



ORGANIZER MATRISHA ARMITAGE WITH 2013'S GRRRLZ ROCK MUSICIANS

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Peter Wilde, talent booker at Sam Bond's Garage, and Alec Cox from Cozmic cite the overall number of female acts touring through the area as the main reason for the disparity.

"When I start looking at who wants to come through here, who wants to play here," Cox says, "it's male heavy." Cox also says he observes a difference in temperament from female artists. "If I really go out on a limb," he tells me cautiously, "I think musically, women have a more emotional approach to it, which can tend to leave them guarded and not wanting to step up and out."

Like Wilde and Cox, Kelly says who he books depends largely on who is touring. That may be true, but it's hard to ignore that there are many more female-led acts touring Portland and San Francisco than are stopping in Eugene. And in a town where some of the best-attended shows in the past six months were Sallie Ford and the Sound Outside and Thao and the Get Down Stay Down, it's hard not to wonder why acts like CHVRCHES, The Joy Formidable, Emmylou Harris, Janelle Monáe, Sleight Bells, Heartless Bastards, Camera Obscura, India.Arie, Fiona Apple and the Indigo Girls — all of which played Portland in the period from May to October — did not come to Eugene. On the other hand, are Eugene audiences even asking for female-fronted acts?

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On stage and off, female musicians are subject to the same sexist attitudes, both casual and blatant. While no artist interviewed said that she's experienced sexism from bookers, each of them have faced very real condescending and patronizing experiences related to their gender from men in different facets of their careers.

"I was heckled once when I was 15," jazz vocalist Halie Loren tells me quietly over a cup of coffee. Loren, who's based in Eugene but tours nationally and internationally, released an album this fall — *Simply Love* — that ranked number one on Billboard Japan's jazz charts. The professional songstress tells me about a man in the audience of one show who insisted on making sexist remarks toward her looks, disregarding her talent. "That's just super inappropriate for any age woman, much less a

CAROLINE BAUER



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15-year-old girl, but I think that that unfortunately is this thing that's still super present in music."

Local indie folk singer Caroline Bauer — whose music video for her 2013 track "Last Train Home" was part of the official selection for this year's Portland Film Festival, L.A.'s International Film Festival of Cinematic Arts and the Long Island International Film Expo — speaks to the patronizing challenges that an up-and-coming female artist faces backstage. "Early on I had a few different experiences of older men in positions of power, whether they were booking guys or venue owners or even just more experienced musicians, who made a point of telling me 'You've got potential, kid' as if they had 'discovered' me and were going to take me under their wing and slingshot me into stardom," the young singer-songwriter says. "It felt condescending."

It's troublesome that these experiences are so common, even at a local level, for a woman pursuing a career in entertainment. To compound the issue, women are often held to a quite different standard in terms of looks and persona than men. "What you have to say becomes less important than how you look," Black, of *ROCKRGRL*, says. "We're losing voices. We're losing perspectives for outfits and mini-dresses."

"Everything I've experienced with talent agencies is very based on your looks," says Bettreena Jaeger, front woman of local band Betty and the Boy, co-winner of *EW*'s Next Big Thing 2011 (they tied with Tyler Fortier). "Men don't really have to try to be cool when they're holding a guitar. Women sort of have to add something if they're not initially attractive." With pure talent at the forefront of her success, it was a double standard that Jaeger wouldn't succumb to.

Sex does sell, and when you see the Miley Cyruses cashing in on it, traipsing up and down our airwaves, television screens and twitter feeds, putting the word "twerk" on the fast track to a spot on the pages of Merriam-Webster, it seems the only choice major female performers have is to be lusted after or laughed at. This September in *The Guardian*, Lauren Mayberry of electro-pop trio CHVRCHES discussed her disgust for the casual objectification she experiences as a part of a band born on