
**Becoming a musician:
a longitudinal study investigating
the career transitions of
undergraduate music students**

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Appendix One

Interview Schedule One (Phase 1)

1. Background Information

Name:

Age:

Year of study:

Current place of study/course:

Main instrument:

Length of time played:

Age started:

Other instruments:

Length of time played:

Age started:

Why did you want to learn/start playing your main instrument?

(Saw, sibling, friend, heard, teacher, parent, other)

Why did you want to learn/start playing the other instruments? (if applicable)

(Saw, sibling, friend, heard, teacher, parent, other)

Why did you decide to focus and improve on your main instrument?

(Start of lessons, to catch up a friend or sibling, inspired, career choice, unexpected success, personal need to do music, getting into certain band/institution, other).

Has there been some kind of turning point that has influenced your decision to study music to a high level, and perhaps further?

What kinds of activities have you been engaged in with your main/other instruments throughout your musical career? (Orchestras, ensembles, solo performances, bands etc.)

What activities are you currently engaged in with your main/other instruments? What kind of commitment do they require? *Time scales*

What courses have you completed? (University, college)

What, or who, do you think your key influences have been? In what aspect of your life have they played a role? To what extent?

What role have your parents played in decisions you have made? (Studying, jobs, other)

Do you still ask for their advice/involvement? Why?

Do you think their role in your life has changed over time? In what way?

When do you think your relationship with them changed?

How do you view your relationship with your parents?

Do any other people play an important role in your life?

Have peers/teachers/partners influenced you in important ways? How?

Has your relationship with them changed in any way?

How much do you value their advice compared to that of other important people?

What are your current goals and ambitions?

How do you think you will achieve them?

How long have you had these goals?

How do you think your route to achieving them is progressing so far?

What are your long term musical goals?

Do you think music will always play an important role in your life?

What do you think makes a good musician? (Qualities/strengths/weaknesses)

Do you think you have these qualities?

What do you think studying music to a high level has offered you? What skills has it provided?

Are there any negative aspects to studying music to a high level? Have you had any experiences that have made you think this? How have you cope with these difficulties?

2. Transitional information

How has your playing been going recently/since we last met for an interview?

What playing have you been doing? (Concerts/rehearsals/gigs/practice)

How much have you been playing? How is your playing time divided into rehearsals and formal practice – time scales?

How is your practice going?

What progress do you think you have made?

How do you think that has been achieved?

What form has your practice taken?

- Formal
 - Technical
 - Improvisatory
- How long do you spend on each of these?

How have you been feeling when you've been playing?

How focused have you been?

How have your lessons been?

What has your teacher said about your playing?

Have you had a lesson that has been particularly good or bad?

How has this affected your playing?

How would you describe your relationship with your teacher? What are your perceptions of your teacher? How does this influence your playing?

How do you feel about the quality of your playing in general at the moment?
(Positive/negative/frustrated)

Why do you think that is?

Do you think you could improve that feeling? How?

Is there anything you feel needs improvement? What?

How do you think you will go about overcoming the problem?

Do you have a target that you are working towards at the moment?

What is it? How are you preparing for it?

How do you feel about it? (Nervous/calm/in control)

How are you coping with those feelings?

How do you think the event will go?

How central would you say music is to you at the moment on a number of levels:

Spiritually

Psychologically

Socially

How does this compare with other things you do? (Sport/hobbies)

How are the academic elements of the course going?

How much work have you been doing for them?

How does this compare to the amount of time you have spent practising?

Why do you think you divide your time in this way? (Priority/enjoyment)

Have you had any feedback on the work you have done?

Has that been positive or negative?

In what way has this affected you?

How much are you enjoying the module?

What else have you been doing aside from work on your degree? What time have you spent pursuing other interests? How do you feel when engaging in other activities? (Think about work to do/completely forget about degree/relaxed)

Do you find that other aspects of your life carry over into your music? Have there been any instances of this in the last few weeks/since we last met? In what way has it affected you playing? How do you cope with personal difficulties – does music play a role in it? How do you use music in this way? (Examples)

What do you think you want to do after you complete your degree?

Pursue further music education/find a career in a different profession/travel

How realistic do you think it is that you will do that? Do you think you have to achieve anything in particular before you are able to do so? How do you think you will go about preparing for that?

Do you think music will always play an important role in your life?

What do you think music has brought you, for good or ill, since I last met with you?

What do you think your biggest achievement has been since we last spoke/in the last few weeks?

What do you want to have achieved by the next time I speak to you? Do you think that's possible? How will you try to achieve that goal?

Would you now summarise your thoughts and feelings about your playing, and music in general, in the last few weeks, mentioning anything that you feel hasn't been covered in the interview but has been important in your playing and your academic work.

Appendix Two

Performers' quantitative questionnaire (Phase 2)

Name:

Date:

Current occupation:

1) I would like to know, in general, how positive you are feeling at the moment.

Please choose one statement which best suits your answer.

I feel extremely positive

↑

I feel quite positive.

↑

I don't feel either positive or negative.

↑

I feel quite negative.

↑

I feel extremely negative.

↑

2) Which of the following events is affecting you most at the moment? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Music-making

↑

Personal life

↑

General studies and/or work

↑

Professional relationships (teachers, peers)

↑

Other?

↑

3) How central is music to you and your life at the moment?

4) Has music's centrality to you changed in the last three months? Please choose one statement which best suits your answer.

- It is much more central than 3 months ago.
- It is slightly more central than 3 months ago.
- It has stayed the same.
- It is less central than 3 months ago.

5) Why do you think music's centrality to you has changed/remained stable in the last three months? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

- I've been extremely busy with musical activities.
- I'm really pleased with my singing/playing/composition at the moment.
- Other things in my personal life are more of a priority at the moment.
- I'm too busy with other commitments.
- I'm disillusioned with music at the moment.

Please provide additional information about your response if you would like to:

- 6) How much time have you spent playing/singing/composing in the last three months? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Every day.

↑

A few times a week.

↑

Every so often.

↑

Hardly at all.

↑

None.

↑

- 7) It would be helpful to know how your playing/singing/composition has been going in the last three months. Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

It has been going extremely well.

↑

It has been good.

↑

It has had ups and downs.

↑

It has not been going so well at the moment.

↑

It has been going extremely badly.

↑

- 8) Still talking about your playing/singing/composition, I'm interested in what progress you think you have made in the last three months. Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Immense progress.

↑

Some progress.

↑

No progress.

↑

I've taken a few steps back.

↑

My playing has really gone downhill.

↑

9) How do you feel about the progress, or lack of progress, you have made?

Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

I'm feeling really positive and confident.

I'm feeling quite happy about my progress.

I feel OK, neither downcast nor very pleased.

I wish I could have made more progress.

I feel extremely frustrated.

10) What have you specifically been working towards with your playing/singing/composition? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Improving my musical communication skills.

Learning repertoire/creating a portfolio.

No specific target.

Improving my technique.

Competition/audition/exam.

11) Have you taken part in any competitions/auditions/exams in the last three months? (You may tick more than one box).

Audition.

Competition.

Exam.

No [go to 15].

Other?

12) If yes, please name the event which was most important to you.

13) How well do you feel the event went? Please choose one statement which best suits your answer.

- Extremely well, I was completely pleased with my performance. ↑
- Quite well, I was pleased with most of it. ↑
- OK, it wasn't excellent, it wasn't terrible. ↑
- Not great, I could have played/sung much better. ↑
- Extremely badly, I was very disappointed with the way I played/sang. ↑

14) What was the result of that event? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer, and then please provide more specific information about the result.

- I did extremely well. ↑
- I did quite well. ↑
- I did ok, neither really badly, nor really well. ↑
- I didn't do very well. ↑
- I did extremely badly. ↑

Please provide more specific information about the result:

15) How do you feel about the outcome of the event? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

I'm extremely excited and pleased. ↑

I'm really encouraged by it. ↑

It hasn't had much effect; it was just a learning experience. ↑

I'm quite disappointed. ↑

I'm extremely disappointed and disillusioned ↑

16) I'm interested in how your singing/instrumental/composition lessons have been in the last three months. Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Extremely well, my lessons have been very productive. ↑

They've been good, but sometimes I think they could be better. ↑

They've been OK, they tend to fluctuate in quality. ↑

They've not been very helpful, I don't really get much from them. ↑

17) How helpful has your teacher been in the last three months? Please choose one statement which best suits your answer.

S/he has been very inspiring, encouraging, and supportive. ↑

S/he has been helpful, s/he knows how to motivate me to work hard and get the best from me. ↑

S/he has been neither good nor bad. ↑

We've been having some difficulties, as s/he often doesn't understand my needs. ↑

S/he has been no help at all. ↑

18) I'm interested if, and how, the quality of your lessons most often affect your subsequent playing/singing/composition. Please tick the statements that best suit your answer.

My lessons are always very inspiring, and I am extremely motivated and encouraged after a lesson.

My lessons make me feel more confident in my abilities.

My lessons have no effect on my subsequent playing.

I feel unmotivated after my lessons and I feel like I need a new teacher.

I feel very frustrated after lessons because we never work productively.

19) Would you describe how your practice/writing habits have changed, if at all, in the last three months?

20) What are your immediate, short-term goals for the next three months? Please tick the statements that best describe your goals.

I want to maximise my opportunities.

I want to fulfil my potential.

I want to develop as many different skills as possible, and not simply focus on one or two.

I want to get as much experience as possible.

I just want to prepare for my immediate goals, such as an exam/recital.

21) Do you think your short-term goals are feasible? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Yes, definitely.

Probably.

I'm not sure, but I hope so.

Probably not.

No.

↑
↑
↑
↑
↑

22) What are your long-term musical goals for three years time? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

I want to pursue a professional performing/composing career.

I want to keep performing/writing, but I'm unsure in what capacity.

I'm uncertain about what I want to do in the long-term.

I have no interest in pursuing a career related to music, but it will always be valuable recreation.

I have no interest in pursuing a career related to music, or in playing/singing/composing in the future.

↑
↑
↑
↑
↑

23) Do you think your long-term goals are feasible? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Yes, definitely.

Probably

I'm not sure, but I hope so.

Probably not.

No.

↑
↑
↑
↑
↑

24) What do you think your involvement with music offers you? Please tick the boxes that best suit your answer.

Music is a means of self-expression.

↑

Music is an emotional release from my personal life.

↑

Music offers me a sense of comfort and security.

↑

Music gives me confidence.

↑

Music does not offer me anything.

↑

25) How does studying and making music affect you emotionally? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Music always makes me very happy.

↑

Music completely determines my mood and emotional state.

↑

Music has no effect on me emotionally.

↑

Music often determines my mood.

↑

Music makes me feel unhappy.

↑

26) Compared to music, how important do you perceive the following activities to be? Please number the following options in order of importance, '1' being the most important.

Spending time with friends.

↑

Sport and exercise.

↑

Spending time with family.

↑

Spending time alone, watching TV, listening to music, or reading, for example.

↑

Non-music related work and activities.

↑

27) Have you experienced any obstacles other than those already discussed, in the last three months? Please choose the options that best suit your answer.

Illness/tension.

↑

Busy with other college commitments.

↑

Problems in personal life.

↑

Financial concerns.

↑

Problems concentrating/focusing on music.

↑

Nerves.

↑

Boredom.

↑

28) How do you try and cope with difficulties and obstacles?

29) I'm interested in who you might talk to in order to overcome any difficulties or obstacles. Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

I will approach my supervisor at school/work with the problem.

↑

I ask my parents for advice and help.

↑

I discuss them with my friends with whom I work/study.

↑

I talk to friends removed from the place at which I work/study.

↑

I don't discuss my difficulties with anyone.

↑

Please explain your answer:

30) What is your current motivation to engage with music on any level (listening, performing, writing)? Please choose the statements that best suit your answer.

Enjoyment and love of music.

↑

Success and achievement in music inspire me.

↑

Determination to overcome difficulties I've been experiencing.

↑

I want to fulfil my potential as a musician.

↑

The more I experience music, the more I want to be involved in it.

↑

31) What other elements, aside from those discussed so far, do you feel will contribute to your musical development? Please choose the options that best suit your answer.

Increased experience in music.

↑

Changed goals and increased focus.

↑

I would like to gain academic knowledge to enhance my performances/writing.

↑

I need life-experience to enhance my performances/writing.

↑

I need a more secure technique.

↑

Chance and luck are important factors determining my success as a professional musician.

↑

32) Are there any further comments you would like to make about your experiences with music in the last three months?

Appendix Three

Non-performers' quantitative questionnaire (Phase 2)

Name:

Date:

Current occupation:

1) I would like to know, in general, how positive you are feeling at the moment.

Please choose one statement which best suits your answer.

I feel extremely positive

↑

I feel quite positive.

↑

I don't feel either positive or negative.

↑

I feel quite negative.

↑

I feel extremely negative.

↑

2) Which of the following events is affecting you most at the moment? Please

choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Music-making

↑

Personal life

↑

General studies and/or work

↑

Professional relationships (teachers, peers)

↑

Other?

↑

3) How central is music to you and your life at the moment?

4) Has music's centrality to you changed in the last three months? Please choose one statement which best suits your answer.

It is much more central than 3 months ago.

↑

It is slightly more central than 3 months ago.

↑

It has stayed the same.

↑

It is less central than 3 months ago.

↑

5) Why do you think music's centrality to you has changed in the last three months? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

I've been extremely busy with musical activities.

↑

I'm really pleased with my singing/playing/composition at the moment.

↑

Other things in my personal life are more of a priority at the moment.

↑

I'm too busy with other commitments.

↑

I'm disillusioned with music at the moment.

↑

Please provide additional information about your response if you would like to:

- 6) How much time have you spent playing/singing/composing in the last three months? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Every day.

1

A few times a week.

1

Every so often.

1

Hardly at all.

1

None

1

- 7) It would be helpful to know how your playing/singing/composition has been going in the last three months. Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

It has been going extremely well.

1

It has been good.

1

It has had ups and downs.

1

It has not going so well at the moment.

1

It has been going extremely badly.

1

- 8) What have you specifically been working towards with your playing/singing/composition? Please choose the statements that best suit your answer.

Improving my musical communication skills.

1

Learning repertoire/creating a portfolio.

1

No specific target.

1

Improving my technique.

1

Competition/audition/exam.

1

11) It would be helpful if you would describe how your playing/writing habits have changed in the last three months.

I now just sing/play/write pieces for fun, when I want to.

↑

I don't sing/play/write at all any more.

↑

I occasionally miss playing/singing/writing, so I will then do so for a while

↑

My playing/singing/writing habits haven't changed at all.

↑

Other

↑

Please explain further:

12) What is your current motivation to engage with music on any level (listening, performing, writing)? Please choose the statements that best suit your answer.

Enjoyment and love of music.

↑

Success and achievement in music inspire me.

↑

Determination to overcome difficulties I've been experiencing.

↑

I want to fulfil my potential as a musician.

↑

The more I experience music, the more I want to be involved in it.

↑

Other, please describe:

↑

13) Looking back on your decision not to pursue a music career any further, what factors do you believe contributed to that decision?

14) How do you feel now about your decision?

15) What are your immediate, short-term goals for the next three months? Please tick the statements that best describe your goals.

- I want to maximise my opportunities.
- I want to fulfil my potential.
- I want to develop as many different skills as possible, and not simply focus on one or two.
- I want to get as much experience as possible.
- I just want to prepare for my immediate goals, such as an assessment.

16) Do you think your short-term goals are feasible? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Yes, definitely.

↑

Probably.

↑

I'm not sure, but I hope so.

↑

Probably not.

↑

No.

↑

17) What are your current long-term musical goals for three years time? Please choose one statement which best suits your answer.

I want to pursue a professional performing/composing career.

↑

I want to keep performing/writing, but I'm unsure in what capacity.

↑

I'm uncertain about what I want to do in the long-term.

↑

I have no interest in pursuing a career related to music, but it will always be valuable recreation.

↑

I have no interest in pursuing a career related to music, or in playing/singing/composing in the future.

↑

18) Do you think your long-term goals are feasible? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Yes, definitely.

↑

Probably

↑

I'm not sure, but I hope so.

↑

Probably not.

↑

No.

↑

19) What do you think involvement with musical activities offers you? Please tick the boxes that best suit your answer.

Music is a means of self-expression.

↑

Music is an emotional release from my personal life.

↑

Music offers me a sense of comfort and security.

↑

Music gives me confidence.

↑

Music does not offer me anything.

↑

20) How does your involvement with music affect you emotionally? Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

Music always makes me very happy.

↑

Music completely determines my mood and emotional state.

↑

Music has no effect on me emotionally.

↑

Music often determines my mood.

↑

Music makes me feel unhappy.

↑

21) Compared to music, how important do you perceive the following activities to be? Please number the following options '1-5' in order of importance, '1' being the most important.

Spending time with friends.

↑

Sport and exercise.

↑

Spending time with family.

↑

Spending time alone, watching TV, listening to music, or reading, for example.

↑

Non-music related work.

↑

22) Have you experienced any obstacles other than those already discussed, in the last three months? Please choose the options that best suit your answer.

Illness/tension.

Busy with other commitments.

Problems in personal life.

Financial concerns.

Problems concentrating/focusing on music.

Nerves.

Boredom.

↑
↑
↑
↑
↑
↑
↑

23) How do you try and cope with difficulties and obstacles, either involving music or not?

24) I'm interested in who you might talk to in order to overcome any difficulties or obstacles. Please choose one statement that best suits your answer.

I will approach my supervisor at school/work with the problem.

I ask my parents for advice and help.

I discuss them with my friends with whom I work/study.

I talk to friends removed from the place at which I work/study.

I don't discuss my difficulties with anyone.

↑
↑
↑
↑
↑

Appendix Four

Performers' final qualitative interview (Phase Three)

Name:

Age:

Occupation:

How positive are you feeling at the moment?

Which aspects of your life are having the most impact on you at the moment?

- What kind of an impact do they have?

How has your playing/singing been going in the last three months?

What playing/singing have you been doing? (concerts/rehearsals/gigs/practice)

How much time have you spent playing/singing? (How is your playing/singing time divided into rehearsals and formal practice?)

How is your practice going?

How do you spend the time that you dedicate to practice?

What areas of your playing/singing have you been working on?

What progress do you think you have made in the last three months?

How do you think that has been achieved?

How have you been feeling when you've been playing/singing?

How have your lessons been?

What has your teacher said about your playing/singing?

Have you had a lesson that has been particularly good or bad?

How has this affected your playing/singing?

How would you describe your relationship with your teacher?

What are your perceptions of your teacher as a teacher?

Does this influence your playing/singing, and if so, how?

How do you feel about the quality of your playing/singing in general at the moment?

- Why do you think that is?

Is there anything specific that you feel needs improvement?

- If so, what do you feel needs improvement, and why?

Do you have a specific target that you are working towards at the moment?

- If so, what are you preparing for?

How are you preparing for it?

How do you feel about it?

What are your current goals and ambitions?

How do you think you will achieve them?

How long have you had these goals?

How do you think your route to achieving them is progressing so far?

Do you think music will always play an important role in your life?

How central is music to you?

How does this compare with other things you do? (sport/hobbies)

Has music's centrality to you changed since the last interview?

Are there any reasons why that may be the case?

What else have you been doing aside from musical activities?

- What time have you spent pursuing other interests?
- How do you feel when engaging in other activities?

Do you find that other aspects of your life carry over into your music?

Have there been any instances of this since the last interview?

- In what way has it affected your playing/singing?

How do you generally try to cope with any difficulties you experience – be they musical or personal?

What do you think are the qualities of a good musician?

Do you think you have those qualities?

What do you think studying music and engaging in high-level music making has offered you?

Are there any negative aspects to studying and working in the music performance profession?

Have you had any direct experiences that have made you think this?

- If so, what experiences?

How have you tried to accommodate and deal with such difficulties?

What do you think music has brought you for good or ill in the last three months?

What do you think your biggest achievement has been since we last spoke?

How do you feel you have developed in the last two years?

What are your feelings about that development?

Has music's centrality to you shifted in the last two years?

Is there any explanation for why that might be the case?

How do you expect music's centrality to change in the coming 2 years? Why?

What do you think music has brought you for good or ill in the last two years?

- Have you had any particular struggles or negative experiences?
- Have you had any particularly positive experiences?

What do you hope music will bring you in the next 2 years?

What do you think your biggest achievement has been in the last two years?

What do you hope to achieve in the next 2 years?

How do you feel your training and experiences over the last two years have equipped you for a career in music performance?

Do you feel there were any elements absent in your training that would have better equipped you for a future in music performance?

Who have been the most important and influential people in your musical development over the last two years?

- In what way have those people been important?

Have you had any experiences in the last two years that you wish you could change?

Have you had any doubts about pursuing a career in music performance?

What is your motivation to be involved in musical activities and pursue a career in music performance?

Would you now summarise your thoughts and feelings about your playing, and music in general, in the last few weeks, mentioning anything that you feel hasn't been covered in the interview but has been important to your playing and your future in music.

Appendix Five

Non-performing musicians' final qualitative interview (Phase Three)

Name:

Age:

Occupation:

How positive are you feeling at the moment?

Which aspects of your life are having the most impact on you at the moment?

- What kind of an impact do they have?

How much time have you spent playing/singing? (How is your playing/singing time divided into rehearsals and formal practice?)

What playing/singing have you been doing? (concerts/rehearsals/gigs/practice)

How has your playing/singing been going in the last three months?

How do you spend the time that you dedicate to practice?

What areas of your playing/singing have you been working on?

What progress do you think you have made in the last three months?

How do you think that has been achieved?

How have you been feeling when you've been playing/singing?

How do you feel about the quality of your playing/singing in general at the moment?

- Why do you think that is?

What are your current goals and ambitions?

- How do you think you will achieve them?
- How long have you had these goals?

How do you think your route to achieving them is progressing so far?

What are your long-term musical goals?

- How do you think you will achieve them?
- How long have you had these goals?

How do you think your route to achieving them is progressing so far?

Do you think music will always play an important role in your life?

How central is music to you?

How does this compare with other things you do? (sport/hobbies)

Has music's centrality to you changed since the last interview?

Are there any reasons why that may be the case?

What else have you been doing aside from musical activities?

- What time have you spent pursuing other interests?
- How do you feel when engaging in other activities?

How do you generally try to cope with any difficulties you experience – be they musical or personal?

What do you think are the qualities of a good musician?

Do you think you have those qualities?

What do you think studying music at a high level has offered you?

What do you think music has brought you for good or ill in the last three months?

What do you think your biggest achievement has been since we last spoke?

How do you feel you have developed in the last two years?

What are your feelings about that development?

Has music's centrality to you shifted in the last two years?

- Is there any explanation for why that might be the case?
- How do you feel about the shift?

What do you think music has brought you for good or ill in the last two years?

- Have you had any particular struggles or negative experiences?
- Have you had any particularly positive experiences?

What do you think your biggest achievement has been in the last two years?

Who have been the most important and influential people in your development over the last two years?

- In what way have those people been important?

What reasons are there for you no longer pursuing a career in music performance?

How do you feel now about your decision?

Do you feel there were any elements absent in your training that would have better equipped you for a future in music performance?

What role does music play in your life now?

What is your motivation to involve yourself in musical activities – be they listening or playing?

Have you had any doubts about not pursuing a career in music performance?

Have you had any experiences in the last two years that you wish you could change?

Would you now summarise your thoughts and feelings about your playing, and music in general, in the last few weeks, mentioning anything that you feel hasn't been covered in the interview but has been important in your playing and your academic work.

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Rebecca

Rebecca was a clarinettist at the University; at the beginning of the study was in the second year of her degree. Rebecca's motivation to study music was the enjoyment it provided and she expressed a strong love of music. She described how inspirational her first teacher was in enhancing her enjoyment of music and hoped that music would always be a part of her life.

Throughout the study she lacked confidence in her abilities as a musician and suffered with performance anxiety, which contributed to her avoidance of public performances. Rebecca perceived her teacher as uninspiring and described how he was too critical during lessons and generally unsupportive. She was frustrated by the favouritism she perceived the department to show towards particular students, which in turn made her doubt her abilities. Rebecca's musical participation decreased throughout her degree and she described how she did not dedicate much time to practice and only did so when she wanted to enjoy making music.

Rebecca's lack of confidence in her abilities, fuelled by a perceived lack of support from her teacher and the University appeared to contribute to her decision to protect her enjoyment of music and keep it as a hobby.

Following her graduation, Rebecca studied an MA in the Psychology of Music and continued to make music with friends for enjoyment. She is now working as a research assistant in London.

Violet

Violet was a final year singer at the University when the study began. She began her musical career as a trumpet player, but decided to focus on her singing because she felt that she had more potential as a singer. Most of her musical participation until attending university was connected to the trumpet and at the beginning of the study she complained that she was not doing enough singing. However, Violet was keen to create her own opportunities to sing and with some friends organised several concerts.

Violet perceived the atmosphere at the university as competitive, especially amongst the singers, but tried to concentrate on her own development. Whilst she sometimes experienced conflict with other singers, she identified with her peers as a way to cope with work pressures and also perceived them to understand her and her passion for music since they were all classical musicians.

Violet's confidence as a singer increased throughout the study and was enhanced by events such as being the only undergraduate student to be given a leading part in a university production. She described her teacher as highly supportive and considered them to have a close relationship, so much so that she would always approach her teacher with any problems that experienced.

Violet's ambition was to study as a postgraduate at Music College and whilst her teacher thought she was good enough, she could not afford the course fees. She was upset that she could not train further as a singer, but was determined to continue singing regularly. She trained as a teacher specialising in music and is now Head of Music at a Secondary School. She sings and plays regularly with various ensembles.

Joan

At the beginning of the study Joan was a second year singer at the University. Joan expressed a strong love of music, which was her primary motivation to do so, and she considered herself to have a natural flair for singing. She described high levels of support from her first teachers and her parents, and considered her relationship with her university vocal teacher to be positive and effective. Music was also the central feature of Joan's social life and was important to her psychologically.

In the first phase of the study Joan described how she wished to become a professional singer, although she recognised the limitations of her vocal technique and strategies for coping with the inevitable struggles associated with the profession. She was generally positive about her singing and realistic about the rate at which her voice would physiologically develop and was therefore able to reflect on her progress positively.

Joan experienced much success during her undergraduate degree and was offered several lead roles in university operas and performances and throughout her studies immersed herself completely in musical activities.

Following several consultation lessons with vocal teachers from different music conservatoires, who told her she should wait for her voice to mature before applying to pursue postgraduate study, Joan decided to seek other employment whilst continuing to develop her voice. Joan continued singing with several amateur and professional choirs after her graduation and is now working as a civil servant.

Rachel

At the beginning of the study Rachel was a third year clarinettist at the university. Rachel described that music was her passion and explained that she had always wanted to be a professional musician. She originally started university as a singer but began to focus on the clarinet when she realised that she would gain more performance opportunities.

Rachel described how her first clarinet teacher was an inspiration and had encouraged her to perform from the age of four years and her university teacher was also perceived as supportive and encouraging. She described her parents as supportive; her father in particular had always wanted her to become a professional musician.

Rachel felt that she had the potential to become a professional musician and possessed many of the necessary qualities, and she recognised that in order to deal with the intensity of the profession she needed to develop a balanced lifestyle. Music was important socially to Rachel and she considered music to be everything – it was her life.

Rachel studied as a postgraduate at the music college also involved in this study and whilst she initially found the transition a difficult one, her experiences there were generally positive. She described her teachers as encouraging and supportive and she was given many opportunities to perform in the elite ensembles, which increased her self-confidence. She originally intended to study for two years at the music college, but after one year decided that she did not want to remain immersed in the competitive environment of the institution, and so began work as a peripatetic music teacher. She now teaches the clarinet and saxophone and performs with various ensembles.

Judy

At the beginning of the study Judy was a third year violinist at the university. Judy had always wanted to become a professional musician and had learnt since the age of three years using the Suzuki method. She described how she had focused on her violin over other activities because she felt it was more natural to her and she was a highly experienced performer. At the beginning of the study Judy described that she wanted to become an orchestral musician but as the study progressed decided that the lifestyle was not conducive to her life goals of raising a family and earning a secure income.

Judy described increasing frustration with her lessons and the university and perceived a lack of support and understanding. Furthermore, she perceived her parents to place pressure on her to succeed as a musician. The expectations of others resulted in Judy's decreased enjoyment of music and she explained that she only performed to please others, not herself. The result was that Judy decided to become a primary school teacher and studied a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) specialising in English Literature. This was met with much opposition from her parents and violin teacher, but Judy was determined to achieve her own ambitions rather than those of others.

For the one year duration of her PGCE Judy did not play her violin at all. She felt that for the first time she was allowed to be 'Judy' rather than 'Judy the violinist'. As she approached the end of her PGCE, Judy realised that she had missed music and started to play again. Once the pressure from others had been removed, Judy was able to enjoy playing the violin once again and began to play in an amateur orchestra. Judy now teaches in a primary school and plays the violin only for her own enjoyment.

Katie

Katie was a third year flautist at the university when the study began. Her main motivation for studying music was enjoyment and friends were an incentive for her to participate in musical activities. She described early teachers and her parents as supportive and encouraging and explained that her parents had always given her the freedom to make her own choices. Before attending university Katie had worked as a teaching assistant where she was responsible for organising musical activities for the pupils. She explained that her experiences as a teaching assistant provided her with confidence in her abilities as a musician.

Katie described frustration with the music department because she perceived a lack of opportunities but she acknowledged that she was not motivated to create her own. She did not consider her teacher to be a positive influence and she explained that her lessons were uninspiring and did not motivate her to practice. Consequently, Katie did not feel confident in her abilities as a flautist and expressed many concerns about her final recital.

Throughout the study Katie described a number of possible career options and the majority of them were related to teaching. Following her graduation Katie spent time travelling in Asia and then decided to study a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). Katie now works as a teacher in a primary school and is responsible for organising the musical activities in the school. She plays for her own enjoyment.

Penny

At the beginning of the study Penny was a third year 'cellist at the University. Penny's parents were both musicians, her father also a 'cellist, and she aspired to be like them. Penny explained that she had never been pressured to study music, but described how she did not consider her parents to provide enough support and encouragement. Penny suggested that they were trying to protect her from what they perceived to be a difficult and competitive industry although she felt that they did not have much confidence in her. Despite her parents' opinions, Penny wanted to become a professional musician.

Penny described how her enjoyment and love of music were her primary motivators and she considered music to be the most central element of her life. She did ensure, however, that she was involved in other activities because she wanted to gain a wide variety of experience. As the study progressed Penny placed increasing pressure on herself to achieve and consequently began to enjoy her musical participation less. She began to study a Masters degree in performance and research, but did not complete her studies because she was dedicating much energy to her job as a part-time arts administrator.

Penny eventually secured a full-time job working as an arts administrator and working on music education projects. She now works for a prestigious ensemble and plays with various ensembles several times each week.

Heidi

At the beginning of the study Heidi was a third year vocal and violin student at the university. Heidi's main motivation for studying music was the enjoyment playing and singing offered. She described how her parents had always supported her musical participation and explained that she had always been inspired and motivated by other members of choirs that she had sung with.

In addition to her involvement in University choirs and ensembles, Heidi also sang with a professional choir in the Midlands and in the first phase of the study described how she felt flattered when they asked her to sing in a tour of Israel with them. However, she decided against doing so because she found it difficult to relate to the other members of the choir because they had 'funny attitudes'. She was also highly involved with the Church and she described music as her vehicle for expression and means for releasing emotion.

Heidi's experiences towards the end of her undergraduate degree became increasingly negative as she found the deadlines and amount of work stressful and she began to associate music with stress. Music was no longer enjoyable for her. This was exaggerated by a number of illnesses resulting in vocal nodules, which prevented her from singing and caused her much frustration as she was unable to prepare for her final recital. Being unable to sing led Heidi to the realisation of how important music was to her. She did not fully recover from her illness and consequently she did not perform to her potential in her final recital.

Heidi went on to train as a psychiatric nurse after completing her music degree, but continued to sing in Church ensembles and professional choirs.

Jane

At the beginning of the study Jane was a third year clarinettist at the University. Her main motivation for studying music was her enjoyment of the social benefits that it offered. She was generally inspired by her peers and the environment of the University music department because they motivated her to practice and improve. However, she expressed resentment towards another clarinettist in the department who was offered most of the available performance opportunities. She appeared to blame the music department for not providing opportunities for all students and suggested that the situation deterred her from considering a career in performance because she had not acquired the necessary performance experience.

Jane's experiences improved shortly before she finished her undergraduate degree as she was preparing for her final recital and involved in many ensembles, although she began to suffer with tendonitis which caused her some frustration. She was worried about the impact of her performance anxiety, but generally she felt positive about her playing.

Following the completion of her music degree, Jane started work as a Business Consultant and began to work long hours and consequently she had no time to play the clarinet, despite her intentions to do so. As the study progressed Jane explained that she missed her musical participation and joined an amateur Wind Orchestra and she explained that she enjoyed playing without the pressure of competition or assessment. Jane is still working long hours as a Business Consultant, but makes time to play her clarinet whenever possible.

Bobbi

At the beginning of the study Bobbi was a second year 'cellist at the University and she also played the guitar. Throughout the study she reflected negatively on her musical ability and described how her playing was inconsistent, which caused her much frustration. This was exaggerated by tendonitis which developed during the first phase of the study and, consequently, there were long periods when she was unable to practice.

In the first interview Bobbi explained that she was uncertain of her long-term career goals, although she doubted that she had the ability to become a professional musician. She had a wide variety of interests to which she dedicated a significant amount of time, including working for the Samaritans and as a Scout leader. It seemed that non-musical activities were Bobbi's main priority, although she described that music was fundamental to her and she could not imagine life without music: she felt that her musical participation had enabled her to develop personally and she used it as a way to relax.

Throughout the first and second phases of the study, Bobbi expressed frustration towards her 'cello teacher and described many instances of unproductive lessons. She did not enjoy practising because she found it boring and consequently she often felt that she was not making any progress.

After completing her music degree Bobbi was employed in a number of part-time and temporary jobs and felt increasingly frustrated and disheartened with the direction in which her life was progressing. She played rarely, although she consistently explained that she wanted to start playing again. At the end of the study Bobbi was working part-time in a bakery and was thinking about joining an amateur orchestra.

Gerry

Gerry was the only male participant from the university and at the beginning of the study was a second year percussion student. Gerry decided to focus on percussion because it had the potential to offer many performance opportunities, but he also described how music had a powerful emotional effect on him. He had always wanted to study music as a degree and felt that he had no option – music was everything to him and he saw percussion as an extension to himself. He described the high levels of support that his mother had provided and explained that she had seen his potential as a musician and did everything possible to allow him to progress.

Gerry struggled with motivation throughout the study and he described how he found it difficult to concentrate for prolonged periods of time: he described his practice as mainly just ‘messing around’. Despite this, however, Gerry described music as all-encompassing and wanted to become a professional musician.

After completing his undergraduate degree Gerry began a part-time Masters degree in performance and composition at the university, but he continued to struggle with motivation to practice. He also began to teach percussion and was offered much performance work and consequently he dedicated less time to his Masters degree. Gerry did not complete his Masters course, but now teaches part-time in the North of England and performs in several ensembles frequently.

Hilary

At the beginning of the study Hilary was a third year pianist at the university. Her grandparents inspired her to learn the piano and she decided that she wanted to focus on the piano because of the range of colour it provided. She enjoyed the social benefits provided by playing in ensembles and had always known that she would study music in higher education. She considered her music degree to have given her the opportunity to concentrate on an activity she loved and felt it provided her with life skills such as cooperation and communication.

Throughout the study Hilary was generally positive about her playing. She dedicated much time to practice, although described frustration with her teacher since he did not teach her very often and consequently she often found that her motivation fluctuated. She did not perceive her relationship with her teacher as a positive one and disliked his constant criticism and impatience when she found particular techniques difficult.

Music was a central feature of Hilary's life and she could not imagine life without it. Religion was important to Hilary and music played a vital role in enhancing her prayer and worship.

Hilary did not intend to pursue a career as a professional musician. She was due to be married in the summer following her graduation and intended to train as a social worker at her Church.

Jodie

At the beginning of the study Jodie was a third year flautist at the university and she only took part in the first phase of the study because she could not dedicate the time required. Jodie had always enjoyed playing and the social benefits of making music with others. She explained that early instrumental teachers were important sources of inspiration, support and encouragement and she came from a musical family, with parents and grandparents playing musical instruments.

During the first phase of the study Jodie described fluctuating experiences and she expressed frustration with the lack of opportunity and what she perceived as a generally low standard of playing from her peers: she wished that her peers loved music as much as she did. She also described irritation with her instrumental teacher whose teaching she considered vague and unstructured and therefore she felt as if she was teaching herself.

Jodie intended to pursue postgraduate study at one of the British music colleges, but was unsuccessful in securing a position. This had a negative impact on her motivation and she began to dislike her flute. She was uncertain of her next step at the end of phase one, although she considered studying a Postgraduate Certificate of Education. Friends of Jodie's informed me that she proceeded to study Masters degree in Music in the Community and now works for in an educational outreach department of a professional orchestra.

Rolleen

At the beginning of the study Rolleen was a second year oboe student at the university. Music was Rolleen's main priority and she dedicated most of her time to it. She enjoyed practising and explained that she was extremely focused when doing so and she wanted to become a professional musician.

Rolleen perceived her relationship with her university instrumental teacher as negative and considered that their personalities were not suited. She explained that she often cried after lessons which often resulted in her desire to stop playing the oboe, or conversely motivated her to overcome the difficulties. Rolleen considered performance to provide her with a sense of identity and she relied upon it as a means of comfort and support during personal difficulties.

During the study Rolleen auditioned for several music colleges because her career ambition was to become an orchestral musician. However, she was unsuccessful and consequently her self-confidence and motivation decreased. Since she had only ever wanted to become a professional musician, Rolleen was faced with the challenge of finding an alternative career interest. She decided that she wanted to try auditioning again after another year of lessons and so after graduating she started work as an office administrator. She worked full-time and consequently had little free time to practise and gradually she stopped playing.

In her final interview Rolleen was still working as an office administrator and was about to attend a music course which had motivated her to start practising again. She intended to find an amateur orchestra to join and to begin to play more frequently.

Edith

At the beginning of the study Edith was a second year pianist and oboist at the university. Edith explained that she was encouraged to learn music by her parents and grandparents and has played a number of instruments in the past. However, she decided to focus on the piano because she felt connected to it. Her main motivation to play was her love of music and she had always known that she wanted to study music in higher education because she enjoyed the social benefits of making music with others.

Throughout the study Edith did not place much emphasis on her playing because she wanted to concentrate on her academic studies and she felt that she did not have time to do both. During the first phase of the study Edith found music stressful due to work pressures and had to focus on the oboe over the piano because she was due to take the grade 8 examination. She considered her oboe playing to be a chore and this was exaggerated by her negative relationship with her teacher: she felt that her oboe teacher treated her like a child and this upset Edith and her motivation decreased. She perceived her piano teacher, on the other hand, as inspiring and supportive and he helped her to enjoy the music; she looked forward to her lessons and really enjoyed them.

Edith considered music to be central to whom she perceived herself to be: she used it as a form of therapy to clear her mind when she has been working and to enhance or change her moods. At the beginning of the study Edith wished to become a Music Therapist, but by the second interview she had changed her mind due to the competitive nature of entering the profession. She was uncertain of what she wanted to do for most of the study, although considered working as a civil servant. Of central importance to Edith was that she would be challenged and able to fulfil her potential and she wanted a career which offered financial stability. Although Edith expected to secure employment in a non-music related profession, she was certain that she would continue to play for her own enjoyment in the future.

Juliet

Juliet was a third year singer at the university when the study began. She identified her brother as the most influential person in her musical development as he was also a singer and she aspired to be like him. At the time of the study he was a professional musician and her future goals appeared to be related to his. She also highlighted that her parents were highly supportive throughout her musical development.

It seemed that Juliet was disappointed by the nature of her singing lessons and by the music department in general: she felt that there was a general lack of opportunity to perform in the department and felt that certain students were favoured over others. She found her teacher to be uninspiring and felt that she was not treated as an individual. Juliet explained that her teacher did not provide as much constructive criticism as she required and consequently found her lessons boring. However, her experiences with her teacher did improve during the first phase of the study, with her vocal teacher providing more specific support with languages and interpretation.

Juliet wished to continue her studies at music college, but after attending several consultation lessons with prospective teachers, she was told to wait two years before applying again because her voice was not fully matured. Following the rejection Juliet felt demoralised and it was only pre-arranged public performances that motivated her to practice. Despite the initial setback, Juliet was offered a place on a Masters degree in Performance, which she accepted, but after a term of postgraduate study she was unable to cope and so did not complete the course. She became a peripatetic music teacher and then applied to study a Postgraduate Certificate of Education. Juliet is now a music teacher and performs regularly with a number of different choirs.

Ellen

Ellen was a second year trombone student at the university when the study commenced. Ellen's musical participation was encouraged by inspiring and enthusiastic teachers and her grandparents, who loved music, also gave her much support. Her parents were not musical and emphasised academic study. She was the only member of her family to attend university and expected her to find a career in music after completing her degree. Ellen felt that her parents placed pressure upon her to succeed as a musician and consequently she questioned whether music was a suitable career for her.

Throughout the study Ellen reflected positively on her progress as a trombonist and described a positive relationship with her teacher. She felt as if her understood her and she always enjoyed her lessons. Her perceptions of the department were not always positive as she did not like the cliquy nature of her peers and she often felt as if she was not respected because she knew less about music than others.

Music was fundamental to Ellen: she thought about it all the time and she used it to shape and enhance her mood. She considered music to be stable and something upon which she could rely. When she experienced some personal difficulties, she turned to music to help her to relax and escape her concerns.

Ellen decided to study a Postgraduate Certificate of Education and is now a music teacher in the North of England. She plays her trombone whenever she has the opportunity to do so.

Beth

When the study began, Beth was a second year clarinettist at the university. Her parents were both musicians and wanted her to play a musical instrument and chose the clarinet for her. When she first started learning she was made to practise by her parents and consequently she perceived it as a chore. Music was a central feature of her family life and she used to watch her parents perform and met their friends, some of whom were an inspiration to her.

Beth's experiences during her undergraduate degree were generally positive, although she struggled with academic work and that often detracted from her enjoyment of her degree. Her first clarinet teacher at the university was perceived as uninspiring and too vague and so she changed teacher and her experiences were immediately improved. She described her new teacher as inspiring, clear and constructively critical. Consequently, Beth's perceived her playing more positively and enjoyed her musical participation.

Beth perceived music as therapeutic and relaxing and she described how it determined her mood and provided her with self-confidence. During the study she was uncertain about her career intentions. She was married to another of the participants in this study (Tony from the music college) shortly before the last phase of interviews and her priorities were to be happy and enjoy married life. A regular part of their social life was to sing in a local choir and make music together and with friends.

Beth worked for a short while as a Classroom Assistant and at the end of the study was about to start a Postgraduate Certificate of Education.

Eliza

At the beginning of the study Eliza was a fourth year violinist at the music college. Eliza's family is musical and her parents have always been very supportive. She had known for a long time that she wanted to become a professional musician and attended a specialist music school from the age of eight years. She had to leave the music school after four years due to a form of arthritis, but she realised that she missed music and that it was what she really wanted to do. Eliza was motivated by the social benefits offered by music, but also by the drive to perform: she described music as providing powerful emotions and enjoyment – her enjoyment of music motivated her the most.

Eliza described disillusionment with her instrumental teacher as she felt that he did not allow her to find her own voice as a performer, but she emphasised that her peers provided support, encouragement and honest feedback; they understood her concerns about the future.

Her ambition was to become an orchestral musician but also to fulfil her potential, be happy, and continue to enjoy playing, learning and developing. Eliza recognised the importance of personality to success and felt that whilst she may not possess all the necessary qualities, she would be able to acquire them with time. She was aware of the negative elements of the music profession and highlighted the importance of personality to cope with them.

At the end of the study Eliza had gained much performance experience with a number of professional orchestras and ensembles and was one of the only participants to have secured a full-time position with an orchestra.

Alex

Alex was a fourth year singer at the music college when the study commenced and was one of only three participants not to complete the study. He started his musical career as a flautist and saxophonist, but when his voice broke he realised that he wanted to become a singer. He described his first vocal teacher as providing much support and she encouraged him to wait a few years for his voice to mature before applying to music college. During that time he performed many recitals and worked as a music teacher and in a music shop. His parents were not musical and his father in particular did not understand why he wanted to become a professional musician.

Alex's experiences at the music college appeared to be positive: he was offered lead roles in several of the college operas and was awarded a substantial sum of money to supplement his postgraduate course fees after winning a prestigious singing competition within the college. His success in the operas and competition increased his self-confidence, which in turn made him feel more positive and focused. He considered himself to have an excellent relationship with his teacher and described how his teacher knew his voice inside out and was the best in the country. He also described how important his peers were for providing support and understanding.

Alex generally reflected positively on his vocal progress and seemed confident that he would achieve his goal of becoming a professional performer. Since Alex did not complete the full duration of the study I do not know if he achieved his goal, although I did see him performing recently in another of the music college operas.

Linda

When the study commenced Linda was a third year singer at the music college. She began her musical career as a pianist and 'cellist due to the influence of her mother and friends, but after being asked to sing a solo in a school concert her teacher offered her lessons and she had been a singer ever since. When she arrived at the music college she realised that she wanted to become a professional singer. She was originally motivated to learn music because of the social benefits it offered, but enjoyment was also an important factor.

Linda reported in the first phase of the study that she had not been given many opportunities to sing in the college, but as the study progressed she won several competitions and was beginning to earn her living as a performer. Her successes made her feel more positive about her singing, although she tried to use them as opportunities to sing and enjoy herself. She perceived her teacher as inspiring and supportive and was always excited to attend her lessons.

During the study Linda suffered frequently with colds and viruses which affected her singing and caused her much frustration: many of her negative reports were related to her inability to progress due to illness. Linda recognised the negative elements of the professions such as competition, instability and uncertainty, but considered herself to possess the necessary qualities to succeed.

Linda wished to become a professional singer and at the end of the study she had won several prestigious competitions and it seemed likely that she would continue to find work as a singer and achieve her ambitions.

Charlotte

When the study began Charlotte was fourth year 'cellist at the music college. She initially started to play the 'cello because her mother suggested that it would suit her and her mother was always highly supportive, listening to her practice every day. As she progressed her teacher recommended that she attend a specialist music school and she then chose to study at music college because she wanted to focus on performance. She described one particularly inspirational teacher at her music school who motivated her to pursue a professional career in music.

Charlotte's experiences at the music college were generally positive. She often reported feeling increasingly positive about her playing and her ability as a performer and considered that she was successful in achieving her potential in her final recital. Charlotte was determined to achieve the highest possible standards and was excited about meeting new challenges. She perceived music as central to her identity and she often described how music helped her to feel better about herself. She could not imagine a life without music. Charlotte considered her peers to provide an important source of support and described how they would often play and learn together.

Charlotte's career ambitions were to perform in a professional ensemble or orchestra, but as the study progressed she began to consider alternative options. In the last interview she explained her plans to create a teaching practice near her home and concentrate on providing opportunities for young musicians to make music. She played with a string quartet with which she performed regularly.

George

At the beginning of the study George was a third year violinist at the music college. He started to learn the violin because he saw it being played on the television and emulated the performer by using a toy guitar and a snooker cue! He decided to attend a specialist music school because he loved music and it was the most important thing to him. He explained that his first teacher has been the largest influence on his musical development and he described how he felt that he owed him a debt because he was responsible for George's achievements.

George's experiences at the music college were generally positive. He perceived his relationship with his instrumental teacher at the college to be a good one and he described how his teacher had helped him to overcome technical weaknesses by being supportive and providing constructive feedback on his performances. George participated in many performances and competitions during his time at the music college and was often awarded prizes and asked to lead the College orchestra, experiences which George valued and from which he felt he could learn a lot.

Music is a large part of George's life but he tried to ensure that it did not become all-consuming – he made time for leisure activities that were completely different from music which he considered to be relaxing, refreshing and to provide balance.

Immediately following graduation from the music college George intended to continue pursuing a career in performance and was planning to study in Germany but he explained that since music was not a stable career he did not expect to work as a musician for his entire career. He wanted different experiences and was considering starting a family business.

Roz

At the beginning of the study Roz was a third year viola player at the music college. She began to play the viola because her mother, who was a teacher, needed a viola player for the school orchestra. She described the high levels of support provided by her family and her mother in particular, who helped her to find competitions and concerts. Roz attended a specialist music school and in the 6th form doubted that she wanted to become a professional performer. However, her teacher at the time was perceived as inspiring and completely changed her perspective by teaching her how to practice effectively and by encouraging her abilities. Roz had participated in many solo competitions and experienced much success and she described particular music courses which had increased her enthusiasm and passion for music.

At the beginning of the study Roz did not perceive her playing positively because her instrumental teacher had retired from the music college and she had not received any lessons for several weeks. Consequently her self-confidence diminished and she felt unsure of how to improve. Despite the lack of tuition, Roz took part in many ensemble performances and competitions and began to experience some success and her confidence increased. She started to learn with a new teacher and reported large amounts of progress.

Throughout the study Roz was always busy with performances and she often described feeling tired and stressed. She felt that music was too all-consuming at times because it often made her feel negative after setbacks but she tried to prevent this from happening. Roz intended to become a professional performer and after completing her studies at the music college she moved to Austria to continue her studies.

Tony

Tony was a third year organist at the music college when the study commenced. He started his musical career as a pianist and wanted to play the organ after hearing one being played, but his parents would not allow him to until he improved on the piano. When Tony started to play the organ he found that he enjoyed it much more than the piano, but it was only when a teacher recommend that he attend music college because his academic grades were not high enough for university that he started to dedicate hard work to the organ.

As an organist, Tony did not have many opportunities to perform at the music college, but enjoyed being a member of a small department because there was no competition, only support and a shared love of the organ. He idolised and respected his teacher and considered them to have a positive relationship. During the first phase of the study Tony described a small number of negative performance experiences which initially resulted in decreased confidence, but he tried to maintain a sense of perspective and learn from his mistakes.

Tony's main priority during the study was his fiancée (also a participant in this study – Beth from the university) and his career goals were related to her goals, although he intended to continue practicing on a daily basis. After graduating from the music college Tony decided that he did not want to become a professional musician because he did not like the pressure which detracted from his enjoyment of music and he applied to join the Police Force. He and his wife (Beth) sang regularly with a local choir which helped them to integrate into a new community.

Paula

At the beginning of the study Paula was a third year trumpeter at the music college. She started to learn the trumpet after hearing a recording and because her family were musical she aspired to become a musician as well. She had always enjoyed practicing and her main motivation was that she loved music, although her peers in the ensembles in which she played also inspired her.

Paula appeared to struggle with negative experiences during the study. She was not given many opportunities to perform in the music college ensembles and did not have much confidence in her abilities as a musician. Her degree consisted of an academic element (unlike some of the other participants in the study) and the extra workload often caused anxiety and pressure. Paula worried that her practice technique was not efficient and seemed to spend her private rehearsal working on the aspects of her playing with which she was already content. She perceived her relationship with her teacher as negative and did not consider him to provide her with enough support and guidance and this also seemed to contribute to her lack of self-confidence. There were many occasions during the study when Paula wanted to discontinue her studies, although she was determined to overcome the setbacks.

Throughout the study Paula's career ambition was to become an orchestral musician and this was unchanging despite her negative experiences. After graduating from the music college Paula changed institution and her musical experiences immediately improved. She was given many opportunities within her new institution and began to secure professional work. Her confidence in her abilities increased and she began to reflect more positively on her musical participation. At the end of the study Paula was performing regularly and was still intending to become a professional musician.

Kelly

At the beginning of the study Kelly was a fourth year singer at the music college. She had always wanted a career as a musician because she loved singing and performing on stage. Her parents were highly supportive and although they originally wanted her to become a doctor or accountant they supported her decision.

Kelly was involved in many ensembles and competitions during the study and was given several leading roles in the college operas. She was keen to gain as much experience as possible in order to develop her Curriculum Vitae and increase future employment possibilities. Her experiences during the study fluctuated from positive to negative and she described several performances which were not as successful as she hoped but after some initial disappointment she was able to reflect positively on the learning opportunities it offered. Kelly respected her teacher's abilities as a singer and tutor and described their relationship as positive and professional. She depended upon her peers for support and described how one in particular helped her to find work and promoted her whenever he had the opportunity.

Kelly wanted to become a respected opera singer and by the end of the study considered that she was progressing well on her route to achieving her ambition. She identified identity as the key to success and felt lucky to be involved in music. Kelly's perceptions of her experiences were not always positive and she often felt pressured by the competitive environment: music was central to her self-concept and a criticism of her voice was perceived as a personal judgement.

Kelly was studying as a postgraduate at the end of the study and was still achieving success in competitions and beginning to penetrate the profession by performing in music festivals such as the Buxton Festival of Music.

Geoff

At the beginning of the study Geoff was a fourth year 'cellist at the music college. His early experiences at summer schools and in ensembles motivated him to practice, as did his basic enjoyment of performing. His parents were always supportive of his musical participation and encouraged him to achieve his ambitions.

Geoff was generally positive about his experiences at the music college: despite some initial difficulties with his instrumental teacher he realised that his lessons were helpful and enabled him to progress and he appreciated the support she provided. At the beginning of the study Geoff usually referred to performances and auditions in a positive way, and his enjoyment and love of music was evident. He described music as central to his life and could not imagine life without it. However, he ensured that he engaged in non-musical activities in order to relax and release excess energy.

After completing his undergraduate degree, Geoff decided not to follow the usual route of further education and was determined to try to secure employment as a professional musician. However, during the middle phase of the study he was unsuccessful in doing so and had to find alternative employment in order to support himself financially. He worked as an office administrator, which left him little time to practise, and Geoff became increasingly frustrated with his work and the decline of his playing ability. By the final interview Geoff had decided to reinitiate his search for a career as a professional musician and through a chance meeting with an old friend he began to earn his living by performing.

At the end of the study Geoff was earning a living as a professional musician, by teaching and performing.

Helen

At the beginning of the study Helen was a third year singer at the music college. She started her musical life as a violinist and pianist and described becoming a singer ‘by accident’. She spent much of her childhood performing in musicals and dancing and for a while considered becoming a dancer. A knee injury prevented her from becoming a professional dancer and so she decided to concentrate on her voice. She explained that her love of music was her main motivation to study music. Her parents were supportive and although they were initially uncertain about her becoming a professional musician, they were excited by her vocal development and went to watch her perform whenever they could.

Helen described her experiences at the music college positively, acknowledging the support and encouragement of her teacher. She experienced success in competitions which gave her increased confidence in her abilities and motivated her to attempt more challenging material. Helen was keen to achieve her potential whenever she had the opportunity and was excited by how her voice would progress in the future. Music was central to Helen’s self-perceptions and she explained that the powerful impact of music on her was often frightening. Helen used music as a release from her personal life but also tried to ensure she was involved in non-musical activities in order to relax.

Helen intended to become a professional singer and at the end of the study was studying as a postgraduate at the music college and beginning to secure professional work.

Olga

At the beginning of the study Olga was a fourth year singer at the music college. Olga was originally a flautist but felt that it was a barrier that prevented her from communicating her musical intentions effectively and she felt that singing was more suitable. Olga's parents were not musical and she enjoyed the fact that music was her secret language that they did not understand. Her parents were not supportive of her decision to train as a musician which motivated Olga further and throughout the study she described her desire to receive their reassurance and confirmation of her career choice.

Olga's experiences during the study fluctuated between positive and negative. She felt that she was not a priority for her vocal teacher and consequently Olga had little respect for her. She did not consider her teacher to be very helpful and felt that she would progress faster on her own. Whilst she was at the music college Olga seemed to doubt her ability and status as a singer and was concerned that her voice was not the same as her peers. However, as the study progressed Olga realised that the unique qualities of her voice were special and would enable her to find her own performance style. Her final recital represented a shift in how the college perceived her abilities and she described how her teacher's attitude transformed from negative to positive after her performance. Olga perceived this change as 'too little, too late' and was determined to leave the music college and pursue further education elsewhere.

Olga studied a specialist Performance Arts course in London for the year immediately following her graduation and whilst she found it challenging, her response to the experience was positive and her confidence seemed to increase. She then progressed to a different music college to study a Masters degree and again her experiences were positive. She felt as if she was a respected musician which enhanced her motivation to become a professional performer. At the end of the study Olga was completing her Masters training and still intending to pursue a professional career as a singer.

Charlie

At the beginning of the study Charlie was a third year singer at the music college. Before starting his undergraduate degree Charlie worked for two years in a music shop whilst he waited for his voice to mature, and in that time was encouraged by his teacher to perform with prestigious choirs and in a variety of concerts, competitions and recordings. Charlie identified his teacher as a central influence in his development: he admired and respected her and he attributed much of his success to her teaching. He considered himself to have 'always been a singer' and his motivation to study music was the enjoyment and challenge that it offered.

Charlie's experiences during the study fluctuated between positive and negative. He felt increasingly frustrated by his teacher at the music college because he did not consider their relationship to be a positive one. He felt that his teacher did not understand his requirements as a singer and consequently he felt demoralised and his self-confidence declined. However, events such as understudying the lead role in the college operas helped to confirm his abilities as a performer and he tried to maintain a positive outlook. Charlie described music as his expressive outlet and appeared to rely on it as a source of comfort and security – he felt that he could depend on music when he was experiencing personal difficulties. He attempted to strike a balance between his musical participation and non-musical activities as a way to relax and prevent music from becoming all-consuming.

After finishing his undergraduate degree Charlie felt as if he needed further training before attempting to penetrate the profession, but still intended to become a professional musician.

James

James was a third year violinist at the music college when the study commenced. He originally started to learn the violin because his siblings also played and was motivated by his love of music and success in concerts and competitions. His parents were supportive but never placed too much pressure on him: his parents took him for an audition at the Menuhin School of Music without telling him what it was for, and when he was offered a place they asked him if he wanted to go. When he said 'no' they did not force him to do so; they respected his decision.

James described his teacher at the music college to be a significant influence – he perceived him as supportive and encouraging and always found his lessons productive and inspiring. This was not always the case, however. When James first started his undergraduate degree his teacher had a negative impact on his progress and he found that he was very anxious about performance because he lacked confidence. His new teacher helped James to restore his self-confidence. James reported many performance opportunities and competitions and seemed to have a clear awareness of his strengths and weaknesses as a performer. Music was important to his happiness and sense of well-being and he felt that his daily musical experiences determined his state of mind, although he recognised the importance of maintaining a balanced lifestyle, emphasising non-musical hobbies and part-time work.

At the beginning of the study James intended to study in America as a postgraduate, but during the middle phase of the study he began to doubt his abilities as a musician and questioned whether or not he wanted to become a professional musician. James felt that he needed more time to consider his options and because his first year experiences were so negative he was given the opportunity to study at the Music College as a postgraduate. However, at the end of the study James was approaching the end of his postgraduate course at the Music College and intended to pursue his ambitions of studying in America and becoming a professional musician.