



# IS THE CONVERSATION CHANGING?









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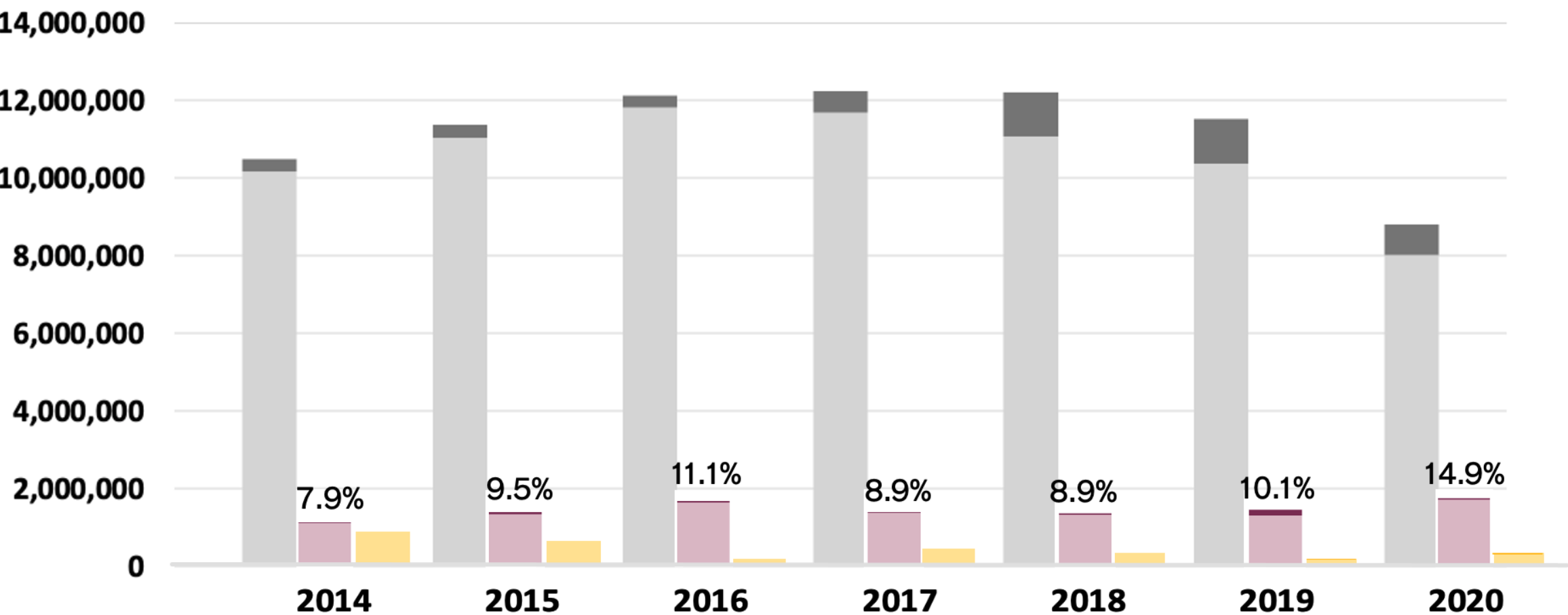
# WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- Increase in spins for songs by women.
- 6 songs by women have reached the #1 position on the Airplay charts.
- 8 songs by women within the Top 30 for a two-month period in March and April.
- However, in the first months of the pandemic, very few new songs by women were added to radio playlists and only a handful entered the Airplay charts.
- As a result of a deficit of songs in the bottom 20/30 position of the weekly charts, songs by women have slowly disappeared from the Top 30 positions by mid-June, dropping to 3 songs by July, to 2 songs by mid-August, to just 1 song at the start of September.
- BIPOC women still excluded: despite national attention, Mickey Guyton's 3 released singles have been ignored at radio.

# LEGEND

-  White male artists
-  BIPOC and multi-racial male artists
-  White female artists
-  BIPOC and multi-racial female artists
-  White male-female ensembles
-  BIPOC and multi-racial male-female ensembles
-  White gender non-binary artists
-  BIPOC gender non-binary artists

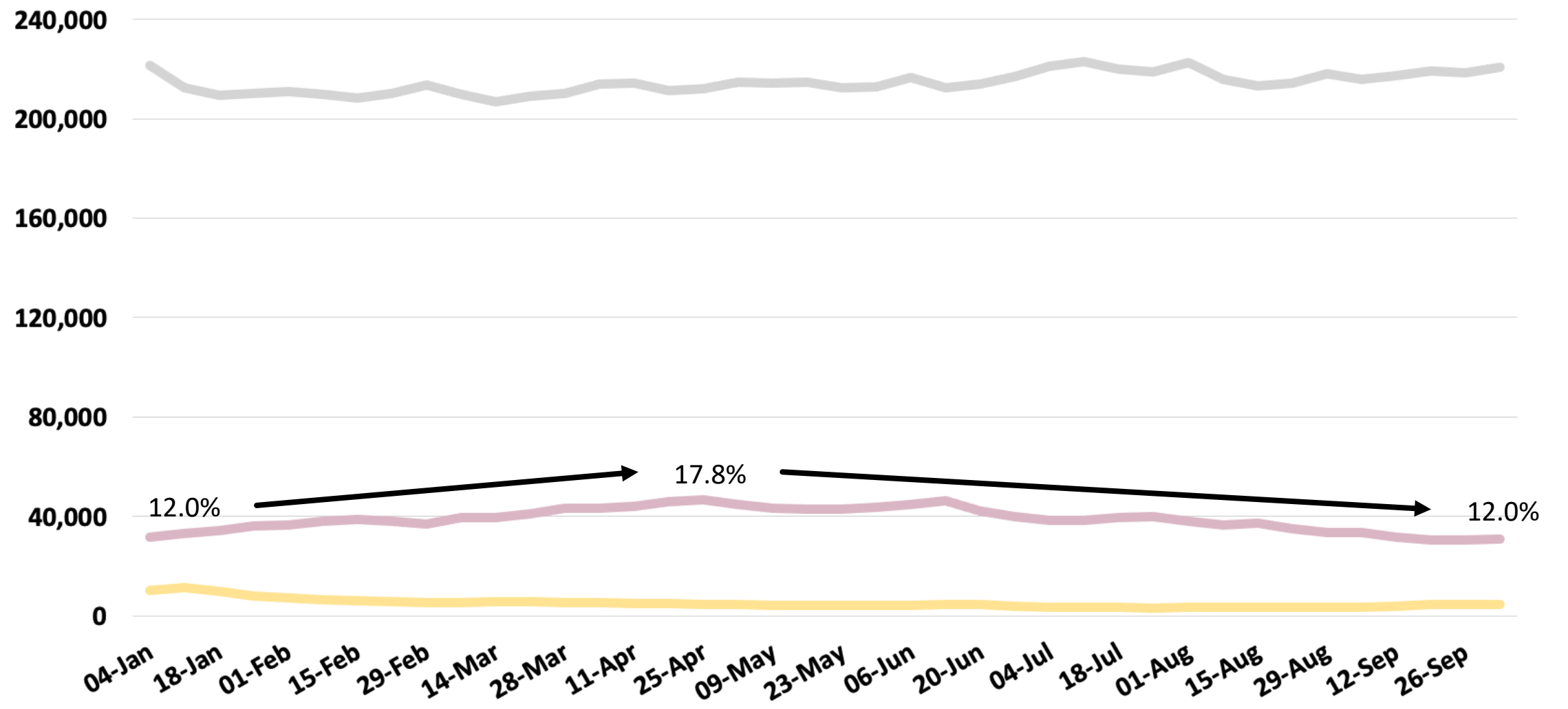
# Distribution of spins on country format radio from 2014-2020



*Note: Airplay for songs by gender non-binary artists, which occurs in 2020, is so limited that it doesn't register on this graphic.*

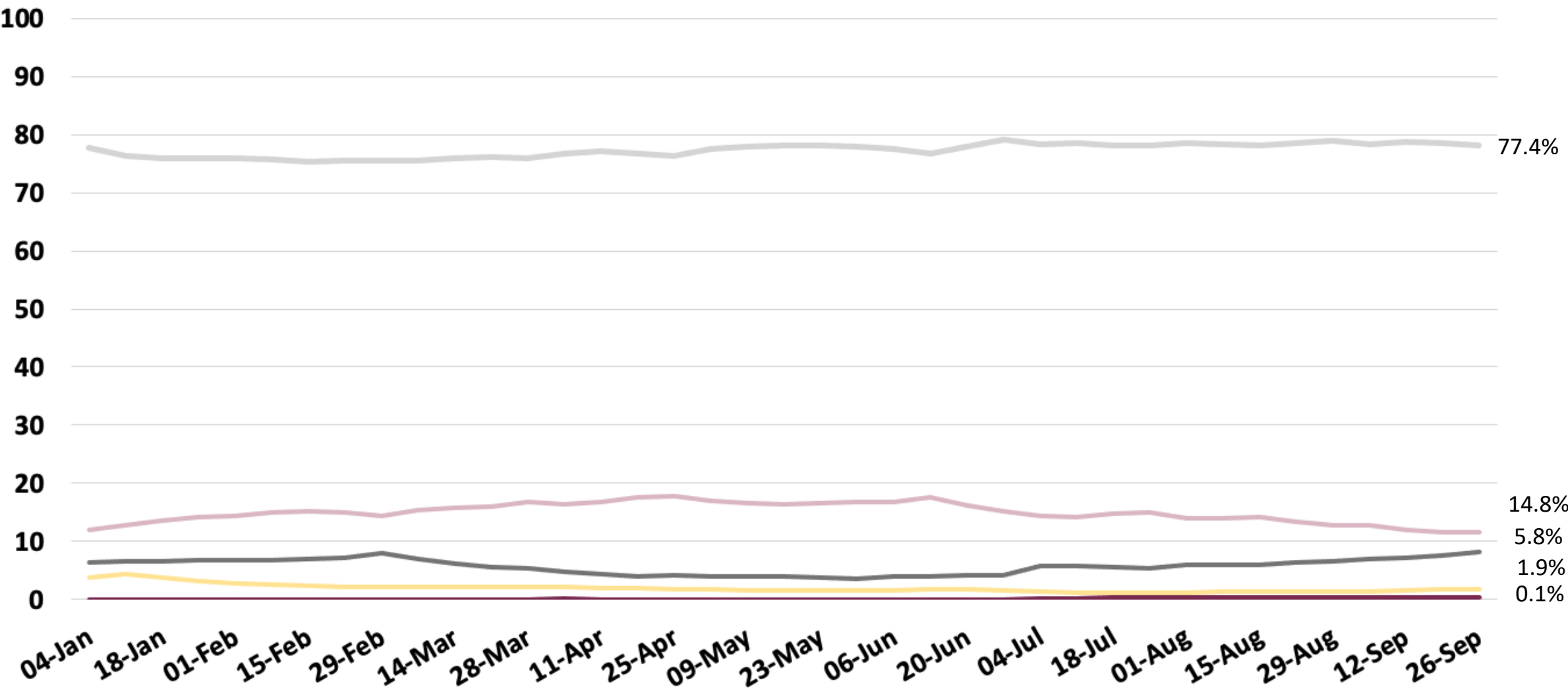


# Distribution of spins on weekly reports from 1 January to 26 September 2020



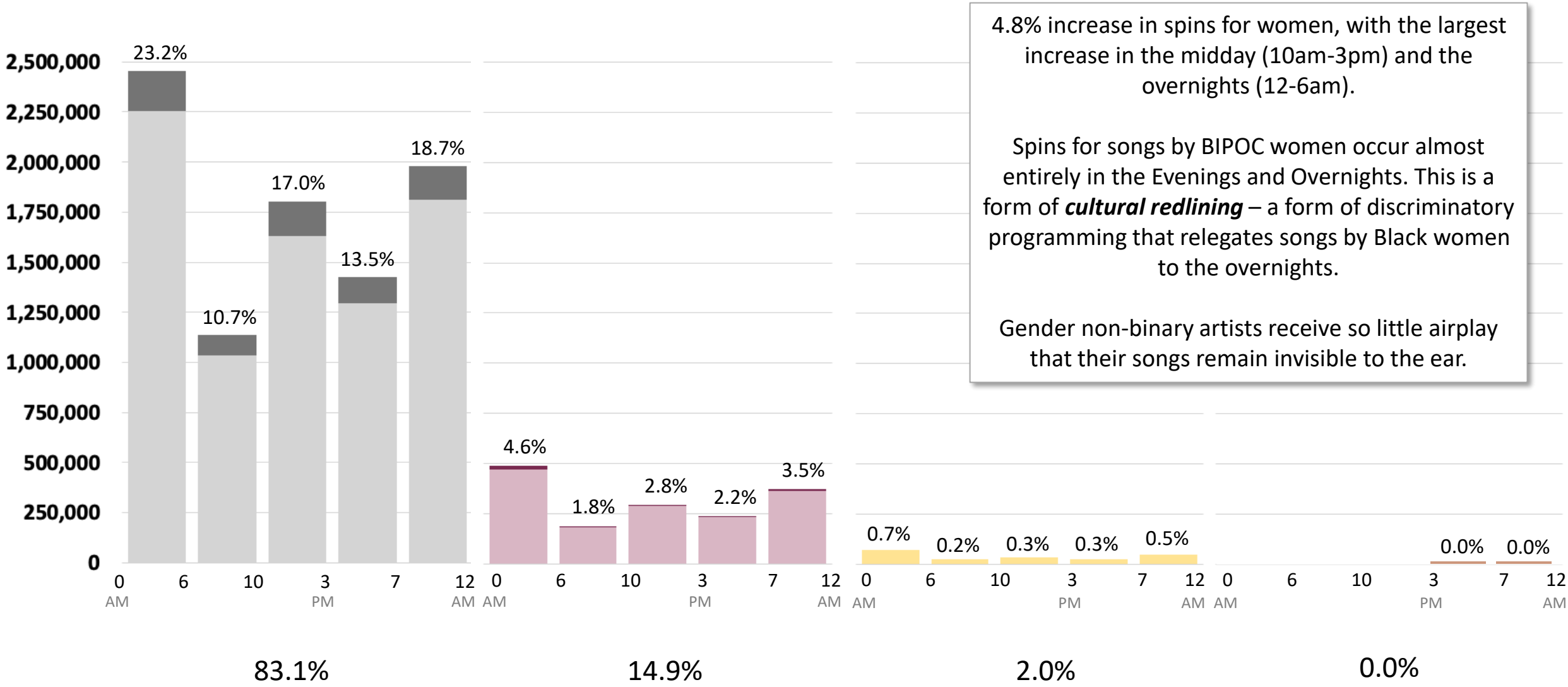
Note: Airplay for songs by gender non-binary artists in 2020, is so limited that it doesn't register on this graphic.

# Distribution of spins on weekly reports from 1 January to 26 September 2020



Note: Airplay for songs by gender non-binary artists in 2020, is so limited that it doesn't register on this graphic.

# Distribution of spins by time of day in 2020





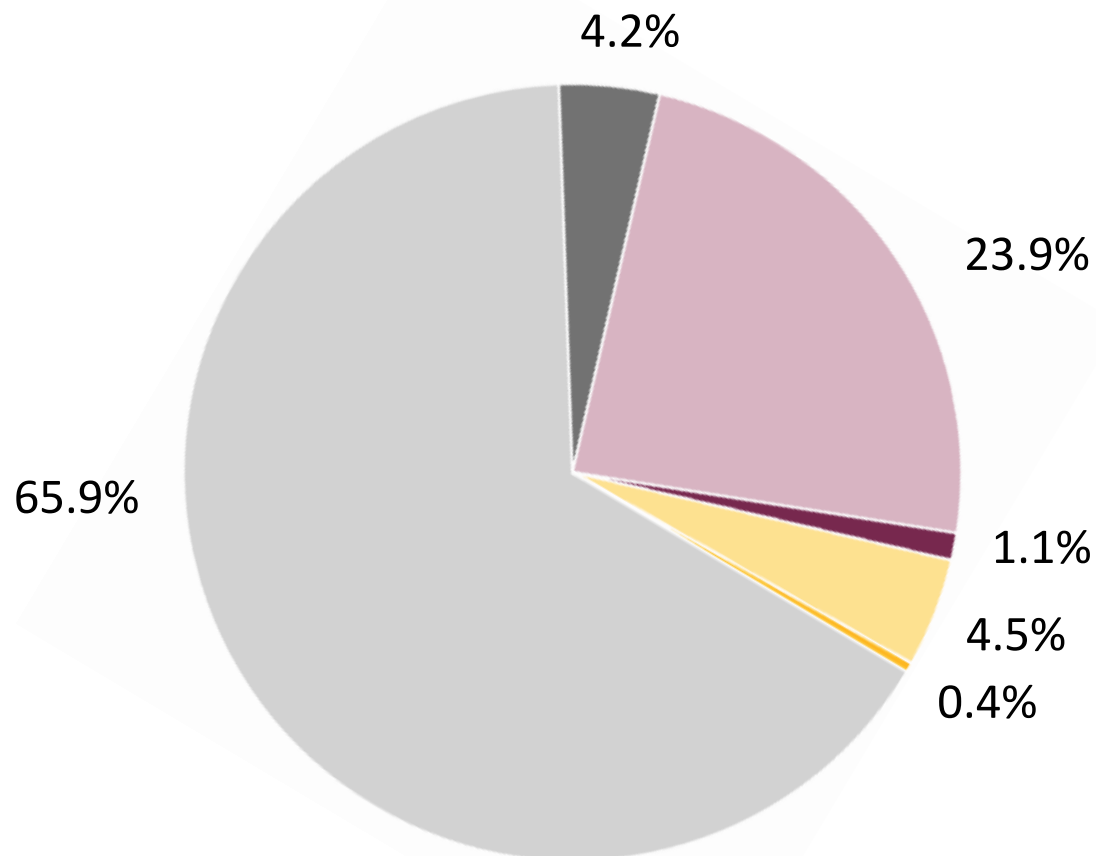
# **REPRESENTATION ON LABELS**





# Representation on labels:

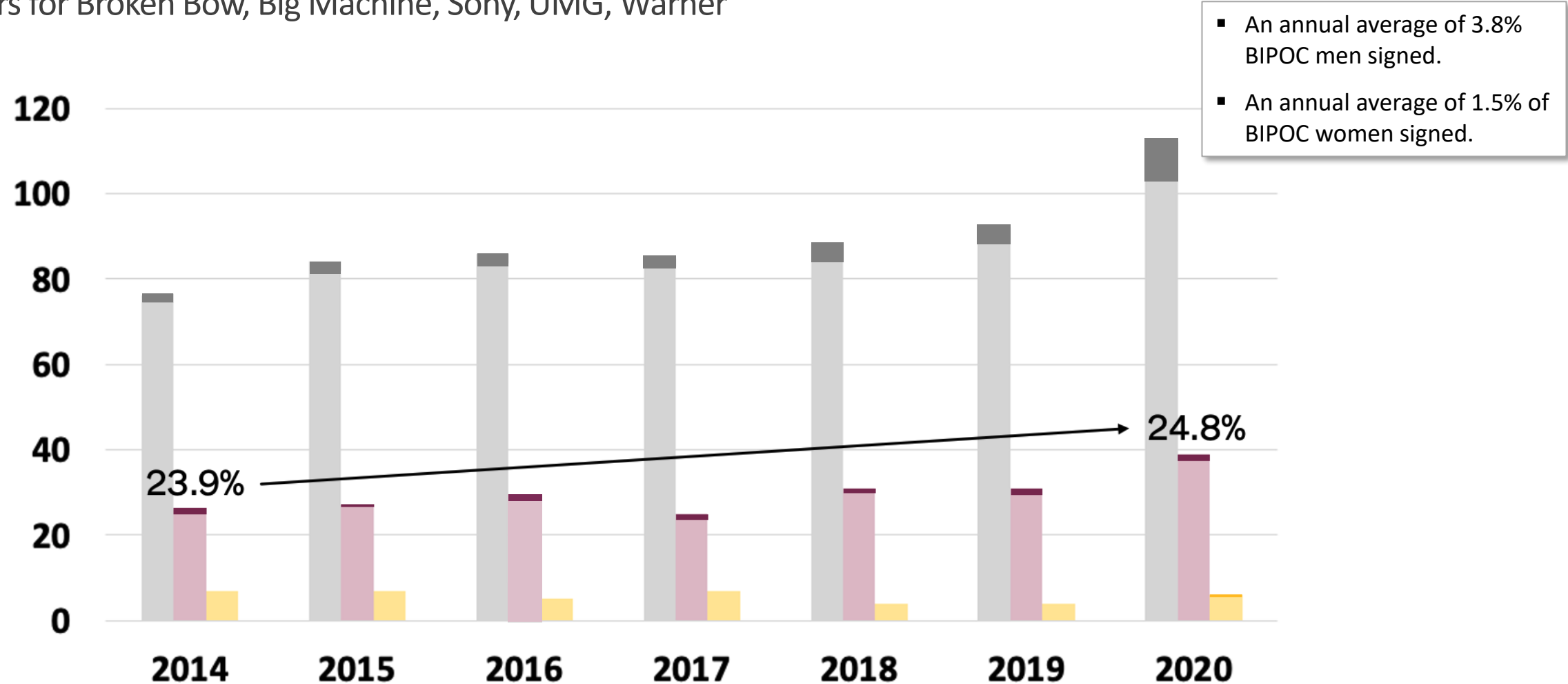
Rosters for Broken Bow, Big Machine, Sony, UMG, Warner



- 25.8% of the unique artists signed over this period were solo female artists or all-female ensembles.
- 15 of the 264 artists (5.7%) that have been signed to one of these 5 labels over the last 6 years are BIPOC.
- Just 2 of the 15 BIPOC artists have been solo women (0.7% of signed artists) – only 1 remains signed today on her label; 1 has been a multi-racial female ensemble.
- Neither of the BIPOC women have charted a single in the Top 30 of radio airplay charts.
- There are no gender non-binary artists signed to a Nashville label.

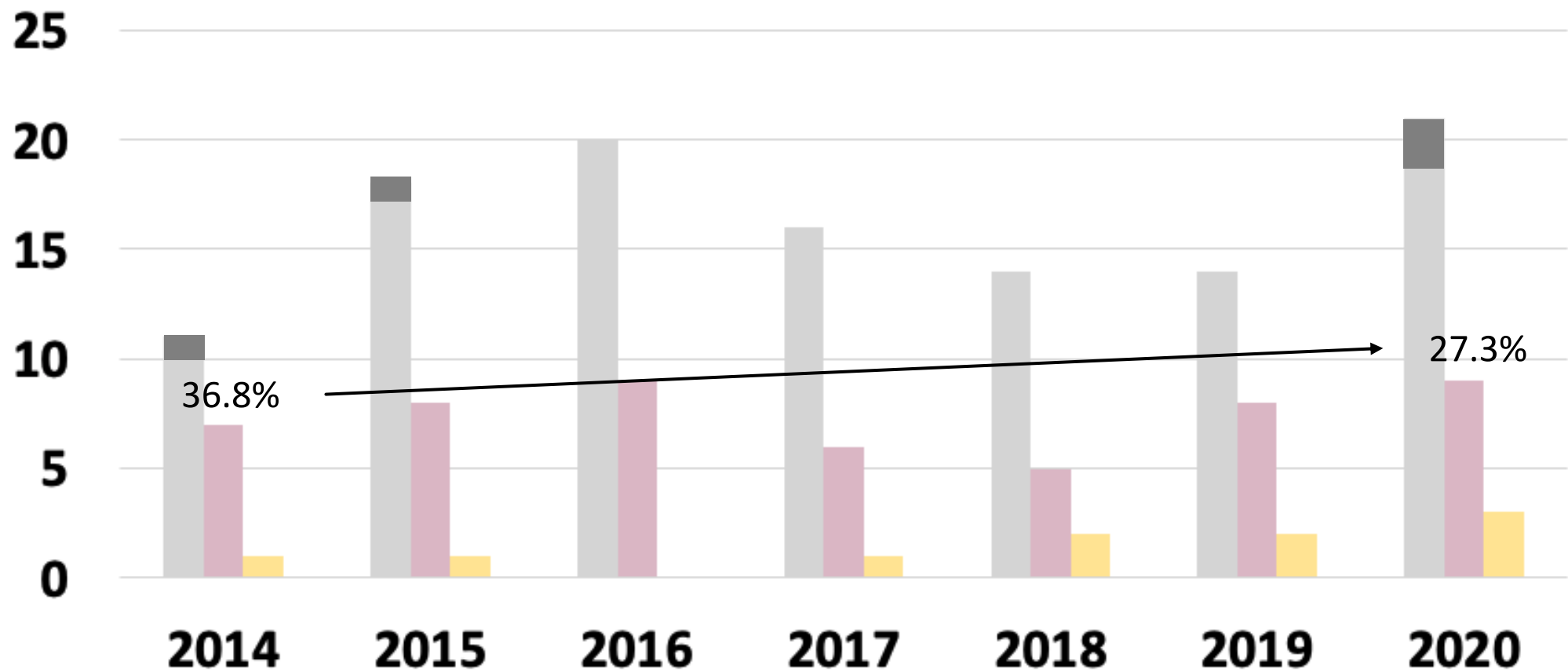
# Representation on labels:

Rosters for Broken Bow, Big Machine, Sony, UMG, Warner



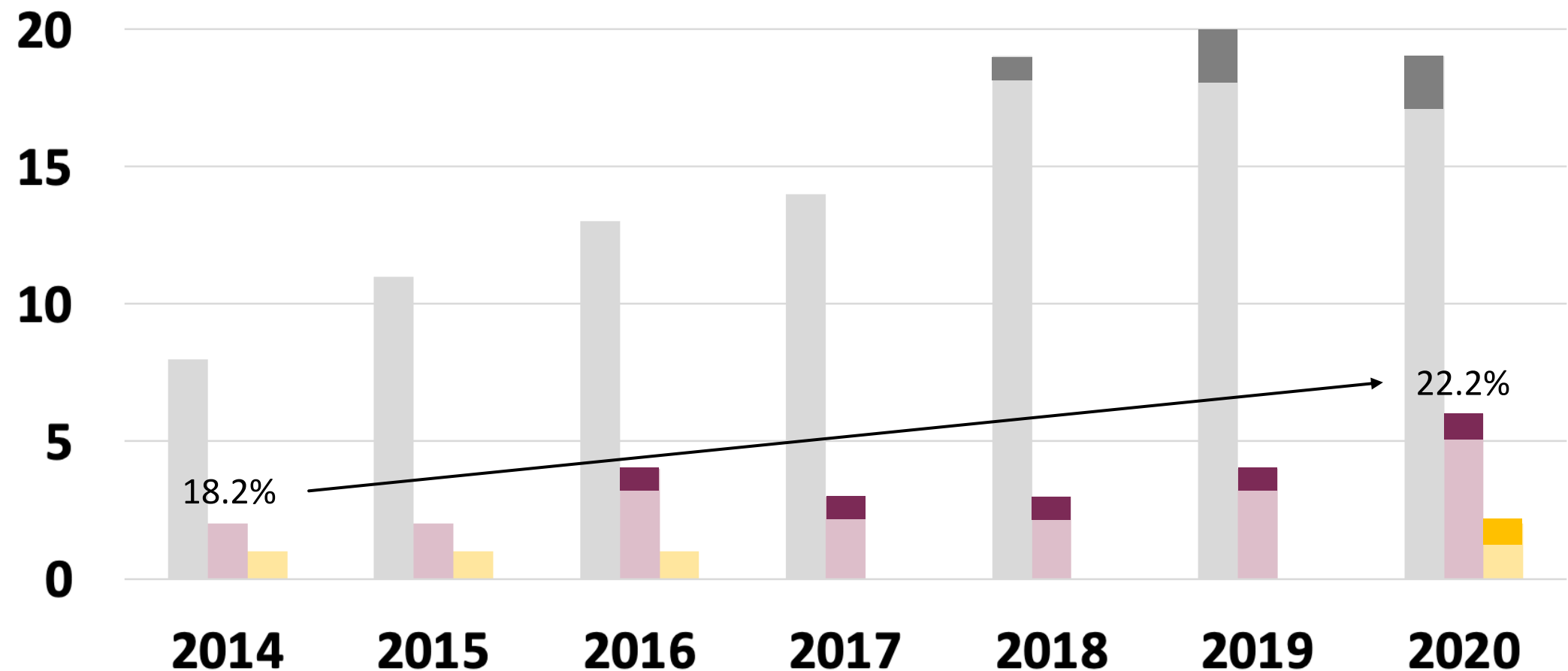
16.1% increase in the number of female artists from 26 women in 2014 to 39 women by 2020.

# Representation on Big Machine



22.2% increase in the number of female artists from 2014 to 2020.  
Just 2 BIPOC men and 1 multi-racial male ensemble amongst 62 artists that have been signed to BMLG – 4.8% overall.

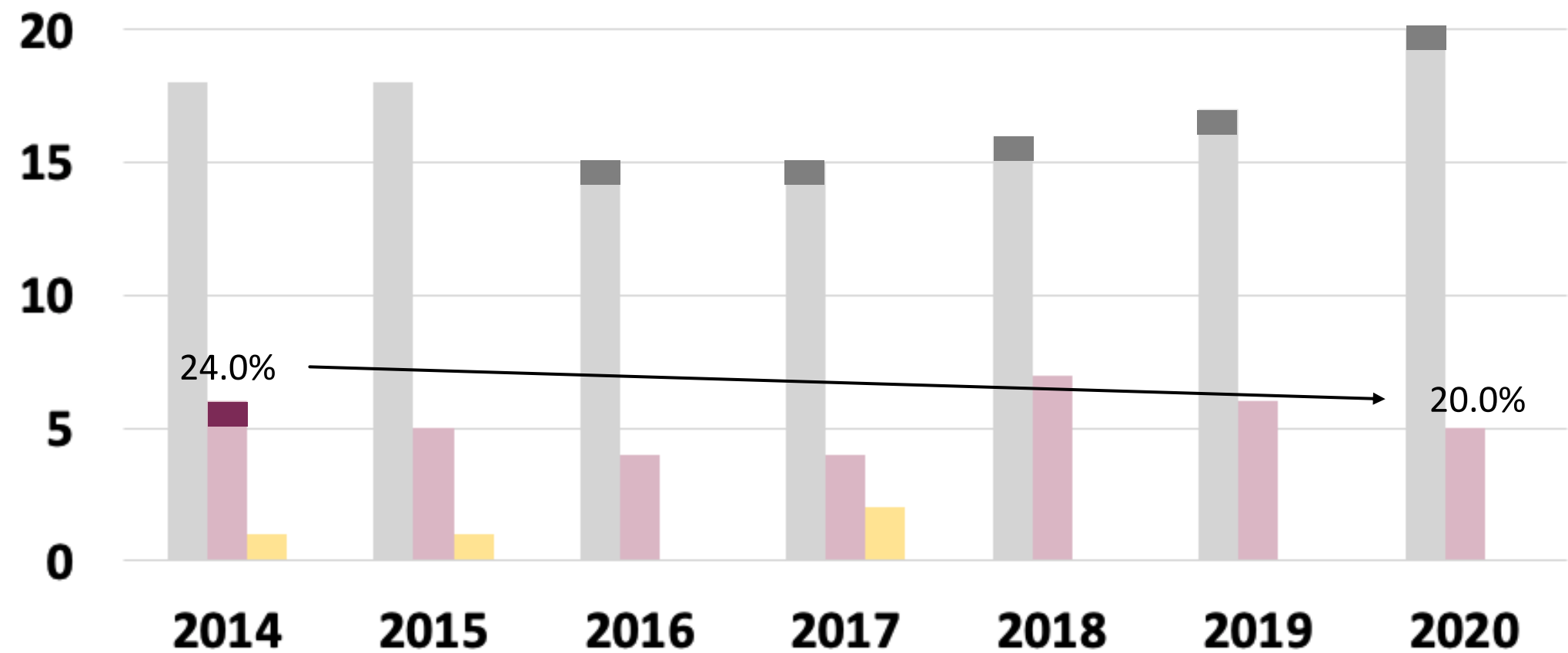
# Representation on Broken Bow



66.7% increase in the number of female artists from 2014 to 2020.

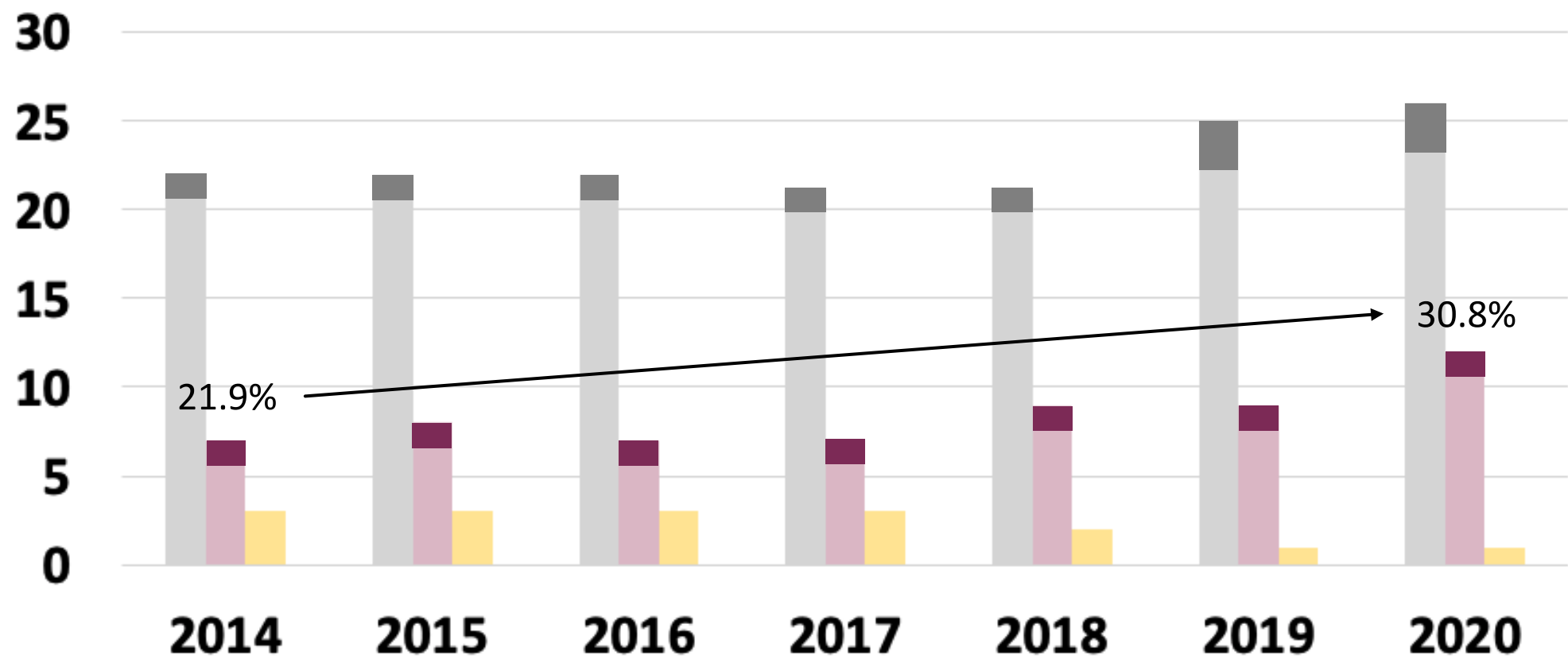
Just 2 BIPOC men currently signed to BBR, and 2 multi-racial ensembles amongst 44 artists that have been signed to BBR – 9% overall.

# Representation on Sony Music Nashville



*20.0% decline in the number of female artists from 2014 to 2020.  
Just 1 multi-racial male artist and 1 Latina amongst the 64 artists that have been signed to Sony – 3.2% overall.*

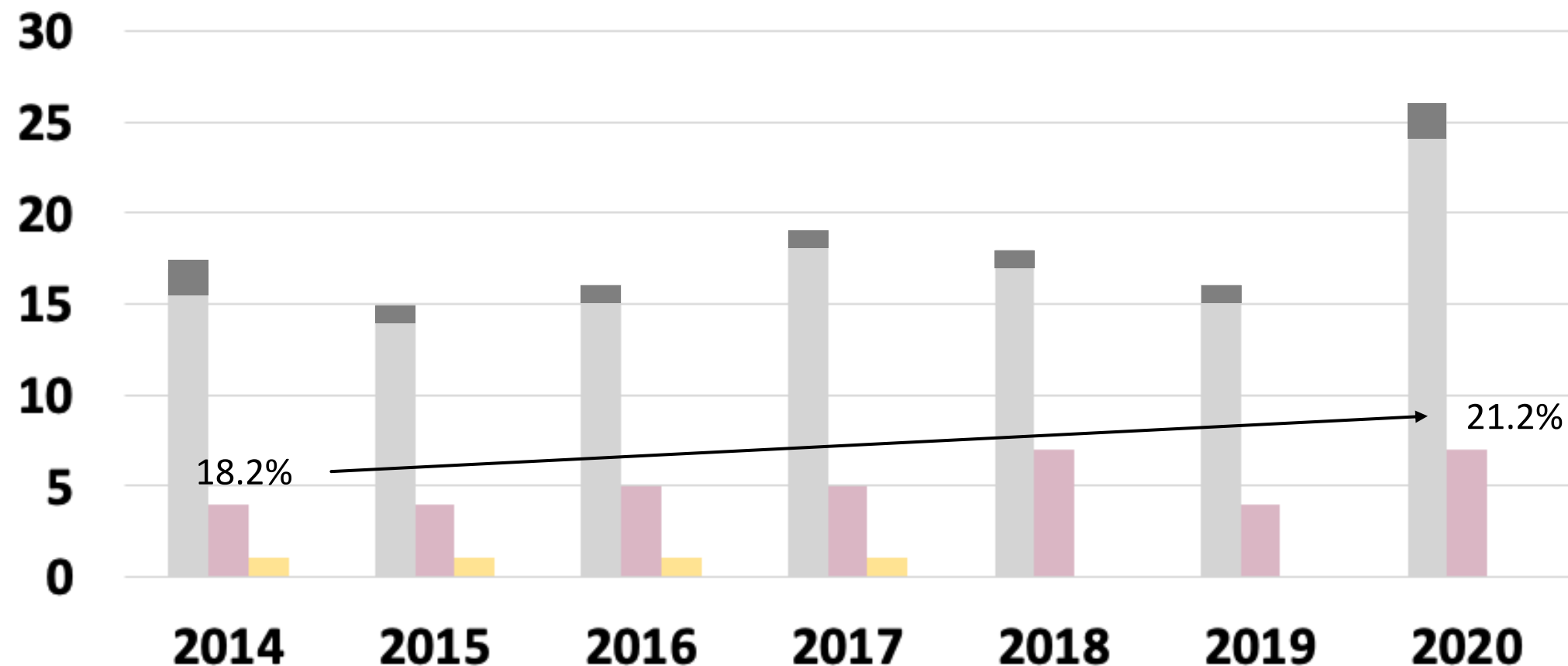
# Representation on UMG Nashville



*41.7% increase in the number of female artists from 2014 to 2020.  
Just 1 BIPOC man and woman amongst the 59 artists that have been signed to UMG – 3.4% overall.*

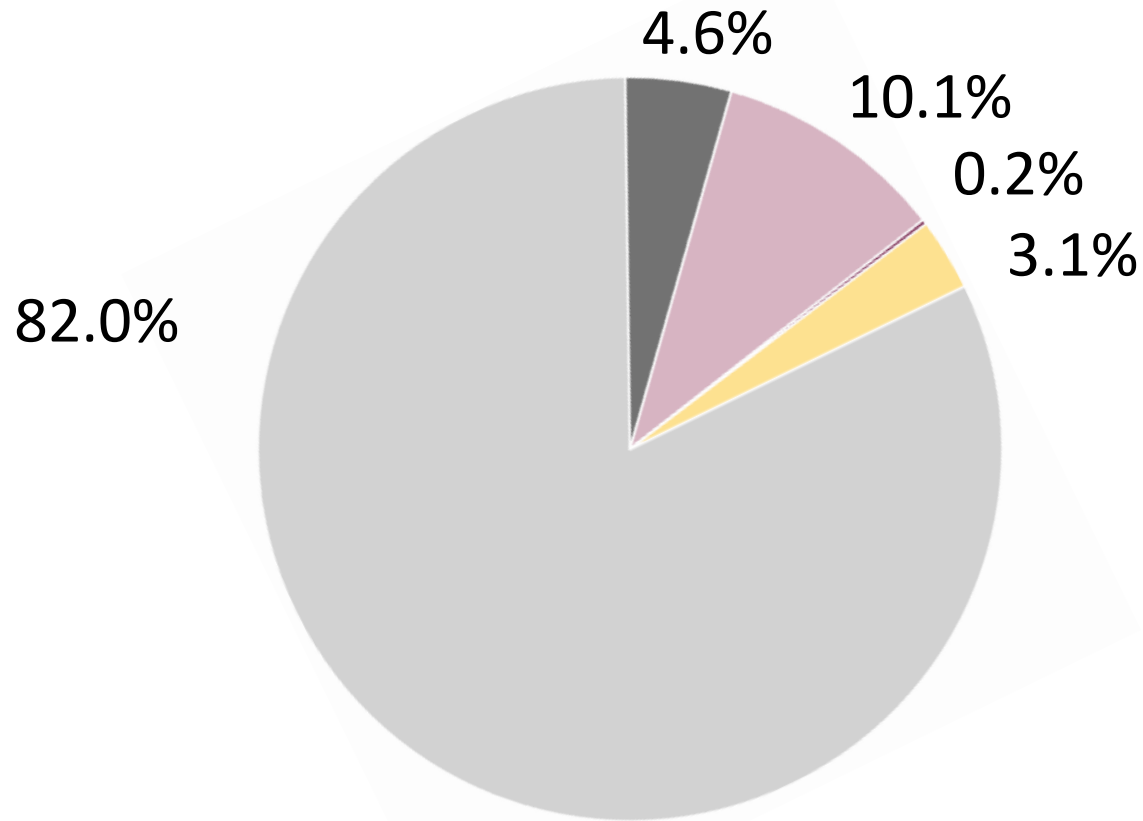


# Representation on Warner Music Nashville



*42.9% increase in the number of female artists from between 2014 and 2020.  
Just 2 BIPOC men and 1 multi-racial male ensemble amongst the 57 artists that have been signed to Warner – 5.3% overall.*

## 10.0% of the Top 20 singles were by white female artists



478 songs peaked in the Top 20 between 2014 and 2020, only 48 of them were by white women (10.1%) – 40 of which (8%) were by a white female artist signed to one of these 5 labels.

22 of the songs (4.6%) were by BIPOC men or multi-racial male ensembles.

One of the 48 songs by a multi-racial all-female ensemble (0.2%).

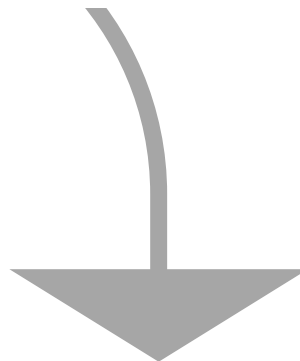


# **SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY?**



**CHARTS** have fewer  
songs by women.

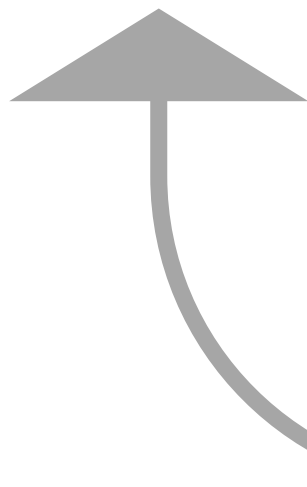
**DSP algorithms** include  
fewer songs by women.



**LABELS** sign fewer women, drop  
those not performing at radio.



**PUBLISHERS** stop  
signing female songwriters,  
encourage writing for men.



**RADIO** plays fewer  
songs by women.



Industry actions  
based on 100-  
year old practices  
and historic and  
biased data.

Consequences  
for artists'  
careers and the  
health of the  
ecosystem.

CHARTS have fewer  
songs by women.

DSP algorithms include  
fewer songs by women.

Perpetuation of systemic  
**REPRESENTATIONAL  
ISSUES.**

LABELS sign fewer women, drop  
those not performing at radio.

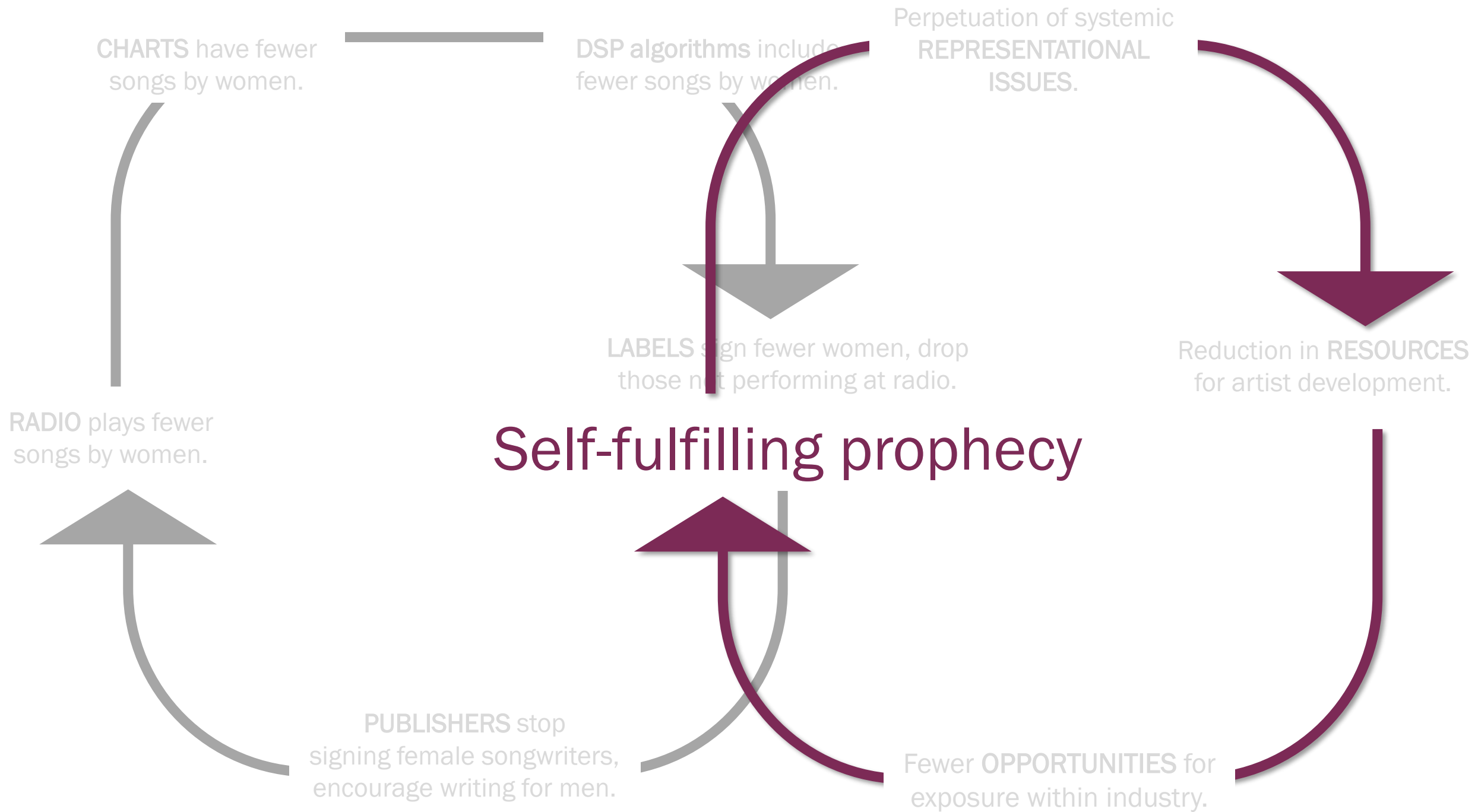
**INELIGIBILITY** for industry  
awards/recognition for women.

Reduction in **RESOURCES**  
for artist development.

PUBLISHERS stop  
signing female songwriters,  
encourage writing for men.

Fewer **OPPORTUNITIES** for  
exposure within industry.







This cyclic relationship doesn't account for Black, Indigenous, Women of color – whose music is redlined to the overnights and remains outside of the chart.

These barriers result in limited opportunity for exposure – unless it's self-made and outside of the industry's mainstream. As a result, their music, though critical to the sound and culture of the broader genre, is at risk of being erased from cultural memory.



“This is how inheritance is reproduced.” The white patriarchal industry has “inherited decisions that made these exclusions for [it], without [it], decisions that mark edges, marking out where [it does] not have to go.”

SARA AHMED, “WHITE MEN”, *FEMINISTKILLJOYS* (NOVEMBER 4, 2014),

### Critical Writing on Black Women in Country Music

Olivia Roos, "[Country Music's Reckoning: Black Women Forge Their Own Path in Whitewashed Industry](#)," *NBC News*, October 15, 2020.

Andrea Williams, "[Mickey Guyton Stands Strong on her New EP \*Bridges\*](#)," *Nashville Scene*, September 17, 2020.

Andrea Williams, "[Why Haven't We Had a Black Woman Country Star?](#)" *Nashville Scene*, August 5, 2020.

### Radio Airplay

"[Country Radio Has Ignored Female Artists for Years. And we have the data to prove it.](#)" *NBC News Think*, 17 February 2020.

"[Six Months of EqualPlay: An Update.](#)" *SongData Reports*; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 26 July 2020.

"[Inequality on Country Radio: 2019 in Review.](#)" *SongData Reports*; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 17 February. Prepared in partnership with [CMT's Equal Play Campaign](#). [Associated Brief](#) available.

"[Gender Representation on Country Format Radio: A Study of Spins Across Dayparts.](#)" *SongData Reports*; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 6 December. Prepared in consultation with [WOMAN Nashville](#). [Report Brief](#) available.

"[Gender Representation on Country Format Radio: A Study of Published Reports from 2000-2018.](#)" *SongData Reports*; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 26 April. Prepared in consultation with [WOMAN Nashville](#). [Report Brief](#) available.

### Streaming

"[Reflecting on Spotify's Recommender System.](#)" *Keeper of the Flame* (blog), October 2019.

### Industry Recognition

"[Inclusion and Diversity in the ACM Award History: A Study of Nominees and Winners, 2000-2019.](#)" *SongData Reports*; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, May 2020.

"[Gender Representation of CMA Awards: A Study of Nominees and Winners, 2000-2019.](#)" *SongData Reports*; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, November 2020.

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