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Central Oregon women share their experiences in the music industry

Artists, behind-the-scenes workers talk sexism, inclusiveness and more

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY • The Bulletin

In celebration of Women's History Month, GO! Magazine asked four prominent women in the Central Oregon music scene about their experiences in the music industry. Their responses are presented here with minimal editing for space.

MARNEY SMITH

Bend native Smith has been director of Les Schwab Amphitheater for 19 of its 20 years, ushering the venue through its early growing pains and controversies into a top Oregon concert destination for artists such as Dave Matthews Band, Michael Franti, Jack Johnson and more.

Q. My sense being in the industry, or industry-adjacent, is that more often behind-the-scenes roles with concerts, you're not very common — a director of a venue is usually a man. But that's just my sense, that might not be true at all. What are your thoughts?

A. I've got a fairly narrow view based on the experience. I haven't been backstage



Marney Smith

at a lot of different venues across the country. And there's always challenges. ... Whatever industry that you're in, typically you see a larger male component than female component, and there's always a challenge that goes with that. One of the things that I love the most about the music industry is that they take you as you are in general. And you can come with tattoos head to toe and crazy colored hair and what-

ever outfit you have on and you're accepted. And some of the most brilliant people I've had the opportunity to work with do not look like the banker down the road. They are unique individuals and they don't judge me or anybody else that they're working with in general based on their gender. It's provided a different level of freedom than I was used to in the past.

Q. How have things changed in recent years, over the years or in the years you've been doing this?

A. I don't know whether I've become more confident myself or whether the workplace environment has changed, but I'm in my mid-40s now and I don't care as much about what you think as I did when I was in my 20s. I can't see clearly enough whether it's me or the workplace that has changed, but it's probably a little bit of both. I think that as a society we evolve and we try to be better at all times, and at a baseline I think everybody truly is trying to do their best. I think that we've just evolved as people and become better.

KRIS ARNOLD

Arnold has been the music director and midday DJ at modern rock station 92/9 (KRXF-FM) for close to 14 years. She hosts



Kris Arnold

the local music show Highway 97 every Tuesday from 8 to 9 p.m. Before coming to 92/9, for 12 years Arnold was vice president of alternative radio promotion at Atlantic Records in Los Angeles, where she worked with

Danny Goldberg (known for managing Redd Kross and Nirvana, among others).

Q. I had it in my mind, but I'm kind of being proven wrong, that it's not common to see women in certain roles in the music industry — if it's not a woman who's a performer, a lot of times in the industry it will be women in public relations roles. But at least

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