

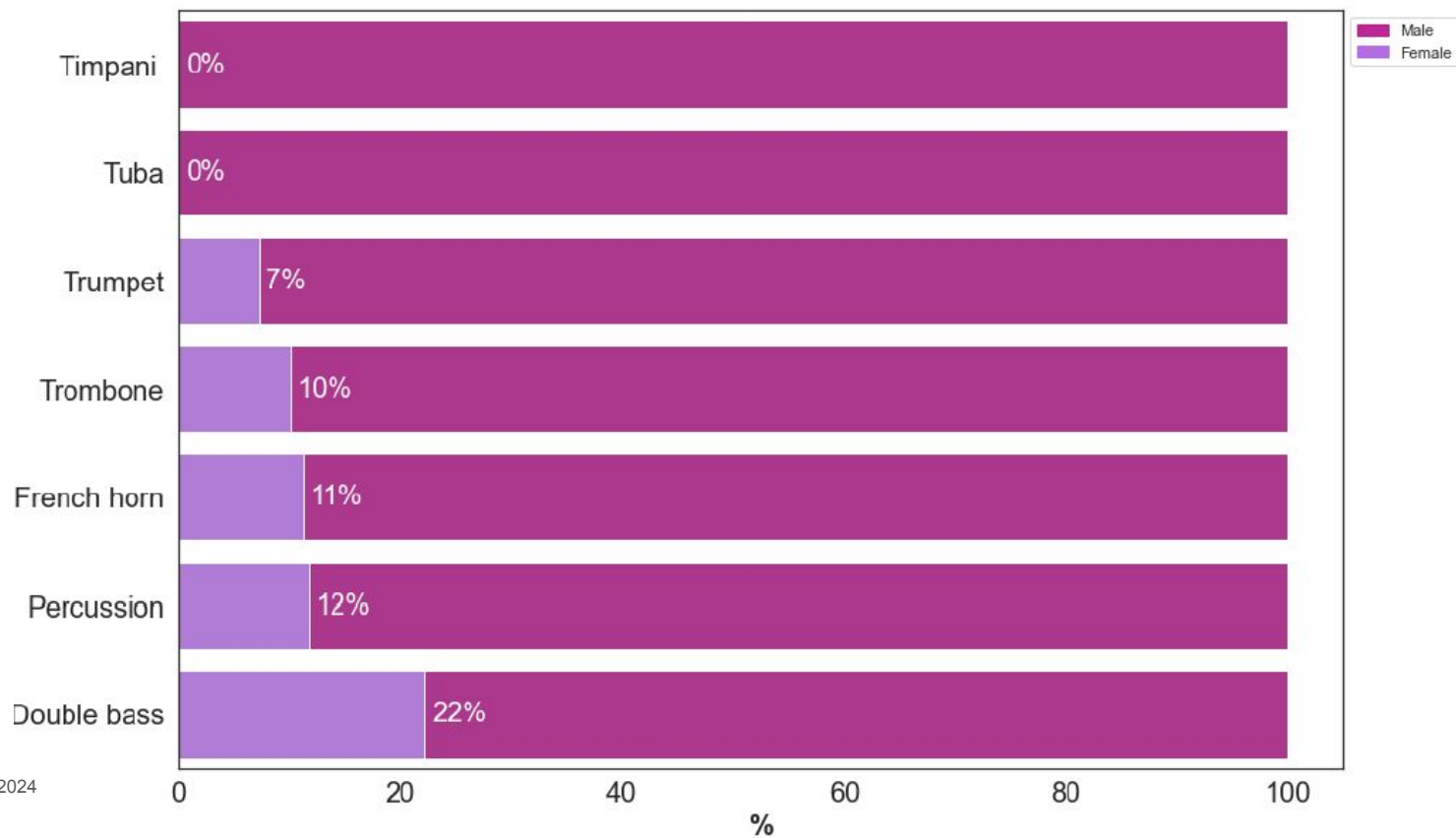


Roundtable Discussion

Friday 23 February, 2024

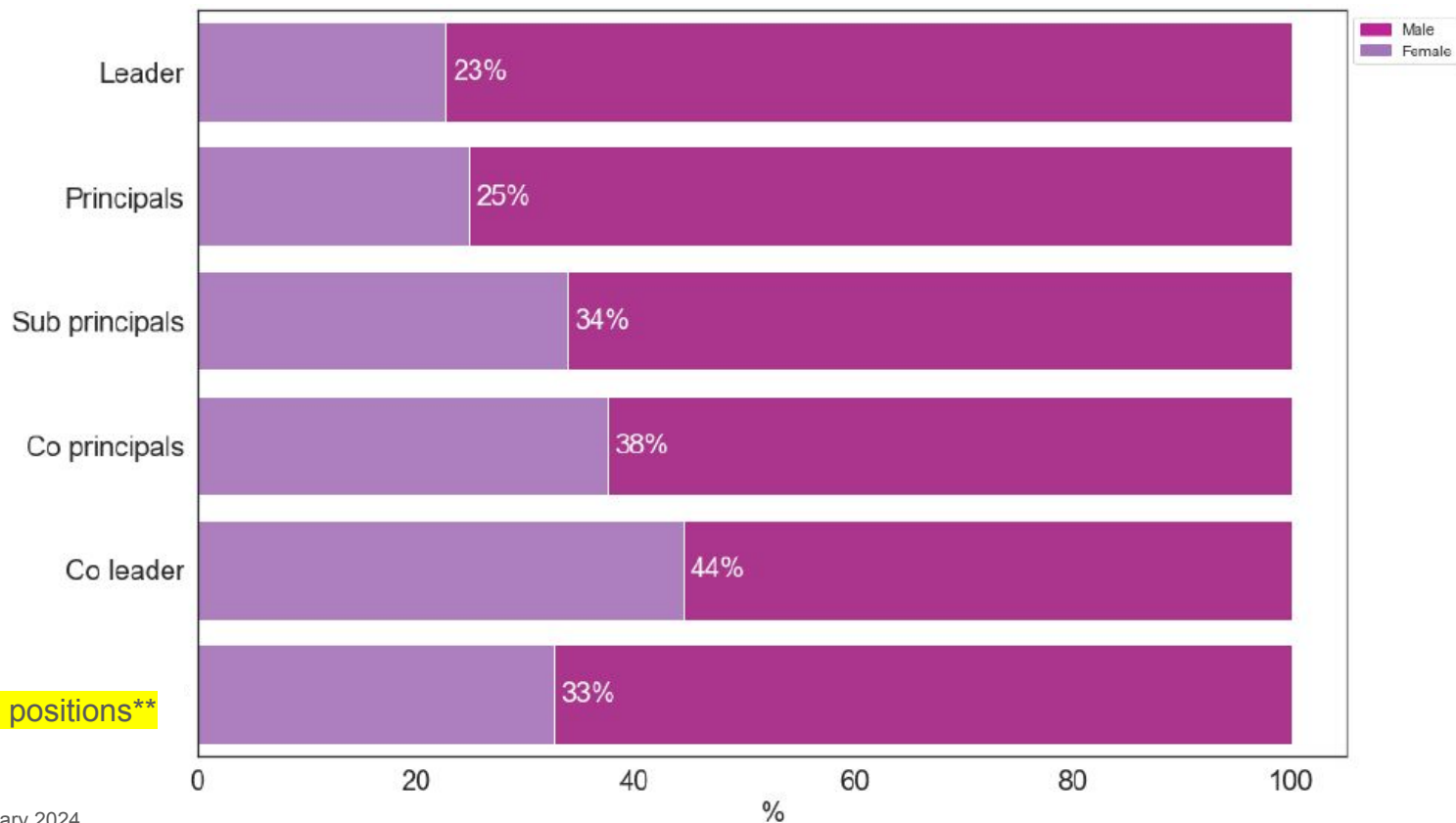
Beth Higham-Edwards, Letty Stott & Rebecca Celebuski (in absentia)

Positions held by women in full-time Symphony Orchestras in the UK*

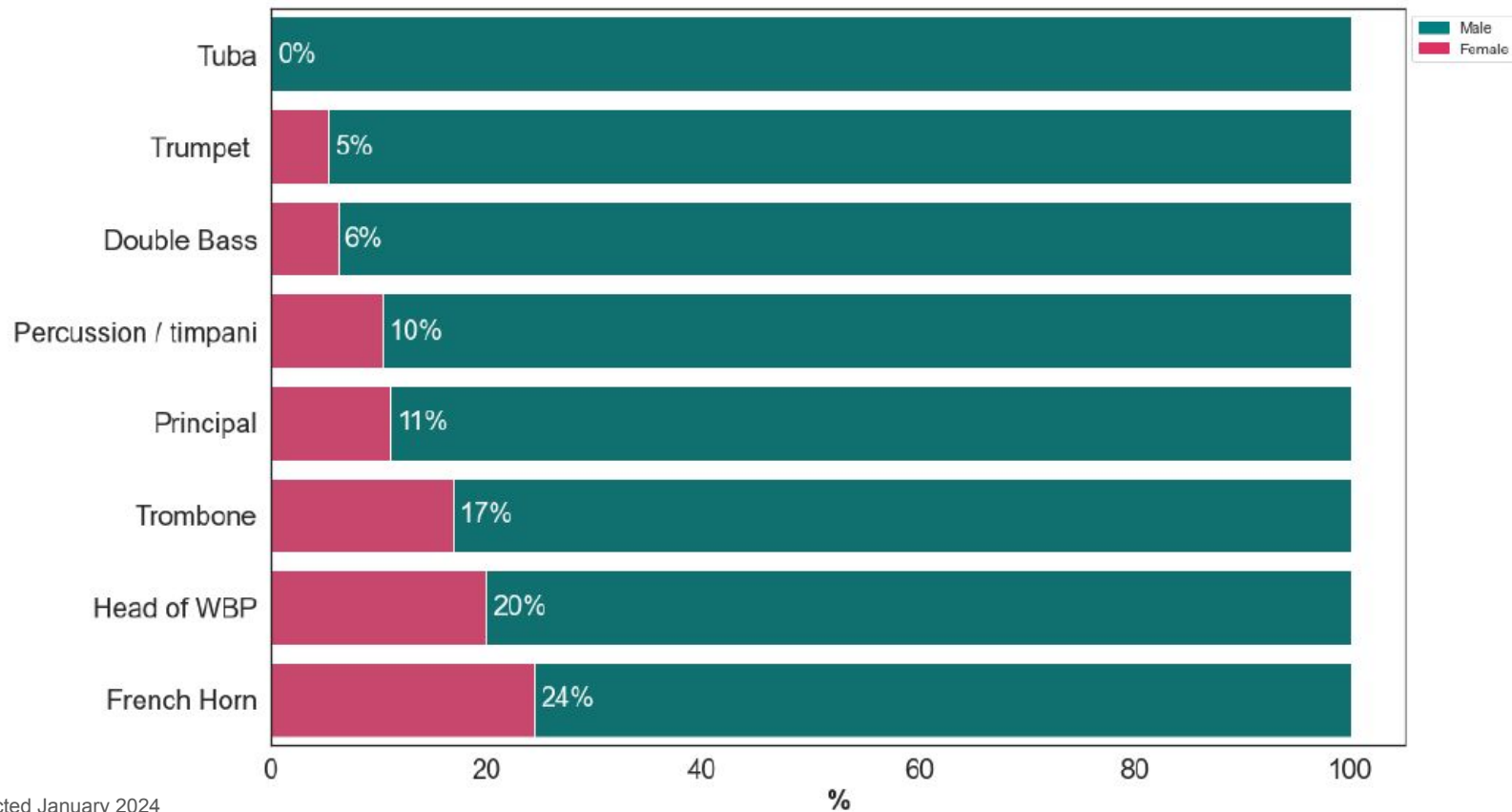


* Data collected January 2024

Women in leadership positions in full-time Symphony Orchestras*

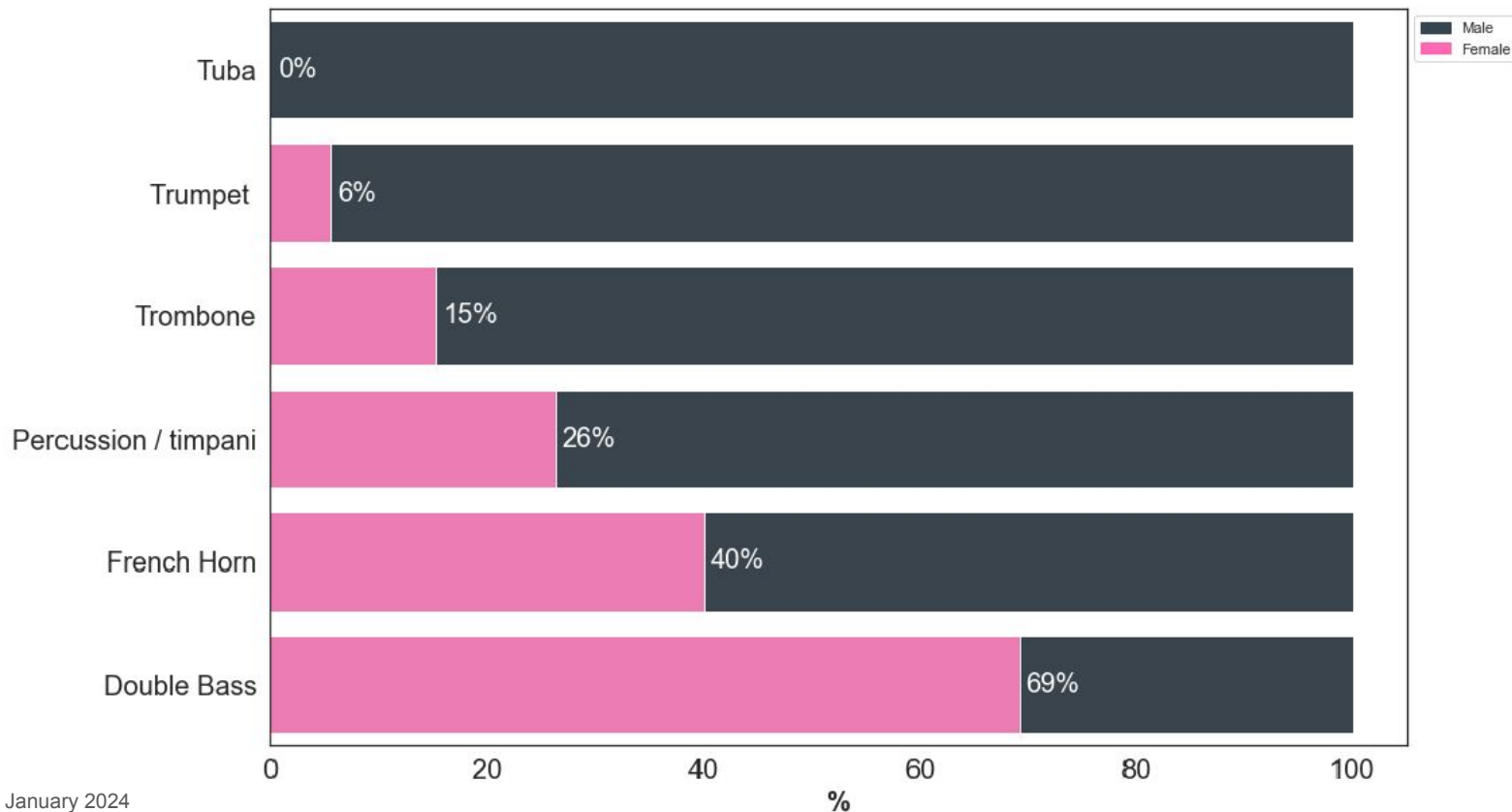


Female professors at UK Conservatoires*



* Data collected January 2024

Female teachers in Junior Conservatoire Departments*



* Data collected January 2024

Other Findings

- A Junior Department homepage lists a sample of Visiting Artists they've had in the past (all instruments) - all 25 individually named artists are men.
- Similarly, one conservatoire lists 36 recent percussion classes, with 32 of those 36 being with male visiting tutors.
- One conservatoire has 6 male oboe/cor professors and 0 female.



Masterclasses and workshops are given by distinguished visiting artists and by members of [REDACTED] professorial staff. They include guest performances, masterclasses, ensemble coaching and composition projects.

Recent guests have included Louis Dowdeswell, Alan Thomas, members of the London Symphony Orchestra, David Waterman and members of the Royal Opera House, The Endellion Quartet, Schubert Ensemble, Thomas Adès, Oystein Baadsvik, Jeff Bradetich, Iain Burnside, Charles Castleman, Peter Donohoe, Philip Fowke, James Galway, Bernard Haitink, John Harle, Paul Harris, Andrzej Jasinski, Jens Lindemann, Frank Lloyd, Ronan O'Hora, Gregg Patillo, Michael Seal, Dominic Seldis, Bobby Shew, Weidong Tong, Raphael Wallfisch and Mark Wigglesworth.

What should the future look like?

- Did the data surprise you?
- Is it where it should be?
- Will the figures be much different in 5 years time?
- How might a girl or young women who play these instruments regard their future in view of the data?
- What are working environments like for the few women who are represented in the data?
- What are the barriers?
- Should I (or my organisation) be doing anything about this?
- How can we improve the balance?

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GALSI Round Table Event 2024

Wigmore Hall

On 23rd February 2024 *Gender and the Large and Shiny Instruments* hosted a roundtable discussion at the Wigmore Hall in London.

We had 31 attendees, who were a mix of performers, educationalists, people representing major arts organisations, and researchers. We started with a presentation which showed what GALSI has achieved since its inception, and led participants through the new data we collected. We then opened the floor for general discussion.

The issues discussed...

There was agreement that barriers do exist for women and gender minorities within certain (if not all) instrument groups. There was discussion around the casual nature of obtaining work, and how this can rest on being accepted into the existing culture of a section. Issues surrounding peer pressure, bullying, and drinking alcohol at work/pub culture were raised as challenges for people trying to gain work. There was also discussion around gatekeeping and how it is difficult for women and gender minorities to get more permanent and tenured jobs, such as those reflected in our data.

An interesting point was made about the role of a 'Principal' in an orchestra, and how often the management side of the job is neglected both by the person appointed and not upheld as a vital part of the role by organisation employing them. It was mentioned that often the person is employed based solely on their instrumental playing, despite clearly stating in the job description advertised that the role will come with management responsibilities. Appointed candidates can therefore lack the skills to manage a section or team responsibly, which can lead to a lack of compliance with open access policies with regard to recruitment. This could potentially lead to biased judgment with regard to auditioning, the trial process, or managing the culture of a section. An interesting provocation was put out, which was 'why does people management have to lie within the Principal role as we currently define it, and what would happen if the role were to be divided between others in the section?'

Conservatoires were mentioned frequently as extremely challenging environments for gender minorities and a potential drop-off point for people who might otherwise have wished to continue into the profession. There was insight on conservatoires being breeding grounds for misogynistic views and gatekeeping, both peer on peer at student level, and between teachers and students.

There was a want for...

- More data! The table agreed that data holds power, and there was a want for more data on this subject. This included looking into how the data GALSI has collected could be explored further by including other intersections of EDI. It was agreed that our discussions are richer when we are thinking in terms of intersectionality.
- There was also a call out for more data and research on how parenthood affects instrumentalists, and connections were made at the roundtable in order to start this research.
- In an ideal world there would also be more data surrounding the freelance workforce, as it is particularly difficult to gather data from freelance workers.
- Unconscious bias training. It was acknowledged that even though many organisations claim to offer unconscious bias training, it very often does not reach casual workers, including those working directly with children and young people.

- Networking opportunities. An interesting point was made about how it is common in the jazz and folk scenes to have jams and sessions where you can meet other players casually, which can lead to the offer of work. There was a want for something similar in the classical world - whether that be including playing, or simply sessions where women and gender minorities can meet. Since the roundtable a participant has organised a networking session for women in brass, which will hopefully form part of a wider programme of networking opportunities.
- More round table events and discussions! With the rate of change in the industry appearing at times very slow, there was a call for more frequent discussions to take place to try and increase this pace. These could also provide further opportunities for networking and help to keep data fresh and enable dialogue to keep happening and conversations to stay current.
- The linking up of other organisations similar to GALSI, in order to aid intersectional thinking - such as PIPA, Black Lives in Music, SWAPra etc.

GALSI asked...

We at GALSI were open and honest that GALSI reflects our passion for change and equity, but is run as an addition to our full-time work as performers and educators. Beth, Letty and Rebecca are effectively giving their time voluntarily and therefore have limits on time and resources that can go into this work. GALSI asked that the issue be shared, that larger organisations show their support and also take the initiative to collaborate with us.

We shared a video of our GALSI October half-term course for young women, girls and non-binary people in brass and percussion aged 8-25. We believe this is one of our most impactful pieces of work, and we want to expand the course to include other instruments (such as double bass), in other locations in the UK, but we need help! If any conservatoires or organisations wish to aid us in this we would appreciate the connection, and love to talk further.

Thankyou to everyone who joined us for this session and for the many positive responses we have since received from the roundtable. We hope the session was helpful to those who attended and please get in touch if you would like to discuss anything further by contacting us on largeandshiny@gmail.com

The GALSI team - Beth, Letty and Rebecca