



*"When a culture's music is lifeless,
that culture is bound for more trouble
than just having nothing decent to listen to."*



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March 16, 2018

New Organization "Rebelle Road" Looks to Expand Opportunities for Women in Country

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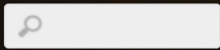


There's talk about what to do about the adversity women are facing in country music, and then there's action. A new organization called Rebelle Road is looking to expand support and touring opportunities for women in country music by banding together knowledge and resources, and putting together events and other opportunities with women as the main attraction.

Founded by industry executive Karen Rappaport McHugh, who has helped to organize elements of the Stagecoach Festival and other events, along with artists KP Hawthorn and Adrienne Isom,



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Rebelle Road organized a gathering as part of 2018's South By Southwest festivities in Austin on Wednesday March 14th, which included a panel about the issues plaguing women in country, and performances by artists young and old, up-and-coming and established.

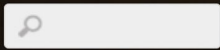
Country, rock, and rockabilly legend Rosie Flores headlined the festivities along with speaking at the panel, and played a rousing set that resulted in standing ovations and boot scooting as she showed off some of her most recognized songs, as well as some new, more bluesy material ahead of an upcoming record. Austin notables T Jarrod Bonta and Jim Stringer also joined Rosie on stage, along with a 2-piece horn section.

California country artist and yodeler Alice Wallace began the performance portion of the event, and concluded with her new song "Elephants" which is very timely and resonant to the #TimesUp movement, and worked well as a cornerstone and conversation starter for the event. Austin's Carson McHone featured songs from a finished album she's looking to release soon. Jaimee Harris is another Austin performer who could have a big 2018 with an upcoming album, and brought an upbeat, retro sound to the festivities.

The Rebelle Road showcase had a little bit of



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everything, including songwriters such as Ali Holder Christy Hays, and Jenny Van West, to raucous full bands like California's Nocona, and Calico The Band. Nashville's Ladies Gun Club also turned in a marquee set, backed by Aaron Lee Tasjan and his touring band.

True country was also well-represented at the event, with the younger Pearl Charles proving she's one to watch. Emily Herring stunned with renditions of excellent songs such as "Last of the Houston Honky Tonk Heroes" and "Best Thing I've Seen Yet." Her recent record *Gliding* is one to not overlook. And Austin bedrock performer Brennen Leigh also dazzled with songs old and new, including songs she's had recorded by Sunny Sweeney and Lee Ann Womack. In the name of inclusion, Austin's Chris Fullerton played songs from his 2017 record *Epilepsy Blues*.

Maybe most importantly during the event was a discussion panel that took place before the music, featuring Rosie Flores, journalist and author of the recent book *Woman Walk The Line*, Holly Gleason, Ladies Gun Club front woman and Café Rooster Record company owner Sally Jaye, TeXchromosome founder Penny Jo Pullus, and Founder/President 14 Inch Fringe Creative Artist Management Shilah Morrow.



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Utilizing different perspectives on the same underlying issues, the women discussed the reasons women seem to be excluded from the modern country narrative, and what could be done to reverse the course. One important aspect often overlooked in the recent exclusion of women in executive and managerial roles in the music business. This in turn translates to lack of radio play and playlist consideration, and festival representation.

"Every meeting when I was having when I was 21 and 22-years-old seemed like I was giving a romantic invitation to the man I was meeting with," said Sally Jaye of Ladies Gun Club, which is one of the reasons she chose to start her own record label.

Most importantly, the Rebelle Road event at SXSW was a starting point for the Los Angeles-based organization to expand the conversation and spread awareness in ways that will impact the music and support for women in the coming years, similar to other efforts like Change the Conversation in Nashville, and TeXchromosome in Texas. Beyond the traditional conversation starters and featuring of artists in live performances, Rebelle Road also wants to expand into TV and movie opportunities, and is also launching a podcast.

For a first-year SXSW event from a burgeoning



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organization, the Rebelle Road showcase was very well done, was well-curated with talent, and foretold of a strong organization open-minded to fresh ideas of how to solve systemic problems facing women in country.

More information can be found at RebelleRoad.com



The Rebelle Road Panel: Karen Rappaport McHugh, Penny Jo Pullus, Shilah Morrow, Sally Jaye, Holly Gleason, Rosie Flores, plus Rebelle Road Founders Adrienne Isom and KP Hawthorn.