# Primavera Sound 2025 pioneers all-female headline as global festivals lag on gender balance



This weekend, all eyes turned to Barcelona as Primavera Sound Festival 2025 made history with its trailblazing all-female headline. Charli XCX, Sabrina Carpenter, and Chappell Roan dominated the main stage at this landmark event, which was streamed globally by Amazon Music. Marking a significant advancement in festival programming, Primavera Sound stands as the only major festival to feature a fully woman-led line-up this year. Yet, it raises a pressing question: why does achieving gender balance remain an enduring challenge for many festivals, and will this pioneering moment inspire wider change internationally?

Despite female artists leading the music industry’s most iconic moments—think Beyoncé's Cowboy Carter Tour or Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour—the representation of women in festivals continues to lag behind. In 2023, Sky News reported that only 18% of headline acts at the UK's top music festivals were female. Over a hundred festivals that year had a mere 20% of headliners fronted by women, while male-fronted performances dominated at 78%. Notably, Glastonbury's lineup for the same year was exclusively male, prompting backlash regarding its gender diversity. Emily Eavis, co-organiser of Glastonbury, noted in an interview with the Guardian that addressing this disparity requires collective industry commitment. "We’re trying our best so the pipeline needs to be developed," she stated, emphasising the need for involvement from record companies and radio.

While female representation at festivals remains inadequate, a recent report by Akas highlighted that, between 2017 and 2024, only 19% of artists nominated and awarded at the Grammys were women. Amid ongoing conversations, Charli XCX boldly addressed the lack of female inclusivity among nominees at the 2023 Brit Awards, questioning the rationale behind women being excluded from major categories despite their achievements. Her momentum continued as she secured five awards at the 2025 Brits, including artist, song, and album of the year for "Brat."

However, Primavera Sound 2025 marked a significant departure from the prevailing trend. The festival’s all-female headline, alongside a robust commitment to gender balance, attracted a sold-out audience and a significant global viewership. The festival featured a line-up comprising 42.36% female artists, comprising acts such as FKA Twigs, Beabadoobee, and Haim, alongside mixed-gender groups like Wolf Alice and Wet Leg. Mish Mayer, Head of Production at Amazon Music, mentioned that witnessing the three prominent headliners perform together was profoundly meaningful. "It sends a message to other promoters that women drive this business," she stated, highlighting the festival's role in showcasing female talent as a commercial success.

Despite the forward movement reflected in Primavera Sound’s programming, the festival landscape remains uneven. Coachella featured Lady Gaga as its sole female headliner among four acts, while Glastonbury’s line-up included only Olivia Rodrigo among its prestigious performers. Moreover, festivals such as Download, Isle of Wight, and Wireless have failed to include any female artists in their main headliner spots this year.

Looking ahead, the road to gender balance continues to present challenges. Nonetheless, the festival’s Press Head, Marta Pallarès Olivares, confirmed that Primavera Sound has prioritised this since its first gender-balanced line-up in 2019. “Every year we try to do something new,” she vowed, underscoring a strong commitment to continue driving inclusivity and equality in future iterations.

Primavera Sound celebrated its 23rd edition, welcoming approximately 290,000 attendees from 136 countries, with tickets selling out more than five months in advance. As anticipation builds for Primavera Sound 2026, scheduled for June 4-6, 2026, in Parc del Fòrum, the hope persists that this inclusive vision will inspire other festivals globally to follow suit and elevate the standards for gender representation in the music industry.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.elle.com/uk/life-and-culture/a65044058/primavera-sound-review-2025/), [[4]](https://www.reeditionmagazine.com/to-the-minute/primavera-sound-barcelona-announce-2025-lineup)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.elle.com/uk/life-and-culture/a65044058/primavera-sound-review-2025/), [[2]](https://www.iq-mag.net/2024/10/primavera-sound-barcelona-reveals-2025-lineup/), [[5]](https://www.grimygoods.com/2024/10/24/primavera-sound-barcelona-2025-linuep-shines-with-all-women-headliners-charli-xcx-chappell-roan-sabrina-carpenter/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.iq-mag.net/2025/01/whats-going-on-with-gender-balanced-festival-lineups/), [[6]](https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/music/2023/08/29/electric-picnic-2023-gender-balance-difficult-due-to-fewer-women-headliners-says-festival-director/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.elle.com/uk/life-and-culture/a65044058/primavera-sound-review-2025/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.iq-mag.net/2024/10/primavera-sound-barcelona-reveals-2025-lineup/> - Primavera Sound Barcelona has announced its 2025 lineup, featuring Charli XCX, Chappell Roan, and Sabrina Carpenter as headliners. The festival continues its commitment to gender balance, a hallmark since 2019, with a lineup that includes FKA twigs, HAIM, and Clairo. The event is scheduled for June 5-7, 2025, at Parc del Fòrum in Barcelona. Tickets are available through the Primavera Sound website, with general and VIP options offered until they sell out.
3. <https://www.iq-mag.net/2025/01/whats-going-on-with-gender-balanced-festival-lineups/> - IQ Magazine explores the trend of gender-balanced festival lineups, focusing on Primavera Sound and Roskilde Festival. Both festivals have achieved gender balance, with Primavera Sound leading the way since 2019. The article discusses the challenges and strategies involved in booking a gender-balanced lineup and the positive impact on audience demographics and inclusivity.
4. <https://www.reeditionmagazine.com/to-the-minute/primavera-sound-barcelona-announce-2025-lineup> - Reedition Magazine highlights Primavera Sound Barcelona's 2025 lineup, emphasizing the significance of having three female artists—Charli XCX, Chappell Roan, and Sabrina Carpenter—as headliners. The festival's commitment to gender balance, initiated in 2019, continues with a diverse lineup that includes FKA twigs, HAIM, and Clairo. The event is set for June 5-7, 2025, at Parc del Fòrum in Barcelona.
5. <https://www.grimygoods.com/2024/10/24/primavera-sound-barcelona-2025-linuep-shines-with-all-women-headliners-charli-xcx-chappell-roan-sabrina-carpenter/> - Grimy Goods reports on Primavera Sound Barcelona's 2025 lineup, featuring Charli XCX, Chappell Roan, and Sabrina Carpenter as headliners. The festival continues its tradition of gender-balanced lineups, with additional performances by FKA twigs, HAIM, and Clairo. The event is scheduled for June 5-7, 2025, at Parc del Fòrum in Barcelona.
6. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/music/2023/08/29/electric-picnic-2023-gender-balance-difficult-due-to-fewer-women-headliners-says-festival-director/> - The Irish Times reports on Electric Picnic 2023, where festival director Melvin Benn discussed the challenges of achieving gender balance due to a scarcity of female headliners. The article highlights the broader issue of male-dominated festival lineups and the efforts to address this imbalance in the music industry.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0qw54vpk2wo> - BBC News discusses the prevalence of male-dominated music festivals, citing events like Longitude Festival in Dublin and Belsonic in Belfast, which have predominantly male lineups. The article highlights research indicating a significant gender imbalance in festival lineups and the need for greater inclusivity in the music industry.