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# **MISSION STATEMENT**

## **Vision**

Undergirding the vision of the ISME Commission on the Education of the Professional Musician is the belief that any discussion or action pertaining to the education and training of professional musicians must be sensitive to the roles and status that musicians have in various societies and cultures. Of equal importance is the attention to the value systems in those societies and cultures that drive the choices concerning music, education, and the arts in a broader sense.

## **Mission**

The mission of the ISME Commission on the Education of the Professional Musician is to engage in and promote a variety of activities in international and local settings that:

- focus on the professional musician as one who accepts responsibility for advancing and disseminating music as an integral part of life, and whose engagement with music reflects perception, understanding, appreciation, and mastery in a manner that conveys meaning to people
- foster the recognition of the many modes of educating and training musicians as practised by various societies and cultures
- emphasise strategies through which educators can prepare musicians for the continually changing role of the musician in various contexts, societies and cultures
- raise awareness and develop an appreciation of matters pertaining to the general health and welfare of musicians

## Preface

### **A Multi-Perspectival Contemplation of Leadership for Musicians in the 21st Century**

“There is no such uncertainty as a sure thing.”<sup>1</sup>

Music graduates are increasingly entering job markets that demand more of them than before yet offer them far less certainty in terms of career prospects. In the face of an ever-evolving market situation, paradigms for the education of the professional musician need to be constantly reviewed and assumptions interrogated. In exploring the path forward, invaluable lessons may be drawn from past and current practices. In the spirit of creative problem solving, one may further explore speculative theories. In all these, leadership is certainly called for. The Commission for the Education of the Professional Musician (CEPROM) therefore chose to focus on leadership as the theme for its 21st International Seminar. This main theme was explored along two sub-thematical lines: (i) leadership theories, cultures and practices, and (ii) leadership in action.

In one sense, the appeal for leadership can amount to a transformation of music-making and music-learning spaces. Discussions of various forms and ideas of leadership and the need for developing such skills in musicians sprung from the eighteen papers (which included one “performed research”) and two posters that were presented. The presentations were organised into contextual categories—namely, those of instrumental teaching, ensembles, and academia. The culminating session

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<sup>1</sup> R. Burns, “To A louse, on seeing one on a lady's bonnet at church” (1786), modern English translation by Michael R. Burch (<http://www.thehypertexts.com/Robert%20Burns%20Translations%20Modern%20English.htm>)

then considered matters from a broader institutional or cultural vantage point. By the end of the seminar, it was clear that musical leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs to operate in a complex multi-dimensional space with its variegated interstices of liminal spaces. For those who were not present at the seminar, the present set of papers can nonetheless reflect the exciting debates that led to that hugely expanded notion of leadership that, as it emerged from the seminar presentations, 21<sup>st</sup> century musicians would want to be acquainted with and be involved in.

### **Calls for Leadership in Musicians**

To set the scene, the opening segment of the seminar presented some exemplars of leadership in action on the one hand and highlighted research findings on the need for leadership skills to be developed in musicians on the other. Rosie Perkins and Aaron Williamon's paper shares about the new learning space, as it were, created by the Royal College of Music's (London) new Masters of Science programme in Performance Science. Such a curricular initiative that brings musical studies into intersection with performance science as well as performance health and well being is a wonderful instance of leadership in action on the part of the institution. For the individual graduate student, the opportunity to interrogate their musical practices through other disciplinary lenses lay an important foundation for leadership thinking in a multi-disciplinary manner.

Judith Brown's applied theatre project with a strong community-engagement aim, led by the Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music in Australia but involving government partners and community leaders, is exciting for the communal benefits it has been bringing to local communities over the seventeen years since its inception. What has been educationally invaluable was the provision of mentorship for emerging performing arts student leaders to engage in real-world problem solving, and it was

done in a context that blurs the distinction between student and professional. The end result, as reflected by the email responses obtained, was one of enhanced confidence in leadership skills and a broadened purview of possible career directions, which can translate into greater employability. The latter would, of course, be supported by the expanded skill set that was developed beyond those of the core discipline of music.

Jennifer Rowley, Dawn Bennett and Anna Reid look at a different kind of authentic learning to develop leadership. Theirs is an internship programme that puts students in the liminal space between formal music study and authentic work experiences. The experiences prompt students to “re-imagine what their musical world means and how their own capabilities and creativity can be utilised as leaders”. This process reshapes their sense of identity as a musician, which is otherwise more narrowly framed by their formal musical studies. The authors here recognize that the ontological nature of a musician’s identity is at once singular and multiple, and is developed alongside a sense of self that is evolving from “a dynamic interplay between the two notions of who the person is becoming and what they are coming to know”. As the students develop their creative leadership as interns, they also refocus their learning mindset and their professional thinking to better prepare for the real world.

Serving as a useful backdrop to and augmenting the above opening segment of the seminar are two poster presentations. Alejandra Trabucco, María Cuitiño and Alejandro Giboin’s investigation, from the Spanish speaking part of the world, echoes a similar concern for leaderships skills in musicians. They probe into the life stories of twenty three young Argentinian musicians within five to ten years of their graduation to surface the need for developing entrepreneurial skills, professional networking, and team work strategies. Responding too to the general call for leadership skills development, Daniel Machado and Heloisa Feichas draw inspiration from the

Brazilian philosopher-educator Paulo Freire. They submit that Freire's dialogical process of teaching, which includes a form of democratic listening, can be most relevant for developing leadership skills.

### **In the Context of Instrumental Teaching**

The second thematic segment of the seminar explores issues and aspects of leadership pertaining to the teaching spaces of music studios and keyboard labs. To begin, Gemma Carey and Catherine Grant present a case study of transformative pedagogy at work, based in part on video recordings of one conservatoire studio teacher whose pedagogical approach has been identified to be transformative. It is an inspiring picture of pedagogical agility in which flexible responsiveness and adaptability is very much in evidence. They then suggest that the sharing of such good practices can constitute a form of leadership in action given that transformative pedagogy is relatively new to the studio-teaching circle. Indeed, the teacher in question exemplifies the kind of self-directed learning propensity that any musician-leader would want to have, and in her case this involves multidisciplinary learning and collaboration at that.

Next, Margaret Young, Cynthia Stephen-Himonides and Martha Hilley outline the history of group piano teaching in the USA to underscore the general recognition of the pedagogical and financial advantages of group pedagogy in piano teaching. They then make a strong call for leadership in renewing the curriculum, not least in the light of the digital music technology and the expansion of professional demands. They call for a re-scoping of what constitutes functional keyboard skills relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They also advocate adopting some of the current practices in pedagogy and assessment that have greater elements of authenticity.

A similar forwarding-looking presentation comes from the leadership in action by Pétur Jónasson under the mentorship of Tânia Lisboa. In leading an evidence-based curricular reform at the Iceland Academy of the Arts, Jónasson saw the need to improve the teaching of contemporary music performance. He notes the common practice of musicians not performing contemporary pieces from memory, and a worrying trend of music students coming with increasing less exposure to contemporary music. He then draws on his music research skills to investigate the process of memorising contemporary music. The finding is rather surprising—it challenges the common thinking that it is harder to memorise contemporary music as compared to more conventional tonal pieces. This research initiative thus addresses a perceived gap in the tertiary music curriculum.

Katie Zhukov's study, whilst focused on professional pianists, has much relevance for the training of performing musicians in general. Her case study of five Australian classical pianists continues to underscore the importance of a broader curricular purview for the education of the professional musician. Zhukov recommends musicians to have under their belt as it were a wider range of playing skills beyond solo performance, they should also acquire a range of entrepreneurial and related skills. Though not explicitly appealing for leadership in curricular changes, she nonetheless sees the change imperative here as being part of "A fresh vision of teaching and learning in higher music education for the 21st century" (quoting from Burnard, 2014).

The kind of "re-imagining" to reshape the professional self in the course of an internship stint, as broached by Rowley et al. above, is examined by Christine Yau in the context of a studio environment. She is interested in the critical role conservatoire instrumental teachers play in students' professional identity negotiations. If we have

seen the kinds of transformational work that Carey and Grant's pedagogue had done to foster ownership in learning, in Yau's teacher-student dyad here, we witness a similar keen interest on the part of the teacher in the individual student and a proactive approach taken to guide the latter's career thinking. Yau argues that, to be more effective, a supportive institutional culture must be established.

### **Performed Research**

This year's seminar introduced the new presentation format of "performed research". Tony Makarome offers one such example. To lay the ground for his "performed" presentation, his written paper explains aspects of Carnatic music, in particular the Konnakol, and reveals how he has incorporated Carnatic musical elements and thinking into his Jazz practice, both as a performer and in his teaching. Whilst he might have been motivated to pick up this non-western tradition out of personal interest, he has in effect taken the lead amongst his Jazz counterparts to break new grounds through his learning and eventual integration of Carnatic elements within an otherwise standard Jazz framework. If the management or entrepreneurial kind of leadership is important to the 21<sup>st</sup> century musicians, Tony's demonstrated musical leadership can be one musical equivalent. His work with the Malay folk musicians further points to a certain cross-cultural competency that brings people across different (musical) cultures together—certainly an invaluable asset for any leader, musician or otherwise.

### **In the Context of Musical Ensembles**

Amanda Watson and David Forrest offer a glimpse into the operations of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra. They see leadership at work insofar as the Artistic Director and the Executive Director have successfully guided this medium-sized orchestra, without the benefit of a permanent membership, to strike a happy balance

between the ensemble's performance engagement needs and the kinds of employment flexibility that their non-fulltime members' desire. Yet, under such circumstance, opportunities for professional development—musically as well as in terms of leadership—were provided.

Annie Mitchell's study complements the discussion with her investigation of three community orchestras and a big band in Queensland, Australia. Beyond her rather intriguing paper title, she creatively interweaves her personal history and thoughts into her research presentation on the different leadership forms and styles observed. She thereby invites us to ruminate from her autoethnographic angle how participation in such community ensembles can foster leadership across different levels, even of self. Her acquired insights informed the "Ensemble Direction and Arranging" course that she teaches, making it relevant to her students who, under her tutelage, certainly appreciated the need for "more practice as *leaders*".

Janis Weller tackles the concept of transformational leadership, as opposed to transactional leadership. Being a practising musician herself, she opts for the musical metaphorical lenses of improvisation, composing and performing to shed light on the transformational leadership that takes place in the liminal space of conducted improvisation whereby the three musical activities intersect. The backdrop to this is the call to return to the traditional model of musician as composer/improviser/performer, as articulated in the 2014 report of the College Music Society (CMS) Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major. Within this frame of reference, Weller presents the inspiring story of Aaron's work with the group *Improvestra* in which the willingness to take risk stands out as an important attribute in such transformational leadership—indeed an essential attitude if one were to ensure sustainability in one's career in the face of the changes in the employment landscape.

Sara Ascenso, Jonathan McCormick and Rosie Perkins broaden our purview further with the innovative mentorship programme at the Negaunee Music Institute of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which succeeded in prompting eight Civic Fellows (the mentees) to see their profession with a widened perspective that connects with the community on the one hand and with their self-concept and personal well-being on the other, apart from the development of their professional skills—musical and non-musical, the latter including leadership and communication competencies. The overall confidence and competence to thrive outside the civic fellows’ comfort zone is certainly one critical survival asset in a fast changing world.

### **In Academia**

Don Lebler’s autoethnographic account is an inspirational story of a series of transitions from a performing to a teaching then managerial cum research career. We witness instances of leadership in action that took place against a backdrop of changing educational landscape. In a career span of just over twenty years, he navigated from a relatively autonomous to a much more regulated institutional environment, exemplifying an adaptability that would make him a strong candidate for any musician looking for a role model, especially when given an unsought-for leadership role or, for others, wishing to take leadership in steering their own career. If Ascenso et al.’s paper has expanded the purview of a musician, Lebler’s personal story inspires musicians to “think more broadly than their individual studio practice”, and more positively so at that. Equally importantly, Lebler alerts us of the ongoing challenges posed by complex institutional regulations pertaining to the domain of assessment that he has been working in. He urges us not to be deterred whether by this more local situation in Australia or by other similar change-induced challenges

elsewhere, and recommends that we should be prepared to explore new thinking in order to adapt.

Diana Blom takes our thinking on leadership in rather unexpected directions, instantiating yet another creative leadership in action, this time in the area of thesis supervision. Drawing on her own experiences as practitioner-researcher, she has approached the supervision of practice-based doctoral research in a way that “braids” theory and practice. She submits that practice as research takes the form of a mixed-method approach to yield a multi-modal braided thesis that can be comparable to a doctor of philosophy one. Her model departs from many creative arts doctorates where the focus is largely on the creative practice thesis with an appended exegesis. Her leadership in thesis supervision essentially constitutes a response to the relatively new phenomenon of performance as research in academia.

### **Change Issues**

In the closing segment of the seminar, the seminar discussion moved to the institutional and societal levels. Pamela Burnard shone the spotlight on gendered viewpoints. Her paper perhaps offers us less yet another lens to contemplate leadership issues but more a critical awareness of a lens that has been transparent to us for a long time. Drawing us into the gendered politics of musical creativities, she challenges us to be forward-thinking enough to “contemporize [our] learning cultures and environments”, specifically to accord equity to women (and minorities) in our various “fields” (*à la* Bourdieu) through our institutions (“activity systems”) so as to allow musical and leadership creativities to blossom. In short, brave leadership is needed to transform the education of the musician.

Lest we get too caught up with ideological advocacies, Pamela Pike’s investigation of thirty six performing and teaching musicians in one southern U.S. state anchors us in the realities of what musicians need in their day-to-day work as a performer and teacher. Cautious against the current buzz surrounding creativity in the business and, in turn, the educational world, Pike expresses concern over the danger of music and music education being hijacked. Although hers is an advocacy that reminds us of what music and music education are, leadership in music educators is called for in the face of pressures to justify the value of music and music education. For the student, she advocates a balanced approach in which critical creative and leadership skills are developed alongside domain-specific competencies.

Glen Carruthers grounds us in a different way. Having been a dean for many years, he is critically aware of the management realities of priority setting and accountability when taking leadership, especially if the leadership were to be “strong and visionary”. He raises pertinent questions of what “leading” a music school means and ask to whom this leadership is accountable. Like Pike who has reservations over assessment metrics, Carruthers bemoans the weight of accountability data that falls on the shoulders of institutional leaders. Drawing on the four review cycles he was involved in, he points out worryingly how such responsibilities can unfortunately prevent senior administrators (e.g. deans) from attending to curriculum matters themselves even though review exercises point to the latter as the overwhelming area of concern.

## **Closing Remarks**

“While forward-looking seers, we humans guess and fear!”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> R. Burns, “To a mouse, on turning her up in her nest with the plough” (1785), modern English translation by Michael R. Burch

(<http://www.thehypertexts.com/Robert%20Burns%20Translations%20Modern%20English.htm>)

We started by noting, with a reference to one Burns poem, the imminent changes that impinge on musicians' careers and hence on how educating the professional musician calls for creative reforms. In recognising the importance of leadership for the modern-day musician and unpacking this key term, we discover an almost bewildering complexity concerning leadership even if we may be inspired by the numerous ideas and instances of leadership in action: musical leadership, as the seminar delegates quickly found out, lies in the interstices of a multi-dimensional space:

- between musical skills and life skills
- between teaching/performing and (business/career) management
- between career development and well-being
- between musical and interpersonal spaces
- in the supervision of a braided thesis
- between gender inequalities and gendered perspectives
- between individual's urge to innovate and institutional need to regulate (or, between leadership and management)

In a nutshell, at the end of the day, the professional musician needs to be ready for an active role in a "multi-member nexus" (Wenger, 1998, quoted in Rowley et al.) that operates in an ever-changing multi-dimensional space. It is anyone's "guess" what the future will look like for the professional musician, but it is the responsibilities of educators to ensure that both the present and the next generation of musicians, as "forward-looking seers", are well-equipped to take lead, musically and otherwise, such that there is no "fear" in them!

## Acknowledgements

It has been my privilege and pleasure to serve as the organising chair for this seminar.

The seminar's success would not have been possible without the wonderful support that I had received from all involved:

- my fellow commission members, who worked with me throughout the whole organization of the seminar—from conceiving the seminar theme, reviewing the submissions for the seminar presentation to chairing the various sessions during the seminar
- Janis Wellers and Glen Carruthers, our two previous commission chairs, who not only gave me regular moral support but graciously stepped in to assist when I needed extra help in the review process
- Bede Williams, who very ably worked with Scott Francis the events manager and other staff members to make all the local arrangements
- University of St. Andrews, for providing the venue and facilities as well as sponsoring the welcome reception
- Lee Higgins (the then ISME president-elect), Angela Ruggles (ISME Secretary General) and Ian Harvey (ISME Finance Officer) for their invaluable advice

To all of you, a heartfelt thank you! I certainly treasure the collaboration and our friendship.

# **Musicians as Researchers: The Development and Evaluation of a Conservatoire-based MSc in Performance Science**

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## **Abstract**

The recent call for multiple creativities in higher music education echoes the increasing body of research that highlights the need for transformation in the education of professional musicians. This paper reports on a curriculum initiative, designed in response to changing professional landscapes, at the Royal College of Music London (RCM). Launched in 2011, the RCM MSc programme in Performance Science offers musicians the opportunity to critically examine the art and science of performance in a real-world educational and professional context, facilitating a robust understanding of performance through the lens of the social scientific method. This paper examines students' experiences of the MSc programme to date, and interrogates motivations for studying performance science, perceived learning outcomes, graduate destinations, and the role of the MSc in professional development. Data were collected via a specially-designed online survey from a total of 16 MSc graduates. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively using Microsoft Excel 2010, while qualitative data were coded and clustered into themes.

Results indicate that students are motivated to study performance science in order to learn more about the intersection between art and science and to engage in self-reflection and questioning. MSc graduates reported that they learned new study skills from undertaking the programme, as well as skills to undertake their own research. Further, the programme equipped them with applied content knowledge of music psychology, education and health, and facilitated processes of self-reflection at the intersection of theory and practice. Upon graduation, the majority of graduates are in paid employment alongside further study or applications for further study. Graduates typically reported that the MSc contributed positively to their current employment or study—be it guiding them towards new or more established professional paths, providing new knowledge and skills, or allowing a space for reflection and development of a more holistic view of being a musician. Given the imperative for new ways of educating professional musicians, the paper demonstrates the programme's potential for providing a space for musicians to engage in leadership in action, using social science as a means of critiquing and enhancing musical practices.

## **Keywords**

conservatoire, leadership, Performance Science, research, social science

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## Introduction

The recent call for multiple creativities in higher music education (Burnard & Haddon, 2015) grows from and echoes an increasing body of research that highlights the need for transformation in the education of professional musicians. Perkins (2013), for example, argued for the introduction of more spaces for creativity, reflectivity, and leadership in conservatoires, recognising that spaces for *learning* have sat uncomfortably with priorities on musical specialism and outdated measures of musical success (Perkins, 2012; Carey, 2010). Similarly, Smilde (2009) argued that lifelong learning for musicians entails multiple forms of leadership, multiple learning styles, and, crucially, adaptive and responsive learning environments that enable learning to flourish. Further, Bennett (2008) makes a strong argument for the definition of musician to stretch far beyond performance, recognising the multiplicity of roles and identities that a career in music demands.

Higher music education has already begun responding to such imperatives, and we see increasing examples of curriculum reform (Carey & Lebler, 2012), projects that take musicians out of the academy or practice room into new spaces (Perkins, et al., 2015; Smilde et al., 2014), and experimental approaches to teaching and learning (Burnard & Haddon, 2015). This paper reports on a curriculum initiative, designed in response to changing professional landscapes, at the Royal College of Music, London (RCM). Launched in 2011, the RCM MSc programme in Performance Science offers musicians the opportunity to critically examine the art and science of performance in a real-world educational and professional context.

Developed as an MSc (Master of Science) in Performance Science, the Level 7 (third cycle) programme aims to facilitate a robust understanding of performance through the lens of the social scientific method, which in turn enables the acquisition of the critical and analytical skills necessary to conduct high quality practical work and independent research in the field. Offered as a full-time (one calendar year) or part-time (two academic years) programme, the MSc aims to introduce students to principles and priorities in three core areas: Performance Education, Performance Psychology, and Performance Health and Wellbeing. Additionally, two core research method modules set out to provide the skills and knowledge required to design, conduct, and report high-quality research. Working with broad definitions of “performance” and “science”, the programme challenges musicians to (re)consider the ways in which music is taught, learned and performed, the role of music in society, and to ask and

answer questions, via social science methodologies, that lead to new and enhanced practices. The programme is assessed through a combination of written assignments including case studies, oral presentations, examinations, and an independent research project and dissertation.

This is the first programme of its type in a UK conservatoire and its impact remains as yet undocumented. This paper therefore sets out to examine students' experiences of the programme to date, and interrogates motivations for studying performance science, perceived learning outcomes, graduate destinations, and the role of the MSc in professional development.

## **Methods**

### *Materials*

Data were collected via an online survey, constructed and hosted in *SurveyMonkey* ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). The survey was developed specifically for the present study, and comprised five sections:

- i) Participant information and consent;
- ii) Demographic information, including (a) gender, (b) nationality, (c) year of commencement of MSc, (d) current country of residence, (e) mode of study (full- or part-time), (f) age at commencement of MSc, (g) qualifications prior to, and since, the MSc;
- iii) Current activities, including information on paid work and/or further study, and the contribution of the MSc, if any, to these activities;
- iv) Experiences of the MSc, including motivations to study performance science, highlights of the programme, challenges of the programme, key learning points, and plans for the future;
- v) Current connections with the RCM and/or the MSc.

Questions were both closed and open, and respondents were able to write freely in response to questions in sections (iii), (iv), and (v).

### *Participants*

Of a total of 23 eligible MSc graduates, 16 (n=14 women, n=2 men) participated in the study. Any MSc graduate with at least one year post programme completion was eligible to

participate. This is to allow post-study graduate destinations to be monitored. Participant characteristics are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant characteristics.

<i>Age</i>		<i>Nationality</i>		<i>Start year</i>		<i>Registration</i>		<i>Previous qualification</i>	
20-25	7	British	7	2011	5	Full-time	8	Undergraduate	11
26-30	3	European	4	2012	9	Part-time	8	Postgraduate	5
31-40	3	Overseas	5	2013	2				
41-50	2								
>50	1								

### *Procedure*

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was secured from the Conservatoires UK Research Ethics Committee. Eligible participants were then contacted by email by the MSc programme leader, with a personalised invitation to take part in the online survey via hyperlink. Data were collected between May and September 2015.

### *Analysis*

Microsoft Excel 2010 was used as a platform for descriptive analysis of the quantitative data and for coding and thematic clustering of the qualitative data.

## **Results**

Results will be presented in four areas: motivations for studying performance science, perceived learning outcomes, destinations, and the role of the MSc in professional development. The qualitative strength of each theme is indicated by the number of times it was cited, and indicative evidence for each theme is provided in the form of quotations.

### *Motivations*

Motivations for studying the MSc were clustered into four themes:

i) Content of the programme, including the intersection between arts and science (n=5):

It [the MSc] bridged my experience in music and biology, and the content was directly relevant for my work in teaching. (Graduate 10: Male, 2011/12 cohort)

ii) The opportunity for self-reflection and questioning (n=5):

It's [the MSc] highly interesting considering it attempts to answer many of my music related life-long questions. (Graduate 11: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

I had many unanswered questions about various aspects of my musical training, of my psychological wellbeing as a musician and so on. I was convinced there were missing links in my musical life and wanted to find out the reasons for this. I felt I needed to understand the psychology of practice and performance in order to be able to help myself and others. (Graduate 12: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

iii) The uniqueness of the programme (n=4):

There was no such course existed in any other schools. (Graduate 4: Female, 2011/12 cohort)

iv) The location or reputation of the RCM (n=4):

I was looking for an opportunity of overseas study. The MSc programme was quite a new subject to me and RCM was a renowned conservatoire that made the choice attractive. (Graduate 9: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

### *Perceived learning outcomes*

Key perceived learning outcomes were clustered into five main themes:

i) New study skills, including immersion in a new field of literature and academic writing (n=13):

Where to go in this field (main authors and studies for each main topic in performance science). (Graduate 5: Female, 2011/12 cohort)

How to structure an essay/research paper. (Graduate 16: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

ii) Research methods skills (n=12):

How to design and conduct a research project. (Graduate 5: Female, 2011/12 cohort)

Research methods and process of research. (Graduate 14: Female, 2013/14 cohort)

iii) Applied content knowledge of key issues in music education, psychology, and health (n=10):

Aspects of health and wellbeing applied to music. (Graduate 10: Male, 2011/12 cohort)

Subject knowledge in music psychology. (Graduate 14: Female, 2013/14 cohort)

The importance of teaching certain topics to a student musician. (Graduate 11: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

iv) The intersection between practice and theory, and processes of self-reflection (n=6):

Becom[ing] a great musician is not just practising hard, but to know ourselves physically and mentally inside out. (Graduate 4: Female, 2011/12 cohort)

The importance of analysing and understanding what we, as performers, do. (Graduate 7: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

Science and music/arts can complement each other really well and I would say this represents a necessity. (Graduate 12: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

v) Enjoyment of education (n=3):

Learning can be fun again. (Graduate 3: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

I like performance science more than I knew. (Graduate 5: Female, 2011/12 cohort)

### *Destinations*

Figure 1 details the destinations of the 16 MSc graduates. The majority of graduates are in paid employment alongside further study, or applications for further study in the future.

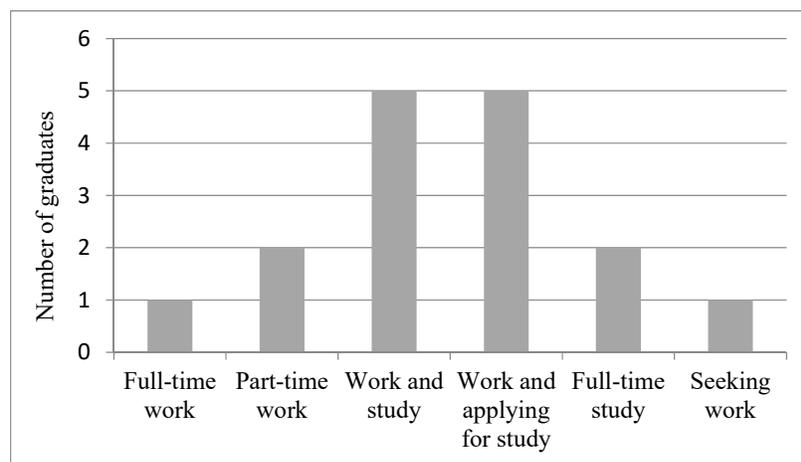


Figure 1. Destinations of RCM MSc graduates.

Of those in full- or part-time work, eight graduates reported more than one professional activity. In total, 11 graduates reported roles in music education, five in musical performance, one in research, and four in other roles. The graduates reported a total of 19 career aspirations for the future, including research (n=8), education or musician support (n=5), research-informed practice (n=2), other (n=3) or unsure (n=1).

### *The Role of the MSc in Professional Development*

The positive meaning of the MSc for professional development was clustered into three themes:

i) Overarching career development (n=5):

I've got more understanding of the music profession which has enhanced my confidence in working in the field. (Graduate 9: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

Very influential on my career as a teacher, enabled me to develop ideas about teaching and music education, and to research them thoroughly. (Graduate 10: Male, 2011/12 cohort)

It is a valuable step towards becoming a performance coach for musicians, and doing a PhD. (Graduate 16: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

ii) New and applied knowledge (n=4):

I learnt a lot about a subject that I was passionate about (research). I did not do this degree with a specific career aim in mind. My own personal goals and applying the knowledge to my music practice came first. (Graduate 15: Male, 2012/13 cohort)

It was a step towards a new direction, to learn about something I had always been interested in but never had a chance to learn before. (Graduate 14: Female, 2013/14 cohort)

iii) An opportunity to reflect and think holistically about (musical) practice (n=6):

It helped me to further appreciate the interplay between art and science. Helped me to adopt a more holistic view and appreciate the effect of music on people's lives and their health – which is good for training to be a doctor, which is what I'm doing now. (Graduate 3: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

I feel I am [a] better and fuller musician. That the knowledge filled some gaps in my musical development and helped me being more aware and perhaps more analytical of certain things, which helps me as a performer and as a teacher. (Graduate 7: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

For me, the MSc opened inner avenues I never knew existed. As I haven't been involved in academic work previously, learning to make sense of academic writing (English being my second language) has been a revelation. Writing a 12,000 words dissertation by the end of the course was a real achievement and somehow an invitation to develop further, to go even deeper into the research of the music world. I find combining music performance with science a very exciting and necessary tool for a musician—it certainly opened my mind in many ways. (Graduate 12: Female, 2012/13 cohort)

Twelve respondents reported that the knowledge and skills that they secured through the MSc contribute to their current work or study while three reported that this was not the case.

## **Discussion**

This paper has detailed the motivations, perceived learning outcomes, and destinations of graduates from the RCM's MSc in Performance Science programme, and has documented respondent views on the MSc's role in their professional development.

Results indicate that musicians are motivated to study performance science in order to learn more about the intersection between art and science and to engage in self-reflection and questioning. The programme's uniqueness and location were also reported as important factors in applicant decision making. MSc graduates reported that they learned new study skills from undertaking the programme, including accessing and critiquing literature and writing academically, as well as skills to undertake their own research. Further, the programme equipped them with applied content knowledge of music psychology, education and health, and facilitated processes of self-reflection at the intersection of theory and practice. Upon graduation, the majority of graduates are in paid employment alongside further study or applications for further study. Graduates typically reported that the MSc positively contributed to their current employment or study—be it guiding them towards new or more established professional paths, providing new knowledge and skills that can be applied in practice, or allowing a space for reflection and development of a more holistic view of being a musician.

Given the context in which the MSc was established, and the imperative for new ways of educating professional musicians, these results indicate the programme's potential for providing a new space for musicians to critique and enhance their musical practices. Following Joubert and Schubert's (2015) argument that "critical thinking, multidisciplinary, 'hands-on' approaches and reflexivity are important for music education" (p. 172), the MSc

appears to offer a form of research-led-reflexivity that supports graduates in developing their careers as informed and curious musicians. The number of students returning to study later in life and in addition to previous postgraduate qualifications (see Table 1) is testament to the role that a programme such as this has to play in proving ongoing professional development for musicians at all stages of their careers. Indeed, that research features in the professional aspirations of the graduates—and that new study skills and research skills were cited as key learning outcomes from the programme—speaks to the value that they perceive social science to be bringing to the study of music, and encourages a form of criticality and analysis that compliments that already embedded in the study of music itself.

This case study of one programme within higher music education is designed to demonstrate an example of “leadership in action”. Now in its fifth year, and with over 20 students, the MSc continues to endeavour to educate musicians for careers as leaders in their fields, with the know-how to be able to challenge the status quo, to generate new knowledge, and to advance our thinking on music, performance, and education. Conscious of the limitations of this paper’s relatively small sample, further research will continue to collect data from MSc graduates in order to interrogate the programme’s impact over its first decade.

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# **Work Placement of Music Performance Graduates: Trajectories, Obstacles and Strategies**

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## **Abstract**

This study explores problems related to the transition from study to work as described by music performance graduates in Mendoza, Argentina. Sociologist Claudia Jacinto (2004) states that while several decades ago work placement could simply be defined as the moment in which somebody got a job based on his/her knowledge acquired at school, we have now arrived at a much longer process, in which there is a rotation of unemployment periods, sub-employment ones, back to school options, etc., before a certain level of stability occurs, if it ever happens.

As a first approach to the problem, we decided to adopt a qualitative method and collect the life stories of young musicians within five to ten years after graduation ( $N=23$ ), acknowledging that the multifaceted job of an artist is difficult to register statistically in a reliable way (Bennet, 2008). Surveys mostly register full-time jobs, and fail to reflect the ways in which musicians move along to seize opportunities for artistic development while trying to make ends meet.

Data was collected in a series of Concert-Debates, in which graduates were invited to participate by playing a chamber music piece of their choice. At the end of each concert, participants were organized on stage as a panel, with a research team member as moderator. Each participant was asked to address briefly four topics: current job/s, other previous jobs to date (trajectories), obstacles experienced in trying to get a job, strategies used to become employed. Participants debated the four topics. Finally, questions from the audience were allowed. Afterwards, we worked on the transcription of the videotapes, extracting meaningful passages of discourse which became our analysis units. Table 1 shows examples of data organization.

Table 1. Examples of data organization

<i>TRAJECTORY / CURRENT JOB</i>		
ANALYSIS UNIT	SUB-CATEGORY	CODE
“I entered the Symphony Band, usually the first step, and that made it much easier to enter the Symphony Orchestra”	Degree-specific job 1	DEJ1
“Parallel to my Oboe Major I completed a Music Ed. degree. I started working in a suburban-at risk community kindergarten.”	Degree-specific job 2 (Double Degree)	DEJ2
“I taught music in Primary and Secondary Schools for two years: it was not for me! in the beginning you do it to open your way.”  “Working in music education gave me the economic stability that allowed me to buy a new oboe, and then complete a post graduate course in Brazil.”	Alternative music job—Music Education	AMJ-ME
“...I am also a copyist, and the piece I just played is my own transcription”	Alternative music job—Music Services	AMJ-MS
“My artistic experience is the guitar quartet. I actually work in a family business”	Non-music job	NMJ

<i>OBSTACLES</i>		
ANALYSIS UNIT	SUB-CATEGORY	CODE
“...so I asked for a leave of absence to study abroad but when I got back from Europe, my place had been taken, so...there I was, jobless.”  “Maybe they re-audition the same position and somebody else wins. Maybe one is older now, has a family...moving and running the risk of losing everything from one day to the other...it’s complicated.”	Job precariousness	JP
“...temporary jobs that are hard to combine with the stable one that you need to keep to subsist”	Multiple jobs	MJ
“A doctor gets paid...why should I play for free every time?”	Society prejudices	SP
“...but they prefer to hire one multi-instrument player rather than three players [ <i>in musicals</i> ]	Oversupply	OS

<i>STRATEGIES</i>		
ANALYSIS UNIT	SUB-CATEGORY	CODE
“Starting to contact people from other places, making relationships with other musicians...this has turned to be of vital importance for me lately...”	Interpersonal net	IN
“We realized that Latin-American music is becoming more relevant, so we arranged a project around it and it is working really well”	Market adequacy	MA
“Study, go for the degree, try to be good at what you do...good grades lead to scholarships abroad, and that is something that looks good in your resumè”	Academic training	AT
“All in all, there <i>are</i> possibilities. The clue is being perseverant. In this field you have to be very perseverant”	Personal attitude	PA

Results show that young graduates face a complex situation and they feel not fully prepared for it. The music performance field offers few job opportunities for those who wish to obtain a full-time employment performing their instrument or singing. Most graduates found part time jobs in different music areas that could be combined with their playing or singing activities, thus experiencing an overload at first, especially when they found out that they needed competences that were not acquired in performance major programs. Gallart (1997) defines competences as a set of attributes in constant change that must undergo the test of specific problem solving in the workplace. Thus, competences do not come exclusively from the school curricula, but from the exercise of applying knowledge in critical working circumstances.

This skill mismatch is eventually reduced as the young professional continues to seek for jobs closer to his/her specialty, and/or incorporates new skills or new areas of interest. An analysis of the 23 trajectories shows a slow but steady progress towards job satisfaction in most cases. Yet, it raises concern about the poor attention higher music studies give to the development of entrepreneurial skills, professional networking and team work strategies.

Since one of the objectives of this study was to create awareness of the problem in grade students, and these youngsters hardly pay attention to research reports, we hired cartoonist Beto Espinoza, who depicted a selection of ten of the collected stories (preserving anonymity of each case) and a gallery of big size cartoon strips was set up in one of the school corridors, to stimulate discussion over the topic. Pictures are shown below.

While external conditions are hard to change, we believe that students and performance teachers being conscious of the need to be more open to different ways of surviving in the music field is the key to set in motion strategies (institutional and/or personal) that may help young professionals find their way in the music labour market. Those initiatives will be necessarily local, determined by the particular socio-cultural circumstances and opportunities of each city or country.

## **Keywords**

work placement, music performance careers, graduates, labor transition

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# **Enhancing Graduate Employability Through Community Engagement Projects: A Case Study of Leadership in the Performing Arts**

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## **Abstract**

Graduate employability continues to be an important focus for tertiary curriculum developers and academics, and, in Australia, universities employ various means to measure the employment of their graduates and use this as a marketing tool for recruitment (Kalfa, 2015). Within the creative and performing arts sector there is much debate about the types of skills that should be included in a curriculum to give graduates the best-possible outcomes in terms of employability (Bennett, 2011; Bridgstock, Goldsmith, Rodgers, & Hearn, 2015; Brown, 2007). Curriculum designers and academics are also building evidence to support the notion that a curriculum that privileges authentic learning and assessment experiences can result in the acquisition of a broad range of skills for the learner that can provide lifelong benefits (de la Harpe & Mason, 2014; Leglar & Collay, 2002).

This paper will examine one learning and teaching project at an Australian university that goes beyond the established curriculum, that is deeply embedded within the local communities surrounding the university, and that also provides opportunities to identify and mentor emerging performing arts leaders whose student leadership experiences have a profound effect on their graduate employment. Developed as a result of a community need, this performing arts project brings together tertiary students, university faculty, government partners and community leaders. As a long-running community engagement project with a track record spanning seventeen years, it has a clear community focus yet it also expands and enhances the tertiary performing arts curriculum providing the emerging leaders with educational opportunities that blur the distinction between student and professional, and provide valuable graduate employment outcomes.

Several project leaders, who have since graduated from the university, were asked to reflect on their experiences as emerging leaders within the project, the mentorship that was provided during the project, and how these leadership skills have translated into their graduate careers in the performing arts and related fields. The data was analysed for common themes that would answer the research question: how does the experience of student leadership within a tertiary performing arts project prepare students for a career after graduation? The results of this analysis showed that the learning acquired as student leaders in this project allows the emerging leaders to move seamlessly into the realm of the professional, providing them with added confidence in their leadership skills and opening their minds to further career opportunities not previously considered.

## **Keywords**

Performing arts leadership, student leadership, mentoring, authentic learning, graduate employment.

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## **Introduction**

The inclusion of leadership skills within the tertiary performing arts curriculum has not always been a primary focus for curriculum developers, but with the increasing desire to create authentic learning and assessment experiences for tertiary students within their undergraduate degrees (Carey & Lebler, 2012), and to provide opportunities to increase the employability of university graduates, leadership emerges as a significant by-product of the graduate attributes that are often linked to these learning objectives (Harrison, O'Bryan, & Lebler, 2013). Skills such as critical thinking, communication, information literacy, teamwork, problem solving, information technology competence, cross-cultural competence and ethical practice are defined as graduate attributes and through the completion of the learning outcomes in the program of study, graduates are expected to have attained high levels of competence in each of these areas measured through a range of assessment paradigms including reflective practice (Blom, Rowley, Bennett, Hitchcock, & Dunbar-Hall, 2014; Brown, 2009).

Add to this, with the increasing opportunities for universities to engage with non-university agencies to solve real and serious problems in their communities (Dempsey, 2010; Quek et al., 2012; Soska & Johnson, 2004), there are many possibilities for the development of community engagement projects that can challenge emerging student leaders to develop their leadership skills within the safe environment of the university, be mentored by faculty and project partners, while at the same time solving a real and serious problem in the community. Furthermore, the projects provide authentic work experiences for these leaders that can transfer into graduate employment opportunities across a wide range of related fields. These opportunities for community engagement can be fostered in many discipline areas across the university and this paper will discuss one such community engagement activity that draws on the skills and expertise of students and faculty within the performing arts discipline.

## **The Project**

Celebrating Schoolies is a major social phenomenon in Australia, where thousands of young people converge on beachside holiday destinations to celebrate the end of their formal years of schooling and the transition from adolescence to adulthood. The Whitsunday Schoolies event, based at Airlie Beach Queensland, regularly attracts thousands of school leavers from North Queensland, and the *Choices* applied theatre project is a significant part of the safety response for Whitsunday Schoolies. Taking a harm minimization approach (Midford et al., 2014; Munro & Midford, 2001; Peterson, Northeast, Jackson, & Fitzmaurice, 2007), the fifty-minute performance, written, directed, choreographed and performed by university music theatre students, uses a sketch comedy format based on current pop-culture references relevant to Australian seventeen year-olds to effectively deliver important health, safety and legal messages to over 3000 year twelve students before they arrive at Schoolies. Research conducted by the *Choices* team and the Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research at the University of Queensland found that students who had watched the *Choices* presentation “reduced the risk of engaging in risky behaviour by 59% even after controlling for the effect of gender, pre-Schoolies drinking, binge drinking and illicit drug use at Schoolies” (Quek et al., 2012, p. 5).

The student directors of *Choices*, mentored by the university faculty, lead two teams of student performers through the rehearsal process and subsequent tours to high schools in Central and North Queensland. These students work over several months writing, rehearsing and performing *Choices*, which includes over thirty key health, safety and legal messages. Working side-by-side with health professionals, law enforcement officers and community agencies, the student leaders ensure the script includes safety messages that are up to date and in line with current government campaigns, and also select appropriate music and popular culture references that will connect with the seventeen year-olds in the audience. The *Choices* project is a partnership between the university staff and students, the Queensland Police Service, the Whitsunday Regional Council Schoolies Advisory Committee, the Queensland Department of Health, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and other community organisations including the Friends of the Conservatorium, Headspace and Red Frogs.

## **Student Leadership and Graduate Employability**

The literature in the field of tertiary student leadership is growing as more tertiary institutions recognise the value of a curriculum that encourages engagement with its communities in order to bring a sense of authenticity to the learning experiences of students (Dempsey, 2010; Harper & Quaye, 2009). Bernardo, Butcher and Howard (2014) use reflective writing and autoethnography to explore the operational milieu between university and community as well as the managerial roles inherent in these types of community engagement projects. Through the development of a curriculum with a focus on engaged teaching and learning (Bryson & Hand, 2007), universities are able to ensure the quality of the educational experiences for students (Coates, 2005). Furthermore, Stuart, Lido, Morgan, Solomon, and May (2011) suggest that students who participate in engagement activities gain skills that include leadership, and these are highly valued by future employers, and thus add weight to the engagement activity that may occur as part of the university curriculum, or as an extra-curricular activity.

Service-learning is also a theme that is emerging in the literature around tertiary curriculum (Lester, 2015; Vickers, Harris, & McCarthy, 2004). Bringle and Hatcher (1996, p. 222) note that service learning “enhances performance on traditional measures of learning and increases student interest in the subject” while Lester (2015) emphasises the importance of developing strong relationships between university and community to ensure service-learning projects meet the needs of all project partners, including those of the student leaders. Turner (2012) found that students who engaged in extra-curricular music projects became more invested in the projects when there was a service-learning element. When service-learning is embedded within a tertiary curriculum, it also has the potential to cultivate students with a strong sense of civic responsibility that is carried across into post-tertiary life (Reiff & Keene, 2012).

The skill-sets required of students to secure employment after graduation (Cavanagh, Burston, Southcombe, & Bartram, 2015) has also been widely studied across a range of disciplines, including performing arts (Bennett, 2009; Brown, 2007; Daniel & Daniel, 2015). Tertiary curriculum developers have increasingly acknowledged the importance of not only producing graduates with high skill levels in the core disciplines within the performing arts, but of allowing students to gain a wide range of non-performing arts skills that include leadership, team management, budgeting, strategic planning and time management (Bennett, 2011;

Bridgstock, 2013; Bridgstock et al., 2015; Brown, 2009; Daniel & Daniel, 2015). Helyer and Lee (2014) report on the inclusion of work experience and internships within the tertiary curriculum, and how this is a valuable tool in the preparation of work-ready graduates. The work of Bennett and Bridgstock (2015) and supported by the research undertaken by Daniel and Daniel (2015), highlights the importance of the acquisition of a wide range of non-performing arts skills to increase the employability of performing arts graduates.

## **Research and Methodology**

The *Choices* project has a long history in the north Queensland region and has been recognised nationally and internationally as an effective community engagement project with evidence demonstrating that it changes the lives of young people during their Schoolies celebrations (Quek et al., 2012). However, its role as a tool for the development of emerging leaders in the performing arts has not been fully explored, and this paper will address this fundamental research question: How does the experience of student leadership within a tertiary performing arts project prepare students for a career after graduation?

Using the *Choices* applied theatre project as a case-study (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Yin, 2009) to answer this research question, two sub-questions were posed by email to a small number (n=6) of music theatre graduates who have been student leaders within the *Choices* program:

1. Did being a leader of *Choices* help you with your confidence on entering the workforce after graduating from university? If so how?
2. Did being a leader of *Choices* help you in your performing arts career after graduation? If so how?

Their email responses provided the data for this qualitative study. While their identities are known to the researcher, they are not disclosed within the paper. Their responses were analysed for common themes that postulated an answer to the broader research question about the provision of student leadership opportunities in the performing arts that enhance graduate employability. The analysis and discussion will add to the debate around graduate employability in a wide range of activities including the performing arts and related fields.

## Results and Discussion

### *Personal Self-confidence*

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the responses was around the idea of personal self-confidence, and developing the skills and ability to create one's own work as a performing artist. As reflected by one of the graduates, the confidence gained through the leadership experience enabled them to trust their own ideas as a performing artist. "I learnt to be quite fearless in my choices and trust my instincts" (Respondent 3). The ability to create new work as a performing artist can be vital in an increasingly competitive market (Bennett, 2011).

Leading *Choices* has also given me more options with my career...I can create my own work to get noticed. Having seen this work for some of my peers, and indeed having had it pushed by my agent, I know it can be a valuable option. And leading *Choices* is what makes me believe I can achieve it. (Respondent 6)

For example, on first arrival in Canada where I had no contacts, referrals or experience working in the country I was shortlisted for an audition with a children's theatre company in a similar leadership role mostly due to my similar experience with the *Choices* program. It also certainly helped me build the skills required to take initiative as a performer, being able to really put myself out there and not be afraid to approach people about opportunities and even creating my own performing opportunities. (Respondent 4)

These comments support the notion of the graduate performing artist creating a protean career (Bennett, 2009; Bridgstock et al., 2015) where artists find themselves changing focus throughout their career in order to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise. "The protean career pattern is characterised by: (1) personal construction of career and recurrent acquisition or creation of work (likely to occur on a freelance or self-employment basis); and (2) strong intrinsic motivations for, and personal identification with, career" (Bridgstock, 2013, p. 124). Participation as a leader within the *Choices* project at university was an important step for the development of the protean career for these graduates, one of whom also reported on the importance of the university project in developing his confidence as a leader in the workplace. "I have since done a stint as Operations Manager at one of Queensland's biggest theatre companies, which I can say fairly safely came about, at least partially, as a result of that confidence" (Respondent 6).

### *Transferability of Skills*

Another significant theme emerged around the confidence to transfer skills into new areas of employment. “*Choices* required me to use a variety of skills such as coordinating and working closely with a group of people, managing a budget, carefully planning a schedule for each day, showing a professional attitude and time management” (Respondent 2). Cavanagh et al. (2015, p. 279) note that Australian university curriculum designers often assume that “graduates can seamlessly transfer and apply employability skills in any employment context and sector.” However, several studies have made it clear that such skills are often best developed in projects or extra-curricular activities that extend the curriculum (Helyer & Lee, 2014; Stevenson & Clegg, 2011; Stuart et al., 2011), thereby allowing these students to blur the distinction between the student and the professional and move more easily into graduate employment.

Respondent 1 provided a clear example of the transfer of his skills from the university project to later graduate employment.

I have recently accepted a management position at my current work place (non-performing arts job) where I have been given a team of sixteen employees to lead and manage within my department. The experience that I gained by leading two teams of approximately thirteen students (per team) across two regions simultaneously during *Choices* was crucial and paramount in me securing my current position of leadership as it was seen as an invaluable experience that the other applicants did not possess. (Respondent 1)

This particular respondent also touched on another by-product of the student leadership experience where he demonstrated the ability to exercise a transformational leadership style (Abfalter, 2013) within the project, providing both direction and autonomy to the creative partners in the project, thus adding to its ongoing success.

The experience that I had dealing with situations during times of hardship within the teams gave me the knowledge and skills to help my fellow cast-mates through equally difficult times, be it with a director, producer or other. It can be said that having a position of leadership for an educational production makes you a more eligible candidate for employment within the performing arts industry as you become perceived as someone with maturity, stability and professionalism. (Respondent 1)

### *Moving from student to professional*

A third theme emerged around the move from student to professional, as several of the respondents took on leadership roles within *Choices* in their final year of study. “As *Choices* was essentially the final project of my degree, I feel like it propelled me in the direction of professionalism and allowed me to consider myself, in terms of my career, as more than just a performer” (Respondent 5). Madison (2014) provides some insight on the way internships and projects that sit outside the regular university curriculum provide learning experiences for students that blur the distinction between student and professional and this is supported by the work of Daniel and Daniel (2013).

Respondent 6 was very positive about the learning experience of leadership within the *Choices* project: “I would say that, in a very real way, leading *Choices* was one of the biggest learning curves, and one of the most influential experiences I had in my time at university.” Further affirmation on the effectiveness of the *Choices* project in developing confident leaders who could step with assuredness into their professional career, came from the fourth respondent.

Having had the wonderful leadership opportunities that I did with the *Choices* program (particularly in my final year as the last thing I did before entering the “real world”) I found this was a real confidence booster and a good chance to hone in on my leadership skills and remind myself that I possessed such skills. I believe this elevated confidence is essential when you are trying to pursue a career path, which is all about knowing and being confident in yourself and your skills and feel the *Choices* program was the perfect stepping stone between finishing my degree and moving into the professional world. (Respondent 4)

While there is evidence that long-term internships in the creative arts can also pose problems for the participants in term of the type of working conditions and frequent lack of payment (McGuigan, 2010; Siebert & Wilson, 2013), the *Choices* project is a short community engagement project that takes the positive characteristics of an internship or work-integrated learning (Smith & Worsfold, 2014) and embeds the project into the tertiary performing arts curriculum. The high level of engagement of faculty with the project also ensures that the workload of the student participants is not increased to beyond a manageable level.

The University and the committee members really provided the entire structure for us to create within. As a first time director it gave me space to focus on the creative side

of the project without getting too tied to the administration (definitely not my strong suit). Any feedback was always very gently delivered, and it was much more common for us to receive encouragement and praise for what we had done. They really did provide a great playground for us to play in, and I think that was an incredible form of mentorship (Respondent 6)

## **Conclusion**

This paper has explored the notion of graduate employability in the performing arts through the lens of a particular performing arts project that includes the identification and mentoring of emerging performing arts leaders. The project is an on-going community engagement project that brings together tertiary students, faculty members as well as government and community organisations to solve a very real problem within the region—that of safety for young people during their end of school celebrations, known as Schoolies. Aside from the performing opportunity, the project relies on the ability of student leaders to manage the teams of performers, liaise with community and government partners, and bring the performances to fruition in multiple venues over the period of a two-week tour.

The student leaders who responded to the research questions, all found the project extremely challenging yet rewarding. Their responses were further analysed to identify three consistent themes: personal self-confidence, the transferability of skills, and the progressing from student to professional. The respondents were able to articulate specific instances within the project where they had been challenged to develop these essential skills in leadership. Furthermore, they recognise the importance of these skills in their graduate careers, citing many instances where the acquisition of these particular leadership skills has resulted in them securing lasting and satisfying paid employment.

This particular case study of a tertiary performing arts project adds some useful evidence to the growing literature around graduate employability, and the types of learning experiences that could facilitate the development of emerging leaders in the performing arts. However, further research needs to be undertaken to identify the specific aspects of the project that could be further embedded into the tertiary performing arts curriculum to enhance the employment opportunities for performing arts graduates in Australia.

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# **Leadership as a Core Creativity for Musician Identity**

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## **Abstract**

Leadership development and musician identities are complex ideas that may be understood from theoretical and practical perspectives, and yet rarely are they explicitly addressed within higher music education. This paper draws on complexity theory to probe these perspectives. It does so within the context of an internship program designed to offer student musicians authentic workplace experiences. Complexity theory suggests that across multiple domains there are often three elements that enable the diverse situations to cohere. In this case, student musicians' movement through multiple domains exposed three connective elements: namely, bridging the gap between theory and practice, flexibility, and reorienting learning as career relevance is realised. The inclusion of experiential learning in the education of professional musicians enabled the student musicians to develop essential, transferable skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork, workplace negotiation and problem solving. Moreover, students learned to re-imagine what their musical world might mean and how their own capabilities and creativity might come to the fore as leaders. This learning was evidenced in students' reflections on this important professional experience. The skills identified by students are also identified by employers as being vital to successful transition to a career, and the same skills identified by practising musicians as vital to leading complex careers within and beyond the music industry, often from the point of graduation. The paper reveals how students experience the liminal space between formal music study and internship work experiences and how, in turn, they transform their thinking from situation to situation.

## **Keywords**

higher education, music, complexity theory, graduate competencies, transferable skills, career transition

## **Introduction**

Musician identity is a complex notion that comprises a sense of self, or being. Students are actively involved in developing their concept of self as a musician whilst engaged in their formal musical studies. However, formal studies rarely lead to a deep understanding of potential professional worlds, or to the leadership that is required of musicians in professional settings. Leadership development and musician identities are both complex ideas that may be understood from theoretical and practical perspectives. This paper reports an internship program established to provide music students with authentic workplace experiences. In the internship context, students are able to re-imagine what their musical world means and how their own capabilities and creativity can be utilised as leaders. We explore how leadership is understood and what musician identity means from the perspective of complexity theory. Following this discussion we explore how leadership is played out in the experience of students who have undertaken internship programs within the music industry. The paper reveals how students experience the liminal space between formal music study and internship work experiences and how, in turn, they transform their thinking from situation to situation.

## **Background**

Leadership and musician identity are graduate qualities that we expect music students to acquire during their time in higher music education. Leadership graduate qualities are favoured by the music (and other) industries as enabling the process of creative innovation, whilst musician identity grounds the individual inside a musical community of practice. The intersections between these two important qualities have rarely been explored in an empirical sense. We suspect that this is so because of the complex character of each of these elements. Leadership development for musicians, and musician identity, are things that seem to evolve out of a (young) lifetime of study. To understand the manner in which leadership and musical identity are developed in practice, against the rhetoric that surrounds them, we use the lens of complexity theory. In this paper, we explore responses from our participants who define creative leadership as an aspect of changing identity, greater self-awareness, broadened perspectives and an awakened professional commitment.

When student musicians perform or work it is possible to consider them as part of different communities of practice. As student musicians their community is a learning community and they are expert in that domain by the time they complete their studies. But they are also a part of multiple work sites where they can play with peers who are students like themselves, or long time professionals. They are also part of this community of practice, but still as novices in that professional context. These, and other, different communities enable them to consider their leadership roles and musician identities in different ways (Reid et al., 2011). The idea of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) has been long established in business contexts as a community that comprises people who share a particular passion and, through that passion, engage with others in specific ways. However, the musician's community is uniquely complex (Hennekam & Bennett, forthcoming), and participants in this community also experience an unstable income (Bennett, 2013). The work of systems theorists such as Senge (1994) suggests that internal and external situations both strongly influence individual's leadership styles and activities. For many workers, the organisation provides the main external influence which, in most commercial situations, is saturated with complex ideas and relationships. Much research literature related to leadership development is situated in the field of business, which brings to it the logical assumption that businesses are designed to make money. And, from the perspective of complexity theory, "almost anything can effect anything else" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 22).

According to Marion (1999, p. xii),

Leadership begins when the behaviour of one system stimulates certain behaviours in another system, that in turn stimulates another, and another; eventually the chain of stimulation returns to motivate, or catalyse, the original system and the cycle is reinforced. Order ... [therefore emerges] not because someone or something expends energy to create it; [but] rather order emerges from the natural, and free, consequences of interaction.

However, this complex view of stimulating interactions is problematic in the music industry as many of the activities undertaken by musicians do not make money, nor are they located in clearly established organisations. Rather, leadership is dispersed throughout a musical activity and the development of leadership skills comes within a liminal space.

Within this liminal space, musicians have multiple socially and culturally defined identities endorsed through musical encounters, role models and aspirations. Musicians' work-related identity often incorporates an intrinsic "calling" (Randle & Culkin, 2009) that represents the whole self and is expressed in such a way that nothing else can be imagined. Moreover, the musician identity encapsulates "the importance of shared understandings and practices in musical, social and cultural terms" (McDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2009, p. 465), highlighting the networked community context of musicians' practice and identity.

The strong focus on performance and creation is reinforced long before students enter higher music education (Bennett & Freer, 2012). At odds with this is the complexity of musicians' practice, which most often involves multiple and changing roles and employments within and beyond music. This requires the reconciliation of multiple, often changing professional selves into one, multimember nexus (Wenger, 1998). Solomonides and Reid (2009) observe that the presence of identity as simultaneously singular and multiple is seen in both practising and aspiring musicians. As such, a student's *sense of being* and *sense of transformation* form the ontological core of identity and engagement, and around this are epistemological spokes such as professional knowledge, discipline knowledge and engagement.

In reality, then, musician identity develops alongside a sense of self that can be disrupted and reinforced, feared and ideal, liminal, troublesome and transformative. Moreover, the complexity of musicians' work heightens the need for what Rowley and Munday (2014) call a "growth" mindset: identity development as a process of integration and formation not bound within the constraints of discipline, sector or traditional ways of working. For higher music education to support student musicians in the development of their musician identities there needs to be "a dynamic interplay between the two notions of who the person is becoming and what they are coming to know" (Reid, Dahlgren, Petocz & Dahlgren, 2011, p. 15). Central to this are experiences, such as that reported here, that enable exploration of music and self within the context of community.

## **Approach and Context**

Students do not necessarily have rigidity or certainty when at the early stage of their profession because they are still in the process of integrating and forming their musician identity (Rowley & Munday, 2014). Indeed, we would argue that identity is a process of becoming—of change—throughout the career lifecycle, albeit particularly tenuous in the early stages of career transition. This led us to query the extent to which the process of engaging in an internship might influence students' sense of self.

The internship program at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (SCM) aims to develop awareness and knowledge of the Arts sector combined with knowledge and understanding of work place practices. The internship works as an exchange of services for experience between the student and his or her employer. Students use an internship to determine if they have an interest in a particular career, to create a network of contacts, and/or to gain credit towards their degree. Students are introduced to collaborative skills and techniques for working in a team setting using knowledge and skills learnt in their university program. From this comes an understanding of effective professional skills, and knowledge of leadership and management techniques essential for developing professional practice.

Musicians construct their identities taking into account their musical, social, cultural and psychological theories, which help to explain the behavioural aspects of musician identity (McDonald, Hargreaves & Mielle, 2009). This unit of study operationalizes this thinking by allowing students to apply their musical knowledge to the broader Arts community as they engage in specifically designed internship programs for professional practice.

Students choose a project that will involve working in an organisation in the Arts sector. The internship is a system of on-the-job training and this structured unit of study seeks and selects the most appropriate places for students according to students' interests and expertise and the availability of suitable host employers.

Once ethical approvals were in place, students (n=75) completed their internships unit in 2013 - 2015 and 61 submitted their written reflections for analysis by the research

team. Student reflection tools did not ask any questions about leadership; rather, we analysed to see whether students raised these themes as a natural component of their reflective practice. The team employed deductive analysis to analyse the reflections, searching for key words such as leadership and for leadership themes as described in the following section.

## **Results and Discussion**

In this short paper we bring out the student voice as reported from within the internship experience to show that it has assisted students in developing a professional ability, to take on new roles and responsibilities, and to adapt to and work with new knowledge (Rowley, 2012). We focus on three leadership themes: bridging the gap between theory and practice; flexibility; and reorienting learning as career relevance is realised.

Complexity theory suggests that across multiple domains there are usually around three elements that enable the diverse situations to cohere (Manson, 2011). In this study, our student musicians move through multiple domains throughout the internship program and the three connective elements are the themes described above. We present below some short statements from students to provide evidence of the three different domains identified; however, these statements are also part of longer narratives that contribute to the overall pool of meaning in this study.

Students reported the level of flexibility in their thinking as a result of undertaking the internship program.

Career Relevance: My everlasting passion lies in music, however, I recently discovered a more profound passion, that is, teaching music [student LM]

This quote from student LM shows how prior experiences are considered differently in the light of the internship experience. LM now sees herself strongly as part of the community of musicians, but also of the subset of musician teachers. The language she uses strongly demonstrates her transforming identity.

In the quotation that follows there is a somewhat reverse orientation. DS is already well-entrenched in music education as his primary degree focus, but the internship

experience has enabled him to articulate other skills that he has. In the internship program the situation enabled him to change the emphasis of his knowledge to suit the new situations. In that sense he is able to make a bridge between one community and another.

Bridging: music education now as a lifelong career choice, maybe not always teaching as I have developed a range of skills that include being able to clearly articulate the skills I have now [Student DS].

From a reflective component of the unit assessment, the student below demonstrates a sophisticated view of leadership. As in the others, this student dances in the liminal spaces between experiences and is able to focus on the things required of each situation as the situation demands.

Bridging: ...critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity... all of these things I experienced allowed for a shift in my practice being realized... [Student CD].

TR below demonstrates a reorientation perspective as current student skills are evaluated in the light of a 'competitive' industry, and the industry experience has shown how to refocus in the student domain. This student is now able to see the relevance of professional work to current study, and current study as a preparation for a newly appreciated work situation.

Reorientation: "As an operatic artist, I am always learning and evolving ... this internship has provided a platform for some fundamental skills that I can build on and expand ... and I definitely need to keep on improving vocally and continue to work on my stagecraft skills in order to succeed in this highly competitive industry" (Student TR).

The following quotations emphasise networked forms of work which is an essential component of communities of practice. In fact, this is the essence of creative leadership within communities of practice: recognising the ability to build on team passion and skills.

Creative leadership: "Through the internship program I realised that music programs are created through hard work and pushed to a high standard by those who care. Someday I wish to be in a musical setting that sets up music and musicians for the next generation" (Student LC).

Creative leadership: "... pulling together a network of like-minded individuals and pooling resources to make things happen was the core lesson in this internship." (Student VN).

In a sense, the student comments reported here support the notion that creative leadership could be seen the ability to stimulate otherwise disunited individuals that might want evidence for (creative) leadership.

## **Conclusion**

This paper illustrated how tertiary music students experience the liminal space between their formal music study and internship work experiences, and the impact of these dual experiences on their thinking about self and career. Through an exploration of leadership we discussed musician identity from the perspective of complexity theory. The discussion of how leadership is evidenced in the experience of students who have undertaken internship programs within the music industry was supported by student comments. At the conclusion of the internship program, students were able to demonstrate an ability to apply relevant theories, skills and knowledge to the workplace.

The student musicians' experiences enabled them to bridge the gap between theory and practice; notice the need for flexibility in the workplace and in their own thinking about self; and develop the creative skill of reorienting learning as career relevance is realised. Thus, the inclusion of experiential learning in the education of professional musicians can be seen to enable student musicians to develop essential, transferable skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork, workplace negotiation and problem solving.

The paper has revealed how students experience the liminal space between formal music study and internship work experiences and how, in turn, they transform their thinking from situation to situation. The skills identified by students are the same skills identified by employers as being vital to successful transition to a career, and the same skills identified by practising musicians as vital to leading complex careers within and beyond the music industry, often from the point of graduation. The ability

of students to re-imagine what their musical world might mean, and how their own capabilities and creativity might be utilised as leaders, is evidenced in their reflections on this important professional experience.

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# **Collaborative Learning, Leadership and the Pedagogy of Autonomy**

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## **Abstract**

Collaborative and creative learning to develop musical leadership seems to be an important way to address the new paradigm of teaching and learning music and art. Some concepts from Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of Autonomy" will be presented in this work along with other authors such as Peter Renshaw, Sean Gregory, Gaunt and Westerlund, and a few others.

Out of the twenty-seven principles presented and discussed in Freire's *Pedagogy of Autonomy*, some of them are particularly relevant to the education of professional musicians. One central principle concerns Freire's 'dialogical' process, which is the basis for collaborative work. Freire stresses that teachers should be facilitators instead of mere transmitters of knowledge. Education for autonomy, according to Freire (2011), seeks to develop critical students who are able to reflect and transform society. Freire (2011b, p. 94) reminds us that learning happens in the invention, reinvention, as well as in the restless search. Thus he advocates an education that breaks with vertical schemes and this is only possible through dialogue: "No one educates anyone, no one educates oneself, people educate each other mediated by the world". According to the dialogical perspective, "the educator and pupils educate themselves in communion" (Freire, 2011b, p. 95). The pupil becomes his/her own agent, developing his consciousness. This is a key concept within the collaborative proposals outlined by Renshaw (2010, 2011, 2013), Gregory and Renshaw (2013), and Gaunt and Westerlund (2013).

Some other principles from *Pedagogy of Autonomy* related to collaborative learning and leadership development are: "teaching requires respect for pupils' knowledge" because their knowledge is socially constructed in their practices (Freire, 2011, p. 31). When previous knowledge of the pupils is taken into account, it creates a sense of familiarity that facilitates integration with new knowledge that will be produced in the new context of learning.

"Teaching requires knowing how to listen." As teaching should not merely transfer knowledge, educators have the role of arousing pupils' curiosity and encouraging them to overcome difficulties in understanding. In this sense, it is fundamental to "hear" pupils' doubts and fears, and learn how to talk to them. Freire (2011, p. 117) keeps arguing about the importance of listening to others, explaining that "listening means the permanent availability for the opening speech of the other, the gesture of the other, the differences of others". Legitimately listening to others requires several qualities that are built into the democratic

practice of listening. "Teaching requires commitment; it requires understanding that education is a form of intervention in the world; it requires making conscious decisions" (Freire, 2011, pp. 94, 96, 106).

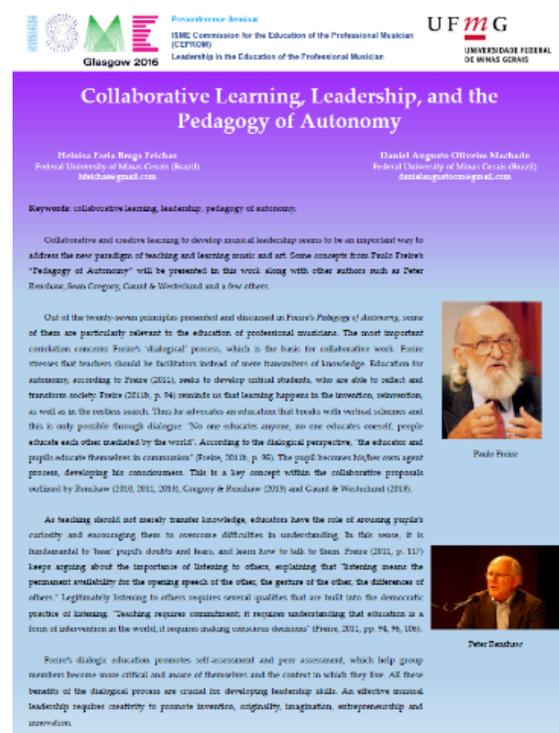
Freire's dialogic education also promotes self-assessment and peer assessment, which help group members become more critical and aware of themselves and the context in which they live. All these benefits of the dialogical process are crucial for developing leadership skills. An effective musical leadership requires creativity to promote invention, originality, imagination, entrepreneurship and innovation.

## Keywords

collaborative learning, leadership, Pedagogy of Autonomy.

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# **Enacting Transformative Pedagogy in the Music Studio: A Case Study of Responsive, Relational Teaching**

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## **Abstract**

Over some decades now, education scholars have clearly delineated the characteristics of transformative pedagogy—student-oriented, flexible, responsive, explorative, context-rich, and have equally clearly and convincingly argued for the potential of this approach to improve learning outcomes in students. With the attention of music education scholars and practitioners now turning to implementing and cultivating the transformative approach in the one-to-one music studio environment, it is becoming increasingly important to better understand specific behaviours, strategies, interventions that together result in a transformative approach to teaching. This article reports on part of a larger project on transformative pedagogy in the studio one-to-one tertiary music environment, which aims to improve the education of the professional musician-in-making by fostering transformative approaches to teaching and learning. The article offers a nested case study of one teacher whose pedagogical approach was identified, in advance of this study, as predominantly transformative. Using video-recorded lessons as prompts, the authors explore transformative behaviours and strategies as manifest in the approach of this teacher, inviting reflections of the teacher herself on what, specifically, transformative teaching looks like in the context of her music studio. Themes range from the importance of pedagogical agility in adapting and responding to the student and situation at hand, to methods of fostering student ownership of lessons and learning, to building a relationship of confidence and trust with the student. In this way, this brief case study offers one example of how transformative teaching and learning may be enacted in the music studio. It argues that particularly in those situations where exemplary teaching practices are shared among colleagues, such pedagogy constitutes a form of leadership-in-action, as the benefits roll out to other teachers and, crucially, teachers-to-be—that is, students. The authors hope its findings will inform and support the aspirations of teachers and institutions to foster transformative pedagogical approaches to one-to-one music teaching and learning.

## **Keywords**

one-to-one, studio teaching, transformative pedagogy, responsiveness, pedagogical agility, student ownership, leadership

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## **Background**

For some decades now, scholars and practitioners have underscored the value of a transformative approach to education (Boyd & Myers, 1988; Cranton, 1994; Lysaker & Furness, 2011; King, 2005; Mezirow, 1991; Taylor, 2007). Transformative pedagogy is characterised by a student-oriented approach to learning, where process is emphasised over outcome, and where the teacher remains responsive and adaptable to the distinct needs of each individual learner. The role of the teacher is to help students learn how to learn, through exploration, collaboration, and placing new learning in context; in this way, students take an active part in their own learning. Several studies in the area of education generally (Mezirow et al., 2000; McGonigal, 2005; King, 2005; Lysaker & Furuness, 2011), and music education specifically (Carey & Grant, 2014; 2015a, 2015b), underscore the potential of transformative pedagogical approaches to improve short- and long-term learning outcomes, to increase student engagement and motivation in learning, to support students' personal and professional growth, and to help them develop strong career and life skills.

In the context of increasingly scholarly focus on the characteristics, challenges, and outcomes of one-to-one music teaching and learning (Burwell, 2013, 2015; Carey & Grant, 2014; Gaunt, 2007, 2009; Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013; Gaunt, Creech, Long & Hallum, 2012; Kennell, 1997; McPhail, 2013; Nerland, 2007; Perkins, 2013; Presland, 2005), the attention of music education practitioners (and the institutions in which they work) is now turning to finding optimal ways to implement and cultivate the transformative approach in the one-to-one studio environment. As these efforts gain momentum, it becomes increasingly important to better understand the specific behaviours and beliefs that comprise a transformative pedagogical approach. As a contribution to this end, this brief case study presents some of the specific teaching philosophies, interventions and strategies of one conservatorium-based studio music teacher whose teaching displays predominantly transformative characteristics. In this way, it represents an example of how transformative teaching is enacted in the studio.

Kate—a pseudonym—is a voice teacher in the jazz department of an Australian university-based music conservatorium. She has been teaching in this department for around 19 years and often teaches in other voice areas of the institution, formally and informally. She has around 33 years' teaching experience at undergraduate and postgraduate levels across the spectrum of contemporary styles, with a focus at undergraduate level on jazz voice, and

musical theatre voice. Kate regularly performs as a freelance singer and band vocalist in a range of contemporary styles, including Legit, belt musical theatre, jazz, pop, rock, and rhythm and blues (R&B). She reports that she learnt to teach by doing, beginning her teaching career at a performance school where she managed up to 250 students a year—aged 4 to adult—in class and individual lesson environments. Upon starting to teach, she immediately began to self-educate in areas of pedagogy and vocal technique, by reading relevant literature and by attending national and international conferences and symposia on voice science and vocal pedagogy. This education, which Kate describes as intense and strategic, was further supported through Kate’s working association with three speech pathologists and two Ear-Nose-Throat surgeons, for whom Kate became an integral team member in remedial programmes for voice-damaged singers.

Since 2011, Kate has been one of six teachers at her institution participating in a project that explores transformative pedagogy in the context of the one-to-one music studio. Research in the early stages of that project reported in Carey et al., (2013), Carey, Grant, McWilliam and Taylor (2013), and Carey, Lebler and Gall 2012), used an in-depth coding scheme and framework to analyse a series of video-recordings of these six teachers’ lessons, to quantify the extent to which they demonstrated characteristics of transformative strategies in their teaching. Kate’s profile signalled that her teaching was the most strongly transformative of all six teachers—an index of 0.85, on a scale between 0 and 1, against an average across the six teachers of 0.58—on this basis, she was chosen as the case study for this research. Detailed description of the process of identifying Kate as a strongly transformative-style teacher is provided in those earlier publications.

For this case study, Kate video-recorded a lesson with each of two of her performance study students: a 19 year-old male and a 26 year-old female student, both enrolled in the second-year jazz strand of a Bachelor of Music, and both receiving the typical one individual lesson per week as part of their studies. The younger student only recently started lessons with Kate, choosing to take advantage of institutional openness to students studying with more than one teacher in the second and third year of their programs, while the 26-year-old had studied voice with Kate for around 18 months at the time of the videos. The videos were recorded in August 2015, early in the second semester of the academic year. The teacher selected these students for this research on the basis of convenience, willingness of the students, gender difference and different experience levels of the students.

Following the video-recordings of these lessons, the first-named author guided Kate's verbal self-reflections on the specific ways her teaching strategies and behaviours embodied characteristics of transformative learning, and how these interrelated with her teaching philosophy and approach. Through semi-structured elicitation and using the lesson videos as prompts, the discussion covered themes from Kate's methods of fostering student ownership of lessons and learning, to building a relationship of confidence and trust with the student, to remaining pedagogically agile and responsive to the student and situation at hand. This discussion was audio-recorded and later transcribed, and it forms the basis of the next section, the case study. In preparing this paper, the authors sought Kate's further reflections on the themes of the study, as well as her comments on a draft of this article; her feedback is integrated into this final version.

## **Case Study**

*Fostering ownership and a positive learning environment:* Celebrating her students' learning successes and creating a positive learning environment are strong characteristics of Kate's teaching. With all her students, she aims to "get one success per lesson and really focus their attention on that one success, whatever it might be. It might just be 'I feel happier about this now; I can smile at this now'". Kate believes that her positivity is a strength of her teaching; even with those students who "don't do a lot of work", she says, "I'm calm and I'm never negative". Her students "know that I get a lot of joy out of their successes. I don't mean success in the industry, I mean small successes." Kate began the videoed lesson with the 19-year old student—her second lesson with him—by complementing him on changes to his tone since his first lesson, asking whether he was aware of the change, and if so, in what way it felt different: "I wanted him to articulate rather than me tell him ... I wanted to recap on the last lesson, but I wanted to do it in the context of him having had a success." In this way, Kate believes, "he takes ownership of a success that he has ... It then doesn't become: I'm the wizard and I can wave the magic wand, and all of a sudden they can do things better". On reflection, Kate believed that one of the main strengths of her teaching in this lesson was "that I got out of the way a lot ... I asked him to lead the lesson at the beginning. He really wasn't leading the lesson; I was leading the lesson, but I gave him ownership". Encouraging student ownership directly supports Kate's goal of creating a positive learning environment: "In that way, when he has a success it belongs to him and not me". In cases where the students feel unable to carry forward their own learning, however, Kate takes care to ensure

they feel able to ask her for further guidance: “I expect them to go away and work ... [but] they can always come back [for help], and I don't care how many [times]”.

*Approaching learning holistically:* To train the voice in the way best suited to each individual student, Kate takes into account their unique personality and demeanour: “I do a lot of ... getting to know them, so that if they come in and they're not well, if they come in and they're stressed, I can be aware of it really quickly ... I don't want to sit and be a counsellor. I want to work with their voice, but I have to work differently according to their mood”. She acknowledges that students' lives outside the studio affect their learning, and recognises that this demands her constant awareness and adaptation: “You can't rest on your laurels as a one to one teacher. You're on your mettle all the time, because the student ... bring[s] their life in the room with them”.

*Relationship-building:* Building a relationship of trust and mutual respect with her students is both a characteristic of, and a tool in, Kate's pedagogical approach. Regardless of her students' level of skill or knowledge, she says it's “a given” that she treats them as “intelligent young people who are talented”. She makes sure her students know she respects them: “I show them—and I really mean that. I ask their opinion. I respect their opinion”. Building trust is also an undertaking Kate takes very seriously, particularly with commencing students:

In these early lessons, I want to take the time to listen to them. I want to try and just be quiet and listen ... If I ask them a question ... [and] they take five minutes to answer, I'll just stand there and wait. I want them to smile at me. When I get that sort of smile I go, “Well now I've got a way into this mind”.

She frames the value of trust-building specifically in terms of students' learning: “I need to let them know that their voice is safe with me ... I want them to feel as comfortable with me as possible, so that we can get as much work done as possible.” Kate considers her ability to listen and observe to be key strengths of her teaching. Observing the way students receive and react to information is a method Kate employs “to break down the barriers as fast as I can, so we can move faster”.

*Fostering self-sufficiency:* The importance of fostering in all her students a sense of ownership of their learning comes through strongly in Kate's reflections on her teaching:

“We have a lot of power as teachers ... For me the magic is when the student's capable of going back and realising how that problem's been fixed or how they can do it again.” Her attitude toward her students is: “I'll give you the keys. I'll even open the door for you, but you've got to do the work. You've got to walk through the door”. In her lessons, Kate encourages students to diagnose problems themselves, so that “they can correct issues in their own voices”. Another technique she uses to foster self-sufficiency is to insist students audio- or video-record their lessons, then review and reflect on their lesson using the recording “within a day or two ... so that then they're actually having the lesson again”. Kate hopes this will contribute to fostering students' ability to learn outside of the studio: “I don't want to have to be there to tell her how to fix something. My ideal student is the one that can be going, ‘You know what? I have the capability of fixing things myself as long as I listen’”.

*Goal-setting:* For Kate, progress toward overarching learning outcomes are more important than more specific task-oriented progress, such as learning repertoire: “Repertoire for me is not important ... It's not my job to teach them songs.” She believes the learning outcomes of her students is more important than their performance outcomes—that is, for her as a teacher, she prioritises “the joy of seeing them learn something and take ownership of that learning where they can go: ‘You know what, I can do this again, or if that doesn't work I have the skills to work out how to make that better’.” In each lesson, she “wants [students] to feel like they've learnt something”, not only intellectually, but so that “they've actually had time in the lesson to process the learning”.

*Using space and movement:* Kate uses movement and the physical space of her studio to support her students' learning. By changing her position in the room frequently, she aims to shift students' focus: “They start to switch off otherwise. So I tend to move them around the room and try to get them to do different things.” In this way, she reflected of her younger student: “He doesn't feel like he's a specimen being studied ... I don't want him to be focusing on me; I want him focusing on him, on his self”. Kate often uses physical techniques in her lessons, believing many students are “physical learners” (her common tools include a balance board, a gym ball, and a mirror). In the recorded lesson with her male student, she suggested that he put his fingers in his mouth “to get him into a resting jaw position”, because she “want[ed] him to see what it feels like”. At another point in the lesson she asked him to sit, so he could change and explore centres of tension in his body. In using these physical techniques, Kate recognises that until students build confidence and trust in

her, such activities may feel “vulnerable”: “I don't put people straight on the floor, because that's very vulnerable”.

*Remaining pedagogically agile:* Adaptability, flexibility, and responsiveness are key characteristics of Kate's teaching. At the start of each lesson with each student (including the videoed lessons), she “gets them to sing”, because she “want[s] to hear what their voice is doing in that moment, in that day. I don't want to teach to what it was last week, because I only see them weekly. So I want to see where the voice is.” Rather than setting her own pre-determined goals and agenda for each lesson, she will typically ask her students what they wish to cover, both as a way to better understand their needs, and to encourage their own goal-setting. She adapts lesson structure according to the student and situation at hand: “I have a plan, but it's a very flexible plan. It's really oriented to the student ... That's why I think one to one teaching is terribly invigorating but it's also very tiring, because I have no set way that I approach a student.” Whilst recognising that the knowledge base of each student might vary, Kate believes there is no fundamental difference in her approach to teaching beginning students and those more advanced. She simply gauges the situation of each student anew each lesson. She asks frequent questions of students throughout their lessons—“I constantly, purposefully ask rather than tell”—which serves to elicit from the students their opinions and needs in relation to their learning.

## **Conclusion**

Kate's strategies in the studio, coupled with her reflections on how these strategies relate to her philosophy of teaching, suggest a pedagogy strongly underpinned by transformative tenets. She prioritises holistic learning, and generally places more emphasis on longer-term learning outcomes than achieving specific performance-based or task-oriented goals. She is sensitive to the potential of physical space and movement as a tool in learning. She actively fosters an affirmative learning environment, and a personal, collaborative, and respectful student-teacher relationship built on trust. She encourages students to be actively involved in their learning, from setting the agenda in lessons to discovering their own solutions to challenges they face, thereby developing in them self-sufficiency. Finally, Kate remains alert to both the necessity and the pedagogical value of remaining agile and responsive in her teaching, adapting to the unique and changing needs of each student at each stage of their learning journey.

A better understanding of these kinds of specific behaviours and strategies that constitute transformative pedagogy is important, as teachers and institutions increasingly challenge old education paradigms and look to new ways of fostering successful, sustainable, professional music careers. When the transformative practices of teachers like Kate are shared among other teachers and institutions—either through research, as in this article, or in collaborative disciplinary contexts, as in the wider project of which this study forms a part—that pedagogy implicitly represents a form of leadership-in-action, as its benefits roll out well beyond a single studio. Sharing such practices not only enables other teachers to better understand the characteristics and advantages of transformative teaching; it also has intergenerational gain, as students are exposed to exemplary pedagogical approaches which they in turn later adopt in their own teaching practices.

Transformative teaching may be realised in many different ways. In this paper, we have presented a brief sketch of one studio music teacher whose teaching displays characteristics typical of a transformative approach. In so doing, we make no claim that this case study is indicative of transformative teaching practices in general, that it presents a perfect manifestation of the transformative approach, or even that it displays a comprehensive set of qualities inherent in that approach. Rather, we offer this sketch as just one illustration of the specific ways in which a transformative teaching philosophy and approach may be realised in the studio music environment. In this way, we hope to inspire reflection by teachers (and by extension, their institutions) on the nature and value of transformative learning, and how it may be fostered—and ultimately achieved—in the music studio.

## **Acknowledgements**

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# **Shifting the Paradigm: Leading Curricular Changes in Keyboard Skills Training for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Musician**

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## **Abstract**

Due to the changing nature of the music profession, those responsible for training and educating future musicians are considering alternative methods of delivering content and implementing curriculum. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the relevance and cultivation of piano skills for professional musicians in terms of curricular content and implementation. We first outline the background of why teaching keyboard in groups became the norm for preparing professional musicians, as well as in what ways the curriculum developed during this transition. Secondly, we trace the research in group piano pedagogy supplying evidence that current curricular practices have been reported to be ineffective and insufficiently executed. These lead to the thesis of the paper—a call for change for a more relevant and consistent curriculum and higher standard of proficiency. Possible solutions for transforming the keyboard skills curriculum and its implementation with the preparation of professional musicians are presented.

## **Keywords**

Group teaching, curriculum development, piano pedagogy, keyboard skills

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## **Background**

The value of professional musicians' keyboard competency has been made apparent by previous research. However the same research demonstrates that the group keyboard setting, in which this training typically occurs, is not utilized to its fullest potential while the curriculum lacks applicability. In this paper, we aim to make a case for a change in *what* and *how* keyboard skills are being taught in the university setting and offer possible solutions for making these changes in

order to fully prepare professional musicians with relevant and useful skills at a greater proficiency level.

Because university keyboard skills instruction typically occurs in a group teaching environment, we describe the background of group teaching as related to curriculum implementation and how group instruction became the setting for teaching piano skills in U.S. universities. The impetus for group piano classes has been noted as early as 1815. Johann Bernhard Logier first experimented with teaching piano to groups of students of varying abilities and found that students benefitted from these classes regardless of their ability (Richards, 1962). Logier's motivation for teaching in groups was his belief that his piano classes were particularly helpful for beginning pianists because they developed a sense of rhythmic continuity and fluency by performing in ensemble. The first documented group piano courses in the USA appeared in private primary and secondary female schools in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia (Richards, 1962). While group piano instruction continued in private music schools, Calvin Cady, considered the father of group piano instruction in the USA, began advocating for the inclusion of group piano study in public school curricula around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Richards, 1962). By moving to public schools, he was able to expand his program and reach more students. Due to his success, group piano classes then inundated public schools systems in Boston, New York, and Minnesota between 1913 and 1915. By 1924, public schools in 12 states offered group instruction to young children. Again, student motivation in groups as opposed to the one-to-one setting, and the economy of group teaching gave momentum to the adoption of group keyboard teaching (Richards, 1962). Due to the recognition by teachers of the benefits of teaching piano in groups, the growth of piano classes at elementary and secondary levels was staggering (Richards, 1962).

Until 1931, group piano courses were available exclusively for the pre-college student, not for adults enrolled at universities and colleges. Raymond Burrows, another leader in group piano pedagogy in the USA, designed the first group piano course for young adults in 1931, believing everyone could benefit from engaging in music. These first college-level courses provided students an opportunity to develop basic piano technique and learn standard piano literature. Burrows' classes at Columbia University were such a monumental success that they spread to

other public colleges and universities (Richards, 1962). By 1952, more than 256 institutions of higher education had included group piano classes in their curricula (Locke, 1987; Skroch 1991).

These courses were popular because they were an efficient use of faculty members' time (Locke, 1987) and provided students an opportunity to meet with their teachers more often than private piano instruction, which meant being given more learning materials and gaining additional practice on the learning tasks in these classes (Locke, 1987; Skroch, 1991). Teaching in groups offered both financial and pedagogical advantages. With the first appearance of electronic keyboard laboratories in the 1950s, the group piano teaching environment was further revolutionized. Now, teachers were able to accommodate more students and provide instruction to a greater number of pupils simultaneously. Additionally, with the innovation of headsets and laboratory systems, teachers were able to provide customized instruction while still benefiting from the collaborative nature of a group setting (Greeslin, 1971; Goltz, 1971). Group piano classes are now commonplace at most universities and colleges in the USA and have become a model for other countries offering group piano classes at this level as well. Scholars from Korea (Jung, 2005), Taiwan (Chen, 2000), the Republic of China (Kou, 1985), Brazil (da Costa, 2003), Egypt (Sabry, 1965), and Turkey (Kasap, 1999) have proposed that their national group piano curricula reflect the goals and structure of group piano programs in the USA.

## **Curriculum Content**

The university-level piano classrooms of the 1940s provided students with not only standard piano repertoire, but also *functional piano skills*, such as sight-reading, harmonizing, and transposing. Initially, the incorporation of functional piano skills was designed to equip elementary classroom teachers with the ability to lead songs from the keyboard (Robinson & Jarvis, 1967). The focus of these classes changed again in the 1950s; instead of training elementary teachers, group piano classes focused on the skills music majors would need in their intended careers (Richards, 1962).

Currently, most undergraduate group piano programs in the USA take place during the first two years of study, spanning between two and four semesters. They teach music majors a variety of piano skills such as sight-reading, harmonizing, transposing, and improvising; in addition, students are introduced to piano repertoire and play technical exercises (Chin, 2002; Fu, 2007;

Spicer, 1992; Young, 2016). These classes usually culminate in a proficiency examination, which is used to measure keyboard competency; it can be included within the final course in the piano-class sequence, or as a stand-alone examination (Skroch, 1991; Young, 2016). The proficiency examination reflects institutional and teacher attitudes regarding the relevance and perceived importance of piano skills and as such these examinations vary widely across schools (Christensen, 2000; Spicer, 1992; Uszler, 2000; Young, 2016). Commonly assessed skills within the piano proficiency examinations include sight-reading, open-score reading, harmonizing melodies, improvising, and accompanying (Young, 2016).

Although there is not a standardized approach to the curriculum, national music teacher organizations began monitoring the content of group piano courses shortly after their inception and made recommendations for what students should learn. The Music Educators National Conference (MENC, now NAfME) and the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) stated that music majors needed to develop functional piano ability—skills that could be used to encourage participation in music activities (NASM, 1943; Robinson & Jarvis, 1967). They named sight-reading, harmonizing, transposing, accompanying, and improvising as skills that every undergraduate needed to master (NASM, 1953).

In 1967, MENC published *Teaching Piano in the Classroom and Studio*, a document which has often been used as a justification for including a piano requirement for undergraduate music majors (Robinson & Jarvis, 1967). MENC stated that studying functional piano ability provides choral and orchestral conductors and music classroom teachers with skills such as reading from the Grand staff, open-score reading, hearing complete harmony, score study, musical modeling, harmony and theory teaching, accompanying singing, teaching vocal parts, playing assembly songs by ear, sight, or memory, as well as transposing and improvising accompaniments, and supervising piano classes in the school. The final benefit listed in this document is that students and the public will often equate musicianship with the ability to use the piano effectively.

The benefits, as they are outlined, address only one career path, that of the music educator in primary and secondary schools. In fact, the most recent survey found music performance to be a more commonly-earned degree than music education (National Center for Education Statistics,

2013), and new degree programs such as music management, music technology, and other music degrees have become increasingly popular (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The focus on developing functional piano ability for music educators resulted in a thorough examination of the piano skills used by these professionals. Music teachers frequently sight-read, harmonize, play accompaniments, improvise, and read open scores, although the value placed on each skill varies across disciplines within music education (Christensen, 2000; Freeburne, 1952; Graff, 1984; March, 1988; Sonntag, 1980; Spicer, 1992). While music performance is now a more popular degree than music education, very little is known about the piano skills used by professional musicians beyond music education (Young, 2013a).

While the piano skills often included in the piano proficiency exam are those used by professional musicians, students do not attain the level of keyboard competency necessary for their profession (Buchanan, 1964; Christensen, 2000; Case, 1977; Graff, 1984; Hunter, 1973; Lyke 1969; McWhirter, 2005; Wells, 1986; Young, 2013a). As such, several recommendations to change piano classes have been offered: increasing the number of piano classes required (Fisher, 1969), moving the piano class to the last two years in the undergraduate music program (Mauricio, 2009), and tailoring instruction to meet the needs of each degree program (Christensen, 2000; Freeburne, 1952; Graff, 1984; March, 1988; Sonntag, 1980; Spicer, 1992; Young, 2013a). However, the most common recommendations concern the skills taught in these classes. School music teachers report that too much time is spent on developing technique and learning piano repertoire, and consequently the piano skills such as sight-reading, harmonizing, reading open scores, and playing chord progressions, that serve their profession, are largely left undeveloped (see Figure 1). In fact, Sonntag argued that group piano courses “have not made the transition from piano programs designed to prepare performers to those designed to prepare public school music teachers” (1980, p. 75). Similarly, Vernazza (1967) wrote:

The usefulness and importance of the course has been recognized. Now music educators need to establish new guidelines for *how much* can be taught in a reasonable length of time, *where* the emphases shall be, and *what* must be the core of basic piano study (p. 45).

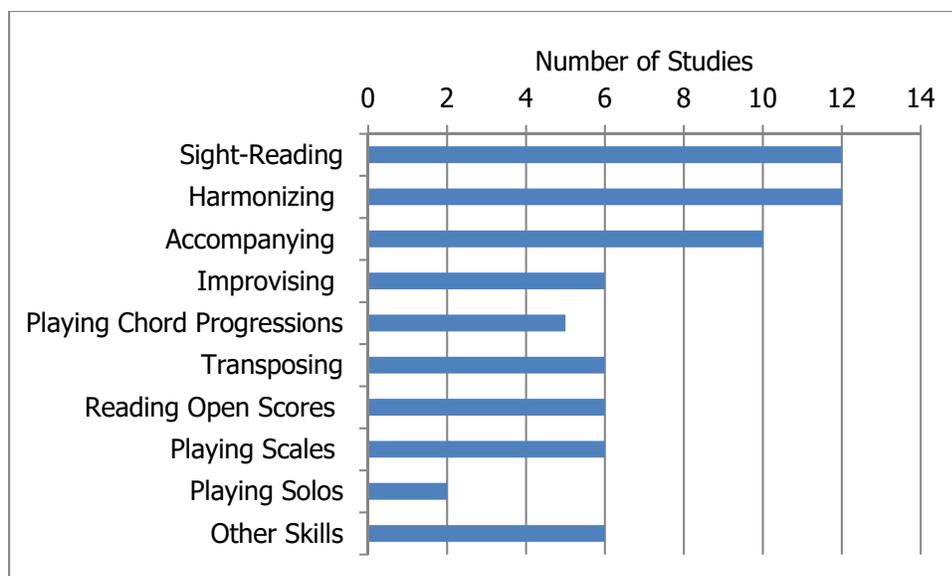


Figure 1. Number of studies identifying piano skills used by professional musicians

The most current information regarding group piano programs in the USA indicates that this transition towards functional piano skills has not yet occurred on a national level (Young, 2016). Additionally, many of the teachers responsible for group piano classes have not had adequate training in group pedagogy, with 88% having earned degrees in piano performance, a degree program that may not require its participants to engage in research or curriculum development (NASM, 2015).

### Call for Change

The call for a change in curriculum began shortly after the establishment of group piano classes for music majors (Vernazza, 1967). Since then, one question resurfaces repeatedly—are we preparing the next generation of professional musicians (Freeburne, 1952; Graff, 1984; Lyke, 1969; McWhirter, 2005; Rast, 1964; Williams, 2000; Young, 2013a)? In order to answer that question, we must first ask what contributions group piano classes make to the training of future musicians. Is our curriculum an extension of the topics covered in music theory (Bastien, 1973)? Or, are we more akin to music education method courses in which we develop the piano skills necessary to function in an intended profession (Maris, 2000)? Although pedagogues and researchers alike have argued for a more standardized approach to the group piano program, no such change in curriculum or assessments has occurred (Christensen, 2000; Spicer, 1992; Young,

2013a). If our purpose is to prepare future musicians for their careers, then we must determine explicit definitions for the functional piano skills needed by professional musicians of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and design our curriculum accordingly.

## **Curricular Changes to the Music Major**

Currently, national music organizations are calling for careful reconsideration of curricular objectives for the undergraduate music degree. The music profession, and its place in higher education, is shifting (National Association of Schools of Music et al, 1998), in part due to the rapid changes to the music industry itself (Thomson, 2013). For example, digital music technology has transformed the way in which we interact with music; the roles of performer, composer, and listener are now ill-defined (Williams, 2007). Because of these changes, the College Music Society (CMS) assembled a task force to examine the relevance of the current undergraduate curriculum. The Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major (TFUMM) developed a manifesto calling for a progressive change based on the three principles of developing creativity, embracing culturally diverse music, and integrating curricular ideas (College Music Society, 2014). When addressing the undergraduate piano class, the task force charged teachers with a “critical reconsideration of the practical functionality of the skills learned in these classes” (p. 18).

To address the concerns of practical functionality, we must first determine which skills to teach our undergraduate music majors and demonstrate them in a way that illustrates how they can be used in the future. In short, we must make the change called for nearly 50 years ago (Vernazza, 1967): developing and implementing a curriculum that demonstrates the applicability of piano skills to any music profession. Sight-reading, harmonizing, improvising, reading open scores, and accompanying are skills valued by professional musicians and therefore are the skills that ought to be emphasized.

If the purpose of an undergraduate education is to prepare students for their careers upon graduating, then group piano teachers should consider how they may contribute to students’ training in a relevant way. Group piano class seems an ideal place to incorporate some of the ideas put forth in TFUMM’s manifesto (CMS, 2014). The impetus for class piano was the

collaborative nature that took place in these classes and the motivation it elicited from the students therein. With CMS's interest in departments collaborating and providing a diverse and inclusive educational experience, group piano teachers can capitalize on what the group learning environment does best—encouraging collaboration between students and developing critical thinking skills. This collaboration may necessitate an examination of common teaching practices and foreseeable alteration of these courses.

Of utmost importance for group piano pedagogues and teachers is the focusing of our curriculum on the piano skills that will serve professional musicians. A catalogue of piano skills necessary for all music careers might be a valuable resource. Although we have information regarding the skills used by professional musicians, what has yet to be determined are the precise description of how these skills are used by professional musicians. Do faculty members sight-read multiple staves at sight or after practising? Do private teachers accompany their students during every lesson and play exactly what is notated or do they reduce the score to make it easier to play? Do public school teachers use Roman numerals or lead sheet notation to harmonize melodies for their students? Identifying exactly how these skills are used by professionals would be a valuable resource to teachers and students alike. A handbook of piano skills for the professional musician which explicitly describes the piano skills utilized by each career could be developed and distributed to group piano teachers to be used in revising their curriculum. This type of document could also be introduced as part of group teacher education in piano pedagogy programs.

## **Changes in Implementation**

Although functional piano skills are often the core of the undergraduate piano class curriculum, many teachers have not altered the way in which those skills are introduced or assessed. In light of TFUMM's emphasis on collaboration, creativity, and inclusivity and the growing body of research on the effectiveness of cooperative learning and authentic assessments, one way we could improve the education of future musicians would be to reevaluate the value of the piano proficiency examination in *how* teachers determine keyboard competency. Perhaps we could emulate other disciplines which ask students to demonstrate their abilities in situations that replicate what they will encounter in the workforce through the use of authentic assessments (Fook & Sidhu, 2010; Suurtamm, 2004; Svinicki, 2005; Watson & Robbins, 2008; Wiggins,

1989). Authentic assessments often allow students opportunities to participate in the design and implementation of assignments which then imitate the way in which they will use the material introduced in the class in the future. Authentic assignments have been used in group piano classes previously, and have improved students' attitudes (Young, 2013b).

Additionally, students must be made aware of the piano skills they will need as professionals. Assignments which require students to job-shadow someone in their intended profession may increase their motivation and skill development (Fisher, 2010; Young, 2016). Professors in other music disciplines (*e.g.* theory and education) could also incorporate piano assignments within their own curriculum thus strengthening the relationship between disparate disciplines (Young, 2016).

Another way students can engage with the materials in piano classes in a meaningful way is through projects that utilize the group dynamics to its fullest extent. Meulink (2011) and Fisher (2006) developed activities based on cooperative learning theory to be used in the collegiate piano class. Cooperative learning-based activities have been found to improve efficacy, time spent in deliberate practice, and skill acquisition in students in a group piano setting (Pike, 2014). These projects provided students with opportunities to improve critical thinking skills and collaborate with their peers while developing valuable piano skills—ideas directly in line with the TFUMM's manifesto.

Future research into group piano curriculum should explore the effectiveness of our curriculum and implementation over the span of several years. Are the skills taught in piano class those which serve music professionals at the beginning of their career and after five or ten years? By tracking the use of piano skills by professional musicians over a period of time, we can measure the practicality of our curriculum and explore methods of improving piano ability among music majors and professional musicians. Further investigations of group piano teacher education could also support a standardized and consistent implementation of a relevant curriculum.

## Conclusions

The benefits of group piano classes have been made evident (*i.e.* increased motivation, opportunities for critical thinking and collaboration, efficient use of teacher time, and additional time spent in directed practice), but the curriculum of keyboard skills classes has not undergone the necessary changes to equip our undergraduate music majors with the piano skills they will need as professionals. Group teachers and pedagogues have the opportunity, and responsibility, to transform and revolutionize the content and implementation of group keyboard classes achieved through open discourse, relevant research, and timely action. The consequences of *not* effecting change bears the same significance as causing changes; therefore, it is imperative that the shift in keyboards skills preparation for professional musicians be progressive, apposite and contemporary.

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# **Shifting the Paradigm: Contemporary Music, Curriculum Changes and the Role of Professional Musicians as Researchers**

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## **Abstract**

Soloists usually perform from memory. When performing contemporary music, however, it seems acceptable to play from the score, the common assumption being that it is harder to memorize than other repertoire. But is it so? Or is it simply that students are not taught to memorize nor are they exposed to contemporary compositions? If this is the case, how can experienced musicians promote changes in the music education of young performers to include such training? Today, mainstream pop music is the predominant listening material for young people. When considering general music education, students are seldom exposed to other important genres such as contemporary classical music. Unfortunately, this has a restricting effect on their musical development. As musician researchers, we have identified a gap in the curriculum of tertiary level institutions in the UK and Iceland—that is, the above mentioned lack of students' exposure to new compositions. This project is therefore an attempt to provide research evidence that may lead to important changes in this respect. The investigation is the result of a proposal by the first author to revise the curriculum for instrumental teaching at the Iceland Academy of the Arts (IAA) by establishing a line of studies focusing on areas needing change. The first of these focuses on strategies and memory types that Higher Education students employ when learning contemporary music. In a pilot study, three advanced guitar students at a Conservatoire in the UK memorized and performed two short pieces—one traditional, the other contemporary—within a restricted time frame. None had substantial experience in playing contemporary music. The sessions were recorded in the presence of the first author who engaged in direct dialogue with the participants. A main study was subsequently performed, involving one longer, more complex contemporary piece. The data was analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Results showed that the participants found it easier to memorize the contemporary pieces in spite of their considerably greater rhythmic and musical complexity. The achievement here is seemingly due to the novelty of the material and the strategies needed for deciphering the complex rhythms. All reported having found the contemporary works more interesting to play than the traditional piece. The development of meta-cognition through reflecting upon their own practising and learning functioned as a self-teaching method for the participants. It was revealing to find that all participants stated that the work they did whilst involved in the research should be included in their Conservatoire's curriculum. The

presentation of the results at the IAA also stimulated similar discussions. This study exemplifies the unique role that experienced performers have in advocating important curriculum changes through robust empirical research.

## **Keywords**

curriculum change, leadership, contemporary music, musician as researcher, memorization

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## **Introduction**

Expert musicians seem increasingly interested in research (Ginsborg & Chaffin, 2011; Lisboa, Chaffin & Logan, 2011), applying their findings to teaching (Lisboa, Chaffin & Demos, 2015). This investigation portrays how professional musicians' experience can be advantageous for their research as they respond to the call for leadership in the area of curriculum change. Our study highlights how Higher Education students may benefit from participating in such a project.

This study focuses on memorization of contemporary pieces. As musician researchers and teachers, it is our responsibility to introduce innovative and challenging repertoire to our students. This, however, is not always an easy task. Through powerful marketing tools and modern technology, mainstream pop is becoming ever more predominant in the media, resulting in an alarming narrowing of horizons and musical preferences. For example, in a recent US consumer survey ("Statista," 2014) where participants were asked to name their three favorite music genres, 40% mentioned Rock, 33% Oldies, 31% Country and 30% Pop. While only 15% named classical music, contemporary music was not even mentioned. This may exemplify the lack of emphasis on it in general music education and the limited extent to which it is taught at the tertiary level. Students are therefore generally deprived of a musical education that engages with the varied soundscapes and diverse composition techniques which are characteristic for the genre.

When it comes to performing contemporary music, soloists tend to play from the score, while traditional repertoire is usually performed by memory (Aiello & Williamon, 2002). This puts new music at a disadvantage since audiences prefer memorized performances to non-memorized ones and musicians also seem to be freer to express themselves without the score (Williamon, 1999). Has the view that memorizing contemporary music is a more complex task led to such approaches? Is it indeed more difficult to memorize or is it a case of finding

more appropriate strategies than those employed in traditional repertoire? In addition, students do not seem to be taught how to memorize. The quote below illustrates the case of an accomplished clarinetist in the Far East:

...many of my professors deemed memorization unnecessary...Therefore, it was never impressed upon me to learn the technique of memorization...I am now entering large international competitions, and performance memorization is a compulsory requirement. Even though I have almost nine years of tertiary study...the task of performing from memory is quite daunting. At my level, technical and memory slips are simply unacceptable.

Hence, there is clearly a need for curriculum improvement in this field at all levels of studies. But how can experienced musicians promote such changes?

In 2014, the first author led a committee to revise the curriculum for instrumental teaching at the Iceland Academy of the Arts (IAA). One of the areas spotted as needing improvement was the teaching and performance of contemporary repertoire. A series of studies aimed at providing research evidence that would help develop the curriculum in that direction was planned. This study is the first of these. Here, the process allowed the participants to discover their own memorization potential, not least apropos contemporary material, by focusing on memorization strategies and the different memory types used.

According to Williamon (2002) and Mishra (2004), four types of memory are used for music: the *aural*, *visual*, *kinesthetic* and *conceptual*. Performing involves complex interactions of all these, the importance of each varying between individuals. Conceptual memory and multiple encoding have been reported by those who have greatest confidence in performing from memory (Hallam, 1997). A fifth type, *emotional* memory, contributes to the process as well (Chaffin, Logan & Begosh, 2009).

Mishra (2004) also defines four memory processing strategies: *segmented* (fragments practiced separately, then linked), *additive* (the same, but continually lengthening segment), *holistic* (the whole piece performed repeatedly, allowing minor regressions) and *serial* (the same, but returning to beginning when errors occur). Different combinations are used, the segmented being preferred by experts (Mishra, 2002), who reportedly also devise strategies to avoid confusion when learning similar passages (Hallam, 1997). Additionally, mental

practice has been shown to be effective for memorizing (Bernardi, Schories, Jabusch, Colombo & Altenmüller, 2012) as is the use of *performance cues*—a series of *landmarks* which function as retrieval schemes during performance (Chaffin & Logan, 2006; Chaffin, Lisboa, Logan & Begosh, 2010; Ginsborg & Chaffin, 2007; Lisboa et al., 2011).

Interestingly, none of the above-mentioned studies deal with the memorization of contemporary works. This investigation focuses on the *strategies* and *memory types* that selected Higher Education guitar students use when memorizing contemporary music, it also compares the results with the memorization of traditional music.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

Three guitar students from a UK Conservatoire were selected: Participant A (PA), a 25-year-old female finishing her Masters; Participant B (PB), a 23-year-old male attending first year of a Masters programme; and Participant C (PC), a 21-year-old male, finishing the first year of a Bachelor programme. None had significant experience in memorizing contemporary music.

### *Materials*

In total, three pieces were composed in collaboration with the composer Kjartan Ólafsson. The pilot study involved a tonal piece with regular rhythms, referred to as *traditional* (TP), and an atonal piece with irregular and complex rhythms, referred to as *contemporary* (CP) (Figure 1). Both contain the same number of notes, are of a similar tempo and of comparable technical difficulty. Their compositional structure is *static* in that no development takes place. For the subsequent main study, a longer, more rhythmically and musically complex contemporary piece was composed (Figure 1). Having no bar lines nor time signature, the melody is based on two cells of differing characteristics. As the piece progresses, it gradually *metamorphoses* from the first cell to the second.

Pilot study - traditional piece



Pilot study - contemporary piece



Main study - contemporary piece



Figure 1. The three pieces composed for the study

*Procedure*

A pilot study and a main study were performed. The purpose of the former was to:

- a) ensure the method's efficacy and validity,
- b) observe whether one piece was more difficult to memorize than the other, and
- c) note whether different memorization strategies and memory types were used by the participants in relation to particular genres.

This served as a baseline for the main study. One hour was given to learn and memorize both pieces (TP, CP) in the pilot, the participants distributing their time as they wished, marking their scores, commenting on the process and, finally, performing the pieces from memory. The sessions were audio and video recorded in presence of the first author, who engaged in dialogue with the participants during the sessions.

The main study, employing the same procedure, aimed at delving deeper into the process of memorizing contemporary music. Given the greater complexity of this piece, the following questions were raised:

- a) would the participants memorize the piece successfully?
- b) would they use the same strategies as in the pilot study or any musical aspects to facilitate memorization (e.g. bar marks, dynamics, phrases)?
- c) were the same memory types used as in the pilot study and was their conceptual memory used to a greater extent?

To answer the last question, participants were asked whether they had analyzed the following compositional elements: rhythms, intervals, pitch, note durations, chord tension, phrases, important notes (as in Schenkerian analysis, see Temperley, 2011), and the metamorphosis of the melody.

Questions were also raised as to whether memorization would be more difficult in two places (see Figure 1):

- a) between A and B, a section characterized by consonant intervals, regular rhythms and similarity of the musical materials, and
- b) between C and D, where the two above-mentioned cells meet and the musical ideas become more complex.

The marked scores were kept as data.

For the pilot study, a thematic analysis was performed on the practice data—namely, the complete verbal and observation transcripts. For more in-depth analysis, an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA, Smith & Osborn, 2007) was performed on the main study data.

## **Results**

### *Pilot Study*

The pilot study ascertained the validity of the method and provided relevant material for exploring the differences between memorizing the two pieces. A large amount of data derived from the participants' comments and the practice data provided scope for exploring the research questions.

Two of the participants found the CP easier to memorize. All spent considerable time deciphering the rhythms, but no differences were noted in memorization strategies for the two pieces. The segmented strategy was predominant for all participants (see Mishra, 2004). Memory types differed between participants, but not in terms of pieces. PA relied on aural, kinesthetic and emotional memory, PB on aural and kinesthetic memory, and PC on visual memory. Examples of individual approaches for each participant are given below.

#### *PA*

PA memorized both pieces well within the time limit, making no mistakes while performing. She considered the CP easier to memorize: “[it] was easier because it’s weirder, so it sticks in my mind more”. However, its rhythmic complexity was an obstacle: “deciphering [the rhythm]...that’s hard”. PA employed the segmented strategy: “[I] divide into phrases or shapes that I can remember” and described her use of kinesthetic memory: “If I don’t play it...just do that [moves hand] then it will go into my automatic memory”. The similarity of the material in the TP was confusing to her: “there are lots of notes the same...whereas... things [in the CP] are more distinct”.

#### *PB*

PB dedicated most of his time to learning the TP and hadn’t memorized the CP when it came to performing. When asked which strategies he would use were he given a few more minutes, he said: “[get] it into my aural memory...[then] take a single bar or...phrase... meticulously fingering it...memorize that bit...and build them up block-wise”. Having applied this segmented strategy he gave a remarkable performance of the CP. Most notes were correctly played, suggesting that had he dedicated the same time to it as did the others, his memory recall would have been correct. The performance of the TP was however correct. PB relied

on aural memory: “[I] try to...get a reasonable sound” but also kinesthetic memory: “when it comes to finger memory...I don’t need to redo anything”.

*PC*

For PC, the familiarity of the TP raised questions about interpretation. This interfered with memorization, and as a result he skipped a whole bar during performance. However, he found the CP easier to memorize and made no mistakes there. He used the segmented strategy, together with musical imagery: “it’s...small segments of colours...that are...connected”. His visual memory was clearly dominant: “[it’s a] visual memorizing thing...to see the notes and the fingers...I think of shapes in the left hand...a clear image” and mental practice figured strongly: “If I can play through the piece in my head...I...can play it...from memory”.

*Main Study*

All participants memorized the longer piece successfully. Strategies and memory types for each participant are reported below, combined with results of the IPA analysis of observations and practice data. Table 1 illustrates the main emerging themes.

Table 1. Emerging themes

theme	subtheme	participant
rhythms	rhythmic complexity	A, B, C
	marking the beats	A, B
	recognizing the rhythms	C
memory types	aural memory	A, B
	kinesthetic memory	A, B
	visual memory	A, B, C
	emotional memory	A
musical aspects	shapes and gestures	A
	feel	A
	internalizing	A
	colours and dynamics	C

strategies	segmented	A, B, C
	holistic	C
	mental practice	C
	memory cues	C
	musical imagery	C
sections	defining sections	A, B, C
	linking sections	A, B
	phrases	A, C
contemporary music	preconceptions, illusions	A
meta-cognition	working under pressure	A
	importance of resting	A
basic technique	fingering and ringing	B
“modes”	performance mode	C
	memorization mode	C

### *Emerging themes*

#### *PA*

For PA, rhythms emerged as a major theme: “[They] look quite hard...I need to work [them] out first”. But marking the beats helped guide her way: “I’ll...[mark the beats] for all of it”.

She quickly began playing, using aural memory “to get the sound in my head” her visual memory lasting only a short time: “I can’t quite remember...how the rhythms look on the page...[it’s more] like a mechanical memory”. Kinesthetic memory was strongly engaged through expressive gestures and movements: “If you give something a shape or think about the gesture [it’s easier] to memorize...it’s less like a random series of notes”. She referred to “feel” in terms of expression, indicating her use of emotional memory: “I’m trying to get it more...musical...I remember things...if I feel something”. She often used the word *internalize* for her kinesthetic, or “other” memory: “when you [don’t] remember what’s on the score...that’s ‘cause it’s...internalized in your other memory”.

PA's strategy was segmentation, but defining and linking the sections seemed hard: "I'm not sure...what the sections should be...I can play it starting from [a new section] but...starting from the section before is harder". She also had preconceptions of how it would be to memorize a contemporary piece: "I always have this...feeling that contemporary music takes way longer to learn than everything else". However, describing a duo project involving new music she commented: "It was weird how quickly things did become familiar. I don't know why it's so scary...I think it might be...an illusion...I don't know if it's really that much harder".

PA also demonstrated the use of *meta-cognition*, being conscious of the time pressure: "It's better to look at everything a little bit first...otherwise I feel...it's an unmanageable task". And as with other expert performers (see Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Römer, 1993), she recognized the importance of resting: "My brain gets tired quite easily...[taking a break is] more efficient".

### *PB*

PB's main focus was on fingering and "ringing"—that is, making notes sound for their designated time: "have to see...whether all the rings work...a very basic fingering idea first" but also rhythms: "No bar lines...no tempo marking? ...I need to...rearrange my head". As with PA, marking the beats proved useful: "I'm trying to help myself with the beats".

PB used his implicit aural memory to mentally *hear* a correct, well-sounding performance, while engaging his kinesthetic memory through careful planning of fingerings and positions. This was dominating during his performance, his only memory slip being due to a recent change in fingering. And like PA, he used the segmented strategy and phrasing, but finding it difficult to link sections: "It's the transition...I can't get right".

### *PC*

At first, PC focused on the rhythmical complexity and the absence of bar lines. But soon, he began recognizing the rhythms: "You...see the rhythmic motive clear enough".

The position of his music stand allowed him to simultaneously read the score and monitor the left hand, creating a *picture* of the note-hand combination. He also employed mental practice,

envisioning the score with closed eyes. During performance, his reliance on visual memory was obvious: “basically, [I] had a picture of the page in [my] head”.

Using both holistic and segmented practice strategies, he repeatedly played the piece through, while also “[grouping] it in smaller things and longer phrases” additionally finding places which served as memory cues: “points where you can...catch up...landmarks”.

While performing, there were memory slips, which according to him were related to shifting from concentrating on memorization to delivering an expressive performance. Having stopped for a moment, he performed again with success, later explaining that he had “[kept] the ‘performance mode’ [while going] back to...‘memorization mode’”.

### *Common Features*

- a) All three participants were successful at memorizing the piece.
- b) The same strategies as in the pilot study were used, mainly segmentation, although one participant used the holistic as well. None annotated bar marks and the use of musical/expressive tools such as dynamics was limited. All defined phrases, differing noticeably only at one point, that is, just before the second melodic cell enters (see numbered points, line 4 of main study piece, Figure 1). Here, PA started a new phrase at point 1, PB at point 3 and PC at point 2. This coincides with Lefkowitz & Tavola’s (2000) theory of segmentation, where three possibilities for section markings are predicted: after the longest note (PA), the largest interval (PC), or a purely musical decision is made (PB).
- c) All participants used the same memory types for both studies. Greatest emphasis was on deciphering rhythms. Compositional elements such as intervals, pitch, duration of notes and chord tensions were also analyzed. However, no important notes were defined, nor did they notice the metamorphosis of the melody. Compared to the pilot study, conceptual memory was thus used to an increased, albeit limited extent.

### *Difficulties in memorizing specific sections*

- a) All participants had trouble memorizing between A and B (see Figure1), where rhythms become regular and the music similar and more tonal. This is congruent with the results of the pilot study.

b) Difficulties were also experienced between C and D (see Figure 1), where the two melodic cells meet and the music becomes more complex.

## **Conclusions**

All participants mentioned that the work they did whilst involved in the research should be included in the curriculum, both for contemporary music and traditional repertoire. Similar discussions arose amongst students and staff when these results were presented at the IAA.

Results show that the participants used the same strategies for memorizing contemporary pieces as have been reported in previous studies on traditional repertoire—that is, mainly segmentation. However, their dominant memory types differed, each using aural, visual, kinesthetic and emotional memories in different combination. This concurs with earlier research (see, for instance, Hallam, 1997).

Two participants found it easier to memorize the CP than the TP, where they experienced difficulties due to the similarity of the material and questions regarding interpretation. It appears that the more unlike or varied the musical materials are, the easier it was to memorize. This indicates that memorizing contemporary music may not be more time-consuming or more difficult than with other types of music; in fact, in some cases it is easier. Three factors may be contributing here:

1. the cognitive demand of focusing on complex rhythms,
2. the slow, repeated playing of musical material over a length of time, and
3. the novelty of the musical material and the attendant freedom from having to play according to set rules or conventions.

More importantly perhaps is the fact that the participants developed their own self-teaching methods by reflecting on their own practising. Now they are applying their newfound skills to memorizing longer contemporary works for public performances, something which they had hitherto thought hard to do or impossible. Therefore, one might suggest that a shift in their paradigm occurred. Memorizing contemporary material has seemingly widened their horizons and helped them experience new sound worlds and composition methods, thus deepening their overall musical understanding.

We hope that this study has helped demonstrate how professional performers can play particular and leading roles in combining practical experience with empirical research. In this case, the focus was on up and coming musicians and 21<sup>st</sup> century repertoire, exploring processes of learning that ideally should be included in their music curriculum.

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# **Building Successful Music Careers: A Case Study of Five Australian Classical Pianists**

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## **Abstract**

Employment opportunities for classical pianists in Australia are limited, and include studio teaching, accompanying, community music and public performances. This case study examines the lives of five Australian classical pianists to identify the common skills that helped them build successful careers. The semi-structured interviews were analysed for emerging themes as well as for connections between distinct skills developed during education and their role in the careers. All five pianists began learning to play the piano at an early age and pursued lessons during primary education, developing their technique, learning numerous works and participating in competitions. In high school the pianists learnt to play other instruments, studied more complex and demanding piano solo repertoire, and participated in many extra-curricular music activities. During performance-focused undergraduate study all had concentrated on improving technique, building solo and collaborative repertoire, including contemporary music, and branching out into other music-related areas. Postgraduate study overseas and concertizing broadened their understanding of world-class music standards. The participants undertook a number of various casual music jobs at the start of their careers but eventually achieved permanent full-time employment. While hard work, ability to learn quickly, and passion for music helped these pianists build successful careers, today's undergraduates will also require diverse music and entrepreneurial skills, and a positive attitude. This case study highlights the need for the development of wide-ranging playing skills beyond solo performance and a greater emphasis on generic music skills as important factors for 21<sup>st</sup> century careers.

## **Keywords**

classical piano, music careers, music skills.

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## **Background**

There is evidence that careers of classical musicians have become increasingly complex in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Bennett, 2012). Burnard (2014) points out that during their careers music undergraduates will have to “negotiate their way through a maze of options, with many informal processes, different decision-making spaces and multifaceted roles, and learn how to adapt continuously to an ever-changing society” (p. 220).

Bennett (2012) reviewed the state of the classical music industry in North America and Australia, finding similar employment situations for classical musicians where there were many more music graduates than available positions. A recent Music Council of Australia report on employment revealed a significant decline in four main categories of professional musicians over 2001–2006, in particular singers (-25%), composers (-19%) and instrumentalists (-11%); yet, it identified an increase in the number of private music teachers (+10%) (Hoegh-Guldberg, 2012). The Classical Music Summit highlighted broad dissatisfaction among music graduates with their lack of knowledge on how to build their careers and the inadequate responses to these issues by tertiary music institutions (Classical Strategy Group, 2011). The Summit has identified a significant problem in transition from tertiary education to professional career, with students not being fully prepared for work.

The investment of public funds in higher education and the training of musicians in Australia is substantial, with 29 different institutions offering 279 music degrees. Recent examination of the changing needs of the Australian classical music industry has highlighted a lack of hard data and an urgent need for new research to focus on music career patterns and skills (Bartleet et al., 2012). In the USA, The College Music Society *Task Force Report* (Sarath et al., 2014) has called for urgent transformation of undergraduate curricula, stating that “significant change is essential if we are to bridge the divide between academic music study and the musical world into which our students will graduate” (p. 10). Similarly in the UK, Burnard (2014) warns that higher education institutions are failing in their duty to prepare undergraduates for the future and that the sector as a whole has to change. It is now timely to focus on the distinct skills that will improve employability of music graduates.

Employment opportunities for classical pianists in Australia are limited. Unlike orchestral musicians who in addition to orchestral positions in State, opera, ballet, and musicals’ orchestras are able to work for State Education Departments as instrumental school teachers, the job prospects for classical pianists are generally confined to studio teaching, accompanying singers and instrumentalists (typically younger students preparing for music examinations), playing for dance classes, community music involvement (accompanying church choirs), and staging public performances with self-started performance groups. Ten years ago Gordon (2006) emphasised the need for classical musicians to broaden their skill set to include teaching, accompanying, church work, party gigs, writing/editing, recording

services, administration, and music management. The necessity of fulfilling multifarious roles during professional careers indeed requires a wide range of musical and life/social skills.

The high cost of one-to-one tuition is putting significant pressure on the number of instrumental lessons offered to students across Australia; many higher education music institutions have slashed the total number of individual lessons per semester from 15 to 12 and/or reduced lesson duration from 60 to 45 minutes and/or substituted some small-group lessons for individual lessons. There is less time for teachers to teach the prescribed techniques and repertoire, and, therefore, even less time to attend to other generic skills relevant to subsequent careers. While much emphasis has been placed recently on entrepreneurship in music, with many Australian institutions introducing careers courses, little is known about the distinct music skills that will prepare music graduates for the 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs.

This case study addresses a gap in music education by examining the lives of five Australian classical pianists in mid-to-late career to identify the common skills that helped them build successful careers. The music profession by its nature involves “artistic, generic and educational leadership [realised] through collaborative artistic practice, informed decision-making, adaptability and flexibility” (Smilde, 2012, p. 111). Literature suggests that musicians in mid-career “seek out more variety in their work” and “demonstrate high levels of expertise, collaboration, reflection and a sense of empowerment” (Abeles, Conway & Custodero, 2010, p. 310). Disseminating the knowledge and experience accumulated by these successful music professionals to wider audiences of music educators and students can inform the preparation of professional musicians-to-be in ways that constitute leadership, challenge the existing status quo, and advocate for change.

## **Method**

A list of Australian classical pianists was compiled through a perusal of piano staff employed in Australian higher education music institutions and an online search for classical pianists. After obtaining ethical clearance, invitations were sent out by email to all pianists on that list and over 20 pianists agreed to be interviewed about their education and careers. The interviews took place in various locations during 2015, some face-to-face and others by phone or Skype. All interviews were audio recorded and are being transcribed. This paper presents

early findings of this research by focusing on five contrasting interviews, chosen using the strategy of maximum variation (Given & Saumure, 2008).

### *Sample*

This select case study consists of five classical pianists, three females and two males, in the latter stages of their careers. Two were born in Europe and emigrated to Australia as adults, the other three were born in Australia but did study overseas after completing their undergraduate degrees at home. In today's Australian multi-cultural context both scenarios are typical in the population in general and amongst musicians in particular: Australian-born students often seek overseas experience to complete their education, whereas international students and professionals come to live and work in Australia attracted by the high standard of living.

The semi-structured interviews focused on the acquisition of musical literacy, musical education (early, primary, secondary, higher and postgraduate), career paths, skills that contributed to success in careers, and skills needed by piano undergraduates for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The interviews were analysed for emerging themes (Creswell, 2008), in particular connections between distinct skills developed during education and their impact on career progression was sought.

### **Results**

All five participants began learning to play the piano at an early age (5–7 years old) and to read music notation from the start. None could recollect having any difficulties in reading music; for one pianist, reading music notation came before learning to read text. During primary school education all of the participants had individual lessons with private piano teachers, and undertook many piano and theory examinations. In addition, they all actively participated in various piano competitions, which motivated them to learn a great deal of additional repertoire, as shown by the following comments:

D: I have done much more than the [...] exam repertoire as [...] competition music was always different.

B: I did my sixth grade exam at age 11 and took an extra list of 25 pieces with me just for fun. I could actually play all those pieces!

Musical experiences at this stage also included singing in choirs, playing piano duets with fellow students, and accompanying other piano students playing concertos.

During the high school years all of the participants learnt to play other instruments in addition to continuing with piano study; strings and woodwind provided opportunities to play in school orchestras, while organ and harpsichord studies developed extended keyboard skills such as improvisation. The pianists studied more complex and demanding piano solo repertoire, with teachers expecting higher quality performances. As one participant stated, “I would spend months on one piece because it was never quite good enough”. However, this increased focus of perfecting solo repertoire was balanced out for all pianists by greater amount of chamber music played and more accompanying, and, for three of the participants, by concerto performances. Their knowledge of piano repertoire increased and they all reported receiving a broad educational experience of classical music.

The undergraduate degrees were performance-focused for all the participants and lasted 4–5 years. Enhancing technique and developing deeper understanding of approaches to interpretation were major goals of the undergraduate study:

D: I had been playing too much without thinking about what I was playing. [The teacher] realised I had big holes in my technique and we worked on lots of studies and exercises.

During this time the pianists were exposed to new repertoire, often contemporary music, as seen in these statements:

A: By that time I was interested in playing what was called contemporary music: Boulez, Tippett, Messiaen. I got a prize or two playing that kind of music.

C: [my teacher] was keen on exploring less well-known repertoire. He gave first Australian performance of Albeniz’ *Iberia* and Ives’ *Concord Sonata*.

Winning prizes in international competitions led one of the pianists to begin touring while still studying:

E: I went almost everywhere, it was a great experience. Now I think it was scary, I don’t know how I survived being so young with no experience, but it was fantastic. It trained me to play in any circumstances and on any instrument.

In addition to building piano solo repertoire, all the participants reported playing a great deal of chamber music and accompanying:

E: At the end [of the degree] there were huge exams. You had to prepare a list of accompanying repertoire of different kinds and during the exam you had to know all of it and they would just pick two or three [pieces].

Four of the pianists branched out into other areas: one year of an education degree, two years of history and fine arts study, attending Schenkerian analysis classes, and investigating group-piano teaching respectively. These additional skills became invaluable for their careers later.

On completion of their undergraduate degrees, Australian-born pianists went abroad for postgraduate study and to broaden their musical experiences. To finance their time studying overseas all applied for scholarships and supplemented this with teaching assistantships, accompanying jobs and chamber music playing. During their time away all learnt a great deal of repertoire in solo and collaborative performances. One of the major educational attractions for Australian pianists studying in Europe and the USA was the opportunity to hear famous pianists, world-leading orchestras and singers, and see international opera and ballet companies in live performances as student-rush and standing-room-only tickets were inexpensive and within their financial reach. This broadened their knowledge of standard repertoire and introduced them to new composers and works:

C: It was wonderful being able to hear on such a regular basis what I think is the best orchestra in the world. Unforgettable, memories that stay a lifetime!

The two European-born pianists in this sample concertized across Europe at the end of their undergraduate study, thus broadening their musical experiences beyond the country of their birth.

In the early years of their careers all the participants undertook a number of diverse casual music jobs: teaching piano in secondary and higher education, advising on piano for an educational authority; teaching music theory, harmony, aural, history, and keyboard skills; accompanying, répétiteur and orchestral piano work. This meant working in 2–3 institutions at the same time, often travelling long distances:

B: I travelled back and forth and played lots of concerts with some marvellous people. But I found myself on the other side of the road at two in the morning one time, and thought, “This is not safe”.

C: I was teaching at a variety of different institutions, in a variety of different areas—a real portfolio teaching career at that stage.

One pianist had to re-start her career three times as she moved to different cities with her husband—also a musician—when he obtained full-time employment in new locations.

Eventually, all were offered full-time positions—including the two European-born pianists who emigrated to Australia—initially on contracts and later as permanent staff in a variety of music roles: teaching piano at higher education and pre-college levels, teaching piano pedagogy, teaching history and academic subjects, and as a higher education accompanist.

All have continued to perform regularly in a range of contexts: solo, chamber music and two-pianos recitals, concerto appearances, and making recordings. Over their career most of the participants had gradually reduced the frequency of their public performances due to work and financial pressures:

A: Until the last few years when the job has got too busy, I continued to play, but then the job started to take over from the performance, and in any case with a lot of wonderful young pianists coming up, there is no need.

B: I think if you are going to play, it is the time and balancing the time that has to be spent to do it properly with the fact that you earn no money from it. The competition is so enormous for so little financial reward. If you are teaching, it takes the time away from your own playing as you need to make money. It can be very challenging.

When asked to identify the qualities that helped them build successful careers the participants highlighted dedication, hard work and ability to learn quickly and perform at a high level as contributing factors:

D: My whole success lies in the fact that I am quick at absorbing things and quick at sizing up the situation and quick to get onto it.

E: I tried to stay true to myself. I believe in meaningful music and I don't want to compromise that.

Enthusiasm and passion for music were considered to be essential to maintaining high levels of motivation throughout often-difficult careers:

B: Total dedication and enthusiasm for the subject has to be there and if that is not there, people shouldn't consider music. That will help with a lot of things such as disappointments that are inevitably there with every career.

C: It is a real passion for exploring new music, an eagerness to explore new ways of teaching, and preparedness to learn how to approach different students individually.

One pianist thought that the success of his career was partly due to a stream of favourable coincidences:

A: I wasn't particularly proactive. I've tried to do things well, but I feel I have been very fortunate, it wasn't any of my doing, just luck. Being the right person at the right time in the right place.

Career advice to piano students of today included developing music skills beyond piano solo playing—being able to reduce scores, transpose, memorise, play collaboratively, learn quickly and remain flexible on the one hand, and to display entrepreneurial, networking, social and business skills on the other; a positive attitude to find their own career path is also necessary:

A: Being a musician in today's world is so much a matter of being more than just a musician. Nowadays, students are not going to really understand how their career should unfold.

D: It is harder that it used to be. Students who are flexible and quite quick and have a really good attitude about trying anything and doing anything will still succeed, and others who just want to sit and practise their pieces won't.

B: Students can't just follow a very traditional path and have limited skills. They need to find where their actual talents lie and then go for it with the very best qualifications they can possibly have in those areas.

## **Discussion**

The analysis of interview transcripts showed that all five pianists began learning to play the piano and acquired music reading-skills at an early age. They pursued lessons in piano and music theory during their primary education, developing their technique, learning a considerable amount of repertoire and actively participating in competitions. The findings are supported by research on expert performance that has demonstrated that starting at an early age and maintaining consistent level of practice for at least 10 years are crucial elements in acquiring expertise (Ericsson, 1997). The literature confirms that regular music lessons with a dedicated teacher play an important role in motivating students to sustain their musical

practice (Hallam, 2009; O'Neill, 1997), and that music examinations and competitions provide additional goals for learning (McCormick & McPherson, 2003).

During high school years the participants' music skills were extended through playing additional instruments, participating in large ensembles, and expanding piano technique and repertoire knowledge. Similar findings were documented by Woody (2004), showing that high-achievers in music tend to be involved in many extra-curricular music activities that provide opportunities for broader musical learning. Burland and Davidson (2002) also demonstrated that peer interactions in group music-making result in support, encouragement and motivation to practise.

Higher education offered the participants more opportunities for collaborative playing, extended their technique and interpretation, and introduced more contemporary repertoire. Postgraduate study raised their understanding of world-class music-making standards. Research corroborates these findings by demonstrating that in higher education music students aim to achieve very high performance standards (Creech et al., 2008) and that participation in group music-making activities helps "to deepen their musical knowledge and understanding", and encourages "the development of self-achievement, self-confidence and intrinsic motivation" (Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2007, p. 93).

All the participants encountered difficulties starting out in their careers and had to remain flexible and willing to work in a variety of part-time jobs, before finally being appointed to full-time positions later in their careers. These real-life outcomes are in contrast to the expectations of full-time music careers typically held by music undergraduates (Lebler et al., 2009). The diverse music skills acquired by all the participants during their education and willingness to explore new music and work in a variety of professional roles demonstrate disciplinary agility highlighted by research as essential for the 21<sup>st</sup> century careers (Bartleet et al., 2012).

Some differences between factors contributing to successful careers of established classical pianists and what is required by current piano undergraduates had emerged. While the participants identified hard work, ability to learn quickly to a high level of performance, passion for music and some luck as important components in their careers, all had acknowledged that additional skills will be needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, namely, diverse music

skills, entrepreneurial skills and a positive attitude. The findings are supported by research, with Perkins (2012) highlighting “determination, pro-activity and flexibility” (p. 13) and Beeching (2012) listing “initiative, resilience, perseverance, optimism, interpersonal skills, problem-solving and organisational skills” (p. 39) as skills needed beyond music performance.

## **Implications for Higher Education**

The examination of careers of five Australia classical pianists showed that diverse musical skills acquired throughout their education had proven invaluable for their careers. Despite this, the focus of undergraduate classical music training in Australia remains firmly fixated on the development of technical skills and expertise in solo playing (Bartleet et al., 2012). In UK career planning and development had been marginalised in the undergraduate music curriculum until recently (Gaunt, 2010). While career courses introduced in many institutions around the globe in the past few years are helping undergraduates to find their own path in music, we should now also focus on the training of diverse musical skills such as instrumental skills beyond solo repertoire and broad generic music skills of transposition, reduction, improvisation, sight-reading, composition and analysis to prepare future generations for portfolio careers.

The old model of higher education music training “needs urgently to become more flexible, open, and accountable, and this will involve change at the industrial, as well as pedagogical level” (Tregear, 2014, p. 55). “A fresh vision of teaching and learning in higher music education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century” as advocated by Burnard (2014, p. 221) is imperative for the survival of classical music.

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# **The Role of an Instrumental Teacher in a Student's Career Development: Negotiating Professional Identities**

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## **Abstract**

Undergraduate students entering UK music conservatoires often go through a pivotal transition as they bring their various hopes and fears into musical and professional aspects of the life on which they are about to embark. In particular, undergraduate students consider subjective and objective factors as they negotiate their professional identities and speculate on their possible career positioning within musical communities. Such a period of personal and professional transformation is often facilitated by their instrumental teachers. The present study explores the construction of professional identity by a first-year undergraduate piano student in a UK music conservatoire, and the role of his piano teacher within that process. Findings suggest that the student's professional identity negotiations involve a reflective process of envisioning a future career, which draws from subjective and objective factors, as well as internal and external dialogues, the latter notably with his instrumental teacher. These are all balanced against each other in order to arrive at a vision that is grounded in his personal interest and musical identity. Finally, recommendations are offered regarding ways in which leadership actions could be taken by teachers and institutions to facilitate students' professional identity formation and career direction.

## **Keywords**

Professional identity, positioning, one-to-one instrumental teacher-student relationships, conservatoire.

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## **Introduction**

Undergraduate students entering UK music conservatoires, often go through a pivotal transition as they bring their various hopes and fears into the musical and professional aspects of the life on which they are about to embark (Burt & Mills, 2006). Particularly, commencing aspiring performers-students are likely to experience apprehensions about

their futures. Having lost their “star” status as the prominent performer within their previous school contexts (Pitts, 2002), students sometimes start to doubt their own musical abilities when surrounded by talented peers (Kingsbury, 2010). Further, students’ aspirations of becoming a soloist-performer are disrupted by their growing awareness of the international competitive nature of musical careers, such that a soloist’s career is available to only a very few after graduation (Juuti & Littleton, 2012). Moreover, while for many people professional identity coincides readily with their job title, careers for professional musicians are rarely straightforward; they often incorporate multiple employments and complex working arrangements in the form of a *portfolio career* (for example, Bennett, 2008).

As such, students consider subjective and objective factors as they negotiate their professional identities and speculate on their possible careers within musical communities (Bennett, 2013). Such a period of personal and professional transformation is often facilitated by social relations (Juuti & Littleton, 2010). One of these key social relations is the support provided by their instrumental teachers (Persson, 1994; Nielson 2006; Gaunt et al., 2012). For example, Persson (1994) states that one of the fundamental elements for the identity formation of professional musicians seems to be the musical and personal dialogue with instrumental teachers who believe in the musical potential and talents of their students, and who support their students emotionally in their professional and personal endeavours. However, although there is potential scope for conservatoire instrumental teachers to guide their students’ attitudes towards and engagement with the professional communities, relatively little research has been conducted to understand the role of conservatoire instrumental teachers within the process of students’ professional identity negotiations (Gaunt et al., 2012).

Against this backdrop, in this article, I explore the construction of professional identity by a first-year undergraduate piano student in a UK music conservatoire, and the role of his piano teacher within that process. The choice of this dyad as a case study reflects my interest in their specific situation: the transition process of the first undergraduate year, during which a freshman student might negotiate his professional identities both as a musician and an aspiring professional pianist. This is because such a transition period is

characterized by intense identity work, involving many internal dialogues with the self and external dialogues with instrumental teachers and others, in attempts to reconcile multiple discourses and identity positions. This dyad case thus constitutes an ideal opportunity for me to explore how the construction of professional identity by a conservatoire student is potentially influenced by his instrumental teacher.

## **Method**

Framed within a social constructivist epistemology, this paper draws on nine semi-structured interviews that have been conducted over the course of a term with a pair of individuals who share an instrumental pedagogical relationship at a UK conservatoire—thereafter referred to as British Conservatoire. The conservatoire piano teacher Pierre, and his first-year undergraduate student Carl, were each interviewed on a one-to-one basis by the author with the interviews lasting between one to two hours. Pierre was recommended by the head of the keyboard department of the British Conservatoire as an ideal participant for this project mainly due to his interest in reflecting on his own pedagogy and relationship with his students. Carl was subsequently recommended by Pierre as a suitable participant in terms of the purpose of this study and the stage of his learning. Pierre and Carl were interviewed separately about Carl's possible future career development and Pierre's guidance in this speculative process. The interviews were transcribed and analysed inductively and triangulated with lesson observations.

## **Findings**

In the space of five months, from March to July inclusive, Carl has gone through a period of doubts, reflections and speculations on his hopes, wants and professional aspirations. This process includes internal and external dialogues, the latter with his piano teacher Pierre, who has supported and influenced this process in a way that is intricately interwoven with Carl's personality, interests, and musical strengths.

### *Dreams, Reality Checks to Possibilities*

Carl is a 19-year-old Chinese student, born and raised in Hong Kong. He began to learn piano at the age of five. He started considering a professional musician's career in his senior years when he was regarded a talented young performer in his own school and

town. This gave him the confidence to dream of becoming a concert pianist. Yet, that dream was at odds with his later realization of “what it’s like in the real world”. Indeed, having studied in the British Conservatoire for six months, Carl’s understanding of his own position within the institution began to emerge; he became increasingly aware of the “competitive” context within and outside of the institution: “In general, this field is very, very competitive, because you’re not just competing with people from the British Conservatoire, but also with other people in the world”.

Additionally, Carl recognized his own weaknesses and preferences as a pianist: “I also realised when I perform solo, I got really nervous...I can’t see myself going through that as my career”. These reality checks and self-understanding triggered Carl’s doubts and raised questions about his future in the music profession. Consequently, he experienced a period of internal dialogues with himself about possibilities in his musical and professional future. In the beginning of the research study in March, when being asked about his professional future, he seemed both uncertain and excited about these possibilities at the same time:

So I’m thinking of being a piano accompanist because I’ve been doing that quite a lot now. I want to be a conductor at the same time, whether it’s an orchestral conductor or whether conductor in the opera house or for a musical. I would love to put a show or be a musical director in Covent Garden or one of the West End shows...I would hope to come back to the British Conservatoire or some conservatoire to teach there (Carl, First Interview, March).

Here, Carl lists possible music-related careers, voicing his hopes, desires and passions. It includes his recognition to do something pragmatic, as a piano accompanist: “I’ve been doing that quite a lot now”; his desire (“want to be”) to be a conductor; his hope (“I would hope”) to be a conservatoire instrumental teacher; and his passion (“I would love to”) for musical theatre. Apart from Carl’s internal dialogues, external dialogues with his instrumental teacher Pierre, as presented below, also contributed towards his exploration of his position within the professional community.

### *Guidance and Reassurance from Instrumental Teacher*

At the time the research was conducted, Carl had been studying piano with Pierre at the British Conservatoire for about 6 months. When being asked about his specific pedagogical aims, Pierre spent considerable time discussing his role in actively imagining and guiding students towards realistic and suitable careers based on students' qualities. This is necessary due to the harsh reality of the performing world: "not anyone can become a concert pianist. It's impossible". He continues:

I try to search what are the best qualities [of each student]. They could become accompanists, they could maybe teach ... I try to see what kind of personalities they are. They can become maybe music critics, you know? You can work at BBC, why not? You never know, in a record company? (Pierre, First Interview, January).

Pierre sees his role as searching for what are considered the best qualities and to get a sense of the student's personality while encouraging them to consider options beyond the traditional soloist career, for example, to consider being an accompanist. His perception of the dialogues with Carl illustrates a speculative approach:

I said [to Carl]: "You might have a big chance one day in in musical theatre and you can maybe play for them, maybe direct one day and that might be your world." He said to me: "How do you know? Because I am actually interested in this." I said: "Well, you have got the look and the personality; you are going to get the training of being a good classical pianist. (Pierre, Fifth Interview, July).

Pierre offers his opinion on what might suit Carl. Based on Carl's "look" and "personality", Pierre envisages a future for him while contextualizing Carl's present classical piano training as the foundation of this future career. Interestingly, Carl's appearance is one of the factors to be considered. When asked how he comes to know a suitable career for Carl, he replies that he has come to this conclusion by "watching" and "listening to" Carl a lot: "It's the energy around him, the way he acts, the way he looks and I heard him play Gershwin also and I enjoyed it a lot but I knew that he was enjoying it a lot." Hence, it is Carl's musical strengths shining through his piano playing, not just Carl's appearance, that has given Pierre the idea. In short, by relating to Carl as a person and musician over a period of time, Pierre envisions the kind of future professional

musician Carl might become, while searching for his personal qualities, interests and musical strengths. Yet, how does Carl perceive Pierre's suggestion? He says:

Pierre mentioned it [the theatre career] to me first out of the blue, he said to me "I've been thinking about you. What are you going to do later on with your life or career? I think theatre would be very suitable". I was like: "interesting", because that's what I've been thinking as well... (Carl-Fourth-Interview-July)

Indeed, Carl is pleasantly surprised, as it had crossed his mind earlier:

When halfway through this year, I want to do something more towards that side of work [in musical theatre]; because I enjoy opera, musical and ballets. So if I like them and I want to do something similar to that, why not set my goal as that? Then not long after, two months later, Pierre mentioned that as well and I was like: "mmm interesting" (Carl, Fourth Interview, July).

Carl finds it "reassuring" to hear that from Pierre. When asked whether it is important that Pierre agrees with his thinking, Carl's response is affirmative:

It's nice to be someone who tell you, that's not your friend in a way, that they approve of what you are thinking, what you are doing. [...] but you don't actually know whether they are being sincere or not. Whereas Pierre he would tell you whatever he thinks. If I go up to him and say I want to be a concert pianist, he would be like: "you don't have what it takes". Because he has a very good idea about what a concert pianist needs to have (Carl, Fourth Interview, July).

This shows that, while it is important for Carl to receive approval from others regarding his professional intentions, he makes a distinction between approval from his friends and from his teacher Pierre. This implies a high level of trust that Carl places in Pierre's judgment, which stems from Pierre's professional experiences and knowledge of what it takes to succeed in certain kinds of musical profession, and also from Pierre's sincerity in giving Carl the realistic picture. Most importantly, Pierre's agreement with Carl carries certain authoritative weight.

### *Emerging Professional Identity*

Towards the end of the academic year in July, during our last interview, when being prompted to reflect on his future, Carl expresses his professional dream:

That I would be able to work in big shows, opera or musical. Musicals in West End or Broadway like *Wicked* or *Les Mis* or *Sister Act* on Broadway or *Phantom of Opera* or something like that. And in opera, I would hope to go to Glyndebourne opera house, in Covent Garden and Amsterdam and Germany, or wherever. (Carl, Fourth Interview, July).

This narrative shows Carl's vivid visualization of his future professional self in successful and specific situations. From the early fantasy of being a concert pianist, Carl has moved to a more grounded choice in musical theatre that is closer to his own musical style, personality and interest. Carl has gone through a journey in developing his thoughts on his professional positioning. While there is still a long way to go before Carl could actualise this goal, he will have at least his undergraduate years and beyond to seek out relevant professional and musical experiences. These experiences could reinforce Carl's conviction, and enable him to start developing his professional career and professional networks in the area of musical theatre.

### **Concluding Comments**

The findings of this study are consistent with the literature about music students' experiences of losing their *star-soloist* status when entering higher music education (for example, Burland & Pitts, 2007), and of realizing the competitive nature of the music profession (for example, MacNamara et al., 2008). In Carl's case, such experiences led to a reflective process of envisioning a future career during his first year of study. This process draws from internal dialogues with himself, external dialogues notably with his instrumental teacher, subjective factors (for example, musical identity) and objective factors (for example, competitiveness in profession). These dialogues are all balanced against each other in order to arrive at a vision that is grounded in his personal qualities, interests, musical strengths and professional realities. This echoes the study by Juuti and Littleton (2012) that students' transition from conservatoire into professional life involves

intensive identity work and is a balancing act using one's own inner resources grounded in reality while following one's individual needs supported by meaningful others.

In particular, Carl's case illustrates an influential leadership role that instrumental teachers could potentially play in supporting the identity work and career direction of conservatoire instrumental students (Burland & Davidson, 2004; MacNamara et al., 2008; Gaunt et al., 2012). The leadership skills modeled by Pierre in this case study closely resemble the function of mentoring, as he facilitated Carl's creative process of professional identity formation while "sharing knowledge and encouraging individual development" with "a longer-term focus designed to foster personal growth and to help an individual place their creative, personal and professional development in a wider cultural, social and educational context" (Renshaw, 2009, pp. 95–6).

However, for a teacher's mentorship role to achieve its full potential in leading students' identity work, more professional development opportunities should be encouraged for teachers to ask "open questions and enabling students to think reflectively and reflexively about their artistic, personal and professional development." (Gaunt, 2012, p. 40). Indeed, in guiding the development of students' reflexivity in their identity work, there is much scope to explore how teachers and students can work together to support their reflective thinking innovatively.

To start with, it is not always easy for instrumental teachers and students to find "the language of reflection" for the purpose of "bringing hidden treasure to the surface" and communicating their reflections to others verbally (Gaunt, 2013, p. 50). For musicians to find the reflective verbal language, they need to be equipped with tools to articulate their thoughts and means of expressing themselves. One such example may be the notion of *sources*: musicians can be asked to find materials—for example, poems, music, or photos—to represent the source of their inspirations and the core influences on their artistic practice and possible career aspirations (Gaunt, 2013, p. 56). Another example may be the use of a *life river*, a critical incident charting method through which musicians can draw out significant influences on their development as musicians and speculate on how such development would potentially mean for their future professional development

(Burnard, 2000). These innovative methods could potentially be utilized by institutions and teachers together to lead conservatoire students' creative process of professional identity formation and career directions in a number of ways.

At the institutional level, there should be regular career development workshops<sup>1</sup> organized for conservatoire students at different phases of their studies, where they can reflect on important questions such as “Why am I doing what I do? How do I perceive my identity? In what ways does this impact on my professional life and work? Where am I going? What determines my long-term goals?” (Renshaw, 2009, pp. 95–6). Such workshops should offer an accepting and safe atmosphere based on values of empathy, trust, mutual respect, honesty and risk-taking (Renshaw, 2009, pp. 95–6). Further, there is great potential for such workshop atmosphere to be gradually transformed into an institutional culture, where leadership team and teachers model similar values to create an empowering discourse of trust and explorations institutionally.

Undeniably, collaborations between teachers and institutions are essential for such institutional culture to be sustainable. For example, ideas gathered from the career development workshops could potentially be shared with the relevant instrumental teachers to inform their teaching meaningfully and possible explorations with their students' aspirations. Finally, a sustained and consistent effort is required institutionally to provide such support structure for instrumental teachers and students so as to encourage students' professional identity work.

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<sup>1</sup> Such workshops could be organized by career centers within the institution. For example, The Royal College of Music in London has a creative careers centre that holds regular seminars, workshops and special events thereby providing a better view of the professional landscape. Information retrieved from: <http://www.rcm.ac.uk/life/beyondthercm/creativecareers/>

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# **Expanding Jazz Horizons by Studying South Indian Music**

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## **Abstract**

South Indian or carnatic music has a rich classical tradition. This tradition also includes its own unique music theory and performance practices. As a professional jazz bassist who found carnatic music very appealing, I began to study the mridangam, the predominant percussion instrument of South India, about six years ago. This exploration has helped me develop new ideas and sensitivities as a musician. The development of a unique personal voice as seen in my recent compositions is one direct result of my mridangam studies. There has also been a change in some of the ways I have approached my role as a jazz bassist. In this presentation, I will share some of my experiences as a student of carnatic music. I will also explain how a carnatic musician would approach a song and how this varies from a jazz musician. My recent arrangement of a jazz standard and a composition will be shown as examples of how I have adopted ideas from carnatic music, thereby departing from typical jazz practice. My exploration into the music from a different culture has opened up new possibilities for jazz music.

## **Keywords**

Mridangam, Carnatic, Konnakkol, Tala

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## **Jazz Bass meets Carnatic Percussion**

Growing up in Singapore, I was exposed to musical traditions of many different cultures. However, the rhythm of carnatic music from South India has always attracted me so I began to study the mridangam six years ago. At first, I merely expected to learn a new way to count rhythmic subdivisions, apart from learning to play an interesting instrument. I had no idea it would eventually change my way of thinking about jazz and musicianship. Let me first describe some musical concepts I learned as a mridangam student and compare these to materials I have used in jazz.

### ***Concepts from Studying Mridangam***

#### ***Konnakkol and Solkattu***

*Solkattu* refers to the rhythmic syllables employed by South Indian musicians to vocalize rhythmic patterns in songs or improvisations; this is the art of *Konnakkol*. The

syllables used in rhythmic vocalization come from their association with different sounds produced on the mridangam. For example, the four common syllables Ta, Ka, Di and Mi can be used to represent four subdivisions of a single beat or pulse. In action, the syllables combine into one word: Takadimi. In common time, four sets of sixteenth-notes would be vocalized as: Takadimi, Takadimi, Takadimi, Takadimi. During my studies, I have learned that Takadina, Tarikita, Kitataka or other such rhythmic words can also be used to represent a grouping of four. The choice of rhythmic words depends on the related fingerings on the mridangam but is also governed by musical requirements of a specific piece of music.

Other examples of commonly used rhythmic words are Takita (three syllables) for a grouping of three and Tadikitadom (five syllables) for a grouping of five. Although *konnakkol* is a method of teaching rhythm, it is unique because it is also used as a performance medium. It is common to see *konnakkol* artists performing vocal percussion solos in a concert in a manner similar to what jazz singers do when they sing scat and mimic musical instruments.

### *Phrase Structures and Groupings*

Like western music, carnatic music is metrical and the time cycle or *Tala* is indicated through a series of finger counts and claps. A carnatic musician differs from a jazz musician in the way he or she relates to the time cycle and its corresponding beats. The following musical fragment will help to illustrate the difference.



As a western musician, I tend to count the syncopated rhythm above as:

*One, Two And Three, Four* | *One, Two, Three, Four*

where the italicized words correspond to where I would play the notes.

A carnatic musician would interpret the rhythm as groupings of numbers. In this example, he or she would think in terms of eighth-note subdivisions and group the rhythm as 3 + 3 + 4 + 2 + 4 (eighth-notes). Then he or she would vocalize the rhythmic phrase as:

Takita Takita Takadimi Taka Takadimi

and play the notes at each "Ta" syllable.

Using the carnatic musician's approach, a performer would think less of each bar line and interpret the music in phrasal units. As a jazz musician, I may think of a certain musical phrase as consisting of four bars of 4/4 time while a carnatic musician would think of the same four bars as thirty-two subdivisions of eighth-notes that may be combined in different ways. This allows a performer to feel music in a linear manner rather than measure-by-measure.

### *Improvisation Tools*

In a mridangam curriculum, drum solos in different time cycles are first vocalized and then played on the instrument. Some of these pieces are fifteen to twenty minutes long and may take weeks to learn. I remember a time before YouTube when I had to learn jazz solos from recordings or live concerts, so the carnatic way of teaching through oral tradition was not uncomfortable to me.

I also learned new methods of developing motifs. One example is how the South Indian musician augmented motifs by adding fragments to the front of the motif rather than the back end. There are also traditional ways to approach cadential sections of a drum solo as well as ways to add coda sections that other musicians trained in the tradition would be able to follow in real time. A lot of this could be thought to mirror some practices in a jazz musician's education. As a jazz bassist, I had to learn how to respond to reharmonizations a pianist may use in a standard song or how to accompany a coda ending that a singer may feel inspired to create on the spot.

The rhythmic concepts for improvisation in carnatic music may be seen as based on arithmetic and number play. If we were in a time cycle of three quarter-notes, we would have twelve subdivisions of sixteenth-notes. Here a carnatic musician may think of the 12 subdivisions as  $4 + 4 + 4$  three groupings of four and vocalize the rhythm as Takadimi, Takadimi, Takadimi. In subsequent variations, he or she may regroup the subdivisions as  $3 + 4 + 5$  Takita, Takadimi, Tadikitadoom or  $5 + 4 + 3$  Tadikitadoom, Takadimi, Takita. This creates variety but gives a sense of cohesiveness because the number combinations are related presentations of three numbers that add up to twelve.

In carnatic music, spaces or rests could be insert into phrases to create more interesting rhythmic effects. In a time cycle equivalent to the western odd-time signature  $7/8$ , three measures would give us twenty-one subdivisions of eighth-notes. A carnatic musician may choose to group the 21 subdivisions as  $5 + 3 + 5 + 3 + 5$  and vocalize it as:

Tadikitadoom, Tham, Tadikitadoom, Tham, Tadikitadoom.

The "Tham" in the phrase has the value of three eighth-notes. This will allow the musician to create various interesting number combinations. The original  $5 + \text{Tham} + 5 + \text{Tham} + 5$  could be modified as  $4 + \text{Tham} + 5 + \text{Tham} + 6$ , or  $3 + \text{Tham} + 5 + \text{Tham} + 7$ .

The default subdivision of each beat or pulse in carnatic music is often four. This is equivalent to the western music practice of dividing a quarter-note into four sixteenth-notes. It is common for a carnatic musician to switch to a different subdivision of the beat during improvisation and create a special section of the piece that subdivides the beat into five, six, seven or nine. One interesting way to use this device is to reinterpret the same musical phrase with a different subdivision of the pulse. In the time signature of  $5/4$ , there would be twenty subdivisions of sixteenth-notes per measure with each quarter-note subdivided into four. Here, three measures would give us sixty subdivisions. A musical phrase composed of sixty subdivisions could be grouped as  $6 + 6 + 6 + 3 + 6 + 6 + 6 + 3 + 6 + 6 + 6$ , and the rhythmic vocalization could be:

TaTadikinadoon, TaTadikinadoon, TaTadikinadoon, Tham;  
TaTadikinadoon, TaTadikinadoon, TaTadikinadoon, Tham;  
TaTadikinadoon, TaTadikinadoon, TaTadikinadoon.

This simple example utilises "TaTadikinadoon" for six subdivisions and "Tham" for three subdivisions. If we switch to a subdivision of six per beat in each measure of 5/4 time, we would have thirty subdivisions since each beat is now a sixteenth-note sextuplet. The same phrase would be completed in two measures of sextuplets instead of the original three measures of sixteenth-notes. The beauty of this sort of improvisation lies in the connection between the changing subdivisions of the beat.

### *Song Forms*

Geethams, Varnams and Kritis are amongst the many song forms a mridangam player learns as preparation for his role as an accompanist in a classical music concert. Since many of these songs have strophic structures like many jazz standards, it is easy for a jazz musician to relate to and follow. The new lessons here include melodic embellishments called *gamakas* and carnatic performance conventions that allow for percussion interludes at the end of each section of the form.

### **Employing Carnatic Music Elements in Jazz**

During the past few years, in addition to my work as a jazz bassist, I have also begun to perform with some Indian music ensembles. I will now describe how the concepts I learned from carnatic music are employed in an arrangement of Brazilian composer Antonio-Carlos Jobim's Bossa Nova standard "One Note Samba" and an original composition entitled "Shiva." I then briefly describe how studying carnatic music has influenced my jazz improvisation.

### **Carnatic Concepts in Written Music**

#### *One Note Samba*

This piece is scored for piano, electric guitar, bass, drum set, tabla and mridangam. I was commissioned to arrange this Antonio-Carlos Jobim standard as a percussion showpiece for a jazz drummer. In order to provide common musical ground while

experimenting with carnatic elements, I decided to compose the arrangement in its original time signature of 4/4. The song is in an A-B-A' form. Both A sections consist of sixteen measures while the B section consisting of eight measures. The A section is further divided into four phrases of four measures each with an anacrusis before each phrase. I kept the B section in its original Bossa Nova style but rearranged the A sections. An excerpt of the first four measures of the A section with lyrics is given below in the manner of jazz standards songbooks.

Four measures of common time contain thirty-two eighth-notes. In its original form, the regular quarter-note pulse is felt quite clearly by the listener. I created a slightly different combination of groupings to make up the thirty-two eighth-note subdivisions: 7 + 7 + 7 + 11. Although the overall effect still had a groove, the musicians found the music notation tricky to read:

This might have been due to the fact that the music was sounded as if it were notated in changing odd-time signatures as shown thus:

The musicians who performed this arrangement also discovered that learning the rhythmic vocalization before playing the music on their instruments made the process much easier. Using the alternate notation above for reference, I also varied the way I

grouped the eighth-notes in the 11/8 measures in the A and A' sections. In the first three phrases of the A section, I grouped the eighth-notes of the 11/8 measure as 9 + 2. In the measure before the B section, the 11/8 was grouped as 3 + 3 + 3 + 2. While in the last measure of the A' section, the 11/8 was grouped 5 + 1 + 5.

### *Shiva*

This song was scored for soprano, male carnatic vocalist, piano and mridangam. The commission called for an Indian-influenced composition, which gave opportunity for a joint expression of jazz and carnatic music. The text was by Edwin Thumboo (Emeritus Professor at the National University of Singapore) whose three-stanza poem allowed for either a jazz interpretation in the tradition of a standard like Kurt Weill's "Mack the Knife" or a carnatic interpretation in the tradition of a geetham like "Vara Veena." Since the Indian vocalist for this concert only read Indian music notation, I began by charting the song in that notation. Then I used this reference chart as if it were a jazz lead sheet and added interludes and a coda. For the vocal improvisation section, instead of the usual jazz practice of improvising on the song's chord structure, I decided that the vocalist should improvise in carnatic style for a set number of tala cycles accompanied by the mridangam and piano. The interludes were also composed in the same style as the equivalent sections found in carnatic music with rhythmic combinations being a key feature.

## **Carnatic Concepts in Jazz Improvisation**

The following is a summary of concepts that influenced my jazz playing:

### *Rhythm and Polyrhythm*

The carnatic approach to grouping subdivisions is more systematic than similar practices I have experienced in jazz. For this reason, I have become more adept at responding to polyrhythms created by other musicians in a jazz ensemble. In addition, I have also improved my reading of odd-time signatures as well as general tempo-keeping and accompaniment.

### *Counting Backwards from Resolution Points*

As mentioned earlier, one novel feature in mridangam improvisation is the practice of extending motifs from the front end instead of the back end. In a sense, carnatic musicians would think about where they end a phrase and count backwards from that point. In 4/4 time, if they were going to cadence on the downbeat of measure five in a song, they may begin from any point before it. For example, they may start twelve eighth-notes before the downbeat of measure five and add a 3 + 4 + 5 combination before the downbeat. In subsequently repetitions, they could develop this idea by counting backwards three more eighth-notes each time, each subgroup of eighth notes increased by one. For example, if they started with fifteen subdivisions before the downbeat, they could use the combination: 4 + 5 + 6; and if they continued in the next time cycle with eighteen subdivisions, they would use the combination: 5 + 6 + 7. Improvisations with an arithmetic flavour are pleasing aesthetically to carnatic practitioners. There are also various other ways of combining subdivisions to get pleasing results. I have even learned to count backwards from cadence points in jazz with interesting results.

### *Melodic Influences*

There is a rich vocabulary of embellishments in carnatic music related to individual ragas or scales. A carnatic musician is able to create lengthy and interesting improvisations on a single scale as opposed to following a harmonic scheme as a jazz musician is wont to do. These days, I try to find harmonic relationships in certain portions of jazz songs in order to derive a single major or minor scale from the harmonies. In this way, I can improvise over these portions in a linear way.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

My exploration into the music from South India has opened my ears to new possibilities in jazz. I have begun to think differently about scales and learned to use them to create improvisations that move outside of the harmonic structure in a more linear way. This also helped me get a different perspective about how the jazz legends approached their improvisation, especially in the moments when it seems as if saxophone greats like Dexter Gordon or Charlie Parker ignored the rules of music theory but somehow connected tonal areas in a linear fashion with certain melodic

motifs. In addition, carnatic music has influenced my jazz performances in the area of rhythm. My overall musicianship has also improved greatly in the areas of listening, sight-reading and dealing with polyrhythms. In this paper, I have described an arrangement and a composition that were direct products of my Indian music studies and my desire to blend carnatic music elements into western music in a natural way.

In addition, I have created new opportunities for leadership in my musical work. From the circle of jazz musicians who are active in and around Singapore, a couple of veterans have sought me out to show them how to work through the theoretical and mathematical aspects of konnakkol. It is clear to me through our interactions that they had long been attracted to the charm of south Indian music but had difficulties finding someone who could demonstrate ideas from south Indian music in a way that western musicians could relate to more directly.

Over the past six years, I have also designed and taught a musicianship class for Singapore's National Arts Council that was requested by local Malay folk musicians who desired to learn western music notation in order to communicate better through sharing their songs with European and American musicians at World Music Festivals. Although I have always used jazz theory as a basis for teaching music theory for both classical and non-classical music, carnatic music provided me with additional rhythmic and theoretical devices to share with the local community. I am pleased to report that the intuitive manner in which rhythm is articulated and learned in carnatic music appeals to these traditional music performers and konnakkol has been adopted as a valuable tool. At Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, I have found that it is possible to use elements from carnatic music to teach western musicianship, score study and jazz. My students have found it easier to memorize challenging passages from orchestra literature by using konnakkol. "The Glorification of the Chosen One" from Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" is one such passage. At the same time, they also discovered that structural elements in a composition were revealed when translated into konnakkol.

In conclusion, I found that there were enough commonalities between jazz and carnatic music to allow for personal experiments that injected carnatic music materials into a jazz framework of performance and teaching. In this way, I am able to

broaden my horizon towards a unique musical voice and lead my musical community to a more global understanding of music.

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# **Emerging Leadership and Professional Development in a Chamber Orchestra**

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## **Abstract**

The paper presents a consideration of the place of leadership and professional development in the context of a professional chamber orchestra. The work of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra is presented as an exploratory case study. The initial study has been developed from discussions with the orchestra's Executive Director and the Artistic Director along with observations of practice. The study has confirmed the initial observations of professional development opportunities and areas for further ongoing development. Reflecting on the development of musicians as professionals through pursuit of their careers has been a driver for the study. The paper addresses the 21<sup>st</sup> CEPROM International Seminar theme: leadership in the education of the professional musician. It presents a case of leadership in action vis-à-vis (new) creativities for the musician and for career development.

## **Keywords**

professional development, leadership, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra

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## **Introduction**

This study has developed from our previous work on the development of professional musicians in the context of a symphony orchestra as workplace. The current study is an exploratory investigation of emerging professional development and leadership opportunities as well as of development in the setting of a professional chamber orchestra—the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (MCO).

In this paper we consider aspects of education and the career development of professional musicians, including pathways into the profession and various forms of development along the way. We present the first stage of this investigation, which focuses on discussions with the Executive Director and Artistic Director of the orchestra, along with observations of

practice. The next stage of the research will involve interviewing the core orchestral players as well as observations of the orchestra in rehearsal and on tour.

The first stage involves extended observations of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra's performances, a consideration of publicly-available published materials on the orchestra, and extended interviews with the orchestra's Executive Director, Richard Jackson and the Artistic Director, William Hennessy. These interviews provided a rich opportunity to examine, discuss and verify observations, and arrive at some preliminary conclusions.

The research questions are:

1. What professional development and leadership opportunities are available in a professional chamber orchestra?
2. How are the musicians that form the core of the orchestra developed professionally and musically?
3. Is there a place for professional development in a small to medium sized ensemble such as a chamber orchestra?

The above questions emerged from a series of observations of the orchestra in performance by the researchers over the last five years. A number of trends developed over this period of time. Observing a number of annual program series, it is evident that:

1. The artistic director was not always the leader of the MCO or associated ensembles.
2. A member of the orchestra was programmed as conductor when the ensemble increased in size or the work required a conductor.
3. Solo opportunities were distributed among members of the orchestra alongside visiting artists.
4. Musicians changed desks providing opportunity for more exposure. Roles and functions appeared to be distributed.
5. The orchestra consisted of core players with others joining as required.

## **Musical landscape**

In Australia, each of the States has a flagship symphony orchestra. In Melbourne it is the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Each orchestra has an extensive program of orchestral and chamber ensemble performances, as well as educational and outreach programs, across a

broad spectrum of artistic and educational experiences. In addition, in Melbourne there is Orchestra Victoria that principally functions as the pit orchestra for the Victorian Opera and Melbourne seasons of The Australian Ballet and Opera Australia.

In Sydney there are two major chamber orchestras: the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. These orchestras have been operating for a number of decades; ACO was established in 1975 and ABO in 1989. They have justifiably developed, earned and maintained the status they hold nationally and internationally today. Each has aggressively targeted a national audience through their subscription programs.

### **Melbourne Chamber Orchestra**

In Melbourne, among small to medium sized ensembles, the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra holds a valuable place in the musical landscape. It is the only professional chamber orchestra in the city. Its annual subscription and touring program contributes significantly to the musical and artistic development of the City of Melbourne and the State of Victoria.

MCO was founded in 1991 as Australia Pro Arte Orchestra, and has been known as Melbourne Chamber Orchestra since 2009. The year 2016 marks the orchestra's twentieth-fifth anniversary as an ongoing ensemble. Richard Jackson (2015), the Executive Director of the MCO stated

Our founder Jeffrey Crellin has a vision: a Melbourne-based orchestra that would combine Victoria's finest musicians on a chamber scale. It was an audacious undertaking, but one which immediately established itself with strong support from audiences. From its initial privately-funded pilots, the organisation has grown to become one of Australia's leading professional orchestras and one of the most significant regional tourers of orchestral music in the country. (p. 4)

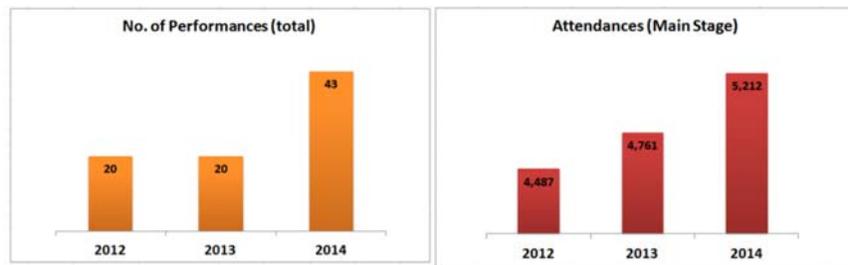
Jackson provided the snapshot perspective of the orchestra:

MCO presents music for between five and thirty musicians. Straddling chamber ensembles and symphonic forces, it performs not just as Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, but also as Australian Octet (one of only two professional string octets in the world) and MCO Virtuosi (a small string consort). MCO's repertoire encompasses up to six centuries of musical heritage, and includes an active commissioning program to extend our music making into the future. (MCO, 2015)

The MCO as “a mini-symphony, a string consort, or a chamber ensemble” (Jackson, 2015, p. 3) aptly describes the ensembles’ opportunities and experiences available to the musicians associated with the orchestra. The orchestra’s 2014 report provides an indication of its range of activities.

2014 IN STATISTICS	
Total number of attendees*	10,469
Mainstage (Melbourne) attendances	5,212
Number of performers employed	66
Number of performances	43
Number of different venues	27
Number of touring performances	23
Number of free performances	2
Number of new works and arrangements presented	4

\*provisional (final official figures from regional events still be received)



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<http://mco.org.au/share/reports/2014-MCO-RTC-Web.pdf>

The projections to date indicate that the 2015 figures will confirm the increasing trend over the indicators.

## Perspectives of Development

William Hennessy has been Artistic Director of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra since 2006, commencing as Concert Master in 2003. He has a long and distinguished career as a soloist, ensemble and orchestral musician, teacher and mentor. In his numerous institutional and musical positions he has supported the development of individuals and ensembles. He is associated with the development of some of Australia’s foremost chamber ensembles; the Tinalley String Quartet, the Flinders Quartet, The Tailern Quartet, the Hamer Quartet and the Seraphim Trio.

Through discussions it is evident that Hennessy believed that central to the development and ongoing development of the orchestral musician is their involvement and place of chamber music in their musical life. He stated “when we audition it’s not enough to get the person who plays best but [one] who has chamber music in their life. The greatest soloists are chamber music players—there is enough evidence to show that there is a serious link in the life blood”.

He said the ideal is “an orchestra filled with chamber musicians for all the reasons of intimacy, nourishment, quality, exposure and listening”. For Hennessy, “the healthiest orchestras have a chamber music culture”. He also suggested that from an orchestral perspective the chamber ensembles are not organised and institutionalised by orchestral management but those that have emerged from the individual interests and passions of the players, particularly their involvement with players outside of the home orchestra.

### **The Makeup of the Orchestra**

The Melbourne Chamber Orchestra performs as a chamber orchestra, and players perform as the Australian Octet, and the string consort MCO Virtuosi. In addition to the principal work of the MCO two relatively new ensembles have developed providing other insights and opportunities for performers and the audience. Australian Octet is MCO’s flagship chamber ensemble. This ensemble is unique in Australia’s musical life, as it is dedicated to performing music for five to eight strings. Hennessy described the ensemble as filling a “vacancy in musical landscape”. This vacancy provides other opportunities and experiences for the musicians—an opportunity to work with rarely performed repertoire in the context of a larger chamber ensemble. The MCO Virtuosi is the MCO’s string consort, “giving spirited, uplifting performances of the best-loved string music from the Baroque, Classical and beyond” (Jackson, 2015, p. 3). The Virtuosi is not led by the Artistic Director but directed by distinguished musicians associated with the orchestra. In this ensemble the Artistic Director takes another desk.

According to the Executive Director, the MCO is made up of “30 to 40 core players and others”. The Artistic Director talked of “a core of the core” consisting of six players. For Hennessy “the core evolves”. The musicians are freelance and engaged for performances and/or series of performances and rehearsals. The core has a “demonstrated commitment to

MCO”. From a management perspective “It’s about availability and dovetails with performer’s other work, schedule and location” (Jackson). Both Jackson and Hennessy talked of the portfolio careers of the players. Many are balancing travel, work and overseas study, teaching, orchestral work, Orchestra Victoria engagements, with the MCO. What this demonstrates is their commitment and dedication, as well as the organisational nature of these performers. To be able to commit to a series of performances and the prior rehearsals is a major consideration.

Most of the players are graduate musicians, many holding postgraduate qualifications. Hennessy stated that the core players “all have chamber music lives and are thinking about careers. There is the tension between working players and preserving integrity of ensemble.” In an ensemble that has full time players there is not the issue or discussion about loyalty—it’s there.” In an ensemble such as the MCO there is the issue of loyalty and the work of the ensemble is a work in progress. As resources are limited how can the organisation provide the best work and professional experience for the musicians?

In a team of more than 30 players the initial issue is getting them together for the four to five rehearsals over the two-week period prior to a concert, and scheduling this over the program and year. Hennessy talked of the “time/imagination/good will” required from his position and the organisation of the MCO through to the players. The aim always is to provide and maintain “as much continuity and regularity with limited resources”. The players need to be provided with time and space for “learn[ing the] music, thinking [about] the music, bowing” and to maximise time in practice and rehearsal.

Both Jackson and Hennessy talked of the flexibility of the orchestra and its operation. What the flexibility of the MCO provides is the accommodation of the individual. In many ways it enables the individual musician the opportunity to pursue their professional and musical life rather than organising and structuring it. They saw this as a positive position. However they recognized that the nature of larger orchestras were like “military operations”, which has the advantage of being able to implement policy and practice from the position of a fixed employment contract.

Hennessy (2015) states “It is a wonderful time for music in our country, with MCO itself being one of the beneficiaries: able to sustain within its membership an outstanding collection

of gifted and deeply committed musicians, who joyfully share the ideals of chamber music sensitivity” (p. 7). Across the ensembles there is “a spirit of collegial music making that brings joy to the stage at every concert” (Jackson, 2015, p. 4). This spirit is exemplified in the manner in which the musicians present and take on responsibilities and functions in the orchestra or ensemble.

Sustainability is a key feature of the work of the MCO. The flexibility of the organisation provides the musicians with options for both life and professional work, as well as musical opportunities. Hennessy spoke of the best interests of the organisation and the musicians. One issue of the organisation is being supportive of the musicians and knowing that they “have their own stuff to do”. It is enabling the “stuff” to happen that is a welcome challenge for the management of the orchestra.

The Artistic Director is always mindful of the ever present issue of forward planning alongside the organisation of players. It is the combination of the two that involves the moving and cycling of players around the positions and desks of the orchestra, providing leadership/direction experience as well as solo opportunities. The concern of repertoire and the curation of an annual and ongoing program involve the very human consideration of works that suit the development and capability of the players.

## **Conclusion**

In returning to the guiding questions of this study it is evident that the MCO does not provide formal professional development opportunities in the form of education and training. What it does provide is the opportunities through practice for the individual and the ensemble. The ongoing development comes through the interaction of players with the Artistic Director and the Executive Director. This has resulted in a committed and dedicated team of musicians. The musicians are provided with opportunities to develop professionally and musically through the cycling of desks and responsibilities, the solo opportunities, and the involvement in the Australian Octet and the MCO Virtuosi.

There is evidently a place for professional development in a small to medium sized ensemble such as a chamber orchestra but it does not necessarily come in the form of study provided by a registered training provider and training in practice and modelling. This provides an opportunity for educators to consider how best to support professional small to medium

ensembles in their quest to match musical excellence with exemplary opportunities to continue to develop individual professionally in a complex musical and social environment.

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# **From Fairy Frock to Tea Towel ... and Thanks for the Land Rover!**

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## **Abstract**

This paper reports on a research project entitled *Conducting, musical direction and performance in community music ensembles and their influence on pedagogy*. The project aims to investigate methods and identify best practices of leadership, conducting and musical direction employed in community music ensembles. It also aims to evaluate the benefits of participation in community music ensembles, particularly how that influence musicians' performance and their music teaching practices.

This research project studies three community orchestras and one big band, of which I am, or have recently been, a member. The research employs multiple qualitative methods: interviews with the conductor/musical director of each ensemble, surveys of musicians in each ensemble through a questionnaire, and focus group discussions with the students of a third year university Ensemble Direction and Arranging subject I teach. Case study observation has also been conducted during my participation as double bassist or pianist in each concert series, and reported through evocative narrative autoethnography.

Implications for music education include increased awareness and understanding of the influence of community music participation on music teaching and the integration of good musical direction and performance practices into pedagogy. The research findings will inform university music and music/education curricula and can be applied to implement effective teaching strategies in the development of vocational skills of musical leadership, conducting, musical direction and ensemble performance. This should facilitate the transition for graduates into professionals like secondary school teachers, conductors of community music ensembles and musical directors of their own bands.

## **Keywords**

Conducting, musical direction, leadership, community music

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## **Theoretical/Pedagogical Background**

My university teaching is underpinned and informed by years of professional practice as a solo artist, pianist in jazz bands and double bassist in orchestras. Seasonal routines of rehearsals and concerts with professional and community music ensembles inspired my research into how this creative practice contributes to my performance, pedagogy, musical direction and leadership. Rehearsal venues, concert halls and community music ensembles

provide rich learning environments, offering a wealth of data and willing research participants.

Leadership operates on several levels in community ensembles: conductor, management, sectional leaders, and the artistic agency of the ensemble within the community. Less apparent levels of leadership also shape this dynamic: leadership in families and of oneself. This paper aligns with CEPROM's 2016 theme and sub-themes on leadership.

Bryman (1996), in Koivunen (2003), has identified “new” leadership approaches emerging since the early 1980s that include *transformational* and *charismatic* leadership. Atik's research (1994) adds a third model of *transactional* leadership. In charismatic leadership the orchestra's mission and values are articulated through the vision of the conductor (Koivunen, 2003). This self-enhancing style is typified by extraordinary, profoundly influential individuals whose attributes, vision and behaviour are highly meaningful to musicians (Koivunen, 2003). The transactional leadership model is task-oriented and based on working relationships. Atik (1994) describes a two-stage process: testing and establishing authority and trust between conductor and musicians, then a transactional phase to negotiate working relationships and task achievement. Transformational leadership builds on this model, adding a third stage of shared responsibility and diminished hierarchical boundaries (Atik, 1994). Transformational leadership, driven by motivation and positive emotions (Bass, 1997 in Rowold & Rohmann, 2009), relies on musicians' satisfaction, extra efforts and appraisal of the leader's effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 2000).

Mintzberg's (1998) study of conductor Tovey's leadership of Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra uncovered *covert* leadership: “leadership influenced everything Bramwell did, however invisibly” (Mintzberg, 1998, p. 144); co-ordinating existing professional skills of musicians, energising people as respected members of the cohesive social system, enhancing the accepted orchestral culture, networking and advocating for community legitimacy and support (Mintzberg, 1998).

More recent leadership theory focuses on *authentic* leadership, characterised by: i) a core leadership self-concept; ii) high self-resolution, iii) self-concordant goals motivated by one's true beliefs, values and passions; iv) self-expressive behaviour consistent with own values and identities (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Bartleet (2009) emphasises the importance of

*relationships* in music, particularly between conductor and musicians and how musical meaning is created through these relationships. Koivunen (2003) acknowledges the trend towards *shared* leadership in conducting. Authentic leadership relies on an authentic *followership*, sharing the leader's belief system and values, having independent and realistic evaluations of the leader and their leadership, and authenticating if the leader's personal values and convictions are in accord (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). The importance of relationships is fundamental to *authentic leadership development theory*, where the "identification, positive modelling, emotional contagion, supporting self-determination, and positive social exchanges" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 326) of the leader influence the follower, potentially transforming them into a leader.

Life-story narratives are important self-expressive and self-regulatory vehicles for authentic leaders to construct their self-knowledge and self-concept, clarify relationships and justify their self-presentation and efficacy (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Life-stories, self-observation and self-reflection are also valuable autoethnographic tools. Autoethnographic narratives connect and contextualise the personal with culture and society (Ellis, 2004), and have been applied to examine creative practice including music performance (Brown, 2014), conducting (Bartleet, 2009) and teaching (Dyson, 2007). This paper is interspersed with narrative excerpts (in italics) about my life's journey; these are true-life stories but watch out for fairies!

*My musical education, commencing in my family, has been nurtured by them throughout my life—piano lessons from my mother, growing up in Fairy Street on the slopes of Fairymount, where every Monday night we stayed up late as my parents' big band The Rhythmairs rehearsed. On weekends balloons, streamers and whistles abounded as we kids (me in my fairy frock) collected bounty brought home from the balls we played at.*

## **Aims**

The aim of this project are (i) to investigate styles of leadership, conducting and musical direction in community music ensembles; (ii) to ascertain the professional, musical and personal attributes necessary for effective leadership in community ensembles; (iii) to identify best practices in conducting, musical direction and leadership in ensembles; and (iv) to evaluate how participation in community music ensembles influence musicians' performance and their teaching practices.

Research findings are intended to inform curriculum development and teaching strategies in Ensemble Direction and Arranging, a third year university subject that I teach, designed to develop vocational skills of musical leadership, conducting, musical direction and ensemble performance in students training for careers as secondary school music teachers. A broader aim is the development of lifelong attributes of leadership in graduates that are applicable throughout their professional and personal lives.

## **Methodology**

The project studies four regional community music ensembles: three orchestras and one big band, all of which I am, or have recently been, a member. The research used a multi-methodological qualitative approach. The initial phase involved interviewing the conductor/musical director (MD) of each ensemble, surveying musicians with a questionnaire, and conducting focus group discussions with students in my Ensemble Direction and Arranging class. Four conductors were interviewed, providing detailed and insightful responses on aspects of conducting, performance, rehearsal techniques, musician management, orchestra business and community engagement. Thirty-seven musicians answered the questionnaire, which meant a response rate of 45%. Focus group discussions were held with two Ensemble Direction and Arranging classes, each with enrolments of thirty students. These concentrated on topics of vocational training, music teacher preparation and pedagogy. Through my participation in each ensemble as double bassist or pianist, I observed and interrogated the performance practices of several conductors, other musicians and myself.

This attempt to understand the processes of these creative activities is practice-led research that is “concerned with the nature of practice and lead[s] to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice” (Candy, 2006, p. 1). Interpretation of the data collected was informed by previous research and interviews I have conducted on similar topics with four Musical Directors of cruise ship orchestras. The data were analysed and categorised according to major focus points in the research questions: skills and attributes, best/worst practices, leadership styles, influence of community music performance on pedagogy. Results have been presented in relation to significant leadership styles that emerged in the literature review. In the second phase, findings of this research will be integrated into the music degree curricula; the final phase is dissemination of results.

The orchestras offer an interesting study. North Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra (NQPO) is a well-established institution of almost twenty years' tenure, with frequently changing personnel. In 2014 Lismore Symphony Orchestra (LSO) celebrated its tenth anniversary and is currently undergoing a change in conductor and management committee. Clarence Valley Orchestra (CVO) was formed two years ago. *During this time, I have seen these ensembles grow and develop in musical expertise and professional presentation. In the early days I cringed behind my double bass as nervous amateur announcers struggled through mispronounced composer names and song titles, thanking every person and their dog from the dedicated mother who cooked the sausages for rehearsal barbeques to the good bloke who loaned us his Land Rover ... a bull's roar from my youthful exploits entertaining on North Queensland resorts, dancing in floor shows and frolicking about as the Keppel Island Christmas Fairy!*

## Results and Summary

Responses from the interviews and questionnaires are summarised in Table 1. Skills and attributes necessary for every type of musical leadership have been placed in the Generic category. Other responses have been allocated to the leadership style they strongly align with. Some identified poor practices have been included in the Charismatic Leadership section.

**Table 1: Leadership Skills, Attributes, Best Practice**

<i>Generic: Musical</i>	<i>Charismatic</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tertiary qualifications in music, conducting</li> <li>- high level of musicianship, conducting</li> <li>- group direction, management</li> <li>- understanding how sections work together</li> <li>- understanding orchestration, arranging</li> <li>- rehearsing correctly, setting up programs</li> <li>- sight reading skills</li> <li>- good timing, intonation</li> <li>- orchestra/big band experience</li> <li>- knowledge of how instruments work</li> <li>- ability to interpret full orchestral scores</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creative genius, ability to <i>see</i> what the performance will look like and how to achieve that</li> <li>- <i>visual</i> concept of everything going on</li> <li>- conductors should not just beat time but indicate the landscape and architecture of musical progressions</li> <li>- ability to produce the context of musical genres, make the orchestra understand their intent, what is required to achieve particular sounds needed</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clear conducting technique with clear downbeats and ictus</li> <li>- singing in a cappella choirs to improve sight singing, hearing inner parts</li> <li>- ability to see notes and <i>hear</i> them</li> <li>- ability to improvise, creating flexibility in music interpretation and improved understanding of rhythm, form, melodic and harmonic structure</li> </ul> <p><i>Generic: Personal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- organisation, preparation, tolerance, empathy, patience, good communication</li> <li>- executive, presidential, administrative expertise</li> <li>- participation in Management Committee, directing orchestra, ensuring aims of Mission Statement are fulfilled</li> <li>- programming music</li> <li>- confidence</li> <li>- humour</li> <li>- integrity</li> </ul>	<p><i>Poor Practices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- excessive ego, dictatorial manner, bullying, arrogance, bad temper</li> <li>- lack of respect for players</li> <li>- firing effective musicians but not dealing with real causes of problems</li> </ul>
<p><i>Transformational</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ability to work with amateur and professional musicians, awareness of players' standards</li> <li>- helping players achieve required standards without pushing them beyond abilities</li> <li>- ability to inspire, encourage, elicit the best from all involved and unify a diverse range of musicians with varying capabilities</li> <li>- sense of fun, recognition of it being a community rather than professional</li> </ul>	<p><i>Transactional</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use authentic arrangements but source easier versions when necessary</li> <li>- compromise in decisions about tempos, repertoire choice</li> <li>- awareness of balance (in chords, tonal balance, melody/accompaniment, between sections)</li> <li>- managing inner-band problems</li> <li>- confidence in position</li> <li>- ability to make appropriate, constructive performance decisions (how to navigate difficult passages)</li> </ul> <p><i>Authentic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- know limitations of players and have musical expertise to gain their respect</li> <li>- lead by example, comfortable in leadership position</li> <li>- friendly, approachable, even-tempered</li> <li>- encourage members to do their best, play well for benefit of group and selves</li> <li>- commitment to orchestra, knowing its aims and objectives, how to achieve these</li> </ul>

<p>orchestra, while aiming for the best possible standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- orchestra/ensemble management must be supportive of what musical director does, this gives MD autonomy and ownership of music which is recognised by musicians and empowers them</li> </ul>
<p><i>Covert</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- awareness of “tempered pitch”; pitch varies in orchestras depending on key, where notes lie in chord (voicings)</li> <li>- dealing with people sensitively, speaking in ways that don’t devalue them (especially volunteers)</li> <li>- consideration of the organisation: community ensembles must be financially viable with audiences attending and returning, decisions about repertoire must encourage this</li> <li>- recognition that the livelihood and continuance of the orchestra is paramount</li> <li>- modesty: one conductor was described as self-effacing with unbounded skill, professionalism and hours dedicated to each project</li> <li>- generosity: sharing ownership of orchestra between director, ensemble, community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- community spirit can reinforce what a group produces as a whole</li> <li>- sensitivity to know how instruments work, how sounds are produced</li> <li>- empathy in performance, knowledge of when to go with orchestra and when to take them with you</li> </ul>

### *Issues in Leadership*

Lack of preparation, of punctuality, of commitment to the ensemble; poor time management and wasting time talking or socialising during rehearsal were some poor practices identified. Regarding leadership in academe: in the university where I have worked for sixteen years there have been fourteen changes in the Head of School position. Impacts of this include instability of leadership, change fatigue in staff, interrupted career progression, inconsistency in interpretation and implementation of policies, duplication and/or contradiction of

initiatives, displacement or loss of intellectual capital and corporate memory. Such disruption is the antithesis of LSO's effective strategic succession planning where the positions of new conductor and management committee are supported and facilitated by a well-structured, organised culture secured by ten years of consolidation.

### *Relationships between Conducting/Directing, Performance and Teaching practice: New Paradigms*

Conducting affords insight into how to deal with different personalities within a large ensemble. One interviewee stated "Conducting allows you to *see* how music fits together, it makes you more aware rhythmically, broadens your understanding, you see music as a *graph*". This transfers to performance, heightening aural awareness of scores, parts, roles of instruments, parts in chords, vertical and horizontal dynamics of music.

One conductor attested to the development of transferrable lifelong skills: playing music teaches *listening* and by listening we become good learners. The training students receive on instruments is transferrable; it improves skills in maths (rhythm), physics (acoustics), physical motion (technique, posture, co-ordination), and working together in aural and visual ways (hearing, reading): music combines all these disciplines. Music also has important social significance, particularly when conceived of in ways students appreciate: described by one conductor/educator as "the ultimate team sport".

### *Relationships between Community Music Participation and Performance Practice*

Musical attributes enhanced by community music participation include increased knowledge of repertoire, competence in playing in diverse styles, motivation to play pieces individuals dislike or find difficult, improved technique and greater awareness of time, feel and balance. Ensemble expertise is refined through group playing, as one soloist articulated: "Coming from a solo performer background it has sharpened my awareness of working within the requirements of the orchestra as determined by the composer and conductor". Community music engagement offers valuable opportunities to participate in music performance and gives people confidence to play. A motivational activity, it affords musicians a sense of purpose to practise and improve, reduces performance anxiety, creates a sense of belonging to a team, and enhances self-worth and personal growth.

### *Relationships between Community Music Participation and Teaching Practice*

Community ensembles provide opportunities to mentor talented school musicians within the orchestra and enable students to watch their teachers perform, thereby offering a motivational experience. Modelling such experiential learning authenticated the musicianship and leadership of teachers in their students' opinion. Musicians performing challenging repertoire and playing in unfamiliar genres gained confidence to encourage their students to play "outside the square". Teachers also gained confidence to undertake responsibilities they had not believed themselves capable of.

### *Physical and Emotional Well-being: Leadership of Self*

My research has inadvertently discovered how "positive other-directed emotions" (Michie & Gooty, 2005, p. 449) are evoked through participation in community music. One member's community music practice contributes significantly to his university research into Elder Music and Affirmative Ageing. Some un-elicited responses reported the benefit of community music engagement on a member's health and well-being, their practice empowering them to repeatedly battle cancer; another used music to heal her grief over her husband's sudden death.

### *Relations: Leadership in Family (Old Paradigms)*

An old institution that has modelled leadership throughout generations is the *family*. The CVO is conducted by a musician whose skills have been modelled by a father with a distinguished career as musical director, conductor, composer/arranger and performer. This conductor's wife and daughter assist with organising and managing the orchestra and perform in it. Conductors in the LSO and NQPO also have children performing in their orchestras; some have progressed to professional performance careers.

*In April 2015 I performed in the CVO's Anzac Concert, a commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of World War I. My performance was not just for this concert or audience, but for generations of my family whose leadership, legacy and love have placed me here ... my grandfather and great-uncle soldiers in WWI, their sons who fought in WWII, my grandmother who shared with me her piano compositions, my other grandmother who nurtured in me the worth of my musical talent ... my father who, on return from WWII with his war bride, established a big band that entertained communities for decades ... my mother, a classically-trained pianist, spending rainy days composing arrangements for their big band, directing and teaching the rhythm*

*section from her piano. My musician husband says I am just like her; when at our piano surrounded by arrangements I compose for the ensembles I play in or teach, I acknowledge this is true.*

## **Conclusions and Implications: Emerging Paradigms**

### *Leadership Development*

My Ensemble Direction and Arranging students reported that these classes improved their sight reading, reinforced the importance of music reading and developed their conducting technique. They described these activities as a huge learning curve whereby they learn how to control a group and realise the difficulty of multitasking when conducting. Students discovered a profound difference between conducting practice, rehearsals and performance. They compared the benefit of learning in a safe, supportive environment with the challenging reality of directing their own ensembles and conducting school groups. Students requested for more practice as *leaders* rather than having teachers direct them.

“One of the greatest challenges for leaders lies in the conflict between behaving effectively and behaving ethically” (Michie & Gooty, 2005, p. 443). Conductors/directors walk a fine line between pleasing the community, maintaining the organisation, challenging proficient performers and nurturing less competent players. Many styles of leadership were apparent in the ensembles I researched. Rather than conforming to one leadership style, conductors generally exhibited traits from various models befitting each occasion or task. Different levels of leadership exist: cultural leadership in the community, direction of ensembles, sectional leadership, leadership of students, in families, of oneself. Leadership attributes are developed in aspiring musicians, beginning teachers and band leaders through modelling and teaching by dedicated educators as well as the collaborative efforts and good will of musicians who share a collective sense of purpose, self-transcendent values and aspirations.

*I am finishing this paper in New Zealand's southern alps, tramping the Milford Track. I wonder if there are fairies here? Hobbits, certainly! Our expert guides discreetly model leadership in an environment where the consequences of mistakes are considerably higher than a performance train-wreck. On steep declines I reconsider my authentic followership! But what would Beethoven have written in this place? Wonderful self-affirming, life-affirming adventures to channel into my creative practice and teaching!*

*Christmas is near with another whirl of rehearsals and concerts. This season's compère, comedian Anthony Ackroyd, performs an alarmingly realistic cameo of "Rudd is in the Air". The fairy frock is shelved. Instead I find my face on a tea towel! A lovely gift for Nana! The admirable entrepreneurial initiative of a non-profit community organisation ... merch isn't the sole province of thirty-something rock bands! Has the cringe factor appeared again? No ... I don't mind whether my visage is used to wipe the Christmas dishes; this affirms our altruism and musicianship have secured a place in people's communities and homes, and we have enriched their lives as they have enriched ours. I have discovered that three fundamental qualities of leadership are citizenship, grace and gratitude, theirs and mine ... oh, and thanks for the Land Rover!*

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# **Leading in Liminal Spaces: Exploring the Intersections of Composition and Improvisation**

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores concepts of leadership using the theoretical lens of transformational leadership and the metaphorical lenses of musical improvisation, composition and performance. In particular, conducted improvisation, the liminal intersections between controlled composition and spontaneous improvisation, serve as metaphor and examples of leadership. Specifically, I use conducted improvisation to examine and explore leadership topics related to both individuals (conductor/composers) and organizations (an improvising orchestra of diverse and changing instrumentation). The young composer/conductor/leader of an improvising orchestra serves as a case study to illustrate liminal leadership and exemplify the concepts and connections between transformative leadership theory and music. The concluding summary makes suggestions for real world applications in the education and career development of 21<sup>st</sup> century musicians.

## **Keywords**

transformational leadership, musician careers, conducted improvisation, curricular revision

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## **Introduction**

Given the rapid pace of social change, the pervasiveness of technology, and the resulting intercultural connectivity, music students today will build careers very different from their teachers (Covach, 2015; Cutler, 2012; Freeman, 2014; Sarath, 2014). Many in the field acknowledge a need for both entrepreneurial training and broader musical experiences for performers—composition, improvisation, genre and stylistic variety, for example. Groundbreaking leadership and entrepreneurship programs started twenty years ago at Eastman School of Music and the University of Colorado-Boulder. These have expanded to include numerous partnerships between music schools and business schools, entrepreneurship classes, and required internships. Colleges and conservatories of music

recognize a need to expand their approach to educating future professionals for sustainable careers (Covach, 2015; Cutler, 2012; Freeman, 2014; Sarath, 2014).

In November, 2014, the College Music Society Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major proposed a number of innovative curricular revisions. This provocative manifesto became a catalyst for numerous conversations in music colleges and at professional conferences around the world. Among many recommendations, this document advises returning to a traditional model of the musician as composer/improviser/performer, a pervasive model in many musical traditions of the world for hundreds of years. The lead author suggests a greater emphasis on improvisation and composition can reinvigorate the current “interpretive performance” model, providing young performers with broader skill sets and deeper musicality (Sarath, 2014).

This paper examines two varied skill sets useful for musicians and music careers, leadership and improvisation. I start with a brief overview of leadership definitions and theories to establish the choice of transformational leadership theory. The ensuing two sections provide the musical context by examining relationships between composition and improvisation, and presenting the distinct history and techniques of conducted improvisation. This theoretical and musical background combines to frame the case study of a young conductor/composer who leads an improvising orchestra. Finally, I summarize the research, suggesting potential applications in the career preparation of music students in higher education.

## **Defining Leadership**

Scholars, generals, business gurus, self-help authors, and journalists have attempted without consensus to define the most salient concepts of leadership (Northouse, 2007; Winston & Patterson, 2006). One study seeking to define leadership claimed to identify more than 26,000 articles using the term (Winston & Patterson, 2006). The resulting definitions of leadership center on two perspectives, namely the aspects of individual leaders and organizational leadership issues (Morgan, 1986; Oberlechner & Mayer-Schonberger, 2002; Winston & Patterson, 2006). Based on diverse and extensive

scholarly literature examining leadership theories, Northouse suggests a broad and simple definition of leadership combining both individual and organizational aspects:

“Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2007, p. 3).

Authors often use metaphors to distinguish different types of leadership (Morgan, 1986; Oberlechner & Mayer-Schonberger, 2002). Morgan cautions that while metaphors provide a point of reference or comparison, they also influence and narrow the reader’s perceptions (Morgan, 1986). Nevertheless, game, military, arts, or sports-related metaphors are often used to frame the diverse meanings of leadership within varied cultural and structural contexts (Northouse, 2007; Oberlechner & Mayer-Schonberger, 2002). While military, sports, and machine metaphors focus on the winning, power, and control aspects of leadership, music metaphors provide examples for understanding personal leadership styles, interpersonal relationships, and means of engaging audiences (Oberlechner & Mayer-Schonberger, 2002; Wheatley, 1999).

### **Theories of Leadership: Transformational Leadership in Music**

Like definitions of leadership, theories abound, framed by structures, people, politics, symbols, cultures, relationships, or motivation (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Northouse, 2007), and metaphors like brains, machines, and organisms (Morgan, 1986), or chaos and quantum versus Newtonian physics (Wheatley, 1999). Some of these theories concentrate on the leader as individual, including personal perspectives and behaviors such as traits, skills, situations, contingencies, goals, gender, teams, psychodynamics, ethics, and transformational qualities (Noonan, 2007; Northouse, 2007). I selected transformational theory to tease apart the relationships between organized and spontaneous composition and the seemingly incongruous role of a conductor in improvised performance. The next section compares transformational and transactional leadership theories to provide additional context.

Transformational leadership theory emerged in the early 1980s. It emphasizes intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation and interpersonal connectivity. It has since become

increasingly popular in the literature (Noonan, 2007; Northouse, 2007). In individuals, transformational leadership is characterized by an inspirational, charismatic, and strongly interpersonal style, often grounded in morality or social justice (Morgan, 2003; Noonan, 2007; Northouse, 2007). Unlike its diametric opposite, transactional leadership, where an exchange of money, status, grades, or other commodity occurs, transformational leadership focuses on building relationships, trust, ideals, and shared ethical and moral purpose between leaders and followers (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Northouse, 2007). Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela provide prominent examples of charismatic and effective transformational leaders.

In a traditional conducted ensemble like a symphony orchestra, the conductor ideally inspires great performances from the players, but ultimately leads an essentially transactional relationship (Seifter & Economy, 2001). A clear hierarchy of power and clarity of roles between leader and musicians centers on the conductor's musical vision and the players' ability to realize that vision. A transformational leader engenders a group spirit focused on the whole, with motivation and inspiration maximizing capacity, creativity, and innovation in players (Northouse, 2007). While transformational leadership in conducted ensembles appears less common, the case study later in this paper illustrates the effectiveness of a transformational leader in a conducted improvisation ensemble.

With the theoretical lens of transformational leadership described, the next section compares and contrasts distinctions between controlled composition and spontaneous improvisation. The intersections of these two compositional techniques identify liminal aspects of the creative process and potential new creative opportunities. Composition, improvisation, and the roles of the leader and followers can then help illustrate a process-oriented, intersectional style of music making and leadership.

### **Intersections of Composition and Improvisation**

In Western art music, a single composer typically determines the form and content of a composition, musicians then interpret the work in performance. This form of composition

is generally solitary and highly structured. Improvisation has its own wide-ranging rules, depending on the tradition, for creating music in the moment. In jazz, chord progressions and stylistic melodic, rhythmic, and form conventions provide a framework for improvisation, for example. From the classical and folk traditions of Middle East to Asian countries and Africa to Eastern Europe, improvisation is deeply embedded in the fabric of music and performance around the world (Cowell, & Richardson, 2002). In Western music, improvisation has also played an important role, from liturgical chant to figured bass, cadenzas, preludes, and of course, jazz. Today, with technology fostering cross-fertilization of styles, the fusion of musical genres has further expanded the art and expectations of improvisation.

In the spirit of evolving notions of improvisation in the musics of the world and the melding of many styles, The National Association of Schools of Music began requiring improvisation in the curriculum of American higher education institutions in 1999 (NASM, 1999, rev. 2010). The International Society for Improvised Music provides a definition exemplifying improvisation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, without genre or stylistic implications:

Improvisation is spontaneous interaction between musicians from the most disparate backgrounds, dissolution of boundaries between performers and listeners, and access to the transcendent dimensions of creative experience. Improvisation is at the heart of a new musical paradigm that uniquely reflects contemporary life (International Society for Improvised Music, n.d.).

Next, I explore a specific sub-set of improvisation—conducted improvisation—which lies at the intersection of structured and improvised composition.

### **Conducted Improvisation—Liminal Spaces**

Improvisation is not composition...It is a work in progress. It is performers' music (Foss, 1963, p. 684).

In the 1960s, composer Lukas Foss experimented with improvised chamber music, but compared improvisation to an artist's initial sketch, as opposed to a completed painting. The random nature of open improvisation held little interest for Foss as a composer. However, he noted, "Chance...becomes musically interesting only when it rubs against the will, when musical selectivity enters into the picture correcting the chance formations" (Foss, 1962, p. 684). Foss' statement anticipated the directions of pioneering composers interested in these compositional intersections between chance and will—a kind of liminal spaces.

Walter Thompson (*Soundpainting*) in the 1970s, and Lawrence Douglas "Butch" Morris (*Conduction*®) in the 1980s, each developed intricate, structured sign-systems for conducted composition and improvisation (Larsen, 2015; *Soundpainting*, n.d.). Other early innovators in structured improvisation include diverse artists like John Zorn, Charles Moffett, Sun Ra, Lukas Foss, Anthony Braxton, and Frank Zappa (Larsen, 2015; Smith, 1995). Using pre-determined hand and body gestures, these composers/conductors work with groups of musicians as living, in-the-moment compositional tools (Larsen, 2015; Morris, 2006; *Soundpainting*, n.d.). Brief descriptions of Thompson's and Morris' approaches to structured improvisation follow, providing context for the generation of musical material and metaphorical implications for exploring leadership.

Thompson described soundpainting as "the universal multidisciplinary live composing sign language for musicians, actors, dancers, and visual artists" (*Soundpainting*, n.d.). *Soundpainting* has evolved into a complex system of over 1,200 discrete gestures, with certification systems and educational materials. Thompson specifies soundpainting as a method for *live composing*, not as improvisation, although the players create the musical materials in the moment, guided by a carefully trained soundpainter/composer. In the 1980s, Lawrence "Butch" Morris' created conduction, a pre-determined set of hand gestures used by a conductor/composer to organize and compose with an improvising ensemble (Foss, 1962; Morris, 2006; Bynum, 2013). Morris described conduction as "a vocabulary of ideographic signs and gestures activated to modify or construct a real-time musical arrangement or composition" (Morris, 2006, p. 593).

Conduction and soundpainting each serve as conceptual compositional inspiration for exploring conducted ensemble improvisation, providing a structure to meld performer-generated improvisation with a composer's purposeful intention—chance rubbing against the will. The conductor/composer balances unknown and unpredictable musical elements as they unfold, working with the individual and collaborative contributions of the musicians (DePree, 1992; Goleman, Kaufman, & Ray, 1992). The completely improvised yet expertly guided results meet in the intersection between composition and improvisation. In this process-oriented music making, “the ‘working’ becomes as important, perhaps more so, than the ‘work’” itself (Turner, 1988, p. 8). Turner describes this intersection or threshold state as liminality, a complex, ambiguous, zone of possibilities particularly suited to creative artistic activities (Burnard, 2012; Turner, 1988). The liminal space provides rich opportunities for the conductor/composer/leader and also for the musicians to create and innovate together (Dobrian, 1991; Turner, 1998). Worldwide, composers and musicians continue to develop various approaches to conducted improvisation today, drawing on these and other diverse musical traditions to compose in real time.

The history and methods of structured improvisation inspired a young composer/conductor in the U.S. Aaron's experiences as the leader of an improvising ensemble illustrate the creative, intersectional boundaries between improvisation and composition, forming an apt metaphor for leadership and interpersonal interaction.

### **Case Study—Aaron and Improvestra**

Aaron and his ensemble, Improvestra, exemplify the convergence points between composition and improvisation, providing implications for leadership. A composition instructor in college introduced Aaron to conducted improvisation for an interdisciplinary visual art and music event. Three years after that initial performance, Aaron continued leading a fluid group of improvising musicians and has blossomed as a conductor/composer and charismatic leader. Aaron's evolving perceptions concerning the distinct but interrelated musical realms of composition and improvisation inform both his musical decision-making and his broader career directions as an artist and a leader. In his

work with Improvestra, Aaron's personal transformations as a musician, leader, composer, conductor, and colleague have sparked reflection and heightened self-awareness, enhancing his evolving transformational leadership style (Noonan, 2007). Artistically, Aaron lives at the liminal intersections of spontaneous and controlled composition.

With a romanticist's aesthetic and a composer's process and vision, Aaron consciously guides his musicians toward a "tonal, groove-oriented" style of improvisation, rather than what he describes as the "out there, random, atonal" sounds of free jazz or new music ensembles. Acknowledging his debt to pioneers in conducted improvisation, Aaron creates his own artistic vision, prioritizing musical accessibility along with musician and audience engagement as central goals for Improvestra performances (Bynum, 2013; Morris, 2006). Aaron shared his transformational approach to leadership: "the ability to lead a situation depends on reading personalities (overall and in the moment) to bring out the best in people and communicate effectively".

Aaron's role as leader, conductor, and de facto composer for Improvestra has evolved over time. Initially, he learned several hand signals from conduction, adding new ones collaboratively with the musicians. Gradually, Aaron shaped the improvisations with the deliberate intentions of a composer, growing as both a musician and as a leader. Out of the initial chaotic and unstructured potential in an Improvestra performance, Aaron responds to the emerging musical material. He may start with a solo instrument, setting an evocative or energized mood. Or he might launch the music by providing a tempo and feel, allowing an original groove to emerge. As conductor/composer, he plays with instrumental color, juxtaposing unusual combinations of instruments or non-traditional voicings. He listens closely for melodic fragments that catch his ear, signaling players to create duets or instrumental sections. He plays with contrasts of dynamics, texture, mood, and form shaping the improvised composition by balancing expectation and surprise. Aaron uses his distinct and focused aesthetic and transformational leadership style to "make my voice heard through everyone else".

Unlike the solitary nature of most composers' work, all this compositional activity takes place on stage with audiences present. A high potential for failures, small and large, elevates the level of musical unpredictability and inspiration for Aaron and the ensemble. Will the ideas come together to create order out of chaos or will it fall apart? While some efforts do fail, Aaron's willingness to experiment and the excitement of inherent risks inspire and unite the players. Aaron embraces the risks and rewards of leadership, modeling both for the ensemble. "I don't know if you can call someone a good leader unless they take a risk and you see them come out of a hole. If you're afraid of that, man, you've got a rough life ahead of you." Uncertainty, risk-taking, and the potential for satisfying musical results, inspire focus and attention in both the players and the listeners. Audiences appreciate the musical tight rope of an Improvestra performance, remaining both engaged and moved by the music. This consistently positive connection with the musicians and the audience demonstrates a full-circle of creative expression: the ultimately social nature of creativity (Goleman, Kaufman, & Ray, 1992).

The final section provides educational context to advocate for attitudes and opportunities exploring improvisation and leadership.

## **Summary and Recommendations**

This paper explored connections between the musical skills of conducted improvisation and extra-musical abilities of leadership as two skill sets useful for addressing sustainable music careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In a time of cultural and curricular change made more challenging by limited budgets, these career proficiencies provide opportunities for student development and growth with little financial cost.

The CMS manifesto noted the importance of embedding critical learning and career experiences within curricular and co-curricular opportunities rather than simply adding courses and credits (Sarath, 2014). Establishing a consistent culture valuing leadership including opportunities to apply and practice these skills can help students internalize these expectations and encourage growth throughout their education and beyond. For example, instructors can look for opportunities to define leadership organically in the

curriculum, providing, or encouraging, opportunities in class, rehearsals, on campus, and in the community. We can bring attention to leadership moments, telling stories from our experiences and encouraging students to do the same. Give student musicians significant responsibilities with real consequences appropriate to their level of experience to help develop individual leadership styles.

Aaron's experiences melding conducted improvisation with a leadership role was tested within the safe space of the classroom. Supported and mentored, he learned and practised technical skills in conduction and composition while honing his abilities to lead, motivate, and inspire musicians. After graduation, Aaron's levels of experience and confidence enabled him to retain experienced players while broadening to include musicians from the professional community. Success in engaging audiences in the earliest performances provided him with the self-assurance to reach out and engage eager new audiences. Leadership is not always a designated, titled role; it may be ephemeral or project-based, like Aaron's first exposure to conduction. Leadership opportunities can provide career turning points with powerful and long-lasting results.

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# **Minding the Gap in Musicians' Transition from Student to Professional: The *Civic Fellowship* at the Civic Orchestra of Chicago**

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## **Abstract**

The transition from student to professional has proven to be one of the most challenging phases for musicians. The *Civic Fellowship* at the Civic Orchestra of Chicago—the training orchestra of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra—is an innovative programme for recent graduates aimed at holistic development through a portfolio of opportunities in orchestral, educational and community contexts. This study aimed to understand how participants experienced the fellowship and ascertain its value as a tool for enhancing learning in the transition to professional. 8 musicians chosen for the 2014/2015 season took part in the study: 4 males and 4 females, aged between 22 and 30 years. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) revealed the experience of the programme to be accounted for through 7 over-arching themes: 1) perspective; 2) “the musician as citizen”; 3) professional skills; 4) social skills; 5) self; 6) wellbeing and mediated by 7) the process of getting out of the conservatoire comfort zone. Results suggest that the *Civic Fellowship* model represents a strong example of a creative career advancement initiative that meets key developmental and educational needs of transition musicians. Longitudinal follow-up is suggested to verify the sustainability and generalizability of the change.

## **Keywords**

Transition to professional, Music career, *Civic Fellowship*, life-skills, IPA

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The transition from student to professional has proven to be one of the most challenging processes of human development (Gerrish, 2000). In music, growing attention is now given to this phase as—alongside entering a music higher education

programme—it is emerging as a highly demanding process (Creech et al., 2008; Burland, 2005). The specific challenges of each stage of musical development are now well described, from spontaneous musical expression and exploration, to guided instruction, goal commitment and identification, and development of the artistic personality (Hallam, 2006). Nevertheless, as MacNamara, Holmes and Collins (2008) point out, while the challenges of each stage are crucial, they appear to be less significant than the challenges of the transitions *between* stages. Research has revealed that the transition from student to professional, in particular, represents a major shift due to both the practicalities and emotional impact of the general adjustment to adulthood, as well as to the new habits and demands of playing professionally (Burland, 2005). With an enduring focus on preparing students as skilled specialists (Perkins, 2013), there may be a gap between music-specific skills (*doing* music) and life-skills (*being* a musician) in institutional music programmes.

This paper focuses on the process of transitioning, concentrating on the period between the last stages of institution-based learning and the beginning of paid, day-to-day activity as a working musician. New challenges are typically reported by musicians in this phase. Besides potential financial hardships, there is the reality of professional competition, conflicting identities, time-pressure and the inability to maintain discipline for practicing (Creech et al., 2008; MacNamara et al., 2008). As Creech et al. (2008) suggest, new routines can contribute to self-doubt and even a perception of reduced engagement with music, and there is evidence for lower overall psychological wellbeing in the first years of being a music professional (Ascenso et al., 2016). Further, one of the key features of transitioning to professional is choice-making, closely intertwined with establishing a less experimental self-concept and constructing and building complex identities (Burland, 2005; Jutti & Littleton, 2012). The musician needs to re-equate future selves according to new circumstances and their behaviour is shaped accordingly. There is a brainstorming process of possible selves, and a possible narrowing and redefinition of self as new contexts of being are encountered. Furthermore, the reward system of life as a professional is different: feedback is not so systematically present, leading to a higher need for self-regulation (Burland, 2005).

Finally, society is changing and the demands on a professional musician are also evolving (MacNamara et al., 2008). Seltzer and Bentley (1999) describe a current day skills paradox, as there is increasing demand for versatility and new skills on one hand, alongside the need, on the other hand, to maintain traditional skills at the highest level, as competition increases. Higher music education is therefore faced with a double challenge: the transition itself and the new contours of the profession. Musical skills need to be refined like never before, but adaptation, versatility and resilience need to be equally optimized (Gaunt et al., 2012).

### **Managing the Transition**

Several factors have been highlighted as key for managing the transition from student to professional: personality characteristics and maturity (Burland, 2005), personal values (Fiske & Chirboga, 1990) and effective coping strategies (Burland & Davidson, 2004). However, research has suggested that there seems to be a gap between the areas of support that a holistic development entails, and those that educational institutions may be providing (Burland, 2005; MacNamara et al., 2008; Gaunt et al., 2012). It seems necessary to increase awareness in educational settings for the importance of training for transition, going beyond musical skill proficiency alone, to foster attributes needed to meet the key challenges of professional life.

Peer-learning and practice-based programmes have been highlighted as tools for soothing this transition and potentiating integration. Centrality is placed on tacit learning and the search for *becoming* (as opposed to rigid and static goals of performance). The focus is on forming a sense of identity that goes beyond specific music skills, in what has been called the “living curriculum” (Johnsson & Hager, 2008). Despite representing a step forward in training for transition, the experiences of musicians involved in these initiatives remain under-researched. Additionally, such programmes have typically been confined to the academic context, preventing full immersion in the professional world.

In response, the *Civic Fellowship* at the Civic Orchestra of Chicago pioneered a project which entailed immersion in a professional context. The aim is to optimize learning opportunities for musicians in handling career transition.

## ***The Civic Fellowship***

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is hailed as one of the greatest orchestras in the world. In addition to its artistic accolades, its legacy of educational programming dates back to 1919, when then music director Frederick Stock founded a series of “Young People’s Concerts”, “Youth Auditions” for talented young soloists, and the Chicago Civic Orchestra, a training orchestra for emerging professionals. Nearly one hundred years later, the Orchestra invests more deeply than ever in education and community programmes that provide access to its extraordinary musical resources. This programming, which is guided by celebrated cellist and CSO Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant Yo-Yo Ma, is produced by the CSO’s Negaunee Music Institute. Programmes reach over 200,000 people annually and include school and family concerts, projects for at-risk and incarcerated youth, a city-wide festival for young musicians, free chamber concerts in diverse schools and communities, open rehearsals, an apprenticeship programme for exceptional conductors, and a rigorous training programme for young percussionists. In addition, the Civic Orchestra continues to expand through the incorporation of a fellowship programme for professional training—the *Civic Fellowship*. As apprentices to the CSO and members of the Civic Orchestra, the civic fellows who are recent music graduates take part in a two-year residency.

The fellowship is designed to provide experiences that enable participants to architect fulfilling, sustainable, professional lives in music. The curriculum is organized as five pathways: (1) community engagement, (2) leadership within a symphony orchestra; (3) collaboration as a chamber musician, (4) music education and (5) cultural entrepreneurship. As a bridge between formal education and a professional career, the fellowship seeks to provide a safe space for development that simulates a real-world environment, with a particular focus on engaging audiences in creative ways. In a typical month, in addition to duties as members of the full Civic Orchestra, fellows will collaborate with residents of a juvenile prison, perform in chamber ensembles in Chicago Public Schools, lead a masterclass at a community youth orchestra, lead a new initiative of their own design, attend seminars and workshops on practical skills (for example, starting a teaching studio, artistic planning, grant-writing), receive private lessons from members of the CSO, collaborate with Yo-Yo Ma and Civic staff

on the design and implementation of artistic challenges, meet regularly as a cohort, and be mentored in self-management by CSO staff.

The *Civic Fellowship* was launched as a one-year pilot programme during the 2013/14 season. Following its success, a formal two-year program began in 2014/15. In 2016/17, the programme was expanded to include seventeen fellows who have been appointed to a two-year term. While musical ability is essential, fellows are also selected based on their aptitude for growth, leadership qualities and an interest in a multi-faceted career in music. Fellows often possess a passion for a tenured position in a professional orchestra.

The purpose of the present study is to understand how musicians in transition experience the training approach of the *Civic Fellowship* and to provide insight into its potential for bridging the gap for transition musicians.

## Method

The study adopted a qualitative approach in order to understand the subjective processes behind the experience of transition in the context of the fellowship.

### *Participants*

The sample comprised all musicians engaged in the *Civic Fellowship* for the 2014/2015 season (N=8): four males and four females, aged between 22 and 30 years (see Table 1). Fictitious names are used to preserve anonymity.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Participant	Instrument	Age	Sex	Education	Nationality
John	Violin	28	M	BMus, MMus	Taiwan
Erica	Viola	26	F	BMus	USA
Paul	Viola	22	M	BMus	USA
Jennifer	Double Bass	25	F	BMus, MMus	USA
Lilian	Double Bass	26	F	BMus, MMus	USA

Claudia	Oboe	30	F	BMus, MMus, DMus (ongoing)	USA
James	Clarinet	24	M	BMus, MMus (ongoing)	USA
Daniel	Percussion	28	M	BMus, MMus	Colombia

The study was granted ethical approval by the Conservatoires UK Research Ethics Committee and was conducted according to the guidelines of the British Psychological Society. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and no payment was given in exchange for participation.

### *Procedure*

Participants were recruited through invitation from the CSO staff. One semi-structured interview was conducted per participant two months before the programme ended. Interviews had a duration of approximately 60 minutes covering: 1) overall evaluation of the fellowship experience; 2) development of skills and 3) wellbeing.

### *Analysis*

All data were fully transcribed and analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA was chosen to facilitate understanding of the rich subjective meanings and complexity that experiencing the *Civic Fellowship* may imply. The IPA process followed five steps: (1) transcripts were read multiple times, leading to the identification of central meaning units, recorded on the left-hand margins; (2) units were translated into emergent themes—short phrases or words that capture their essential meaning were systematically written on the right-hand side of the transcript; (3) all themes were listed and clustered together; subordinate and supra-ordinate themes began to emerge; (4) a table of themes for each participant was generated; (5) after applying this procedure to the eight datasets sequentially, emergent themes across the eight participants were clustered together and successive hierarchies of themes were built leading to an overarching table. Validity was optimized through cross-checking, theme discussions and collaborative interpretations within the research team.

## Results

IPA analysis revealed seven themes and twenty sub-themes (Table 2) accounting for the meaning of the *Civic Fellowship* experience across all eight participants. In what follows, each overarching theme is explored in relation to its constituent sub-themes; example quotes are presented.

Table 2. Overarching Themes and Sub-themes

Overarching Themes	Sub-themes
Perspective	Re-framing careers
	Re-framing performances
'Musician as citizen'	'Something to say'
	Impact
	Connectedness
Professional Skills	Entrepreneurship
	Versatility
	Productivity
	Creativity
	Teaching skills
	Music-specific skills
Social Skills	Empathy
	Communication
Self	Awareness
	Confidence
Wellbeing	Meaning
	Accomplishment
	Gratitude
	Hope
Process	Out of conservatoire comfort zone

### *Theme 1: Perspective*

All participants highlighted the fellowship as a catalyst for a wider perspective on what it means to be a musician. This emerged at two levels. First, through experimenting with different musical identities, the fellows started considering new possibilities regarding their future career paths (sub-theme 1.1):

I feel like with these activities I don't feel as much pressure and need to win an orchestra job... I feel like I could have a rewarding life if I end up teaching or doing another activity that is just not performing in an orchestra. (Lilian, Double-bass)

Second, participants reported re-equating the weight and primacy of performance in their concept of the profession (sub-theme 1.2):

I come back from the orchestra audition and I think about the kids I am working with in these projects, and all of a sudden I just put things into perspective you know? There is so much more in music than just perfect performance... (James, clarinet)

This sub-theme was further explored by three fellows in relation to a reduced experience of performance anxiety.

### *Theme 2: "Musician as Citizen"*

Community engagement as a means for being a complete musician—or in the participants' words, "the musician as citizen"—was highlighted across all accounts. There was convergence in three areas in this domain. First, through the engagement in a rich set of activities, participants widened their repertoire of human encounters and were exposed to new emotional processes. This was reported as a source for "content" when performing, or as Paul (viola) expressed it: "I now have *something to say*". (sub-theme 2.1):

If we're artists, and we're trying to touch on all the depths of human experience, it's really good to actually go out and see what poverty looks like, what struggle looks like. I know what my struggle looks like, but I now know what your struggle looks like, you know? How can we play about something if we don't go out there and experience it? (Erica, viola)

A second sub-theme (2.2) captures the recurrent accounts of experiencing, through community-based encounters, the direct *impact* of making-music:

Maybe it's just being a member of the 21st century where we want everything now and we want to be happy now, but I like being able to see the difference that we have the opportunity to make in the moment as opposed to "okay I'm investing my time but I don't know where that is actually going to go" and in these projects, they are really impactful, you kind of get the immediate gratification of knowing how your music benefitted others, on the spot. (Claudia, oboe)

Finally, *connectedness* (sub-theme 2.3) was highlighted by all participants as the key mechanism mediating the positive growth experienced through the fellowship. This was referred both in relation to the connections established with the outreach communities and to the fellowship group itself. Importantly, in this context, participants highlighted how outreach impacted their performance experiences as a group:

In Civic when we play together I can just look at John in the first violins and we share a moment. Right? Like...we've had these experiences doing work together in all these contexts and I think that's good, beyond just being in rehearsal together...having that personal connection. If everyone in the orchestra had those experiences I think it would make the orchestra better. (Claudia, oboe)

### *Theme 3: Professional Skills*

For all participants the fellowship represented a laboratory for experimenting with new skills: *entrepreneurship* (sub-theme 3.1), closely linked with leadership; *versatility* (sub-theme 3.2), mentioned in relation to both the context of the programme activities but also generalized to daily life situations; *productivity* (sub-theme 3.3), *creativity* (sub-theme 3.4), *teaching skills* (sub-theme 3.5) and *music-specific skills* (sub-theme 3.6) such as improvising, composing and arranging. Across all accounts, the perception of an overall higher preparedness for professional life emerged:

One of the biggest things I've learned is that you just have to go for it. And the worst thing someone can ever say is no, and if someone says no you don't really want to work with them anyway (...) if you're excited about something usually someone else will be excited about it too. (John, violin)

#### *Theme 4: Social Skills*

The fellowship was experienced by all musicians as a source for a strong development of social skills. Two areas were highlighted: the development of *empathy* (sub-theme 4.1), and the widening of skills for *communication* (sub-theme 4.2):

Through this type of work it makes it much easier to think from other perspectives, you place yourself in another's shoes. It's not that I learned to make new friends. I learned how to have the other's point of reference. (Lilian, Double-bass)

We get so used to being with people that share our 'language', it can be hard to remember that not everyone knows everything about music that we do, and that sometimes it doesn't occupy the same place in their lives. And trying to communicate it across that divide was a huge gain. (Jennifer, Double-bass)

#### *Theme 5: Self*

A recurrent theme across all accounts was the re-definition of self. Participants reported heightened overall *awareness* (sub-theme 5.1) of their personalities, skills and values leading to a renewed self-concept:

I think I've just become stronger in a lot of areas and I've realized I'm capable of things that I didn't necessarily think I was capable of, whether it's a matter of putting a brave face on when I have to, time-management, not panicking and falling apart when I want to... even learning how to be away from home... (Claudia, Oboe)

Within *self*, a recurrent emergent theme accounted for a perceived increase in *confidence* (sub-theme 5.2) both in relation to music and to life outside music.

#### *Theme 6: Wellbeing*

A higher sense of wellbeing was highlighted by all participants. The fellowship as a source of *meaning* (sub-theme 6.1) was the strongest thread:

I would just say that life is great you know? As much as I know playing music is not all about myself, or not just about how well you can play, how you need to prove the world that you can play... I have a feeling more and more since

I've been doing these kind of interacting with people works that it has a purpose beyond me. Which is probably why after some time you feel better about you as a human being not just as a musician you know? (James, clarinet)

A sense of *accomplishment* (sub-theme 6.2) linked with the perception of *impact* (sub-theme 2.2) and in relation to the *re-framing of performances* (sub-theme 1.2) also emerged. *Gratitude* (sub-theme 6.3) for one's own life trajectory, for the opportunity of being a musician and for the fellowship itself was also recurrent. Finally, participants reported a heightened sense of *hope* (sub-theme 6.4), especially in relation to the widening of career possibilities (sub-theme 1.1):

I felt like... there's a cliff and I'm closely getting closer to the cliff... if by a year from May I don't have a job I'm going to fall off the cliff and never get back on to be able to get a job. And everything in civic is trying to give you other avenues so you feel like there isn't the cliff anymore... (Claudia, Oboe)

### *Theme 7: Process*

Throughout all accounts themes 1 to 6 were equated as a result of an underlying *process* of getting out of the conservatoire comfort zone (sub-theme 7.1).

It's like discomfort at first and then you need to overcome to actually have a positive change... it's like building callouses or something. (Paul, viola)

It takes me out of my comfort zone because generally musicians don't really interact with the audience so much...[at] conservatory and everything we just work really hard, play the concert, go home (...) it was refreshing to have that artistic freedom. So in one way you have your comfort zone of music and then you have outside of your comfort zone which is all these different settings (...) and this process is what I think just really makes the musician grow as a citizen and not just a person. (Claudia, oboe)

## **Discussion**

The accounts of the eight musicians in this study highlight the potential for practice-based immersive portfolio programmes in addressing the challenges of the gap between being a music student and becoming a professional. In particular, the *Civic Fellowship* at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra offers an effective model for how the

professional music world can embrace these challenges and creatively potentiate career development of recent graduates. The fruitful space for skill development appears to serve as a laboratory for experimenting with new musical identities, varying the meaningful encounters with and through music. By the synergy of a wide variety of contexts—a professional orchestra, schools, charities, community agents and mentoring staff—and a strong focus on agency across different musical settings, this programme supports musicians in becoming leaders through its creative and thorough approach to both personal and team learning. Indeed, the experience seems to be strong enough to allow for a perspective change and sense of readiness for the profession. Results have highlighted the potential of this programme in forging creative new approaches that link higher education with the professional world. Beyond the prolific development of portfolio profiles, this initiative also proved significant in enhancing wellbeing, through meaning, sense of accomplishment and connectedness—components that remain key pillars of wellbeing for high achieving musicians (Ascenso et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, a question remains regarding the selection of musicians for programmes such as this. The musicians taking part in this fellowship were included based on their musical abilities, motivation and vision. It can be argued that they were already *a priori* open and more capable of portfolio experiences than some of their peers. Are all music graduates ready to benefit from this type of initiative? Future research making use of a wider sample and an extended baseline assessment will allow for further insight. Additionally, a longitudinal follow-up will enable the monitoring of sustainability and generalizability of the change.

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# Phases of Leadership: Responding to Opportunity

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## Abstract

This paper addresses the overarching seminar theme of leadership with particular reference to the sub-themes of old, new or emerging paradigms and the professional musician as researcher, in both cases with a focus on assessment practices. An autoethnographic approach is used to describe the author's career trajectory, which was strongly influenced by his engagement with issues around assessment—in his own courses, the program he led, the Conservatorium in which he works, its host University, and the creative and performing arts community in his own country and abroad. Although to lead was never an explicit goal, leadership has been present in the author's work at all of these levels, and the experiences of the author can be seen as representative of the experiences of at least some others in Higher Music Education. These personal experiences are contextualised in the prevailing regulatory circumstances of their times, and some conclusions are drawn about what may be possible for leaders in the education of the professional musician in current contexts.

## Keywords

assessment, assessment in music education, leadership, professional development, standards.

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## A Professional Trajectory

The following is an autoethnographic account (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010) of the author's engagement with the education of the professional musician in the context of Higher Music Education in Australia. In an increasingly globalised world, there is a growing awareness that the issues faced in one setting may well be mirrored elsewhere, and that we may find help with our own challenges in the experiences of others.

### *Phase One: Induction*

Following a lengthy career as a performer, the author became involved with teaching as a drum kit instructor, first in a private drum school then, in 1995, as a sessional<sup>1</sup> teacher in the Conservatorium that would be his place of work for the following two decades. One Conservatorium drum kit student became two, then ten, and one lecture about rhythm became

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<sup>1</sup> In the author's workplace, sessional teachers are those who are employed for specific duties on a contract basis, renewed from one semester to the next subject to demand for their services.

a course<sup>2</sup>, then two courses, and after six years of increasing involvement with the Conservatorium, the author was appointed to a continuing full time position as an associate lecturer, the bottom rung on the ladder of tenured academic appointments. Even at this junior level, opportunities to develop innovative practices were available, and a desire to understand how these innovations functioned became a central motivation for the author's doctoral studies and the research that has followed.

From its foundation in 1957 until 1991, the Conservatorium was an independent entity and conducted itself in the usual manner for conservatoires of that time—it was exclusively focussed on preparing students for their likely futures in the music profession, usually as performers and teachers. There was a clear focus on musical outcomes for graduates, with no requirement for more generic learning outcomes to be developed by the programs on offer. As a consequence of reforms to Australian higher education that resulted in all conservatoires amalgamating with universities (Dawkins, 1988), the Conservatorium became a college within a University in 1991, though much of its practice remained as it had always been. A considerable level of autonomy was available for the teaching of performance in the author's context in the mid to late 1990s, with individual teachers choosing the specifics of what was taught and what was assessed within broad departmental guidelines. The leadership of the Jazz department where the author was located did not micro manage the work of their performance teachers. The same was true for courses that were delivered as lectures, though the weekly content and the assessment tasks were reviewed and published at the start of each semester.

The performance assessment of Jazz drummers is an example of a degree of flexibility that was present in that context at that time. The examination performances for all of the drummers in the Jazz program were scheduled in a sequence, and the drummers opted to get feedback from the author/examiner together; they all welcomed the contribution of comments from their peers in this process. Often, it appeared that students valued their peers' feedback at least as much as the feedback they received from their teacher. In a context where feedback and marks were officially regarded as confidential, this represented a substantial departure from common practice, but this process was conducted openly and was allowed to continue

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<sup>2</sup> A course in this context is a unit of study, and a number of courses constitute a program of study for which a qualification is awarded.

for at least as long as the author was active as a performance teacher. This experience of peers providing valuable and constructive feedback alerted the author to the value of having students participate in the assessment process in this way, and this would have a substantial influence on subsequent practice.

In 1999, the author became involved in a new and innovative Bachelor of Popular Music program. Student self-assessment in the form of reflective writing was a requirement of the major study courses<sup>3</sup> in this program, and this was extended in 2002 to include self-marking and the provision of written feedback and marks to peers as part of an assessment panel process (Lebler, 2005). While feedback on this innovation was sought from the host University's Institute for Higher Education, the adoption of this unusual assessment process was within the University's Assessment Policy and was not subjected to formal external review. The implementation and documentation of the process was in the hands of the author in collaboration with the other teachers in the popular music program who also participated in the assessment process.

This is in marked contrast with the current context, in which the Conservatorium Learning and Teaching Committee would discuss a change of this kind; it would be noted by the Conservatorium College Committee, then it would be flagged in the University Course Profile process and would require the formal approval of the Conservatorium Deputy Director Learning and Teaching and the relevant University Dean Learning and Teaching. Students' experiences of this process became the focus of the author's research, and a sequence of publications has described particular aspects and effects of the process (Lebler, 2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015; Lebler & Hodges, in print; Lebler & Weston, 2015). To this point, leadership had been an aspect of teachers' autonomy in the context of a particular small cohort of one-to-one drum kit students, through the creation of a number of lecture-based courses, and ultimately through leadership of an innovative popular music program that included opportunity to enact new assessment processes. This interest in assessment led to an appointment to the directorate of the author's Conservatorium in 2008, with responsibility for everything relating to learning and teaching in addition to other leadership roles.

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<sup>3</sup> The major study course in this program is Popular Music Production, and it is undertaken by all students in each of the six semesters of the program.

### *Phase Two: Management*

In the broader context, 2008 was a significant year, with the publication of another comprehensive review of Australian higher education (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent, & Scales, 2008). The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) was one of the outcomes of this review, responsible for the oversight of higher education from 2012, along with the Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP) which provides advice to TEQSA and to the responsible minister (Lebler, Holmes, Harrison, Carey, & Cain, 2015). In addition, a strengthened Australian Qualifications Framework (*Australian Qualifications Framework*, 2013) specified a range of learning outcomes that should be demonstrated by all graduates in their responses to assessment tasks, so the era of conservatoires acting autonomously was well and truly over, just as was the case for the rest of higher education.

The author engaged with the process of meeting regulatory requirements as a manager in the Conservatorium as well as through service as a member of 16 committees and working groups within the host University but external to the Conservatorium in the years up to 2013. The main business of these committees and working groups was governance and the preparation of the University for compliance with new and emerging regulation of the higher education sector. The majority of this service related to learning and teaching matters, with assessment being present in many of these contexts, and the University regarded all of this service as leadership. Such opportunities as involvement with the revision and rewriting of the University's Assessment Policy and representing the Institution in discussions around the development of sector-wide regulations were a valuable learning experience for the author, and allowed thinking at the local level to be situated in the broader regulatory context.

While some induction was available for a few of these roles, most of the professional development needed to perform appropriately was acquired on the job, by observing more experienced committee members and reflecting on the strengths of their contributions. With the exception of the professional bureaucrats who were important and valuable contributors to many of these meetings, almost all the academic members were people who had started their academic careers as teachers or researchers, not seeking to lead or manage, and found themselves contributing to the development of policy at a level that would have been unimaginable at the start. However, these academics were very capable and usually comfortable in their management and leadership roles. In the words of the fictional character

Albus Dumbledore in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*,

perhaps those who are best suited to power are those who have never sought it. Those who ... have leadership thrust upon them, and take up the mantle because they must, and find to their own surprise that they wear it well. (Rowling, 2007, p. 718)

A professional trajectory such as this demonstrates that leadership of this kind is not always an explicit goal at the start of an academic career, but can develop as an implicit aspect of the teaching role, an extension of influence from one to many. The author's main pedagogical goal at the start was to positively influence the progress of drummers, one at a time in their one-to-one lessons and, to a lesser extent, collectively in workshops and master classes. Lectures provided an opportunity to influence more students, though arguably, in more general ways, and later management and leadership roles extended this influence quite directly to the entire enrolment of the Conservatorium and less directly, to aspects of the student experience across the entire University.

### *Phase Three: Post-management Academic Life*

More recently, management roles have given way to leadership of an Assessment in Music project (AiM) that was funded by the Australian Government's Office for Learning and Teaching (Lebler, Harrison, Carey, & Cain, 2015). The project grew out of the changes in regulations referred to above that required higher music institutions to demonstrate student achievement of a nationally agreed suite of threshold learning outcomes for graduates of degrees in the creative and performing arts in Australia through assessment activities. In addition, the Australian Higher Education Standards Panel's requirement that standards applied to the assessment of students' achievement of learning outcomes be comparable between similar programs of study, so the project also investigated processes by which understandings of standards could be shared within and between institutions, with a particular interest in D. Royce Sadler's consensus moderation process (Lebler, Carey, Harrison, & Cain, 2014). The Australian AiM project is paralleled elsewhere, particularly in the work of the AEC Polifonia Working Group on Assessment and Standards (2014) whose report stresses the need for transparency in the standards being applied to the assessment of musical performances and recommends processes to develop shared understandings of these standards between institutions.

### *New Focus*

At the time of writing, the author has no management responsibilities and is immersed in a range of academic activities that include chairing the external examiners' panel for a large international private provider of education in the creative and performing arts; membership of various external review panels and reference groups for other institutions developing or reviewing degree programs in music; editorial board memberships and reviewing of various kinds; external examining; and contributions to a number of research projects investigating such topics as interdisciplinary work, peer enhancement of teaching and one-to-one teaching. Much of this work benefits directly from the experiences of the previous phase of professional life that included a deep engagement with the regulations and regulatory processes within which higher music education institutions must now operate.

At a more local level, continuing to research and write, and the supervision of research students has come to dominate activities in day-to-day work allocation, along with managing some courses and a wide range of informal interactions with colleagues and students. This transition enables the author to make way for the next generation of academic managers in the Conservatorium while maintaining a presence and ensuring that the institutional knowledge of the recent past remains available. It also allows the author to represent the Conservatorium and the sector in the continuing discussions around the place of the creative and performing arts in higher education, and to contribute to University activities on behalf of Conservatorium management when appropriate. There are two former directors and another former acting director still working at the Conservatorium in their post-management career phases, along with other academics who have previously held senior management roles, so there is a considerable body of institutional knowledge still available to those who have now assumed senior management roles when needed.

Looking to the future, assessment is likely to remain at the centre of the author's work, both through active involvement in a range of assessment activities, supervision of a number of research students whose studies include assessment, and as a recurring theme in research. A continuing involvement with the international assessment in music community is evident through a commitment to co-chair the 2019 Ninth International Symposium on Assessment in Music Education, which will be hosted by the author's Conservatorium.

## **Conclusion**

The experiences of the author are similar to the experiences of many others in leadership roles in higher music education in that the original purpose for engaging with higher music education was simply to teach, motivated by a desire to help students achieve their musical goals. The academic environment encourages teachers to think more broadly than their individual studio practice, and this often takes place when teachers assume the management of the courses they teach, because an awareness of the broader context is needed in these management roles. In the Australian context and elsewhere, scholarship is expected of academics, and common research interests frequently manifest in collegiate relationships among academics. All of these factors should combine to foster excellence in practice, but in a context that is very different from two decades ago, when a new idea could be implemented more or less autonomously. Regulations in Australia now specify the kinds of learning outcomes that should be achieved by graduates on completion of their programs of study, and it is in their responses to assessment tasks that students demonstrate their achievement of these learning outcomes. As a consequence, course level assessment tasks are now commonly mapped—directly or indirectly—to learning outcomes that reflect the Australian Qualifications Framework specifications and are closely monitored by institutions as part of their quality assurance processes.

While this kind of regulation has merit, it does tend to work against agility and innovation and it is clear that to implement radical innovations in the current context requires an effective engagement with various layers of institutional processes that are designed to manage change in a complex environment. Creativity and innovation are still important in the continuing development of higher music educational processes, but in the current context, they are not enough. This form of leadership must now be moderated by close attention to layers of regulation, progressed through usually complex institutional approval processes, and subjected to close scrutiny by numerous others. It is hoped that those seeking to innovate will not be deterred by the current context, because new thinking is more important than ever if we are to successfully adapt to increasingly fast rates of change, not just in higher music education, but also in many other aspects of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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# **Supervision as Leadership in the Combined Practice-theoretical Higher Degree Thesis**

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores how doctorates of philosophy involving a combination of practice and theory can be supervised to form a cohesive thesis through a form of leadership which encourages and develops scholarly thinking and writing at post-graduate level, engaging the student researcher to understand conceptual gateways which guide them to view their practice as a research paradigm, complementary to, and equally informative as, traditional texted research approaches. After a review of literature on styles of leadership which intersect with the supervisory role, the supervision of creative arts theses, and the notion of threshold concepts and conceptual gateways, the paper discusses five multi-modal doctorates, noting how the theory and practice were braided together to shape a cohesive argument. Underlying this is the experience of the researcher-practitioner as supervisor. Finally, there is discussion about the value of practice and other practice-based research approaches for doctoral research, implications for this supervisory leadership role, and how practice as research can be part of a mixed-method braided thesis study.

## **Keywords**

Leadership, higher degree supervision, threshold concept, music practice, braided thesis

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## **Introduction**

Supervising higher degree theses is a form of leadership. This paper explores how several doctorates of philosophy, in which practice and text-based theoretical/philosophical research are combined, were supervised to form a cohesive thesis. It explores the notion of the supervisor's role as one form of leadership in the encouragement and facilitation of post-graduate level scholarly thinking and writing, engaging with an understanding of Meyer and Land's (2005) idea of "threshold concepts" as the "conceptual gateways" through which the student researcher is guided to view practice as a complementary research paradigm, equally informative as traditional texted research approaches.

The paper begins by reviewing the literature on styles of leadership which intersect with the supervisory role as well as on the supervision of theses in the creative arts, and outlines the

notion of threshold concepts. It then discusses, as vignettes, five multi-modal doctorates which combine theory and practice, focusing in particular, on how the different modes of research were braided together to shape an argument, drawing on the experience of the supervising academic as researcher-practitioner. The paper concludes with a discussion about the value of practice and other practice-based research paradigm approaches within the doctor of philosophy context, with implications for the supervisory role in this style of what will be called a ‘braided’ thesis, and how practice as research can be part of a mixed methods thesis study.

## **Literature Review**

### *Leadership and Supervision*

Talking of what she calls “generic research supervision at undergraduate and postgraduate levels” (p. 41), Wisker (2012) writes of all students needing “guidance, modelling and managing” (p. 41) as they develop as researchers. Komives, Lucas and McMahon (2013) similarly notes “that when engaging others in accomplishing change, everyone can be a leader” (p. 4). They identify two ways the word leader can be used—a “positional leader ...[elected] to assume responsibility for a group working toward change” (p. 22) and the engager leader, someone “who actively engages with others to accomplish change” (p. 22) and while each study discipline may require different aspects of leadership, all are interested in “how people can work more effectively together toward some outcome” (p. 27).

Discussing definitions of leadership, Komives et al. draw on the thinking of several writers on leadership who adopt the metaphor of a performing art—leadership and the symphony orchestra; leadership and the jazz-band leader (De Press, 1992), emphasising inclusiveness, individuality; “empowering people to realize their gifts and talents” (Komives et al, 2013, p. 54); and examining “action as a performing art” (Vaill, 1991, p. 117) with “the parts and the whole, as well as the interrelationships between the two” (Komives et al, 2013, p. 53). They identify the Relational Leadership Model, described as “a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change” (p. 52) with the purpose being “vision-driven and not position-driven” (p. 97). The research supervision role has characteristics of positional, engager and relational leadership models.

### *Creative Arts Doctoral Supervision*

Literature on supervising creative arts doctorates focuses largely on the creative practice thesis with an exegesis. In each institution this style of thesis is given a different title—a PhD

in some institutions, a creative arts doctorate (DCA, DMA etc.) in others. Whatever the title, the main focus is on the creative work with the exegesis in a support role. This paper, however, is about the doctor of philosophy model with a substantial word count thesis, around 80,000, but which can include a substantial creative component drawn in as part of the research process. Literature on the creative arts doctorate with exegesis, however, draws out several issues relevant to the braided thesis.

At Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University in Australia, the current Doctor of Musical Arts was original based on a PhD shape. In the university environment, Harrison (2014) from that institution notes a sense “among some performing academics that scholarly activity and creativity may be mutually exclusive” (p. 309) thereby creating a binary in the minds of some, which may not be true in practice. He promotes the idea of the term and concept “practice-centred research” (p. 307) introduced by him in earlier research and “largely borrowed from other disciplines” (p. 307). This is an approach in which “new forms of knowledge dissemination have emerged that are not necessarily linear and that serve to ensure that the creativity within practice itself, rather than the talk about the practice, is assessed” (p. 308). Harrison cites Schippers who finds that practice-centred research is “what reflective musicians do in pursuit of their art [and] often consists—or at least contains elements—of research, which can be made explicit” (Schippers, 2013, quoted in Harrison, 2014, p. 308).

The thesis shape Harrison discusses is, from my reading, focused largely on creative work with a text-based exegetical contribution, and in doing so, he raises the idea (with co-author Draper) of this style of thesis creating “a multi-modal quandary” (Draper & Harrison, 2011, p. 99 in Harrison, 2014, p. 309). Multi-modal is a term useful, with and without the quandary, to discuss practice-theory theses of all balances. It also serves to draw into focus the stages in academic thinking, outlined above, from creative practice being very separate from scholarly writing, to being the main focus for assessment, to containing some elements of research, to being a truly multi-modal research component incorporating the braided practice-theory thesis of this paper. Harrison’s description of Emmerson’s 2006 study *Around a Rondo* where rehearsal process, performance, historical sources and scores and personal reflections are drawn together through multiple hyperlinks “to illuminate the artistic process” (p. 310) seems close in style to the braided practice-theory thesis.

Wisker (2012) devotes a chapter to discussing the supervision of higher degree creative research. From her comments about the creative work being accompanied by an analytical account that more closely resembles the conventional format, and also rather dismissive phrases such as “ensuring the theorists are mentioned” (p. 382), her discussion is, again, on a thesis where the creative work is the primary focus. She notes that “artists and writers tend to define their research processes as discovering through creating—the research is the writing, painting, weaving itself, and embodied in the process and the project” (p. 367). This is part of the braided thesis but by no means all. While the creative component may be the initial thesis concept, leading the discussion, it may also emerge from the discussion topic as a way of adding richly to the thesis arguments another research paradigm. In exploring “ways of confronting the challenge and the conceptual threshold crossing leading to doctoral work which is conceptual, critical and creative ... in production terms” (p. 366), however, Wisker raises several points useful and relevant to this paper. Supervision is to be undertaken to “help [students] bridge the gaps...between the creative, the reflective and developmental and the analytically critical” (p. 369). This can be by brainstorming and exploring preliminary ideas, discussing what the creative produce might be which engages with these ideas, determining the amount of personal knowledge to include, and discussing theories, concepts, readings and arguments which can inform the work. She found that “threshold concepts and conceptual threshold-crossing theories” (p. 373) enabled the exploration and identification of experiences, guiding direction and thinking. Wisker talks of how those who research in creative subjects “are developing a mix of the individualist and the socially situated, the developing and unbounded, and the articulated work in a dialogue with others, with previous work and with the structures of the form of a ...thesis... and so creating a new form of expression, communicated to others” (p. 378). She introduces the notion of “the ‘wrap’” (p. 382) where concepts, theories and argument unite to create the whole and this involves “blending collections..., connecting and creativity” (Wisker & Robinson, 2009, p. 326).

### *Threshold Concepts*

The idea of certain disciplines having “conceptual gateways” or “portals” which lead “to a previously inaccessible, and initially perhaps ‘troublesome’, way of thinking about something” was first introduced into educational thinking in 2003 by Meyer and Land (2005, p. 373). They suggest that once the concept is understood, a new, transformed way of “understanding, interpreting, or viewing something may thus emerge” (p. 373) which may be “*transformative* (occasioning a significant shift in the perception of a subject), *irreversible*

(unlikely to be forgotten, or unlearned only through considerable effort), and *integrative* (exposing the previously hidden interrelatedness of something)...[but also] *troublesome* [leading]... to troublesome knowledge for a variety of reasons” (pp. 373–374). The examples given of such threshold concepts are “precedent in Law, depreciation in Accounting, the central limit theorem in Statistics, entropy in Physics” (p. 374).

In this paper I argue that introducing practice (with its associated research paradigms) into music research, in combination with traditional research paradigms, is such a threshold concept. When a student finds the learning of some concepts troublesome, a quandary, or a surprise (to use Schön’s 1987 term), Meyer and Land (2005) find these spaces have the characteristics of “states of ‘liminality’” (p. 375), a thinking drawn from van Genneep (1960) and Turner’s (1969) work on adolescent boys initiation rites of passage. Turner adopts the term liminality “to characterise the transitional space/time within which the rites were conducted” (Meyer & Land, 2005, p. 375). When a new learner cannot achieve the transformed status, they may result in “mimicry” which involve “attempts at understanding *and* troubled misunderstanding, or limited understanding, and is not merely intention to reproduce information in a given form” (p. 377). While this paper will not discuss the vignettes in relation to liminality and mimicry and the post-graduate student and supervisor process, Meyer and Land recognise that all of these concepts are part of “the more liminally engaged nature of post-graduate research” (p. 380), different from “the teleological nature of undergraduate learning” (p. 380). They further urge enquiry between liminality, creativity and problem-solving, something this paper attempts to begin in relation to post-graduate research.

From the literature a number of key concepts emerge, which inform the supervision/ leadership role of a braided thesis (see Figure 1).

<b>Styles of leadership</b>	
Positional (Komives, Lucas and McMahon, 2013)	Elected to assume responsibility Position-driven
Engager (Komives, Lucas and McMahon, 2013)	Actively engages with others to accomplish change Vision-driven
Relational model (Komives, Lucas and McMahon, 2013)	Relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change Vision-driven

<b>Academic thinking on practice as research</b>	
Practice and scholarly activity mutually exclusive - binary (for some) (Harrison, 2014)	
Practice-centred research (Harrison, 2014)	Knowledge not necessarily linear Creativity within practice itself, not the talk about it
Practice contains elements of research (Schippers, 2013, in Harrison, 2014)	
Multi-modal quandary (Draper & Harrison, 2011, in Harrison, 2014)	
<b>Supervisory leadership in practice</b>	
Threshold concepts and conceptual threshold-crossing theories (Wisker, 2012)	Enable exploration and identification of experiences, guiding direction and thinking
Brainstorming ideas (Wisker, 2012)	Exploring preliminary ideas; initial planning
Bridge the gaps (Wisker, 2012)	Between dynamic mixtures of the reflective, creative and analytical (Wisker & Robinson, 2009)
Blending (Wisker, 2012)	Collections, connecting and creativity
The wrap (Wisker, 2012)	Concepts, theories, argument unite to create the whole = blending collections = multi-modal
Conceptual gateways or portals (Meyer & Lane, 2005)	Threshold concepts Transformative; irreversible; integrative; troublesome (quandary (Draper & Harrison, 2011 in Harrison, 2014), surprise (Schön, 1987))
Liminality (Meyer & Lane, 2005, thinking of van Gennep, 1960, Turner, 1969)	Liminality (transitional space); mimicry (limited understanding)
Supervisor active as practitioner and researcher (this study)	
<b>Accomplishing new knowledge</b>	
Multi-modal thesis = braided thesis (this study)	
New form of expression (Wisker, 2012)	

Figure 1. Key concepts which inform the supervision/leadership role of a practice/theory braided thesis

## Vignettes

Students researching in the creative arts are often working with “dynamic mixtures of reflective, creative and analytical work” (Wisker & Robinson, 2009, p. 317). Talking of post-graduate supervision in music, Harrison (2014) offers a comment made by a supervisor in his study—“you start with what interests [the student] and their approach to it. It’s incredibly interesting work and you don’t want to dampen the enthusiasm that people bring to this sort of process” (p. 314). The vignettes to be discussed began with this approach. All students walked through my door wanting to undertake traditional research into their chosen topics but also to include creative work. Here, the role of supervisor as relational leader took an important but carefully balanced turn. I am a practitioner (composer, performer) and engage with a range of research paradigms including practice-based approaches. The reality of combining practice and theory into a braided, multi-modal and convincing thesis, in the initial planning—Wicker’s brainstorming—and later writing up the completed practice and theoretical component, required careful supervision encouraging an understanding of the conceptual threshold thinking needed to draw the two research paradigms together, often drawing on the supervisor’s own experience.

There are five thesis vignettes. Investigating strategies for singers and singing teachers to engage with Australian art song, one thesis undertook empirical data gathering through email interviews with singers, the journaling of preparation of two concerts and a questionnaire to singing teachers. The practice—two concerts performed by the researcher with other singers—drew valued information from the singers and accompanist through a practice-led paradigm. It involved programming the repertoire and placing the songs at the heart of the study, thereby drawing the practice component, which took place in the public arena, strongly into the central argument of the thesis. A bank of strategies for engaging with contemporary art song emerged from all components of the thesis.

A bassoonist, investigating how to engage contemporary classical audiences with new Australian bassoon music, adopted a four stage research process of which three were analytical/empirical, one practice-based. She reviewed literature on contemporary art music and its audience then completed a survey of existing Australian music for solo bassoon or bassoon and piano music, noting style, level, and playing characteristics/difficulties. Bassoonists, composers of bassoon music and CD marketers of contemporary Australian classical music responded to a questionnaire. Several Australian composers were

commissioned to write music for bassoon and, while not requiring them to fill gaps in the repertoire, the researcher told composers of the gaps. Finally she recorded a sampler of the works, sent it to the CD marketers for comment and drew out practice-led information in relation to playing characteristics/difficulties, level, etc. which, in turn, informed the bassoon repertoire survey.

While learning to be a community choir director, empirical data was gathered from interviews with community choir directors, plus observations of their conducting. Through a Design-based Research methodological model, this information then continuously informed the candidate's own community choir directing the development of which became a central practice column in the thesis. This practice was documented and added to the emerging body of approaches and techniques on how to learn to become a community choir director.

Before starting to compose music and lyrics for a Pacific-Christian CD album of songs for use by diaspora Pacific-Christians living in Australia, the researcher conducted interviews with Pacific-Christian leaders in their own countries seeking information on issues of importance to their communities. These issues were discussed with the diaspora Pacific-Christian church group collaborating on the music, and informed the lyrics and musical style of songs on the album. The discussion and collaborative processes were documented.

A study of the transcendent experience in experimental popular music performance began with the candidate's existing improvisational music practice which drove the initial investigation into his own phenomenological experience and provided a musical framework for the thesis. This led to self-interview, analysis and through embodied enquiry, informed the process of selecting and interviewing other musicians for the study. Both practice and interview data resulted in ways of experiencing transcendence and a list of musical and non-musical triggers for transcendence.

## **Conclusions**

The value of practice and other practice-based research paradigm approaches within the doctor of philosophy context focuses on an understanding of the conceptual gateway required to braid the multiple modes of practice and text-based scholarly/theoretical work convincingly into one central argument. All of thesis vignettes had a carefully planned order of data collection, whether practice or empirical data collection, after several brainstorming sessions. The practice component occurred at different parts of the thesis, sometimes

throughout, sometimes at one stage. All theses were strongly vision-driven and ‘wrapped’ the multi-modal components/stage(s) of the study together, bridging gaps between the creative, reflective, developmental, analytical and critical.

The braided thesis requires supervision which is positional (needs the right team), engager in style by drawing the candidate to understand and engage with threshold concepts in the braiding of the multi-modal approach, and relational by leading candidates to accomplish positive change through new knowledge.

When the multi-modal practice and theoretical components are convincingly braided into one thesis argument, and the conceptual threshold, which is the thinking required for engaging with practice and text-based paradigms, is understood then practice is clearly viewed as research, as valid as theoretical/philosophical research modes, rather than as a binary. Practice then becomes a valued third research paradigm as part of a mixed-method research methodology and this approach informs the marking of the multi-model braided thesis. Wisker and Robinson (2009) asked post-graduate creative writing and visual art participants to “identify moments of transition in their own doctoral development” (p. 320). This is asking them to identify conceptual gateways which moved their understanding on, and is something I’d like to investigate with post-graduate music participants.

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# **Creativities in the Paths to a Career: Professional Musicians, Gender, and the Case for Institutional Change**

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## **Abstract**

When you ask professional musicians, “How do you think your gender has affected your musical careers?” there is significant variance in the extent to which some see their gender as always and inevitably relevant in every situation and how others see it as important but less relevant. Issues of inequity in higher music education’s institutional leadership are mirrored in the gendered work of the music industries. Historically linked and limited definitions of high art orthodoxies exalt individual creativity along with the depiction of gender. In presenting a multiplicity of creativities, other than those ascribed and mythologized by the accepted canon of “great composers”, more often, men, this paper offers insights from research produced by the profession toward the education of professional musicians. These illustrate the need for us, in our work as higher education sector educators, to refine and accelerate institutional change in fostering and sustaining diverse creativities in both individual and collective practice. In this paper, I attempt to draw attention to some of the “taken for granted” gendered perspectives on higher education institutions circulating among professional musicians.

## **Keywords**

Gendered creativities, careers, practices, institutional change

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## **Introduction**

Gender may not be the most important thing about a person, or something they see as having influenced their own career trajectory. But it does not necessarily follow that gender is therefore irrelevant, or that it does not in some way affect how colleagues or society, more broadly, view women. Students enter an academy having already been exposed to messages about their gender from their parents, schooling and wider society. This is of course true of both men and women. There is a wide range of gender messages by which people are affected. Within dominant discourses these run the full gamut from hugely positive and empowering to extremely inhibiting and undermining.

When women join the workplace as professional musicians, their sense of what is acceptable and unacceptable for them to be and become is even more dramatically shaped by their working environment and interactions with colleagues. When gendered signification (and positioning) and the place of women within the dominant discourses are linked to “taken for granted” assumptions and practices of diverse creativities, a sense of unfairness and inequity becomes clear, both within and without the academy.

To nurture diverse career creativities (in those pursuing a career in music, practicing and preparing for music performance in popular, jazz and/or classical genres and production, arts administration and/or music teaching, or any of a multitude of creative activities), music institutions need to contemporize their learning cultures and environments in ways which enable and embed a multiplicity of creativities to be modelled and resourced. While we might regard the historical legacy of creativity as being about domain-specific musical processes and products, a central ingredient in highly innovative, forward-thinking institutions is the crucial dimension of “leadership”. Higher education institutions evolve academic hierarchies of knowledge and learning cultures in which leaders make decisions about people, programmes, practices, performance specialism and professionalism at a high level of complexity and under great pressure to demonstrate world-class excellence so as to widen participation and global reach. In a time of too many graduates for too few jobs, and in a context where applicants have similar levels of educational capital, we know that gender is one of the factors that influences graduate career trajectories. Yet, as one of several reports on the role of gender in higher music education concludes, too little space is given to diverse voices that counter entrenched gender (and class) biases in academia or challenge academic conventions (Bogdanovic, 2015). Why is this?

Despite the proliferation of interest in creativities research in higher education, the problem of what constitutes musical creativity in conservatoire education remains unresolved. This is because there is a diversity of discourses and practices, such as improvisation, composition and performance. Whilst the dominant romantic values of western art music favor the individualistic, competitive dimension, popular music favors the social dimension of collaborative and collective practices. This is what makes new perspectives on who is, professionally, making the music, where it is being made, and for whom, as significant as the under-representation of women and

girls. Career preparation in practices such as sampling, resampling, mixing, mashing and songwriting are as important as composing, arranging, improvising and performing. What kinds of collaborative, intercultural and interdisciplinary venturing underpin any analysis of the gendered work of professional musicians at the beginning of the third millennium? We have few institutional models of leadership discourses which challenge, as opposed to feed into, dominant constructions of gender and its effect on working life. We need higher music education institutions who are preparing graduates for employment in the music and creative industries to critically engage with the role that gender (and social class) as well as cultural and social capitals and career creativities have on both the aspirations and expectations of newly graduated music professionals (Bennett & Burnard, 2015). Here are some of the figures from the UK.

According to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), women held 36.7 per cent of jobs in the creative industries, compared with 36.1 percent in the creative economy, and 47.1 per cent in the UK economy as a whole. By a slight margin, then, women were less likely to hold a creative job than work in a creative industry. They were also less likely to work in creative industries than in the economy overall.

According to the 2012 Employment Census on the UK's creative media industries, in which 832 UK companies participated to provide a snapshot of those working on 4 July 2012, women have increased their representation in the creative media industries. However, black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) representation has declined since 2009, and is only 5.4% of the workforce. This is the more notable figure, as 44% of the creative industries workforce is located in London, which has a relatively large BAME population (2011, Census; see also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-31082941>). The data suggests a creative industries workforce which is overwhelmingly white and mostly male. Studies which report on creative work, gender constructions, gender role models, career trajectories and diverse practices of musical creativities are an imperative (see Burnard, 2012, 2013; Connell & Pearse, 2015). The argument here is about the expansion of the concept of "music creativity" from its outmoded singular form to its manifestations in multiple creativities and the perpetuation of gendered practices over which academic institutions exercise influence and power.

## **Gender, Diverse Creativities and Career Capitals**

The social and cultural sites and activity systems in which creativities arise are increasingly complex. How and where music is being created and consumed can be defined and valued differently in different cultures. In the world (or habitus) of the Internet, e-learning and virtual realities, we also have “virtual fields”, the fields of the media and globally networked or spatialized Internet fields, in which to make digital and mobile music. Social networks and fluid roles between musicians feature prominently in contemporary classical and popular musics; DJs and audiences (as in the use of YouTube) also feature strongly.

The common ground among social perspectives (on creativity) is that they are based on the conviction that creativity is vital to all societies, to all fields, domains and cultures. But who do we typically see as role models in music professions? Social perspectives on higher music education are not, as some have suggested, “just political”; they should represent the lived meanings of diverse musical cultures and communities. If the range is too narrow, and concentrates on one group over another, or indeed lacks sufficient representation of women, how can institutions inspire, embody and accelerate change in stereotypically gendered views, such as whether women can be great composers of music? Interestingly, both Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu have investigated the relationship between creativity and cultural evolution. Inspired by the process of species evolution, a “confluence” of three subsystems has been identified. These subsystems are, firstly, the domain, which includes a set of rules and practices. Any culture is composed of thousands of independent domains, and most human behaviours or activities are affected by the rules of some domains. Secondly, the individual, who is the most important actor from a psychological perspective and makes novel variations in the contents of the domain; these will be evaluated by the third part of the system, which is the field. Fields are held by various gatekeepers who have the rights to choose which variations can be preserved in the domains. Bourdieu (1990) claims that musical taste and aesthetic judgment are largely determined by, and distributed in, a “field” (e.g. the cultural field) and are related to each other in terms of their synchronistic positioning. Women’s careers are, arguably, and more often, invariably dependent on male support and sponsorship. Unsurprisingly, the discourses which interrogate the white, male, middle-class hegemony are largely

absent from higher music education. We need to understand where inequalities are perpetuated by structures, networks and gendered positioning in and across fields which do not allow women access or offer role models.

The field can be described in terms of its structural features and its generative principles and power. The full—and different—picture of how the fields of education and industry meet and interrelate remains seriously under-researched. The notion of practice is particularly relevant here. Bourdieu (1977, p. 3) puts forward a theory of practice which, he argues, is:

The knowledge we shall call phenomenological... sets out to make explicit the truth of the primary experience of the social world... The knowledge we shall term objectivist... constructs the objective relations... which structure practice and representations of practice... and the theory of practice inscribed (in its practical state) in this mode of knowledge, that we can integrate the gains from it into an adequate science of practices.

What might be the gendered creativities inscribed in the practices of professional musicians? What constitutes gendered creativities? What are the official discourses from governments at both local and national levels that create the linear and meritocratic relationship between higher education and graduate employment? What data do we need to have to address gender equity in the training of professional musicians? Csikszentmihalyi (1999) takes the position that creativities are about adding something new in relation to the culture. The creation by an individual is usually legitimized by a member of the group who is seen as qualified to make such a judgment and who is an expert in the domain. This is precisely where the enactment of the gender politics of creativities is played out, as pointed out in the NAMHE report (Bogdanovic, 2015).

There is little interaction between educational systems (including academia) and the “real world practices” of diverse creativities exemplified by professional musicians presently working in the creative industries. If we consider how we “do” our gender, as West and Zimmerman (1987) note, we also must consider how our gender socialization impacts every aspect of our lives, including the authorial practice that characterizes diverse creativities. These creativities include:

**Individual creativity**, which allies itself with an ideology of self-contained individualism and assumes the high art model of creativity as the impetus and endeavour of the individual grounded in “self-responsibility”. It is commonly believed, especially within the classical music world, that musical creativity is an individualized practice involving an individual disposition, and is more often exemplified by male composers.

In contrast, **collaborative (or group) creativity** is grounded in “shared responsibility”, which comprehends the actual practices resulting in joint creative endeavors. Ideas are generated from joint thinking and from sustained, shared struggles in order to achieve shared musical outcomes and ownership. Group creativity depends on a shared system of creative conventions; no one can create music without first internalizing the rules and conventions of the domain—a kind of codified practice with emphasis placed on the significance of relationships, on synergy in relationships, on partnerships and on valuing the other. Again the media privilege gendered modes of band work with musical groups.

**Empathic creativity** allies itself with the idea of empathy in creative musical interaction. Empathy, being the involuntary coupling or pairing of my living body with your living body in perception and action, is important for creativity in musical group interaction in which individuals experience intersubjective communication. What makes empathy an emotional capacity is an attribute or quality associated with and occurring in collaborative and communal settings in which creative music-making gains its expressive power from its mimicking facial expressions and body postures of others, thus facilitating the sharing of musical states. Empathic creativity involves the ability to have emotional and experiential responses to the feelings of others that approximates their responses and experiences. How musical creativity becomes empathically funded and resonant with empathic meaning is related to the meaning and value of empathic creativity, a process-oriented activity (see Rabinowitch, Cross & Burnard, 2013).

**Performance creativity** in music, particularly in the more improvisational genres, like jazz and hip-hop, is often based on the implicit assumption that all performances are variations. Again, there is a massive historical and current under-representation of women who work as conductors or as jazz musicians/composers/arrangers. There are,

however, no famous record producers or sound technicians. While some women produce their own records, such as Björk, historically there is no female equivalent to George Martin. Why is this?

Similarly, collective and corporate creativities ally with particular practices of authorship (such as live-coders, DJs, or game music designers) and are practised at the intersection of music, social interaction (as in club music) and corporate work; collective creativity is about building rule-led communities in which performances are contingent, in part, because they are collective; activity is often institutionalized, corporatized and/or interdisciplinary (see Tanaka et al., 2005).

Taken together, these differing capitals for creating musics form an integral part of generative social and musical practices in the lived-in world: “generative” in that they describe acts of creation or co-creation; “social” in that they each occur with social groups or partnerships; and highly “gendered” in the ways they privilege men and disadvantage women; “the lived-in world” connotes real practices and settings that manifestly broaden the remit of the term “musical creativity” and its invariable use in the singular and gendered sense. These diverse creativities involve capital conversion strategies and volumes of capital—hence those with limited asset structures entering into the music industries (along with the education sectors) need to be able to maintain or advance their position in the field by converting career creativities in terms of what musicians can and do create, reproduce and transform. The costs of privilege are high (Burke, 2016).

Here we build on Lucy Green’s seminal 1977 book, *Music, Gender, Education*, which presents a theory of gendered musical meaning as it is manifested through women’s historical musical practices and the gendered discourses surrounding them. This presentation will, using a blend of theory and empirical research, build a Bourdieusian conceptualization of gendered creativities, and provide a map of debates and ideas on the gender politics of music that still remain, nearly forty years on.

### **Interweaving the Intersecting Case for Leadership Creativities, Gender Equity and Institutional Change**

Creative practices need to be considered in the light of the domain, field and activity systems within which they arise as well as the current state of gender thinking and

politics. The weighting of criteria across the field will require rethinking the importance of differing systems for creating music, the masculine and feminine delineations of creating music, the gendered discourses and practices (and performative acts) of creating music, and the necessity of translating these taken-for-granted understandings into language that can be communicated to others. It will also require a repositioning of music education in relation to the music industry with music-specific creativities—in practice and in theory—needing to be reciprocal and interrelated. This, in turn, can lead us to think about institutions as activity systems in which local, regional, cross- and inter-cultural practices and gender democracy become the engines of change (Burke, 2016).

The critical challenges facing music institutions in the education and training of musicians today are issues that pre-occupy educators, particularly in higher music education institutions where there are strong continuities between past and present practices. Music institutions need creativities instigated by their leaders and supported by their management that are integrated with programmes, practices and administration, and that result in realized actions. The diversity and extent of creativities that can be brought to bear, and the magnitude of the awareness of gendered musical meaning and practices, will depend on the “realized” rather than on the “intended” creativities that are strategized and implemented by the higher education institution.

The influence of leadership and the gender relations that come into being are dimensions which can facilitate or impede the creativities of faculty staff and students. A structure of relations, along with gendered dynamics and gendered modes of behaviors, define the possibilities for action and their consequences. The centrality of gender models and gendered creativities in musical development, learning and teaching, and the empowering potential of creativities to sustain an institution’s competitive edge and adapt to the changing landscape, are themes woven across all levels of strategic decision-making and professional judgment in music institutions. The scope and dimension of creativities as a field of leadership enquiry and action, as with institutional change, is evidenced in the growing recognition that effective leadership needs to combat the unremitting perpetuation of the gender politics of music through education.

We need to be continually aware of the limitations on knowledge which are a direct result of academics' social positioning both within the academy and wider society. Widening the net of engaged colleagues, in order to recognize gender inequality and privilege, strengthens the likelihood and extent of potential collegial engagement in decision-making and institutional change. Using a metaphor of jazz, articulating a distributed perspective on leadership along a journey to create a new teaching and learning dream in higher education where leadership, like jazz, is a public performance, is dependent on so many things—the environment, the band, the need for everybody to perform as individuals and as a group, and the absolute dependence of the leader on the musicians. Leaders need to improvise and adapt quickly in circumstances of escalating tension, and in decision-making under pressure.

We are not on our own. We work with others in the application of new and novel ideas for improving the quality of our work, for transforming institutional programme curricula by creative teaching in higher academic music education, and for allowing women from all classes of society the possibility of a bright pluralistic future as professional musicians.

Our ability to imagine, and then invent, institutional change is one of our greatest assets. To be successful, we need to recognize and harness our ability to influence gendered musical practices and gendered creativities, both within our experiences of music and in our constructions of ourselves, our colleagues and our students; we need to continually adapt and invent creativities for accomplishing institutional change, leading to equitable gender practices in an ever-changing and increasingly complex world.

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### **Some reflection points**

1. How is/are diverse creativities encouraged and supported in your institution? How do the social constructions of gender and the regimes of power that intersect with gender, race, and class manifest in your institution? How is the pre-dominance of patriarchy in the professor-ing and production of academia played out? What needs to change? How?
2. What do you know of the voices of all of your students? How do you provide opportunities for another perspective on how gender is embodied and experienced in your university setting, especially considering the ethical responsibility we have for teaching and learning within and towards the materiality of gender difference and otherness?
3. What role can our discipline play in educating new generations of women and men about what gender equality and justice really mean?

# **Creativity, Leadership & Advocacy: Core Abilities for the Next Generation of Musicians**

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## **Abstract**

Making music can be an inherently creative activity. In this context, creativity implies being able to generate novel solutions to musical problems or creating innovative musical works by availing oneself of domain-specific musical skills, creative problem-solving strategies, and appropriate motivation tools. However, research reveals that music students may not be graduating with the creative skills they need to pursue and establish gratifying musical careers in the 21st century. Within the current American cultural climate, professional musicians are being asked to quantify musical experiences for utilitarian purposes, suggesting a renewed need to advocate for the intrinsic value of music and creative experiences.

Through the lens of creativity, leadership, and advocacy, this paper explores findings of an in-depth survey of professional musicians ( $N=36$ ) in one U.S. state. The survey included Likert-type, short-answer, and open-ended questions. The respondents, which included both young and older professionals, were pianists, vocalists, violinists, and guitarists. The purpose of the survey was to discover how professional musicians were earning income, to learn which skills they used regularly, and to discover which skills from their degree programs they believed were most beneficial. Data were analyzed for the entire subject pool and comparisons were made between recent graduates and established teachers.

Results revealed that teaching and church positions were the primary income sources for the respondents. While many of the musicians engaged in collaborative performances, these provided little income. Domain-specific music skills employed regularly included technique, collaborative performance, efficient practicing, and sight-reading. Teaching skills reported as important included assigning appropriate technique and repertoire, teaching practice strategies, student performance preparation, and business management. Business-related activities occupied a large percentage of the professionals' time. Musicians who reported high levels of satisfaction with daily professional pursuits and whose activities included self-described high levels of creativity and advocacy, regularly assumed leadership roles within various local, state, or national music organizations.

## **Keywords**

advocacy, creativity, professional musicians, 21st-century curricula

## **Introduction**

Leaders achieve their effectiveness chiefly through the stories they relate... Leaders in the arts characteristically inspire others by the ways they use their chosen media of artistic expression, be they the phrases of a sonata or the gestures of a dance...In addition to communicating stories, leaders *embody* those stories. (Gardner, 1995, p. 9)

Creativity is often cited as a byproduct of music study. But, what does creativity mean in the musical context? Is it only generating musical creations such as composing, improvising or performing? Or, are other creative thinking tools required of professional musicians today? Will the younger generation of professional musicians need to creatively lead and advocate for music and, if so, do our graduates believe that such skills were developed during their tertiary music studies? Since creativity is culturally contextual, these questions will be explored within the context of music education in United States.

## **Creativity & Leadership**

During the past several decades, scholarship on creativity has become more prevalent. While there are still only a few reliable tests to measure creativity (Amabile, 1996; Torrance, 1966), Amabile (1996) made a case and demonstrated that observers who have appropriate training in a specific domain are able to judge whether or not a work is creative. Amabile's definition of creativity suggests that a work must be novel, an appropriate response to the task, and heuristic (Amabile, 1996). It is frequently cited as the psychological and educational definition of creativity. In her model of creativity, three skill sets are necessary to undertake creative work. These are domain specific skills, cognitively creative skills, and task motivation. These skill sets overlap. Based on this model and subsequent studies by others, in order to engage in musical creativity, musicians need the requisite music skills, various creative skills, and intrinsic motivation to solve the creative task. Creative skills include diverging and converging abilities, generation and elaboration of ideas, flexibility, and persistence.

Despite the fact that making music can be a creative activity, inexperienced teachers may be less adept at designing and assessing assignments that develop creative skills and generate musical products (Kokotsaki & Newton, 2015). In higher education creativity is a facet of music in which our students may not be engaging, beyond solving simple practice and performance concerns. Consider a typical performance or music education major during a routine week of coursework. While the student uses and develops domain-specific musical skills, how frequently and in what contexts is she presented with problems for which she must use divergent and convergent thinking, generate new ideas, and find novel solutions to musical problems? Undergraduates typically delve deeply into domain-specific skills related to music theory, history, aural, technical and performance techniques. However, they do not necessarily engage in finding novel solutions to real-world problems such as how to program and produce a meaningful musical concert and bring it to a group of constituents unlike themselves. Fortunately, there is a growing body of literature supporting the creative and educational benefits of such creative projects for music students (e.g., Bartolome, 2013; Burton & Reynolds, 2009; Pike, 2015b).

Compounding the issue is the fact that creativity has become a buzzword in contemporary Western culture. Particularly in the business world, where technologies and problems change rapidly, employers report that creativity is one of the most important skills for employees to possess (AACU, 2013; Adams, 2013; Benedictus, 2013; Soulé & Warrick, 2015). In the United States, concepts that can be measured empirically, usually on multiple-choice tests, tend to get the most attention during class, due to the pervasive use of standardized testing. Indeed, even faculty productivity in the academy is measured in terms of numbers of performances, citations, or published research papers, rather than by the quality or level of creativity used to generate such works. In light of mass-media reporting about the importance of creativity, there is a trend in some states to rate how well teachers teach creativity using a creativity index (Roblen, 2012). However, closer inspection reveals that measurement simply includes counting the number of creative enrichment activities in which students participate (Hennessey, 2015). One assumes that such a primitive measurement instrument does little to promote high-quality, prolonged, or meaningful opportunities to engage in creative endeavors.

Despite persistent misconceptions about the nature of creativity among the general population (Baas, Nijstad, Koch, & DeDreu, 2015), serious educators and psychologists have presented cogent arguments supporting how both pre-college and college students can be led to engage in creative activities (Amabile, 1996, Simonton, 2014; Soulé & Warrick, 2015, Sternberg, 2015). Students can develop domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, and intrinsic motivation in tandem, while seeking creative solutions to challenging, ill-defined tasks. Soulé and Warrick (2015) recently proposed a *patterns of innovation* model, which also includes engaging the community while developing student creativity.

Finally, psychologist Howard Gardner (1995) has made a case for considering leadership and creativity together. Indeed, scholarship on leadership often includes the ability to think and act creatively as critical pieces of the leadership puzzle (Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Puccio, 2014; Ruggio, 2015). McManus and Perruci (2015) suggest that we must look at leadership as a process where several components, including “leaders, followers, goals, environmental context, and cultural context” (p. 55) are equally important. Gardner (1995) references *indirect leadership* as typical among artists and musicians. Indirect leadership features a relationship between the leader and follower(s) that is “ongoing, active and dynamic” (p. 36). But, will our graduates need to lead? At a minimum, musicians should be able to advocate for music. Recent evidence suggests that effective music advocacy is a problem that may require a new generation of creative leaders to solve.

### **Arts Advocacy in the U.S. Context**

Musicians have noted the inherent tension between teaching music for its own sake and justifying music study for utilitarian reasons, such as to teach social and cultural values and to enhance educational and economic outcomes (Carruthers, 2008; Logsdon, 2013). Indeed, music education was introduced in American schools for utilitarian purposes in the nineteenth century (Austin & Reinhardt, 1999). While using music participation to boost academic, social, and motivational success raises concern (Libman, 2002; Gee,

2002), there is a shift toward such advocacy, again (Logsdon, 2013). Evidence suggests that this justification is no longer serving musicians, or our art.

### **Standards, Metrics, and the Dilemma of Value**

In the United States, music schools and conservatories have been experiencing increased pressure to demonstrate why music programs are worth their cost and the value of the degree program for the graduates (CMS, 2015). In the past, demonstrating that students and faculty met minimum performance goals and standards, many of which were imposed by administrators with little or no understanding of music or performing arts, has addressed this need; such assessments are no longer serving their purpose. In January 2016, the College Music Society (CMS), a national organization comprised primarily of music faculty, administrators and students, will gather for a two-day summit entitled “Shaping institutional expectations for national benchmarking of faculty and music unit accomplishments”. The stated goals of this conference are (a) to create a short-term toolkit of quantitative metrics to address the value of music, and (b) to devise “a long-term plan that will involve new means for the collection and analysis of data not currently available” (CMS, 2015).

In 2014, the United States National Coalition for Core Arts Standards set forth four standards that artists and educators determined were central experiences for all pre-college students. In music, these are creating, performing, and responding. Connecting, the fourth standard, is embedded in the three other processes (NAfME, 2015). It appears as though educators set standards, while administrators, parents, and the public wish to see quantitative metrics in order to assess the value of music. Is it possible, or even desirable, to show quantitatively how students are creating, performing, and responding to music? It might be easy to measure and increase the number of performances that our students give. However, the quality of these endeavors may suffer in the effort to tally high numbers. While many American music administrators attending the CMS summit will be finding ways to supply performance metrics, doing so in the way that engineering or mathematics departments do, may only further devalue the true worth of music.

Even if the “art for art’s sake” argument seems esoteric to those uninitiated in the arts, Libman (2002) advocates for honestly promoting “what we do and why we do it” (p. 33). Musicians should become adept at explaining how humans benefit from active participation in or experiencing music aesthetically (Bowman, 2005; Elliott, 1995; Reimer, 2002). Indeed, cogent arguments that clearly articulate goals and ideals should be enough to justify our existence; these are the narratives that musicians need to convey. Gee (2002) reminds us that, “arts advocacy is what we proclaim arts will do for the individual and society in return for investments of time, love and money” (p. 3). Arguably, many of us have not considered how we will guide our students to advocate for the intrinsic and societal value of music, which they will surely need to do. The case for the value of art in society or for the individual has not been made, nor has the contribution “between art, artists, education in the arts...and the public good” (p. 4) been made, which is perhaps why when economic growth slows, the arts lose funding (Ross, 2006).

### **Musicians must Define the Narrative**

Clearly, there is a need to advocate for music programs at all educational levels and within the greater society. Musicians must find a way to express the value of quality musical experiences, and not just take the path of least resistance, quantifying musical events with little aesthetic value. Performance majors will need to advocate for the role of music in society as they create innovative performance spaces, though they may graduate without having thought about such critical issues. If they become teachers, they will need to advocate for the role of music in children’s lives. At present, future music educators are being trained in how to engage students in the aforementioned performance standards. But, in an era when music programs are being reduced, teachers are coming under pressure to demonstrate the value of music. Thus, an important component of teacher and musical training music must be advocacy. Recent data show that many music educators across the United States are successful because they have clearly and compellingly advocated for their music programs and for their students to various stakeholders including principals, parents, and community partners (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Miksza, 2013). Arguably, engaging all constituents requires considerable leadership skill

on the part of the teacher. Miksza acknowledges that “the types of skills and characteristics that arts specialist teachers employ to negotiate within ... their schools are important to understand and could represent valuable information for the preparation of arts teachers” (p. 31). Ross (2006) suggests that “the absence of arts education that connects creation of art to its primary ‘raison d’être’—the reflection or leadership of society—reinforces the dull approach of teaching that leads, inevitably, to lack of public support for the arts” (p. 4).

Hawkins (2012) believes that artists and organizations must make the connection between the “arts’ civic and community impact” (p. 131) and she recommends that individuals leverage social networks to advocate for the arts in contemporary society. Hawkins argues for arts agencies to develop visionary goals, create tools, and lead social media efforts for advocacy. Yet, it might be argued that these efforts should be undertaken by all practicing artists and musicians in the 21st century and should be grappled with by students prior to graduation. Opportunities to creatively engage students in music advocacy should be explored. Music entrepreneurship classes are being integrated into some undergraduate curricula. A benefit of such classes includes learning to speak about and advocate for one’s art and creativity when interacting with different constituents. This becomes especially crucial in light of troubling reports about how arts teaching is considered to be a “non-creative role” when reporting to arts and funding agencies (Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015). In light of the previous discussion, results of a recent survey of professional musicians will be explored through the lens of indirect leadership, creativity, and advocacy.

## **Skills Used by Professional Musicians in 2015**

### *Brief Overview of Survey*

Based on results of a small study of piano graduates (Pike, 2014), a more in-depth survey consisting of Likert-type and open-ended questions was developed and sent to 50 professional musicians in a southern U.S. state. Thirty-six respondents completed the survey; they were pianists, vocalists, violinists, and guitarists. The pool included both recent graduates and more established musicians, all of whom were members of a

national professional music organization. Data were analyzed for the entire subject pool and comparisons were made between recent graduates and established teachers. The primary purpose of the survey was to find out in which areas professional musicians were earning their income, to learn which skills they used on a daily or weekly basis during the past year, and to discover which skills from their degree programs they believed were most beneficial. Open-ended questions encouraged the musicians to reflect upon skills they deemed important and which could have been, but were not, developed during their formal music studies.

### *Synopsis of Results*

The primary income source for all respondents, regardless of graduation date or highest degree earned, was teaching. Church musician roles were the second most frequently reported source of income. The most common church positions were accompanist, choral director, and seasonal or substitute positions. While many of the respondents engaged in collaborative performances in their communities during the past year, few of these were paid, nor were there any reported paid solo gigs even among those with terminal performance degrees. None of the respondents were working full-time in academia, though several held adjunct positions in universities. Technique, collaborative performance, efficient practicing, and sight-reading emerged as the most often-employed musical skills and these were used on a daily and/or weekly basis. Teaching skills were identified and ranked from most to least frequently used. These included choosing and assigning appropriate technique and repertoire; teaching practice strategies; student performance preparation; and business management, such as book-keeping, maintaining communication with students and families, arranging studio performances, overseeing teaching assistants, and studio publicity or marketing to build studio profile and increase enrollment.

Studio maintenance occupied a large proportion of time among teachers who had graduated within the past five years. Although this finding might be expected, surprisingly, there were a number of more established teachers who had re-created their studios or entered into teaching consortiums with colleagues during the previous five

years. Incidentally, these same teachers reported high degrees of satisfaction with teaching activities. Teachers who had been teaching for more than ten years, but who also noted involuntary enrollment decreases or less satisfaction with daily teaching endeavors, reported fewer activities associated with the business of running or building a studio and less time devoted to seeking out new teaching repertoire or professional development opportunities. Closer inspection of open-ended questions revealed that many of the satisfied and self-reported successful teachers were more likely to engage in creatively solving business or teaching problems; seek out creative performance and educational activities for their students; collaborate and work with organizations within the community; and, advocate for the importance of music and music lessons in the lives of their students. Finally, those musicians who reported high levels of satisfaction with daily professional pursuits and whose activities included self-described high levels of creativity and advocacy, regularly assumed leadership roles within various local, state, or national music organizations.

Although the design of the survey precludes making a clear connection between leadership and creativity, critical components of indirect leadership roles that these musicians played cannot be ignored. The satisfied musicians engaged members of their community in meaningful ways, advocated for the arts, and lead creatively by example through performing and teaching. While results of this geographically limited study should not, in and of themselves, suggest that successful musicians who engage in creative activities and advocacy emerge as leaders in our field, it is hoped that the foregoing discussion highlighted the intersection between creativity, advocacy, and leadership among professional musicians. Music students should be encouraged to develop these skills concurrently with domain-specific musical skills at the tertiary level, since these will be critical in the current cultural environment.

### **Final Thoughts about the Future**

Most music educators or graduating performance majors are not prepared to work creatively in the 21st-century musical context. Since few will rely solely on performances like those experienced during their studies for income, other musical ventures, some

perhaps yet to be imagined, will need to be pursued. If music is not valued within the broader culture, creating professional opportunities may prove difficult. A persuasive argument for the value of music has yet to be agreed upon, even though these issues are critical (Austin & Reinhardt, 1999; Elpus, 2007; Hawkins, 2012). Although creating and disseminating promotional materials, embracing new technologies, being savvy about business practices, and other important 21st-century skill-sets are still not being taught in many schools (Slaughter & Springer, 2015), there is growing evidence that such skills could be practiced, in meaningful ways throughout the undergraduate curriculum.

For example, real-life service-learning projects and internships can be integrated into current courses (Pike, 2015a). Since there is increasing evidence, including from this study, that all professional musicians need to work creatively to elicit performance and teaching engagements, to market themselves, and to undertake leadership roles in music advocacy, space should be created in undergraduate and graduate music curricula for students to engage in new types of coursework. Students need to be availed of notation, web tools, and other music technologies and made to use verbal, visual, and online communication when networking with community constituents. These can be achieved through informal performances, teaching practica, or internships. Creating project-based courses, which require students to hone their music skills, create marketing materials, practice advocacy, and interact with community members will help students to develop critical creative and leadership skills alongside domain-specific techniques that they will use upon leaving the sheltered walls of the academy.

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# Priority Setting and Accountability in Leading Music Schools Today

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## Abstract

The title of this study is intentionally ambiguous – “leading” could be a verb or an adjective and what makes a school “leading” is open to debate. The second half of the title is derived from an OECD conference held in Paris in 2003 – “Managing Arts Schools Today” (OECD 2003). I have changed this to “Leading Arts Schools Today” because managing and leading are very different. Certainly, institutional success is predicated on strong and visionary leadership.

Two of the pressing challenges facing leaders today are priority setting and accountability, which are closely allied to one another. Leaders set goals and objectives and are measured against them. What is theoretically simple is pragmatically complex. Priority setting presents enormous challenges (whose priorities matter most?), as does determining the metrics by which success is measured (whose metrics matter most?). Institutions of higher learning in music have many stakeholders, from students and parents to government and industry, whose vested interests may not align with one another. To whom does a leader owe allegiance? Leaders hold managers accountable, but to whom are leaders accountable?

By collating and analysing data from four case studies—recent cyclical reviews of undergraduate and graduate music programs in Canada—the practice of institutional priority setting is interrogated. The study weighs the validity of the cyclical review process and assesses the roles leaders play in realizing review recommendations. In conclusion, a seminal question is addressed—what should the highest priority for schools of music and their leadership be? This question is discussed in light of complementary and competing institutional and personal priorities. What emerges is evidence that leaders are relinquishing a fundamental responsibility in relegating curricular matters to committees, associate deans and department chairs. Ways that future researchers can refine the research questions, data collection, and data analyses are proposed, in the hope that others will delve more deeply into the crucial matter of priority setting and accountability in leading music schools today.

## Keywords

Priority setting, accountability, program reviews, performance reviews, curricular reform

## **The Myth of Accountability**

I have spent more than 20 years in leadership roles at Canadian post-secondary institutions and one of the most dramatic changes, and one that has spiked dramatically in the past five years, concerns accountability.

Public institutions, especially in health care, education and the arts, but in other sectors as well, are held to an increasingly high standard of accountability. The leaders of these institutions are called upon to demonstrate, via metrics determined by consensus or imposed by governing bodies (at the two extremes), how both they and the institutions they lead are accountable to their stakeholders. Music programs are accountable to governments, donors, students, parents, the disciplines, the professions and the industries, whose interests may complement or contradict one another. Further, they may or may not accord with an institution's core values or principles.

Leadership, by its very nature, implies independent thinking, in combination with experience, knowledge, good judgement and intuition. Some of these qualities are more readily measured than others. Similarly, some factors that contribute to an institution's success are easily quantified and others are not; for example, enrollments can be quantified more reliably than staff morale. Nonetheless, qualitative and quantitative markers by which to assess success are offered from inside and outside institutions and leaders are held accountable to them. Periodic stock-taking determines which goals and objectives have been met, which have not, and which remain in process. By the end of a leader's term of office, ideally, the majority of goals and objectives will have been realized or so conventional wisdom would have us believe.

The case studies discussed later in this paper concern priority setting which, when done well, accounts in large part for leadership successes in any field. But the setting of goals and objectives—establishing priorities—is only a first step. This is one of the insidious myths of accountability: that once goals have been set, and met or exceeded, a leader's job is done.

## **Review Processes**

Because accountability is linked to measurable outcomes, music programs and the people selected to lead and administer them are subject to regular performance reviews. In the past year or two alone, the present author has been directly involved in eight independent reviews.

I underwent review at the end of a renewable five-year term as dean, three of four degree programs under my purview were reviewed, an institution-wide integrated planning and resource management process was completed, an institution-wide academic planning exercise was undertaken, and an agreement was negotiated with the provincial government setting the university's strategic course for the next three years. At the same time as these processes were underway, I agreed to review music programs at two sister institutions and in this connection authored or co-authored substantial review reports. As can be imagined, these reviews occupied a tremendous amount of my time and energy as well as that of my faculty and staff.

The call for data was constant, the analysis of which would inform review outcomes. In conjunction with the two institutions I was reviewing, I received self-study documents of several hundred pages each. A staggering number of hours were required to amass data and incorporate them into self-study and other documents. This certainly represents one of the challenges faced by academic leaders today. The production and analysis of data precludes doing much else for long periods of time, certainly on the part of a leader's administrative team and often on the part of the leader as well. It should be stressed that none of these reviews was occasioned by any problems or misgivings; enrollments were not dropping and budgets were not overspent. The reviews were simply part of a routine institutional life cycle.

There is not space here to delve into each of these review processes in detail. Of these processes, the cyclical review is the most pervasive (some might say invasive) and warrants particular attention.

## **Case Studies**

The cyclical review is a popular instrument of assessment and priority setting in North American universities. Generally, the names and credentials of possible arms-length reviewers are supplied

by the unit under review, and the provost or delegate makes a final selection. Because recommendations are produced by experts from within the academic discipline, the recommendations and metrics attached to them are not so much imposed on a school as solicited by it in an effort to improve its day-to-day and long-term functioning.

This following case study compiles and collates outcomes from four cyclical reviews in which the author participated within the past year. In two instances the author was a committee member assessing programs at another institution. In the other two instances, programs for which the author has academic and fiduciary responsibility were being reviewed. By analyzing over one hundred recommendations in the four review documents, priorities are identified and ranked in order of importance (based on the frequency with which a topic arose).

Because only parts of the reports are public documents, I have elected to present all review outcomes and findings anonymously. The three institutions have been renamed North, South and East Universities. Of the four separate reviews analyzed here, one was undertaken at North University, two were undertaken at South University, and one was undertaken at East University. At North University one program was reviewed and at South and East Universities several programs were reviewed as follows:

<u>University Name</u>	<u>Program(s) under review</u>
North University	Bachelor of Arts (Music)
South University	Bachelor of Music (with several specializations)
South University	Bachelor of Music Therapy; Master of Music Therapy
East University	Bachelor of Music (with several specializations); Master of Music (Performance); Master of Arts (Ethnomusicology)

The 124 recommendations arising from these reviews were not weighted in any way. A recommendation to construct a new facility was accorded as much importance as a recommendation to improve directional signage. This is clearly a limitation of the study. Others are noted below under Further Research.

The recommendations are grouped into eight categories and each recommendation is counted only once. If a recommendation spans several categories, it is assigned to the category with which its objective is most closely allied. For example, if outreach to another university is encouraged, but the point of that outreach is to establish shared curriculum, the recommendation is listed under curriculum, not outreach.

The eight categories are:

- 1) Curriculum. This category includes revisions to extant curricula and development of new curricula, and includes all courses and programs offered on a for-credit basis.
- 2) Outreach. This category includes marketing and recruitment, community projects and placements, concert series and ensemble tours, and includes all courses and programs offered on a non-credit basis.
- 3) Leadership and Governance. This category includes academic/administrative units and sub-units, reporting structures, chains of responsibility, and academic/administrative policies and procedures.
- 4) Facilities and Equipment. This category includes physical structures and the musical instruments and other equipment and technology housed within them.
- 5) Staff Complement. This category includes support positions such as administrative managers, financial analysts, recruitment coordinators, development officers, career counsellors, facility managers, and office assistants.
- 6) Faculty Complement. This category includes full- and part-time instructors, adjunct professors, visiting professors, artists-in-residence, and graduate students engaged in teaching.
- 7) Budget. This category includes operating funds, endowments, special initiative accounts, capital reserves, fundraising, donations, and resource allocation.
- 8) Miscellany. This category includes a wide range of other topics from library holdings to building security that were cited three times or less across all four reviews.

A category conspicuous by its absence is research. Since none of the recommendations in the four reviews concerned research the category could be omitted entirely. In many universities, research productivity would be captured in reviews, not of academic programs, but of research offices and institutes. South University houses music therapy and community music research institutes, East University houses a world music research centre, and faculty at all three institutions are active researchers. A separate study similar to this one could be undertaken of research productivity as determined by cyclical review processes.

## Findings

In the following table the number of review recommendations under a single heading is broken out by institution (remembering that South University had two separate reviews) and expressed as a percentage of the total number of recommendations in that review. East University had significant challenges around facilities, equipment and leadership, and data for that institution skewed the aggregate results somewhat. Accordingly, aggregate percentages were calculated twice: once excluding and once including East University.

Table 1. Recommendations from 2015 External Reviews of North, South (A and B) and East Universities, grouped by categories, and expressed as a percentage of the total number of recommendations for each institution, and as overall percentages with and without data from East University.

	<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
North	32/65 49%	12/65 18.5%	5/65 7.5%	3/65 5%
South – A	9/19 47.5%	3/19 16%	2/19 10.5%	1/19 5%
South – B	11/18 61%	3/18 17%	0/18 0%	0/18 0%
East	6/22 27%	0/22 0%	3/22 14%	6/22 27%
Total (w/o East)	52/102 51%	18/102 17.5%	7/102 7%	4/102 4%
Total (w/ East)	58/124 47%	18/124 14.5%	10/124 8%	10/124 8%

	<b>Staff</b>		<b>Faculty</b>		<b>Budget</b>		<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
North	0/65	0%	7/65	11%	0/65	0%	6/65	9%
South – A	0/19	0%	3/19	16%	0/19	0%	1/19	5%
South – B	2/18	11%	0/18	0%	0/18	0%	2/18	11%
East	1/22	4.5%	0/22	0%	1/22	4.5%	5/22	23%
Total (w/o East)	2/102	2%	10/102	9.5%	0/102	0%	9/102	9%
Total (w/ East)	3/124	2.5%	10/124	8%	1/124	1%	14/124	11%

## Discussion

It is evident that, on average, more recommendations concern curriculum than outreach (including marketing and recruitment), leadership (including governance), facilities (including equipment), staff and faculty complement, and budget combined. The percentage of recommendations concerning curriculum ranges from an anomalously low 27% at East University to 61% in the second review of South University. The percentage at North University and in the first review at South University hovers just below 50%. In total, excluding data from East University, 51% of all recommendations concern curriculum; when East University is included the total drops a little to 47%. Embedded within recommendations on curriculum are industry partnerships, online and blended learning, the curricular core, and specialized courses on career preparation, and health and well-being for musicians.

The topic with the fewest number of recommendations is budget. Budget was not mentioned in the reviews of North and South Universities and was mentioned only once in the review of East University. The focus of these reviews was academic, but it might reasonably have been expected that more recommendations relating to curriculum and budget would arise; for example, budget should be reallocated from an extant course in music and technology to an innovative new course in digital media. Although the reviews were rich with recommendations for curricular reforms that could not be cost neutral, reviewers were content to leave the means by which initiatives would be funded to the institutions themselves.

Ironically, a systemic pre-occupation with cyclical and other reviews, and with internal and external accountability, at least in Canada, draws considerable time and energy away from curriculum development. This is true especially of deans, who are responsible for holding units under their purview accountable to variegated and disparate stakeholders and constituencies. Deans are also increasingly driven by the need to fundraise and between these two responsibilities—accountability and fundraising—curricular reform is frequently off-loaded to committees, overseen by associate deans or department chairs. It is rarely front and centre for deans themselves. This is problematic if, as suggested by the review recommendations, curriculum is by far the greatest challenge facing institutions of higher learning in music today.

A quotation from Robert Fowler, who headed the Commission on Broadcasting in Canada in 1965, is relevant here. Fowler famously stated that “The only thing that really matters in broadcasting is program content; all the rest is housekeeping” (Fowler, 1965, p. 3). Pierre Juneau, who served as chair of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) from 1968 to 1975 and as president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) from 1982-1989, invoked Fowler’s words when he reflected on his own role at the CBC:

Philosophically, Fowler was right, at least as far as the CBC or public broadcasting is concerned. Everything we do ... is done in order to provide good radio and television programmes. That is the only goal that matters ultimately....

Unfortunately, we in the CBC sometimes have the impression that the reality is different..., [that] the only thing that really matters in this world is housekeeping and all the rest is programming! (Juneau, 1988, p. 197)

Fowler’s quotation and Juneau’s response to it could easily be reworked to apply to the teaching (as distinct from research) mission of institutions of higher learning:

The only thing that really matters in higher education is curriculum; all the rest is housekeeping.

Everything we do ... is done in order to provide good curriculum. That is the only goal that matters ultimately....

Unfortunately, we in universities sometimes have the impression that the reality is different..., [that] the only thing that really matters in this world is housekeeping and all the rest is curriculum!

This circumstance, whereby curriculum development is not central to a dean's role, is reinforced by professional development opportunities. The Centre for Higher Education Research and Development (CHERD) at the University of Manitoba offers three courses annually for academic administrators. The offerings are:

a) Senior University Administrators Course. This course is intended for “experienced administrators responsible for making institutional policy, including presidents, rectors, principals, vice-presidents, provosts, associate vice-presidents, treasurers, comptrollers, registrars, chief librarians, deans and senior directors of services.” Topics covered include “legal issues and institutional policies, power and influence in the organization, restructuring issues, resource management, negotiation and conflict management, and the changing leadership role.”

b) University Management Course. This course is intended for “administrators of academic and administrative units with direct responsibility for recommending and implementing policy, including department heads, chairs, associate deans, managers, directors of services and executive assistants.” Topics covered include “human rights, administrative and contract law, financial management and planning, human resource management and conflict resolution.”

c) Heads and Chairs – Challenges in Academic Leadership. This course is intended to help “Chairs/Heads reflect together on the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of this critical role in universities and colleges. Topics include the changing academic culture, leadership in a collegial environment, faculty development, the legal structure of the university and rights and responsibilities and fostering a teaching culture.”

This emphasis on everything but curriculum for senior administrators is reflected in other conferences and meetings across North America. The Canadian Association of Fine Arts Deans, for example, is an entirely autonomous organization that meets once annually. In 2015, for the first time in several years, the CAFAD conference program included a session devoted to

curriculum. “Curriculum Reviews/Redesign and Opportunities of Alternative Streams of Revenue Generation for Creative Arts Programs” took the form of a panel discussion that linked curriculum to revenue generation. The implication that curriculum is most relevant to senior administrators when it generates income reflects a pragmatic exigency. Curriculum and revenue are conjoined in the resource management model adopted or under adoption at many Canadian universities. This model rewards entrepreneurship by linking income to class enrollments (Dickeson 2010) such that curriculum, budgets and enrollment become inextricably linked.

### **Further Research**

The sample in the foregoing case study is biased in favour of review processes in which the author participated. A far larger sample would be necessary to corroborate the research findings. The sample, too, is exclusively Canadian and the scope needs to be widened.

Further research into internal and external reviews, undertaken with greater rigour and more checks and balances for bias, has the potential to identify key challenges facing music schools today. A longitudinal study that plots recommendations over time might help identify emerging trends in higher music education. Perhaps most importantly, future research could link recommendations with outcomes to determine if the review system is working or not. Reviewing the review process – a process that has not changed substantively in over 20 years – is crucial to ensure its continued efficacy.

### **Conclusion**

Corporate management models are destined to flounder in academic milieu. The double jeopardy of tenure and collective bargaining creates a power dynamic lacking in the corporate sector. Despite the empowerment of the professoriate, based on a collegial governance model, and the strategic planning and other consultative processes that arise from it, senior academic and administrative leaders are ultimately responsible for institutional goal setting in conjunction with senates and boards of governors (or their equivalents). Institutional goals are then reflected in personal goals. Goals for chairs and deans are negotiated with immediate supervisors, usually deans and vice-presidents respectively, deliverables are determined jointly, and outcomes are assessed in face-to-face meetings on an annual basis.

This process is confounded periodically by an external review, whereby colleagues from other institutions are engaged in goal setting at the program level. This triggers new personal goals, since leaders are not held harmless if agreed-upon programmatic goals remain unrealized. In the Province of Ontario, once external reports and responses have been approved by the institution and filed with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), chairs and deans are responsible to the Ministry to take appropriate action on review recommendations. The Quality Assurance Office of that Ministry has, as one of its key responsibilities, the task of ensuring compliance with review recommendations. Internal offices also monitor compliance, but the Ministry is the engine that drives compliance with both the general principles and specific deliverables proposed in external reviews.

Although cyclical reviews are often conducted under duress, they do serve two important purposes—to encourage innovation and to hold leaders accountable. If, as the foregoing case study indicates, curriculum is the key deliverable, then leaders must be held accountable for curricular relevance and reform above all else.

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