’s website says the goal is to "resample" ideas about who can and should be involved in producing the music we hear and to widen creative possibility(ies) in the process."

Resampled is a free, hands-on event, and it will take place one day only, this Sunday, July 14 at Tranzac, beginning at 10 a.m. It’s open to the public, but registration is required.
New workshop aims to help women, trans folk break into the music industry

What? replying to a comment from Why? / JULY 8, 2013 AT 01:32 PM
Sorry, but there is intense, pervasive discrimination against women and trans folk in the music industry. It permeates all levels of it. Your 'I don't know or care/nothing is stopping them' shows your ignorance. Check your privilege – from a man working in the music industry.

dick / JULY 8, 2013 AT 01:42 PM
"The workshop will explore challenges unique to women and trans folk looking to break into the industry including invisibility, lack of mentors and role models, and negative representations in the media." curious what these "negative representations in the media" are but the other two are challenges faced by pretty much everyone "looking to break into the industry" (whatever that means anymore), especially in a city the size of Toronto, these challenges are in no way "unique to women and trans folk"

Mr. Tunes / JULY 8, 2013 AT 02:05 PM
great initiative! and the schedule looks really useful too.

Anonymous / JULY 8, 2013 AT 02:55 PM
Folks who are choosing to comment without fully investigating the initiative: This workshop series is dedicated to empowering women to get behind the scenes and work with technology, it permeates all levels of it and being in bands. While you've never encountered studios with "no gay/bi/trans/women" policies for musicians who are paying to record there, how many studios with "gay/bi/trans/women" behind the console have you been in?

C replying to a comment from Merit Chick / JULY 8, 2013 AT 02:37 PM
What a silly response. This workshop hasn't even said anything about sexuality. It's clearly listed as targeting towards people who face barriers due to their gender identity whether that because they are trans, a woman or both.

Silly people shouldn't even be responded to so you're welcome.

Anonymous replying to a comment from dick / JULY 8, 2013 AT 04:02 PM
dick,
In case you missed it, that was a response to "Merit Chick" who brought up studies. While there are still studios (of various sizes) in existence, and they are largely male-owned and operated, this workshop is about developing skills with a wide variety of music production tools – whether to work behind a console or record on your own laptop and make mp3s at home. Why don't you try reading about it before responding inaccurately... twice?

Related in an Unrelated sort of way / JULY 8, 2013 AT 08:16 PM
Dustin Hoffman explains feminism... (Link below – and very moving)
I know this isn't a feminist workshop but why can't a bunch of women or female identified persons get together to share their talents and inspire one another to try something new or something that they have wanted to try, or to get more experience in? I think this is great and it is so nice to see the amount of interest in the FB event. It is a thorough workshop and it will have a warm environment for the participants to explore their creativity.
Women can sometimes just 'get' each other, when it comes to communicating and I can never know what it is like to be a man, or someone who is confused about their gender but I know that events like this are so valuable. I am sure there are similar things for all categories of human beings. Way to go Heather, for putting such a solid exploratory together!
http://www.themarysue.com/dustin-hoffman-tootsie/

blah / JULY 9, 2013 AT 09:04 AM
QUIT WHINING! just email tegan and sara or something. Absolute waste of time

huh / JULY 9, 2013 AT 03:42 PM
so, basically a workshop for people who aren't comfortable around straight dudes? good luck in the real world...
New workshop aims to help women, trans folk break into the music industry


http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/steph-guthrie/sexism-in-music_b_3573435.html
Why? / JULY 8, 2013 AT 01:14 PM

Why is this needed? I hope there were no grants involved. There are plenty of women making new music, trans I don't know or care but this is a desperate attempt to get her and her band out there. If women/trans want to make an album they will!! Nothing is stopping them. I predict an empty booth, make sure you have enough recycling bins for your flyers.

What? replying to a comment from Why? / JULY 8, 2013 AT 01:32 PM

Sorry, but there is intense, pervasive discrimination against women and trans folk in the music industry. It permeates all levels of it. Your 'I don't know or care/nothing is stopping them' shows your ignorance. Check your privilege - from a man working in the music industry.

Merit Chick replying to a comment from Why? / JULY 8, 2013 AT 01:36 PM

Agreed. I've yet to record in a studio that had a 'no gay/bi/trans/women' policy. If you've got the cash, you can record it. If it sucks? Well that's on you. Don't whine about not being able to make it because of your sexual orientation and consider the possibility you're just not that good.

dick / JULY 8, 2013 AT 01:42 PM

"The workshop will explore challenges unique to women and trans folk looking to break into the industry including invisibility, lack of mentors and role models, and negative representations in the media." curious what these "negative representations in the media" are but the other two are challenges faced by pretty much everyone "looking to break into the industry" (whatever that even means anymore), especially in a city the size of Toronto, these challenges are in no way "unique to women and trans folk".
Agreed. I've yet to record in a studio that had a "no gay/bl/ trans/women" policy. If you've got the cash, you can record it. If it sucks? Well that's on you. Don't whine about not being able to make it because of your sexual orientation and consider the possibility you're just not that good.

"The workshop will explore challenges unique to women and trans folk looking to break into the industry including invisibility, lack of mentors and role models, and negative representations in the media." I am curious what these "negative representations in the media" are but the other two are challenges faced by pretty much everyone "looking to break into the industry" (whatever that even means anymore), especially in a city the size of Toronto, these challenges are in no way "unique to women and trans folk."

great initiative! and the schedule looks really useful too.

Appendix 3.c - Resampled Press
This woman’s work

From the 416 to the 905, some of Toronto’s most promising production talents are proving gender has nothing to do with the size of your hits.

By: Anupa Mistry

At a listening party for Canadian hip-hop duo Rich Kidd and SonReal’s album, The Closers, last fall, Ebony Oshunrinde stood shyly in the corner. Later, Rich and SonReal introduced the soft-spoken 16-year-old, who goes by WondaGurl, as the producer of “Money Money,” the rowdy first single from The Closers, which would go on to be nominated for a Juno. At the time, Oshunrinde’s collaboration seemed remarkable—a few months earlier, she was the youngest producer to win the local Battle of the Beatmakers competition. But even that feat pales in comparison to WondaGurl’s most recent coup: She co-produced the serpentine “Crown” on Jay-Z’s chart-topping 12th album, Magna Carta...Holy Grail.

The press has been somewhat fixated on Oshunrinde’s age (she starts Grade 12 in September at Brampton’s Chinguacousy Secondary School), though some people just seem incredulous that a girl might want to make rap beats. But in a time of laptop producers and in a place like Toronto, where the hip-hop community owes a debt to innovators like Michie Mee and the Droppin Dimez radio crew, why wouldn’t a young woman want to—as Jay-Z raps on MCHG—“fuck up the world”?

There are plenty of game-changing female musicians, but it can be difficult to track their contributions when they’re not catering to the lowest common denominator. There are also creative professionals hoping to bridge the very real gender gap that plagues studio-oriented or compositional work across genres. These musicians say the issue is not that no women are calling the sonic shots—notable exceptions include electronic composer Laurie Spiegel, pop icon Linda Perry, and younger music producers like Grimes and Odd Future’s Syd Tha Kyd—but rather, that there’s a need to acknowledge the disparity and create networks of support.
Along with playing in local orch-pop band Ohbijou, Heather Kirby (pictured above) has produced and mixed for artists like Austra’s Katie Stelmanis. “While I’ve worked with lovely and supportive men, I feel that not having female mentors and role models in the production world has been challenging,” she explains. “As a musician, I’ve often noticed that sound guys at venues will approach the guys in the band to discuss tech needs. When they do speak with women, they tone down the technical language.”

Kirby is currently pursuing a master’s in new media and communications at McMaster University. She used part of her grant funding to host Resampled, a workshop (pictured below) geared towards women and transpeople, at the Tranzac in early July. Session leaders included Maylee Todd, DJ Cozmic Cat, and Morgan Doctor. She describes Resampled as “a hands-on workshop about empowering women to [use] technology to explore creativity.”
The misconception that women can't creatively express themselves through technology is one excuse commonly given to explain why they're underrepresented in music production, says Kirby. “The culture of technology is extremely gendered. For example, major bookstores often file recording magazines in the men's interest section.” Providing role models for existing and aspiring musicians is extremely important, she says.
Vanese Smith (pictured above) wants to be just that. She’s a Maryland–raised electronic producer who makes music as Pursuit Grooves and a programmer for July’s annual Sound in Motion festival. Smith has introduced women-only gear-and-sampling courses at Offcentre DJ School in the east end. But she also sees some power in being underestimated. “First thing people always assume is that because you’re a woman, you’re a vocalist. I feel like I had an edge because I gave people more than what they assumed I could do.”

Smith makes hip-hop, house, and other electronic-inspired beats in her own home, so she rarely encounters mansplaining dudebros in a studio environment. Still, like Kirby, she does believe that technology is levelling the playing field. “Access to software allows more people to get into music production,” says Smith, who started building songs on keyboard synthesizers at age 15. “But sometimes you just don’t know where to start because of all the options. I want to focus on the creativity that happens when you don’t have an abundance of presets or any given sound at your fingertips.”

Unfazed—or at least still untouched—by all of this is young Oshunrinde, who uses software like FL Studio to make beats six hours a day (“I try not to do it too much because of the electricity bill”). As a nine-year-old Lego fan, after seeing a video of Timbaland and Pharrell in the studio, she applied her affinity for construction to making music instrumentals on a keyboard. She’s still a Timbo die-hard, but her mentor is Boi-1da, the in-house producer for Drake’s OVO empire, who also has a song on MCHG and who mentored her at the Remix Project, a community organization that offers education and support for young people pursuing creative careers.

Oshunrinde plans to study audio engineering in college and says her family has always been very supportive. Has it ever been weird being the only girl in the room? No, she says, everyone has been nice. But she’s been briefed on what may come, thanks to singer Jill Scott. “She said that I have to stand up for myself as a woman, and not let anybody try to trick me.”

For more info on Heather Kirby’s workshop, go to resampledworkshops.com; For more info on Vanese Smith’s classes, go to offcentredj.com.

TAGS  Ebony Oshunrinde, Heather Kirby, Vanese Smith, WondaGurl
Quote of the day...

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1:37 pm on July 24, 2013
Appendix 5: Resampled Press

Turn up the mid. Heather Kirby, a McMaster graduate student in the Faculty of Humanities and bassist with the band Ohbijou, led a series of production and engineering seminars in Toronto last month — the women and trans-friendly ‘Resampled Workshops.’

August 20, 2013

Push the button: Bringing music production to the masses

By Andrew Baulcomb
Heather Kirby always had a lot of time on her hands, braving long stretches of desolate highways while staring out of van windows.

It was during many of these cross-Canada trips, while traveling as a bassist with Toronto band Ohbijou, that Kirby began to think less about the business of performing music, and more about the behind-the-scenes work involved in production and engineering. More specifically, she wanted to know why so many women and transgendered folks were seemingly absent from the field.

What started as a roadside daydream finally emerged in July as the "Resampled Workshops," a seminar series held in Toronto that introduced a group of 55 women and transgendered participants to the world of music production. Kirby, now a graduate student in McMaster's Faculty of Humanities, received a Forward with Integrity grant along with additional funding from McMaster's SPICES initiative to make the project a reality.

In her Forward with Integrity proposal letter, Kirby discusses the importance of participatory learning, building a supportive community and making same-sex role models more visible in the production and engineering spheres. "One of the problems is not having any visible female or trans role models or mentors," Kirby explains. "It's a major barrier for people looking to get into the production and engineering business."

The role of a producer involves guiding the creative vision of recording session — capturing lightning in a bottle, so to speak. The producer's job is to capture the good ideas, scrap the bad ones and (at times) keep the band members from killing each other over a difference of opinion. Engineers, on the other hand, typically handle the meat-and-potatoes side of a studio session — setting up microphones, dialling in tones and making sure volume levels are properly set before pushing "record." These lines have become increasingly blurred, however, with the advent of new and accessible technology.

The free seminar, which took place at the Tranzac Club in downtown Toronto, covered many of the basics when it comes to actually using this technology. Sessions included "Home Recording Basics," "Hardware Looping," "Intro to Analog Sound Synthesis," "DJ 101" and "Music Technology Playground," with an overall goal of breaking down some of the perceived barriers associated with modern studio recording. In other words, showing women and trans producers that great music can be recorded at home or in a modest rehearsal space — all it takes is a little know-how.

"It's important for anyone experimenting in the production side of things to meet new people, pool resources and trade gear," says Kirby. "Renting equipment is also an option. You can get a feel for something and take it back, without having to make a big purchase."

Christina Baade, an associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia, supervised the development of Kirby's seminar project. The pair also collaborated on the popular Music and Labour (http://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/article/punchin-in-punchin-out-at-the-music-and-labour-conference/) conference earlier this year — a McMaster-led research symposium held in downtown Hamilton.

"Tech is still very much gendered masculine," says Baade. "There is research that suggests boys are still more likely to 'own' technology in the home, and there's a whole series of barriers to women and trans folks that are both structural and cultural."

For Baade, who described Kirby as a consummate professional with an incredible attention to detail, the importance of an event like Resampled is giving women and trans producers "permission to play."

While no plans are in the works for a second run of Resampled Workshops, Kirby is hoping she'll be able to organize another event in Toronto, or even Hamilton, in the near future.

For more information, check out the project on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/events/118136338356725/).