

# Inclusion in the Recording Studio?

Gender and Race/Ethnicity of  
Artists, Songwriters & Producers  
across 900 Popular Songs  
from 2012-2020

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**USC** Annenberg  
*Inclusion Initiative*



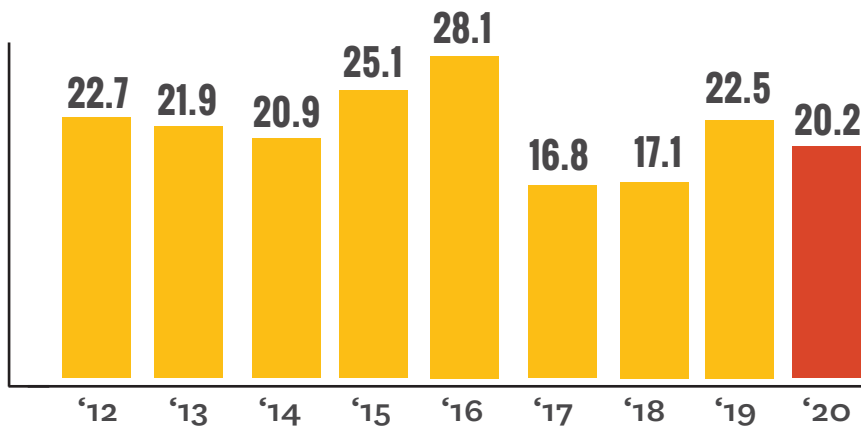
# INCLUSION IN THE RECORDING STUDIO? EXAMINING 900 POPULAR SONGS

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## WOMEN ARE MISSING IN POPULAR MUSIC

Prevalence of Women Artists across 900 Songs, in percentages



TOTAL NUMBER OF ARTISTS **1,797**

RATIO OF MEN TO WOMEN

**3.6:1**



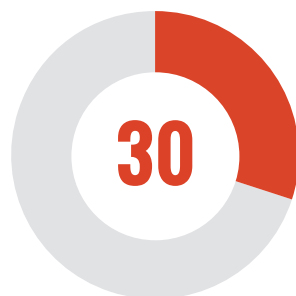
## FOR WOMEN, MUSIC IS A SOLO ACTIVITY

Across 900 songs, percentage of women out of...



ALL ARTISTS

(n=388)



INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

(n=340)



DUOS

(n=9)



BANDS

(n=39)



## WOMEN ARE PUSHED ASIDE AS PRODUCERS

THE RATIO OF MEN TO WOMEN PRODUCERS  
ACROSS 600 POPULAR SONGS WAS

**38 to 1**

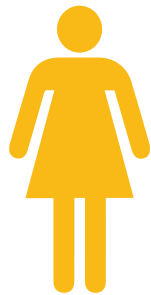
## WRITTEN OFF: FEW WOMEN WORK AS SONGWRITERS

Songwriter gender by year...

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
	11%	11.7%	12.7%	13.7%	13.3%	11.5%	11.6%	14.4%	12.9%	12.6%
	89%	88.3%	87.3%	86.3%	86.7%	88.5%	88.4%	85.6%	87.1%	87.4%

## WOMEN ARE MISSING IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Percentage of women across three creative roles...



**21.6%**  
ARE  
ARTISTS



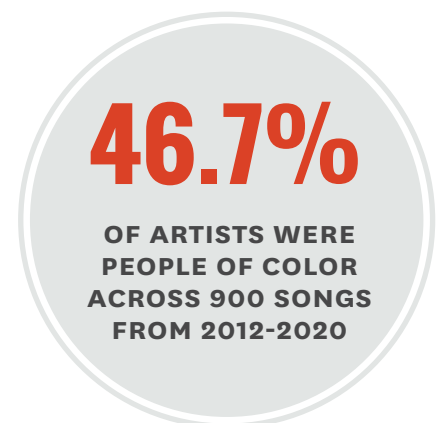
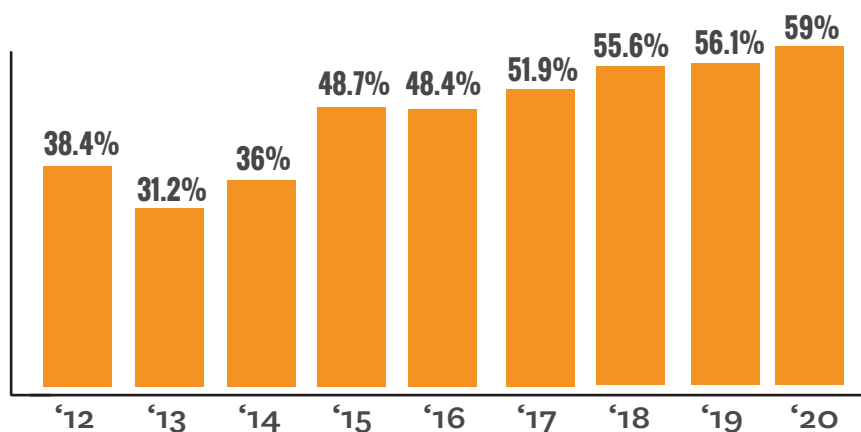
**12.6%**  
ARE  
SONGWRITERS



**2.6%**  
ARE  
PRODUCERS



## VOICES HEARD: ARTISTS OF COLOR ACROSS 900 SONGS

Percentage of artists of color by year...



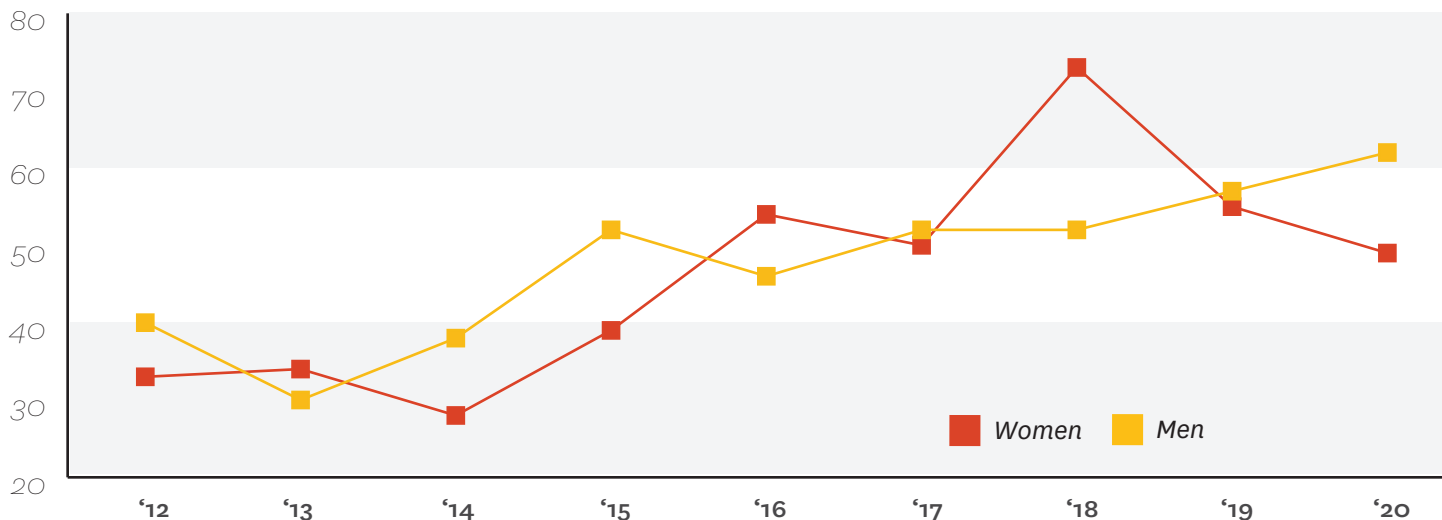
# CREATIVE CONSTRAINTS: FEW WOMEN PRODUCERS WORK IN MUSIC

Percentage of men and women producers by year...

	2012	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
	97.6%	98.2%	98.2%	97.7%	95%	98%	97.4%
	2.4%	1.8%	1.8%	2.3%	5%	2%	2.6%

## MEN AND WOMEN OF COLOR CLIMB THE CHARTS

Percentage of underrepresented men and women artists by year...



## WOMEN OF COLOR ARE INVISIBLE AS PRODUCERS

**9** OUT OF **1,291** PRODUCING CREDITS WENT TO WOMEN OF COLOR

## CREDITS & DEFICITS: MEN OUTPACE WOMEN IN SONGWRITING

Leading men and women songwriters by number of credits...

	Top Men Songwriters	# of credits	Top Women Songwriters	# of credits
<p>THE TOP MALE WRITER HAS</p> <p><b>44</b></p> <p>CREDITS</p> <p>THE TOP WOMAN WRITER HAS</p> <p><b>19</b></p> <p>CREDITS</p> <p>ACROSS 900 POPULAR SONGS FROM 2012-2020</p>	Martin Sandberg (Max Martin)	44	Onika Maraj (Nicki Minaj)	19
	Aubrey Graham (Drake)	42	Robyn Fenty (Rihanna)	14
	Benjamin Levin (Benny Blanco)	25	Taylor Swift	14
	Lukasz Gottwald (Dr. Luke)	24	Belcalis Almanzar (Cardi B)	13
	Savan Kotecha	24	Ariana Grande	12
	Henry Walter (Cirkut)	23	Katheryn Hudson (Katy Perry)	9
	Johan Schuster (Shellback)	21	Selena Gomez	9
	Dijon McFarlane (DJ Mustard)	18		
	Justin Bieber	18		
	Jacob Hindlin (JKash)	17		

The top 11 male songwriters are responsible for 22.5% of the 900 most popular songs from 2012 to 2020.

## LINER NOTES LACK WOMEN SONGWRITERS

Women songwriters across 900 popular songs...

**<1%**

OF 900 POPULAR SONGS HAVE ONLY WOMEN WRITERS

**30.6%**

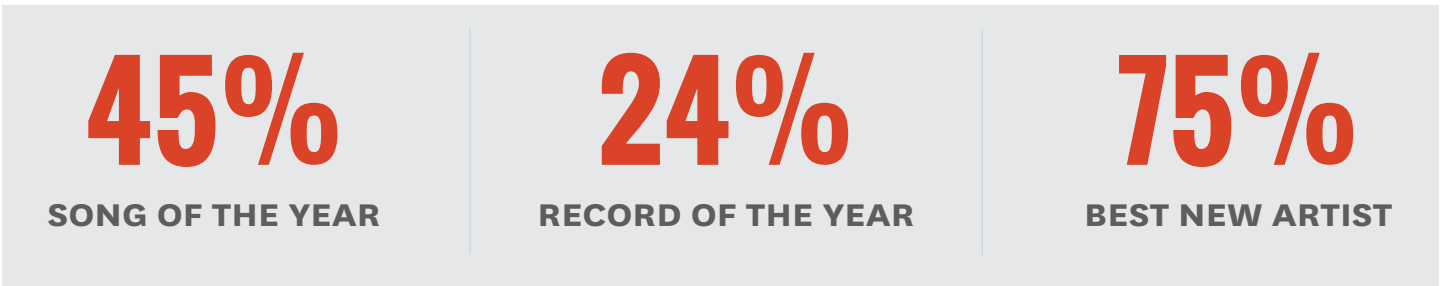
OF 900 POPULAR SONGS HAVE ONLY 1 WOMAN WRITER

**57.3%**

OF 900 POPULAR SONGS HAVE NO WOMEN WRITERS

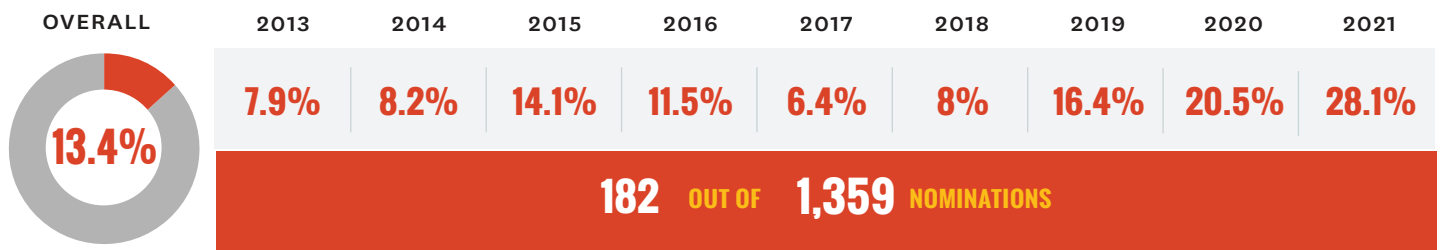
## WOMEN SURGE IN KEY CATEGORIES

Women Grammy® Nominees by Category, 2021



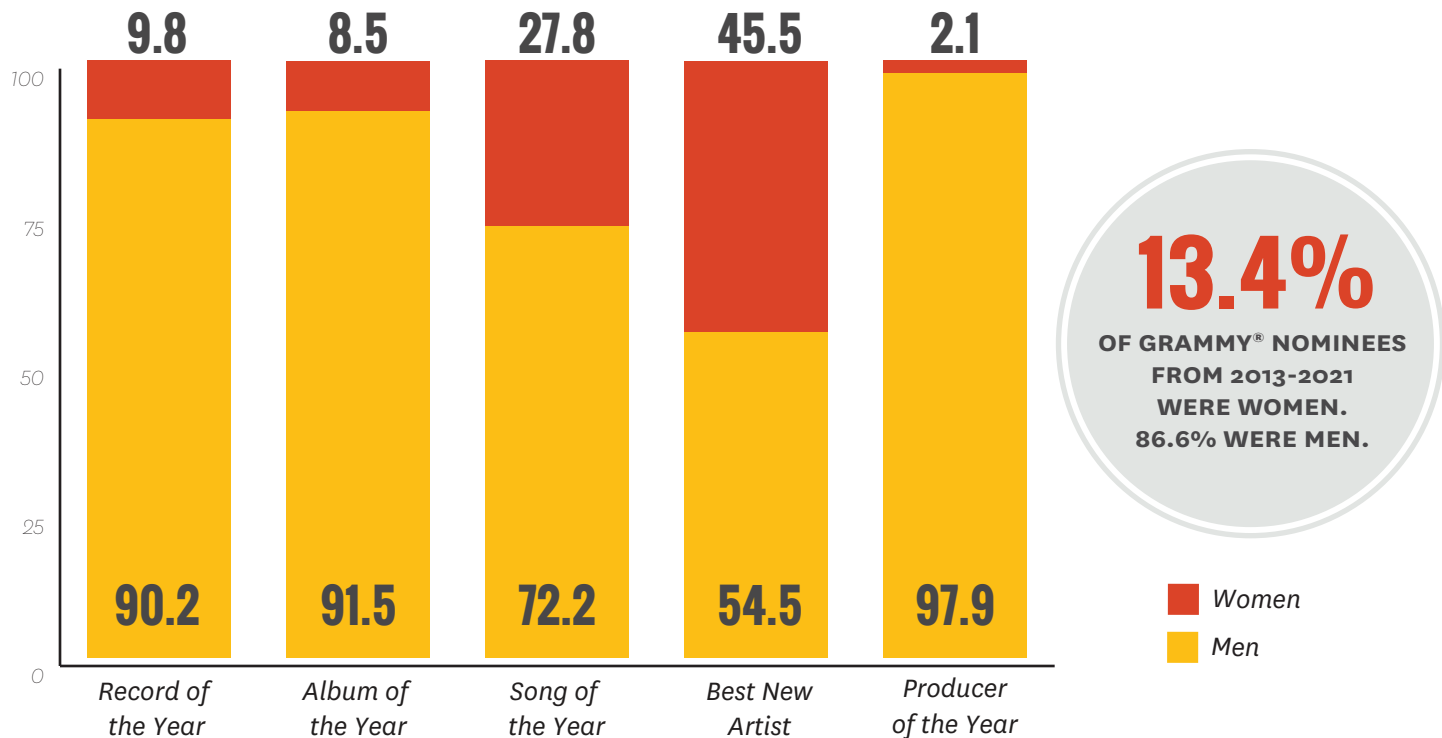
## WOMEN GRAMMY® NOMINEES HAVE INCREASED WITH TIME

Women Grammy® Nominees by Year, 2013-2020



## THE GENDER GAP AT THE GRAMMYS® IS REAL

Percentage of Women Nominees by Category, 2013-2020



**Inclusion in the Recording Studio?  
Gender & Race/Ethnicity of Artists, Songwriters, & Producers across  
900 Popular Songs from 2012 to 2020**

*Annenberg Inclusion Initiative*  
USC

The purpose of this report is to assess gender and race/ethnicity of artists, songwriters, and producers across the 900 most popular songs from 2012 to 2020, based on the Billboard Year-End Hot 100 Chart. We also evaluated Grammy nominations by gender and race/ethnicity across 5 categories: Record of the Year, Album of the Year, Song of the Year, Best New Artist, and Producer of the Year. The key findings are presented below, focusing on differences of 5 percentage points or greater.

### Key Findings

**Artist Gender.** 173 artists appeared on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End chart in 2020. Of those, 79.8% were men and 20.2% were women. No artists identified as gender non-conforming or non-binary in 2020.

2020 was not meaningfully different than 2019, 2017 or 2012 in the percentage of women artists. The high watermark for women artists was in 2016, when 28.1% of artists were women.

In terms of *genre*, women artists were most prevalent in the pop genre (32%) over the last 9 years, and least prevalent in hip-hop/rap (12.3%), where 7.1 men charted for every 1 woman artist.

Fewer than one-third of *solo artists* were women (30%). In 2020, the percentage of women solo artists was 22.5%, down from 27.3% in 2019 and from 35.8% in 2012. Looking to *duos*, there were few women overall who filled this type of artist role (7.1%). Fewer than 10% of artists in *bands* were women across the 9-year sample (7.3%), and 6.9% of band members in 2020 were women.

The top-performing artist of the last 9 years was *Drake*, with 41 songs. *Nicki Minaj* and *Rihanna* topped the list for women with 21 songs each. Ten of the top 13 artists of the past 9 years are from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

29 *duos* appeared on the Billboard chart across the 9 years studied. Of those, 10.3% were comprised of only women members, while 10.3% had both men and women members. The remaining 79.3% of duos featured men artists only. As was the case in 2019, the top-performing duos across the sample were *Florida Georgia Line* (8 songs), *The Chainsmokers* (5 songs) and *Macklemore & Ryan Lewis* (5 songs).

There were 51 bands (performing groups with 3 or more members) across the 9-year sample. Two were all-women bands (3.9%), 25% or 13 were mixed-gender, and 36 (70.6%) were bands of only men. *Maroon 5* (14 songs) led the bands in terms of chart appearances, followed by *Migos* (9 songs) and *Imagine Dragons* (8 songs). In comparison, of the two women-driven bands, *Fifth Harmony* had 3 songs on the year-end chart.

**Artist Race/Ethnicity.** Of 173 artists in 2020, 59% were underrepresented and 41% were white. 2020 was the fourth consecutive year where the percentage of underrepresented artists increased. 2020 was also a nine-year high for underrepresented artists, reflecting an increase from both 2019 (+2.9

percentage points) and 2012 (+20.6 percentage points), and surpassing (+19.1 percentage points) the percentage of the U.S. population that identifies with an underrepresented racial/ethnic group (39.9%).

47.3% of all men artists and 45.1% of all women artists were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups across 9 years. For underrepresented men artists, 2020 caps off a three-year increase, from 52% to 62%. For underrepresented women, 2018 was the 9-year high. The percentage of underrepresented women declined to 49% of women artists in 2020.

Underrepresented artists were most likely to appear on the charts in the **genres** of R&B/Soul (92.1%), Hip-Hop/Rap (87.3%), and Pop (36.3%).

Most underrepresented artists were *solo performers* (60.9%), with fewer in *duos* (29.4%) or *bands* (20.9%). For individual artists, 2020 was not different from 2019, but was significantly greater than the percentage of underrepresented solo artists in 2012.

The top-performing underrepresented artist (*Drake*, 41 songs) had more than twice as many songs on the chart compared to the top white artists (*Justin Bieber*, 18 songs; *Ariana Grande*, 18 songs). As we noted last year, *Nicki Minaj* and *Rihanna* also outpaced the top white artists in terms of chart appearances.

A total of 11 *duos* were comprised of solely underrepresented members, which represents 37.9% of all twosomes. An additional 10.3% of duos had both white and underrepresented members. Slightly more than half (51.7%) of the duos in the sample had only white members. Turning to bands, 13.7% of the bands in the sample had underrepresented members only, while 27.4% had both underrepresented and white members, and 58.8% had white members.

**Songwriters.** A total of 449 songwriters were credited in 2020. 87.1% were men and 12.9% were women. 2020 reflects a slight decrease from the nine-year high achieved in 2019 (14.4%), but is slightly more than the percentage of women songwriters in 2012 (11%). Across all 9 years, 12.6% of songwriters were women, a ratio of 7 men to every 1 woman songwriter.

We also evaluated the **race/ethnicity** of women songwriters. For white women, there was no difference in the number of songwriters in 2020 compared to 2019 or 2012. For women of color, 2020 was a decline from the 9-year high in 2019, but an overall increase from 2012.

Women songwriters were most likely to work on Dance/Electronic songs (20.5%) and Pop (18.7%) music, and least likely to work in Hip-Hop/Rap (6.3%), R&B (9.1%) or Country (10.6%).

Songwriting credits were assessed at an individual level. Men and women both were most likely to write only 1 song that appeared on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Chart over the last 9 years. Fewer than 10% of men and women wrote 6 or more songs that charted in this time frame.

Looking to top-performing songwriters, the top 2 male songwriters each had more than double the songwriting credits than the top woman songwriter. The remainder of the men on the top songwriting list all outpace the women in slots 2 or below. Moreover, the top 11 men songwriters were responsible for writing 22.5% of the songs in the 813-song sample.



The absence of women songwriters was explored. In 2020, 65% of the songs on the Hot 100 Year-End Chart did not feature any women songwriters. This is an increase from 2019 and from 2012. In fact, this reflects a sample-wide high in the exclusion of women songwriters.

Across the entire sample of 900 songs, more than half (57.3%) of the songs studied did not have any women writers, and 30.6% had only 1 woman writer. Thus, 87.9% of the songs on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Charts in the last 9 years were either devoid of women songwriters or included just one woman.

**Producers.** The producers across each song on the Hot 100 Year-End Charts from 2012, 2015, 2017, and 2018-2020 were tabulated. There were 198 producers credited in 2020; 98% were men and 2% were women. Across the six-year sample, a total of 1,291 producers were credited. Of these, 97.4% of producers were men and 2.6% were women. This is a ratio of 38 men to every 1 woman producer.

Over time, there was little variation in the percentage of women working as producers. 2020 represented a slight decline from 2019 (the 6-year high), and was almost equivalent with the percentage of women producers in 2012.

For the second year, we evaluated the impact of the Recording Academy's Women in the Mix pledge. None of the women producers who worked on songs appearing on the 2020 Hot 100 Year End Chart were there as a result of the Women in the Mix Pledge.

Of the 38 Women in the Mix pledge-takers who worked on a song that appeared on the Billboard Hot 100 Year End Chart in 2020, none were credited with a woman producer. Only one person (Ariana Grande) worked with a woman engineer—herself—on a song that made it onto the year-end chart in 2020. While pledge-takers may have worked with women producers and engineers on other songs, they did not do so on the year's most popular music.

Out of the 33 women credited as a producer across the 6 years studied, 9 were women of color. Only 1 woman of color was credited as a producer in 2020. Mariah Carey received a producing credit for *All I Want for Christmas is You* a song first released in 1994. Thus, no woman of color was credited as a producer on a song released in 2020 that made the Hot 100 Year End Chart in the same year.

There were 23 individual women who worked as producers across the sample, and 7 were women of color. The ratio of men producers to underrepresented women producers across the 6-year sample is 180 to 1.

**Grammy® Nominations: 2013 to 2021.** In total, 1,359 individuals were nominated for a Grammy® Award between 2013 and 2021. Of these nominees, 13.4% were women and 86.6% were men. This is a ratio of 6.5 men nominated for every 1 woman nominee.

From 2020 to 2021, the percentage of women Grammy® nominees increased significantly and reached a 9-year high as 28.1% of nominees were women. There were nearly 4 times as many women nominated for a Grammy® Award in 2021 in the 5 major categories evaluated as there were in 2013.

Women were most likely to be nominated for the Best New Artist award, followed by Song of the Year. Across 9 years, roughly 10% or less of the nominees for Record of the Year or Album of the Year have

been women. Moreover, only 1 woman has been nominated for Producer of the Year across the entire sample.

2021 represents a high point in the percentage of women nominated for Record of the Year and Best New Artist. Women nominees in 2021 also slightly surpassed those in 2020 nominated for Album of the Year and Song of the Year, which were previously the high watermark for women. Finally, in 8 of 9 years examined, there were no women nominated for Producer of the Year.

How do women of color fare at the Grammys®? Of the 182 women nominated in the past 9 years, 61.5% were white and 38.5% were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. In all but one category, women of color were less likely than their white counterparts to be nominated for a Grammy® Award. The largest disparity occurred in the Song of the Year category, where 73.1% of nominees were white and 26.9% were underrepresented.

**Inclusion in the Recording Studio?  
Gender & Race/Ethnicity of Artists, Songwriters, & Producers across  
900 Popular Songs from 2012 to 2020**

*Annenberg Inclusion Initiative*  
USC

This annual investigation is published by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative to present updates on the gender and race/ethnicity of artists, songwriters, and producers across the Hot 100 Year-End Billboard Charts.<sup>1</sup> To that end, we quantitatively assessed the gender and race/ethnicity of the artists, songwriters, and producers responsible for each of the 900 songs on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Chart between 2012 and 2020.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, we evaluated the nominee demographics for Record of the Year, Album of the Year, Song of the Year, Best New Artist, and Producer of the Year at the Grammys® for the same time frame.<sup>3</sup>

The report has four sections. First, we present gender and underrepresented racial/ethnic status (yes, no) for artists, including an examination of inclusion by genre and credit type (solo, duo, band). Then, we turn to an evaluation of songwriters and producers. The third section overviews the results of the Grammy® analysis. Finally, we provide a set of study conclusions and recommendations for change.

As is standard across all Initiative reports, only differences of 5 percentage points or greater are noted. This minimizes the likelihood of emphasizing trial deviations of 1-2%. Our comparisons first examine how 2020 compares to 2019 and then to 2012. The methods and procedures for this investigation are presented in the footnotes as well as in prior editions of the report.<sup>4</sup>

**Artists**

**Gender.** A total of 173 artists appeared on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End chart in 2020. Of those, 79.8% ( $n=138$ ) were men and 20.2% ( $n=35$ ) were women. No artists identified as gender non-conforming or non-binary in 2020. Table 1 demonstrates how artist gender has fluctuated over time. There was no meaningful difference between 2019 and 2020 in the percentage of women artists. 2020 was also not meaningfully different than 2012 or 2017 in the percentage of women artists on the chart. The high watermark for women artists was in 2016, when 28.1% of artists were women. 2020 still falls 7.9 percentage points below this figure. Moreover, in none of the years examined does the percentage of women artists approach the percentage of women in the U.S. population (51%).<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1  
Artist Gender by Year**

Gender	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
<b>Men</b>	77.3 ( $n=153$ )	78.1% ( $n=168$ )	79.1% ( $n=178$ )	74.9% ( $n=146$ )	71.9% ( $n=138$ )	83.2% ( $n=178$ )	82.9% ( $n=179$ )	77.5% ( $n=131$ )	79.8% ( $n=138$ )	78.4% ( $n=1,409$ )
<b>Women</b>	22.7% ( $n=45$ )	21.9% ( $n=47$ )	20.9% ( $n=47$ )	25.1% ( $n=49$ )	28.1% ( $n=54$ )	16.8% ( $n=36$ )	17.1% ( $n=37$ )	22.5% ( $n=38$ )	20.2% ( $n=35$ )	21.6% ( $n=388$ )
<b>Ratio</b>	3.4 to 1	3.6 to 1	3.8 to 1	3 to 1	2.6 to 1	4.9 to 1	4.8 to 1	3.4 to 1	3.9 to 1	3.6 to 1

We also examined how artist gender varied by song *genre*. iTunes distinctions for genre were used to determine song classification, with very small sample sizes recoded into one of the categories in Table 2. The data are reported at the artist level for all 900 songs. Women artists were most prevalent in the pop

genre (32%) over the last 9 years, and least prevalent in hip-hop/rap (12.3%), where 7.1 men charted for every 1 woman artist.

**Table 2**  
**Song Genre by Artist Gender**

Genre	Men	Women	Gender Ratio
Pop	68% (n=482)	32% (n=227)	2.1 to 1
Hip-Hop/Rap	87.7% (n=443)	12.3% (n=62)	7.1 to 1
Alternative	86.9% (n=192)	13.1% (n=29)	6.6 to 1
Country	80.4% (n=115)	19.6% (n=28)	4.1 to 1
R&B/Soul	84.3% (n=75)	15.7% (n=14)	5.3 to 1
Dance/Electronic	78.5% (n=102)	21.5% (n=28)	3.6 to 1

**Artist type** was also evaluated. We created three categories for credited artists: those who headlined or featured on a song in a solo capacity; those who were members of duos; and those in bands. Of solo artists, across 900 songs and 9 years, fewer than one-third were women (30%). In 2020, the percentage of women solo artists was 22.5%, down from 27.3% in 2019 and from 35.8% in 2012.

**Table 3**  
**Percentage of Women Artists by Performer Type**

Gender	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Individual	35.8% (n=39)	33.3% (n=37)	35.8% (n=43)	30.8% (n=41)	35.3% (n=43)	25.6% (n=34)	26.2% (n=37)	27.3% (n=35)	22.5% (n=31)	30% (n=340)
Duo	16.7% (n=1)	10% (n=2)	0	10% (n=1)	0	4.5% (n=1)	0	16.7% (n=2)	33.3% (n=2)	7.1% (n=9)
Band	6% (n=5)	9.5% (n=8)	4.6% (n=4)	13.5% (n=7)	22.9% (n=11)	1.7% (n=1)	0	3.5% (n=1)	6.9% (n=2)	7.3% (n=39)

*Note:* Groups with 3 or more artists were considered a band provided that they were under a single moniker, save 1. The percentage of male individual performers, members of duos or bands can be found by subtracting a specific cell from 100%. Featuring credits were included in all analyses. Columns nor rows add to 100%.

Looking to duos, there were few women overall who filled this type of artist role (7.1%). One-third of duo members were women in 2020, but this reflects that only 6 individuals were in duos that charted on the Hot 100 Year-End list. This is a significant percentage increase from 2019 and from 2012, but reflects no numerical difference for women for either year. Across 3 of the 9 years examined, there were no women credited as part of a duo (2014, 2016, 2018).

Women were also rare as band members. Fewer than 10% of artists in bands were women across the 9-year sample (7.3%), and 6.9% of band members in 2020 were women. This is slightly higher by percentage (3.5%) from 2019, but on par with 2012 (6%). Clearly, women find success on the Billboard

chart when they perform individually, and more work is needed to understand why groups of women performers do not reach the same level as their male peers.

The analyses above focus on all performers, but now we turn our attention to *unique* or individual artists to determine if there are gender differences in how often specific artists appeared across the 900-song sample. 87 songs were duplicates across the sample, and were included only once for this analysis, bringing the new sample size of songs to 813. There were 618 artists who worked on these 813 songs, with a total of 1,797 credits. These reduced to 1,610 credits and a total of 374 individual artists appeared on the charts.

Table 4 shows the breakdown for solo artists. There were no differences by gender. More than half of men and women solo artists charted for a single song over the last 9 years. At the highest level, 12% of men artists and 13% of women artists charted for 6 or more songs in the sample time frame. In total, two-thirds of all artists, no matter their gender identity, released two or fewer songs that appeared on the Billboard Hot 100 during the 9-year time frame studied.

**Table 4**  
**Number of Song Credits by Solo Artists' Gender**

# of Songs	Men Artists		Women Artists		Total	
	# of Artists	%	# of Artists	%	# of Artists	%
1	154	56%	53	53.5%	207	55.3%
2	38	13.8%	13	13.1%	51	13.6%
3	21	7.6%	9	9.1%	30	8%
4	18	6.5%	6	6.1%	24	6.4%
5	10	3.6%	5	5.1%	15	4%
≥6	34	12.4%	13	13.1%	47	12.6%
Total	275	100%	99	100%	374	100%

*Note:* Range was grouped for presentational purposes with 6 or greater credits in one category. Similar to other years, the credits for individual artists were determined using both artists' names and/or pseudonyms.

The top performers on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End chart across the last 9 years appear in Table 5. The top-performing artist overall was Drake, with 41 songs. He was also the top-performing male artist. In contrast, Nicki Minaj and Rihanna topped the list for women with 21 songs. Ten of the top 13 artists that appear in Table 5 are from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

**Table 5**  
**Top Performing Solo Artists by Gender**

Top Men	# of Songs	Top Women	# of Songs
Drake	41	Nicki Minaj	21
Justin Bieber	18	Rihanna	21
Chris Brown	15	Ariana Grande	18
The Weeknd	12	Taylor Swift	14
Calvin Harris	11	Cardi B	13
Kendrick Lamar	11	Selena Gomez	11
Bruno Mars	11		

Twenty-nine duos appeared on the Billboard chart across the 9 years studied. Of those, 10.3% ( $n=3$ ) were comprised of only women members, while 10.3% ( $n=3$ ) had both men and women members. The remaining 79.3% ( $n=23$ ) of duos featured men artists only. As was the case in 2019, the top-performing duos across the sample were *Florida Georgia Line* (8 songs), *The Chainsmokers* (5 songs) and *Macklemore & Ryan Lewis* (5 songs).

There were 51 bands (performing groups with 3 or more members) across the 9-year sample. Two were all-women bands (3.9%), 25% or 13 were mixed-gender, and 36 (70.6%) were bands of only men. *Maroon 5* (14 songs) led the bands in terms of chart appearances, followed by *Migos* (9 songs) and *Imagine Dragons* (8 songs). In comparison, of the two women-driven bands, *Fifth Harmony* had 3 songs on the year-end chart.

The findings in this section provide a few overall trends regarding women artists. First, one-fifth (20.5%) of artists on the popular charts in 2020 were women. This is consistent, though slightly lower, than the percentage of women artists in 2019 and 2012. Women artists were still dramatically underrepresented in popular music. Women were most likely to work in pop music and least likely to chart with hip-hop/rap songs. While there were no gender differences in the number of appearances for solo artists on the charts, the majority of men and women appeared on the charts two times or fewer in nine years. Finally, women were far less likely than men to appear on the charts as part of a duo or a band. These results extend our work over the past several years and demonstrate that there is still tremendous room for growth for women artists in popular music. Next, we review differences in chart appearances by artist race/ethnicity.

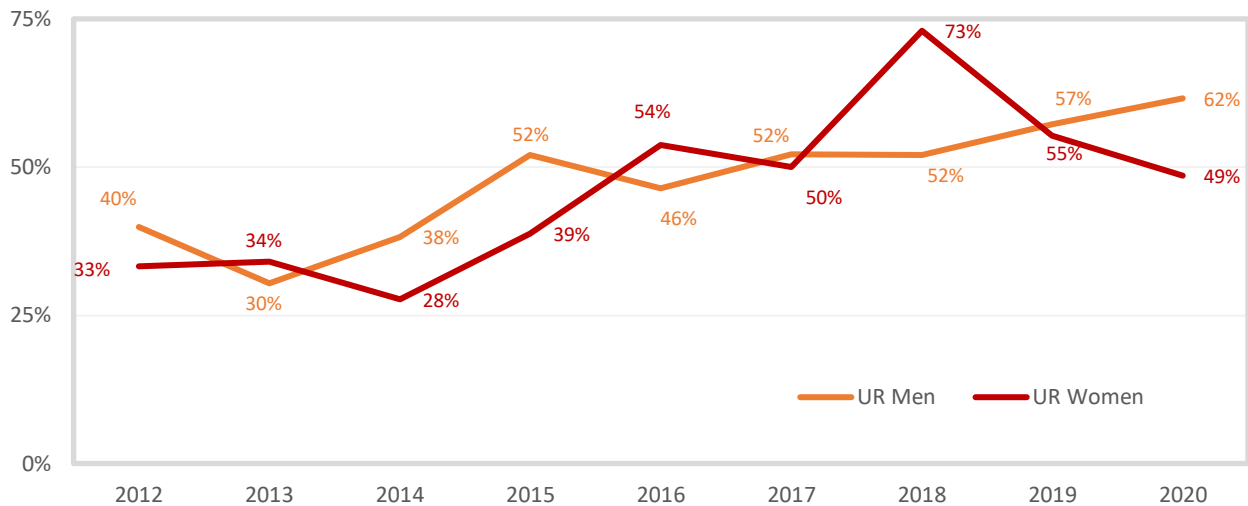
**Race/Ethnicity.** The race/ethnicity of individual artists appearing on the charts ( $n=1,799$ ) was coded as white, or as affiliated with an underrepresented racial/ethnic group.<sup>6</sup> As shown in Table 6, 59% ( $n=102$ ) of artists were underrepresented and 41% ( $n=71$ ) were white in 2020. The percentage of underrepresented artists in 2020 was a nine-year high across the sample, and reflects a 2.9 percentage point increase from 2019 and 20.6 percentage point increase from 2012. The 2020 figure is also 19.1 percentage points above the percentage of the U.S. population that identifies with an underrepresented racial/ethnic group (39.9%).<sup>7</sup> 2020 also reflects the fourth consistent year in which the percentage of underrepresented artists increased.

**Table 6**  
**Artist Underrepresented Status by Year**

Measure	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
White	61.6% (n=122)	68.8% (n=148)	64% (n=144)	51.3% (n=100)	51.6% (n=99)	48.1% (n=103)	44.4% (n=96)	43.9% (n=75)	41% (n=71)	53.3% (n=958)
UR	38.4% (n=76)	31.2% (n=67)	36% (n=81)	48.7% (n=95)	48.4% (n=93)	51.9% (n=111)	55.6% (n=120)	56.1% (n=96)	59% (n=102)	46.7% (n=841)
Ratio	1.6 to 1	2.2 to 1	1.8 to 1	1.1 to 1	1.1 to 1	.93 to 1	.8 to 1	.78 to 1	.7 to 1	1.1 to 1

Differences in the percentage of underrepresented artists by **gender**, **genre**, and **performer type** were also of interest. Overall, 47.3% of all men artists and 45.1% of all women artists were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. Figure 1 reveals how the gender of underrepresented artists has varied over time. For underrepresented men artists, 2020 caps off a three-year increase, from 52% to 62%. For underrepresented women, 2018 was the 9-year high. The percentage of underrepresented women declined to 49% of women artists in 2020.

**Figure 1**  
**Underrepresented Men & Women Artists Over Time**



Next, we examined song **genre** by the proportion of white and underrepresented artists within each category. Underrepresented artists were most likely to appear on the charts in genres of R&B/Soul (92.1%) and Hip-Hop/Rap (87.3%), and Pop (36.3%). See Table 7.

**Table 7**  
**Song Genre by Underrepresented Status of Artists**

Genre	Underrepresented Artists	White Artists
Pop	36.3% (n=258)	63.7% (n=453)
Hip-Hop/Rap	87.3% (n=441)	12.7% (n=64)
Alternative	6.8% (n=15)	93.2% (n=206)
Country	4.9% (n=7)	95.1% (n=136)
R&B/Soul	92.1% (n=82)	7.9% (n=7)
Dance/Electronic	29.2% (n=38)	70.8% (n=92)

As with gender, the relationship between race/ethnicity and performer type was explored. Most underrepresented artists were solo performers (60.9%), with fewer in duos (29.4%) or bands (20.9%). Table 8 reveals this breakdown, along with changes over time. For individual artists, 2020 was not different from 2019, but was significantly greater than the percentage of underrepresented solo artists in 2012. There were no underrepresented artists who were part of a duo in 2020. As we noted in our previous report, the small sample size of underrepresented artists in duos and bands each year results in percentages that fluctuate from year to year. Differences should be interpreted with caution, focusing on the small numerical deviations rather than larger percentage gaps.

**Table 8**  
**Percentage of Underrepresented Artists by Performer Type**

Race	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
<b>Individual</b>	54.1% (n=59)	52.2% (n=58)	54.2% (n=65)	56.4% (n=75)	60.7% (n=74)	65.4% (n=87)	70.2% (n=99)	65.4% (n=85)	65.2% (n=90)	60.9% (n=692)
<b>Duo</b>	66.7% (n=4)	15% (n=3)	38.9% (n=7)	70% (n=7)	18.2% (n=4)	27.3% (n=6)	20% (n=2)	33.3% (n=4)	0	29.4% (n=37)
<b>Band</b>	15.7% (n=13)	7.1% (n=6)	10.3% (n=9)	25% (n=13)	31.2% (n=15)	30.5% (n=18)	29.2% (n=19)	24.1% (n=7)	41.4% (n=12)	20.9% (n=112)

*Note:* Groups with 3 or more artists were considered a band provided that they were under a single moniker, save 1. The percentage of white individual performers and members of duos or bands can be found by subtracting a specific cell from 100%. Featuring credits were included in all analyses. Columns nor rows add to 100%.

We further explored differences between white and underrepresented artists in terms of the frequency of appearances on the popular charts. Here, we once again examined how often individual artists charted with a song across the 9-year sample. As Table 9 reveals, there was a difference between underrepresented and white artists in the number of times each appeared with a single song on the charts. White artists (61.6%) were more likely than underrepresented artists (50.7%) to have just one song on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End charts. By contrast, underrepresented artists (15.8%) were more



likely to have 2 songs that charted over the 9 years than white artists were (10.7%). There were no further differences by artist race/ethnicity and number of songs on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End charts. At the highest level, 13.5% of underrepresented artists and 11.3% of white artists had six or more songs on the charts.

**Table 9**  
**Number of Songs by Underrepresented Status of Artists with Solo Credits**

# of Songs	UR Artists		White Artists		Total	
	# of Artists	%	# of Artists	%	# of Artists	%
1	109	50.7%	98	61.6%	207	55.3%
2	34	15.8%	17	10.7%	51	13.6%
3	19	8.8%	11	6.9%	30	8%
4	16	7.4%	8	5%	24	6.4%
5	8	3.7%	7	4.4%	15	4%
≥6	29	13.5%	18	11.3%	47	12.6%
Total	215	100%	159	100%	374	100%

*Note:* Range was grouped for presentational purposes with 6 or more credits amassed in one category. Similar to other years, the credits for individual artists were determined using credits with both their name and/or any pseudonyms.

The top-performing artists across the sample by race/ethnicity were also assessed. The top-performing underrepresented artist (*Drake*, 41 songs) had more than twice as many songs on the chart compared to the top white artists (*Justin Bieber*, 18 songs; *Ariana Grande*, 18 songs). As we noted last year, *Nicki Minaj* and *Rihanna* also outpaced the top white artists in terms of chart appearances. See Table 10.

**Table 10**  
**Top Performing Solo Artists by Underrepresented Status**

Top UR Artists	# of Songs	Top White Artists	# of Songs
Drake	41	Justin Bieber	18
Nicki Minaj	21	Ariana Grande	18
Rihanna	21	Taylor Swift	14
Chris Brown	15	Calvin Harris	11
Cardi B	13	Post Malone	10
The Weeknd	12	Ed Sheeran	10
Kendrick Lamar	11	Luke Bryan	9
Bruno Mars	11	Katy Perry	9
Selena Gomez	11		

A total of 11 duos were comprised of solely underrepresented members, which represents 37.9% of all twosomes. An additional 10.3% (n=3) of duos had both white and underrepresented members. Slightly more than half (51.7%, n=15) of the duos in the sample had only white members. *Florida Georgia Line* (8

songs), *Macklemore & Ryan Lewis* (5 songs), and *The Chainsmokers* (5 songs) had the most chart appearances for duos in the sample. Turning to bands, 13.7% ( $n=7$ ) of the bands in the sample had underrepresented members only, while 27.4% ( $n=14$ ) had both underrepresented and white members, and 58.8% ( $n=30$ ) had white members. *Maroon 5* (14 songs), *Migos* (9 songs), and *Imagine Dragons* (8 songs) led the bands in terms of chart appearances.

Summing up, the majority of artists on the popular charts were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. In particular, solo artists from underrepresented backgrounds were more likely to appear on the Billboard Hot 100 Year End Chart, while fewer underrepresented artists were part of duos or bands. Underrepresented artists were also more likely to have more than one song on the popular charts across the last 9 years compared to white artists. In the next section, we turn to evaluating other roles responsible for a song’s success: songwriting and producing.

### Songwriting & Producing

Across the sample, songwriters and producers were identified. The gender of every songwriter and producer was evaluated, as well as the race/ethnicity of women across these two positions.

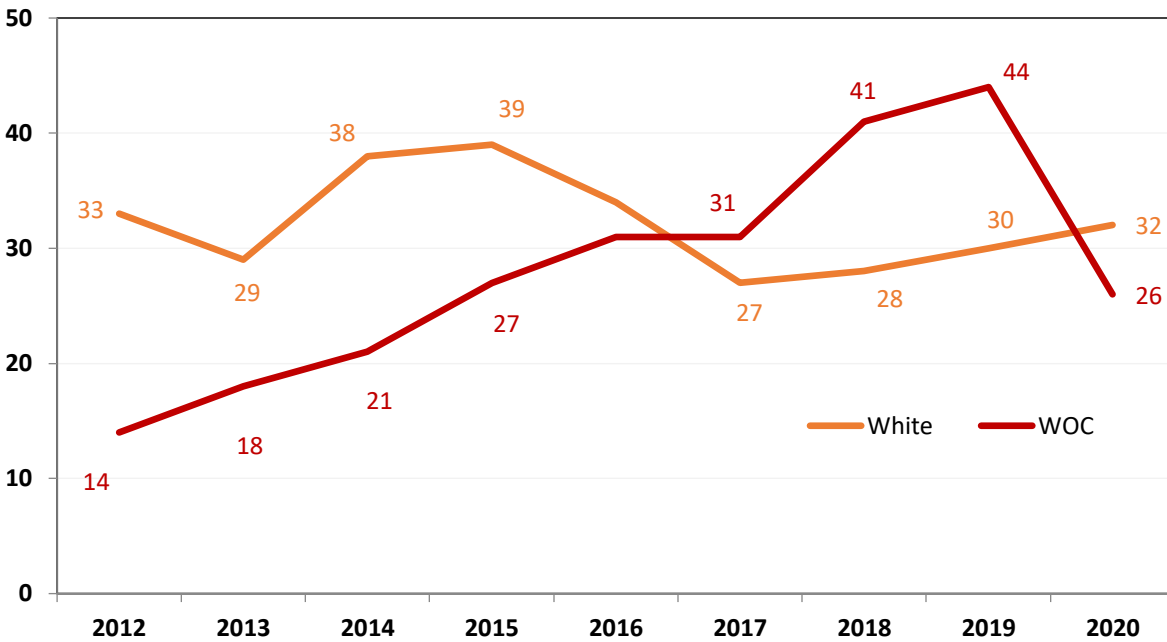
**Songwriters.** There were 4,322 songwriters credited across the 9 years examined.<sup>8</sup> Table 11 shows that in 2020, 87.1% ( $n=391$ ) of songwriters were men and 12.9% ( $n=58$ ) were women. This is a slight decrease from the nine-year high achieved in 2019 (14.4%,  $n=74$ ), but slightly more than the percentage of songwriters in 2012 (11%,  $n=47$ ). Across all 9 years, 12.6% of songwriters were women, a ratio of 7 men to every 1 woman songwriter.

**Table 11**  
**Songwriter Gender by Year**

Gender	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Men	89% ( $n=380$ )	88.3% ( $n=355$ )	87.3% ( $n=404$ )	86.3% ( $n=415$ )	86.7% ( $n=424$ )	88.5% ( $n=445$ )	88.4% ( $n=526$ )	85.6% ( $n=439$ )	87.1% ( $n=391$ )	87.4% ( $n=3,779$ )
Women	11% ( $n=47$ )	11.7% ( $n=47$ )	12.7% ( $n=59$ )	13.7% ( $n=66$ )	13.3% ( $n=65$ )	11.5% ( $n=58$ )	11.6% ( $n=69$ )	14.4% ( $n=74$ )	12.9% ( $n=58$ )	12.6% ( $n=543$ )
Ratio	8.1 to 1	7.6 to 1	6.8 to 1	6.3 to 1	6.5 to 1	7.7 to 1	7.6 to 1	5.9 to 1	6.7 to 1	7 to 1

We also evaluated the **race/ethnicity** of women songwriters. Figure 2 shows the number of women songwriters per year, with one line reflecting the number of white women and the other the number of underrepresented women songwriters. For white women, there was no difference in the number of songwriters in 2020 compared to 2019 or 2012. For women of color, 2020 was a decline from the 9-year high in 2019, but an overall increase from 2012. The decline for women of color in 2020 ended the linear increase that began in 2012.

**Figure 2**  
**Number of Women Songwriters by Underrepresented Status Per Year**



A second way of evaluating women’s participation as songwriters was to focus on genre. Women songwriters were most likely to work on Dance/Electronic songs (20.5%) and Pop (18.7%) music, and least likely to work in Hip-Hop/Rap (6.3%), R&B (9.1%) or Country (10.6%).

**Table 12**  
**Song Genre by Songwriter Gender**

Genre	Men Songwriters	Women Songwriters
Pop	81.3% (n=1317)	18.7% (n=304)
Hip-Hop/Rap	93.7% (n=1392)	6.3% (n=94)
Alternative	88.9% (n=289)	11.1% (n=36)
Country	89.4% (n=279)	10.6% (n=33)
R&B/Soul	90.9% (n=339)	9.1% (n=34)
Dance/Electronic	79.5% (n=163)	20.5% (n=42)

We also evaluated the unique songwriters working across the 9-year sample. We removed songs that appeared more than once across the sample, and examined the songwriting credits of each individual (by name and/or pseudonym). As Table 13 shows, there were no differences in the distribution of

songwriting credits by gender across the 9 years evaluated. Men and women were both most likely to write only 1 song that appeared on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Charts. Fewer than 10% of men and women wrote 6 or more songs that charted in this time frame.

**Table 13**  
**Number of Songs by Songwriter Gender**

# of Songs	Men Songwriters		Women Songwriters		Total	
	# of Writers	%	# of Writers	%	# of Writers	%
1	1080	66.7%	163	69.1%	1243	67%
2	227	14%	27	11.4%	254	13.7%
3	113	7%	15	6.4%	128	6.9%
4	44	2.7%	10	4.2%	54	2.9%
5	34	2.1%	5	2.1%	39	2.1%
≥6	120	7.4%	16	6.8%	136	7.3%
Total	1618	100%	236	100%	1854	100%

*Note:* Range was grouped for presentational purposes with 6 and/or greater credits in one category. Similar to other years, the credits for individual songwriters were determined using songwriters' names and/or pseudonyms.

To understand in more depth the top echelon of songwriting, we further explored the gender breakdown of those writers with six or more credits. Table 14 shows that the top 2 male songwriters each have more than double the songwriting credits than the top woman songwriter. The remainder of the men on the top songwriting list all outpace the women in slots 2 or below. Moreover, the top 11 men songwriters listed in Table 14 are responsible for writing 22.5% of the songs in the 813-song sample.

**Table 14**  
**Top Individual Songwriters by Gender**

Top Men	# Songs	Top Women	# Songs
Max Martin	44	Nicki Minaj	19
Drake	42	Rihanna	14
Benny Blanco	25	Taylor Swift	14
Savan Kotecha	24	Cardi B	13
Dr. Luke	24	Ariana Grande	12
Cirkut	23	Selena Gomez	9
Shellback	21	Katy Perry	9
DJ Mustard	18		
Justin Bieber	18		
JKash	17		

Another way to evaluate the lack of women songwriters on the top charts is to examine how many songs in the sample were missing women in a songwriting role. The sample of songs was separated into two categories: those songs with one or more women songwriters, and songs without any women songwriters (only men writing). There were 4 songs without any men songwriters across the sample—

<1% of songs overall. Only 9.2% of songs had only 1 male songwriter. More than half (57.3%,  $n=466$ ) of the songs studied did not have any women writers, and 30.6% ( $n=249$ ) had only 1 woman writer. Thus, 87.9% of the songs on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Charts were either devoid of women songwriters or included just one woman.

**Table 15**  
**Presence vs. Absence of Women Songwriters Across Sample**

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>0 Women Songwriters</b>	58%	62%	60%	52%	47%	59%	59%	53%	65%
<b>1 or more Women Songwriters</b>	42%	38%	40%	48%	53%	41%	41%	47%	35%

The over time distribution of songs without any women songwriters is depicted in Table 15. In 2020, nearly two-thirds of the songs in sample did not feature any women songwriters. This is an increase from 2019 and from 2012. In fact, this reflects a sample-wide high in the exclusion of women songwriters.

Overall, popular music still lacks the presence of women songwriters. Women are outnumbered overall, and the majority of songs included in this study over the last nine years did not feature the input of any women writers. While in previous years, there were increasingly more women of color who appeared as songwriters on the charts, this changed in 2020. Next, we examine how women fared in another leadership role behind the scenes: producing.

**Producers.** The producers across each song on the Hot 100 Year-End Charts from 2012, 2015, 2017, and 2018-2020 were tabulated.<sup>9</sup> When producers received multiple producing credits per song, they were only included once for that work ( $n=29$ ). There were a total of 1,291 producers credited across these songs. Of these, 97.4% of producers were men and 2.6% were women. In other words, this is a ratio of 38 men to every 1 woman producer.

**Table 16**  
**Number and Percentage of Women Producers by Year**

Year	2012	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
% of Women Producers	2.4%	1.8%	1.8%	2.3%	5%	2%	2.6%
# of Women Producers	5	4	4	5	11	4	33

Over time, there was little variation in the percentage of women working as producers. In 2020, 2% of all producers were women, this is a slight decline from 2019 (the 6-year high), and almost equivalent with the percentage in 2012. As with last year’s report, we further explored whether the women producers who appeared on the charts did so as a function of the Recording Academy’s Women in the Mix pledge. To do so, we examined when the credit was earned, the other personnel working on the song, and previous work history.

Two of the women producers (Jessica Agombar, Jenna Andrews) worked on a song that was made after the pledge, but did not involve any pledge takers in its creation. The remaining two women producers (Chelsea Lee, Mariah Carey) were credited for songs that were made prior to the pledge release, though

the songs charted in 2020. **Thus, none of the women producers who were on the 2020 Hot 100 Year End Chart appeared there as a result of the Women in the Mix pledge.**

Another way to assess the impact of the pledge is to examine whether pledge takers appearing on the Hot 100 Year End Chart in 2020 worked with a woman producer. Given that it has now been at least one full year since the pledge was released, we evaluated every artist, songwriter, or producer who was listed as a Women in the Mix pledge taker. There were 38 pledge takers who worked on a song that charted on the 2020 Billboard Hot 100 chart. None of these pledge takers worked with a woman producer on the song that appeared on the charts. Only one (Ariana Grande) worked with a woman engineer—herself—on a song that made it onto the year-end chart in 2020. While pledge-takers may have worked with women on other, less popular songs, the pledge did not affect the top charts in 2020.

The number and percentage of women of color working as producers was also evaluated. Of the 33 women credited as a producer across the 6 years studied, 9 were women of color. Only 1 woman of color was credited as a producer in 2020. This credit went to Mariah Carey, whose song *All I Want for Christmas is You* appeared on the Billboard Hot 100 Year End Chart in 2020, though it was first released in 1994. Thus, no woman of color was credited as a producer on a song released in 2020 that made the Hot 100 Year End Chart in the same year.

We further examined how many individual women of color were credited across the sample. After removing duplicate songs ( $n=34$ ), there were 28 songs with a woman producer in the sample. In other words, 5% of all songs in the 6-year sample credited a woman producer. There were 23 individual women who worked as producers across these songs, and 7 were women of color. Two women (*Ariana Grande*, *Taylor Swift*) received producing credits on 3 songs, and 4 women received producing credits on 2 songs. **The total ratio of men producers to underrepresented women producers is 180 to 1.**

The results for women producers reveal that there is still considerable room for improvement when it comes to including women in this key behind-the-scenes role. Not only was there no progress overall for women producers, the number of women credited in this position declined from 2019 to 2020. Women of color were substantially less likely than white women to work as producers. In fact, the only woman of color credited as a producer in 2020 appeared on the charts as a result of a seasonal hit first released in 1994. The music industry must find ways to include more women producers in its current output.

### **Grammy® Awards: 2013 to 2021**

Annually, this report examines whether industry accolades vary by gender through an exploration of major Grammy® Awards nominations. Over the past nine years, we evaluated the nominee profile of the most prominent Grammy® Award categories: Record of the Year, Album of the Year, Song of the Year, Best New Artist, and Producer of the Year.<sup>10</sup> Each nominee was assessed, including individual members of nominated groups. In this section, we review the results of this analysis by year, category, and nomination frequency.

In total, 1,359 individuals were nominated for a Grammy® Award between 2013 and 2021. Table 17 reveals that 13.4% ( $n=182$ ) of nominees were women and 86.6% ( $n=1,177$ ) were men. This is a ratio of 6.5 men nominated for every 1 woman nominee. From 2020 to 2021, the percentage of women Grammy® nominees increased significantly and reached a 9-year high as 28.1% of nominees were women. There were nearly 4 times as many women nominated for a Grammy® Award in these major categories in 2021 as there were in 2013.

**Table 17**  
**Grammy® Nominations by Gender and Year**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Grand Total
<b>Men</b>	92.1% (n=105)	91.8% (n=156)	85.9% (n=134)	88.5% (n=138)	93.6% (n=190)	92% (n=92)	83.6% (n=138)	79.5% (n=124)	71.9% (n=100)	86.6% (n=1177)
<b>Women</b>	7.9% (n=9)	8.2% (n=14)	14.1% (n=22)	11.5% (n=18)	6.4% (n=13)	8% (n=8)	16.4% (n=27)	20.5% (n=32)	28.1% (n=39)	13.4% (n=182)

The breakdown of nominee gender per category is shown in Table 18. Women were most likely to be nominated for the Best New Artist award, followed by Song of the Year. Across 9 years, roughly 10% or less of the nominees for Record of the Year or Album of the Year have been women. Moreover, only 1 woman has been nominated for Producer of the Year across the entire sample.

**Table 18**  
**Grammy® Nomination by Gender and Category**

	Record of the Year	Album of the Year	Song of the Year	Best New Artist	Producer of the Year	Total
<b>Men</b>	90.2% (n=342)	91.5% (n=611)	72.2% (n=135)	54.55% (n=42)	97.9% (n=47)	86.6% (n=1,177)
<b>Women</b>	9.8% (n=37)	8.5% (n=57)	27.8% (n=52)	45.45% (n=35)	2.1% (n=1)	13.4% (n=182)

The percentage of women nominated in each category per year for the last 9 years are presented in Table 19. Year to year variations are common, but three trends are important to note. First, 2021 represents a high point in the percentage of women nominated for Record of the Year and Best New Artist. Women nominees in 2021 also slightly surpassed those in 2020 nominated for Album of the Year and Song of the Year, which were previously the high watermark for women. Finally, in 8 of 9 years examined, there were no women nominated for Producer of the Year.

**Table 19**  
**Women Grammy® Nominations by Category Over Time**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Record of the year</b>	11.8%	2.8%	18.8%	6.7%	7.5%	0	9.1%	8.5%	23.7%
<b>Album of the Year</b>	2%	6.5%	8.2%	8.1%	4.4%	6.1%	13.3%	17.3%	18.6%
<b>Song of the Year</b>	15.4%	31.2%	27.3%	33.3%	14.3%	12%	18.9%	44.4%	44.8%
<b>Best New Artist</b>	16.7%	16.7%	50%	60%	33.3%	60%	58.3%	46.2%	75%
<b>Producer of the Year</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	20%	0	0

*Note:* Cells contain the percentage of women nominated per category to obtain the percentage of men nominated, subtract the cell percentage from 100%.

How do women of color fare at the Grammys®? Of the 182 women nominated in the past 9 years, 61.5% ( $n=112$ ) were white and 38.5% ( $n=70$ ) were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. In all but one category assessed, women of color were less likely than their white counterparts to be nominated for a Grammy® Award. The largest disparity occurred in the Song of the Year category, where 73.1% of nominees were white and 26.9% were underrepresented.

**Table 20**  
**Women Grammy® Nominations by Underrepresented Status and Category**

	Record of the Year	Album of the Year	Song of the Year	Best New Artist	Producer of the Year	Grand Total
<b>UR</b>	43.2% ( $n=16$ )	42.11% ( $n=24$ )	26.9% ( $n=14$ )	42.9% ( $n=15$ )	100% ( $n=1$ )	38.5% ( $n=70$ )
<b>White</b>	56.8% ( $n=21$ )	57.9% ( $n=33$ )	73.1% ( $n=38$ )	57.1% ( $n=20$ )	0	61.5% ( $n=112$ )

The final analyses in this section explored how frequently men and women were nominated for Grammys® over the past 9 years. We included each nominee only once, reducing the overall sample size to 739, and 86.2% of those individuals were men, while 13.8% were women. This is a ratio of 6.2 men to every 1 woman nominated. Table 21 shows that the distribution of nominations by gender varied slightly. Men (67.2%) were more likely than women (61.8%) to be nominated only once for a Grammy® in the last 9 years. Women, on the other hand, were more likely (38.2%) to be nominated two or more times for a Grammy® award than men (32.8%). At each level of nominations (e.g., 2, 3, 4, etc.) the differences were not significant, however. Men had a larger range of nominations. The top man (Tom Coyne) had 17 nominations across the last 9 years, while the top woman (Taylor Swift) had 10 nominations.



**Table 21**  
**Number of Grammy® Nominations by Gender**

No. of Nominations	Men	Women
1	67.2% (n=428)	61.8% (n=63)
2	16.8% (n=107)	21.6% (n=22)
3	6.3% (n=40)	7.8% (n=8)
4	3.3% (n=21)	3.9% (n=4)
≥5	6.4% (n=41)	4.9% (n=5)
<b>Total</b>	637	102

Another set of analyses examined how frequency of nominations differed by race/ethnicity for women. We were specifically interested in whether white women and women of color received a comparable percentage of nominations. Of the 102 individual women nominated for a Grammy® Award over the last 9 years, 57.8% (n=59) were white and 42.2% (n=43) were underrepresented.

Table 22 shows that underrepresented women (69.8%) were more likely than white women (55.9%) to be nominated only once for a Grammy® over the last 9 years. In contrast, white women (25.4%) were more likely to receive 2 nominations than women of color (16.3%). There were no differences at the other levels of nominations (e.g., 3, 4, 5+). The top white woman nominated (Taylor Swift) had 10 nominations, while the top woman of color (Beyonce Knowles) had 7 nominations across the last 9 years.

**Table 22**  
**Frequency of Nominations for Women by Race/Ethnicity**

No. of Nominations	UR Women	White Women
1	69.8% (n=30)	55.9% (n=33)
2	16.3% (n=7)	25.4% (n=15)
3	7% (n=3)	8.5% (n=5)
4	2.3% (n=1)	5.1% (n=3)
≥5	4.7% (n=2)	5.1% (n=3)

The Grammy® analyses reveals that women have made important strides toward receiving a larger share of music's top honors. There was a significant increase in the percentage of women nominated in 2021 for a Grammy® Award in major categories. Moreover, 2021 was a high point for women in nearly every category considered. There is still room for improvement in the percentage of women of color nominated for top awards, however. As the percentage of underrepresented women working as songwriters continues to increase, the lack of nominations in the Song of the Year category raises important questions about how the work of women of color is valued in the larger music ecosystem. While there is still work to do to improve the number and percentage of women—particularly women of color—receiving major Grammy® nominations, the results here reveal that the steps taken by the Recording Academy have helped to close the gap for women.

### Conclusion

This report reflects the fourth iteration of our annual study on inclusion in music. The purpose of the investigation is to provide an updated understanding of how the music industry fares with regard to gender and race/ethnicity across artists, songwriters, and producers of popular music. Additionally, we continue to examine major Grammy® nominations for inclusion. Below, we summarize the major results of this year's investigation and present recommendations to accelerate inclusion in music.

#### *The Music Industry Continues to Marginalize Women*

The advocacy around women in music has continued, but women represented less than one-third of artists, clocked in at 12.6% of songwriters, and were fewer than 3% of all producers on the popular charts between 2012 and 2020. These percentages have changed little over time, and do not reflect the audience for popular music nor are they in line with the percentage of girls and women studying in music education programs.<sup>11</sup> The music industry must examine how its decision-making, practices, and beliefs perpetuate the underrepresentation of women artists, songwriters, and producers.

#### *Women of Color Are a Crucial Community to Support*

Women of color comprised half of all women artists on the charts in 2020, but were a much smaller contingent of songwriters, and nearly invisible as producers. As the music industry continues to grapple with racial equity, supporting women of color across the industry must be a priority. Moreover, as the chorus of voices championing women's work in music continues to grow, emphasizing the inclusion of women of color must be part of this effort.

#### *The Gender Gap Has Narrowed at the Grammy® Awards*

Major Grammy® nominations in 2020 reflect an increase in women nominees. This was true overall, and across nearly all of the categories evaluated. Given the emphasis on inclusion at the Grammy's® over the past several years, these increases clearly reflect two things. First, that the Recording Academy has made it a priority to address gaps in membership that contributed to skewed nominations. Second, that the steps the Recording Academy and its members have taken are clearly working to increase the participation of women as nominees. While there is more room for growth—particularly when it comes to women of color—the results demonstrate that sustained and serious efforts for change can have an impact.

## ***Recommendations for Change***

### *Every Song is a Starting Point*

As we noted in last year's report, each song on the popular charts represents an opportunity to include women. This might be as an artist, a songwriter, or a producer. More than half of the songs included in the study over the last 9 years did not include even one woman songwriter, and 95% did not credit a woman producer. If these positions were awarded to only one person on a song, then perhaps the lack of women would be more understandable. Yet, the process of creating a song is collaborative, and multiple songwriters and producers can be brought into the process and credited for their work. For artists starting work on new music, consider working with women in songwriting and producing roles. While it may seem easier to work with prior collaborators, the process of discovering new partners and opening up the potential for innovation is the path toward greater inclusion.

### *Contribute to Existing Efforts Supporting Women*

Organizations across the music ecosystem have been working to support women, particularly as songwriters and producers. **She Is The Music** works to increase the number of women working in all areas of the music industry. Through songwriting camps, mentorship, and a database of women creatives in music, She Is The Music supports women at all levels of music and their career aspirations. Spotify's **EQL Residency** program offers women engineers experience and training in high-profile environments. **Women's Audio Mission** trains young women with an interest in professional audio and provides placement in industry jobs. These groups—and others—are supporting women across music and their efforts require ongoing support and investment.

### ***Limitations***

Each year, we note a few limitations of the current report. First, because the study is based on the Hot 100 Year End charts, it is reflective of a specific type of music. Relying upon a different sample (genre-based, less popular songs) might produce different results. However, our work in other genres (Latin, Country) echoes the findings in this study. The report also provides insight into the music that garners the largest audience each year and key opportunities for women in the industry. A second limitation is related to race/ethnicity. Information on specific racial/ethnic groups is not provided in this report, and our focus on underrepresented individuals in songwriting and producing is focused on women. Future work should address these limitations by studying how specific racial/ethnic creators are represented in music.

In sum, this report offers an update to our previous work on the participation of women in music. 2020 was a unique year for the music industry, changing the way that audiences enjoyed and experienced music. Yet, while the industry faced new challenges, the ongoing lack of representation for women as artists, songwriters, and producers persisted. As the industry looks forward, it must conceive of a future in which the voices and talents of women are represented and included in powerful ways.

## Footnotes

1. The Hot 100 chart was collected from Billboard at <https://www.billboard.com/charts/year-end/hot-100-songs> Each year, a number of songs repeat or carry over. We leave these repeated songs in per year when running overall and yearly analyses. However, when analyzing the number of credits per individual artist, the duplicate songs are removed. This is done so we do not count the same credits more than once when examining the access and opportunities by gender and race/ethnicity. A total of 87 songs repeated across the 9-year same time frame.
2. Last year's report on Inclusion in the Recording Studio 2012-2019 report can be found here <http://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-inclusion-recording-studio-20200117.pdf>
3. Grammy® nominations were aggregated from their nominee list on their website <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/news/2021-grammys-complete-nominees-list> The 2021 nominees were analyzed with a combined list of Grammy® nominees beginning from 2013 to 2020.
4. Our approach to unitizing and variable coding can be found in our original report by S. Smith, M. Choueiti, K. Pieper, and others (2018). Artist information was taken directly from Billboard's website and gender was assigned by examining online information, industry databases, pronoun use, and online interviews. No information was missing for gender judgments of artists.
5. U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.). Quick Facts. Retrieved January 13, 2021 from: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045218> RIAA Facts & Research (n.d.). Music Consumer Profile—2019 Retrieved on January 13th, 2021 from <https://www.riaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MusicWatch-Consumer-Profile-2019.pdf>
6. The race/ethnicity of every solo artist as well as individual in a band or duo was assessed. Judgments were made for every artist in the sample. All's approach to measuring race/ethnicity can be found in our see our original report, *Inclusion in the Recording Studio*. Apparent race/ethnicity judgments were made for 2% (n=3) of artists in the sample from 2020.
7. U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.).
8. Songwriting credits were gathered from three online sources: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP, <https://www.ascap.com/repertory>), Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI, <http://repertoire.bmi.com/StartPage.aspx>) and/or Society of European Stage Authors and Composers (SESAC, <https://www.sesac.com/#!/repertory/search>). Gender and race/ethnicity data was collected from multiple online sources such as Variety Insight and Studio System. When information was not available on these databases, other sources were used to gather this information. In the absence of explicit information, senior research team members judged apparent race/ethnicity using photographs and other details. The gender of two individual songwriters could not be determined. No judgments for apparent race/ethnicity were needed for women songwriters.
9. Producing credits were taken from two sources, physical copies of the liner notes from the artists' CDs or from Genius (<https://genius.com/>). Guidelines were taken from Recording Academy, three types of producers were included in the analysis: producer, co producer, vocal producer. Artists who were credited for multiple producing credits on a song was only included once for a producing credit. This distinction is consistent with our previous analyses. No apparent race/ethnicity judgments were used for

individual female producers in the sample from 2020. As reported in our previous analyses, the gender of 1 producer could not be determined. One producing group was excluded from analyses as their membership could not be confirmed.

10. Grammy® Award nominees were collected from <https://www.grammy.com> and other online sources. All individuals nominated (including members of groups, bands, or duos) were included in the analysis, with one caveat. Only songwriters associated with Song of the Year nominations were included, and performing artists of those songs were not considered. Apparent race/ethnicity judgments were used for 5 (3 unique) of the 39 individual female nominees.

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