

New Music Commissioning in the UK

# EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN NEW MUSIC COMMISSIONING

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# I Foreword

I embarked on this project because I wanted to change the conversation about diversity in composing. The classical music community has been grappling the issue for many years but I felt that we lacked hard facts. We could see that composing was largely male and white, but we didn't know how many female or BAME potential composers were falling by the wayside. Without numbers it has been easy to make the assumption that as society becomes more equal, composing will too.

Working in classical music, I started to observe what was happening and started to wonder whether this assumption was correct. I started to notice my male student contemporaries becoming well-known composers, but not female ones. As a performer I started to receive unsolicited scores from male composers, but not female ones. So I decided to ask a simple question: what are the demographics of aspiring composers and how do they compare with those receiving commissions? It emerged that there is a big difference, and it's not confined to the older generation.

I'd like to thank everyone who has helped with this project, in particular the information officers at seven universities and conservatoires who put considerable work into providing statistics on their students. Now that we have a picture of what's happening, I'm looking forward to campaigning and working with the classical music community to help redress the balance.

**Natalie Bleicher**, Classical Co-ordinator

Five years ago I conducted in-depth research into equality and diversity in the music industry. I found that despite the outward facing gloss music can present, in many areas it was an unequal sector. BASCA is now actively campaigning on this issue and we have launched a variety of initiatives to research, support and campaign for greater equality and diversity across all genres of composing and songwriting. This research into equality and diversity issues in new music commissioning is part of that commitment as well as being second in a series of research papers into how commissioning works in the UK.

We thought that women, ethnic minorities and working-class people were under-represented in composition but we wanted to investigate the demographics at various stages of composers' careers to assess this hypothesis and see where, if any, there was 'drop out'. At BASCA each year we receive hundreds of entries to the British Composer Awards; in 2015 299 were commissions, providing the closest data set we have to a list of new music commissions in the UK. For the first time the submission process included questions on the demographics of composers, including age, gender, ethnicity and location within the UK.

We wanted to know whether these commissioned composers reflect the demographics of those with the ambition and talent to compose professionally at a younger age. We asked several universities and conservatoires to provide us with data on their students, and Sound and Music provided data on participants at their Summer School for 13-18 year olds and applicants to their professional development schemes, allowing us to uncover patterns and discover where the career barriers are for composers.



**Natalie Bleicher**

(photography: David Jacobs)



**Vick Bain**, CEO

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The results give us something to ponder on as a sector; we can see the drop out all through the educational process ultimately leading to fewer female and ethnically diverse professional composers. Now we can see these statistics we need to come together as a sector and see what we can do to give practical support to those who may wish to continue on with their education and succeed in their composing careers. BASCA is proud to be a fundamental part of that conversation.

**Vick Bain**, CEO

**BASCA** exists to support and protect the artistic, professional, commercial and copyright interests of songwriters, lyricists and composers of all genres of music and to celebrate and encourage excellence in British music writing. BASCA is owned by and run for the benefit of its membership of approximately 2,000 songwriters and composers.

All BASCA members are represented within BASCA by one of four committees—Classical, Jazz, Media and Songwriters – comprising 12 professional music writers who discuss the concerns and interests of their community. The Classical Committee represents the interests of composers of concert music.

**Natalie Bleicher** is the Classical Co-ordinator at BASCA, undertaking projects on behalf of the Classical Committee and co-ordinating judging for the annual British Composer Awards. She combines her part time work at BASCA with a career as a freelance pianist and composer. She studied at Junior Trinity, New College, Oxford where she read music, and King's College London from where she holds an MMus in Composition. Her previous roles include Manager of CoMA (Contemporary Music for All), Academic Administrator (Music) at Trinity Guildhall examinations board and Teacher of Musicianship, A-Level Music and Composition at Junior Trinity.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following:

Vick Bain, Dave Roberts, Dr. Christina Scharff and Prof. Julius Weinberg for their constructive feedback and advice.

Kealy Cozens (Sound and Music), Sarah Findon and Rebecca Kippax (Cambridge University), Caroline Hill (King's College London), Jo Hutchinson (Guildhall School of Music & Drama), Peter Jarvis (Birmingham Conservatoire), Mary F. Liddel (Brunel University), Nicholas Seager (Royal College of Music) and Deborah Williams (Royal Northern College of Music) for providing data.

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## 2 Executive Summary

The purpose of this research was to compare the demographics of composers receiving commissions with the demographics of those with the talent and ambition to become composers. We did this by analysing data on commissioned works which were submitted to the British Composer Awards and comparing it with data on composition students provided by a small selection of universities and conservatoires and data provided by Sound and Music on participants at their Summer School and applicants to their professional development schemes.

We discovered that the proportion of commissioned works by female composers doesn't reflect the proportion of those studying composition: 36% of composition students were female but only 21% of commissioned composers.

If society is getting more equal, one would think that the gender balance between young composers is more equal than amongst older ones, but this is not shown in our analysis of commissions. The age group with the highest proportion of female composers was 30-39 (34%). The 20-29 age group actually had a lower proportion of women (18%).

The proportion of women studying composition decreases at each level of study: they made up 39% of undergraduate composers, 31% of postgraduate and just 14% of PhDs. The proportion of higher degrees awarded to women is telling because higher degrees were significant in securing commissions: 30% of commissions were by composers with PhDs in composition and a further 39% were by composers with Masters level qualifications in composition. They were even more significant in winning or being nominated for the British Composer Awards; composers with Masters degrees and PhDs in composition each accounted for 39% of the 2015 shortlist.

The commissions data showed a large variation in gender balance between different categories of work: women wrote 39% of sonic art commissions but only 7% of orchestral commissions. Orchestral commissions are considered particularly prestigious.

In our analysis of ethnicity, the proportion of commissioned composers who are black or minority ethnic (BAME) was 7% which is half the 14% of people who are BAME in the general UK population according to the 2011 Census. This is especially low if we consider that over half of composers live in London where the BAME population is 30%. The pattern we found was different than for gender; we still see that commissioned composers are less diverse than those with the ambition to be composers, but BAME composers are additionally under-represented in higher education.

The data we collected show that the 30-39 age group is the most successful at securing commissions and that composers receive fewer commissions in the decades after this, confirming anecdotal evidence that middle-aged composers are ignored, being neither young and exciting nor 'grand old masters'.

*"36% of composition students were female but only 21% of commissioned composers"*

*"Women wrote only 7% of orchestral commissions"*

*"BAME composers are under-represented in higher education"*

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Most commissioned composers live in London: 51%, compared to 13% of the UK population as a whole.

There is plenty of work still to be done. The student data we collected were only from a small sample of institutions because the official authority for these kinds of statistics, HESA, only covers Music as a whole, rather than composition specifically. None of this research covers disability equality. We received too little data to be able to do any meaningful research into social class, which could turn out to be an even bigger issue than those we have studied.

What found find explodes the myth that we will reach equality in composition without positive action, but the form action should take is the subject of much debate. Some people dislike the idea because they feel that any action targeted at certain groups will involve discriminating against others, and ultimately composers want to be recognised regardless of their gender or ethnic background. We need to understand the reasons for these inequalities in order to develop appropriate recommendations and campaigns. This research has uncovered particular pinch-points where positive action could reap rewards and one of our recommendations is the development of a scheme to encourage and enable more women and ethnic minorities to undertake PhDs in composition. Research we carried out in 2013 found that 70% of commissioners have no equality and diversity policy, so informing them of current issues and helping them to develop appropriate policies would be another positive step.

### Errollyn Wallen

(photography: Martin Godwin)



*“What we found  
explodes the myth that  
we will reach equality in  
composition without  
positive action”*

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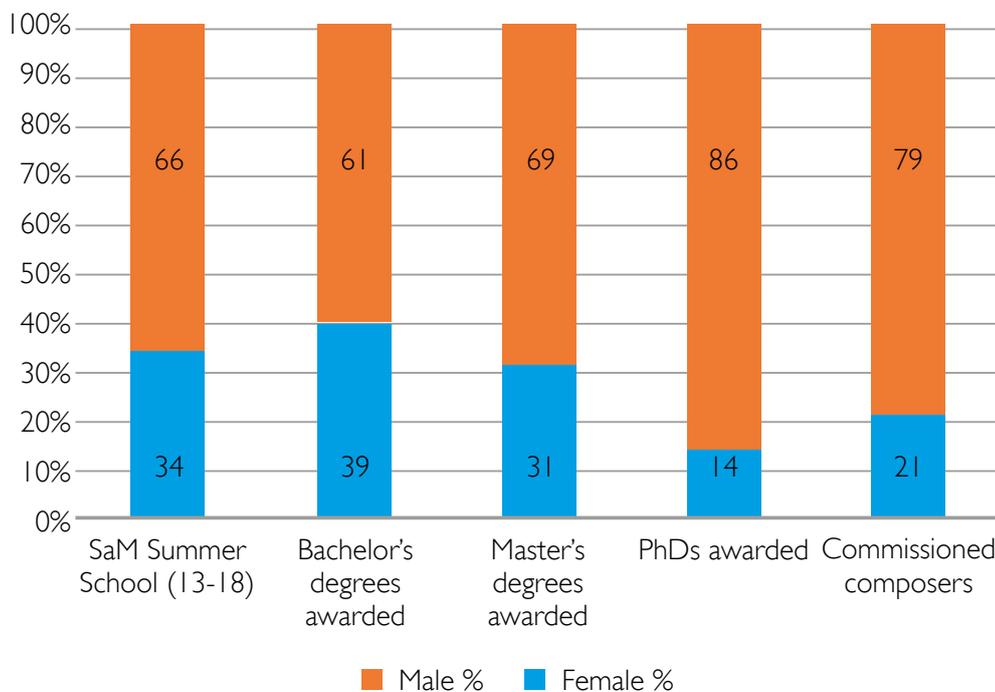
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### 3 Our findings: gender

Works by women comprised 21% of commissions submitted to the British Composer Awards (64/299). We discovered that this proportion doesn't reflect the proportion of those studying composition: 36% of composition students and 34% of participants at the Sound and Music Summer School were female. Moreover, the proportion of women studying composition decreases at each level of study.

Proportion of female and male composers

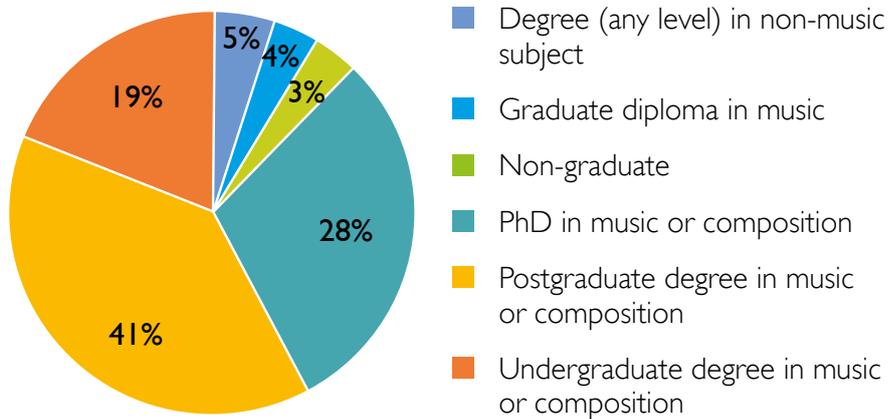


*“The proportion of women studying composition decreases at each level of study”*

The proportion of higher degrees awarded to women is particularly telling because these appear to be an important factor in receiving commissions. This is unlikely to be due to commissioners taking composers' qualifications into account and is probably due to a combination of factors including the extra time and opportunity to develop one's craft that higher study provides and additional opportunity for networking.

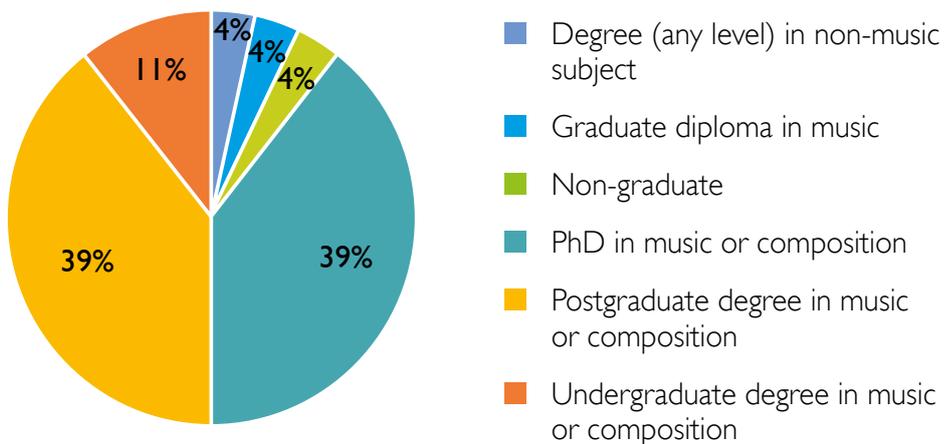
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### Commissioned works: composers' educational attainment



Higher degrees were even more significant when it came to composers who won or were shortlisted for the British Composer Awards:

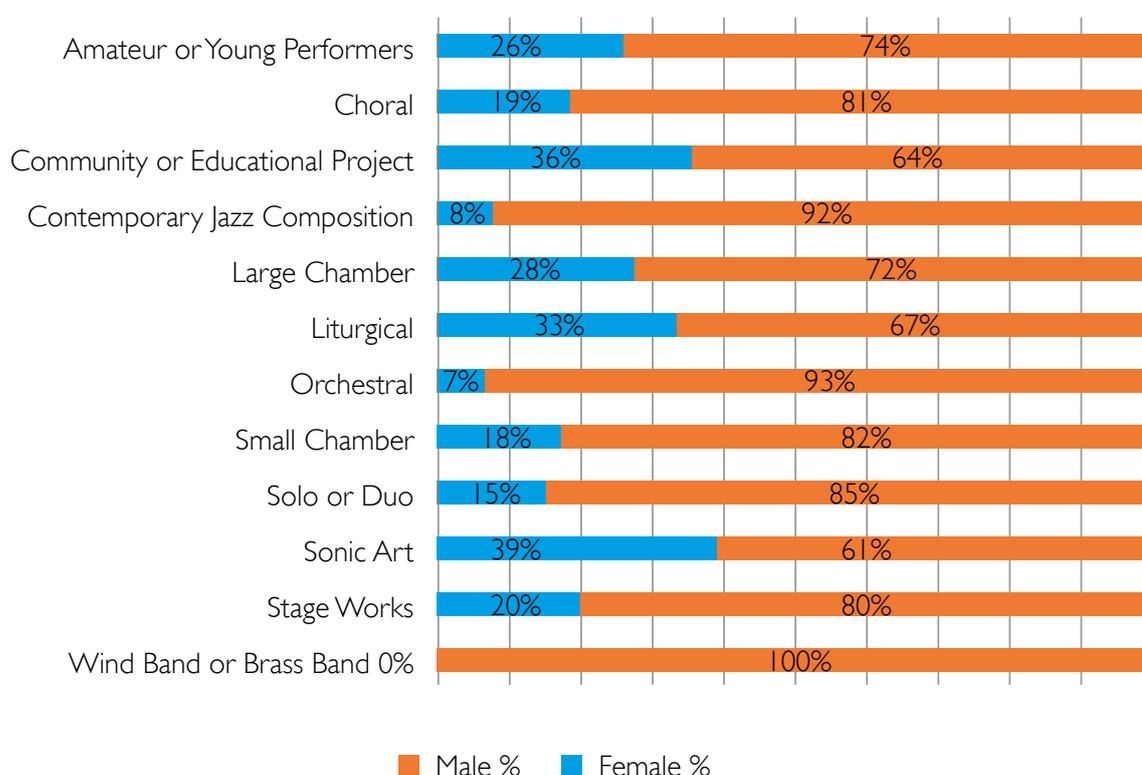
### BCA winning and shortlisted works: composers' educational attainment



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While the overall proportion of commissioned works by female composers was 21%, there was significant variation between categories. Women were much more likely to be commissioned to produce works of sonic art or write works for amateur, youth or community work than for orchestral works, jazz or works for wind band or brass band.

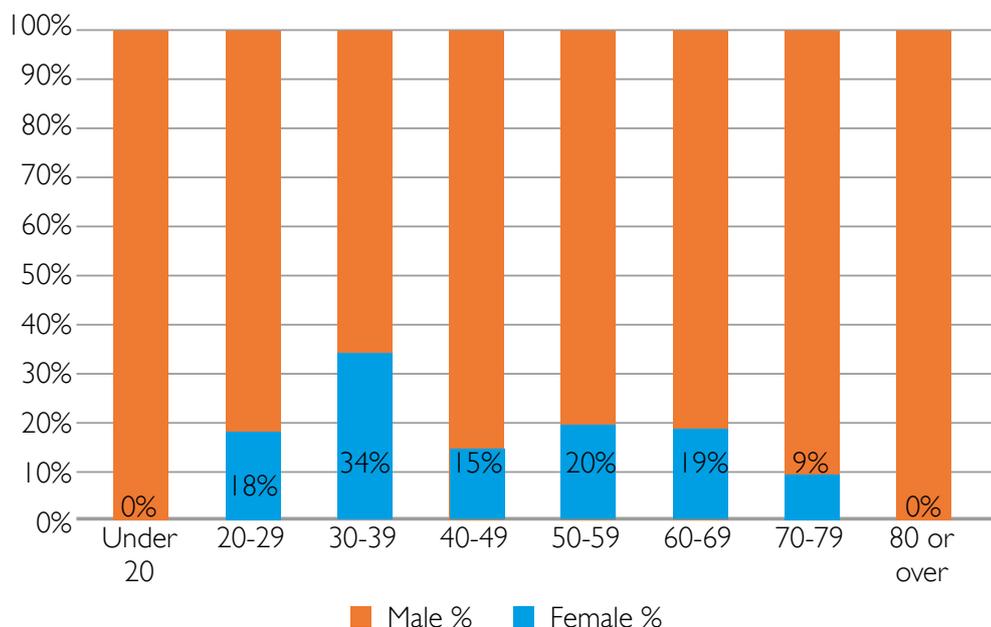
### Commissioned works submitted to the 2015 British Composer Awards



The low proportion of female composers is often viewed as an historical problem. There is an assumption that the low proportion of female composers is concentrated in the older generation, and plenty of younger female composers are coming up the ranks to sort the problem out without a need for further action. However, the numbers suggest otherwise.

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## Age and gender of commissioned composers



The proportion of female composers overall was 21%. The age group with the highest proportion of female composers was 30-39 in which 34% of commissioned composers were female. However in the 20s age group the proportion was no higher than 40s, 50s and 60s. The two commissioned composers who were under 20 were both male, as were all but one of the composers who were 70 or over.

The data provided by HE institutions showed that the proportion of qualifications awarded to female composers was 36% overall. However there was a striking drop-off when it came to the level of qualifications offered: 39% of undergraduate composers were female, 31% of postgraduate and only 14% of PhDs.

Gender of composition graduates			
Degree awarded	Female	Male	Total
BA	93 (39%)	143 (61%)	236
MA	26 (31%)	58 (69%)	84
PhD	2 (14%)	12 (86%)	14
Not specified	5 (26%)	14 (74%)	19
Grand Total	126 (36%)	227 (64%)	353

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## 4 Our findings: ethnicity

Information on ethnic background was provided for the composers of 294 of the commissions:

### Ethnicity of composers of commissioned works

Ethnicity	Number of commissioned works
Asian or Asian British – (Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi)	1
Black or Black British	3
Chinese	1
Other (including mixed)	11
Other Asian background	3
White	275
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>294</b>

The numbers within each of the ethnic groups except 'white' are too small to make any meaningful comparison between the individual ethnic backgrounds represented, but it is still useful to compare white versus 'black and minority ethnic' (BAME) for the purpose of this report and in line with existing research on equality and diversity in the cultural sector (see ACE, 2014). 275 composers (94%) were white and 19 (6%) were BAME. By comparison, according to the 2011 Census published by the Office of National Statistics, 86% of the UK population as a whole is white and 14% is BAME.

The age profile of works by white vs. BAME composers was as follows:

### Ethnicity of composers of commissioned works in each age group

Age	Black or Minority Ethnic	White	Grand Total
Under 20	1	1	2
20-29	4	28	32
30-39	7	71	78
40-49	4	49	53
50-59	2	54	56
60-69	1	41	42
70-79		11	11
80 or over		7	7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>281</b>

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The proportion of BAME composers decreased with age. Although the numbers are very small, they do still indicate that the decrease is in line with the UK population and that the proportion of BAME commissioned composers is low across all age groups rather than being a particular feature of older or younger composers.

### Comparison of BAME commissioned composers with the UK population

Age group	% commissioned works by BAME composers	% UK population who are BAME (2011 census)
Under 20	50*	15
20-29	12	19
30-39	9	20
40-49	8	16
50-59	4	11
60-69	2	7
70-79	0	5
80 or over	0	4

\*one out of two composers in this age group

In the data provided by universities and conservatoires, ethnicity was specified for the recipients of 282 qualifications awarded. Of those, 226 (80%) were white and the rest (20%) were BAME. By comparison, 94% of commissioned works submitted to the British Composer Awards were by white composers and 86% of the UK population as a whole is white.

### Ethnicity of composition graduates

Ethnicity	BA	MA	Not specified	PhD	Total
Asian or Asian British	1				1
Black or Black British	4				4
Chinese	18	2	2		22
Not specified	4	6	2		12
Other (including mixed)	11	7	2		20
Other Asian background	8		1		9
White	141	48	30	7	226
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>294</b>

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However, around 20% of the qualifications were awarded to overseas students. When just considering students from within the UK or EU, where both ethnicity and home/overseas status is known, 92% were white. So while the student body as a whole seems to be much more ethnically diverse than commissioned composers, most of this difference is due to the presence of composers from outside the EU coming to study in the UK.

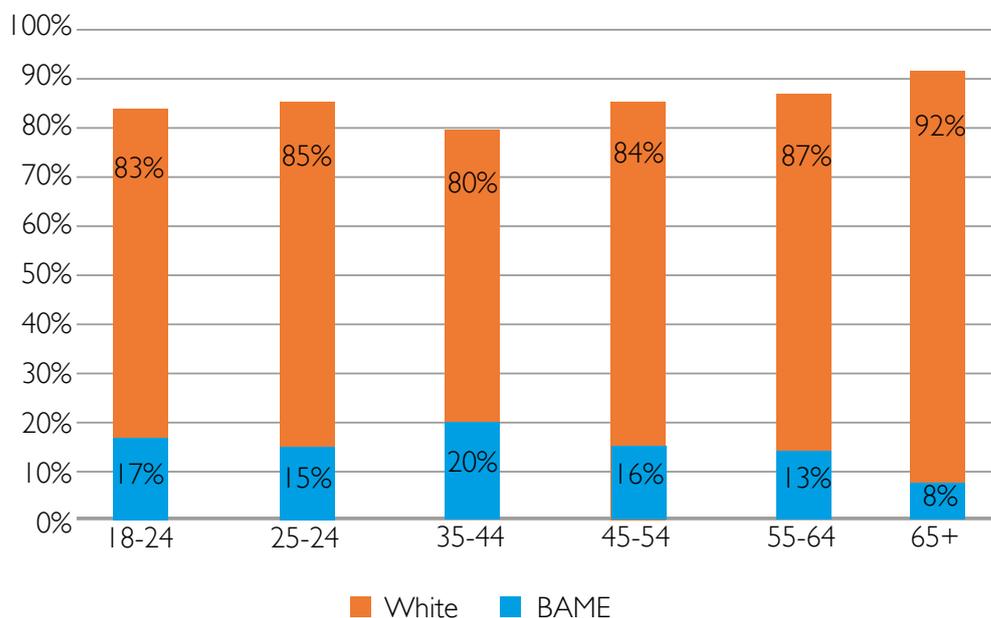
The numbers are too small to make any meaningful analysis of ethnicity per level of qualification among UK/EU students.

Participants at the Sound and Music Summer School were more ethnically diverse than the UK population: 80% were white and 20% BAME.

Applicants to Sound and Music's professional development schemes were 84% white and 16% BAME, which is close to the profile of the UK population according to the 2011 Census. The low proportion of BAME commissioned composers does not reflect the proportion of BAME aspiring composers.

*"92% of composition students from within the UK or EU were white"*

### Age and ethnicity of applicants to Sound and Music's professional development schemes



*"The low proportion of BAME commissioned composers does not reflect the proportion of BAME aspiring composers."*

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## 5 Other factors

### Location

Nominators were asked to specify the geographical location of commissioned composers. 9 were not known and 14 lived overseas (the eligibility criteria state that the composer has to have been born in the UK, or been ordinarily resident in the UK for 5 years). Applicants to Sound and Music's professional development schemes also provided location information.

Commissioned works by composer location (not including overseas and not known)				
	Commissions	Commissions - % of total	SaM applicants - % of total	UK population - % of total
London	141	51	52	13
South East	34	12	10	14
Scotland	32	12	5	8
South West	17	6	5	8
North East	13	5	8	12
East Anglia	10	4	2	9
West Midlands	8	3	5	9
North West	8	3	6	11
Wales	7	3	2	5
East Midlands	4	1	4	7
Northern Ireland	2	1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Commissioned composers and applicants to SaM schemes are much more likely to live in London than the UK population as a whole. Scotland has a higher proportion of commissioned composers than the UK population as a whole. All other regions have a lower proportion of composers.

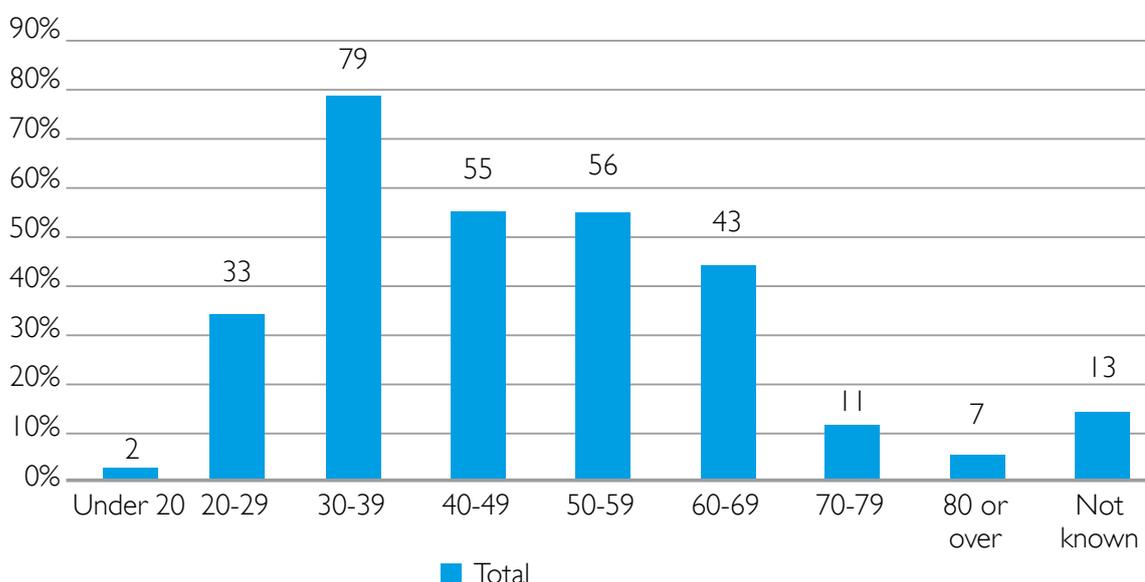
The low proportion of commissioned and aspiring composers from the regions could be for a variety of reasons including London providing better networking opportunities for composers. Much of the higher proportion is likely to be because composers move to London for the musical life offered in the capital. We therefore can't say from these data whether living outside London is a specific disadvantage, except that the low proportion probably creates a knock-on effect of fewer composer role models for young people growing up outside London.

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## Age

The greatest number of commissions was from composers in their thirties, followed by fifties and forties. This bears out what composers sometimes report as a 'difficult' period of not being an up-and-coming composer any more but not yet having reached the coveted position of 'grand old master'.

### Age of commissioned composers



The ages of the composition students were as follows:

### Age of composition students at graduation

Age	BA	MA	PhD	Not specified	Total
Up to 24	215	25		14	254
25-34	13	39	2	4	58
35-44	3	7	4		14
45-54		1			1
55-64		2	1		3
65 or over	1				1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>331</b>

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## Independent vs. state school education

We asked HE institutions to provide information on whether composers had previously been educated in the state or independent sectors. Unfortunately they were not able to provide this information.

63% of the participants at the Sound and Music Summer School came from state schools and 33% from independent schools (including specialist music schools). The rest were not known. Applicants to SaM's professional development schemes answered which type of school they attended at 16. Of these, 68% were state educated, 17% independent and 15% other (including educated overseas, home educated or left school at 16).

We did not collect information about school education of nominees to the British Composer Awards.

7% of the UK population attends independent schools.

## Disability

Sound and Music asked applicants whether they consider themselves to have a disability under the Equality Act 2010. 92% said no, 5% yes and the rest preferred not to say.

We did not collect information on disability for composers being nominated for the British Composer Awards or from universities or conservatoires.

We therefore do not have enough information to do any meaningful analysis on the state of commissioning opportunities for disabled composers.



**Raymond Yiu**  
at the premiere  
of his work  
*Symphony* at  
the 2015 Proms

(photography: Roger Thomas)

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## 6 Possible reasons for inequalities

A growing body of recent research has found a number of reasons for the persistence of inequalities:

### Inequalities at school age

A classical musical education is the usual route to becoming a composer, so inequalities for school-age children who might become composers need to be viewed as part of the wider context of classical music education. It has been well documented that children from lower socio-economic backgrounds and black and minority ethnic children are under-represented in music education, and inequalities have been found to arise due to a variety of factors. A report by the ABRSM observes that “Sustained, progressive music education tends to be the preserve of children born to wealthier parents” and that the cost of instrumental tuition is a major factor (ABRSM 2014). But it’s not just about money: the structures and nature of the music education landscape itself contribute. Anna Bull has found that “there is today a congruence or ‘fit’ between ways of learning classical music and middle-class culture.” (Bull, DiscoverSociety.org, 2014).

### The informal nature of work in the sector

Composers are more reliant than other musicians on others to be able to continue their craft. They need performers to perform their works, and the performers in turn need performance opportunities. In our 2013 survey of commissioners of new music, when asked how they choose which composers to commission, 72% said that it was a decision made by an artistic director. 14% said that it was through personal contacts and just 5% said that it was the result of a competitive or tender process. This means that personal networks and contacts are essential for composers to secure commissions. In her research on equality and diversity in classical music, Christina Scharff explains that in the profession as a whole “Networking, rather than formal recruitment procedures, tends to be key to finding employment” and that the reliance on networks disadvantages women as well as working-class and black and minority ethnic workers. She quotes research from the UK film industry that shows that white, male, middle class research participants were more likely to enjoy networks which could provide access to quality work.

As well as exploiting personal contacts, composers need to promote themselves in order to secure commissions. Scharff has found that women are reluctant to engage in self-promotion because it is “associated with pushy behaviour that conflicts with normative expectations that women are modest”.

*“Personal networks and contacts are essential for composers to secure commissions”*

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## Role models

In a comprehensive assessment of the current state of music education, Sarah Derbyshire cites a lack of black and minority ethnic role models as an issue in classical music education. She recommends providing a wide range of role models to inspire and encourage children and young people to see that there is a route to suit them. (Derbyshire, 2015)

## Childcare commitments

Childcare commitments affect women more than men and can contribute to gender inequality in all fields, although rarely are they the only factor. The data in his report only partially support childcare commitments as a reason for gender inequality. There was a low proportion (18%) of female commissioned composers in the 20-29 age group, and few composers in this age group are likely to have children yet. The age group with the highest gender equality was 30-39 which is actually the most likely age for starting a family. Childcare commitments may contribute to the dramatic reduction in the proportion of female commissioned composers between this age group and the 40-49 age group.

Family life can affect female composers more than male for a number of reasons. Lack of free time as a mother makes it harder to carry out self-promotion and networking activities to secure future commissions, which would explain why there is a drop-off in the 40-49 age group rather than 30-39. Commission fees do not always cover childcare costs and this may be exacerbated by a disparity between fees paid to male and female composers, although we do not currently have any data to support the existence or otherwise of a gender pay gap.

## Unconscious bias

While very few people nowadays would state openly a bias towards hearing or playing music by white, middle-class, male composers, the fact that the demographics of commissioned composers are so different from those setting out to compose professionally does point to an unconscious bias on the part of decision-makers. The role of unconscious bias is well documented in other fields, for example the recent discovery that female software coders' "pull requests" were more likely to be accepted than men's if the coder's gender was not known, but less likely to be accepted if it was. (Terrell J, Kofink A, Middleton J, Rainear C, Murphy-Hill E, Parnin C., 2016).

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# 7 Recommendations

## Further data collection

Collecting data is an essential tool in equality and diversity research since without solid data it's easy for the profession at large to claim that there is no problem. We were disappointed that data collected by HESA (Higher Education Statistics Authority) were only available for Music as a whole, not composition. There is some indication that HESA is creating new subject codes for music which include a separate strand for composition, but it's not clear when these codes will come into effect. When they do, it will be possible to paint a more comprehensive and accurate picture of composition students in the UK, although it will not cover students who take composition options within general undergraduate music degrees.

The data collected on commissioned works via British Composer Awards submissions were an invaluable resource for this report, but we didn't collect information on social class, school education or disability in this way.

Some excellent research has been done on equality and diversity in the classical music profession as a whole by Dr. Christina Scharff at King's College London. Her report "Equality and Diversity" in the Classical Music Profession uncovers under-representation of women and ethnic minorities, horizontal segregation (for example, gendered trends in instrument choice) and vertical segregation (for example, women being over-represented in teaching generally but under-represented in conservatoire teaching, which is considered more prestigious.) She acknowledges in the introduction to "Equality and Diversity in the Classical Music Profession" that "the lack of evidence [on the cultural workforce] is particularly pronounced in relation to musicians' class and ethnic backgrounds" and that there is "an urgent need to collect and collate more data".

Both BASCA (in 2011) and Sound and Music (in 2014 in 2015) conducted surveys of commission fees but neither project included questions on the demographics of commissioned composers. Such a question in future surveys would help us to discover whether there are disparities in fees paid to composers based on gender, ethnicity and other factors.

However, there are encouraging steps. Sound and Music collects diversity data on applications to its professional development schemes and summer schools, and makes these data freely available online. Collecting data has an impact: the organisation has recently announced a programme specifically aimed at BAME and disabled composers as a direct result of analysing these data.

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## Further research into ethnic diversity in classical music

From the data we collected the pattern seems to be rather different for ethnic diversity than gender diversity: BAME composers are under-represented in higher education composition courses at all levels but not in the Sound and Music Summer School for 13-18 year olds or amongst applicants to their professional development schemes. Our understanding of issues of ethnic diversity in composition would benefit from more research into ethnic diversity in classical music as a whole. Some work has been done investigating the ethnic backgrounds of conservatoire students and orchestral players (Scharff, C., 2015) which has found particularly a low proportion of black and minority ethnic (BAME) orchestral players. Further research covering school education as well as higher education would be especially welcome because there appears to be a drop-off between the two.

## PhDs

A key finding of this report is that very low numbers of women and ethnic minorities take PhDs in composition, and a large proportion of commissioned composers have PhDs. This correlation requires careful examination. Commissioners do not generally take composers' qualifications into account and the data on age show that composers may be well into their careers and already receiving commissions by the time they complete a PhD. Nevertheless, schemes to encourage and enable more women and ethnic minorities to take PhDs in composition could transform the landscape. A PhD provides focus, time and opportunity to develop one's craft as well as greater opportunities for networking at a critical stage in a composer's career.

## Campaigning

Commissioners need to be made aware that the demographics of commissioned composers currently don't reflect the demographics of those with the ambition and talent to compose professionally. They need to be encouraged to take this into account when choosing which composers to commission and to implement strategies to address these ongoing inequalities.

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## The British Composer Awards

The British Composer Awards, presented by BASCA, which conducted this research, have an important role to play. The proportion of winning works by female composers has varied from five out of 13 in 2010 to no female winners in 2007 and 2013. In 2015, just 17% of nominees and winners were women (6 out of 36 and 2 out of 12 respectively) while 21% of the submitted works were by women and the judging panels were 50% female. The independent judging panels in each category are instructed to award the best work amongst those submitted, regardless of the identity of the composer, and usually the lack of diversity amongst the shortlisted and winning composers simply reflects the state of the sector, although it isn't possible to discount unconscious bias. In recent years we have made a number of changes to the awards in order to monitor and improve diversity. We have increased diversity on the judging panels so that 50% of panel members are female and a significant proportion are from black or minority ethnic backgrounds. In 2015 we introduced an online entry procedure which increased submissions by a third, and the new system enabled us to collect detailed demographic data on composers. Further changes are under discussion such as introducing anonymous assessment of works and allowing composers to nominate their own works rather than composers having to rely on someone else to nominate one's work. The demographic questions will be widened to include composers' disability and school education information as well as demographic information on nominators.

### Kirsty Devaney leading a composition workshop

(photography: LAITO)



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## 8 About the data

### British Composer Awards data

Each year, publishers, performers, concert promoters and other interested individuals nominate works to be considered for the British Composer Awards. As well as enabling BASCA to celebrate the very best of composition through the awards, the submissions provide a valuable snapshot of what music is being written, who is writing it and how it comes about. In 2015 for the first time the submission process was online and as well as asking for information required to judge the works, BASCA asked nominators to say who had commissioned the work and to provide demographic information on composers and nominators. The 2015 data cover works by British Composers (either born in the UK or resident in the UK for five years) which received their UK premiere between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015. BASCA received 421 entries for 372 separate works; the rest were duplicates. Commissioner information was provided for 299 of these works, representing 80% of all the nominations. The high proportion of works which resulted in commissions underlines how important commissioning is in providing composers with the means to create new works. The following tables focus on the 299 commissions submitted for the British Composer Awards.

It is hard to say what proportion of total works commissioned during that time period this represents as we don't know how many works could have been submitted for the British Composer Awards but weren't. We also don't know whether this provides a representative sample, or whether the process of submitting a work for the Awards alters the demographics. Works need to be nominated by someone other than the composer and it has been suggested that women are less likely to ask someone to nominate their works, for example.

### University and conservatoire data

In order to find out whether the demographics of commissioned composers reflected those of composers entering the profession, BASCA decided to find out who studies composition at universities and conservatoires. The Higher Educational Statistics Authority (HESA) collects data by age, gender and ethnicity for music students but does not narrow it down further to composition students so it was necessary to contact individual higher education institutions for the information.

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British Academy of Songwriters,  
Composers & Authors

BASCA contacted conservatoires and universities with the following questions:

How many people graduated with the following degrees in each of the years 2014, 2009 and 2004?

- **Music Composition BA or BMus**
- **Music BA or BMus with composition option chosen**
- **Music Composition MA or MMus or PGDip**
- **Music Composition PhD or DPhil**

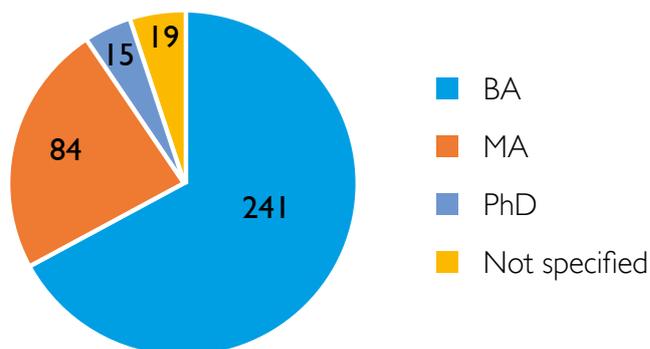
For each year and degree, would it be possible to provide a breakdown by the following characteristics?

- **Gender**
- **Ethnicity (according to HESA categories below)**
- **Whether a UK or Overseas student**
- **Age (up to 24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 or over)**
- **If available, whether previously educated in State or Independent sectors**

Responses were received from Birmingham Conservatoire University, Brunel University, Cambridge University, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, King's College London, Royal College of Music and Royal Northern College of Music. An additional seven institutions were approached for information but were not able to provide it. The total number of qualifications in composition awarded at all levels across all of the institutions was 359: 82 in 2004, 105 in 2009 and 172 in 2014. These data cover 241 BA-level qualifications (including BA or BMus in composition or in music with the composition option chosen). There were 84 MA-level qualifications including MA, MMus, MPhil and postgraduate diplomas in composition. There were 15 PhDs (including DPhil) in composition.

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## Number of composition qualifications awarded in 2004, 2009 and 2014



In 2009 the total number of music qualifications awarded by the same institutions was 1165, with qualifications in composition or including composition making up 9% of total music qualifications awarded.

The total numbers quoted in each of the sections below are slightly smaller because most institutions were only able to provide information for some of the categories requested due to data protection or availability of data.

### Sound and Music data

Sound and Music, the UK's organisation for promoting new music, provided demographic data on participants on its annual Summer School for 13-18 year olds from 2009-2015 and on applicants to its various schemes such as Embedded and Portfolio. The Summer School data represent 370 composers over five annual courses. The professional development applications data represent nearly 2000 composers, although there are probably some duplicates. Both sets of data represent individuals who have the ambition to become commissioned composers and so provide a useful comparison with the profile of commissioned composers.

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