CLOSING THE GAP

Impact & Representation of Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour Live Music Workers in Canada

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CANADIAN LIVE MUSIC ASSOCIATION

The voice of live music in Canada
La voix du spectacle musical au Canada

Key Findings

Everyone deserves access to safe and equitable working conditions; the inclusion and safety of artists and workers in creative careers identifying as Indigenous, Black, and as people of colour (IBPOC) is a basic human right and therefore morally imperative. It is also imperative for fostering the innovation on which creative industries thrive. While important research exists on the state of inequality in music industries writ large, very little research has been conducted on the live music industry. The critical and urgent need for this sector-specific research is demonstrated throughout our report, as the nature of working conditions in live music – festival curation guided by genre, invisible labour that is unevenly distributed, gatekeeping practices by individuals in decision-making roles – have specific repercussions for the wellbeing and safety of IBPOC workers.

Closing the Gap: Impact & Representation of Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour Live Music Workers in Canada is a significant step forward in helping to close the gap in knowledge on inequality in the live music sector. More importantly, our goal is to provide evidence on the nature of inequalities experienced by IBPOC live music workers, and actionable policy recommendations that can in turn help to close the gap in representation and inequitable experiences in the live music community that vary along lines of race and ethnicity. This report examines the challenges confronted by IBPOC workers, while also exploring the opportunities and industry strengths that can be harnessed to promote their full participation. The study consists of 40 in-depth interviews with IBPOC live music workers across Canada, spanning various roles, genres, levels of experience, and identities. This study also includes country-wide demographic survey data on the economic, as well as mental and physical health effects of working in the live music sector.

Live music demographics and representation

The survey focused on three occupational roles in the live music industry: artists, entrepreneur/owners, and workers. White respondents were evenly distributed across the roles of artist (40%), entrepreneur/owner (44%), and worker (35%). In contrast, survey respondents who identified as Black were overrepresented as artists (73%), and underrepresented as entrepreneurs/owners (28%), and workers (17%). This pattern was similar across respondents who identified as Indigenous and other people of colour suggesting **IBPOC live music workers are disproportionately represented as artists, rather than entrepreneurs/owners and workers.**

Survey results revealed that gender diversity, sexual orientation diversity, and having a disability is more common among IBPOC live music workers. Because these facets of identity are underrepresented in the population at large and may be experienced as marginalized, it is likely that discriminatory and tokenistic experiences in live music are intersectional in nature. This further suggests that solutions to overcoming discrimination must likewise be intersectional in design.

In terms of representation, Statistics Canada indicates that **Indigenous people and people of colour[1], including Black people, constitute 27% of Canada's population, but they constitute 16% of the total number of live music industry workers.**

Economic impact

Rates of entrepreneurship and ownership were lower among IBPOC respondents when compared to white respondents; there was a 16% gap in ownership among Black respondents compared to white respondents. Other people of colour had a 12% gap in their rates of ownership, while Indigenous respondents had a 9% gap in comparison to white respondents.

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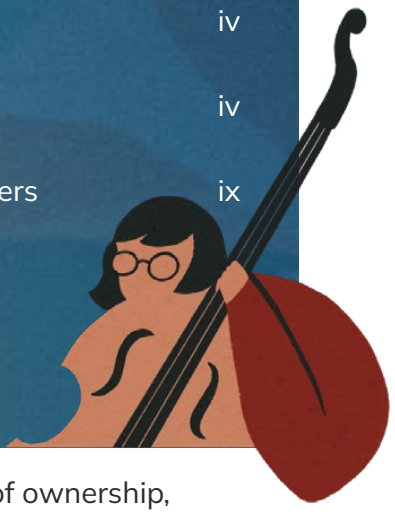


IBPOC workers are not earning as much labour income as white individuals working in the live music industry. Survey data demonstrated that **IBPOC individuals working in live music make, on average, $11,700 less per year than white industry workers**. If IBPOC workers and artists currently in the community earned the same as their white counterparts, they would add $202.2 million to the industry's annual contribution to GDP. **In total, the "missing" GDP contribution of missing IBPOC people and missing wages is an estimated $273.5 million.**

Additionally, if IBPOC representation in the live music community matched Canada's population, there would be an additional 1,765 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in the industry. These FTEs would earn a total labour income of $71.3 million if they earned as much as white individuals in the community.

Sources of inequality

IBPOC live music workers' **employment patterns differ**; they are eight times more likely to be working a part-time job not related to the music industry, and twice as likely to be working on a casual or freelance basis in a job not related to the music industry, in addition to their hours of work as a music worker. By contrast, 71% of white respondents report being able to work full-time in the music industry. Related, Indigenous (30%) and Black (29%) workers most frequently report being paid less than someone else with the same qualifications; none (0%) of the white survey respondents reported being paid less than equally qualified counterparts.

IBPOC study participants also reported experiences of **exclusion** and **tokenization** with greater frequency than white study participants. Indigenous, Black, and people of colour survey respondents reported that tokenization is a major barrier to their sense of belonging in the live music community (at rates of 14, 28, and 19% respectively), compared to only 2% of white respondents. Similarly, 31% of Indigenous respondents, 42% of Black respondents, and 37% of people of colour respondents reported feeling as though lack of representation is a barrier to their sense of belonging.

Related to this, study participants report that **while genres such as Indigenous music and world music provide a source of community and belonging, they can also create feelings of marginalization and tokenization**. The impact of genre is wide-ranging: it is present in funding application categories, where artists and their managers have to select a category that may help or hurt their chances, or otherwise misrepresent them. In addition, genre plays a major role in the way that festivals are curated and venues are programmed, creating a ripple effect that influences marketing and promotion, and the extent to which IBPOC artists, workers, and audiences are made to feel included in live events.

The top four reported employment positions among white live music industry workers are gatekeeping positions: music venue owners, music promoters, live event producers, and music festival programmers. On the other hand, excluding artists, racialized respondents primarily occupy artist management, professional services, and booking agent roles, which seek audience access from gatekeepers. The **unequal allocation of gatekeeping roles** poses significant barriers for IBPOC workers, in terms of gaining access to audiences, and thus, revenue streams.

Access to funding was the most frequently identified barrier for Indigenous (45%), Black (53%), and people of colour (49%) respondents. Eligibility requirements (including restrictions based on for-profit vs. not-for-profit models, by-invitation-only policies, eligible expenses, e.g. Pow Wow competitions), language barriers, lack of awareness of available funding programs, and insufficient reflection of cultural diversity within public funding frameworks and policies were cited as the most significant barriers to funding access for IBPOC respondents.

While eligibility criteria are necessary, the processes and practices on which they are founded do not always take into account how systemic racism may prevent IBPOC workers from meeting eligibility requirements. As funding organizations continue to pursue more equitable practices and level funding opportunities across creative communities, it is important to continue to identify and disentangle systemic racism and colonial histories from their procedures.

Sources of promise

For all the difficulties found, this study also discovered many joys and opportunities shared by participants that counter their negative and harmful experiences. In fact, one of the most consistent themes across interviews was the **importance of community**. Participants shared how their community provided a soothing balm in painful situations, promoted them during their earlier career stages, and offered guidance over necessary learning curves. For example, some IBPOC live music workers promote ethnic and gender diversity in their staff as a way of **cultivating a safer space for otherwise excluded community members**.

Other sources of promise include new partnerships between live music businesses and advocacy groups, such as ADVANCE, Canada's Black Music Business Collective, with the goal of **identifying knowledge gaps**. And, there are programs such as the Toronto Arts Council's (TAC) newcomer and refugee Artist Mentorship and Artist Engagement programs that help **address language barriers** in the funding application process by providing program guidelines in the seven most widely spoken languages in Toronto, outside of Canada's official languages.

Based on these findings, we provide the following recommendations.

For Live Music Industry (Venue Owners, Promoters, Agents, Managers, and Festival Organizers)

One of the strongest findings emerging from this study is the prominence of white workers in gatekeeping positions in the live music industry, while one of the most significant barriers for IBPOC workers is a lack of access to gatekeepers and/or a lack of representation in the industry. This situation perpetuates itself, and will continue to do so unless actively disrupted.

- Publicly funded festivals and concerts can disclose final budgets, including data on artist payments that are aggregated along lines of race/ethnicity and gender (to protect the confidentiality of individual artists), as a check and balance against payouts that skew higher for white artists.
- Additionally, publicly funded organizations should introduce pay transparency in hiring practices to provide a check and balance against discriminatory payment practices that vary by race/ethnicity and gender.
- Those in positions of power can insist on inclusion/equity riders for festivals and concerts.
- When festivals and concerts are promoting events on radio, they can request that booked artists from underrepresented groups receive either airplay, or at least name recognition on radio stations as part of their promotion efforts.
- Privately owned venues can make rental fees publicly available, which may curtail discrimination against booking genres where IBPOC artists, workers, and audiences are more highly represented.

- Organizations can open access to IBPOC workers by offering a 'behind the board' program where emerging sound tech staff, especially women and non-binary technicians, are invited to shadow established sound techs on the job.

- Expand hiring searches to include a more diverse pool of applicants.

- Consider enlisting the help of fractional HR services.

- Engage in more dialogue about the role of substance abuse in live music, provide a wider selection of non-alcoholic beverages, and offer performing artists financial compensation in lieu of complimentary alcohol.

Aysanabee, photographed by J. Atlas

- Amplify music industry-specific addiction and mental health support services.

For Government and Funding Bodies

One response to addressing the inadequate representation of IBPOC live music workers has been for government, funding agencies, and white-led organizations to pursue further research, lead workshops, etc. Although useful, these activities can often consume large amounts of resources that could be used to fund immediate change for IBPOC live music industry workers. Deeper examination and prioritization based on need, where all public funds are concerned, may be required to drive effective and meaningful change.

Promoting Industry Shifts

- Include eligibility guidelines and assessment criteria that stipulate white-led organizations must include significant IBPOC representation in decision-making positions.

- Examine existing, and work to remove, prohibitive funding eligibility criteria. This would include support for competition Pow Wows, examining the limitations of "by invitation only" policies for operating or core grant programs, and expanding eligibility requirements to be more inclusive of for-profit models in addition to not-for-profit organizations.

- Insist on inclusion/equity riders for festivals and concerts that receive public funding.

- Establish additional dedicated support for initiatives led by and serving emerging artists and enterprises, DIY/grassroots initiatives, and newcomers.

- Organize a system-wide grant funding symposium where agencies at different levels of government can do a collective strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT)

analysis, engage more directly with each other's programs, and collaborate on ways to address shared systemic barriers.

- Municipalities can engage with the industry through the Music Cities work, which includes reviewing existing bylaws and policies such as noise regulations and use of public space, and adapting them to better accommodate Canada's sonically and culturally diverse musical expressions and traditions.

Increasing Access and Inspiring Trust

- Consult with IBPOC artists, organizations, and community members regarding the limitations and complex issues related to genre categorizations, and explore strategies to add more flexibility within self-identification processes for program applications, eligibility criteria, and awards programs.

- To account for different regional needs and varying access to information, establish partnerships with regional representatives or community advocates. For example, partnering with the National Indigenous Music Office or ADVANCE, Canada's Black Music Business Collective, could help to ensure the development of relationships needed in order to grow the industry.

- Revise language requirements to include Indigenous languages and non-official languages.

- Provide interpretation/translation services so applicants can apply in the language in which they feel they can most clearly and accurately communicate their project ideas and goals.

- Expand application methods to include audio and video application submissions.

- Remove revenue benchmarks and organizational model requirements for emerging racialized artists and organizations.

- Include a rationale for demographic data requested of applicants to promote transparency between applicants and the funding organization.

- Ensure aggregated peer assessor feedback is provided to unsuccessful applicants, both to promote transparency in the review process and to further improve applicants' future competitiveness.

Nikki Komaksiutiksak, photographed by sākihiwē festival

- Publicly fund music industry-specific addiction and mental health support services, including sector-specific charitable organizations.

For All of the Above (Government and Funding Bodies, Live Music Industry — Venue Owners, Promoters, Agents, Managers, and Festival Organizers)

- Dedicate funding for paid mentorship programs for newcomers and racialized workers, including personal professional skills development and training.

- Both for-profit and nonprofit companies can focus on ensuring that entry-level IBPOC workers receive training and mentoring at every stage of their development.

- Adopt a 'more than one' rule. When employing IBPOC workers to increase representation on staff, boards, and in leadership positions, hiring one worker impedes the psychological safety needed to express oneself, which in turn limits thought diversity.

- Technical and business administration training for IBPOC workers can be developed, including programs specifically for femme and gender non-conforming workers.

- Healing practices around internalized racism and internalized oppression can be implemented to ensure that, as representation at a leadership level increases, IBPOC workers are less at-risk of recreating dynamics and work conditions that emerge from the systems of impression they're working within, alongside, or past.

- Organizations can fill in knowledge gaps (in skills, infrastructure, resources) by partnering with complementary organizations.

- Organizations can engage in learning surrounding diverse cultural protocols and ensure their inclusion in contracts.

For IBPOC Workers

It is important to acknowledge that reshaping workplace cultures to be safer and more inclusive for IBPOC workers is not the responsibility of IBPOC folks themselves. At the same time, any positive change that occurs will likely be slow. Developing tools for self-empowerment and a repertoire of practices that enable workers to advocate for themselves may be necessary, albeit unfair. The following are some community-centred ideas inspired by the study's findings that may help IBPOC workers self-advocate, support each other, and create a sense of agency as they continue to grow their careers:

- Request a copy of grants that include you as a partner, consultant, or other substantial participation to retain/review.

- Add a clause in work agreements that stipulates that artist fees should reflect the budgets of successful grants, if above initial negotiation.

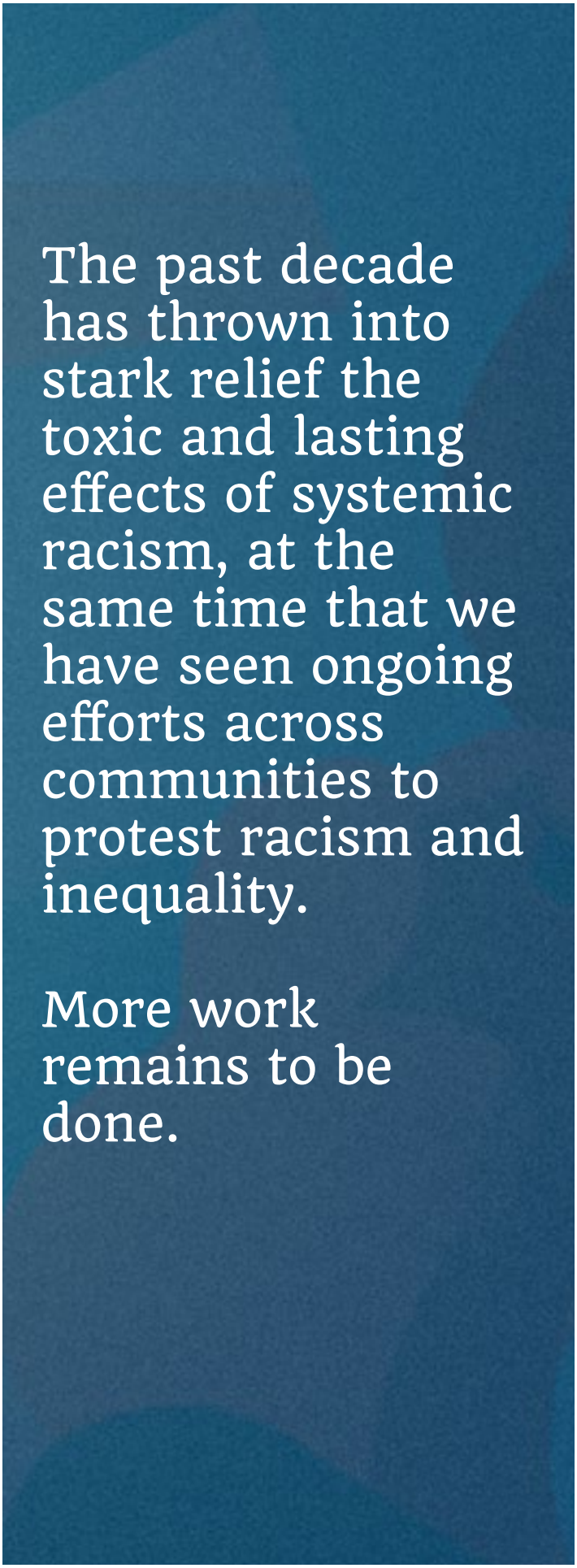
- Exercise your right to request a grant report extension in the event of traumatic experiences.

- Create group grant writing sessions. This can simply involve writing silently, in the same space or via zoom, as a comforting accountability partnership.

- Ask if a granting office would be willing to review the application together with you, to assess eligibility, and answer questions.

- Cross-promote as a way of expanding your audience and deepening your community.

- Adopt the shared spaces approach, whereby established venues and office spaces open



access to emerging, DIY, or small-scale organizations. Workers and venues could consider co-leasing space with another organization, and alternating access or rotating programming to lessen the financial burden of a long-term lease.

- If it feels safe to do so, cross-reference performance rates with each other, and white peers and colleagues to promote transparency.
- Ask collaborators, contractors and/or promoters if your fee/pay is equal to others doing the same work.
- Request a dry green room, or financial compensation in lieu of complimentary alcohol.
- Request that space and time be provided for traditional, spiritual, and/or cultural practices.

Photo by Joshua Sukoff

Calls-to-Action for Presenters

Alan Greyeyes (sākihiwē festival/Ogichidaa Arts) contributed a parallel set of recommendations that recognize and address some of the distinct barriers experienced by Indigenous artists and industry workers in Canada.

1. We call on music award shows, music presenters, music promoters, and music conferences to use every stage they have to show Canadians that Indigenous people are just as special and talented as their loved ones.

2. We call on music presenters to submit offers to Indigenous artists that give them the ability to put their best foot forward. In Marek Tyler's words, "you know that you have given enough when it starts to hurt a little." (A teaching given to him by his mom, Linda Young).

3. We call on summer music festivals in Canada to contract Indigenous artists well before the December tour grant deadline at the Canada Council for the Arts so they can submit competitive applications, strengthen their cash flow positions, and provide better customer service to their presenters.

4. We call on government departments and funding partners to recognize the unique position that Indigenous people have in Canada and not to lump them in with diversity, inclusion, and equity programs or projects.

5. We call on the federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal art councils to remove the "by invitation only" policies on their core or operating grant programs so Indigenous organizations can build the capacity to compete for private sponsors and contract artists well in advance of tour grant deadlines.

6. We call on the Department of Canadian Heritage to make competition prize money for pow wows an eligible expense in all music presentation programs.

As we continue to reflect on how to improve the live music experience throughout and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, it is especially important to consider ways to improve the experiences and wellbeing of IBPOC live music workers. The past decade has thrown into stark relief the toxic and lasting effects of systemic racism, at the same time that we have seen ongoing efforts across communities and organizations to protest racism and inequality. More work remains to be done. We invite you to read the full report in order to develop a more comprehensive picture of the nature of inequalities experienced by IBPOC live music workers, as well as possibilities for change.

Acknowledgements

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Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

The CLMA office is located in the city commonly referred to as Ottawa, built on the unceded, unsurrendered Territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation whose presence here reaches back to time immemorial, and whose presence and culture have nurtured and continue to nurture this land. From coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral territory of all Inuit, Métis, and First Nations people who call this land home, and the historical oppression of lands, cultures, and the original Peoples in what we now know as Canada.

We would also like to gratefully acknowledge all of the artists, organizations, and members of the live music community from across northern Turtle Island who shared their experiences and stories with us and helped to make this project possible.

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About the Study

Closing the Gap: Impact and Representation of IBPOC Live Music Workers in Canada is a national, qualitative, and quantitative investigation into the work experiences of Indigenous, Black, and people of colour (IBPOC) workers in Canada's live music sector. Live music is also a vital part of Canada's cultural landscape, providing space for artistic expression, catharsis for music lovers, and a place of belonging and connection for performing artists and audiences alike. In addition to fostering careers of artists and bringing communities together, live music is also about producing concerts, tours, and festivals, running venues, selling tickets, and working with performing artists to promote and monetize their shows. Live music has become increasingly important in the lives of musicians and industry personnel in light of the global downturn in record sales. It is an expansive job creator, providing over 17,000 full-time employment opportunities and contributing approximately $3 billion to the national GDP. Less revenue from album sales means that the music industry relies even more on this live performance revenue to sustain itself.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made clear just how crucial live music is to society; the pandemic robbed countless musicians and fans of an important source of community and wellbeing, while streamed concerts and outdoor shows contributed to mental health and connection through a period of disconnect. Unfortunately, the lack of in-person shows resulted in sweeping and potentially permanent unemployment for many live music workers, resulting in detrimental impact on the economy and the live music community itself.

As we continue to navigate the effects of Covid-19, we have an opportunity to rebuild our sector and better support the diverse needs of all members of the live music community. As we do so, it is especially important to listen, reflect upon, and implement strategies to improve the experiences and wellbeing of IBPOC live music workers. The past decade has thrown into stark relief the toxic and lasting effects of systemic racism, at the same time that we have seen ongoing efforts across communities and organizations to protest racism and inequality through social movements like Idle No More, Black Lives Matter, #SayHerName, and #TimesUp, among others. Yet media reports on creative industries' responses to these movements suggest that many are at a loss for how to make creative workplaces safer and more inclusive.

Everyone deserves access to safe and equitable working conditions; the inclusion and safety of artists and workers in creative careers identifying as IBPOC is a basic human right and therefore morally imperative. It is also imperative for fostering the innovation on which creative industries thrive. While important research exists on the state of inequality in music industries writ large, very little research has been conducted on the live music industry. The critical and urgent need for this sector-specific research is demonstrated throughout our report, as the nature of working conditions in live music – festival curation guided by genre, invisible labour that is unevenly distributed, gatekeeping practices by individuals in decision-making roles – have specific repercussions for the wellbeing and safety of IBPOC workers.

Closing the Gap: Impact and Representation of Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour Live Music Workers in Canada is a step forward in helping to close the gap in research on inequality in the live music sector. More importantly, our goal is to provide empirical evidence on the nature of inequalities experienced by IBPOC live music workers, and actionable policy recommendations

A note on language

In this report, we often use the term *racialized* or the acronym for Indigenous, Black, and people of colour – IBPOC – to describe the study participants as a group. These labels are flawed; they group a wide range of cultures, communities, and race/ethnicities together as if they are a singular entity. They are not. Using an umbrella term like IBPOC risks eliding differences and masking inequalities within and between communities. For example, as we outline in the report, those working in Indigenous music communities face a unique set of challenges relating to genre categorizations that set their experiences apart from other study participants. The term 'racialized' is likewise reductive; according to The Department of Canadian Heritage & Multiculturalism, it is the "process through which groups come to be socially constructed as races, based on characteristics such as ethnicity, language, economics, religion, culture, politics."

While it is important to acknowledge that categories of race are applied to people and not always something that communities select for themselves, 'racialized' is mostly used to describe those who do not identify as white. But 'white' is likewise a racial category – one that is imbued with a tremendous amount of advantage. Failure to refer to white people as racialized normalizes whiteness as the status quo, and reproduces its privileged position. Our preference would be to use the identifiers that participants and survey respondents have chosen for themselves. However, in an effort to keep participation confidential, we must refer to study participants throughout the report in ways that protect their anonymity. While we use the terms IBPOC and racialized, we do so while acknowledging that they are problematic.

Everyone deserves access to safe and equitable working conditions; the inclusion and safety of artists and workers in creative careers identifying as IBPOC is a basic human right and therefore morally imperative.

that can in turn help to close the gap in representation and inequitable experiences in the live music community that vary along lines of race and ethnicity. This report examines the challenges confronted by IBPOC workers, while also exploring the opportunities and industry strengths that can be harnessed to promote their full participation. The study consists of 40 in-depth interviews with IBPOC live music workers across Canada, spanning various roles, genres, levels of experience, and identities. This study also includes country-wide demographic survey data on the economic, as well as mental and physical health effects of working in the live music sector.

Racism, Belonging, and Exclusion in Live Music

Music is not simply a reflection of specific musicological idioms, like polka, jazz, or reggaeton. According to sociologist Jennifer Lena, musical genres are "systems of orientations, expectations, and conventions that bind together industry, performers, critics, and fans in making what they identify as a distinctive sort of music." Thinking of genres as musical communities helps to focus attention on "the set of social arrangements that link participants who believe themselves to be involved in a collective project." [2]

> "Indigenous People are curating Indigenous voices, and what gets heard from our way of knowing and being in the world."
>
> –Performing artist/festival organizer

The community imperative

Throughout this report you'll read some upsetting findings that identify the barriers and challenges of IBPOC workers in the live music sector. Unfortunately, many of these experiences may not be surprising. Racism and other forms of discrimination are pronounced in the music industry. Fortunately, for all the difficulties found, this study also discovered many joys and opportunities shared by participants that counter their negative and harmful experiences. In fact, one of the most consistent themes across interviews was the importance of community. Participants shared how their community provided a soothing balm in painful situations, promoted them during their earlier career stages, and offered guidance over necessary learning curves. This finding is also not entirely a surprise. Racialized people have historically had to overcome hurt and trauma by creating their own opportunities and safer spaces:

- Enslaved peoples, stripped of belongings, created moments of liberation together using simply their bodies to create percussive rhythms;
- When denied access to commercial radio, economically poor Jamaicans used creative sound system technology and Black sonic innovation to create reggae, dub, dancehall reggae, and more[3];
- Queer Latinx and Black Americans created community and held kikis, sparking the New York City Ballroom scene.

Findings from this study are consistent with this legacy of musical rebellion, creativity, and liberation. Throughout, participants shared the importance of community to knowledge building, creating feelings of belonging, serving as motivation, and providing access to resources in big and small ways. The importance of community and how to foster it is included throughout the recommendations. Look for the 'community imperative' call-out box for examples of the joys, strengths, and opportunities this study revealed.

Musical communities can be a force for good, through creating feelings of belonging and purpose. We see this in hip-hop, various folk musics, and traditional Indigenous musics, genres that provide members with a sense of identity and self-expression, as well as a home base for the emergence of social justice movements, and sites of resistance to oppression.[4]

However, musical communities can also reproduce inequality. Historically speaking, boundaries have formed around certain musical communities, blocking membership as well as the rewards and resources that go hand-in-hand with being a part of a musical community. We see this in the way that awards are conferred, and how certain genres and artists have been excluded from the most important awards categories. In the United States, rap music has been largely excluded from the Grammy award categories for album of the year, record of the year, and song of the year, despite being one of the most profitable musical genres.[5]

Here in Canada, throughout most of the history of the JUNO Awards IBPOC artists have likewise been significantly underrepresented in awards nominations and live performances, though in recent years the JUNO Awards have made greater strides towards inclusivity by creating more representative and diverse awards categories, events, and programming.[6]

Recognizing rap

In 1998, hip-hop group Rascalz won the 1998 Juno Award for best rap recording and refused it. Despite being a vastly popular genre of music, the rap category was still relegated to the non-televised portion of the Juno awards. Lack of visibility is a major barrier to fostering commercial success of underrepresented genres. Rascalz protested on the grounds that racism motivated the award's disadvantageous scheduling. Rascalz member DJ Kemo recalls the following in a CBC interview:

"At the time, hip-hop had taken over as the number one-selling form of music as far as any genre was concerned … We felt like it wasn't really showing hip-hop the kind of respect it had earned to that point, so we felt like a stand needed to be taken."

As a result of Rascalz's 1998 protest, the Juno Awards began televising the rap category during the main ceremony the following year.

Further reading:
Tetteh-Wayoe, A.. (2018, February 13). Inside the Junos, episode 2: Why Rascalz refused their 1998 award. CBC Radio

Tokenism in musical communities – the superficial recruitment of underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of inclusion – also leads to exclusionary practices in the live music sector. In their academic study about how diversity gets taken up in the Canadian music industry, project leaders Alanna Stuart, Kim de Laat, and their team interviewed 50 artists, managers, agents, promoters, and label personnel. Their interviews revealed that representation of racialized performers on festival bills and concerts can be motivated by the economic, aesthetic, and reputational gains they offer promoters and festival programmers, as well as by the financial gains awarded to successful applicants ticking demographic boxes on grant applications. A consequence of this tokenization is persistent feelings of marginalization that impede any efforts to move towards meaningfully inclusive musical communities.[7] In the following report, we provide greater detail on the nature of tokenism and marginalization experienced by racialized live music workers.

What is systemic racism?

The Ontario Human Rights Commission defines systemic racism as "patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for racialized persons. These appear neutral on the surface but, nevertheless, have an exclusionary impact on racialized persons."

Systemic racism is perpetuated despite individual actions to combat racism, precisely because it is baked into bureaucratic practices, policies, and procedures. This embeddedness makes it more challenging to dismantle. An important first step is recognizing all the various forms it takes. There are many well-known, disturbing examples of systemic racism in Canada. For example, in Montreal, Indigenous and Black people are four times more likely than white people to be racially profiled.[8] However, forms of systemic racism in the music industry may be less well known:

- Throughout the 19th century, Indigenous ceremonies and musical traditions were banned across the country. It became a criminal offence for anyone to participate in potlatch ceremonies, and many Indigenous people were sent to jail. For some, the chargeable offence was dancing. In Nunavut, Christian missionaries banned Pisiit, Inuit drum songs. The banning of Indigenous ceremonies and music contributes to cultural genocide, and is an example of explicit racism and xenophobia; over time, Indigenous communities lose familiarity with their traditions.

- In the United Kingdom, journalist Jesse Bernard reported on the introduction of form 696 by London's Metropolitan police. Form 696 was a "risk-assessment document that required the city's nightclub promoters to give details of the events they planned to host, including a description of the style of music that would be played, and the target audience it would be played to, including their ethnicity. It drew heavy criticism for its racist tone, and was seen as discriminating against grime, rap and other underground black genres." While the ethnicity and musical style clauses were removed in 2008, the racist implications were already embedded. The form was officially abolished in 2017 by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan.

- In Canada, Pow Wow organizers can apply for ceremony and event funding, where music is often presented through singing and dance competitions. However, prize money for the competition winners, which makes up the largest portion of Pow Wow budgets, is not an eligible expense. This means that Pow Wow organizers do not receive enough money to adequately plan and organize events. Indigenous communities and arts organizations should not be expected to alter their operational procedures in order to meet government eligibility – it should be the other way around.

- As we outline in the following report, Indigenous people and people of colour, which includes Black people in Canada's census data, make up 27% of Canada's population,[9] but only 16 percent of live music industry workers. Such underrepresentation is also a symptom of systemic racism, and suggests that barriers are preventing the full inclusion of IBPOC individuals in live music communities. In the findings section, we outline several forms that systemic racism takes, including through genre classifications, emotional labour, gatekeeping practices, and the need to code-switch in workplace settings.

Project Methodology

The data for this study come from two sources. First, we conducted in-depth interviews with 40 live music workers self-identifying as Indigenous, Black, or as a person of colour. We developed a country-wide list of live music workers, taking recommendations and suggestions from Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) partners/collaborators, referrals, as well as from our own personal and professional networks. From this, we strove to interview people of all genders identifying as Indigenous, Black, or as people of colour, from a wide variety of geographic locations (including those outside of urban centres), working as artists, managers, festival directors/programmers, promoters, agents, venue owners, and sound technicians, and in a mix of both formal and informal practices and spaces. While the 40 interview participants are not representative of the live music industry as a whole, the insights they shared can usefully elaborate on the nature of inequities and opportunities in live music that surfaced in the survey data, and amplify the voices of those whose experiences are often not prioritized.

The interview guide was designed by the project co-leads, in consultation with Archipel Consulting, and musician and independent consultant Marek Tyler. It included questions about how participants got their start in the live music scene, career challenges and opportunities, moments when they felt supported, and resources they would like to see made widely available to their communities. To promote transparency, a webpage was created to offer information on the study, including the names, images, and biographies of the lead research team.

Table 1: Overview of interview participants

Race/Ethnicity	
Black	13
Indigenous	10
People of Colour	14
Indigenous and Black or POC	3
Gender	
Women	15
Men	22
Non-binary or Two Spirit	3
Occupational Role*	
Artist (incl. artist/entrepreneurs)	12
Manager	4
Festival/Concert Programmer	7
Agent	3
Sound Tech	5
Promoter	7
Venue Owner	2
Geographic Location	
Western	12
Prairies	3
Central	21
Eastern	4
Northern	0

** Some participants occupy more than one role, in which case, we have categorized them based on what they identify as their primary job in the live music industry*

Participants were randomly assigned interviewers with the option of selecting their own preferred interviewer. Interviews were conducted by a team of researchers with expertise in qualitative interviewing techniques, critical race theory, and the music industry, and who represent a variety of backgrounds and cultural communities.

Prior to each interview, participants were offered a letter of consent that outlined the measures we took to ensure confidentiality, as well as the option to review the corresponding summary of the interview. They also had the right to withdraw their participation or decline to answer certain questions throughout the interview. Participants were offered an honorarium of $100 for their participation in the study, regardless of whether they chose to withdraw or decline certain questions. No participants elected to withdraw from the study. In an effort to provide emotional safety, participants had the option to be accompanied by an Elder or trusted companion during the interview. These Elders and companions were also offered a $100 honorarium. No participants requested accompaniment.

Interviews were conducted over the phone or Zoom throughout July and August 2021, and lasted on average 1.5 hours. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using an AI transcription service, with the permission of interview participants. Following each interview, the interviewers wrote a detailed summary of what was discussed, and which therein informs the summary of the qualitative research findings. Because involvement in this study is confidential, we avoid identifying information, and in some cases have altered descriptions, locations, and names if they may otherwise risk identifying study participants.

Second, a survey was conducted online by consulting firm Nordicity from September to October 2021, with additional consultation on equitable question development from Muna Osman at Archipel Research and Consulting, and CLMA advisory members. The survey was developed on the Voxco platform to collect data from artists, industry workers, and owner/entrepreneurs in particular. Given the lack of pre-existing data on live music workers in Canada, and because a portion of the survey targeted companies, it is not possible to estimate a margin of error for this analysis, or a target response rate. The survey received usable responses from 681 respondents. A response was considered usable if the respondent provided

answers to demographic questions, in addition to role-specific questions, and questions concerning barriers and impact.

Once the survey was closed, the Nordicity team eliminated duplicates, checked for data quality including invalid responses, and then conducted data sufficiency checks to understand which analyses would be possible given the response rates. Each question was analyzed along multiple demographic dimensions, and results have been reported where there was sufficient data. Results have been suppressed where there were too few responses in a particular demographic category, or if there was enough information to reveal the identity of the respondent. When reporting on differences between Indigenous, Black, and people of colour and white survey respondents, we often use the aggregate categories of white and IBPOC. We do this to protect the confidentiality of survey respondents, and to enable comparison. More details on the survey methodology can be found in Appendices A and B.

Demographic Groups definitions:

- If a respondent chose at least one IBPOC racial identity, they were considered IBPOC for the purpose of the analysis.

- If a respondent chose at least one non-cisgender option, they were considered to be non-cisgender for the purpose of the analysis.

Limitations

Over the course of this study, we have tried to include a wide range of perspectives, from people representing different genders, cultural backgrounds, and geographical locations. Unfortunately, despite outreach efforts and extended timelines, we were not able to secure ample representation from the Northern communities, both in the survey data and among interview participants. This is indeed a limitation, and further attention and efforts should focus on how best to increase engagement and conduct outreach for future research initiatives.

Throughout the findings section, when presenting survey data, we often collapse Indigenous, Black, and people of colour respondents into one category. We recognize that in no small way, this goes against the spirit of the project, which is to highlight the unique barriers and opportunities expressed by Indigenous, Black, and people of colour live music workers. We made this choice because in many instances, there were shared experiences among these populations that could be gleaned. We also did this to make the data more easily interpretable. We acknowledge that much more work remains to be done, and this is but one step in the journey towards equity.

Project Findings

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Kilo November, photographed by Carla Maxwell

Demographic Overview of Survey Participants

The survey findings provided information about key demographic characteristics including race/ethnic identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and occupational roles in the live music industry. As detailed in the descriptions below, there was more diversity in gender, sexual orientation, and ability among respondents who identified as IBPOC. This pattern highlights the importance of an intersectional lens in understanding the experiences of IBPOC workers in the live music industry.

There was diverse representation within a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds reported in the survey. Although 52% of the respondents were white, 25% of the remaining respondents identified as Black, and five percent or less identified as either Indigenous, East Asian, Indo-Caribbean, Latin American, Middle Eastern, South Asian, Southeast Asian, or Jewish.

Table 2: Racial/ethnic identity of survey respondents

Race	*n*	*%*
Black	169	25%
East Asian	36	5%
Indigenous	36	5%
Indigenous outside of Canada	12	2%
Indo-Caribbean	2	0%
Jewish	4	1%
Latin American	13	2%
Middle Eastern	9	1%
South Asian	27	4%
South East Asian	10	1%
White	351	52%
Prefer not to answer	10	1%
Other	2	0%
Total	**681**	**100%**

Table 3: Respondent educational status

Educational Status	IBPOC	White
High school or equivalent	17%	7%
Some college or university	17%	19%
College or university	23%	21%
Undergraduate degree	22%	26%
Post graduate degree	0%	0%
Graduate degree	10%	15%
None of the above	4%	1%
Prefer not to answer	1%	1%

All survey respondents reported similar levels of education, with the exception of IBPOC survey respondents being more likely than white respondents to report having a high school degree only (17% vs. 7%).

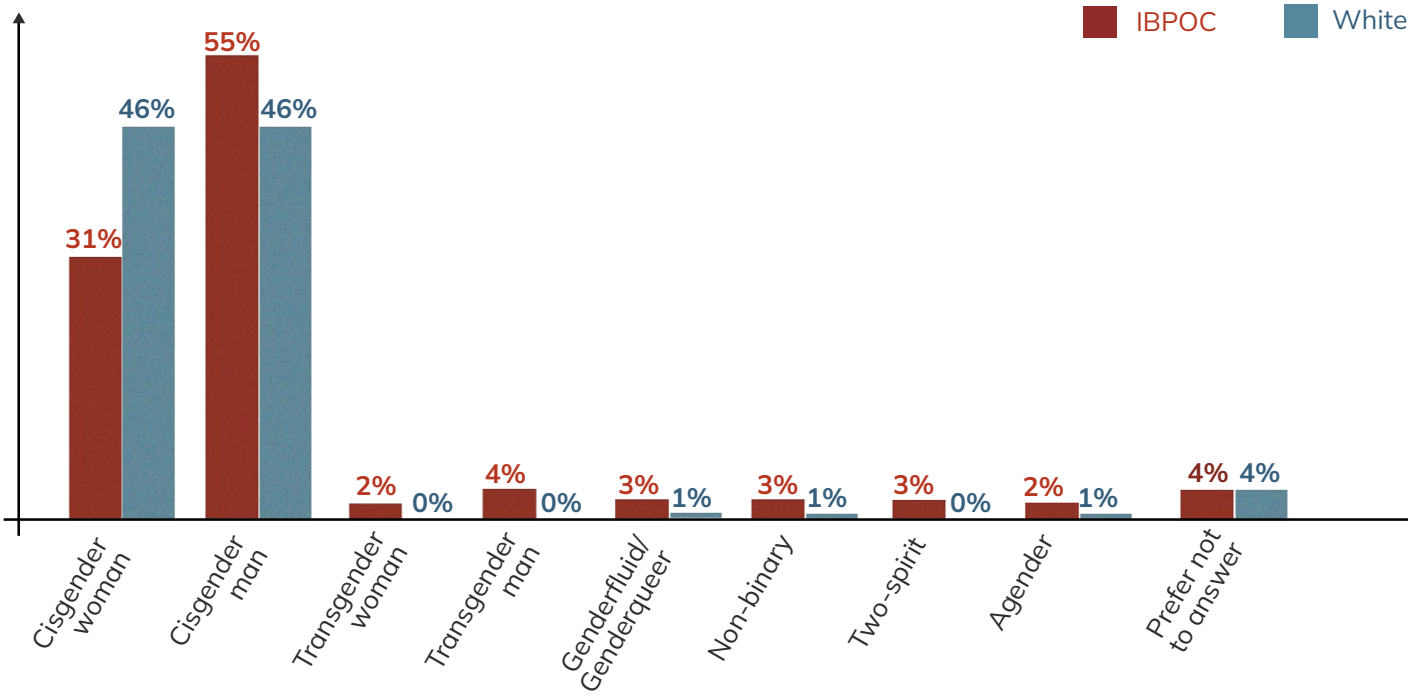
The survey focused on three occupational roles in the live music industry: artists, entrepreneur/owners, and workers. White respondents were evenly distributed across the roles of artist (40%), entrepreneur/owner (44%), and worker (35%). In contrast survey respondents who identified as Black were overrepresented as artists (73%), and underrepresented as entrepreneurs/owners (28%), and workers (17%). This pattern was similar across Indigenous and other people of colour suggesting IBPOC were disproportionately represented as artists, rather than entrepreneurs/owners and workers.

Rates of entrepreneurship or ownership were comparably lower among IBPOC respondents when compared to white respondents. There was a 16% gap in ownership among Black respondents compared to white respondents. People of colour had a 12% gap in their rates of ownership, while Indigenous respondents had a nine percent gap in comparison to white respondents. Additionally, white workers were also more represented as workers, with 35% of white respondents falling into this category, compared to 28% of Indigenous respondents, 27% of people of colour respondents, and 17% of Black respondents.

Table 4: Distribution of occupational roles

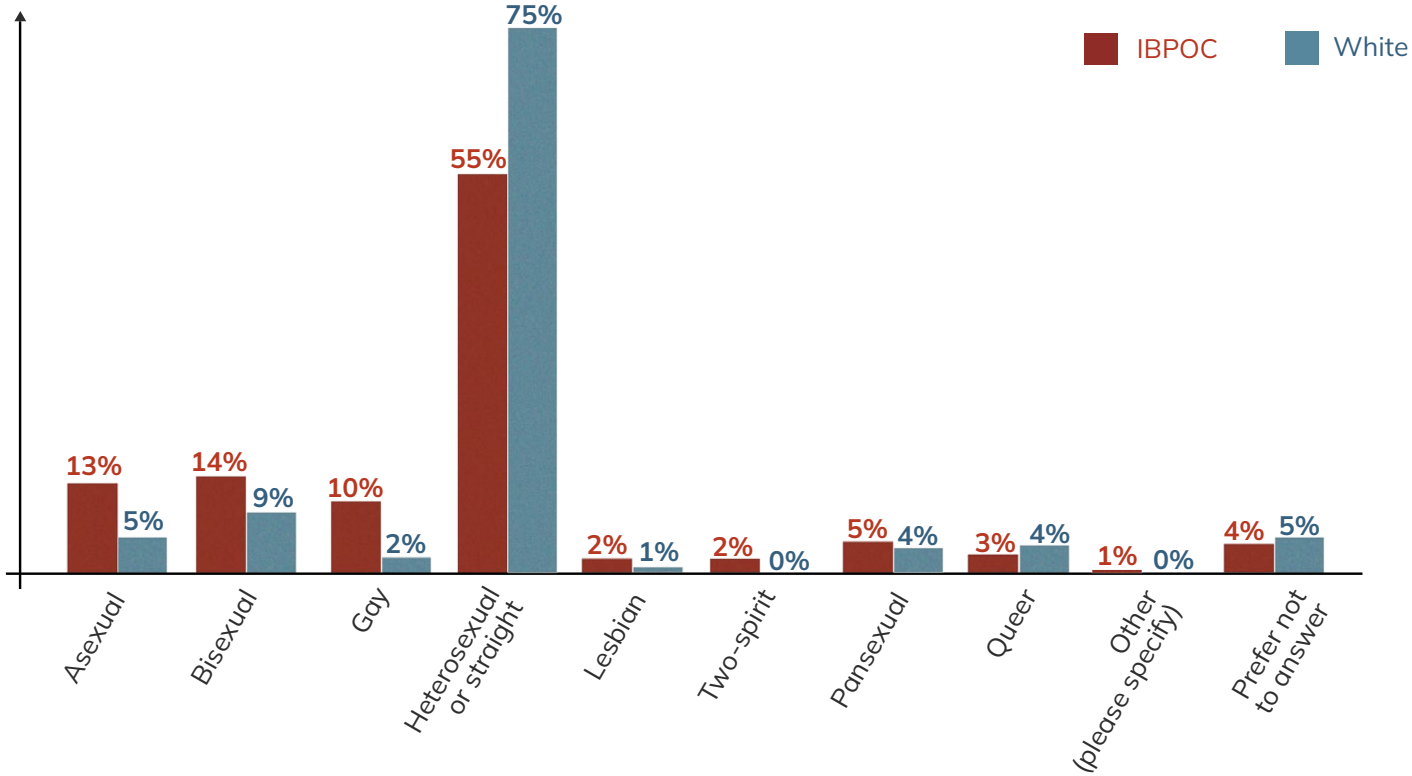
Race	Artist	Entrepreneur/ Owner	Worker
Black	73%	28%	17%
Indigenous	63%	35%	28%
POC	53%	32%	27%
White	40%	44%	35%

Table 5: Respondent gender



There was diversity in gender identities among survey respondents identifying as Indigenous, Black, and people of colour, including cisgender women (31%), transwomen (2%), cisgender men (55%), and transmen (4%). Collectively, 11% of IBPOC respondents identified as gender queer, non-binary, two-spirit, or agender. White survey respondents identified in equal numbers as cisgender men and women, at 46%. However, fewer white respondents identified as belonging outside of the gender binary, with three percent identifying as gender queer, nonbinary, and agender.

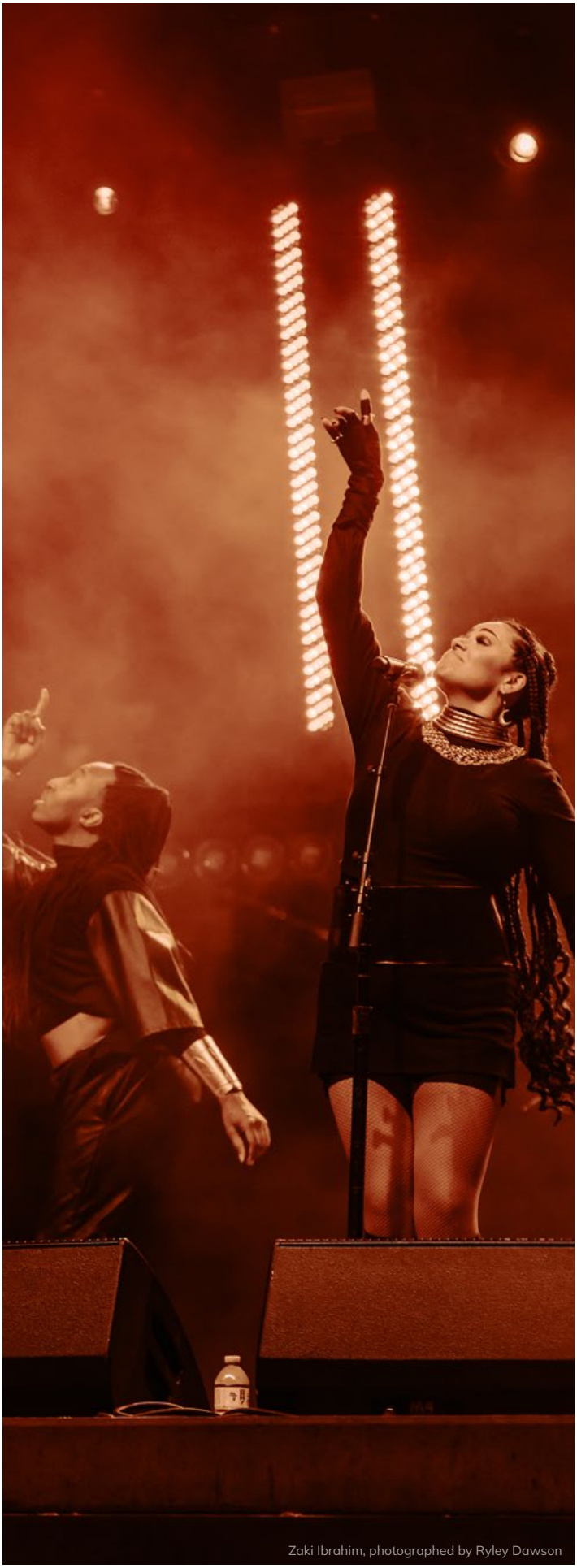
Table 6: Respondent sexual orientation



Related to this, the vast majority of white survey respondents identified as straight (75%) with fewer identifying as bisexual (9%), asexual or pansexual (9%), and gay, lesbian, or queer (7%). On the other hand, among IBPOC respondents, there was wider variation with regard to sexual orientation, including straight (55%), asexual or pansexual (18%), gay, lesbian, or queer (15%), and bisexual (14%).

IBPOC respondents also identified as persons with disabilities at higher rates than white respondents, at 36% and 12% respectively.

Taken together, these survey findings indicate that gender diversity, sexual orientation diversity, and having a disability is more commonly reported among IBPOC live music workers. Because these various facets of identity are underrepresented in the population at large and may be experienced as marginalized, it is likely that discriminatory and tokenistic experiences in live music are intersectional in nature. This further suggests that solutions to overcoming discrimination must likewise be intersectional in design.



Zaki Ibrahim, photographed by Ryley Dawson

Employment Experiences by Occupational Role

Workers

IBPOC live music workers have different employment patterns when compared to white survey respondents: they are eight times more likely to be working a part-time job not related to the music industry, and twice as likely to be working on a casual or freelance basis in a job not related to the music industry, in addition to their hours of work as a music worker. By contrast, 71% of white respondents report being able to work full-time in the music industry. As we discuss below, taking on multiple roles can create stress and cognitive strain, making it more challenging to focus on advancing one's career in music.

In addition, there is variation across roles in the live music industry: IBPOC workers are more concentrated in the roles of artist manager (25%), booking agent (21%), and professional service provider, such as public relations, accounting, insurance, consulting, graphic design, or legal services (26%). On the other hand, white respondents are more concentrated in the roles of promoter (30%) and festival programmer (28%).

In the section on Gatekeeping, we address how underrepresentation in the latter curation roles limits access to opportunities for IBPOC workers and performers.

Artists

When it comes to tenure in the live music industry, racialized artists are present at higher rates in the beginner and emerging categories, at rates of approximately 30%. In contrast, 39% of white artists report being established in their careers, and 19% report being well-known or recognized in their field. Without longitudinal data, it is difficult to estimate why this may be the case. However, when considered alongside all the other data presented in the study (especially data on rates of experiences with harassment and discrimination) it is possible that there are higher rates of attrition among IBPOC artists, and they are therefore underrepresented among those who are more established in their careers.

Entrepreneurs/Owners

Survey data also shows patterns in the kinds of organizations owned by racialized live music personnel; their ownership is concentrated at higher rates in DJing, management, show production,

Table 7: Employment status of live music workers

Employment Status	IBPOC	White
I work full-time in the music industry and do not have any other employment	54%	71%
I work part-time in a job not related to the music industry, in addition to my hours of work as a music worker	24%	3%
I work on a casual or freelance basis in a job not related to the music industry, in addition to my hours of work as a music worker	22%	9%
I work full-time in a job not related to the music industry, in addition to my hours of work as a music worker	10%	9%
I work part-time in the music industry and do not have any other employment	2%	9%

and in professional services. By contrast, white ownership is more concentrated in the realms of venue and festival ownership. This once again points to an uneven distribution in gatekeeping roles.

Other notable differences include higher rates of for-profit, charity, and informal group (such as DIY collectives) ownership among IBPOC respondents. In addition, IBPOC respondents are more likely to be self-employed. Lastly, IBPOC venue owners report having lower capacity rooms (on average, 400-person capacity, compared to an average of over 2,000-person capacity for white venue owners).

Terry Uyarak, photographed by Vincent Desrosiers

BollyHeelsTO, photographed by MonstrARTity

Economic Impact

Economic Impact Summary[10]

The economic impact of the IBPOC live music community in Canada – including both artists and live music companies – can be expressed in terms of the community's contribution to Canada's GDP and the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) jobs the community supports.[11] The impacts are summarized in the table below.

The sections that follow detail the financial indicators for artists and companies that were used in the impact estimations, and the direct, spin-off, and total economic impacts.

Sources of Economic Impact

The main source of direct economic impact in any economy is money paid to or generated by individuals. As such, the direct impact contributed by *companies* comes from salaries and wages paid to their employees, as well as the profits they earn from their operations (which can be understood as income for the companies' owners). On the other hand, *artists* contribute to the economy by earning income from their music activities.

In addition to the direct impact, economic activity also has what can be called "spin-off" impacts,

Table 8: Total GDP impact of the IBPOC live music community

Total Impact	Direct	Spin-off	Total
Employment (FTEs)	17,260	930	18,190
Labour income	$494 M	$46 M	$540 M
GDP	$499 M	$93 M	$592 M

Source: Nordicity MyEIA Model, Statistics Canada, federal and provincial government accounts.

which represent the ripple effects that an industry (or community) has on the broader economy. These impacts include indirect impacts (the employment and value added by suppliers from whom music companies purchase goods and services), and induced impacts (the re-spending of labour income earned from music companies and their suppliers).

Artist Income: All of the IBPOC artists in the live music community in Canada together earned an estimated **$468 million in personal income** from their music activities. This aggregate was estimated by multiplying the average music income earned by IBPOC artists (from the survey) by the total number of IBPOC artists in Canada.

Given that there is no previous national study of the live music community in Canada, Nordicity combined occupational data from a custom tabulation of Statistics Canada's *2016 Census of the Population*, and survey data related to the full-time and part-time nature of artists' work to estimate the total number of IBPOC artists in Canada, (i.e., the artist universe).

Company Spending: Live music companies included in this economic impact assessment have at least one owner who indicated in the survey that they identify with one of the IBPOC racial/ethnic identities, and these companies are referred to as IBPOC companies in this section.

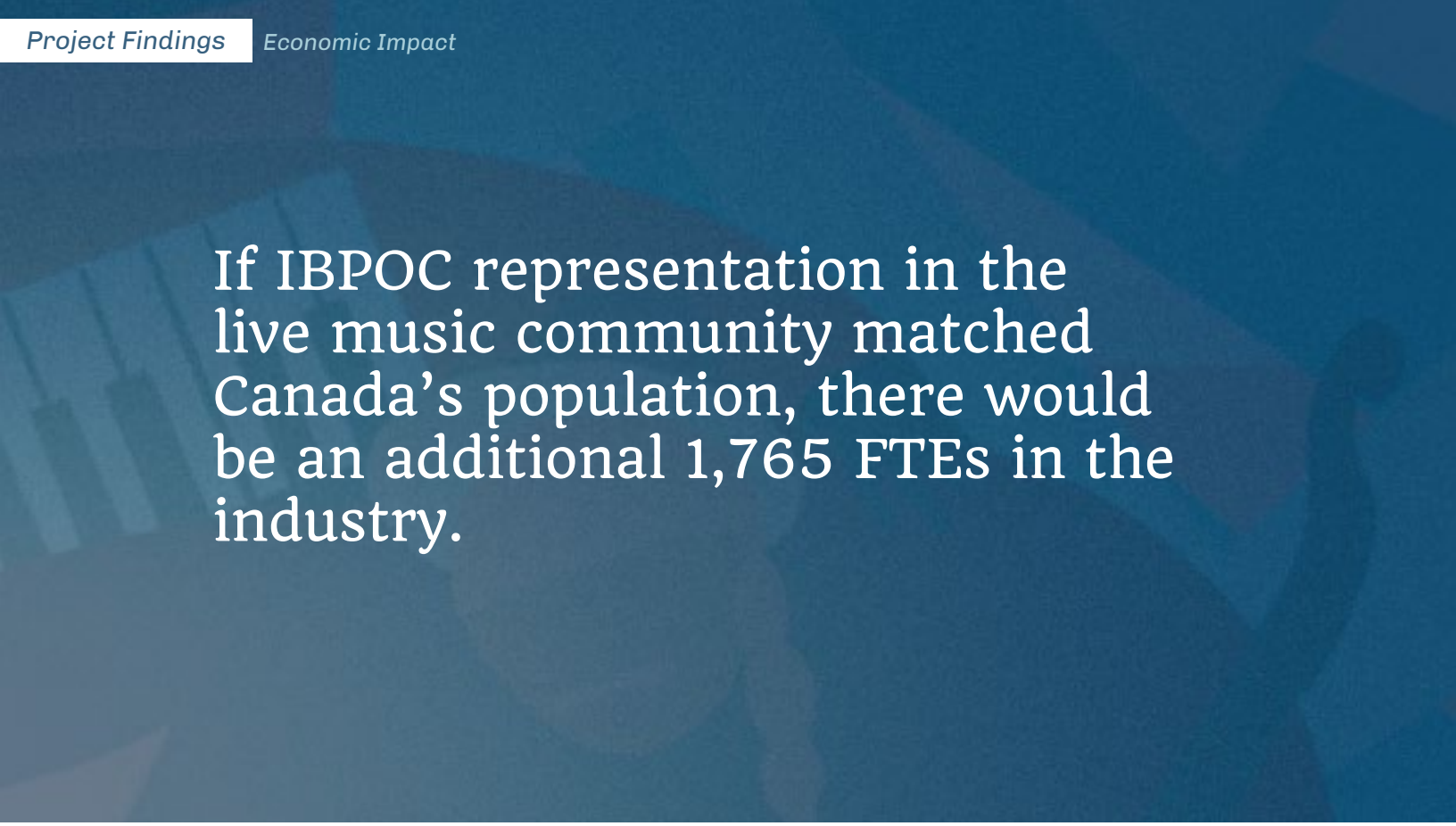
Companies were asked to provide their annual expenditure in a typical pre-Covid-19 year and the percentage paid towards labour, programming fees, and other expenses (including fees paid to other live music companies). In all, IBPOC companies incurred an estimated **$97.7 million** in aggregate annual expenditure. This expenditure was estimated by multiplying the average expenditure for IBPOC companies with the number of IBPOC companies (i.e., the universe).

Given that there is no Canada-wide study of live music companies, nor a registry of live music companies, the universe is also an estimation based on previous studies conducted in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and for the Indigenous live music community. A full description of the methodology can be found in Appendix B.

Companies spent **$32.4 million in programming fees** in a typical pre-COVID-19 year.[12] An estimated 44% of these fees were paid to IBPOC artists. Because the fees paid to IBPOC artists are also represented as artist income in the estimation of economic impact of artists, they were excluded from the calculation of the economic impact of companies.[13]

Fees paid to other live music companies amounts to money circulated within the community, and hence were excluded from the economic impact calculation.

Geronimo Inutiq, photographed by sākihiwē festival



If IBPOC representation in the live music community matched Canada's population, there would be an additional 1,765 FTEs in the industry.

Economic Impact

Direct Economic Impacts: The IBPOC live music community in Canada is directly responsible for an estimated 17,260 FTEs.[14]

The combined direct economic impact of company spending and artist income is shown in the table below. **Direct GDP** impact of the salaries paid by companies, and the income earned by artists is estimated to be **$499 million.**

Table 9: Direct impact of the live music community

Impact	*Total*
Direct employment impact	17,260 FTEs
Direct labour income	$494 M
Direct GDP	$499 M

Source: Nordicity MyEIA Model, Statistics Canada, federal and provincial government accounts.

Direct labour income: This comes from salaries paid by companies to their employees, and the income earned by artists is estimated to be **$494 million**. The labour income for companies includes only salaries and wages paid to company employees, and does not include fees paid to artists, which is counted as artist income.

Total Impact: The **total GDP** impact (direct + spin-off) of the IBPOC live music community in Canada is estimated to be **$592 million**. The community also supported **18,190 FTEs**.

The economic activity outlined on the previous page generates tax revenue, components of which are detailed in the table below. In total (direct + spin-off impacts), the live music community contributed **$221 million in taxes** at local, provincial, and federal levels.

Table 10: Total fiscal impact of the IBPOC live music community

Impact	Federal	Provincial	Total
Personal income taxes	$77 M	$69 M	$146 M
Corporation income taxes	$2 M	$1 M	$3 M
Consumption taxes	$13 M	$30 M	$42 M
Local property taxes and other fees	$ –	$30 M	$30 M
Total	$92 M	$129 M	$221 M

Source: Nordicity MyEIA Model, Statistics Canada, federal and provincial government accounts.

Missing Economic Contribution

As per the Census 2016, Indigenous people and people of colour constitute 27% of Canada's population.[15] There are a total of 6,135 full-time musicians and singers in Canada who identify as either Indigenous people or people of colour, and they constitute 18% of the total number of musicians and singers. Similarly, there are 8,065 individuals working in live performance-related industries (detailed in the methodology) who identify as either Indigenous people or people of colour, and they constitute 16% of the total number of industry workers.

In both examples, IBPOC groups are underrepresented in the economy, compared to their total population in Canada. Additionally, IBPOC individuals working in live music make, on average, $11,715 less per year than white individuals working in the industry. So, not only are there fewer IBPOC individuals participating in the live music community, but the IBPOC individuals currently working in live music are not earning as much labour income as their white counterparts.

If IBPOC representation in the live music community matched Canada's population, there would be an additional 1,765 FTEs in the industry. These FTEs would earn a total labour income of $71.3 million if they earned as much as white individuals in the community.

Similarly, if IBPOC live music workers and artists earned the same as their white counterparts, they would add an additional $202.2 million to the industry's annual contribution to GDP. In total, the "missing" GDP contribution of missing IBPOC people and missing wages is an estimated $273.5 million.

Thierno Soumare, Batuki Music Production, photographed by Nadine McNulty

Sources of Inequality in Live Music

The previous section outlined the financial consequences of the underrepresentation of IBPOC workers in Canada's live music community. In what follows, we illustrate the experiences of IBPOC live music workers by highlighting findings from the survey data and interviews that outline the social and emotional consequences of underrepresentation. Based on our findings, five overarching themes were identified: the problem with genre classifications; working more for less; gatekeeping; intersecting inequalities; and complicated relationships to whiteness.

In addition to outlining the significance of these themes, we also share throughout community imperatives, which highlight the transformative potential of music and community membership to combat and overcome racism, microaggressions, and their effects.

Barriers to Health and Safety

As we mention above, the survey data indicate that barriers to wellbeing experienced by racialized live music workers intersect across multiple lines of difference. This is apparent when we examine reported barriers to health and safety: Black respondents are approximately three times as likely to report a lack of physical accessibility infrastructure as a barrier experienced with regard to their health and safety.

In other respects, Indigenous, Black and people of colour report health and safety barriers at similar rates, including in particular, safety-related challenges associated with bar culture/touring/late nights. Also of note, mental/physical wellbeing (i.e., lack of health or other insurance benefits, lack of work/life balance) is a barrier reported at high rates by all survey respondents.

Table 11: Reported barriers to health and safety

Barrier	Black	Indigenous	POC	White
Lack of physical accessibility infrastructure	22%	6%	8%	2%
Safety-related challenges associated with bar culture/touring/late nights	26%	26%	25%	16%
Harassment	13%	9%	19%	9%
Mental/physical wellbeing (i.e., lack of health or other insurance benefits, lack of work/life balance)	**31%**	**37%**	**43%**	36%
Lack of workplace support structures (i.e., interventions, protocols)	24%	11%	22%	10%
I do not face any of these barriers	17%	31%	19%	**49%**
Prefer not to answer	1%	0%	2%	4%

Barriers to Sense of Belonging

The survey explored five sources of barriers related to a sense of belonging in the live music industry (i.e., prejudice/discrimination, lack of representation, skills discounting, family-related barriers, and feelings of tokenism). Prejudice and discrimination due to diverse identities were reported by Black (38%), Indigenous (29%), and people of colour (30%), compared to only 13% of white respondents who reported experiencing prejudice or discrimination due to their identity. Lack of representation in the industry was a barrier experienced more frequently by Black (42%), Indigenous (31%), and people of colour (37%), compared to white respondents (11%). The barrier of having your skills dismissed or discounted was experienced comparably across all race/ethnic groups, with about 20% of respondents reporting this barrier. Family-related challenges were reported most frequently by Indigenous people (29%) compared to Black (16%), other people of colour (16%), and white respondents (16%). Lastly, feelings of tokenism were most frequently reported by Black (28%), Indigenous (14%), and people of colour (19%), compared to white respondents (2%). Fifty-three percent of white respondents did not face any barriers related to their sense of belonging, compared to Black (8%), Indigenous (14%), and people of colour (16%).

Table 12: Reported barriers to sense of belonging

Barrier	Black	Indigenous	POC	White
Prejudice/discrimination related to my race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, language, disability, and/or religion	38%	29%	30%	13%
Lack of representation in the industry	**42%**	**31%**	**37%**	11%
Skills discounting (dismissed or not taken seriously)	15%	23%	22%	20%
Family-related challenges (managing family ties/relationships, lack of access to childcare or financial support for family travel)	16%	29%	16%	16%
Feelings of tokenism	28%	14%	19%	2%
I do not face any of these barriers	8%	14%	16%	**53%**
Prefer not to answer	2%	0%	3%	5%

Ray Robinson, photographed by Andre Saunders

The Problem with Genre Classifications

Music often relies on stereotypical representations for marketing and branding purposes: the nihilistic punk rocker, the hillbilly country singer, and the gangster rapper are but three of the more obvious personae labels applied to artists working in punk, country, and rap. Stereotypes are even more constraining for women and people of colour, who have a challenging time working in genres if doing so deviates from our stereotypical understanding of gendered and racialized propriety.[16] For example, research finds that the thematic content of pop songs performed by Black women are patterned in such a way that lyrical themes remain in dialogue with harmful stereotypes about "jezebels" and "welfare queens."[17] For racialized performers, oftentimes success is achieved through reproducing tokenistic cultural stereotypes, which means that inequality is likewise reproduced.

Indigenous Music(s)

Our interviews uncovered complicated and conflicting relationships with genres and the stereotypes that accompany them. Several interview participants working in Indigenous music communities reported that, as Indigenous people, performing and supporting Indigenous music provided a great sense of purpose and community. But it is burdensome, too. A performing artist reported feeling as though her Indigeneity is constantly used to define her. She shared:

> The thing that stands out the most in terms of my identity impacting my music career is that it gets to the point where we can't even just create or say regular stuff. Like we can't write a song about wanting to go to a party because the funders are going to want you to sing about your community. It feels

> like we need to perform our culture and identity all the time in order to get certain opportunities. And there's a lot of pressure to represent the entire community and just to be speaking on things, especially over the past few years, it's been a huge escalation of organizations and then just different people.

She is describing the way that identifying as an Indigenous artist invites a certain degree of pressure to perform and create within certain boundaries. This sentiment was echoed by an artist manager, who expressed his frustration with the limits posed by genre categories for regional and national music awards, and for funding opportunities:

> Oftentimes, Indigenous groups or artists are considered for the Indigenous Artist of the Year Award, but nothing else. It's like, okay, you qualify for that. But why can't you be up for Rock Artist or Folk Artist as well? I feel like sometimes Indigenous groups or artists are pigeonholed and not considered for other things ... I'm not trying to complain, because it's awesome to win. But I sometimes feel like you're not looked at beyond your Indigenous identity.

These feelings of tokenization align with the survey data, where Indigenous, Black, and people of colour survey respondents reported that tokenization is a major barrier to their sense of belonging in the live music community (at rates of 14, 28, and 19% respectively), compared to only two percent of white respondents. Similarly, 31 percent of Indigenous respondents, 42 percent of Black respondents, and 37 percent of people of colour respondents reported feeling as though lack of representation is a barrier to their sense of belonging.

Another performing artist likewise struggles with whether to accept certain opportunities, out of fear of feeling tokenized. He said someone might call him up and offer him a show for Orange Shirt Day. But he thinks, "Why can't I just play on a Thursday? Why do I have to play Orange Shirt Day?" He recalled another time when he was invited to play at a festival workshop sponsored by a radio station:

> I was sharing a workshop stage with three other Indigenous artists who are incredibly talented, heavy hitters. We had a great workshop, it was really well attended. And then after, there was a representative from the radio station. And some of the comments that she had made to each of us shed a whole new light on the situation. We were told that we were playing on the 'Indian stage.' We were checking their box, we were the diversity stage for the radio station. And that was sort of tough, it changed everything. It just changed the mood of that whole situation. I can't really explain the feeling. All I know is that it changed the whole experience of that part of it.

This artist's experience is reflected in the survey data; Indigenous respondents were most likely to report that they feel they are dismissed, or not taken seriously, at 23%. What began as a powerful and fulfilling musical experience for him and his collaborators quickly became overshadowed by racist comments from radio personnel, important gatekeepers who provide opportunities for performing artists by helping to get their music heard by a wider audience.

World Music(s)

Another genre label that invites discord is world music: a blanket category that refers to non-Western music. Much like what categories such as 'IBPOC' and 'racialized' do to individuals, the world music category lumps many divergent and unique musical traditions and innovations into one catchall category. As early as 1999, Talking Heads frontman David Byrne, among many others, was maligning the predominance of this genre in a New York Times op-ed:

> In my experience, the use of the term world music is a way of dismissing artists or their music as irrelevant to one's own life. It's a way of relegating this 'thing' into the realm of something exotic and therefore cute, weird but safe, because exotica is beautiful but irrelevant; they are, by definition, not like us. Maybe that's why I hate the term. It groups everything and anything that isn't 'us' into 'them.' This grouping is a convenient way of not seeing a band or artist as a creative individual, albeit from a culture somewhat different from that seen on American television. It's a label for anything at all that is not sung in English or anything that doesn't fit into the Anglo-Western pop universe this year ... It's a none too subtle way of reasserting the hegemony of Western pop culture. It ghettoizes most of the world's music. A bold and audacious move, White Man![18]

Interview participants shared Byrne's sentiment, one of whom is a manager who works in non-Western genres, including Afrohouse. He feels that the divide between world music and mainstream music creates insularity; his social networks differ from those working in genres such as rock and rap, and he feels this prevents him from learning about opportunities to support his artists. Another interview participant is a South Asian musician whose band occasionally sings in Urdu. Although the band plays rock music, they are often classified as world music. He shared:

> The categories that we get put in as a band, that we would get put into in FACTOR competitions, even the Juno Awards … where do we fit? We don't want to be a world band, but because we have a guy who's singing in Urdu, we're automatically world music. But I don't want to be a world musician. That's a very small box. And as soon as you get stuck in world music, you're stuck in world music. So trying to fight our way out of these various boxes, knowing that we could connect with large numbers of people [is a challenge].

At the same time that artists and managers express frustration over the limitations of genre, they shared that genres can also provide a sense of community. Several respondents acknowledged the role of Small World Music Centre in creating a space for artists from a variety of backgrounds to congregate. And many of those supporting non-Western music are helping to preserve traditional and Indigenous music that would otherwise disappear due to the unrelenting forces of globalization and cultural imperialism. Safeguarding traditional music, and creating space for new expressions emerging from these traditions, is a process that is experienced as meaningful by those doing the work.

In brief, interviews demonstrated that genre, while providing a source of community and belonging, can also create feelings of marginalization and tokenization. The impact of genre is wide-ranging: it is present in funding application categories, where artists and their managers have to select a category that may help or hurt their chances, or otherwise misrepresent them. And genre plays a major role in the way that festivals are curated and venues are programmed, creating a ripple effect that influences marketing and promotion, and the extent to which IBPOC artists, workers, and audiences are made to feel included in live events. In the words of one performing artist, "I don't make Indigenous music. I'm not an Indigenous artist. I'm an artist. I'm Indigenous." While targeted funding for Indigenous music in particular is important, the artists and managers we spoke to expressed a desire for more flexibility in the way they are asked to self-identify.

Working More for Less

When asked to report their total pre-tax income earned in a typical pre-COVID-19 year, survey data indicated that IBPOC respondents earn on average $11,715 less than white respondents ($28,658 vs. $40,373). This includes a small amount of variation in earnings among Black, people of colour, and Indigenous artists, at $28,150, $29,111, and $30,767 respectively.

When further disaggregated, we see that artists identifying as Indigenous, Black, and people of colour are more highly represented on the lower end of income distribution.

In addition to income inequality, Indigenous, Black, and people of colour respondents reported facing different barriers in their workplaces; IBPOC respondents all reported facing a lack of opportunities for advancement, ranging from a 7–25% difference compared to white respondents.

Table 13: Total pre-tax income earned in a typical pre-COVID year

Pre-Tax Income	Black	Indigenous	POC	White
Average income	$28,150	$30,767	$29,111	$40,373
Median income	$20,000	$20,000	$30,000	$30,000

Table 14: Income breakdown

Income	Black	Indigenous	POC	White
Less than $20,000	45%	42%	41%	30%
$20,000 - $29,999	37%	4%	1%	13%
$30,000 - $49,999	6%	1%	15%	30%
$50,000 - $99,999	13%	3%	6%	18%
$100,000 - $149,999	1%	1%	0%	7%
$150,000 or more	3%	0%	1%	1%

Leela Gilday, photographed by Angela Gzowski

In addition to advancement opportunities, Indigenous and people of colour respondents most often cited employment-related barriers to their inclusion in the workplace, including hiring processes, high turnover rates, and nepotism. And Black respondents cited a lack of supportive leadership.

Interviews revealed that the income gap and employment barriers are accompanied by other differences in the amount of labour expended; the interview participants reported having to engage in additional forms of work that remain largely invisible to their white colleagues. This includes small tasks, such as having to translate song lyrics into either English or French when registering songs with SOCAN. But invisible labour can be more burdensome, too.

Table 15: Top barriers experienced in the workplace

Barrier	Black	Indigenous	POC	White
Lack of advancement opportunities	**48%**	**34%**	30%	23%
Lack of supportive leadership	36%	17%	21%	13%
Employment-related barriers (hiring processes, high turnover rate, nepotism)	26%	26%	**34%**	18%
Restrictive demands of industry employers (e.g., non-compete clauses, exclusivity)	17%	17%	16%	9%
Lack of transparency	17%	11%	11%	10%
I do not face any of these barriers	11%	17%	21%	**49%**
I prefer not to answer	1%	3%	4%	4%

The Burden of Multiple Roles

Interview participants shared with us the challenges associated with having to be an entrepreneur or holding down multiple roles and jobs in addition to one's primary role in live music. Table 7 demonstrated that IBPOC live music workers are eight times more likely to be working a part-time job not related to the music industry, and twice as likely to be working on a casual or freelance basis in a job not related to the music industry, in addition to their hours of work as a music worker. Research finds that taking on multiple roles that compete with one another for time and attention leads to stress, burn-out, and lower life satisfaction.[19]

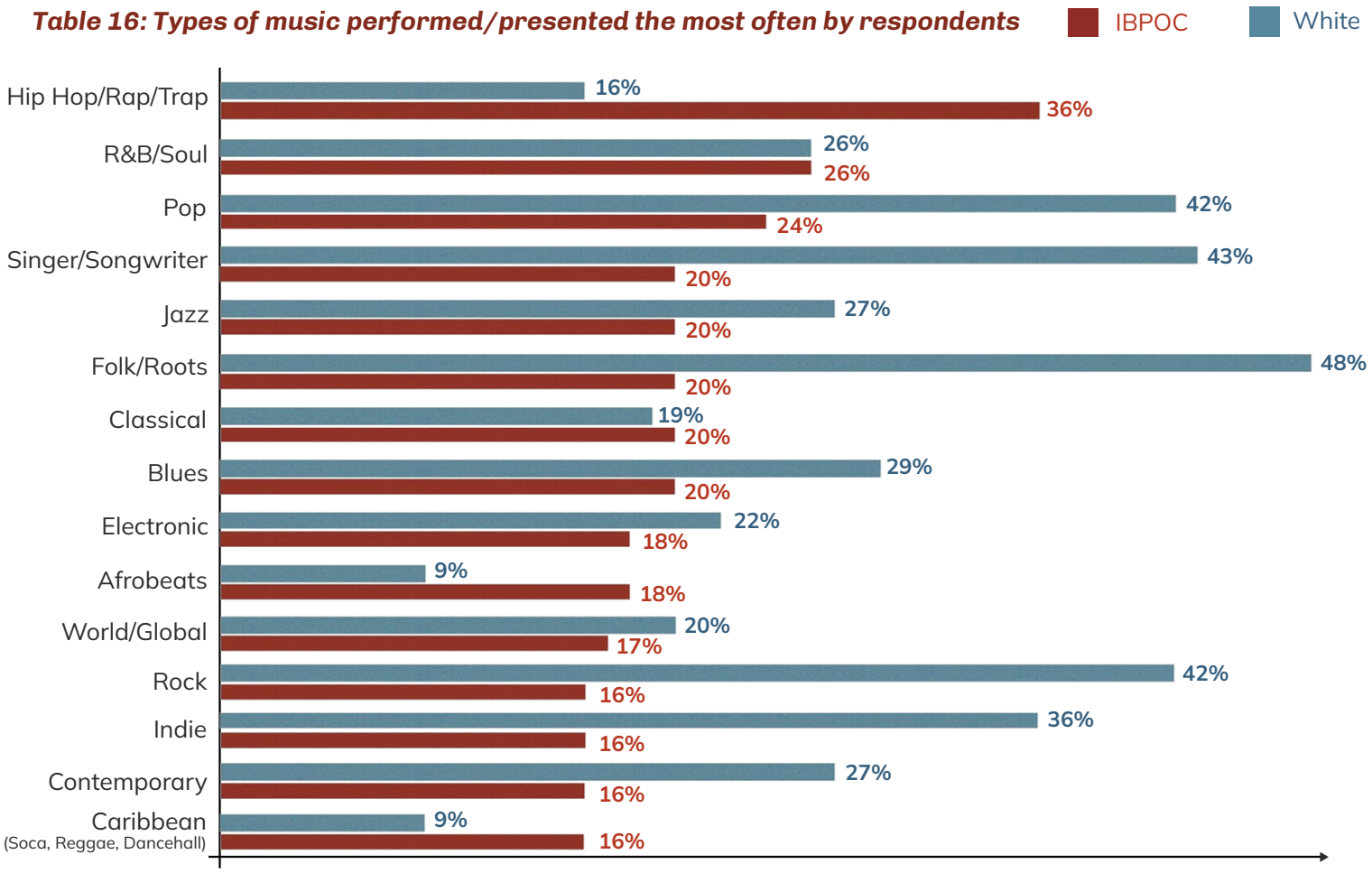
In addition, compared to their white counterparts, IBPOC survey respondents less often work in mainstream musical styles such as rock, pop, and singer-songwriter, where much of the live music infrastructure is concentrated.

This makes it challenging to locate the right kinds of expertise, and hire support personnel to assist with day-to-day tasks. For artists, the additional work of self-promotion, management, and accounting takes time away from their artistic practice. As one performing artist shared: "Nobody ever told me when I started playing guitar that I'd have to end up being a businessman, which is not what I wanted at all. It was quite the opposite. But here we are."

Currently, there are resources within the music industry to help artists acclimate to the realities of entrepreneurship. For example, one DJ we

See the full table of survey results related to this topic in Appendix C.

Table 16: Types of music performed/presented the most often by respondents



interviewed took part in an artist-entrepreneur program to help build artists' confidence as businesspeople and found it very helpful. However, among those who participated in the survey, IBPOC respondents indicated in higher numbers than their white counterparts that a major barrier they confront is lack of access to resources. More work remains to be done, then, to ensure that IBPOC live music workers are aware of the resources available, and that resources and programs are set up in a way that supports diversity in live music.

A part of the difficulty in navigating multiple roles has to do with gaining expertise in multiple domains, and learning how to navigate the culture of the live music sector. As Table 17 demonstrates, 40% of Black respondents lack access to mentorship and professional development activities, and over 40% of Black and people of colour respondents lack opportunities when it comes to marketing, promoting, broadcasting, and building their audiences.

Mentorship, which is the practice of providing advice and feedback, and sponsorship, which involves advocating on a worker's behalf and championing their advancement, are important in live music in particular. Most companies in the live music sector are small, and therefore hiring and advancement is often an informal process. Because of this, a Women in Music Canada report on empowering diversity argues that professional networks become even more important.[20] Mentors and sponsors can help IBPOC workers overcome the learning curve associated with taking on multiple roles, including navigating how to market, promote, broadcast, and build audiences.

A final challenge that surfaced in the survey data concerns a barrier more frequently confronted by Indigenous respondents: 40% of Indigenous respondents reported that they fear losing control over their stories, artistic projects, and/or decision-making, compared to Black (27%) and people of colour (21%) respondents who felt the same.

Table 17: Top barriers experienced in terms of access to resources

Barrier	Black	Indigenous	POC	White
Lack of mentorship and/or professional development opportunities	40%	14%	28%	20%
Fear of losing control over my stories, artistic projects and/or decision-making	27%	**40%**	21%	8%
Restricted opportunities in marketing, promoting, broadcasting and building my audience	**45%**	29%	**42%**	21%
Lack of access to digital technology and/or digital expertise	16%	23%	16%	9%
Geographical location/remote region	8%	17%	14%	17%
I do not face any of these barriers	8%	11%	16%	**43%**
Prefer not to answer	2%	3%	2%	7%

In stark contrast only 8% of white respondents reported fear of losing control over their stories, artistic projects, and/or decision-making. These findings speak to the unique challenges of Indigenous people around maintaining artistic and cultural authenticity, and are likely grounded in the historical realities of appropriation and cultural genocide; because of the historical treatment of Indigenous peoples and cultures, respondents preferred to maintain as much control as possible over the artistic process. But with this comes increasing responsibilities, and attention that must be divided across multiple professional domains.

Pure Soul Energy, photographed by MonstrARTity

Table 18: Resources that would help respondents' careers in live music, by immigrant status

Resource	Immigrant	Non-immigrant
Increased access to funding/ grants/incentives	44%	50%
Opportunities for networking and mentorship	40%	49%
Increased access to gatekeepers, producers, executives, bookers, agents	38%	47%
Opportunities for business/ financial skills development	26%	36%
More diverse representation in management/leadership positions in the industry	26%	38%
Stronger sector-wide advocacy for better working conditions and diverse representation in the industry	23%	30%
Development of standardized anti-racism/anti-harassment protocols for the industry	19%	24%
Development of mandatory anti-racism/anti-harassment training for the industry	18%	21%
Stronger engagement from unions (e.g., collective agreements for regulated work hours, minimum pay rates, health and insurance benefits, etc.)	17%	21%
Reduced fees and/or barriers to union membership	12%	17%
Other (please specify)	6%	8%

Sadaka Jolie Aigbukor and Fumu Jahmez, photographed by Michael Zende

The Challenges of Immigrants

Immigrant live music workers also experience a unique set of challenges. When an interview participant whose family is from South Asia started out as a sound technician, her parents were unsupportive, preferring instead for her to be a doctor or lawyer. This made her earlier work experiences extra challenging. Of this time in her career, she shared, "that really impacted my feelings of self worth. I was like, 'oh am I good enough for this?' And that, mixed with the lack of support from my parents – those two things kind of rubbed up against each other." In addition to confronting the usual imposter syndrome that many women of colour experience, she lacked family support, which further impacted her self-esteem. Research indicates that early support from parents and families is vital to obtaining the confidence needed to sustain creative careers.[21] Because immigrants often move countries to improve their financial wellbeing, their children may face unique pressures to pursue stable and high-earning occupations.[22] Creative careers, for the most part, lack both stability and high earning potential.[23]

In addition to family-related challenges, immigrants and descendants of immigrants may lack the broad social networks that are crucial for learning about work-related opportunities. Unsurprisingly, nearly 50% percent of all immigrant survey respondents believe that increased opportunities for networking and mentorship, access to funding, and access to key gatekeepers would be most effective in advancing their career.

Part of the difficulty in accessing professional networks may be attributed to language barriers, which makes it more challenging to meet new people. A creative director shared his difficulty in overcoming this:

> For most immigrants a lot of cultural context in language can be missed in humour ... English is not my first language and in most meetings now I just straight up ask, 'What does this word mean? I've never heard of it before.' Or, everyone's chuckling, so I might say, 'You've said something that is funny, but I don't understand the context.'

For him and other newcomers, these exchanges add another layer of social disadvantage they need to navigate in order to network and go about the business of producing live music shows.

Emotional labour becomes racialized when people of colour must respond to acts of microaggressions and racism, often by suppressing their authentic response to a given situation.

Emotional Labour

More hidden labour comes in the form of having to manage one's feelings, as well as the emotional responses of others, in order to do one's job. This type of work is referred to as emotional labour. A notable example of emotional labour is performed by flight attendants, who, as a requirement of their job, must be cheerful and cater to passengers' needs, regardless of how they are treated in return.[24] Emotional labour becomes racialized when people of colour must respond to acts of microaggressions and racism, often by suppressing their authentic response to a given situation.

A promoter described the emotional labour he undertook when deciding how to respond to a suggestion that he felt was rooted in tokenism. He was told by a grant officer that his funding application would appear more favourable if it included a Black female artist. He shared with us,

> To this white person, maybe they don't see the harm in that suggestion, but to me it's like, holy fuck, it's like you don't care about us at all … I don't want to be having these kinds of conversations, or to be the one who calls things out all the time.

Deciding whether to call out tokenistic behaviour requires weighing the benefits of doing so against any potential costs incurred to one's career progression or funding opportunities. And avoiding the emotional labour involved in navigating racism and microaggression has fundamentally influenced this promoter's career trajectory. He went on to share, "If I see a job that's a good fit for me but the staff isn't diverse or even reflective of the community that they want to support, I just stay away from it."

While it is difficult to quantify the reasons for the earnings gap between IBPOC and white live music workers, it stands to reason that career strategy decisions like the aforementioned promoter's, rooted in a desire to avoid emotional labour and feelings of marginalization, may limit access to opportunities. The wide range of extra labour taken on by racialized live music workers – juggling multiple conflicting roles, language barriers, and emotional labour – have nonmonetary costs that may not be immediately apparent to white music industry personnel.

Kimye, photographed by Andre Saunder

Gatekeeping

Eighty-two percent of IBPOC survey respondents reported that gatekeepers, including producers, executives, bookers, and agents, would be one of the most useful resources to advancing their career. In the music industry, gatekeepers guide the flow of opportunities, influencing who gains access to resources, audiences, and markets.

In its simplest form, gatekeeping involves choosing what to reject, and what to accept and promote. However, gatekeeping is by no means a straightforward curatorial process; the motivations underpinning gatekeepers' decisions range from political and moral interests, to commercial interests, to aesthetic motives, or some combination of these.[25] These are influenced by individuals' tastes, opinions, and expertise (formal and informal), as well as personal biases, history, and industry knowledge that become enmeshed in gatekeeping processes. And, even during (or especially during) an era when countless artists can use crowdfunding, social media, and open music platforms to bypass traditional channels and reach audiences directly, gatekeepers still play a vital role.

The prominence of white workers in gatekeeping positions means that white workers are best positioned to address gatekeeping issues. Optimistically, the primary reason white survey respondents reported working in the live music sector is to impact people's lives. However, the personal accounts of IBPOC artists, show promoters, and live event producers revealed how gatekeeping has had a negative impact on their

careers. Interviews identified two areas in which gatekeeping had the greatest impact: venues (including venue owners and promoters that curate their line-ups) and public funding (granting) organizations. If the problematic processes the interview participants highlighted were to be addressed, they could serve as pathways towards improving gatekeeping practices and having a more positive impact on people's lives.

Table 19: List of resources that would help respondents' careers in live music, by race

Resource	IBPOC	White
Increased access to gatekeepers, producers, executives, bookers, agents	82%	31%
Opportunities for networking and mentorship	77%	36%
Increased access to funding/grants/incentives	67%	52%
More diverse representation in management/ leadership positions in the industry	53%	25%
Opportunities for business/ financial skills development	44%	30%
Development of mandatory anti-racism/anti-harassment training for the industry	36%	16%
Development of standardized anti-racism/anti-harassment protocols for the industry	36%	19%
Stronger sector-wide advocacy for better working conditions and diverse representation in the industry	29%	31%
Stronger engagement from unions (e.g., collective agreements for regulated work hours, minimum pay rates, health and insurance benefits, etc.)	28%	19%
Reduced fees and/or barriers to union membership	20%	14%
Other (please specify)	5%	9%

When filled with people that curate those spaces, perform on those platforms, or take in those sounds, a venue becomes a social space with the potential to shape culture and impact the lives of those moving through them.

Venues

With respect to access to resources, nearly half of all IBPOC live music workers reported that restricted opportunities in marketing, promoting, broadcasting, and building their audience were the biggest obstacles to advancing their careers. Further, 45% of Black respondents and 42% of respondents of colour reported this as being the greatest barrier to advancing their career. This is of particular significance to the Black community, three-quarters of which (73%) occupy artist roles. This means that the majority of Black live music workers rely on venue and promotional gatekeeping to advance their careers. In the live music sector, performance spaces are important sites for building audience followings. Superficially, a venue is simply a physical structure that can be filled with technology or serve as a platform from which to amplify sound. However, when filled with people that curate those spaces, perform on those platforms, or take in those sounds, a venue becomes a social space with the potential to shape culture and impact the lives of those moving through them. As cultural gatekeepers, venue owners and the workers that book and promote artists within them act as a "vital bridge between the public task of contributing to local creative scenes on the [one] hand and running a successful business on the other hand."[26]

The top four reported employment positions amongst white live music industry workers are gatekeeping positions: music venue owners, music promoters, live event producers, and music festival programmers. On the other hand, racialized respondents primarily occupy artist management, professional services, and booking agent roles, which seek audience access from gatekeepers. This means IBPOC workers mostly seek access to gatekeepers, while white workers predominantly control gatekeeping practices. The personal knowledge that venue owners and show promoters use to run performance spaces determines what scenes are cultivated, which markets are accessed, and which artists get to perform. Interviews revealed the nuanced ways these spaces and their inner workings demarcate boundaries and shape the experience of IBPOC workers in the live sector.

Table 20: Type of music business/organization respondents work for in their live music community

Business/Organization	IBPOC	White
Live event producer	31%	37%
Professional services (i.e., providing public relations, accounting, insurance, consulting, graphic design, legal services to the live music sector, etc.)	26%	14%
Music manager/Artist manager	25%	8%
Music venue	25%	27%
Music agent/Booking agent	21%	8%
Artist/DJ	19%	10%
Music festival	19%	28%
Technical/production (providing technical equipment, lighting, PA, etc.)	16%	18%
Music promoter	15%	30%
Talent buyer	12%	15%
Other (please specify)	12%	6%
Show producer	10%	10%
Crew (event tech experts)	9%	8%
Network/industry association	9%	11%
Arena/stadium	6%	5%
Ticketing company	6%	7%
Supplier of goods and services to the live music industry (other than production/technical)	6%	4%
Pow wow organizer	4%	2%
Music school/learning space	4%	6%

One Toronto-based show promoter shared how racism and personal biases influence professional decision-making in venues:

> I bet half of the venues that existed in the city over the last 15 to 20 years – their owners at one point in time said, 'We don't want your type of music in our venue.' And, like, it was basically as blunt as that. And I think [what they really mean] is 'we don't like that type of music because we don't want those types of people in our venues.' Right. And it still exists today.

In his experience, a venue owner's personal bias against certain genre communities where racialized people are more highly represented became imprinted into their business-making decisions. Another longstanding show promoter demonstrated the practical ways this type of genre discrimination shows up in gatekeeping processes:

> Producing hip hop shows in Toronto was very difficult ... if I walked into a club and said, 'Hey, I'm a promoter. I want to do a hip hop show,' I would either get told there's no availability, be given an exorbitant rental rate, or be directed to the "softer" nights of the week. In not so many words, I wasn't allowed to book a show during their prime nights, because of the stigma around violence, the fear of the audience, the stigma around things like, 'Black people don't drink, and we're in the bar business. So why would I give you a Friday when I can save it for a rock show where people drink?' So, it's all those things I had to overcome. And, at the time, that's just how it was. When you're on the fringes of the industry, you don't really understand what's on the other side, or what you're really fighting for.

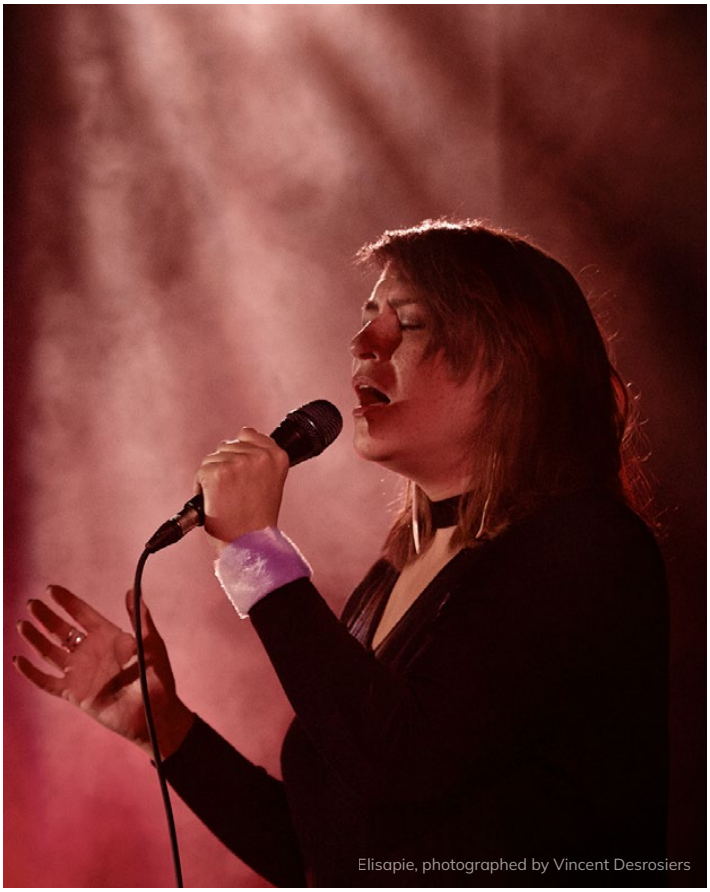
This promoter reveals how venues may establish arbitrary criteria for racialized workers to meet (such as consuming more alcohol) in order to access performance spaces. By basing show selections on misperceptions of racialized genre communities, gatekeeping, while curatorial on the surface, can uphold discriminatory attitudes. In addition, gatekeepers' selections have a ripple effect on subsequent works and creators. The aforementioned promoter went on to share that he opted to book his show on a less than ideal night rather than use a less desirable venue.

This points to an unfair choice that IBPOC promoters working in majority IBPOC genres such as hip-hop must often make: play a slow night of the week, or play in less desirable venues. In this way, decision-makers maintain their power by determining both the selection process and the outcomes of these processes.

Another promoter shared how she felt strong-armed into meeting the demands of one venue owner out of fear of losing future work opportunities. In her professional experience, venue gatekeeping has been an abusive experience: "I'm literally dealing with them yelling at my face. I'm dealing with [the venue owner] saying, 'I'm everything and you're nothing. And you have to do what I say because this is my venue, and if you want to work here that's what you have to do."

Unfortunately, her experience is not singular: Indigenous (10%), Black (17%) and people of colour (8%) workers reported having been threatened or harassed due to their race, while no white survey respondents reported having been threatened or harassed. This difference in experience demonstrates the increased risk of harm to IBPOC workers when navigating power imbalances, including those involving gatekeepers.

See the full table of survey results related to this topic in Appendix C.



Elisapie, photographed by Vincent Desrosiers

A less overt way that venues gatekeep is through design. A space's design can signal who is welcome and who is not, from the inclusion of wheelchair ramps, to the presence of an all-white staff. And when multiple barriers exist, workers with intersecting identities can become further marginalized. The vast majority of Black artist respondents depend on white gatekeepers to access venues and without proper accessibility, their full inclusion may be hindered: for example, 22% of Black respondents reported 'lack of physical accessibility infrastructure' as a barrier to full participation. Once inside a venue, the mental health and personal safety aspects of workplace cultures can have a detrimental impact, as well. One promoter spoke about how a venue can be "trauma waiting to happen." He recalled his experience in an iconic venue that, ironically, was hosting a showcase centred on Black, femme artistry at the time:

> They have murals over every wall, and it's just pictures of white musicians. A woman [is featured], but not a single picture of a non-white musician on their walls, you know? For someone like me, I walked into this space and I think that's purposeful, you know? I don't think that was an unconscious decision, you know? And so I walk in the place and I'm just surrounded by these floor-to-ceiling white men, and I can't help but think that the space wasn't designed for me to be present here, or to enjoy my time here. I think as a whole the spaces that are owned or operated by a family or a single person aren't for me. I stay away if I can.

This promoter highlighted how even the symbolic exclusion of groups has the same gatekeeping effect as outwardly denying someone's presence.

The effects of gatekeeping in live performance spaces have manifested themselves in the lack of representation in these spaces. Sixty-one percent of white live music company owners reported that IBPOC workers made up a minority of their roster. On the other hand, live music companies with Black ownership (69%) were approximately four times as likely to have an IBPOC majority in their roster, and almost twice as likely as companies with Indigenous and people of colour ownership. Even then, in the case of Indigenous (30%) and people of colour (35%) live music business owners, they were still almost twice as likely than their white counterparts (16%) to have a majority IBPOC roster. Over half of white artists, workers, and entrepreneurs alike reported that racialized colleagues were minimally present in their places of work. This finding, in relation to the dominance of white leadership, indicates how limiting white-led gatekeeping processes can be in increasing representation. Despite the increase of diversity and inclusion initiatives, markets, networks, and spaces remain segregated across roles. This indicates not only the pervasiveness of whiteness in the live music sector, but also the need for increased Black, Indigenous, and people of colour representation in gatekeeping positions.

Table 21: To what extent are Indigenous, Black and people of colour present in your places of work and places you perform

A: Artists' response

IBPOC Representation	IBPOC	White
A majority	29%	7%
Present, but a minority	47%	66%
Minimally or not present	21%	24%
Don't know/ Prefer not to answer	3%	2%

B: Music workers' response

IBPOC Representation	IBPOC	White
A majority	70%	8%
Present, but a minority	10%	50%
Minimally or not present	20%	42%

C: Entrepreneurs/owners' response

IBPOC Representation	IBPOC	White
A majority	52%	16%
Present, but a minority	27%	61%
Minimally or not present	13%	16%
Don't know/ Prefer not to answer	8%	7%

The community imperative

At the same time that venue gatekeeping can be exclusionary, the discerning nature of a venue's gatekeeping process also has the potential to foster bonds of community and belonging, and to create safe space for "diverse local cultures within a monopolised urban nightscape."[27] Project contributor Madison Trusolino points out that the concept of safe spaces emerged from queer liberation movements of the 60s and 70s, where they provided an environment in which "to speak and act freely, form collective strength, and generate strategies for resistance."[28] For the queer scene of the time, those safe spaces were clubs and bars where patrons could openly mingle and express themselves. This didn't mean these venues were conflict-free. Safe spaces can be understood as safe(r) spaces rather than places of guaranteed safety for socially marginalized people; what makes them safe is the gatekeeping process – how they were designed, and who was invited in. A promoter we interviewed provided an example of how IBPOC community members used their own discretion to throw parties in culturally safer venues that overrode the gatekeeping of racist, sexist, ableist, and otherwise discriminating spaces:

> I try to make sure someone who is in a wheelchair can come to my event, that the venue is close to an accessible subway station, and they have an elevator. These are things that I don't think people think about. It's a problem, you know? It's like people are just thinking of their bottom line and not thinking of humanity at all.

Table 22: Respondents who identify as a person living with a disability

Response	IBPOC	White
Yes	36%	12%
No	63%	86%
Prefer not to answer	1%	1%

This intersectional consideration is important; IBPOC workers were three times more likely to identify as having a disability than white workers. The intersecting reality of race/ethnicity and disability can present unique challenges and forms of exclusion for IBPOC workers. For example, 22% of Black respondents identify a lack of physical accessibility as a barrier to their health and safety, compared to only 3% of white respondents who experienced this barrier. Similarly, 24% of Black respondents reported barriers due to a lack of workplace support structures (including interventions and protocols), compared to 10% of white respondents who experienced this barrier. Overall, 49% of white respondents reported they did not face any barriers to their health and safety, compared to 17% of Black respondents who shared this experience. As such, industry measures need to account for the further marginalization resulting from disability.
The same promoter that took measures to account for differing abilities also shared how he uses employment strategies to increase representation in live music spaces, and how the identities of patrons and staff signified who is accepted and welcome at his parties:

> It's not like I don't employ white people but at a lot of these cultural

> institutions, it's as though diversity doesn't exist on the back end. So I try to exclusively employ BIPOC folks. I think it's important for people to come to my events and see that there's a Black engineer and there's a Black woman stage manager and you know, all the bartending staff is BIPOC, all the doors are Black or Brown and predominantly women. And that's something that my community and the folks who come to my events appreciate, because they can see themselves represented.

This promoter uses his discretion to promote ethnic and gender diversity in his staff as a way of cultivating a safer space for otherwise excluded community members. Such efforts may prove useful in countering the lack of representation in white-owned workplaces in the live music sector. As Table 21C demonstrates, IBPOC workers represented the majority in over half of IBPOC-owned workplaces, while the opposite is true for white-owned workplaces. In this way, gatekeeping as a method of managing access to a space or opportunity was a mindfully inclusive practice that accounted for the lack of opportunity afforded to certain folks resulting from the maintenance of opportunity afforded to a privileged few.

Interview data provided strong examples of how the social nature of venues and their gatekeeping processes have the power to shape careers, scenes, and tastes through determining who gets to play, work, and hear sound in their spaces. Even when not explicitly saying "no entry" to certain groups, gatekeeping processes and venue design determine the administrative requirements and/or social rules workers and patrons must follow to effectively work and safely attend these spaces. In the recommendations section, we include ways to create safe(r) spaces for racialized workers, and encourage further research into ways of reinforcing support around the racialized DIY initiatives already countering these barriers and creating opportunities for more inclusive practices.

Njacko Backo, photographed by Nadine McNulty

> "The industry is not designed for people like us who are newcomers. It's not even designed for people who don't speak and sing in English or French in the first place."
>
> –Event producer

Funders and Granting Bodies

When assessing financial barriers, IBPOC survey respondents identified funding access as an important barrier to their careers. This lack of access to financial resources was a shared barrier amongst both white and IBPOC participants. More specifically, the findings identified a lack of seed funding, overall public investment/support from government to live music sector, and access to/eligibility for grants as a barrier to career advancement. More than any other barrier, including workplace, health and safety, or sense of belonging, access to funding was the most frequently identified barrier for Indigenous (45%), Black (53%), people of colour (49%), and white respondents (45%) alike. Comparing across race/ethnic groups, we find 21% of Indigenous respondents reported experiencing barriers due to a lack of business and financial knowledge, compared to white (5%), Black (7%) and other people of colour (11%). It's quite possible that IBPOC workers may draw on their social and cultural resources to cope with barriers to their safety, belonging, and representation, but lack the financial means to sustainably advance their initiatives or to fund the professional development, marketing, or space needed to advance. In interviews, IBPOC workers in the live music sector highlighted the role of Canadian funding bodies (the granting system) when discussing inaccessible funding,[29] while survey data illustrated the impact of grant funding gatekeeping processes on IBPOC workers' access to necessary funding.

When grouped together, IBPOC workers experienced similar challenges with respect to meeting eligibility requirements, accessing funding information, and navigating application language. However, overall, IBPOC workers faced greater barriers to public funding than white applicants. Thirty-one percent of white respondents reported not experiencing barriers to funding, whereas only 12% of IBPOC workers reported the same. Of note is how the level of impact varied across barriers and IBPOC groups. The greatest barrier to both Indigenous applicants (31%) and applicants of colour (29%) was lack of awareness of funding programs. This means that many racialized live music workers miss out on funding access before they even encounter the application process. Barriers due to the lack of access to knowledge

Table 23: Top barriers experienced in relation to finance

Barrier	Black	Indigenous	POC	White
Accessing funding (availability/lack of seed funding, overall public investment/ support from government to live music sector, access to/eligibility for grants, etc.)	**53%**	**45%**	**49%**	45%
Access to high profile and/or paying work/gigs	46%	36%	34%	**53%**
Administrative/business costs (e.g., promotion, audition, travel, commissions, and other professional fees)	18%	14%	23%	12%
Managing cash flow and finances	16%	23%	9%	20%
I do not face any of these barriers	13%	11%	14%	8%
Lack of business/financial knowledge	7%	21%	11%	5%
Prefer not to answer	1%	4%	0%	1%

and information are also visible in other domains of barriers, such as financial knowledge. Further, applicants of colour (29%) felt a greater lack of cultural awareness, acknowledgment, and representation in public funding models. This could be because, lumped together, the particulars of a person's experience are lost amongst a more diverse range of experiences, rather than their individual needs being considered. This could also signal a lack of racial or cultural representation on funding bodies' staff and/or boards. Finally, almost half of all Black respondents (49%) could not access funding due to lack of eligibility. All of these barriers combined indicate how preventative current grant funding models can be.

A publicly funded grant application typically has to go through several stages of assessment criteria – and therefore, gatekeepers – before it is accepted or rejected. The driving force behind this assessment criteria sits at the intersection of government mandates, funding body administration processes, and peer assessment. Like the venue owners mentioned above, grant funding is a mediating process that can produce conflict between applicants seeking funding and the mandates and objectives of the organizations the gatekeepers represent. As a result, Canadian granting agencies cater to two 'audiences' in some respects: the governments that fund them, and the artists and administrators they support.[30] Theoretically, peer reviews are meant to be an arm's length process where governments do not interfere with the results of peer assessments. However, the guidelines peer assessors interpret and base their decisions on are guided by the funding body's eligibility requirements, and these requirements are informed by government policy. This knotted relationship has been reported to create a granting system that may "cave into the government's priorities as filtered through symbolic power."[31] As such, grant funding is a political process.

The complicated nature of grant funding is a natural outcome of gatekeeping. As funding organizations pursue more equitable practices and level funding

opportunities across creative communities, it is important to continue to identify and disentangle systemic racism and colonial histories from their procedures. Interview participants shared several ways funding bodies gatekeep, and how their eligibility requirements, language barriers, and inaccessible information can perpetuate systems of dominance that artistic support is meant to overcome.

A live event producer we interviewed shared one way that eligibility guidelines prevent IBPOC workers from potentially obtaining funding:

> I would say 99 percent of the grants out there are only accessible to non-profit organizations, or direct to artists. I know people that have set up non-profit companies strictly to access funding from various levels of government, whether it be municipal, provincial, or federal. And a lot of people who come within the POC realm, I don't think they come from experiences or a network of peers who know about setting up a non-profit organization, or a charity. And it's expensive to set up and maintain a non-profit and charity. So again, for POCs, and people who don't necessarily have the funds or the access to investors, I think it is hard to have that expectation of, 'oh, you can only access money from the government if you're set up as this type of company.' It's limiting in the first place.

Table 24: Barriers faced by respondents when applying for public funding

Barrier	IBPOC	White
Meeting eligibility criteria	**35%**	**32%**
Lack of awareness of funding programs	26%	21%
Lack of acknowledgment/awareness of my culture/ my organization's culture in public funding models	23%	7%
Difficulty navigating funding application language	16%	18%
Lack of time/resources	16%	27%
Lack of access to operating funding	15%	13%
Difficulty accessing program information	14%	8%
I do not face any of these barriers	12%	31%
Lack of accessibility support in applications	11%	6%
Restrictive timing of funding deadlines	11%	17%
"By invitation only" policies of funders	10%	8%
Other (please specify)	3%	9%

Related to this, a performing artist shared how creating less commercially driven music, which resulted in not generating enough funding, has prevented him from accessing operational funding:

> Funders will say things like 'we don't see any money generation in the music that you're producing, so we're not going to support it.' I find that frustrating. I think we need to have a shift in those programs. Because it does come down to a racial thing where, if organizations are based on getting a return on their investments – and you're producing music as a minority or trying to reach an audience that's not necessarily the majority – it's not going to generate the money that they're looking for. And I do think that you can see the funding program shifting a little bit, but I think it needs to be more immediate.

In his experience, eligibility requirements were potentially discriminatory, in that racialized genres are less likely to generate revenue for the racialized workers producing them, and, as a result, their lack of commercial viability negatively impacts their chances at obtaining grant funding.

Both cases demonstrate how eligibility guidelines, which determine access to peer assessors, prevent workers from even attempting to access funding. While all arts funding requires eligibility criteria, the processes and practices on which they are founded do not always take into account how systemic racism may prevent IBPOC workers from meeting eligibility requirements or access to audiences needed to reach sales/revenue requirements.

Another barrier to grant funding is language. Both white and IBPOC respondents almost equally identified difficulty navigating funding application language as a barrier in the funding process.

Sudan Archives, photographed by Joe Miles

One newcomer live event producer we interviewed shared how language barriers also revealed the lack of preparedness to meet the needs of newcomer artists and initiatives:

> The industry – its systems, its funding models – is not designed for people like us who are newcomers. It's not even designed for people who don't speak and sing in English or French in the first place. And then they're not accessible … Everyone wants to include newcomers and racialized immigrants, but they're not ready for us.

In his experience, it isn't only inaccessible bureaucratic language that makes applications inaccessible, but also the language requirements that prevent non-official language speakers from accessing grant funding, despite the increasing discourse around supporting newcomers and racialized immigrants. This restriction can also apply to those with different literacy capabilities, cognitive capacities, and access to technology.

Language requirements also ignore the many Indigenous languages that predate the arrival of French and British settlers in Canada. So while a simple granting system language requirement appears to merely reflect Canada's culture on the surface, a deeper interrogation reveals how racist histories undergirding government policy found their way into the granting system's gatekeeping process.

Language restrictions may have significant consequences for the inclusion of new immigrants in the grant funding ecosystem. In the first quarter of 2020, Statistics Canada reported that 82% of population growth came from immigration.[32] Granting programs' strict language requirements signify a broader cultural issue, and raises the question of how prepared funding bodies are to accommodate and support the increasing cultural diversity of Canada's creative population. In the recommendations section, we outline pathways to decolonizing Canadian funding bodies' gatekeeping processes and widening the gates to Canada's increasingly multicultural creative community.

The community imperative

Refreshingly, many positive new opportunities are emerging, such as the Toronto Arts Council's (TAC) newcomer and refugee Artist Mentorship and Artist Engagement programs. Both programs address language barriers by providing program guidelines in the seven most widely spoken languages in Toronto, outside of Canada's official languages. Additionally, upon request, the TAC offers free translation services and mentorship matching guidance for applicants to the Artist Mentorship program through a partnering organization, the Neighbourhood Arts Network, a Toronto-based arts support network. Promisingly, TAC management shared that several funding agencies have reached out with interest in learning how to develop similar programs in cities across Canada.

While addressing language barriers is an important step, the recommendations section offers subsequent steps towards promoting more equitable funding opportunities. Doing so could open up a wealth of possibilities for creative newcomers whose cultural contributions are welcome, but whose language barriers prevent them from accessing support for these contributions.

Unequal treatment is compounded for women of colour; because of the way their racial identity intersects with stereotypes about femininity, the challenges for racialized women working in live music are multiplied.

Intersecting Inequalities: The Confidence Gap Among Women of Colour

While music has the potential to foster community and belonging, throughout most of the last century and up to the present, the music industry itself has proven to be exclusionary and bigoted. Tales of greed, shakedowns, rivalries, and payoffs abound. Black music has been appropriated to benefit white industry personnel, and performing artists of colour have been denied royalties. Abuse and harassment on tour is a reality for many women musicians and tour crew members.

Unequal treatment is compounded for women of colour; because of the way their racial identity intersects with stereotypes about femininity, the challenges faced by racialized women working in live music are multiplied. They are at a greater risk of experiencing sexual violence; Statistics Canada reports that Indigenous women are more likely to report sexual harassment at work than non-Indigenous women (10 versus 4 percent).[33]

Imposter Syndrome

The hypervisibility and underrepresentation of women of colour live music workers led many interview participants to report feelings of imposter syndrome. Imposter syndrome is an internalized perception that one is less skilled than her peers, and it disproportionately affects women of colour. When asked whether she felt her racial/ethnic identity ever impacted her career, a composer replied "I think it's mostly to do with self confidence, and feeling like you don't belong in certain circles."

Writers Rushika Tulshyan and Jodi-Ann Burey elaborate on this sentiment in the following way:

> For women of color, self-doubt and the feeling that we don't belong in corporate workplaces can be even more pronounced. Not because

> women of colour (a broad, imprecise categorization) have an innate deficiency, but because the intersection of our race and gender often places us in a precarious position at work. Many of us across the world are implicitly, if not explicitly, told we don't belong in white- and male-dominated workplaces.[34]

Unsurprisingly, the main barriers to their sense of belonging identified by women of colour are prejudice/discrimination and lack of representation in the industry (it is worth noting that these barriers are salient for racialized men, too).

Workplace exclusion is especially salient in technical fields, where women remain underrepresented.

Table 25: Top barriers experienced in relation to sense of belonging

Barrier	Gender	IBPOC	White	n
Prejudice/discrimination related to my race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, language, disability, and/or religion	Women	37%	18%	26%
	Men	32%	8%	20%
	Other genders	37%	11%	30%
Lack of representation in the industry	Women	40%	13%	24%
	Men	45%	7%	27%
	Other genders	18%	28%	20%
Skills discounting (dismissed or not taken seriously)	Women	21%	28%	26%
	Men	15%	12%	14%
	Other genders	25%	11%	22%
Family-related challenges (managing family ties/relationships, lack of access to childcare or financial support for family travel)	Women	14%	24%	20%
	Men	14%	9%	12%
	Other genders	35%	11%	29%
Feelings of tokenism	Women	23%	3%	11%
	Men	22%	2%	13%
	Other genders	25%	0%	19%
I do not face any of these barriers	Women	12%	42%	30%
	Men	13%	66%	38%
	Other genders	6%	39%	14%
I prefer not to answer	Women	3%	4%	4%
	Men	1%	6%	3%
	Other genders	2%	11%	4%

Terry Uyarak (artist) and Jimmy-Papatsie (tech), photographed by Vincent Desrosiers

A sound technician shared that it's a lot "easier for men to fake confidence when it doesn't come as easy for women, especially being a woman of colour." And a sound engineer said:

> I didn't get into audio until my 30s because I didn't fully believe that's something I could do for myself, because I was never encouraged to … Women are pushed to a certain place and men are encouraged to do more technical stuff. If someone had encouraged me in college to get into audio engineering, I would have killed it earlier because I really have an aptitude for the work. I know this now. I could have spent my 20s fostering it. I've had to do a lot of professional development on my own for things that my white male peers were encouraged to take up in college. And now they have a skill set that I've had to learn on my own in my 30s, in order to be able to compete. I'm not sure who looked at me in college and said, 'she wants to be someone who's on stage all the time,' because it's not true. I like performing, but I am much more suited to working behind the scenes, and audio engineering and editing and arranging and that kind of world. That's where I thrive. But this is not really something that's encouraged for Black women to do.

The women we interviewed indicated that it took them much longer than their white peers to realize they were just as capable to pursue careers in live music. Because they got a later start on their training, their earnings trajectory is stunted, relatively speaking. In this way, the gendered and racialized confidence gap can have negative financial consequences and delay career progress.

ExFest Fans, photographed by Dekko U Studios

Complicated Relationships to Whiteness

Thus far throughout the project findings, we have highlighted the experiences of racialized workers and contrasted these experiences with those of white workers. However, just as important is the nature of interactions *between* Indigenous, Black, and people of colour live music workers, and their white counterparts. Despite the prominence of racialized music producers and performers, the music industry (the formal system that commodifies music) is predominantly white, and pervaded by whiteness. The racialized workers' presence is concentrated in artist roles, whereas the majority of white workers' employment is in worker and owner/entrepreneurial roles, collectively. The distinction between white identity and whiteness is important; white as a racial identity is the false classification of people based on their less melanated (i.e. paler) skin colour, while whiteness refers to the privilege – the social and economic benefits – afforded to people based on their proximity to systems of domination. White and white-facing people are most likely to benefit from whiteness. However, proximity to whiteness – that is, close relationships to systems of dominance through personal or professional associations – can also benefit IBPOC folks.

Table 26: Responses to the statement 'There are people in leadership/executive-level positions that come from my community or culture'

Response	IBPOC	White
Agree	42%	78%
Disagree	37%	6%
Not sure	15%	12%
I prefer not to answer	7%	4%

Survey results confirmed the discrepancy between white leadership and IBPOC leadership: many IBPOC workers reported having been the only person in the room who looks like them, while none of the white respondents reported the same. This experience was especially common among Black survey respondents (46%) and respondents of colour (39%). (See *Appendix C* for more details).

This lack of representation aligned with other glaring differences in how race negatively impacted IBPOC workers, and when asked if they have had their qualifications and/or authority questioned, there is an alarming disparity in responses. Fifty-one percent of Black respondents felt they had their qualifications and/or authority questioned, 47% of people of colour, and 40% of Indigenous respondents also had this experience. None of the white respondents indicated that they have had their qualifications or authority questioned.

In addition, none of the white respondents reported being paid less than someone else with the same qualifications performing the same job, having to work harder than others to get the same treatment or evaluation, having been excluded from social events with colleagues, nor having been threatened or harassed. Not only does whiteness harm IBPOC workers, but it also protects white workers from this same harm.

Interviews highlighted the many challenges faced by IBPOC personnel when navigating underrepresentation in the live music sector. Notably, when racialized promoters successfully cultivate spaces for racialized crowds, the economic benefits of doing so attract the attention of white counterparts who, with easier access to resources and networks, may push out the racialized scene founders. One promoter shared how his promotional efforts that led to the successful introduction of a then-emerging South Asian hip-hop artist to the market was co-opted by a large white-led concert promotion company:

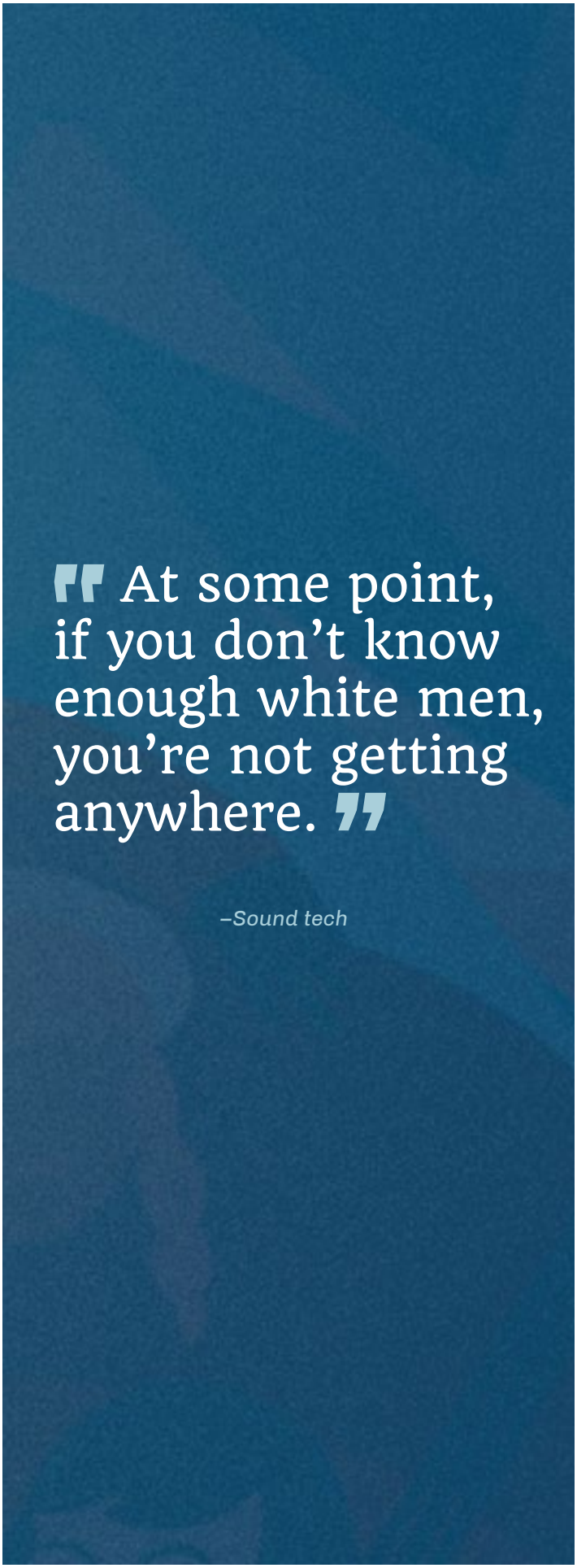
> An artist that we brought here two years ago that nobody knew about – he had just won a Grammy – got taken away from us. The [booking] agencies do not know that you are the ones because in their records, through ticket sales and marketing, all the things in the system, they see the big guys as the ones doing the show, so they don't give us the first right of refusal anymore. And so I tried to investigate and find out why even though we've been doing shows with this artist historically, there's no record of us being the ones producing them.

Equipped with the resources to secure future bookings, the large concert promotion company eclipsed the promoter's early relationship with the hip-hop artist by utilizing their infrastructure to establish a track record, and therefore, presence. To counter the effects of pervasive industry whiteness, IBPOC workers draw on community, targeted support programs, and professional training for tools to overcome barriers this whiteness created. However, racially linked issues such as lack of inherited wealth and established relationships in the music industry impede significant strides. This is further impacted by gatekeeping, and the discrepancy between white and racialized access to financial resources and gatekeepers establishes a dynamic that lowers the ceiling on racialized success in the live music sector. This places racialized workers in a position of reliance on white workers; as one sound tech shared with us, "at some point, if you don't know enough white men, you're not getting anywhere." A promoter made a similar reflection:

> Yeah, I think it's a problem in the DIY scene. The people that do well are the people that had money in the first place. And people that had money in the first place are white men. And they

> invite their white men friends, and then they push us out of our spaces that we cultivated and can't maintain because we are all servers or whatever. And the spaces that were once sacred, no longer stay that way.

The prominence of whiteness in the music industry is a result of the racist and colonial histories that define it. Music journalist Sarah Sahim writes, "there is no divorcing a predominantly white scene from systemic ideals ingrained in white Western culture."[35] So, what happens when racialized workers whose ideas help to sustain the music industry rely on white institutions that organize the industry? Researchers investigating the efficacy of Black-owned television networks as a way of countering the damaging effects of white supremacy argue that so long as production occurs within predominantly white cultural industries, IBPOC cultural production will "remain beholden to industry practices that indelibly shape their social mission."[36]

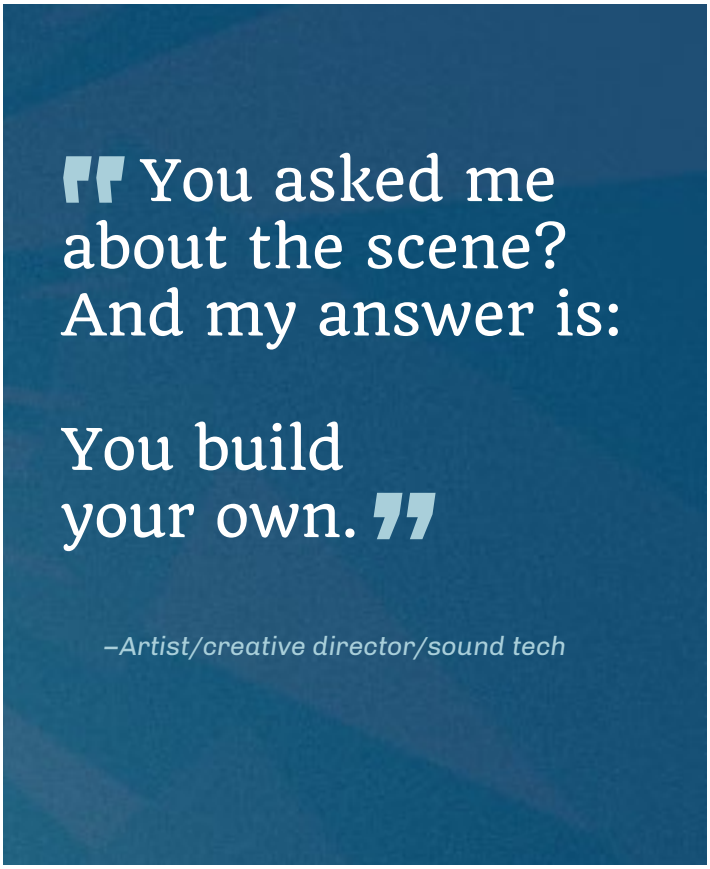


Adopted Whiteness

Less than half of racialized survey respondents work in an environment in which they feel their inclusion is prioritized. This means that IBPOC workers are not only working in spaces in which they are a demographic minority, their work cultures are also signaling to them that their presence is of lesser importance. To increase their personal and professional value within these environments, some racialized workers bring themselves closer to whiteness, and therefore privilege, by adopting whiteness.

Table 27: Responses to the statement 'I feel that diversity and inclusion is a priority within my organization'

Response	IBPOC	White
Agree	44%	74%
Disagree	23%	7%
Not sure	29%	17%
I prefer not to answer	4%	3%



First, artists shared the ways they used social contortion – folding to social pressures to fit in to social norms – by reshaping, hiding, or recontextualizing certain cultural identifiers. An Indigenous performing artist shared why this contortion was necessary: "So many barriers exist for Indigenous people, for queer people, for any minority, really, because it seems to me that the only...the only people that these venues want to hire are straight, white people." As a result, in order to appeal to white booking agents and audiences, he made attempts at "trying not to be too Indigenous or gay." He elaborated,

> I'm just like, 'okay, I know how this province works. I'm going to be smart,' is what I used to think, and try to be as straight and white as I can. And my dad is full white, so if someone mistook me for white, that was the best day of my life two years ago, like I was like, 'thank you so much.'

He recognized the privilege that his white-passing appearance afforded him, and used assumptions about his race to gain more performance opportunities. He bent his identity to lean towards whiteness for career advancement as well as to avoid discrimination.

Another common form of social contortion is code-switching. Code-switching is an adjustment in language, gestures, or expressions to relate to or create comfort in others in exchange for social relation or favour. A humorous example of this is the parody of the former U.S. President Barack Obama during a meet-and-greet. In the scene, you see President Obama greeting white guests saying, "nice to meet you," while shaking their hand. When greeting Black guests, his tone became more personal and colloquial: "Come on, brother. What's up, fam?" with a fist bump or a hug. He 'switched his code' or adjusted his communication based on his relationship to different cultural groups. This

made for a hilarious skit, but in one performing artist's experience in the live music sector, code-switching was a way of overcoming barriers to financial opportunities. When helping youth hip-hop producers applying for grants, she advised:

> I'm working with some people, they'd be like, 'I make dope beats. Just give me the money.' It's like, 'No, you need to break down what you're making your beats on and provide the math of it: 'I'm using this. I'm using that. I make a soundscape. Use a different word. Don't use beats, you know?' It's weird, like, 'we'll give you money, but only if you speak in the way that we speak.'

Earlier, we acknowledged how language acts as a barrier in the gatekeeping process of grant funding. Here, a performing artist is advising young hip-hop producers to code-switch as a way of using language to open the door to grant funding. She adopted language that had been institutionalized by white music workers in an effort to make her grant application more relatable to whom she presumed were white peer assessors. So prominent is whiteness in the minds of racialized artists that even the imagined white peer assessor impacted how this performing artist behaved. Rather than communicate in words that reflected her culture and experience, she code-switched her text to fit within a certain social norm dictated by white-dominated systems.

Snotty Nose Rez Kids, photographed by Carson Asmundson

> "People from your own culture, they see the folks embracing you so they're like, 'Oh, you're whitewashed, or, you're not authentic to us.' But, I'm a person."
>
> –Musician

Imposed Whiteness

Above were instances in which workers took on whiteness to overcome barriers. In other instances, whiteness was imposed on IBPOC workers when their mannerisms, aesthetic, or language were identified by others as white, creating a tension in IBPOC live music workers' experiences with whiteness.

A Black musician in the folk scene shared how her activity within a predominantly white genre impacted her relationship to her own cultural community: "People from your own culture, they see the folks embracing you so they're like, 'Oh, you're whitewashed, or, you're not authentic to us.' But, I'm a person."

In this musician's case, proximity to a predominantly white scene ostracized her from the Black community. According to a Black sound technician we interviewed, the whiteness attributed to his actions and behaviour benefitted his career. He described comments by his white colleagues, ostensibly complimenting him for sounding or acting white:

> I would not be partying as much. And anything that's negative would be Black, but because I'm trying to be so good, I'm not very Black. Or because I'm trying to speak correctly I'm not very Black, so it's like, 'oh, you're, you're basically a white guy because you do a white guy's job and you speak correctly, and we can put you in front of clients and have you on client calls, so basically you're a white guy.'

Even as a Black man, his movements and gestures weren't his own. In the live music sector, where whiteness increased career opportunities, his purported white way of being in the world positioned him as suitable for presentation in front of white clients, and on calls.

Earlier accounts of engaging with whiteness demonstrated the struggles it provokes for racialized workers. Interestingly, 70% of racialized respondents felt that they were valued for their skill sets and not simply their race. What this signals is that IBPOC workers feel they are meaningfully included in workspaces. However,

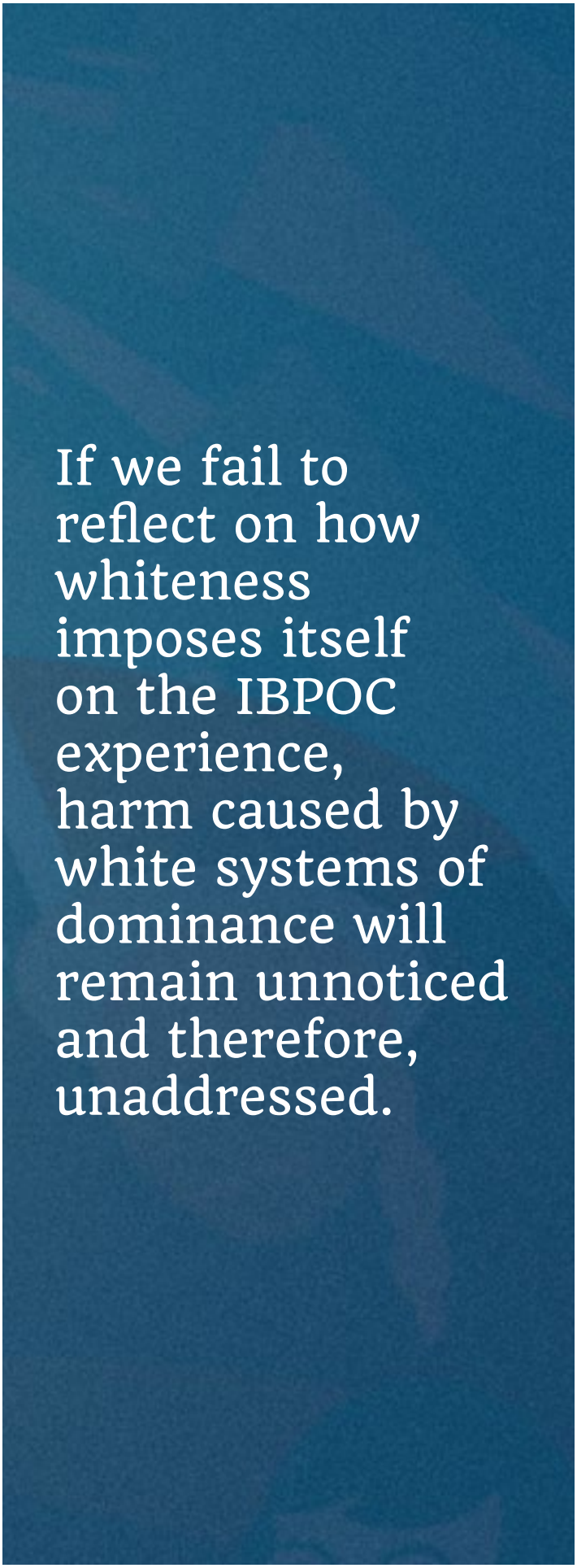
Table 28: Responses related to sense of belonging

Statement	Response	IBPOC	White
I feel that I am valued for the expertise I bring to my work, and not just for my race	Agree	70%	83%
	Disagree	9%	3%
I have opportunities for career advancement in the live music community	Agree	33%	58%
	Disagree	26%	10%
There are people in leadership/executive-level positions that come from my community or culture	Agree	42%	78%
	Disagree	37%	6%
I feel protected by my organization's policies and procedures	Agree	39%	68%
	Disagree	25%	6%

less than 50% feel that they have career advancement opportunities, see themselves in leadership positions, or feel protected by their work procedures and policies. So, while IBPOC workers might be included for the strength of their work, the conditions they're working in may not allow them to advance, speak up, or feel entirely safe. This disconnect is apparent in one sound tech's experience, who viewed being able to orient himself around whiteness as a point of pride rather than point of contention. He recalled:

> Since I was a child, I was called an Oreo - black on the outside and white inside – and I never took it as an insult. I took it as a point of pride. I can adapt to a primary white male industry, and these guys treat me like family ... I have friends who say they've been called the N word, or they tried to get this job but another white guy got it in front of them. That never happened to me because I felt like I could get in there and be a white guy, more or less. And because I've been doing it my entire life – from grade one I was called Oreo – I just worked my way through. So, in the industry I haven't recognized being singled out because of my race.

This sound tech believed that being hired, without being singled out due to his race, was a positive reflection of his work and social skills. However, the work standard he compared his own experience to is that of multiple friends who have been called racial slurs in their places of work or have been overlooked for jobs due to their race. So, while he felt included, and is assumed to be highly skilled, he may not be considering how being dominated by whiteness might have impacted how he evaluates his workplace. Instead, he saw his willingness and ability to take on whiteness as a virtue. This practice recalls what communication scholars Marcus Ferguson Jr. and Debbie Dougherty identify as "the paradox of the Black professional," which recognizes how racialized workers are pressured to enact whiteness to gain acceptance and success within organizations.[37]



If we fail to reflect on how whiteness imposes itself on the IBPOC experience, harm caused by white systems of dominance will remain unnoticed and therefore, unaddressed.

The Privilege of Whiteness

Not only did interviews reveal the nature of racialized workers' relationship to whiteness, but also how white workers uphold whiteness and their systems of dominance through their engagement with IBPOC workers in the live music sector. If we fail to reflect on how whiteness imposes itself on the IBPOC experience, harm caused by white systems of dominance will remain unnoticed and therefore, unaddressed.[38] Several interview participants shared stories concerning the disparity between white and IBPOC representation in positions of industry influence. In each instance, the presence of IBPOC workers was welcomed, but under circumstances that benefitted white workers and limited the chances at career growth.

One mechanism that maintains this dynamic is the use of "marquee quotas" – racially diverse representation on rosters and festival bills. Such representations are highly visible markers of diversity that can mask racism and result in feelings of tokenism.[39] While marquee quotas have been successful at increasing the representation of racialized workers, one cultural programmer pointed out that racialized artists are "typically going to get a role that's performative and nothing that lends itself to the development and growth within more of an operational role." In other words, marquee quotas promote representation at the artist level, where this presence signals an organization's inclusivity, but they do not increase racial diversity amongst decision-making positions, where organizational influence resides.[40]

Failure to foster diversity among festival staff, venues, agencies, and other positions of influence limits the effectiveness of marquee quotas in positively impacting the experiences of racialized workers.[41] An Indigenous performing artist shared the results of such superficial displays of inclusion:

> Sometimes it can be difficult to navigate through whether or not an opportunity that you have as an artist is because you genuinely earned it, and you genuinely deserve it. Or if you are checking a box, you know, like someone is checking off their diversity box, which has definitely happened to us a handful of times we've been, you know? The, for lack of a better term, like, the "token Indian" at the festival, or they put us on the Indigenous stage with all the other Indigenous artists.

In both instances, the IBPOC workers felt as though their inclusion was more beneficial to white personnel and promoters than it was to them.[42]

In another instance, white industry workers' actions threatened to tarnish a performing artist's artistic representation of his Black community, in order to fit within the preferred narrative of the white-run media outlet that was promoting his music:

> I have a song that talks about my experience: being a Black man with love and religion, with things like police brutality and how the system has failed, even Black on Black violence, things like that. And in an interview with a TV network, they tried to paint the narrative that, 'You touch on all this stuff in the song, [suggesting that] it's not all these other things that are hindering [Black people]. Actually, you guys are just killing each other.' I told them, 'Listen, if the narrative is going to be controlled by you guys, and you guys are going to try and put a message like this out, which I know is going to affect and hurt my community, then we're not going to do this.' But they definitely listened and they switched everything up. The issue for me was just making sure that I control the narrative of the story. And they've always tried to take something out of context or shift things to the way that they want to see it, and I've always been vocal about not allowing that to happen.

This performing artist was able to prevent the potentially harmful effects of the media outlet-chosen Black-on-Black violence narrative. But had he not taken on the work of confronting white gatekeepers to address racist tropes, this could have been another case of "white liberal exploitation of Black pain as a source of white supremacy."[43] In this case, the TV network promoting his song tried to highlight aspects of his narrative – Black-on-Black violence – that reinforced notions of white supremacy.

Morgan Toney, photographed by Matthew Frenette for Prismatic Arts Festival

Survey data demonstrated a glaring contradiction in Canada's live music sector. Despite increasing emphasis on diversity, a national identity tethered to the concept of multiculturalism, and continued efforts by IBPOC workers to increase representation, whiteness persists in Canada's live music sector. Feelings of belonging and inclusion have, with few exceptions, rested on the efforts of IBPOC workers in the live music sector. Fostering increased representation in live performance spaces will require the inclusion and growth of racialized workers in gatekeeping positions. This not only has social implications, such as being the only one in the room, being passed over for jobs they are qualified for, or disrespected by colleagues, but it has economic implications, too. Indigenous (30%) and Black (29%) workers most frequently report being paid less than someone else with the same qualifications. Whereas none (0%) of the white survey respondents reported being paid less than equally qualified counterparts. This means that the overrepresentation of white workers in the live music sector has a negative impact on the personal safety and livelihood of Indigenous, Black and people of colour in the live music sector.

See the full table of survey results related to this topic in Appendix C.

Table 29: Responses related to pay equity

Statement	Black	Indigenous	POC	White
I have been paid less than someone else with the same qualifications performing the same job	29%	30%	11%	0%

Table 30: Responses related to diversity in the workplace

Statement	Response	IBPOC	White
I feel that diversity and inclusion is a priority within my organization	Agree	44%	74%
	Disagree	23%	7%
I feel confident in my ability to support diverse perspectives and cultures in my workplace	Agree	53%	81%
	Disagree	17%	3%

Despite the lack of IBPOC representation in positions of influence, three-quarters of white respondents feel that diversity and inclusion is a priority within their organization. As well, a majority of white respondents (81%) feel confident in their ability to support diverse perspectives and cultures in their workplace. While white respondents report diversity and inclusion as a priority in their organizations, the majority of IBPOC respondents reported starkly different experiences and feelings, suggesting that further education and understanding of what a diverse and inclusive industry truly means will be critical for our sector moving forward.

The community imperative

In the same way that community has created a salve for IBPOC workers, decentring whiteness can serve as an antidote to the racist ideals that pervade the music industry. While it is not the responsibility of racialized workers to dismantle racism, this report encourages consideration around the ways colonial ideals are internalized and the risk this poses to IBPOC-led and other community-driven initiatives.

Interview participants shared the ways, big and small – including shifting mindsets to self-organizing – in which decentring whiteness can be achieved:

1. You know actually being honest, 'You guys it's fricking hard out here to be queer and Indigenous.' And then the amount of people that just came through and supported me was amazing. I built connections with media outlets and that was the first time in my career that I felt as though people had my back. And maybe they didn't before because I wasn't being totally transparent. I was trying to be white passing and now I'm being honest and people come to bat for people that have that transparency. It just sucks that the double side of that coin is the haters and the negativity that comes along with that but the positive definitely outweighs the negative in that situation.
   –Performing artist

2. You asked me about the scene? And my answer is: you build your own.
   –Artist/creative director/sound tech

3. Indigenous People are curating Indigenous voices, and what gets heard from our way of knowing and being in the world. I think we're going to start to hear different things and we're going to start to hear old things in new ways, because they will be within context.
   – Performing artist/festival organizer

Audre Lorde writes that "For Black women as well as Black men, it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others – for their use and to our detriment."[44] This perspective can apply across racialized groups. Recommendations consider ways that IBPOC workers can reorient and reinforce themselves so that, as they move through and alongside the music industry, they acknowledge, but don't take on, the whiteness and colonial mindsets enmeshed within.

Recommendations

Over the course of this study, interview participants shared numerous resources and practices that help them in their careers. In addition, the interview and survey responses surfaced ways that others in the live music industry – venue owners, promoters, funding bodies, and agencies, among others – can support IBPOC live music workers. The recommendations section outlines key suggestions for making the working conditions of Indigenous, Black, and people of colour live music workers safer and more equitable. In what follows, we outline recommendations for: live music industry (venue owners and operators, agents, managers, promoters, and festival organizers); all government and funding bodies. And while addressing systemic racism is not the responsibility of racialized live music workers, we include recommendations specifically for IBPOC workers to self-advocate, support each other, and create a sense of agency as they continue to grow their careers.

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Calgary Folk Music Festival Volunteers, photographed by K. Andrews

For Live Music Industry (Venue Owners, Promoters, Agents, Managers, and Festival Organizers)

Formalize Organizational Processes and Transparency

Our survey data suggest that additional HR support may be beneficial to the live music sector: 70% of Indigenous, Black, and people of colour live music workers reported that IBPOC people are highly present in their place of work, whereas 50% of white respondents indicated that IBPOC people comprise a minority of the people in their place of work. These statistics suggest that IBPOC workers are significantly underrepresented in certain live music workplaces. In addition, IBPOC survey respondents cited a lack of advancement opportunities, a lack of supportive leadership, and employment barriers related to hiring and nepotism as major hindrances to their careers, with more frequency than white survey respondents. The underrepresentation of IBPOC people in leadership positions undoubtedly exacerbates the invisible labour that IBPOC interview respondents report enduring.

- **Majority-white organizations can benefit from expanding their hiring searches to include a more diverse pool of applicants.** This is especially the case in an industry that is known for nepotism.[46] Many of the organizations and collectives in the live music industry are quite small, with few people on staff. Engaging in rigorous hiring and recruiting practices with diversity in mind can be challenging for small organizations that lack the formal arm of an HR department.[47] In addition, it takes conscientious effort to recognize sources of bias in one's managerial and leadership styles.

- **This is where fractional HR services may help.** Fractional HR is the outsourcing of responsibilities typically located within a human resources department, such as hiring and recruitment, and helping to improve the inclusivity of company cultures. It can be more cost-effective for small businesses, but more importantly, outsourcing hiring ensures that

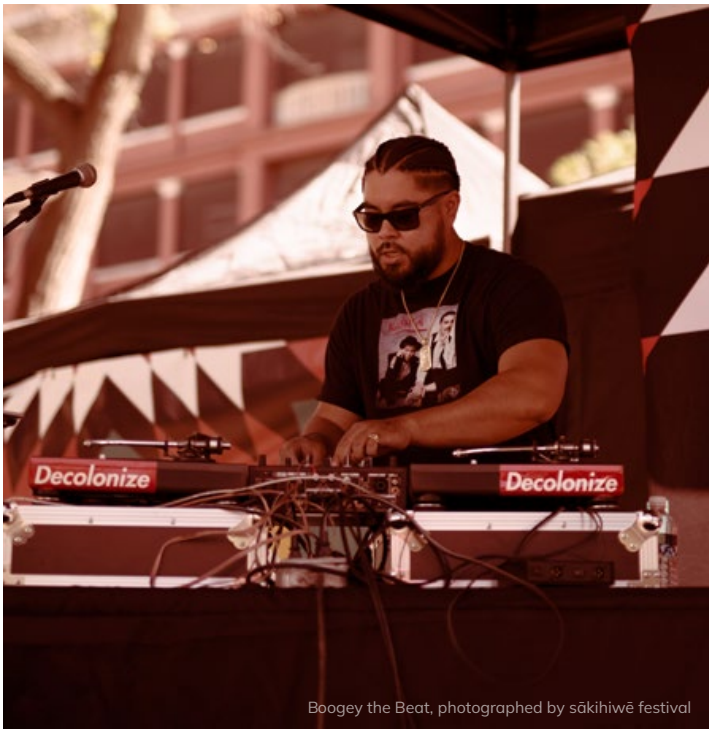
small organizations are looking beyond their own professional networks for job candidates. This, in turn, may help companies attract a more diverse range of applicants. Many fractional HR companies prioritize inclusive hiring, which is much needed in the live music sector. Government funding organizations that support small live music companies and festivals should likewise provision for fractional HR, if they are not already doing so.

- For those in positions of power, consider implementing inclusion/equity riders for festivals and concerts. This is a rider that stipulates that a certain number of support personnel working in support of the concert or festival come from diverse backgrounds. Of course, demographic representation will vary across the country, depending on where the festival or concert is taking place.

- Additionally, organizations can increase access for IBPOC workers in organizations by offering a 'behind the board' program (see, for example, The Music Gallery) where emerging sound technician staff, especially women and non-binary technicians, are invited to shadow established soundtechs on the job.

In addition to improving hiring outcomes and making workplace cultures in live music more inclusive, the wider industry can adopt practices to demonstrate its commitment to fairness and equity. In recent years, efforts have been taken to introduce pay transparency. Publicizing the wages conferred on those whose salaries are paid by public funding/tax dollars provides a check and balance against discriminatory payment practices that vary by race/ethnicity and gender.

- **Publicly funded festivals and concerts can be called upon to disclose final budgets,** including data on artist payments that are aggregated along lines of race/ethnicity and gender (to protect the confidentiality of individual artists),



Boogey the Beat, photographed by sākihiwē festival

as a check and balance against payouts that skew higher for white artists. It is important that pay transparency be taken as complementary to efforts to substantially improve workplace cultures and hiring practices, and not as a substitute.

- Another challenge mentioned by several performing artists we interviewed was a **lack of radio exposure.** In addition to budget disclosure, when festivals and concerts are promoting events on radio, they can request that booked artists from underrepresented groups receive either airplay, or at least name recognition on radio stations as part of their promotion efforts.

Lastly, in addition to the responsibilities of publicly funded organizations to increase inclusivity, private companies can also make strides to formalize their efforts towards equity and inclusivity for underrepresented groups.

- For example, **privately owned venues can make rental fees publicly available,** which may curtail discrimination against booking genres where IBPOC artists, workers, and audiences are more highly represented.

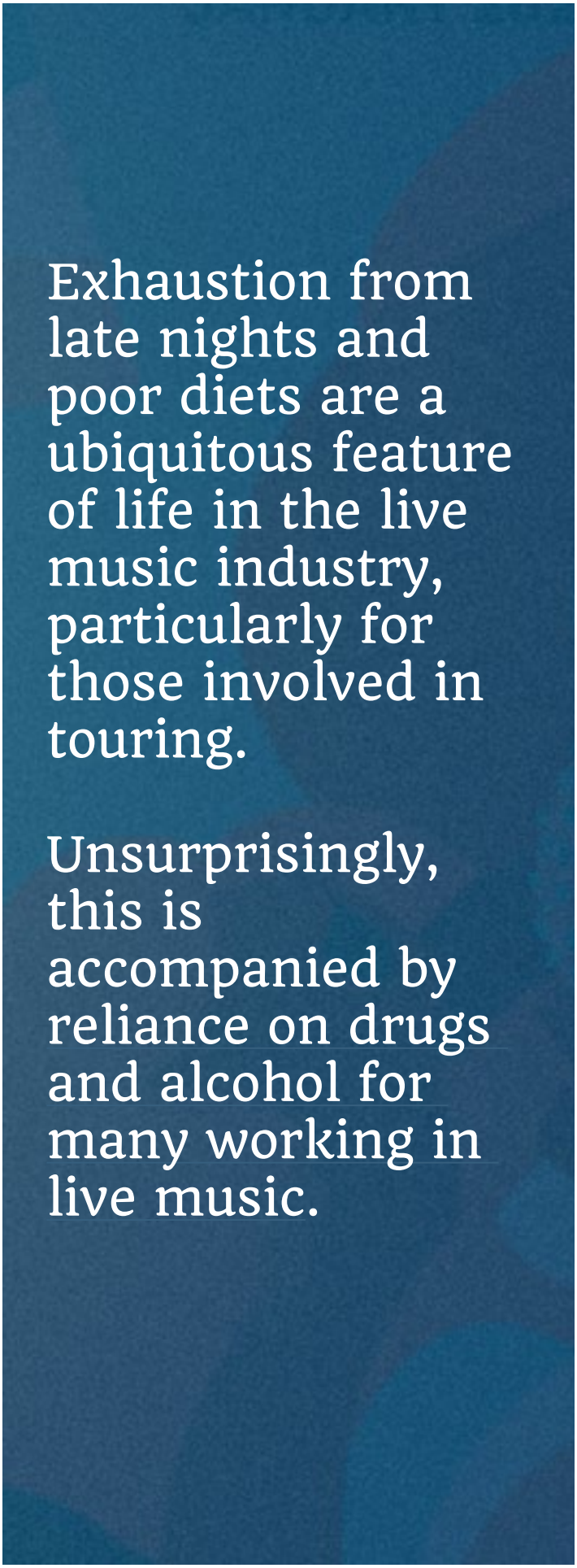
Amplify Mental Health and Addiction Support Services

Both white and IBPOC survey respondents indicated that one of the major barriers to health and safety in the live music sector is a lack of mental and physical wellbeing (at 37 and 35% respectively). Exhaustion from late nights and poor diets are a ubiquitous feature of life in the live music industry, particularly for those involved in touring. Unsurprisingly, this is accompanied by reliance on drugs and alcohol for many working in live music. In fact, many performing artists are partially paid in drink tickets. Touring life can be very challenging for those trying to stay sober, and this problem is multifaceted. A performing artist shared in his interview:

> I'm an alcoholic and a drug addict and I've been sober now for just over six years. But when I started my career, that was not the case. I was always drunk. The reason that this has to do with me being an Indigenous person is that my alcoholism is inherited. I inherited my alcoholism from my mother. My mother inherited her alcoholism from my grandmother. The trauma that my grandmother was trying to heal from and cover up and stuff down with alcohol and drugs came from the residential school.

Outsized reliance on alcohol as currency in the live music industry demonstrates an insensitivity towards a variety of communities, including Indigenous communities that carry the weight of intergenerational trauma. The artist further shared:

> Clubs generally pay artists less by including food and drink tickets. I want bars to look at what that potentially is ... You don't go to work at a day job, and they offer you drinks and food

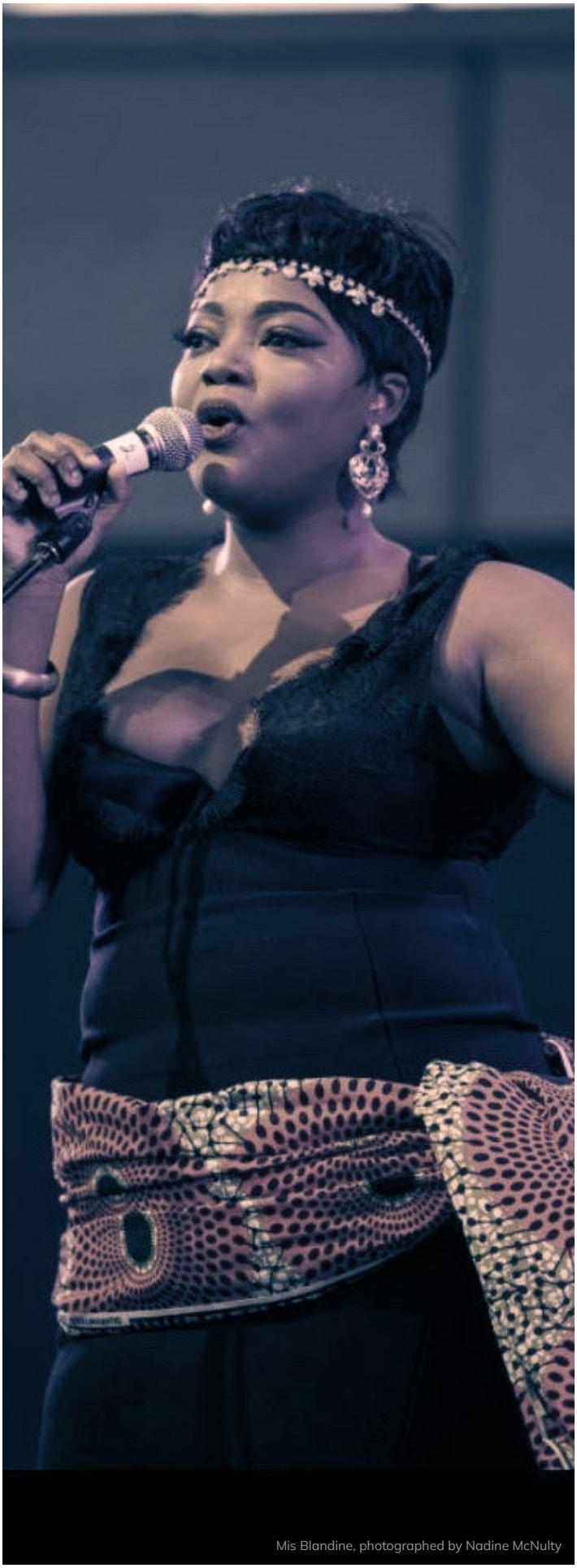


> as a substitute for payment. That's something that needs to really be looked at. If a band asks, good, but if I don't ask, pay me instead ... Drinks and food are not a substitute for paying me less.

- As this performing artist suggests, **members of the live music community need to engage in more dialogue about the role of drinking and drugs in live music;** related to this, nearly half of all sexual assault cases involve alcohol consumption. Research conducted out of The Ottawa Hospital found that of all the sexual assault survivors coming in for medical help, 25% had attended a large event or festival.[48]

- Venues can start by providing a **wider selection of non-alcoholic beverages, and financial compensation in lieu of complimentary alcohol.**

- **Support services like Unison and Over the Bridge can be amplified.** Unison provides counseling and health support to music professionals in Canada. Over the Bridge is a non-profit that provides training and emotional support to music workers trying to overcome addiction and improve their mental health. In addition to peer support groups, they provide training in the administration of naloxone, a synthetic drug used in an overdose situation that can block or reverse the effects of opioids.



Mis Blandine, photographed by Nadine McNulty

A Tribe Called Red, photographed by Joe Miles

For Government and Funding Bodies

Decolonize Funding

Although we spoke of how government policy can impact the funding process, Canada has consistently maintained arts funding support. This study has demonstrated the need to clear the pathway to funding for IBPOC artists. Findings from this report have laid out the many ways that systemic racism prevents IBPOC members of the live music sector from accessing career opportunities. Public funding can allow racialized workers to overcome these barriers by offering support during crucial moments in their careers.

With or without grants, IBPOC workers rely on the gatekeeping of a predominantly white industry to access event production, technical staff jobs, or live performance opportunities that generate revenue for them. In light of this, it becomes clear why access to public funding was indicated as being as important as better paying gigs to supporting IBPOC workers' progress. Unfortunately, grant eligibility guidelines and social barriers can prevent IBPOC workers from accessing necessary funding. Compared to white applicants, three times as many IBPOC applicants felt they lacked acknowledgment/awareness of their culture/their organization's culture in public funding models.

To effectively address barriers to this crucial resource, as difficult as it can be, organizations must recognize how colonial histories have become abstrusely interwoven within their processes.

- **Funding bodies can organize a system-wide grant funding symposium** where agencies at different levels of government can do a collective strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, engage more directly with each other's programs, and collaborate on ways to address shared systemic barriers. With new programs serving emerging artists, newcomers, and digital initiatives, it's clear there is a wealth of knowledge out there that went into the development of these programs that could potentially inspire regional versions.

- In addition, **funding bodies can examine existing, and work to remove, prohibitive funding eligibility criteria.** This would include support for competition Pow Wows, examining the limitations of "by invitation only" policies for core and operating grant programs, and expanding eligibility requirements to be more inclusive of for-profit models in addition to not-for-profit organizations.

- **We recommend funding bodies pursue further education and compensated consultation with IBPOC artists, organizations, and community members** around the limitations and complex issues related to genre categorizations, and to explore strategies to add more flexibility within self-identification processes for program applications, eligibility criteria, and awards programs.

- **We also recommend public funding be provided for music industry-specific addiction and mental health support services,** including sector-specific charitable organizations.

Geographical distance can make it harder to access important granting information. Workers operating outside of urban centres where industry activity is concentrated may not have access to the networks or even telecommunications necessary to access information on available funding or how to apply.

- To account for different regional needs and varying access to information, similar to the benefit of having representational leadership reflect and relate to the needs of the workers they manage, **funding bodies could explore establishing partnerships with regional representatives or community advocates.** For example, partnering with the National Indigenous Music Office or ADVANCE, Canada's Black Music Business Collective could help to ensure the development of relationships necessary to grow the industry.

The Canada Council for the Arts actively supports applicants of diverse abilities by offering to pay for application support. The Toronto Arts Council newcomer programs account for language diversity. As well, this same program is open to any applicant *in the process* of applying for permanent residence, refugee status, or citizenship. This was to ensure the program could be accessed during what could sometimes be a years-long immigration process. Finally, almost all funding bodies accept online applications which saves the financial and environmental cost of printing multiple copies and mailing them to granting offices as was previously the custom. All of these examples demonstrate that strides have been made to create more equitable funding processes. However, as this research has demonstrated, it is undeniable that there is further to go in getting funding to reach IBPOC workers in the live music sector.

Organizations must recognize how colonial histories have become abstrusely interwoven within their processes.

Although language was stressed as a major barrier, this consideration inspired thought in the variety of ways guidelines may prevent applicants from communicating their project ideas, due to differences in language, neurodiversity, literacy, and access to certain technologies, for example.

- Other steps to be taken by funding bodies include **providing interpretation/translation services** to allow applicants to apply in the language in which they feel they can most clearly and accurately communicate their project ideas and goals; **revise language requirements** to include Indigenous languages and non-official languages; **expand application methods** to include audio and video application submissions; and **remove revenue benchmarks and organizational model requirements** for emerging racialized artists and organizations.

As currently implemented, tokenistic representation on concert and festival line-ups is limited in its efficacy. Despite funding opportunities that include racialized workers in the live music sector, IBPOC workers still earn on average $11,715 less than white workers. Although diverse concert and festival lineup representation may promote superficial levels of inclusion, there is merit to funding programs that recognize the entry barriers for socially marginalized groups into behind-the-scenes roles.

- **More meaningful representation, especially in positions of influence, may be achieved through stipulating funding directly to IBPOC artists;** including eligibility guidelines that stipulate white-led organizations must include IBPOC representation in decision-making positions; include a rationale for demographic data requested of applicants to promote transparency between applicants and the funding organization; and ensure aggregated peer assessor feedback is provided to unsuccessful applicants, both to promote transparency in the review process and to further improve applicants' future competitiveness.

Amplify and Support Innovative Community-Oriented/Grassroots/DIY Initiatives

As the community anecdotes indicate, there are many resources and initiatives already addressing the needs and enterprises of socially marginalized groups. For example, Crip Rave is a Toronto-based collective showcasing Crip, Disabled, Deaf, Mad, Sick body-minds within safer & more accessible rave spaces. QPOC Winnipeg is dedicated to providing safer spaces, resources, and events for Winnipeg's queer IBPOC community.

Not only are these spaces important for the emotional safety of participants, they are also a safe place to test the forward-thinking ideas that sustain the music industry. Or, as a corporate event organizer puts it, "the music industry is heavily influenced by community … Everyone starts somewhere and your community is your first fan base."

- Accordingly, **we recommend establishing additional dedicated support and earmarked funding for initiatives led by and serving emerging artists and enterprises, DIY/ grassroots initiatives, and newcomers** removing eligibility restrictions on applications from emerging organizations, incentivizing shared or alternative space use, and exploring the economic and cultural impact of DIY and taste-making initiatives on the broader live music sector through further research.

A Toronto-based live event producer highlighted the need for adaptable sound regulations that can accommodate the varying needs of Canada's diverse musical landscape. She points out that:

> You can perform on a patio, but you can't have an amplified sound? No one [can use] any technology except for acoustic guitar. So you can fucking trumpet out there. You can have a big bassoon, but you can't spin an ambient set, or [use] your modular synth to make a drone.

For example, Calgary's 'Extended Dance Event Bylaw' (commonly known as the rave bylaw) regulates the production of events "held to enable people to gather to listen to and dance to electronic and synthesized music which is performed or played continuously throughout the duration of the event."[45] The bylaw stipulates that events of this nature require at least 45 days' notice and a non-refundable licensing fee of $340 (as of 2018) to operate. However, this formal nature is antithetical to rave culture, which is meant to be an accessible, spontaneous, and electronic music-based event. In this way, the bylaw is a threat to the rave music culture these events emerge from. While meant to protect certain members of the public from sound disturbance, the regulation is also a threat to a music culture that has historically been a site for Black musical resistance. Inflexible sound regulations have implications for IBPOC workers in the live music sector who were reported as being three times more likely to work in the live music sector as a way to share their culture and heritage.

- For a more equitable live music sector that allows for the full musical expression of all its workers, **we recommend municipalities engage with industry through the Music Cities work** which includes reviewing existing bylaws and policies such as noise regulations and use of public space and adapting them to better accommodate Canada's sonically and culturally diverse musical expressions and traditions.

It's not enough to support early-stage IBPOC endeavours; the support must also work towards promoting sustainable success and self-sufficiency.

For All of the Above (Government and Funding Bodies, Live Music Industry - Venue Owners, Promoters, Agents, Managers, and Festival Organizers)

Promote Career Sustainability through Networking, Mentorship, and Training Opportunities

It's not enough to support early-stage IBPOC endeavours; the support must also work towards promoting sustainable success and self-sufficiency. Networking, mentorship, and training can provide the necessary skills and resources needed to overcome barriers. And DIY spaces and grassroots performance opportunities are often the sites for these career boosting opportunities.

For example, queer youth workshop series Lil Sis started out as an open mic night to provide a supportive performance platform for IBPOC and queer and non-binary youth. Sensing the opportunity for expansion, but feeling the ceiling on their growth, founder Kamilah Apong secured public funding support to conduct Canadian music sector research and used this data to establish a more expansive community support and industry development program, including soft skills workshops on negotiating contracts and offering free promotional photoshoots for emerging performers. Workshops featured guest speakers and instructors of varying backgrounds. The program was led by and emerged directly from the community it was serving.

In what follows, we offer recommendation that apply to all live music workers:

- **Adopt a 'more than one' rule.** When employing IBPOC workers to increase representation on staff, boards, and in leadership positions, hiring

hiring one worker impedes the psychological safety needed to express oneself, which in turn limits thought diversity. Worse, it risks alienating and tokenizing IBPOC workers. Instead, representational hiring should be an ongoing consideration, and account for the diversity that exists both within the wider community, and within IBPOC groups, including gender, ability, sexual orientation, education level, etc.

- To encourage the skills development, career opportunity expansion, and nurturing networks needed to promote sustainable success, **funding can be dedicated to paid mentorship programs for newcomers and racialized workers,** including personal professional skills development and training.

- The survey data indicate that IBPOC respondents have on average fewer educational credentials than white respondents. In addition, IBPOC respondents may be disproportionately more likely to grow up in households without Internet connectivity and computer access. This means that, when they begin their careers in live music, IBPOC workers may already be facing a penalty. **In for-profit and non-profit companies, focus on ensuring that entry-level IBPOC workers receive training and mentoring** at every stage of their development.

- **Develop technical and business administration training for IBPOC workers,** including programs specifically for femme and gender non-conforming workers, similar to Women in the Studio National Accelerator program put on by Music Publishers Canada.

- **Implement healing practices around internalized racism and oppression** to ensure that, as representation at a leadership level increases, IBPOC workers are less at-risk of recreating dynamics and work conditions that emerge from the systems of oppression they're working within, alongside, or past.

Photo by Nick Moore

- **Fill in organizational knowledge gaps (in skills, infrastructure, resources) by partnering with complementary organizations.** For example, in 2021 the Junos partnered with ADVANCE in order to create more Black music-focused events.

- Organizations can **engage in learning surrounding diverse cultural protocols** and ensure their inclusion in contracts.

Jamhaitian, photographed by Nando Pauta

For IBPOC Workers

Reshaping workplace cultures to be safer and more inclusive for IBPOC workers is not the responsibility of IBPOC folks themselves. At the same time, any positive change that occurs at the organizational and systemic levels will be inevitably slow. Developing tools for self-empowerment and a repertoire of practices that enable workers to advocate for themselves may be necessary, albeit unfair. The following are some community-centred ideas inspired by the study's findings that may help IBPOC workers self-advocate, support each other, and create a sense of agency as they continue to grow their careers:

- Request a copy of grant applications that include you as a partner, consultant, or participant to retain/review.
- Add a clause in work agreements that stipulates that artist fees should reflect the budgets of successful grants, if above initial negotiation.
- Exercise your right to request a grant report extension in the event of traumatic experiences.
- Create group grant writing sessions. This can simply involve writing silently, in the same space or via Zoom, as a comforting accountability partnership.
- Ask if a granting office would be willing to review the application together with you, to assess eligibility, and answer questions.
- Cross-promote as a way of expanding your audience and deepening your community.
- Adopt the shared spaces approach, whereby established venues and office spaces open access to emerging, DIY, or small-scale organizations. Workers and venues could consider co-leasing space with another organization, and alternating access or rotating programming to lessen the financial burden of a long-term lease.
- If it feels safe to do so, cross-reference performance rates with each other to promote transparency.
- Ask collaborators, contractors and/or promoters if your fee/pay is equal to others doing the same work.
- Request a dry green room, or request money in lieu of drink tickets.
- Request that space and time be provided for traditional, spiritual, and/or cultural practices.

Photo by Joshua Sukoff

Calls-to-Action for Presenters

Alan Greyeyes (sākihiwē festival/Ogichidaa Arts) contributed a parallel set of recommendations that recognize and address some of the distinct barriers experienced by Indigenous artists and industry workers in Canada.

1. We call on music award shows, music presenters, music promoters, and music conferences to use every stage they have to show Canadians that Indigenous people are just as special and talented as their loved ones.

2. We call on music presenters to submit offers to Indigenous artists that give them the ability to put their best foot forward. In Marek Tyler's words, "you know that you have given enough when it starts to hurt a little." (A teaching given to him by his mom, Linda Young).

3. We call on summer music festivals in Canada to contract Indigenous artists well before the December tour grant deadline at the Canada Council for the Arts so they can submit competitive applications, strengthen their cash flow positions, and provide better customer service to their presenters.

4. We call on government departments and funding partners to recognize the unique position that Indigenous people have in Canada and not to lump them in with diversity, inclusion, and equity programs or projects.

5. We call on the federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal art councils to remove the "by invitation only" policies on their core or operating grant programs so Indigenous organizations can build the capacity to compete for private sponsors and contract artists well in advance of tour grant deadlines.

6. We call on the Department of Canadian Heritage to make competition prize money for pow wows an eligible expense in all music presentation programs.

Further Research

While this report has offered an in-depth and holistic view of the experiences of IBPOC workers in the live music sector, it also revealed further areas of exploration and consideration.

Newcomers: The sample group in this survey was too small to garner generalizable findings. However, given the growth of Canada's immigrant population, and Canada's commitment to promoting and nurturing multicultural creative expression, we encourage a focused view on the quality of experiences of professional creative newcomers and refugees.

Doing so will help gauge the preparedness of Canada's music industry to accommodate the varying needs and strengths of music workers of newcomer and refugee status.

Nordicity's investigation into the newcomer experience, Immigrants and the Creative Economy offers some foundational knowledge and first steps to build on.

Black Women in Music: The survey data uncovered many ways that the experiences of Black live music workers diverge from other groups. Our interview data further reveal that Black women, owing to the way their gender and race intersect, may be even further marginalized.

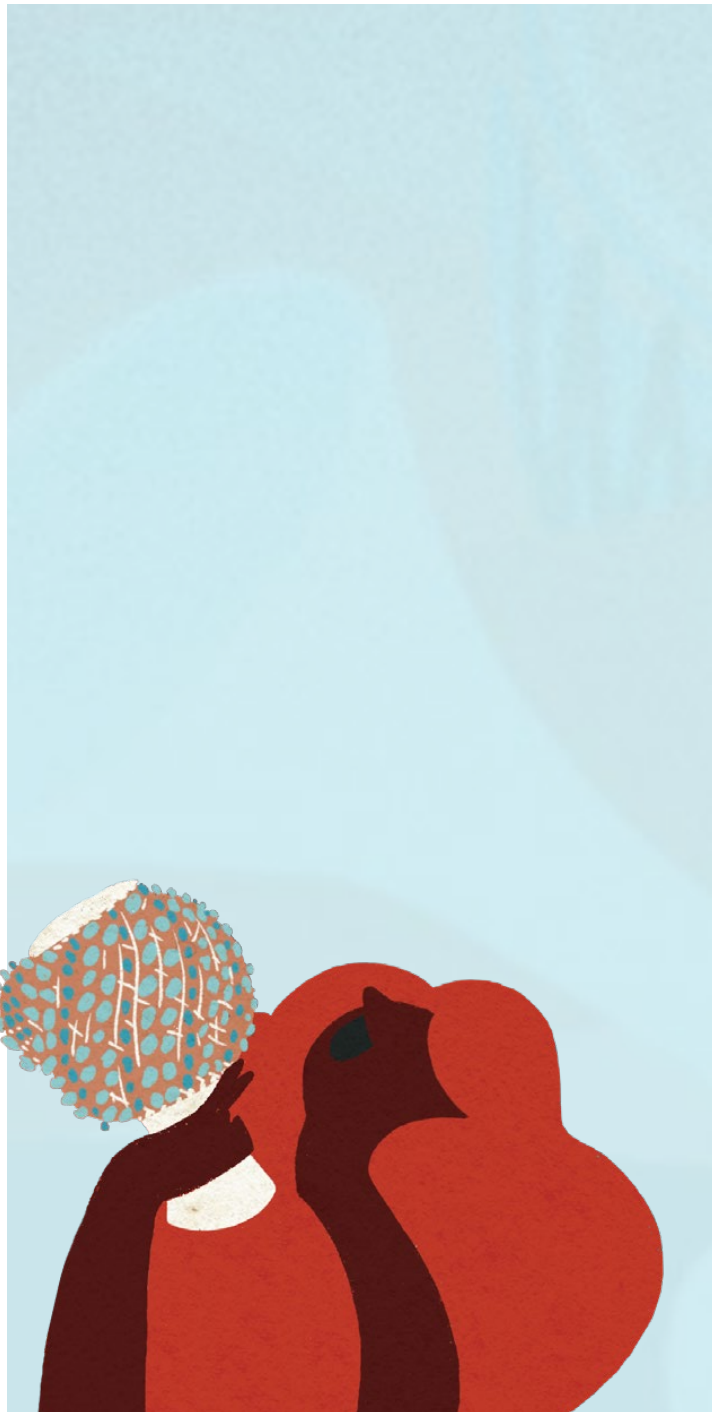
Research focusing on the experiences of Black women in the Canadian music industry may help to illuminate unique barriers they confront, as well as the unique ways they contribute to musical innovation.

DIY Spaces and Scenes: Throughout this report there have been examples of the strength and value of community, DIY, grassroots, and underground live music initiatives. As the report shares, communities rely on the representation, personal safety, and joy created in spaces that speak to their particular experiences. Due to their small scale, DIY scenes' nuanced approaches to live events remain nimble and responsive, and therefore, more reflective of the communities, markets, and audiences they serve. At the same time, the small-scale nature of these organizations makes them vulnerable. As an interview participant shared with us, the audience and market building by grassroots organizers can be co-opted by conglomerate promotion companies that have the resources to pay higher artist fees. As a result, independent producers are at risk of being displaced from the audiences and markets they have helped produce. In light of this, we encourage further research into how to better support, learn from, and make space for the DIY organizers, spaces, and sounds that sustain the live music sector.

Recent research on the creation and availability of DIY venues in Toronto by Ian Swain and Amy Gottung provides a solid point of departure for studying DIY scenes across the country, with specific attention to scenes supporting queer, differently-abled, and IBPOC groups.

Disability & Accessible Live Events and Spaces: Research looking at access in the live events sector called for the events industry to normalize a culture of inclusion and for academic and industry researchers and consultants to prioritize disability, access, and inclusion in their research programs.

Unfortunately, interviews from this study did not provide deep enough insight into the experiences of differently-abled workers to provide sound recommendations. While Canada already has initiatives in the works – including creating events specifically for differently-abled creatives and audiences, free ramp-building initiatives to increase physical access to spaces, and funding available to make venues more accessible – there has not been sufficient traction in research on disability or increasing accessibility at live events and in workplaces in the live music sector. Research undertaken in this area should account for both visible and invisible disability and recommendations could learn from IBPOC-related findings concerning tokenism.



Appendix A:
Survey Data Definitions

Full-time equivalent (FTE):

An FTE is a measure of employment meaning the amount of full-time productive labour of one person annually. It can be used to quantify and directly compare workers that may have a variety of modes of employment (e.g., full-time, part-time, temporary, etc.). Full-time equivalent is a measure of employment that can mean, for example, that three full-time employees each working a third of a year make up one FTE. FTEs are calculated by dividing total labour income (i.e., companies' total labour expenditures and music income earned by artists) by the annual average earnings.

Direct economic impact:
Direct economic impact refers to the income, GDP, and jobs generated in the course of the community's day-to-day operations and music-related activities. This economic impact is largely in the form of wages and salaries paid to employees and contract workers, and income earned by artists.

Spin-off economic impact:
The spin-off economic impact includes both indirect and induced impacts:

- Indirect economic impact refers to the increase in economic activity that occurs when companies purchase goods and services from their suppliers. These purchases increase income and employment at the supplier companies and, in turn, increase demand for other upstream suppliers – i.e., the suppliers' suppliers.
- Induced economic impact refers to the increase in household income, GDP, and jobs that can be attributed to the re-spending of income by households that earned income at both the direct and indirect stages described above.

Appendix B: Additional Details of Statistical Methodology

Economic Impact Assessment

The economic impact estimates in this report are based on the analysis of survey responses, use of previous similar studies conducted by Nordicity, and statistical data.

In particular, data such as average salary, average income earned by artists from music, and average company expenditures (including labour spending and programming fees) was derived from survey data. The averages were then grossed using total numbers of artists and companies, referred to as 'the universe.'

Given that there is no previous national study of the live music community in Canada, Nordicity combined occupational data from a custom tabulation of Statistics Canada's *2016 Census of the Population*, and survey data related to full-time and part-time nature of artists' work to estimate the total number of artists in Canada, i.e., 'the artist universe.'

The number of full-time artists was calculated as the sum of the number of people with aboriginal identity and visible minority identity (Census 2016 terminology) working in National Occupational Classifications (or NOC) code 5133 – Musicians and singers (6,135 full-time artists). From the survey, a ratio was calculated of the total number of artists (100%) to the number of full-time artists (17%). This ratio was applied to the total number of full-time artists, resulting in an artist universe size of 35,992. Aggregate artist income was calculated as average music-related income multiplied by the artist universe size.

Similarly, there is no national database of live music companies operating in Canada. As such, Nordicity estimated the total number of companies based on previous studies conducted in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and for the Indigenous live music community. Nordicity assumed that the response rate in Ontario- and BC-based companies was roughly indicative of the overall response. This assumption allowed Nordicity to develop a conservative estimate of the size of the industry. Using data from Here, the Beat: The Economic Impact of Live Music in BC and Live Music Measures Up: An Economic Impact Analysis of Live Music in Ontario (studies conducted for the Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA), Nordicity estimated that the studies captured 50 of the 866 companies in BC and Ontario that engage in live music (6%). Applying that response rate to the 2021 survey sample, Nordicity estimated that there are 1,853 live music companies in Canada that have at least one IBPOC owner.

Expenditure was allocated according to the expenditure profile developed for the Here, the Beat: The Economic Impact of Live Music in BC study. The profit margin was also derived from the same study.

In order to achieve the most realistic estimate, the gross expenditure (once established) was discounted by two factors:

- **Expenses paid to other live music companies in the community:** These expenses are essentially revenue for suppliers within the community and could not be counted as

contributions to the GDP given that they do not exit the community.

- **Programming fees paid to IBPOC artists:** Income earned by artists includes programming fees paid by these companies. As such, this amount was included in the artist component of economic impact, and not in the company portion. To estimate the fees paid to IBPOC artists, Nordicity used the responses to the survey question *To what extent are Indigenous, Black and people of colour represented in your roster?*, and weighted the programming fees with the responses. By removing the programming fees paid to IBPOC artists, Nordicity assumed that artists are paid directly, and not through another live music company (touring company, agents, etc.).

Economic impact was calculated using Nordicity's MyEIA™ model, which is based on Statistics Canada's most recent Input-Output economic data. The discounted company expenditure along with the aggregate artist income and average salary were provided as inputs to the model. The model generated an output consisting of GDP, jobs, and taxes at the direct, indirect, and induced levels.

Missing Economic Contribution

To find the number of IBPOC individuals not participating in the live music economy, Nordicity looked up the total number of workers in the *7111 Performing arts companies*, *7113 Promoters (presenters) of performing arts, sports and similar events* and *7114 Agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers and other public figures* industries in Statistics Canada's North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), as well as the number of workers with aboriginal identity and visible minority identity (Census 2016 terminology), to calculate a percentage of IBPOC workers. Nordicity assumed that the representation of IBPOC people is the same in live music as it is in the rest of NAICS 71 industries.

Number of missing individuals was calculated by applying the difference between the IBPOC population percentage of Canada and the percentage of industry workers identifying as IBPOC to the total number of industry workers. The ratio was then applied to the direct employment impact to get a number of FTEs. This number of FTEs was multiplied by the average total income earned by 'white' individuals from the survey. To calculate the missing wages, the difference between the average income earned by white individuals and by IBPOC individuals was multiplied by the direct employment impact.

Appendix C: Expanded Tables

Table 16: Types of music performed/presented the most often by respondents

Type of Music	*IBPOC*	*White*
Afrobeats	18%	9%
Alternative	15%	30%
Blues	20%	29%
Caribbean (Soca, Reggae, Dancehall)	16%	9%
Country	13%	28%
Classical	20%	19%
Contemporary	16%	27%
Electronic	18%	22%
Folk/Roots	20%	48%
Francophone	5%	9%
Heavy Metal	6%	10%
Hip Hop/Rap/Trap	36%	16%
Indie	16%	36%
Indigenous Language	5%	10%
Instrumental	15%	23%
Jazz	20%	27%
Latin	10%	10%
Orchestral	11%	13%
Pop	24%	42%
Pow wow	4%	5%
Punk	11%	18%
R&B/Soul	26%	26%
Religious	9%	5%
Rock	16%	42%
Singer-Songwriter	20%	43%
South Asian/Punjabi/Bollywood	7%	3%
Traditional	9%	16%
World/Global	17%	20%
Zydeco	2%	4%
Other (please specify)	5%	6%
Not Applicable	2%	7%

Table 31: Reported impacts of race/ethnicity on working in the live music industry

Impact	*Black*	*Indigenous*	*POC*	*White*
I have been disrespected, talked down to or ignored by colleagues	**54%**	**40%**	**47%**	33%
I have often been the only person in the room who looks like me	46%	20%	39%	0%
I have had my qualifications and/or authority questioned"	51%	**40%**	47%	0%
I have lost out on business opportunities to people less qualified than me	51%	10%	39%	33%
I have not been hired for a job due to unfair reasons	34%	20%	25%	33%
I have been fired from a job due to unfair reasons	20%	30%	11%	33%
I have been paid less than someone else with the same qualifications performing the same job	29%	30%	11%	0%
I have to work harder than others to get the same treatment or evaluation	29%	**40%**	31%	0%
I have been excluded from work or networking events	22%	20%	28%	**50%**
I have been excluded from social events with colleagues	10%	30%	22%	0%
I have been threatened or harassed	17%	10%	8%	0%
My race and/or ethnicity has limited the type or genre of music I am able to play	7%	0%	3%	33%
My race and/or ethnicity has limited the content/style/sound of my music"	7%	0%	0%	17%
Other (please specify)	0%	0%	6%	33%

Endnotes

1. Statistics Canada collectively identifies Black people and people of colour as "visible minorities." See, e.g., Statistics Canada.(2016). 2016 census of population. Statistics Canada catalogue no. 98-400-X2016190. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/index-eng.cfm

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5. Carey-Mahoney, R. & Williams, A. (2016, February 15). *The Grammys have a hip-hop problem. These charts show how bad it is*. Washington Post.

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9. Catalyst. (2020). *People of Colour in Canada; Statistics Canada*. (2016). 2016 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016190.

10. The following analysis on the economic impact of IBPOC live music workers has been conducted by Nordicity.

11. See Appendix A

12. Fees paid to artists, musicians, and performers.

13. Without this adjustment, programming fees would be double-counted: once as artist income, and twice as programming expenditure.

14. This figure, which is calculated as labour spending divided by average salary, was estimated separately for companies and artists and then summed.

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28. Kenney, (2001). *Mapping gay L.A: The intersection of place and politics*. pp 24-25.

29. It also is worth noting that the interviews did not specifically identify funding programs (e.g. programs that organizations administer to target artistic needs, such as tour support, a recording project, or mentorship), and so we presume that mention of grant funding includes funding that also covers live performance expenses. For example, a grant that funds the production and promotion of an album may allow part of the grant to cover touring costs. Or a venue's operational costs may cover artist fees in addition to staff salaries. For the purposes of this report, we speak about grant funding bodies more broadly, sharing data that demonstrate how grant funding application and assessment processes have a gatekeeping effect on racialized workers.

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37. Ferguson Jr. & Dougherty, (2021). *The paradox of the Black professional: Whitewashing Blackness through professionalism.* Management Communication Quarterly.

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