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By Robert Goldrich

## spot.com.mentary



### Lifting The Celluloid Ceiling

While a return to normality is coveted in this COVID era, there's something to be said for not resurrecting business as usual on certain fronts—as shown in research from San Diego State University's Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film headed by Dr. Martha M. Lauzen.

To be sure, the report—titled “The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes

**Dr. Martha M. Lauzen noted that the gender imbalance is huge; 80% of the top films have male directors.**

Employment of Women on the Top U.S. Films of 2020”—shows some progress. But at the same time, considerably more is needed to get the industry up to even a remotely acceptable level.

Among the prime positive-trending findings was that for the second straight year, the percentage of women directing top grossing films increased, reaching recent historic highs, while the overall

percentages of women working in key behind-the-scenes roles remained relatively stable. Women comprised 16% of directors working on the top 100 grossing films in 2020, up from 12% in 2019 and 4% in 2018. Women accounted for 18% of directors on the top 250 films, up from 13% in 2019 and 8% in 2018. In 2020, the percentages of behind-the-scenes women

ers, 22% of editors, and 6% of DPs working on the top 250 grossing films. Yet while percentages are up, movement is far too gradual. In 2020, the majority of films (67%) employed 0 to 4 women in the roles considered; 24% of films employed 5 to 9 women, and 9% employed 10 or more women. In contrast, 5% of films employed 0 to 4 men in the roles considered, 24%

working on the top 100 and 250 (domestic) grossing films inched upward. Women comprised 21% of all directors, writers, producers, EPs, editors, and DPs working on the top 100 films, up from 20% in 2019. Women working in these roles on the top 250 grossing films experienced a slight increase from 21% in 2019 to 23% in 2020.

Women accounted for 18% of directors, 17% of writers, 21% of EPs, 30% of produc-

employed 5 to 9 men, and the remaining majority (71%) employed 10 or more men.

Due to the COVID-impacted box office, the study also tracked employment on films included on The Digital Entertainment Group's “Watched at Home” list. Dr. Lauzen noted that the gender imbalance is huge. Most films employ less than 5 women and 10 or more men. And 80% of the top films have male directors.

## POV

By Josh Rabinowitz



### Top Ten For First 20 of the 2000s

I, like many of you, came of age professionally in these first 20 years of the 2000s. I've been an advertising music exec and professorial accomplice in the ad music continuum. Here are 10 things I've observed:

1) More than any brand, Apple became the top shaker/breaker and career-maker of artists and bands, aka the Apple Bump.

2) VW's use of Nick Drake's “Pink Moon,” 25 years after his death, sparked a reassessment of synching songs with ads—and the rest is “synchronistic” history.

3) In 2000, there were maybe 100 active music producer/supervisors in the branded music space. Now there are way more than 2,000. The modern music business has adapted to service this shift.

4) No matter how often folks in the ad space hear about copyright and sound-alike litigation re: ad music, and notwithstanding the brutal “Blurred Lines” sce-

nario, creators continue to infringe upon the IP of existing music with abandon.

5) The use of music libraries has become rampant. Many claim it's a budgetary imperative, which may be true, but it's irrefutable that the overall quality of their offering has improved tremendously.

6) The concept/business of sonic branding has become a darling of brand CMOs. And thus a cottage industry is born! Will the sound, or the Sonic DNA of your brand enhance its performance/business? Sonic strategists think so and brands are making 6-figure bets on it.

7) Until Spotify, sync and brand partnership deals kept the modern music industry's P&Ls afloat. Super Bowl sync deals, specifically, were generating minimum 6-figure deals. Now with this recent trend of legacy songwriters selling their rights, outright, don't be surprised to hear about even crazier high priced licenses. UMG has to make back the \$300+

million they spent on Bobby Zimmerman's (aka Bob Dylan) 600 songs, right?

8) The role of the agency music producer/supervisor, possibly a brand's greatest musical asset, is being challenged as the Big Agency model slowly fades away. Look to see more music consultancies over the next 5 years. Don't be surprised if the quality of original music, rather than licensed music, declines.

9) With the successes of Lil Nas X and Fleetwood Mac's “Dreams” vis-a-vis TikTok, there's certainly going to be more ad music executions infected by the social media cultural madness/fervor.

10) My vote for best music use of this period is Jet's “Are You Gonna Be My Girl” for the iPod. Although the song isn't the most original track ever, it integrates so well with the imagery, feel and product—it's a musical freaking bull's-eye!

Josh Rabinowitz is founder of Brooklyn Music Experience, a music consultancy.