



### **Executive Summary**

There has been a problem with diversity within the music industry for a very long time, and though recent reports may make it seem as though things are changing there is still a lot of work to be done. The Hub is a community minded project aimed at creating opportunities for those who are underrepresented within the industry, whilst bringing creatives together in a safe space that not only rewards individuality but actively encourages it.

The music industry needs to change. The Hub is where it starts.

### **Project background**

In 2019 The University of Southern California's Annenberg Institute published a report on music creator demographics. The report examined the gender and race of artists, songwriters, producers and other creators within the music industry and found that across the nine years up to 2020 women comprised only 21.6% of artists, 12.6% of songwriters and 2.6% of producers (Wang, 2021). A statement issued by Stacy Smith accompanying the report also said that particularly women of colour have been virtually erased from the music industry. While the 2020 Grammys saw a rise in female nominees with the awards ceremony marking a high point for female songwriters and producers the average sat at a sorry 13.4%. (Snapes, 2020)

It is clear that there is an issue with diversity within the music industry, and although groups aimed at providing opportunities for women are on the rise - for example the likes of Moving the Needle, SheSaid.so and Women in Music - there is still much to be done.

Sadly, the story is much the same across a number of other sectors with women accounting for only 26.25% in the boardroom, but with 56.2% completing a higher education course (Small Business Prices, 2021). Women have also been reported as being underrepresented in the construction industry (13%) (Correa, 2021) and in 2019 the gender pay gap was reported as being at 15% (Stielow et al, 2021)

### **The Solution**

My suggested solution is a simple one; a one stop 'hub' based in Birmingham centre which allows these previously mentioned under represented groups to come together in a safe and inspiring space. The Hub will operate as a community project, providing space for freelancers to give workshops in their specialisms, music teachers to give lessons, an 'in-store' recording studio, regular live events and food provided by a local independent business. The Hub will also provide opportunities for members to access free counselling and open circle evenings. In addition, I hope to house local independent radio station Brum Radio from with The Hub,

The difference between The Hub and other already established enterprises who are working towards a similar goal, is that The Hub will provide a much more comprehensive range of activities and will specifically aim to collaborate with independent businesses within Birmingham. Currently, there are a number of successful social enterprises working out of the city centre - such as The Warehouse, Digbeth Dining Club and Red Brick Marketplace - which have been embraced by the local community, therefore I have no doubt that this idea will be anything other than received with great relief. The previously mentioned businesses work in the disciplines of retail, environmental causes and hospitality, with no overlap into the activities I have proposed for The Hub, so I am confident that there would be little resistance there.

The Hub aims to create a thriving community based on making a difference within the music industry as a whole, but will also be tackling the issue of misuse of power within the current music scene (Khan, 2021). My vision is a buzzing community center, where everyone is welcome and everyone feels safe, motivated and inspired. The Hub will encourage everyone, no matter what discipline their interest is in, and hopefully create opportunities for those who have been underrepresented for so long.

The recording studio will function as a record label, whereby we will make a conscious effort to have a roster which is dominated by those who are underrepresented. The advantage to having the label function out of The Hub will mean that a great deal of A&R work can be done directly from those who utilise its services. We will already have a number of individuals who will be offering workshops on music management, distribution, promotion, marketing and touring and the long term goal would be to create a team who would work alongside the label in advancing the careers of those who record in the studio. There will also be a number of photographers and videographers offering workshops, so we would be able to provide a full package to artists even down to the creation of music videos and promotional images.

The record label aspect is a long term goal. Initially, I would be keen to set up all other aspects of The Hub as I feel that this would be much easier, and would also allow me to begin networking and building on relationships.

Rather than try to set up The Hub immediately, I am proposing a pilot scheme which would allow me to gauge interest in the project and test its viability. Should the pilot be a success, I would need to obtain funding to cover set up fees and come up with a long term plan to continue to generate revenue.

### **Expected impact & Success metrics**

### **Timeline/Milestones**

The timeline will differ for the pilot scheme and for The Hub. Below I will briefly list the milestones for the entirety of the project including the pilot.

- OCTOBER 2021 - Submit funding application
- NOVEMBER - meet with individuals intended to provide workshops at pilot.
- NOVEMBER-JANUARY 2022 - Establish presence on social media, set up website, begin to establish guests for long term project and pilot.
- APRIL 2022 - Pilot Scheme
- APRIL-JUNE 2022 - gather feedback from event, maintain buzz on social media, plan for opening event
- AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2022- Opening of The Hub - Small scale initially, not yet planning for recording studio/label
- JULY 2023 - Opening of recording studio/label
- SEPTEMBER 2023 - setting up of cafe/restaurant

Feedback will be obtained at all points throughout the project but the first key stage will be in November of 2021 where a number of individuals will be invited to a meeting and informed of the project's aims and timescale. Here I expect to receive suggestions for the pilot and The Hub which give me ample time to implement any changes.

I will receive feedback during and after the pilot, and will continuously utilise the social media channels to monitor further suggestions for change.

When The Hub is open, I will make a conscious effort to engage with everyone that uses its facilities to gather any further suggestions or recommendations.

As I will be working to a lean business model all of my SMART objectives will be subject to reasonable changes. I feel that this is crucial to the success of the project as it is so community based it needs to respond to the needs of those who use its services. Realistically I would like The Hub to be opening in October of 2022 by the latest, but I believe that it would be achievable to be in a position to open by late August.

### **Requirements**

The long term requirements are vastly different to those for the pilot event. Long term we would need to consider the annual salary for at least 3 members of staff, annual rent, utilities, licences, office supplies - the list is endless. I estimate that one year of activity would require a spend of at least £80000.

For the pilot we are able to strip back a number of these items and be much more mindful with our spending. We will still need funding for guests, venue and licences so a conservative estimate for the budget would be around £5000. I plan to apply for funding for the event.

I will provide a detailed budget for each branch of the project in my full business plan.

### **Conclusion**

We have discussed the issue with diversity within the music industry and I believe that this project will take drastic steps to fix this problem. My hope is that others may see the success in this idea and have the confidence to follow their own dreams. I believe in this project. I believe that it can only go from strength to strength, and has scope to expand into something industry defining. I believe that others will believe in this project too, that is a critical component.

## **References**

Correa, G (2021) UENI's 2020 Report on Gender and Small Business. Available at:

<https://ueni.com/blog/report-gender-small-business-female/>

[Accessed on 21 August 2021]

Frehsee, N (2020) We Can't Have All Our Artists Die': How the music industry is fighting the mental-health crisis. Available at:

<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/we-cant-have-all-our-artists-die-how-the-music-industry-is-fighting-the-mental-health-crisis-939171/> [Accessed on 21 August 2021]

Kham, J (2021) Birmingham's Music Scene Stands Wlth Survivors of Sexual Assault. Available

at: <https://babmag.co.uk/birmingham-scene-stands-against-carlo-solazzo/> [Accessed on 21

August 2021]

Small Business Prices (2021) Gender Inequality & Imbalance in Business; 2021 UK facts &

Statistics. Available at: <https://smallbusinessprices.co.uk/gender-imbalance/> [Accessed on 21

August 2021]

Snapes, L (2020) Still a boy's club: don't fall for the hype that the music industry has changed. Available at

:<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/jan/23/boys-club-2020s-music-awards-superficial-change-grammys> [Accessed on 25 July 2021]

Stielow, L. Carney, T. Sridhar, D. Forsyth, O. (2021) Strategy&, Women in Work 2021, The impact of COVID-19 on women in work

Wang, A (2021) Women in Music Dwindled in 2020. Available at:

<https://www.rollingstone.com/pro/news/women-artists-music-study-2021-1138094/>

[Accessed on 25 July 2021]