

Episode 3.6 Dismantling the Patriarchy Has to be a Vocal Game with Clayre Sessoms

November 9, 2018

Hannah (Host):

[00:06](#)

[Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. If you are listening to this the day it's released, then this very day, this very afternoon, I am doing my first ever live episode of *Secret Feminist Agenda*. And maybe you're coming to it or maybe you came to it, in which case thank you. If you are listening to this on the day it's released and you are in Vancouver, maybe you were also considering coming to the Potter PodFest event tomorrow, Saturday, November 10th at the Vancouver Public Library, in which case I will see you there. It's going to be great. I will definitely be wearing a fun lipstick. Both of those events are part of the Vancouver Podcast Festival, which is November 8th to 10th and so chances are if you are planning on coming, you're already there while you're listening to this. That doesn't make any sense. Don't listen to podcasts while you're at a podcast festival. Anyway, I hope I get to meet some of you there. Now before I get into this episode, I want to give it a little bit of a content warning, as well as a piece of context. The content warning is that in this conversation we're going to talk about assault, specifically we're going to talk about sexual assault. It's not going to get graphic or detailed, but it is a big piece of the conversation. And what you're about to hear is me and my friend Clayre talking in part about a sexual assault that took place in the context of a community that we're both part of. This was a tricky thing for both of us to decide that we wanted to talk about. I definitely took Clayre's lead on this in terms of her decision to frame the conversation in this way, and I think that is a really generous and valuable conversation that she brings to the episode. And we also talk, in the conversation, about how we both felt really challenged by having this kind of, you know, open conversation about a community that's really valuable to both of us. For that reason, we made the decision to leave the details of the community in question out, because it is really valuable to both of us. And so if you're wondering why we don't actually name any of the details, that's why. We're both pretty committed, I think, to doing the kinds of community-based work in this case that makes it a place where everybody has the opportunity to thrive. And at the same time, I'm really hopeful that this is a conversation that will resonate with other people who are also, sort of, navigating these kinds of

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complexities in communities and organizations that mean a lot to them. Anyway, without any further ado, it's time to meet Clayre. Clayre Sessoms is a mom, a wife and a grad student of counseling, psychology, and art therapy. She loves to sing, but singing brings on more interpersonal challenges than key changes. [Music: "Duetto Buffo di Due Gatti" by Marie-Nicole Lemieux]

- Hannah (Host): [03:28](#) Okay. So we're here to talk about singing.
- Clayre: [03:33](#) Yes.
- Hannah (Host): [03:33](#) Yes.
- Clayre: [03:34](#) One of my favorite things.
- Hannah (Host): [03:35](#) Great. And we are here particularly, so we know each other from singing and a chor-us together. And I have to say "chor-us" because apparently when I say "chorus" it sounds like "course," and I confuse everyone. [Laughs] So specifically, so a chorus is like a choir. I don't do you know why we call it a chorus and not a choir? It's probably a 1950s thing. And I have heard you talk a couple of times about having, sort of, been a classically trained singer, and singing pre-transition, and then afterwards it, sort of, thinking maybe that group singing wouldn't be something that was available to you anymore. And so I wanted to start there, with hearing you talk a little bit about sort of the role that group singing plays in your life, and why sort of getting to come back to group singing in something like an all women's chorus was, you know, like, was valuable. There we go.
- Clayre: [04:34](#) So it all began...
- Hannah (Host): [04:40](#) [Laughs] Ah, it's a rainy day.
- Clayre: [04:41](#) It was a rainy day with Harlan Donow, spelled "do now." That was my vocal coach. And he was a great old man who played piano and sometimes yelled vocal technique to me. And I learned so much from him and also was encouraged to do musical theater. So that's what I got into in my teen years, was doing musical theater, being in a chorus, in theater, sometimes acting. I was a terrible actor, but I was a good singer.
- Hannah (Host): [05:10](#) [Laughs] They forgave you.
- Clayre: [05:10](#) So that, yeah, they forgave me for a bit and then that kind of wore off, so I had to choose something else. Wedding, wedding

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singing was my next pursuit. So I was doing a wedding singing for a while--

Hannah (Host): [05:25](#) That's great.

Clayre: [05:25](#) --For family, for some people. Yeah. Yeah. And then I joined a chorus, chor-us.

Hannah (Host): [05:34](#) [Laughs] chor-us.

Clayre: [05:34](#) The Raleigh Oratorio Society. I was the youngest member at the time. I joined at 17 and I was a baritone and still am, kinda. And was, I'm singing a lot of stuff like Carmina Burana, Carl Orff, Bach's Saint Matthew Passion, that sort of thing. And we did that with the North Carolina Symphony. So that was my, my first big chorus experience and I loved it, every minute of it. But when I transitioned and, and really came out about no longer wanting to be in the men's group with the penguin costume, I really didn't know where I would fit in chorus-wise or singing. I knew my voice wasn't really gonna change that much because testosterone is irreversible. So my vocal cords had stretched and they were not going to snap back unless I went through some horrible surgery, which I've heard is really risky. So I sort of sat on it for a while. I didn't sing and I missed it terribly. And then suddenly I saw this YouTube video where a trans woman was singing opera and she was singing as a soprano. And I'm like, "oh my gosh, I have to figure this out. What is she doing?" And she probably did vocal therapy, that kind of thing. So I did speech therapy for a little while. It's a lot harder than it sounds. Oh my goodness. My voice was so strained and the only evidence of that is my voicemail cause it's still like super high. It's like the perfect voice. It's exactly what I want to sound like forever and ever, but it's really hard to maintain. So screw that. So my friend reached out to me [laughs] she said, "you should join my chorus!"

Hannah (Host): [07:35](#) [Laughs]

Clayre: [07:35](#) And I was like, "oh, a chorus, this sounds great!" And then I looked it up and it's all women. I'm like, "I don't know". You know, I have a deep voice, but I can sing second alto if I stretch it and work really hard. And I was very hesitant. I remember sending an email to the director and I said, "okay, I'm a trans woman. I can probably sing second alto. Do you think this is going to be a good fit for me to even try it?" And of course she's going to say yes, but I wanted to make absolutely sure. If she was like super transphobic, she could have said, you know, "get outta here," or just not replied. But she sent this warm,

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welcoming message that filled my heart with, with joy and hope. So I overcame my fear by basically walking very slowly into the door. And that's where I met the chorus of my dreams, because everyone was so happy, and welcoming, and kind, and everything, I. I never thought they would be. So it was amazing. So I met the voice placement person, this adorable 80-ish year old woman that just, she just warmed my heart. And she placed me in the bass section, which is second alto, Basically. And it went from there, singing and realizing that I could actually do this. I was, I was thrilled and it was like a dream come true. It was a dream come true for me. Yeah. So that brought me to chorus.

Hannah (Host): [09:14](#) A number of times. I've had sort of listeners say that they wanted me to talk about, about group singing at some point, because I think that there are a lot of people for whom like, group singing in particular is a really vital part of their lives. And I know that for me, having sort of really let music fall out of my life for years through grad school, because you are not allowed to have hobbies during grad school. It's against the law. That finding my way back to music was synonymous for me with finding my way back to, to group singing. And so I, you know, I have a sense of, of why it plays an important role in my life, but I'm wondering if you can articulate like, what it is in particular about singing in a community, or singing in a group, that was something that you wanted back.

Clayre: [09:59](#) There's something about singing together. We're it, we're making art all together. There's an amazing sense of togetherness when we're all singing together, and even when we're kind of messing up. But it just, it feels so good. And the chorus experience from before, when I was a teenager, was very much sitting around laughing together, singing, our director occasionally getting really bent out of shape about something, and then we all come together and we make it happen and the symphony's playing. And you're like, hearing the timpani get beaten right in front of you, and it's just this beautiful sound.

Hannah (Host): [10:41](#) [Laughs]

Clayre: [10:41](#) The cellos--

Hannah (Host): [10:41](#) The cellos!

Clayre: [10:41](#) --sounded beautiful. The double basses, oh my goodness. There's something about the double basses when you're singing Bach that just...Anyways, so we had this chorus experience, very

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similar to the chorus that we're in, and we would all go out after chorus and, and, sort of, have a beer or fries or whatever and just...It, it was this whole new community for me. And what was really interesting about the chorus is, this is where the original chorus I was in, so where I met my queer family. A lot of people were LGB, possibly Q. There were no Ts back then, that just didn't exist in, in the place I was in. So, so there were a lot of queer folk and we, we just, we all connected, and I felt like I had a family outside of my family and I could be myself a little more. So that's kind of what I was looking for in any chorus that I was going to join in the future. And that's what I found at our chorus. They're queer folk and, and just that felt amazing. And they were true allies in the group too who don't have to tell me they're allies all the time. "Just want you to know I'm being an ally right now."

Hannah (Host): [12:07](#) [Laughs]

Clayre: [12:07](#) "Here's my flag, and my sign, and my button. Oh, and my paperclip!" Wait, the paper clip, what was it? No, safety pins!

Hannah (Host): [12:15](#) Safety pins! [Groans]

Clayre: [12:15](#) Safety pins. Don't get me started.

Hannah (Host): [12:19](#) Yeah, fucking safety pins. I mean, performative allyship is a, a real whole kettle of fish. But I think, I think sort of is part of the conversation that maybe we need to have, right? When talking about, you know, finding community in something like a chorus, and the genre of music that we sing in is a gender binary genre. I mean it's a genre of music that has to grapple with it's history. Let's say that for one thing that, that it's rooted like a lot of it is Dixie music. And there are fights happening in the community right now about people saying like, "we shouldn't be singing music that's rooted in like, white supremacist culture," and other people saying, "well it's the tradition. Like, stop trying to erase history," which is a thing that white supremacists love to say. Yeah, the race politics are a thing that needs to be worked on. And, and also the gender politics, right? Like, only recently have the women's choruses started not having to wear high heels on stage, and we still all need to wear fake eyelashes. So let's talk about gender and how this is playing out on the stage. So, so there is like, by definition, this chorus is a community that has brought together, not only based on a shared love of music, but also based on gender. And thus, inevitably it is operating based on certain understandings of how gender is defined, and how gender shapes our experiences, and what it means to be a woman. And that is something that I see people butt up against

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to greater or lesser degrees, because that discourse grates in terms of heteronormativity and to attempt to reject heteronormativity. It grates in terms of body politics. For example, there is a tendency for women to socialize based on shared understandings of hatred of our bodies, which comes through very strongly in, sort of, communities that are defining themselves based on, on again, the sort of conservative notion of gender, in a, in an environment that is defining, without a doubt, defining womanhood as by default cis womanhood. I'm sure that that is also a, sort of, a thing up against which one must butt. Was that a well-worded phrase?

Clayre: [14:53](#)

Yes!

Hannah (Host): [14:53](#)

Off against which one must butt?

Clayre: [14:57](#)

Yeah.

Hannah (Host): [14:57](#)

[Laughs] So yeah, I'm wondering if you're, if you're comfortable talking at all about, sort of, what that experience is like, in terms of feeling at once welcomed into and, and at home in a space or in a community, while at once also recognizing that there are aspects of how that community has understood itself that you're going to need to push against, or push to expand, or just ignore if you want to still have fun.

Clayre: [15:24](#)

So I've found that any, any space I'm in, whether it's academic, or a chorus, or just getting a sandwich--

Hannah (Host): [15:33](#)

Sandwich spaces.

Clayre: [15:34](#)

--Sandwich spaces. I'm always in, kind of, this place of having to explain my gender, or explain my history. And there are always questions. No matter how wonderful and supportive people aim to be, there are still, there's still a lot of emotional labor that has to go into belonging. And I'm not allowed to belong, or at least I have the sense of that or the feeling, until I share this information. So for instance, people are comfortable with me after I share, you know, when I transitioned, what my family life is like, whether or not others except me. Because if others don't accept me, perhaps they don't have to either. I don't know. But it's, I'm always playing that game of what do you share? What do you not share? And feeling that pressure that if I don't share, then there's no space for me.

Hannah (Host): [16:45](#)

Yeah.

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- Clayre: [16:45](#) So in chorus, in my education, my master's degree program, in anything I've been in, it always comes to after the honeymoon experience of acceptance, and hugs, and "we're here for you," and "it's so great to see you," it always boils down to these questions like, "so when did you feel like you were a woman? When did you start to feel--"
- Hannah (Host): [17:13](#) "When did you feel like you were a woman?" That's an unanswerable question!
- Clayre: [17:13](#) I know! Exactly. "When did you first feel like you wanted to be a woman?" And these questions just come at me and they're, they're off the cuff. There's no, there's not much thought behind them. I mean, they're very innocent, but when you get them from seven people, it starts to feel like I'm in a, sort of, proving ground where I have to either share this information or exit the community and not, not feel a part of it, be shunned, or what have you. A part of that is my own feeling, and a part of that is I think just how acceptance is not a black and white thing. It's, acceptance is conditional and I feel that. So that's why I started sharing more of my story on Facebook and inviting everybody in because I felt like, well here they are. I'll bring them along on the ride and all those questions of "have you had the surgery?" Well let's take them through the whole process.
- Hannah (Host): [18:21](#) "The surgery."
- Clayre: [18:23](#) "THE surgery." I've had four. I need 70 more. Yeah, anyways.
- Hannah (Host): [18:27](#) It's something that I think that we see a lot in the, sort of, maybe the last five years as we've seen sort of a lot of attempts on public platforms to engage in conversations about transness. And that, that conditional-ness I think, I think you're exactly right, that there's, there seems to be the sort of, "give us your story and then we will welcome you." Like, the price is a kind of exposure of, both a sort of emotional exposure and often a physical exposure. Right? And that like, we, you know, we've seen people like, like I think it was, it was Caitlyn Jenner who some talk show host was like, "what genitals do you have?" And it was like, who the fuck would you ever ask that question to?
- Clayre: [19:19](#) Exactly!
- Hannah (Host): [19:19](#) In what world is that ever an acceptable question? And the, the way in which it is rendered acceptable, I think, I think that's a really eloquent way to, to put it, is that it, that it seems to be this, this condition or this price that I think, I think a lot of

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people, a lot of says people aren't thinking about it like that, right?

Clayre: [19:39](#) This can be applied to the playground. So on the playground are bunch of parents and a person of color walks up with kids, and immediately you see the, a couple of white parents go over to them, "Oh, who's your child?" They want to know more about this person. They never started with "hello" or, hi, my name is." You know, "I love the school," or "isn't it a great day?" It's, "who's child is yours?" And that's the question that I was asked when I went to the park with my child. And it was like, we're trying to figure out whether or not your safe and no one really wanted to get to know me. They just wanted to make sure that I was not whatever negative preconceived notion they had in their head and, that really hurt. Yeah. So, so I'm really sensitive to those questions and I've, but I answer them. I continue to answer them because I have such a strong need to belong. Such a need to be accepted.

Hannah (Host): [20:49](#) The instinct to ask the question that we see from a lot of people, to ask like the, the question that that came to my mind when you were talking about, sort of, a person of color arrives at the playground. You know, it's a version of the, "oh, where are you from?" The the question that is quote unquote "intended" to indicate curiosity, but is a mode of curiosity that is so revealing in the sense that you, the white person, are giving yourself away as looking at a person of color and immediately thinking "other," "foreign," "from somewhere else, doesn't belong here," "needs to explain themselves to me." Whereas my presence here is natural and unquestioned. And that demand that, you know, that gender function the same way. That sure, okay. You can be gender nonconforming in public or you can be visibly trans in public if you, if you answer me these questions three. [Laughs]

Clayre: [21:52](#) Exactly.

Hannah (Host): [21:52](#) Yeah, and, and so we were talking about, you know, well-intentioned allyship and how often it is hard to stomach. And that one of the things that are, that I was reflecting on that, that is a sort of thing that I have had to learn for myself, is that it is useless to people when I tell them what a good ally I am. That has literally never helped anybody with a god damn thing in their lives. It is the verbal version of wearing a safety pin. It is fucking useless. And a much more useful thing to do is to go sit with yourself for a while and think about ways in which you have unthinkingly internalized cisnormative understandings of gender, and where have you actually practiced that in your life?

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How is that expressing itself? How do you-- I saw somebody on Twitter the other day was like, "here's a thing to do to denormalize your gendered gaze: every day when you are looking around at the bus, remind yourself that you did not know the gender of any of these people. And so look at somebody, recognize the assumptions that you make, and then think to yourself, 'I do not know a fucking thing about this person's gender.' And just and and practice it. Practice it until you get good at not assuming that you know people because you don't." Like, that's work, that's work that like, just happens, just happens quietly inside of your head and it's not, it's not a verbal or literal safety pin. But that's fucking like, that's a reversal of the whole idea of who needs to pay a price to be in a community. Like maybe, maybe there is a version of community in which cis people have to do a lot of work before we have the right and privilege to have trans friends. Like, what would that look like?

- Clayre: [23:44](#) I would have no friends.
- Hannah (Host): [23:47](#) [Laughs]
- Clayre: [23:47](#) I could be very lonely.
- Hannah (Host): [23:50](#) You'd be sitting around like, "any day now somebody will get here."
- Clayre: [23:53](#) Someone. I think one or two people, but it would be hard. I'm, I'm a very social person, which that really sucks when you're trans. When I'm trans.
- Hannah (Host): [24:03](#) When one.
- Clayre: [24:04](#) When one is trans
- Hannah (Host): [24:05](#) [Laughs]
- Clayre: [24:05](#) With a mid-Atlantic accent. When one is trans. So I'm a social person. I like friendships and, and meeting people and, and it's hard to do that when I have to do so much explaining.
- Hannah (Host): [24:24](#) Yeah.
- Clayre: [24:24](#) And it used to be, I was born blind and I'm visually impaired, so I, I got used to explaining that all the time. "What's wrong with your eyes?" Oh, well, once upon a time in utero, I developed cataracts. There's my memoir.

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- Hannah (Host): [24:41](#) [Laughs]
- Clayre: [24:41](#) *Once Upon a Time in Utero* by Clayre Sessoms,
- Hannah (Host): [24:45](#) [Laughs]
- Clayre: [24:45](#) I could see this. So I was used to explaining things. I was used to this having to pay the price of admission into the sighted world.
- Hannah (Host): [24:56](#) Yeah.
- Clayre: [24:56](#) And, "you're not one of us until we know that you're not on drugs, because your eyes are shifting around and jumping around." And so then when I came out, this was old hat.
- Hannah (Host): [25:09](#) Yeah.
- Clayre: [25:09](#) So I just started answering all these questions. I started writing on Facebook about every little incident that happened because I kind of was starting to get, to get tired of verbally answering these questions. So I wanted to take people along and say, "okay, this just happened. It's really shitty and this is what I need," you know, "this is what I need the world to be like." I need it to be a little different. I need to feel a little more safe. Yeah. So as I sort of went onto Facebook to vent and do that in a way that educates, you know, 400 people at once, instead of having to explain everything over and over again. So that's when the allies started telling me how much of an ally they are. So they would, and of posts that they're here for me. And that was great and it was good to hear at the time, but then I started to sense like this inauthenticity. Like it was more about them than it was about me.
- Hannah (Host): [26:12](#) Yeah.
- Clayre: [26:12](#) More about what they're wearing on their lapel (safety pin) and less about actually showing up and fighting with me for trans rights, or for safe access to public accommodations, or even challenging a group when there's been an assault. And I've faced not just questions, but I've had, I've experienced sexual assault in the chorus, four months into my membership there. And that's when everything went to rainbows and glitter, to just feeling shitty and not wanting to participate anymore, not wanting to answer questions, not wanting to actively participate in anything in the chorus. But I still wanted to sing.
- Hannah (Host): [27:05](#) Yeah.

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- Clayre: [27:05](#) And I still had my buddies, but I felt like, it was quite interesting. I confronted the person. They did apologize in writing and that was a good thing, but I was still angry. I was still upset about it and I knew that would take time. But here we are two and a half years later and I'm still working through it, because suddenly a place that was safe, wasn't safe anymore.
- Hannah (Host): [27:34](#) Yeah.
- Clayre: [27:34](#) Suddenly a place that was happy and cultivated, a sense of belonging that I so needed at that time, wasn't a place where I felt I could belong.
- Hannah (Host): [27:46](#) Yeah.
- Clayre: [27:47](#) I think one of the most shocking things is it, as I started to explain this assault to people around me, they feared for my ability to continue to be in the group if I were to say something. If I brought this up to the director or I said, you know, "look, this is happening--
- Hannah (Host): [28:08](#) Yeah,
- Clayre: [28:09](#) --and I need support," that I would somehow be rejected. That was the fear from my friends. And I know that's based on years and years, lifetimes of oppression, internalized misogyny, that our voices don't matter, that our experiences don't matter. Yeah. So all the sudden I wasn't just assaulted, but I was in the throes of learning how to navigate assault among a group of women.
- Hannah (Host): [28:45](#) Yeah.
- Clayre: [28:45](#) And I learned, I was told that silence is better than rocking the boat, and I both appreciated that and was also horrified by it.
- Hannah (Host): [28:57](#) I think part of what's really resonating about, sort of, that response that you heard, I mean, is that culture often in communities of women to say, the correct response to assault is silence, which often does come from the experience of like, you know, I know that when I have spoken or when I've seen other people speak up, I've seen them be punished. Like, what we see over and over again is when you speak, you are punished. When you complain, you become the problem, right? The person who points out the problem is the person who's made into the problem. And I think that particularly comes to the fore and really intergenerational communities of women. It's an

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intergenerational tension that I have been seeing a lot, especially in the, you know, quote unquote "Me Too" era conversations about assault, and about how one ought to respond to assault, and the way in which for a lot of older women, you just shut up about it, right? It's just is a, is a, a hard earned wisdom, so to speak, and to say, "actually no, no, let's actually just scream really, really loudly about it all the time," is, is terrifying for some people. And that is a such a hard to sort of point to navigate in, in communities of women to say like, "no, I need to actually be able to say this," and to be told like, "I fear for what will happen to you if you say this."

- Clayre: [30:21](#) And it's a genuine fear because we're conditioned to think as soon as we speak up that we're going to be rejected or wrong or...And in the past two and a half years, I've talked about this one-on-one with women and I've heard story after story of their own assaults, sexual assaults, physical assaults, verbal harassment. All things which they haven't been able to speak up about, they have not been able to share. And here I am struggling with my own assault, as well as physical assault and verbal harassment on the street, and I'm suddenly not speaking up either. And I feel like somebody has to go here, somebody needs to speak up about something.
- Hannah (Host): [31:17](#) Yup. Yup.
- Clayre: [31:17](#) And I do this with love in my heart for the chorus. I do this with love in my heart for all of my friends that I've met along the way and everyone that I've spoken to since that happened. And there's this need for me to speak up because if I speak up, maybe someone else will hear that and want to speak up as well.
- Hannah (Host): [31:44](#) Yeah.
- Clayre: [31:44](#) And then we'll get to that all screaming very loudly for a very long time until it..
- Hannah (Host): [31:51](#) [Laughs] Screaming until our throats bleed!
- Clayre: [31:52](#) Until our throats bleed. Dismantling the patriarchy is not going to be a silent game. It has to be a very vocal game. It has to be a messy game. People are going to get hurt, hopefully not more women, but unfortunately, probably. So here I am.
- Hannah (Host): [32:14](#) Yeah. [Laughs]

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- Clayre: [32:14](#) You reached out to me about telling this story about chorus and how great it was and, and I'm like, "oh, by the way..."
- Hannah (Host): [32:23](#) I was like, "come here and tell your feel-good story." Maybe, maybe not, maybe not. No, I've, I wanted to hear about it. The experience that you had shared of like, finding your way back to music in a way that I knew was both like, really beautiful and also at the same time conditional, at the same time came with having to navigate the space, I thought it was a really, a really, I don't know, a story people would like to hear if you were willing to share it. And I also want to think here about, because I know both of us, you know, when we had a conversation before recording this episode about, you know, being worried about the work of critique and be more worried about how that would be received. And really like wanting to, to, to make it clear that critique comes from a place of love. Like, you critique something because you want it to be better. So to be part of a community and to say, "this community isn't serving me," or "this community has harmed me," or "this community isn't where it needs to be right now and let's try to make it better," is a, is an act of huge emotional labor, and one that, that still feels risky and scary, right? That feels like, I love this thing and I want it to be better and so I want to critique it. And at the same time I know that that critique might be unhearable by some people, and that critique might end up resulting in, in punishment.
- Clayre: [33:52](#) I don't want to lose my community. I love my community of singers. And I just want to bring them into what I'm struggling with, and I want us to sort of lean in together and figure out how we can be a stronger community, how we can support each other when something goes wrong. We learn how to take care of each other, how to listen to each other, and how to support each other. What I'm asking for from this community is to listen just long enough to recognize it takes a little more to be an ally than just saying you're an ally. It takes a little more than just sharing a meme about supporting women who come out about assault and actually standing with women who come out about their assault. It takes policy updates. It takes an organizational shift. It takes talking about it, it takes listening. It takes being wrong. It takes finding the way together to make it work. So I've, I've taken a break from chorus. I'm meeting with my therapist every other week. We are working through this and eventually I want to go back to chorus, but I want to do so from a space that's not as angry and sad as I've felt for the past two and a half years. I wanted to go back and really feel the warmth of the sun that I felt for those first four months.
- Hannah (Host): [35:36](#) Yeah.

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- Clayre: [35:38](#) I mean, every day is not going to be a mountain top experience.
- Hannah (Host): [35:41](#) [Laughs]
- Clayre: [35:41](#) But, but at least at least a hike without any bears or cougars.
[Music: "'Duetto Buffo di Due Gatti" by Marie-Nicole Lemieux]
- Hannah (Host): [36:09](#) If you'd like to learn more about Clayre, you can follow her on Twitter @ClayreSessoms. That's C L A Y R E S E S S O M S. You can find show notes and all the episodes of *Secret Feminist Agenda* on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. And you can also review the show like this week Lindsey EH did. I also did a little bit of digging. I just figured out, for the most part, I have trouble seeing reviews that come from outside of Canada and the US because that's what Apple Podcasts will show me. But I figured out there's a way that you can see the most recent couple of reviews from other countries. And so I looked at, for example, Australia where there were reviews from Wren Evers, Infinite, 0007, and Athena On Earth. There are reviews in Great Britain from Spawnberry, Ms, Medieval and Danny of the North. I also saw reviews from Germany from, I have no idea how to pronounce this, Pfeiffer KJD, or maybe there's a fun German way to be saying that. Sorry. Charlotte is Reading and Tatu0. Oh, I hope that's a reference to the band Tatu. So if there's another country I should be checking, let me know, and also tell me what the country code is because I need the like, two letter country abbreviation. The podcast's theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album Chub Rub. You can download the entire album on freemusicarchive.org or follow them on Facebook. Clayre's theme song was "Duetto Buffo di Due Gatti." That's a humorous duet of two cats performed by Marie-Nicole Lemieux. *Secret Feminist Agenda* is recorded on the traditional and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh first nations where I'm grateful to live and work. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]