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**Lives and careers in  
music: a social  
identity perspective  
on brass music-  
making**

Submitted for the degree of PhD

by

**Kate Ann Gee**

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Department of Psychology

*Volume One*

## **With thanks**

Thanks must go in equal measure to my supervisors, family and friends who have shown a great deal of patience, wisdom and love.

To Chris and Stephanie who have excelled in their mentorship, patiently guiding me along the path to becoming a proficient researcher.

To Mum and Dad for their love, financial support, and motivational renditions of Leroy Anderson's Typewriter Song.

To Matt who revealed that a trombone-playing monkey inspired his musical career: he is an inspiration to me, and made much of this work possible.

To my understanding and supportive friends who have shared their homes, their wine and their editing skills.

## **Dedication**

In memory of Nic Branston, 1982-2008:

A true musician in all senses of the word

## **Lives and careers in music: a social identity perspective on brass music-making.**

This thesis presents a qualitative investigation of brass musicians' identities. It explores the lives and careers of 40 elite musicians through narrative interviews, and of 572 amateurs, semi-professionals and professionals in an online survey. Combining theories from social psychology and music psychology (*social identity theory* (Tajfel, 1979) and *musical identity* (MacDonald, 2002)) enables the musician to be considered as a social category, and from this to develop a contemporary and novel investigation into musicians' identities.

Literature reviews and empirical data develop arguments on three current musical debates concerning the changing nature of musicians' identities:

- the relationships between instrument choice and identity
- the historical and current beliefs about gender and music-making
- the changing nature of higher education and developing a musical career

Previous research on instrument choice has focused on gender in children's decision-making processes. However, the present empirical work shows the importance of social worlds, particularly the home, and of role models within the home in developing a positive musical identity.

A socio-cultural / socio-historical approaches are used to further understand the changing perceptions and position of women in brass music-making. The empirical research examines the successes and barriers experienced by the few contemporary female brass musicians working in the UK.

Finally, the contemporary literature concerning the effects of musical training on becoming and being a musician is examined. The empirical research takes narratives from professional classical performers from across the lifespan, to explore the impact of training, performing, and developing a career on their identities.

The thesis concludes with an evaluation of the application of social identity theory in this context, and its relevance for practitioners and researchers.

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# **Section One:** Researching musicians' identities

Chapter One –Overview

## Researching musicians' lives

### Introduction

A child picks up a trumpet at school because it 'looks easy: it's only got three buttons'; a graphic designer finds the most demanding thing about music to be 'the nerves involved in performing and my embouchure problems'; a surgeon has difficulty 'finding time to practise,' but 'having a good laugh with people' keeps him playing; an Argentinean trumpeter talks of 'watching Latin bands in my father's night club as a child', and of a desire to work in music full time but notes that, '...my other career pays far more than I could aspire to as a musician in my local market'; a professional horn player 'plays fabulous music with fantastic musicians and perhaps has the perfect job.' Yet touring, working long erratic hours, and the fragility of life as a musician is,

'frightening.... you're never really that secure, and I'm not necessarily just talking financially - at any stage you could experience an injury that may jeopardise your playing career, or it could even be a criticism that psychologically undermines what you are doing - once your confidence is gone, it's tough to return to your former glorious self. (os ab hn) (See Appendix A for an explanation of participant identifiers)

These are just a few of the experiences discussed by participants in this study, and offer a small insight into the value placed on music and music-making throughout their lives. It is clear, whether it be the child's reasoning for taking up an instrument, or the dichotomies associated with becoming a professional musician, that music-making and ensemble participation are significant parts of musical life and are inextricably bound to an individual's self-concept.

Regardless of whether music is a leisure pursuit or a living, it is a participatory, communal activity encompassing all manner of social groups. Social psychology sees these groups throughout much of our everyday existence: 'we work in groups, we socialize in groups, we play in groups, and we represent our views and attitudes through groups.' (Hogg & Vaughn, 2005: 276). Despite some music research investigating the effect of single social groups and categories on musical behaviour, it fails to see these

groups from a broad social psychological perspective. Few have seen ‘being a musician’ as a social category, or explored the influence of an array of social groups on this identity and the career practices of musicians. (See the start of the appendices for a glossary of technical terms and a list of acronyms used in this work.) Even less research employs group-based social psychological theories to understand identities developed within music-making, and yet social identity theories can,

‘address the structure and function of the socially constructed self...as a dynamic construct that mediates the relationship between social structure or society and individual social behaviour.’ (Hogg et al., 1995: 262)

Identity and vocation are intimately connected, but neither element is static when considered over the lifespan. This research investigates ‘being a musician’ as a social category, whilst examining how other categories and groups affect the identity of brass musicians. Social psychology suggests that other social categories influence the development of a musician’s identity, such as gender, race or social class. However, there are many music specific groups that could shape a musician’s identity, such as the ensemble that they work with. This study builds on increasing academic interest in understanding musical identities (MacDonald et al., 2002; MacDonald, 2009). It examines and applies social psychological theories to the social groups and categories involved in music-making. New commentary is created on the relationship between making music and the development of a musician’s identity.

## **Aims**

- To assess the effectiveness of social identity theory when applied to musical identities, within the interdisciplinary field of music psychology.
- To determine the outcomes of applying social identity theory to musical identities among brass musicians.

## **Objectives**

- To carry out a literature review of the concept of identity within both the music psychology and social psychology fields.
- To explore the methodologies commonly used for examining identity within music psychology and social psychology.
- To identify and assess the importance of early influences on developing musical identity when it is considered as a social category.
- To examine changes in social and cultural contextual factors influencing musical identity over time and across the lifespan.



## **Introduction to the conceptual frameworks**

Music psychology is multidisciplinary, enabling an integrative many-pronged approach to be taken in investigating the lives, identities and careers of musicians. Three identity-related conceptual frameworks are employed, including: music psychology's recent development of the concept of musical identity; social psychology's long-standing investigations into social identity, with the social identity approach; and the vocational literature concept of the life-career rainbow. These are combined to offer direction and constraints for the research questions, methods and analysis.

### **Social identity approach**

Social Identity Approach (SIA) is a social psychological meta-theory, based on Tajfel's social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Turner's self-categorisation theory (SCT) (Turner et al., 1987), as well as a number of smaller theories relating to the development of social identities through group membership (Hogg et al., 2004). SIA's premise is to understand the role of group memberships in developing and expressing identities, including,

- Understanding how groups shape an individual's social identities
- How a group develops its own identity
- How relationships between groups affect individual and group identities.

SIA has radically changed social psychological theories with regard to group behaviour, group polarisation, cohesiveness, stereotyping and crowd / rioting behaviour (Hornsey, 2008). Relevant to this work are its suggestions that individuals have multiple social identities embedded in a fluid self-concept, and that the expression of one identity or another depends upon the situation or context. Self-concept and identity are used interchangeably within this work to refer to a general sense of self. The self-concept is a continuum of personal and social identities, so occasionally personal identity will dominate, and in other instances, a sense of 'us' or group identity is expressed.

Applied to music, SIA helps to formulate a new understanding of 'being a musician,' enabling questions such as, who or what the 'us' are in association with the processes of

becoming and being a musician. This group-based perspective enables broad research questions to be answered.

### **Musical identity**

Over the last decade, there has been a proliferation of music research into musical identities. Beginning with MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell (2002) musical identity (MI) emerged as a nebulous concept, enabling a wide collection of research into human identities within musical contexts, to be drawn together. However, there was a lack of a clear definition of MI, remedied by MacDonald (2009) with the suggestion that MI

‘play[s] a fundamental role in the development, negotiation and maintenance of our personal identities.’ (MacDonald et al., 2009)

This definition helps to clarify an emerging research field, and suggests a complex, fluid relationship between music and the expression of identity over time. However, the use of the term personal identity is problematic when considered from a social psychological perspective, as this precludes the part of the identity that is affected by social groups. Social psychology sees personal and social identities as central within the self-concept, and so this research tries to add depth to the idea of music affecting identity by examining how groups and group behaviour contribute to our sense of self as a musician. The relationship between music and identity is as complex as it is deep. *Therefore the challenge for this research is to further develop our understanding of how music-making affects our social identity as part of this broader musical identity.*

### **Life-career rainbow**

Music-making and identity are embedded within social and cultural contexts, and so it is important to include these contexts within the research to examine the applied nature of the relationships between music and the self. The final structure framing this work is therefore from the vocational literature: Super’s life-career rainbow. Super (1980) offers a visual framework for understanding change and development over the lifespan. A schematic of this model is reprinted in Appendix B.

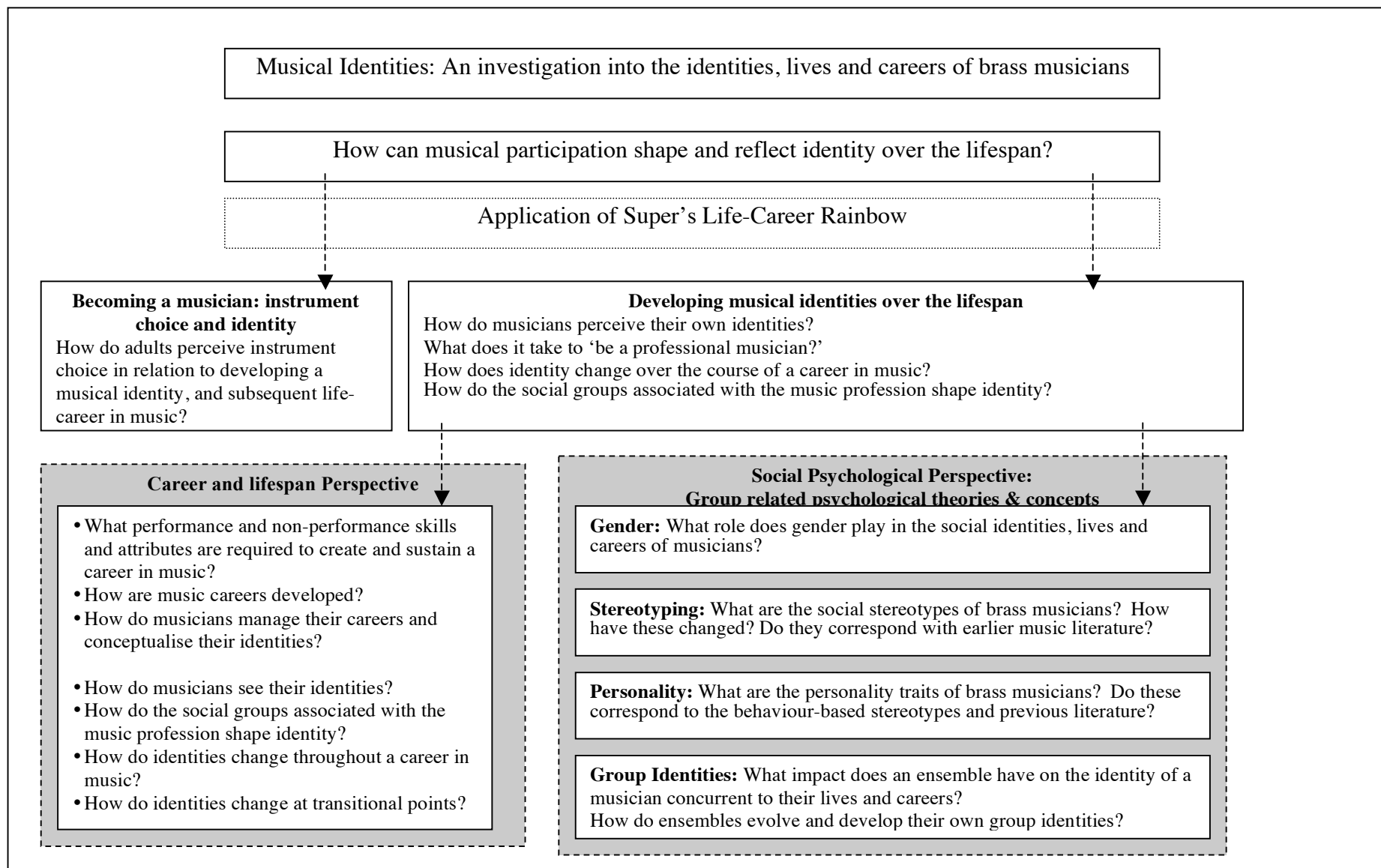
It sees 'the career' as a 'combination and sequence of roles played by a person during the course of a lifetime' (Super, 1982: 282). By covering the whole lifespan and including all of the various life roles, it is a suitable framework for understanding music and identity, because music is a lifelong pursuit incorporating many roles. The model includes the roles of 'leisureite' and 'worker,' which, in a musical context, could involve music-making as a hobby (for example, the accounts from brass band instrumentalists in research Phase Four), or becoming a professional musician (for example, the accounts of the orchestral and freelance performers in research Phase Three). As a stage theory, it breaks the adult lifespan into exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline phases. This also provides a framework for segregating and investigating musicians' accounts of their life histories.

Being a musician is dynamic; it continually changes and adapts over the length of the lifespan, and across roles within the lifespan. This framework offers a more holistic view than other lifespan work that has been employed in music psychology.  
(Manturzevska, 1990)

### **Development of the research process**

On consideration of the objectives, detailed questions were constructed that would focus on aspects of the self-concept, and emerged from the three theoretical areas: the lifespan, vocation and careers, social groups and social identities. The process of refining the research topics and questions is detailed in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** The development of research topics and questions in relation to the theoretical frameworks



## Empirical research phases

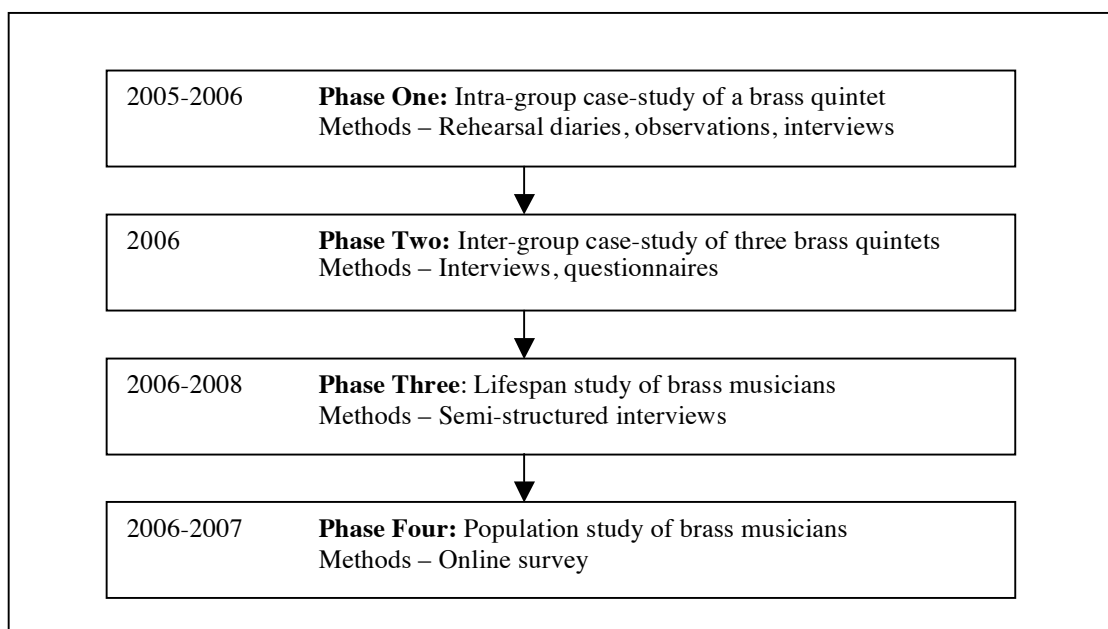
### Introduction to the research methodologies

The three conceptual frameworks provided the parameters for four empirical projects to investigate the social category ‘musician’ and the influence of social groups and categories within musicians’ lives and identities. A qualitative and interpretative methodological approach was adopted. In order to maintain validity, integrity and a sense that the work had meaning and a real-life application, the methodological approach had to maintain the social context.

### Introduction to the research projects

The four projects and their methods are illustrated in Figure 1a.

**Figure 1a:** Empirical research phases in real time



The four projects were carried out between 2005 and 2008. The scope of the research was extended over the four separate research phases, whilst the methods were narrowed and refined for closer analysis. The numbers and ‘types’ of participant were changed over the four projects.

Phases One and Two were *pilot studies* used to unmask the relationships between music, identity and vocation. They were small case-studies, investigating identity in

relation to inter- and intra-group functioning in brass chamber ensembles. These gave an opportunity to test themes and pilot research methods.

Phases Three and Four were larger, focussed studies concerned with musicians' accounts of their lives in music. Project three involved interviews with 41 training and professional brass musicians, with ages ranging from 18 – 65. Project four was an online survey with 572 brass musicians (professional, semi-professional, amateur and student), between 14 and 82 years old. These projects directly contributed to the experimental chapters within the body of this work.

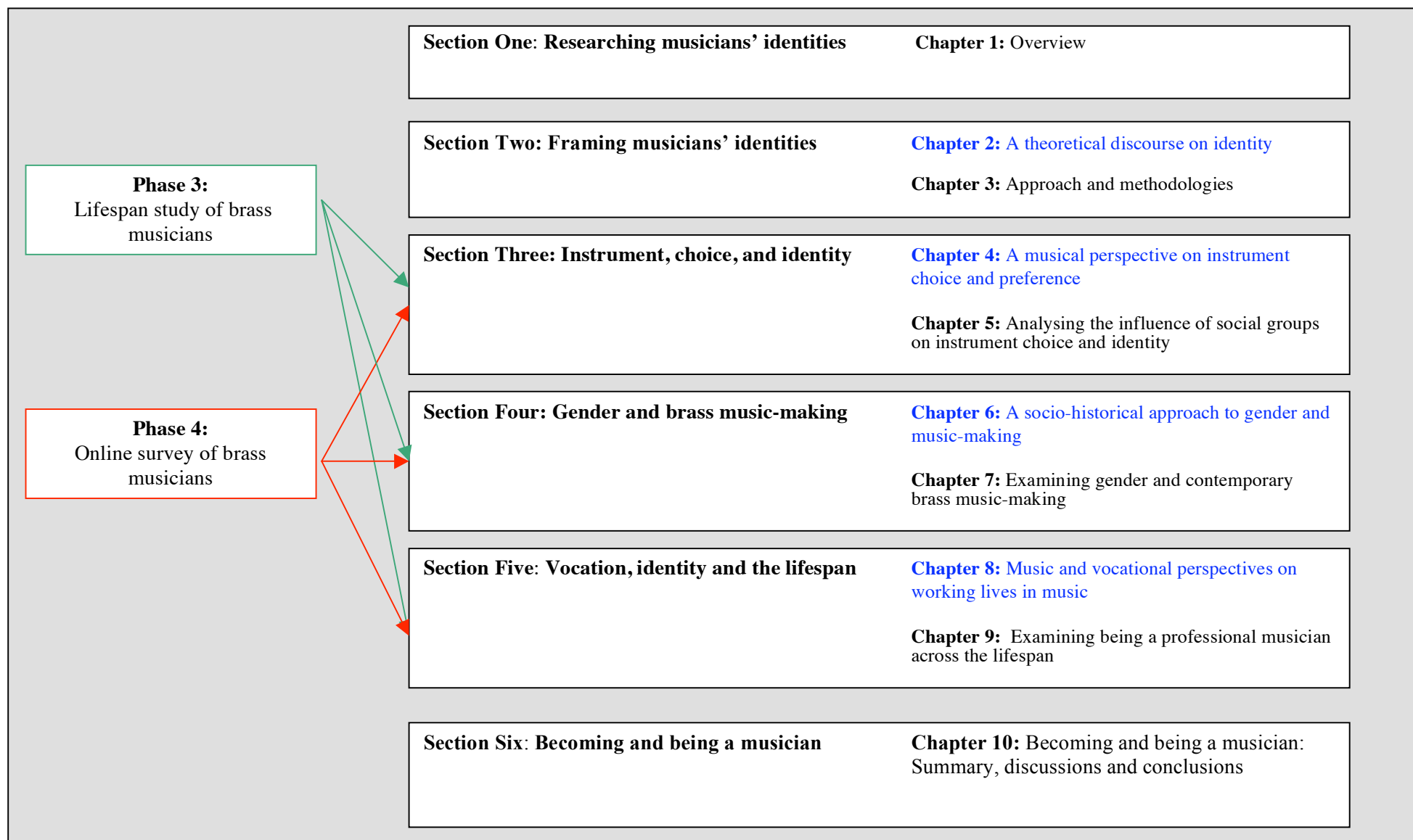
### **Thesis structure**

Identity-related discourse is built up across a set of seven interlinked chapters. These chapters do *not* correspond to the research phases (detailed Figure 1a) as might be expected in a traditional thesis.

Instead, the structure evolved to reflect the discursive and reflective nature of this work. It is divided into six sections: Section One and Six include the introduction and conclusion chapters. Sections Two, Three, Four and Five, develop an argument about musicians' identities by balancing literature critiques against empirical data and discussions.

Figure 1b (overleaf) indicates the relationships between research phases and the thesis sections and chapters, all of which are linked by social identity themes. The four literature reviews (Chapters Two, Four, Six and Eight) and four empirical chapters (Chapters Three, Five, Seven and Nine) were developed *in conjunction with and as a result of* the experimental work; in Figure 1b the literature reviews are highlighted in blue, sections built on experimental work remain in black, and the input from each experimental phase is highlighted in green or red.

**Figure 1b.** Illustrating the relationships between data collection phases and thesis structure



## **Summary**

This section has outlined the aims, objectives and research questions. It has introduced the qualitative and interpretative approach taken to the construction, analysis and writing of the work. It has also shown the broad nature of the research with frameworks drawn from across disciplines.

The general structure of the thesis has been established, as have the identity themes that link the chapters. These themes are reflected within the title of the work.

Following on from this general, structural introduction, the concept of social identity, the methods, and the subjects require further discussion encompassed within the next section.



# **Section Two:** Framing Musicians' Identities

Chapter Two – A theoretical discourse  
on identity

Chapter Three – Approach and  
methodologies

## **Section Two**

### **Framing musicians' identities**

#### **Section Structure and Rationale**

In order to provide a secure foundation to this project, this section reviews the literature on theoretical frameworks and theories that contribute to social and musical identities. From this, methodologies are derived which could be appropriate to investigate the concept of musical identity as a social category.

The methodologies are first tested by pilot studies and then through larger formal studies, with the quantitative analysis of the latter studies being provided and reviewed.

*Chapter Two* reviews the literature in music psychology and social psychology. It illustrates the research gap, and so suggests a new way of researching musical identities through the addition of social identity theory.

*Chapter Three* reviews and trials the various methodologies and by including the quantitative analysis of the Phase Three and Phase Four studies provides an assurance of suitable cohorts for qualitative study.

*This section is a key contributor to both of the aims of this project, and particularly to the first two objectives, namely the literature review and review of methodologies.*

## Chapter Two

## A theoretical discourse on identity

### Introduction

The theme of identity runs throughout this research, and so before outlining the aims of this chapter identity must be defined and its uses as a research topic examined. Identity is used interchangeably with the term self-concept throughout this work. This research views it as having two broad components: personal identity (PI) and social identity (SI). This is in accordance with social psychological definitions of identity, rather than cognitive, developmental or musical uses of the term identity.

The concept of social identity (SI) has a lineage within social psychology, and so has a domain-specific meaning: SI is developed through our fluctuating and multiple memberships of social groups and categories, and is a key part of the self-concept. SI is not just a social psychological term; it has been widely adopted as a research topic across the arts and social sciences. As described by Hammack, it has a ‘remarkable analytic utility for questions of significant concern to social scientists’ (Hammack, 2008: 223). SI provides a useful theoretical link between the self and the social group, regardless of discipline. Hogg et al. (1995) see it as,

‘address[ing] the structure and function of the socially constructed self...as a dynamic construct that mediates the relationship between social structure or society and individual social behaviour.’ (Hogg et al., 1995: 262)

SI is a cross-disciplinary, generic research term, which has numerous advantages as well as limitations. The term holds different meanings depending upon the history and language of its field of use. This poses difficulties for researchers, who may appear to be examining the same topic, but in practice have little shared knowledge or methodologies. Without shared knowledge, it is inevitable that there will be few shared outcomes for furthering identity research. Brewer (2001: 115) describes this as ‘conceptual anarchy’, stating that SI has been ‘invented and reinvented across the social science disciplines.’ However, SI becomes an appropriate topic (either as a specific or generic term) to examine within the arts-science interdisciplinary field of music

psychology. This research aims to avoid the conceptual anarchy by applying a social psychological understanding to SI within a music psychology context. This opens up opportunities to examine ‘being a musician’ as a social category, one that strongly influences an individual’s SI. Within this category, however, are numerous groups and sub-categories that could also contribute to the SI and the self-concept of a musician. These could be groups and categories already recognised in SI research, for example, the effect of families, friends or school peer networks on social identities in music-making. They could also be the ensembles or sectional memberships involved in a musician’s life; the behaviours and identities associated with playing a certain type of instrument, or even the negotiations between various social identities during a musical career.

Adopting a social identity approach within a musical context enables the many different levels of social identities involved in music-making to be explored. This approach provides a way to investigate the ‘real’ questions that have significant meaning in understanding lives and careers in music-making.

### **Chapter structure**

This chapter examines, connects and comments upon the theoretical frameworks, theories and methodologies that have shaped this research. It

- shows the position of this research within various academic disciplines
- examines relevant fields and frameworks, and illustrates influential theories
- details how these areas and theories can combine to support applied music psychology research
- examines possible methodologies and need for this type of research.

Throughout, strands of identity research are drawn together to illustrate a new path through the literature. The research combines a social psychological perspective with music psychology, applying a social identity framework (social psychology) to our understanding of musical identities (music psychology). By doing this, the processes of becoming and being a musician can be reconsidered.

## Influences on musical identity research

This research is based in the musical identities work of music psychology, but draws on identity research in social psychology to provide an alternative perspective to musical identities.

**Figure 2:** Connections between research fields

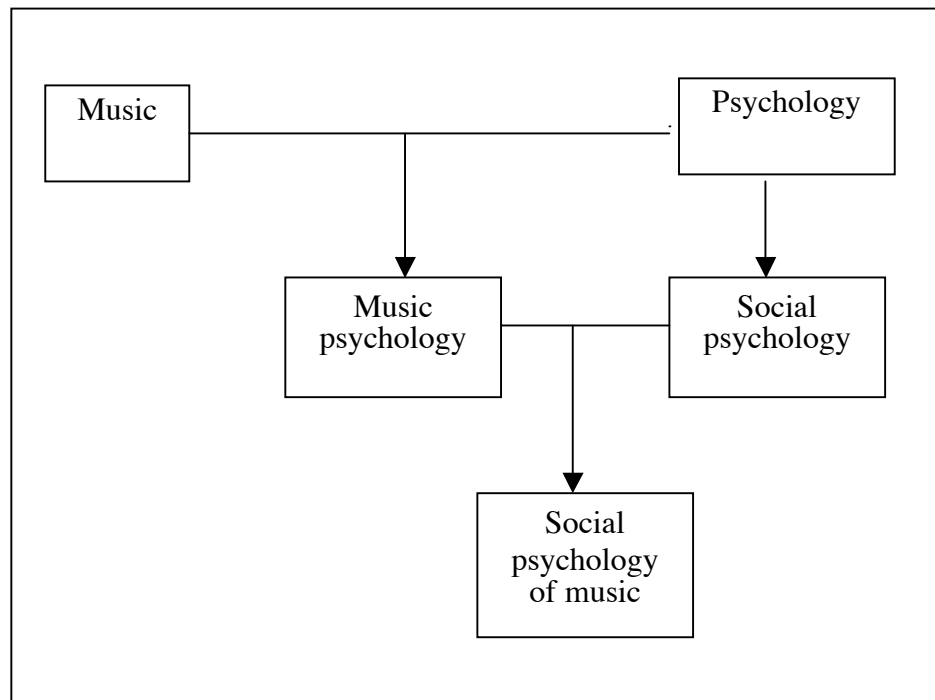


Figure 2 indicates the relationships between the research fields influencing this work. Each field also contains its own approaches and theories useful in examining musicians' identities. The psychology branch and then the music branch is explored here, with a mind to the applicability of psychological theories and frameworks to the general research questions.

## Social psychology and social identity: paradigms and approaches

This section examines the European and North American approaches, then the usefulness of the social identity approach (SIA) (Hogg et al., 2004) to explain relationships between the individual and social groups. In examining the development of SIA from social identity theory (SIT) and social-categorisation theory (SCT), comment is made on the common methodological approaches.

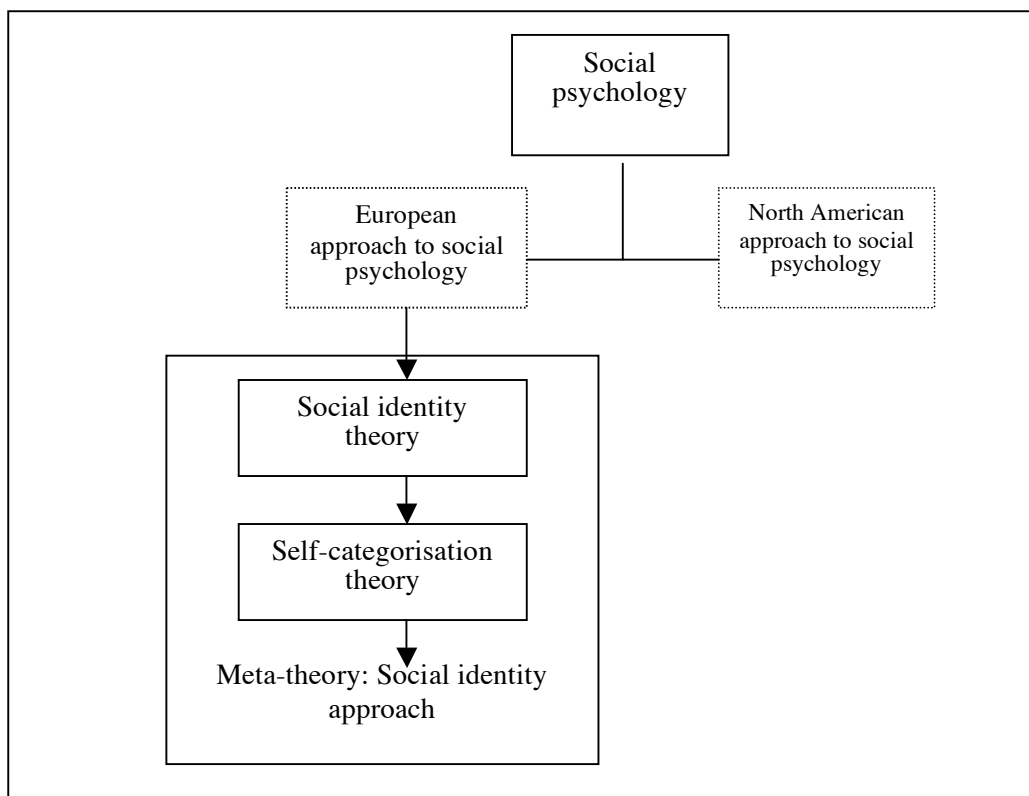
**Figure 2a:** Social psychological theories and frameworks

Figure.2a illustrates the two approaches to understanding the self within social psychology: the European approach and the North American approach. Differences between the two lie in their levels of explanation. The former adopts a collectivistic stance on understanding identity where individuals incorporate ‘groups’ into their identity, for example, incorporating the expected group behaviour into their actions. The latter looks towards individualistic explanations of social behaviour and identity.

### **The North American approach**

This approach dominated social psychology prior to and during the forty years after the second world war: an event that guided social psychology towards examining social phenomena such as prejudice and group conflict, social conformity and social obedience. It produced many ‘classic’ social psychological theories, and its position on the relationship between the group and the individual is encapsulated by Allport’s famous statement that,

‘There is no psychology of groups which is not essentially and entirely a psychology of individuals. Social psychology...is a part of the psychology of the individual.’

(Allport, 1924: 4) cited in (Hogg & Abrams, 1998: 6).

The North American position frequently examines large-scale social phenomena by seeking individualistic explanations, for example, explaining prejudice through an individual's personality profile. Yet this poses difficulties. Personality traits are fixed entities, but when, say, racial tension is viewed from a group perspective, prejudices fluctuate over time and between different social groups. This stance saw 'the group' as entirely separate from the individual, with a somewhat negative power to subsume an individual's characteristics.

'There is a long tradition in... social psychology that construes group influence as a source of irrationality, pathology and primitivism. Think of the idea of 'deindividuation' that to be 'submerged' in the group is to lose one's conscious rational self and become prey to the dark instincts of the collective unconscious.' (Turner, 2004)

### **The European approach**

European ideology came about during the 1970s, increasing in strength and focus with the development of Tajfel's (1982) social identity theory (SIT): a collectivistic examination of the relationships between individuals and social groups. Tajfel aimed to develop a non-reductionist social psychology to explain social relationships without relying on sociological or individualistic explanations. His work saw the group and group memberships at an opposite end of the spectrum to the North American research. SIT explains an individual's identity and relationship to groups in the following passage:

'Belonging to a group (of whatever size and distribution) is largely a *psychological* state which is quite distinct from that of being a unique and separate individual, and that it confers *social identity*, or a shared/collective representation of who one is and how one should behave. It follows that the psychological processes associated with social identity are also responsible for generating distinctly 'groupy' behaviours, such as solidarity within one's group, conformity to group norms and discrimination against outgroups.' (Hogg & Abrams, 1998: 3)

The European approach gave the group a central role in group behaviour and in an individual's identity. SI allowed part of an individual's self-concept to be described at the group level, by distinct 'groupy' behaviours. Understanding that identities are in part driven by memberships of social groups, explains a host of individual and group behaviours, and the strength and value SI then become apparent in certain situations. For example, take three individuals involved in combat situations: a political activist, a member of the military and a suicide bomber. These three people are members of three distinct social groups, and although each has a personal identity (PI) and a social identity (SI), when given a specific social context the strength of their SI's become much more important and powerful than their PI's. They may respectively risk hardship, injury or death, because of the strength of their SI's. Social Identity Theory, SCT and SIA are therefore worthy of more detailed discussion.

## **Social psychology: the development of social identity theories**

### **Social identity theory**

Through SIT evolved the following definition of social identity:

'Part of the individual's self-concept, which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' (Tajfel, 1982: 251).

The importance of groups, group processes, group membership and inter-group behaviour within the construct of the self is central to Tajfel's work. These are therefore central to understanding how musicians' social identities are formed. Tajfel outlined four elements of knowledge necessary to develop SI:

- a knowledge of group membership
- a knowledge of the attributes that are required to be a group member
- a level of emotional significance for the individual
- a knowledge of the status of this group in relation to other groups.



SIT asserts that people have both personal and social identities: the former being the unique, idiosyncratic qualities of the self-concept, the latter being identity driven by the membership of social groups. Identity is not a fixed concept, but something that fluctuates along a personal - social identity spectrum.

When defining ourselves in relation to SI, some of the social group characteristics are included: rather than seeing oneself as a unique individual, definitions might include larger groups and social categories for example, being a woman, a Christian, a doctor, a mother. Each of these SI's may move in and out of salience, depending upon the social context, and can be activated singly or collectively.

Thus SI can be applied to understanding 'being a musician' and 'becoming a musician.'

What social groups contribute to the development of these broad social identities?

Does, for example, the genre, ensemble, section or instrument affect being and becoming a musician? Research shows that the social setting will affect the salience of these identities: in one context musicians will perceive themselves as more 'musician-like', perhaps exhibiting more 'musiciany' behaviours than in other contexts. Being a musician is the social category at the centre of this research, however, as the empirical sections show, there are many other social categories and groups that contribute to this social identity.

### **Methodologies**

Early social group research, such as Sherifs' Robbers Cave Experiment (Sherif et al., 1954 / 1961), was conducted in the field, using large, newly formed groups. The natural, context-based setting helped in studying the development of groups, group behaviour and conflict, but the process was costly and difficult to replicate. Cheaper and more replicable ways needed to be developed.

Tajfel (1970) developed an experimental approach called the *minimal group paradigm* which provided the experimental basis for the development of SIT. This paradigm sought to locate the minimal conditions that would lead group members to discriminate in favour of their in-group and against the out-group. The paradigm removed as many of the conditions and attributes associated with a group as possible, (the social context, history, roles, cohesiveness of the group etc.) This had two outcomes:

1) *Theoretical*: the process of self-categorising as a group member, even with a minimal sense of ‘belonging’ to a group, gives meaning to behaviour. This creates a positive, valued social identity. People want their in-group (‘us’) to be positively distinguished from the out-group (‘them’). This enhances self-esteem and motivation.

2) *Procedural*: the methods employed by the minimal group paradigm placed this research, and much of the following SI work, within an experimental paradigm.

SIT may have sought to advance non-reductionist explanations for social phenomena, but it achieved this by adopting the experimental methods of the North American approach to social psychology. This has been described as,

‘The minimal group paradigm was a revelation because it allowed people to examine inter-group behaviour in a highly controlled way.... What followed was a plethora of lab-based research using participants in either minimal or ad hoc groups’ (Hornsey, 2008: 210).

### **Social psychology in crisis**

Concurrent with the development of Tajfel’s SIT and minimal group paradigm, others saw social psychology as being in ‘crisis’. Research was no longer about social behaviour, but increasingly micro-orientated: social psychology was felt to have reached a point where explanations, questions and methods were too reductionist.

‘The crisis had become most acute in the social sciences and so we must free ourselves from the chains which this kind of thinking about people and society imposed. Instead of men...being seen primarily as ‘subjects’ whose behaviour was *caused* by two or three measurable variables we...should be seen and studied as *agents*...with unique (but problematic) potentialities, hopes, liabilities, interests. Further, we enrich ourselves and our communities by giving ‘accounts’ – stories about our lives and our imaginings.’ (Hodgkin, 1992: 101)

Hodgkin's comments are made in discussing the life and work of Rom Harre, a philosopher, fundamental in the evolution of so-called 'crisis literature' in the 1970s. Social psychology's predicament was captured by Harre's three criticisms of the field: first that individualism was the dominant explanation in social psychology, second that methodological approaches were narrowing, and third that broad social structures and theory were being lost from research (Hepburn, 2003). Laboratory methods and hypothesis testing were common ways to explore social phenomena, but these regularly ignored the cultural and historical contexts of human behaviour. Consequently, new analytical methods began to evolve, including discursive, social constructionist and humanist approaches. Their focus was on subjectivity as a meaningful, historically constructed understanding of the self. Importance was placed on the conversations, shared meanings and the statuses within people's lives, and what these could say about human experience, behaviour and identity. This is of vital importance, supporting the type of empirical research carried out in this thesis.

Although SIT did not directly adopt the non-experimental approaches or methods promoted in the crisis literature, it did bring a new ideological explanation to social psychological phenomena. SIT and its developments helped to re-introduce 'the social' back into social psychology, at least at a theoretical level. It helped to reconsider the value of groups, group processes and group behaviour, and the individual's role within groups. The crisis literature saw social psychology as abstracting and depersonalising social behaviour from its context. In answer to these critics, SIT research improved the internal validity of its experimental research by increasing the use of meaningful, real-world social categories or groups (Hogg & Hains, 1996).

### **Extensions to Social Identity Theory: Social Categorisation Theory**

Social Categorisation Theory (SCT, Figure 2a) (Turner et al., 1987) refined the social cognitive elements of SIT (for example, motivation and self-esteem), extending the theory to move beyond inter-group processes to intra-group processes. Rather than considering groups as small phenomena, SCT introduced large social categories to the research. Social Categorisation Theory showed how social contexts could trigger a person to think, feel and act by employing either their PI or SI. It enhanced thinking about how SI's are managed: if the boundaries between social groups and categories are seen as permeable, then social mobility is possible across groups. If, however,

boundaries are impermeable then individuals are more likely to display inter-group behaviours.

This can be better understood by examining women in organisations, a theme that is discussed in detail in Chapter Five. If a woman perceives group boundaries between men and women as impermeable, she cannot improve her status by moving between social groups within an organisational hierarchy. Instead she might remain where she is but create a positive SI for 'women' in the social group she belongs to. This is exemplified by the numbers of women who find it difficult to move into professional musical performance as a career, instead creating positive social identities for themselves as music teachers and educators. If, however, a woman sees group boundaries as permeable then she might disassociate from her gender-based SI to advance herself.

SCT helped to refine elements of SI and behaviour, but maintained the research along a cognitive pathway. This in turn encouraged the maintenance of experimental paradigms, rather than following the crisis literature, and so further depersonalising the context of real-world social behaviour. According to Hornsey,

'There was a general feeling that there was a mismatch between the big claims made by the theory and the methods being used to test them, as though high-level intergroup conflict could be explained one minimal group at a time.' (Hornsey, 2008: 208)

### **Extensions to Social Identity Theory: Social Identity Approach**

Within the last ten years SIT combined with SCT and other social psychological theories to form the SIA meta-theory (figure 2a). Much of the current psychological SI research continues to operate on social cognitive variables, remaining in an experimental paradigm (Hogg & Hains, 1996; Howard, 2000). However, the impact of SI and its theoretical developments cannot be underestimated, both within and beyond the boundaries of psychology, Hornsey (2008) describes it as,

'An antidote to the overly individualistic and reductionist tendencies of existing theories of intergroup relations...the theories began to attract broader international attention in the 1980s and 1990s. The social identity approach is now one of the most influential theories of group processes and intergroup relations worldwide, having redefined how

we think about numerous group-mediated phenomena and having extended its reach well outside the confines of social psychology.’ (Hornsey, 2008: 208)

### **Social identity: advances and applications**

So far this review has shown that as SI research expanded, it was extended, consolidated and strengthened as a theory, eventually evolving into the SIA meta-theory (Abrams & Hogg, 2004). Hornsey’s quote suggests the meta-theory has almost recreated SI, as it is now applied within and beyond the boundaries of psychology. The reason for this is that it is a useful, explanatory construct between the individual, the group and ideological levels of explanation and analysis.

Despite SI’s experimental, depersonalised and lab-based history, SIA is beginning to be employed within a range of applied settings. Organisational psychology has adopted SIA to explain many of the emotions, actions and behavioural outcomes in the corporate world. SIA could be used to understand the impact of company mergers; effective or ineffective communications between colleagues, teams, or across organisations; or even to examine behaviour leading to managing and resolving striking (Hasllam, 2004).

Leadership has become an interesting topic in this area, as it is traditionally examined through individualistic explanations, for example a strong leader is seen as having certain personality characteristics required to be a leader. Yet personality traits have also been seen as poor quality indicators of leadership abilities (Albright & Forziati, 1995). A group-level SIA to leadership might provide different explanations of behaviour: this approach argues that it is not the individual attributes of a leader that make them successful, but the relationships within and between groups, and the group forces that give the leader their ability to lead (Hogg, 2001; Postmes & Jetten, 2006).

SIA has also been successfully applied to health care and health intervention settings, for example the differences in the experiences of pain between men and women (Bernades et al., 2008). Other theories, such as the theory of planned behaviour, have joined forces with SIA to explore the social aspects of smoking behaviours in young people (Fry et al., 2008). This paper is examined a little further as a template of possibilities of applying SIA to music.

There is a wealth of research into smoking behaviours, both from individualistic and collectivistic stances: Fry *et al.* (2008) use SIA to provide a different perspective on

why, despite the consequences, many young adults perceive status and power is indicated through smoking. They cite Stewart-Knox *et al.* (2005) as suggesting,

‘Young smokers suggest they are striving to conform to the normative behaviours of peer groups with which they identify. Smoking therefore provides the means by which similarity *within groups*, and differences *between groups* might be managed in order to establish a collective social identity’ (Fry *et al.*, 2008: 764).

The collective SI of smokers elevates them to higher social status, and a position of acceptance amongst their peers. They can define themselves by positive social comparisons with their higher-status smoking peer in-groups, against the lower status, non-smoking social out-groups.

Similar to the work here, the authors adopt phenomenological methodologies to examine the ‘lived experience’ and ‘meanings’ attached to smoking behaviours. They defend their methodological choices by saying that the theory-driven nature of much current smoking research may drive the research, but, also predetermine the categories and therefore the analysis and results concerning the causation of smoking behaviours. Their phenomenological approach could ‘explore the lived world of individuals and the meaning they ascribe to behaviour’ (Fry *et al.*, 2008: 765). By investigating the lived-world effective interventions maybe better targeted at young people.

### **Social identity and comparisons to other theories**

Social Identity Theory is not the only approach to social behaviour: the types of questions raised here have also been the subject of sociological research and, as will be seen in the next section, music research. There is a limited literature comparing the meanings attached to SI across disciplines, or comparing different SIT’s. Hogg, Terry and White (1995) looked to the SI literature of social psychology and compared it with the sociological approaches to SI from symbolic interactionists. Deaux (1996) compared SI across different research fields, showing comparisons between the European-based SI discussed here; SI as a sociological construct; and SI as defined in developmental psychology.

Comparisons have not always been beneficial, but some have counteracted the weaknesses they perceive in various theories by combining elements of them to produce

more effective approaches to SI. New models have been developed by looking to the cognitive and developmental models in psychology, to understand the multiple nature of SI, and how it may change over time (Amiot et al., 2007). Brewer (2001) developed their own classification of SI concepts by combining social psychological and sociological approaches. She developed a four-level concept to overcome single-discipline theories. The levels were:

- person-based SI: i.e. who I am as a musician? This may be integrated with other social identities (for example, mother, professional etc.)
- relational SI: i.e. identity derived from musician's social roles and relationships (for example, the teacher-pupil, colleague-colleague relationships etc.)
- group-based SI: i.e. the experiences of 'being a musician'. These are shared by others that make this a meaningful social category (for example, belonging to a type of ensemble, belonging to a body of other similar music students etc).
- collective SI: i.e. that the process and act of 'being a musician' helps to develop a collective identity; a shared social image which invokes values and ideas that can be attributed to musicians.

This taxonomy is used to enhance Tajfel's basic definition of social identity, which underpins the rest of this work.

### **Summary of social psychology section**

This research takes the social psychological premise underlying SI - namely that belonging to a social group of any size or type confers a SI upon a person. It uses Tajfel's early description of SI and Hogg and Abrams' definition (p.17) as reference points to structure the later chapters. SI is part of a person's overall self-concept. It is a representation of who a person is and how they should behave, that is shared with other members of the group. SI produces an idea of a prototypical group member and their 'groupy' behaviours, and so plays a part in social phenomena such as stereotyping and prejudice. In the case of music-making, SI could include: feeling a sense of camaraderie and shared aims with other members of an ensemble, conforming to the

accepted social norms of 'being a musician' or social norms particular to a genre or ensemble, emulating patterns of accepted social behaviours.

The development of the SIA meta-theory, and the uses of experimental paradigms and methodologies provide a sense of the historical and social context for this theoretical approach. Its usefulness as an applied approach, adaptable to fields other than social psychology, has been discussed. Seeing people as agents within their social contexts, and not as de-humanised tools to be examined within a laboratory setting, illustrated a new and parallel approach to understanding social behaviour.

This research aims to understand applied social identities by using the basic principles of SIT and SIA, in conjunction with phenomenological methods that retain reference to the social context. This follows the pattern illustrated in Fry's (2008) paper, where SIA and the Theory of Planned Behaviour were used as top-level explanatory tools to understand the identities of young smokers, but phenomenological methods were used to derive and analyse the data. In this way, an understanding of the self and social behaviour is retained within its social context, whilst enabling meaningful research questions to be asked.



## Music and music psychology: research paradigms and methodologies

This section discusses many of the possible influences of the psychology branch of Figure 2, on the music branch. This prepares the ground for the later empirical sections, which apply the founding principles of SIA to a musical context. Attention is first turned to one analytical approach suggested for use in social music psychology: Doise's meta-theoretical framework.

### Social music psychology: analytical approaches

North and Hargreaves (2008) have suggested Doise's meta-theoretical framework as a way to examine research within social music psychology (see Table 2).

**Table 2:** Doise's levels of analysis (as cited in North and Hargreaves 2008, p.8)

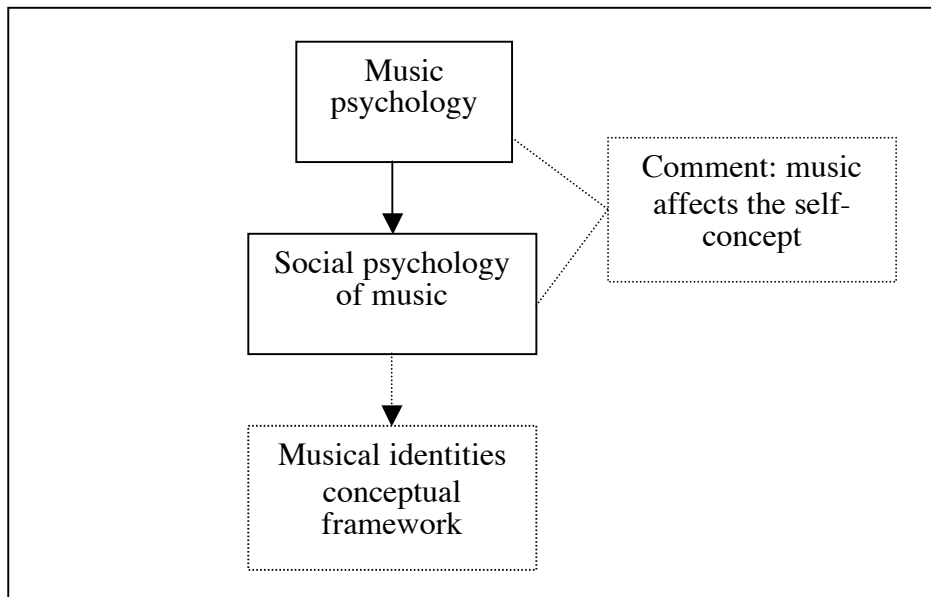
Level	Explanation
1. Intra-individual	Lowest level of analysis: cognitive, biological etc. e.g. personality correlates of musical stereotyping behaviour.
2. Inter-individual	Secondary level of analysis e.g. inter-group behaviour of members of a brass quintet.
3. Socio-positional	Tertiary level of analysis e.g. intra-group behaviour between a number of ensembles – brass quintets, orchestral performers vs. freelancers.
4. Ideological	Quaternary level of analysis e.g. cultural belief systems such as gendered cultural traditions and their impact upon women within the orchestral profession.

The four levels of explanation make intuitive sense for the study of social psychological questions. However, as the research examples show (right hand column), there are difficulties in meaningfully encapsulating broad social behaviour in this type of system. This research is topic-based around the theme of identity, but identity is too broad to be restrained at one level. Even when, as in this research, identity is restricted to examining social identities in music, there are many behavioural possibilities.

Consequently, a more detailed theoretical approach needs to be applied within social music psychology to understand musical identities and the types of research questions

being asked here. SIA helps to frame much of this research at Doise's levels Three and Four – the group based levels of explanation. Although only briefly examining Doise's explanatory theory of social psychology, it is necessary to take a closer look at how the music-related fields have developed to examine social psychological questions (see Figure 2b).

**Figure 2b:** Influences on the conceptual field of musical identities



### **Music and social behaviour**

The previous half of this chapter showed a tendency within social psychology to examine social questions with reductionist approaches. This included decontextualising the social behaviour within a controlled setting, and looking at increasingly smaller nuances of behaviour. This is partially reflected in music psychology's approaches to examining musical behaviours: until recently, it was heavily influenced by the positivistic approaches and experimental paradigms of psychology, as reflected in the rapid, early growth of cognitive and developmental subfields of music psychology.

During the mid 1990s the research approach changed. As had occurred in mainstream psychology, music psychology saw that research problems could be answered that went beyond the constraints of an experimental paradigm. As a multidisciplinary phenomenon, music could present a range of opportunities for questions, methodological approaches and methods.

‘The musical phenomenon covers such a wide range of issues, bringing in disciplines as far apart as anthropology and neuroscience. To one researcher music is a reductionist, cognitive process and to another music is a social manifestation, typifying a cultural pattern.’ (Persson & Robson, 1995: 40).

The opportunities for more naturalistic, context-driven, observational research in music may have come about through the recent, rapid transformation in the way society consumes and considers musical culture. However, as with the ‘crisis’ developments in social psychology, this change may have been a natural product of the research process itself. North and Hargreaves (2008) have suggested that examining ‘the social’ in music psychology marks a clear paradigm shift in the field. However, recent literature discussing Harre’s contribution to social psychology asks the following:

‘[But] has the revolution in the social sciences happened? The answer must be ‘no’, it is still dragging on, and is likely to take a long time yet. One reason must be that the ‘paradigm shift’, which Harre and others foresaw in the seventies, is far more comprehensive than could have been apparent.’ (Hodgkin, 1992: 101)

It is fair then that critics (Konecni, 2009: 237) have suggested that the claims of Hargreaves and North, of a paradigm shift, are untenable given the current state of investigations into social contexts and social behaviour associated with music.

It is important to note at this point that other disciplines within music were examining social behaviours and music-making: the arts-influenced sociologist De Nora (2000) was beginning to question the uses of music as a tool in everyday life and experience. In terms of brass music-making, ethnographers such as Finnegan (2007) and Jones (2007) have both discussed questions around music and social behaviour. The work of Finnegan and Jones was associated with the amateur pursuits of brass banding. Music psychology is not alone in asking behavioural questions about music-making, but it needs to begin to ask questions from a more scientific basis. To this end there are increasing amounts of research into the social aspects of music-making and music listening, which have begun to develop into an independent psychological research field, known as social music psychology (see Figure 2b). This field, and music psychology, have both contributed to examining how identities are shaped within music. Figure 2b illustrates this as the development of the ‘conceptual framework of

musical identities.’ This is not a field of research in the way that social music psychology is becoming one, but an aggregation of research, which considers the multiple relationships between two broad concepts: identity and music.

The concept of musical identities is explored as a term in its own right and as an area of research that in part belongs to social music psychology. This section questions what musical identities are and examines how they could be explored in more detail by applying the scientific theories of social psychology (outlined in the first half of this chapter).

### **Musical identities**

The multidisciplinary nature of music psychology and its relative infancy make it a harbour for outward-looking, progressive research. It is an area that is open to the adoption of other frameworks and theories, and so is suitable for SI research.

This work is situated within the musical identities literature of music psychology, but it is strongly influenced by the literature on social identities. There is limited research within the musical identities literature that adopts a social identity approach; as such, this combination of fields and theories adds a new dimension to understanding musical identities.

### ***Defining musical identity***

That there exists a relationship, however complex, between our identity and music is fundamental to this research. That music somehow shapes our identity is a simple idea, but one that has received growing attention in music psychology.

Musical identity (MI) research encompasses any work that investigates the relationship between identity and music. This is regardless of whether the involvement with music is active or passive, or the social context of the music. The breadth of research in this area has led to there being little doubt that music, ‘plays a fundamental role in the development, negotiation and maintenance of our personal identities’ (MacDonald et al., 2009). To date, this is the best definition of MI.

The difficulty with the term musical identity, much like the difficulties with the term social identity, is its generic nature and broad application. MI covers any manner of

relationships between music and identity, as evidenced by the range of research in the first work in the area (MacDonald et al., 2002).

### ***A conceptual field***

MI was developed in 2002 as an umbrella phrase, drawing together a body of music research that related aspects of human identity to some aspect of musical behaviour (MacDonald et al., 2002). Its adoption proved a useful tool for illustrating the deficits of music research at the time and future opportunities for research. Examining identity within music research provides endless opportunities to examine the social contexts of music-making, and the impact that music has on the self-concept.

This early work provided the foundations for a research field in musical identities: a conceptual field that unites otherwise disparate music research. The concept of musical identity encourages and inspires research, widening the opportunities for understanding the relationships between the self and music. However, MI systematically fails to restrain research within clear, related and defined boundaries. Any research considering the relationship between music and the self is valid, which is exactly the same problem that has affected the concept of social identities. There is a need for increased clarity and sense of purpose within the MI literature. This could be achieved with tighter definitions of different types of musical identity, or by combining other identity theories with the concept of musical identity, as this research does.

### **Social identities research within music psychology**

SI has been presented as a specific social psychology concept, as well as being a generally applicable research theory across the social sciences. From a music perspective, the emerging area of MI research would be ideal for the adoption of SIT and SIA. Thus far, there has been little application of SIA within music research: much of what has occurred adopts the experimental paradigms associated with Tajfel's research and the more recent cognitive developments, rather than the phenomenological analytical methods in the most recent applications of SIT.

Applications of SIT in music have examined music listening and inter- / intra-group relationships (Tarrant, 2002). Music listening behaviour can also be easily mapped onto the early SIT research, because musical tastes are positive indicators of one's self-

concept. They enable a sense of belonging to a social group or like-minded 'fans', and allow judgments to be made about others through their perceived tastes in music.

MI can therefore be the basis for inter-group comparisons. For example, individuals were more positive about others when they were described as fans of prestigious music over non-prestigious music (North & Hargreaves, 1999). This idea was extended as a measure of group categorisation, where pupils at a school were shown to believe that fellow students would like three prestigious styles of music more than students at a different school (Tarrant et al., 2001). Musical liking has been linked to self-esteem measures.

Hargreaves and North (2008: 116) have suggested that applying SIT can change our understanding of adolescents' fondness for 'problem music.' They see it as a 'positive way for teenagers to respond to the perceived threat of older...powerful out-groups' (adults), in addition to being a way to gain self-esteem by belonging to a musical subculture. Hargreaves and North's explanation felt speculative, and in need of further empirical examination and discussion.

Few academics have explicitly applied SIT in music research. Where they have, these have only investigated listening and preferences, often in adolescents. Nonetheless this research sets a precedent for applying SIA to musical behaviours.

## **Significance of the frameworks to the empirical research**

### ***Aggregated theoretical frameworks***

Given the aforementioned arguments, the two main theoretical frameworks can now be drawn together to show how the empirical research has developed, as illustrated in Figure 2c.

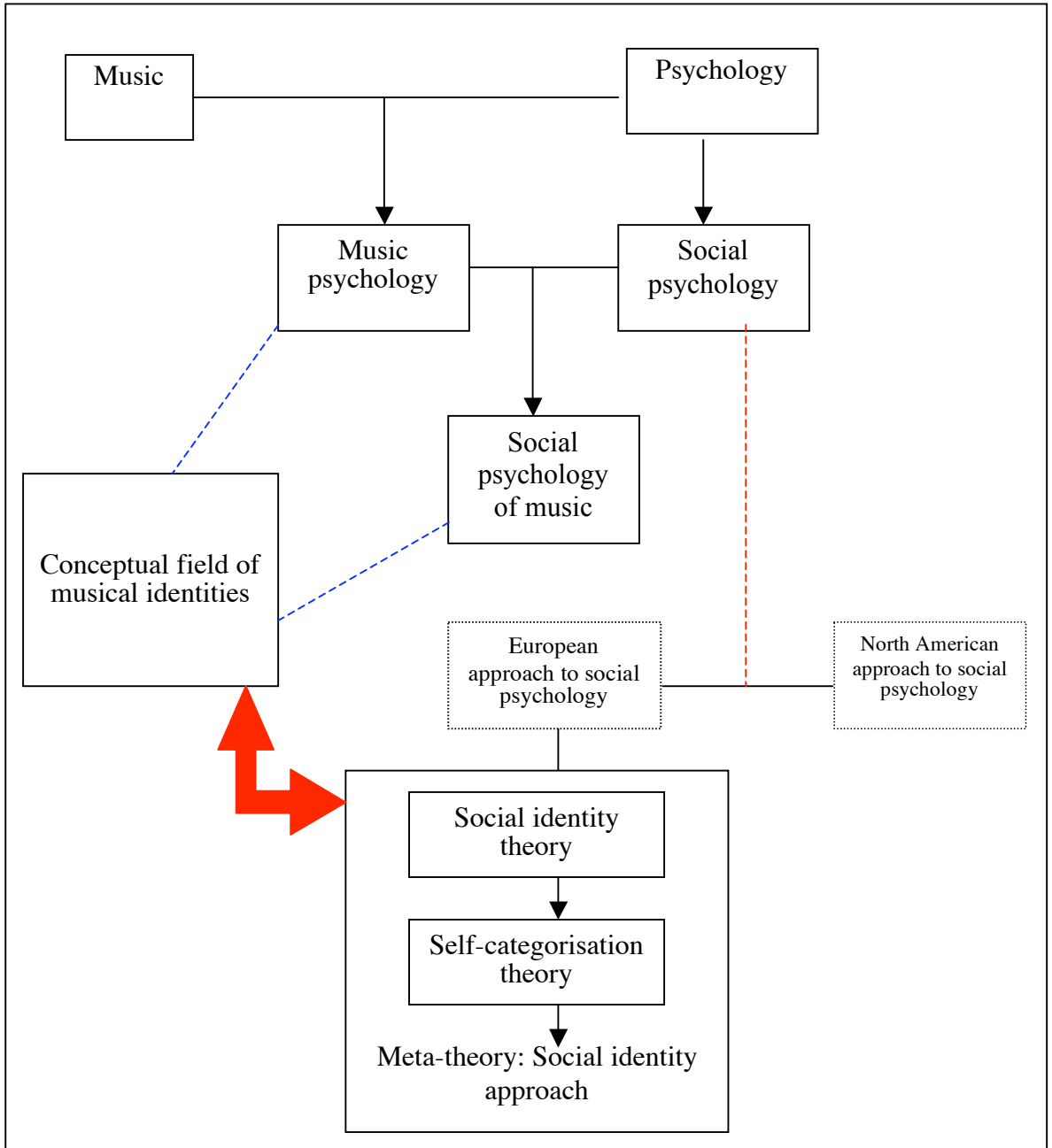
Previous figures are joined by coloured indicators to show where they fit into the overall conceptual framework that has shaped this research.

Having discussed theories and theory development, the following chapters are built on the idea that SI is a social psychological concept, but one that can be adapted and adopted by other fields. The generic concept of social identity that underpins this work was defined originally by Tajfel, and later discussed and employed by Brewer, (Brewer, 2001:117),

‘Part of the individual’s self-concept, which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance.’

Tajfel’s definition of SI and Brewer’s extensions of the concept themed around elements of the social identity approach, together combine to produce a more detailed understanding of musicians’ identities: one that is currently lacking in both music and psychology literature. This thesis has evolved in a qualitative and interpretative manner, drawing on data and concepts developed in all of the research phases. The next two ‘sub-chapters’ detail the methods employed in the research, Phases 1-4, and summarise the key demographic characteristics of sample population.

Figure 2c: Schematic of main conceptual frameworks



- The dotted red lines indicate where the social psychological theories link to the field of social psychology.
- The dotted blue lines indicate the emerging area of musical identities research.
- The red double-headed arrow indicates the symbiotic relationship between musical identities and social identity theory, which is where this research is placed.



## Conclusion

This chapter has focused on some of the research approaches in music and its derivative fields. It has shown that although experimental conditions have dominated early research, the increasing interest in musical behaviour and social contexts have enabled more exploratory, naturalistic questions and approaches. Although some have begun to ask questions about social behaviour and music-making, it is only recently that music psychologists have taken up the challenge to examine identity and music.

MI is an emerging area of research, and, as epitomised by MacDonald (2002), it is a polymorphic field, drawing on a range of identity, music-making, and music-listening research. The multiple and flexible nature of music and identity means that there is no single 'musical identity,' rather that an individual has many music-related identities, which may become salient in different contexts, or even conflict with each other.

MI research is relatively new, and so it is possible to look for more clarity in musical identities by drawing on established social psychology theory. A small number of researchers have applied SIT to musical behaviour; however, these projects have always looked at musical listening preferences and behaviour. They have often been conducted with young adults, and have always been in the experimental paradigm. This is despite the fact that some of the same researchers have recently suggested a shift towards more observational phenomenological research in music psychology.

This chapter has shown a number of gaps in research: first in music psychology, where there are opportunities to draw in more detail on established identity theories: SIT has only been employed with music listeners and in experimental paradigms. Social psychology suggests that there are many more options for using the meta-theory SIA, and employing non-experimental approaches to understanding identity and music behaviours.

Combining SI and MI enables questions to be asked which hold meaning for the musicians themselves, and so an investigation could potentially have applied outcomes. Second, there is opportunity in social psychology, where although some applied SIA research is being conducted, much more research from the social cognitive perspectives could be done. There are openings here to see 'being a musician' and all of the social groups and categories that belong to this, as a way to conduct some interesting applied social identity research, involving unusual social categories.

## Approach and Methodologies

### Rationale for a qualitative research approach

Understanding the working lives and identities of musicians is effectively examined by taking a qualitative or *interpretative* approach; Parker (2005) describes this as

‘...attempt[ing] to capture the sense that lies within, and that structures what we say about what we do. [It is] an exploration, elaboration and systematization of the significance of an identified phenomenon.’ (Parker, 2005: 3)

Qualitative research helps to understand the nature, strengths and interactions of variables, and often involves observing and interpreting human behaviour. It is an approach that values human experience, and one that tries to preserve the complex nature of human behaviour.

Psychology, however, has strong positivist research traditions that emerged from the pure sciences. Parker describes positivists as,

‘attempt[ing] to discover the laws that he thinks govern the relationships between ‘causes’ and ‘effects.’’ (Parker, 2005:4)

Qualitative research does not necessarily examine cause and effect in the way that quantitative research might: it investigates the ‘what’ questions concerning the nature of a concept, not the ‘how often’ questions regarding an event or occurrence. Tensions often arise between these academic camps, and yet if qualitative research is done adequately it can be both objective and rigorous.

This work established a clear research agenda with which to tackle a broad research problem. As such, it reflects some of the benefits of qualitative research. This type of approach comes into its own when the variables are unclear, or when the subjects cannot be easily controlled. It is therefore ideal for exploring the extensive and nebulous concept of musical identity. Within this broad approach, qualitative methods

were mainly used, with some quantification to provide different perspectives or an additional method of validation.

### **Parallels between contemporary research and the ‘crisis’ literature**

Musical identity would be difficult to completely capture and to do justice to, within a positivistic or cause and effect approach. If a laboratory-bound, context-stripped experimental approach was adopted, as it so often is within psychology, the essence of ‘being a musician’ may become lost. This qualitative approach helps to isolate underlying variables and issues that contribute to musicians’ understandings of their identity.

Similar to the crisis literature of the 60s and 70s (p.21), this research still sees ‘the social’ as being removed from mainstream social psychology. This is particularly evident when considering the increasing popularity of neuroscience and cognitive approaches as sub-sections within psychology. Social Identity (SI) has been adopted by an array of fields, and adapted to a range of research problems, but within social psychology it is largely restricted to use within a cognitive paradigm.

### **Qualitative or quantitative?**

Qualitative work often has a different function to quantitative; it can be used to generate hypotheses about a situation or problem and increase understanding of the nuances of a problem or question. In this way it can enhance quantitative research; Section Five illustrates this well – previous organisational research into orchestral musicians’ identities found them dissatisfied and disillusioned with orchestral work (Allmendinger & Hackman, 2005; Allmendinger, 1996), a finding often considered surprising.

However, applying this qualitative approach with theories from vocational research (notions of boundaryless and protean careers), helps to develop a deeper understanding of how musicians’ identities have changed in relation to their desires to be orchestral musicians, counteracting the quantitatively driven organisational psychology research.

### **Application to the real world**

As social identity values are attached to our affiliations with real-world social groups, then understanding participants’ lived experiences with their social groups is central to

approaching identity questions. The applied approach was important, from the initial conceptualisation of the research questions (driven by observing and engaging with musicians) to developing outcomes that extend theory *and* are applicable to the nature and practice of being a musician. This increased the ecological validity of the study. A qualitative approach both structured and captured a sense of the relationships between music, identity and human behaviour. Within the 'real world' conversation is a way that people can construct, understand and 'present' their identity. Conversation is also an integral part of qualitative work. MacDonald, Miell and Wilson (2005:322) said that, 'In talking about music, people are both signalling their membership of and also contributing to a 'community of reasoners' a community of like minded others.' Talk therefore can be a method by which individuals establish and indicate their social identities that are related to their musical practices.

### **Introspective accounts**

Conversation and interviewing are recognised as valid tools within qualitative psychological research to understand the construction of identities. Successfully accessing introspective accounts is also an important aim of lifespan research, which examines the construction of life stories. For example, Bluck and Habermas (2000) developed life story schemas as ways to 'help to connect the present self to the historic self' (Wethington, 2000: 65) and so explore the links and constructions between life points. It is this construction of the self, and the decisions made to disclose or withhold aspects of the self in our interactions with others that is of interest to this research. The projects in this research occur at a real-world socio-cultural level, and so interviewing and self-report are appropriate ways to examine the narrative accounts of participant's lives.

However, on a more micro analytical level, introspective accounts are *not* always recognised (within psychology) as valid or accurate representations of mental states. Cognitive Psychology, for example, rejects introspection – or the self-reporting on mental processes - as a suitable method of investigation. It suggests that we cannot always know or accurately verbalise why we have made choices or judgements. Nisbett & Wilson (1977) produced some of the early work in this area, suggesting that our limited introspective access is subsumed by a tendency to select implicit causal theories as our reasoning for an event or particular occurrence in a situation.

This thesis is not conducted from a Cognitive Psychology perspective, however, it is important that this stance is acknowledged as a potential counter perspective on self-presentation and identity. It is a clear reminder to consider the limitations of working with narratives and self-representation, for example, remembering to question the accuracy of individual's accounts; paying mind to the potential for inaccurate autobiographical remembering; and finally, being aware of potential occurrences of conscious and or sub-conscious confabulation.

### **The researcher - participant relationship**

The relationships between researcher and participant were central to gaining access to the musical worlds, and in developing a level of trust so that representative accounts could be formed. In traversing the boundaries between participant and researcher, this work sought a place that supported applied, scientific research of a qualitative nature: one that did not have the close involvement of a piece of ethnomusicological research, nor the formal distance of a traditional psychological experiment. It aimed to maintain scientific rigour, whilst asking and answering applied research questions.

Observations were essential to establish the relationships between researcher and participant. Being allowed into rehearsal settings enabled an independent assessment of group behaviour, following this with semi-structured interviews enabled discussions about group behaviour and dynamics based upon real observations. Observation also eased the relationship between researcher and participant, so a positive, relaxed dialogue into the participant's musical life could occur. After being interviewed participants were asked if they knew others who may be interested in contributing to the research: by recruiting and developing these mutual connections, a level of trust could be developed within an otherwise closed musical world.

### **A lifespan approach**

The lifespan approach was one of the three conceptual frameworks supporting this project (the others being musical identity and social identity). This approach has directly affected the research questions, the methods and the design of the research phases.

A lifespan approach was, for a long time, limited to understanding childhood and adolescent development. However, the approach has broadened within psychology over

the last thirty years, to include adult development (Baltes, 1999). Baltes (1980) saw the lifespan model as an approach to conducting developmental research. He highlighted seven points that help to understand why a qualitative lifespan approach was necessary for this research:

- 1) Development is a lifelong process, not restricted to childhood.
- 2) A qualitative lifespan approach is multidimensional and multidirectional.
- 3) It shows plasticity.
- 4) It involves gains and losses.
- 5) It is the outcome of the interaction between person and environment.
- 6) It is culturally and historically embedded.
- 7) It is a multidisciplinary approach

The particular lifespan theory used in this project is Super's life-career rainbow (Super, 1980), a concept which had 'untold impact upon understanding our identities and careers as holistic entities' (Watts, 2001). This helped to examine music-making as a holistic and as a life-long pursuit (see Appendix B for an illustration of the framework).

A few music psychologists have examined musical behaviour from a lifespan perspective, for example: Burland (2004) examined transitions between higher education and working in music and Manturzevska (1990) explored the lives of Polish professional and amateur musicians.<sup>1</sup> These projects were approached qualitatively using mixed methods: semi-structured interviews, biographical techniques, observation of concerts, informal conversations and examining archives, among other methods. Creating a narrative or a 'story' of one's life to date, often through the medium of interviews, is a popular method of accessing personal accounts of people's lives (Hammack, 2008). It complements the previous idea of using conversation to construct and examine identities in relation to musical behaviours. A life story is simply an account of the life or of a period within a life and can be justifications of occurrences and actions (rather than "truth") (Ross and Newby-Clarke, 1998). They have been used in psychology as an 'important tool for interpreting the connections of perceived psychological change and development over the life span.' (Wetherington, 2000) Life

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<sup>1</sup> Manturzevska's work inspired much of this research, and so is further critiqued in Chapter Eight.

stories are often used as part of a mixed method approach to a problem (Wetherington, 2000)

The multidisciplinary nature of lifespan research means that it can incorporate other fields of study within its perspective, and so it becomes an ideal approach to be incorporated in music psychology. As development is culturally and historically embedded, generations experience different cultures and may have different attitudes. Therefore discussions of contemporary female brass musicians must be based on a historical understanding of women's previous roles and musical practices in society. Qualitative longitudinal projects are increasingly popular within the social sciences, having been advocated as a way to 'significantly enhance UK social science' (Henwood, 2005: 39). The Economic Social Research Council's (ESRC) *Timescapes* project emerged as a flagship project in this area, and is relevant to this research as a whole because of its exploration of identity throughout the lifespan,

'Timescapes is a five year project that aims to throw light on the dynamics of personal relationships over the course of people's lives, and the identities that flow from these relationships. ...to pioneer the use and development of large scale qualitative methods of enquiry...explores the micro processes through which people's relationships and identities are forged, sustained, discarded or re-worked over time.' (Adam, 2008: 5)

Similar qualitative, longitudinal approaches have been used in this work to understand musicians' identities.

## **Review of potential methodologies**

It was firmly believed that the most fitting methodological approach and set of methods should be employed for successful investigation of the research problem, *not* that the phenomenon should be adapted to suit the available or known techniques. Thus, although the general approach to the problem was qualitative, the methods evolved and adapted throughout the work, embracing quantification with qualitative understanding where the methods could benefit each other. This review section begins by discussing the methods used within the pilot phases.

### **Diary Studies**

Outside of the research setting, diaries are places in which thoughts, ideas and feelings can be documented or indulged. Within research, diary studies can offer a uniquely personal account of life during a period of time or event (Bolger et al., 2003). Diary studies are an underused method of data collection in social psychology. This is odd because they are immensely flexible tools and have the potential to be used in many different settings, however it may be that their time-consuming nature (for both participant and researcher) can be perceived as a problem. There are, however, a number of positive aspects to this type of research.

#### ***Positive aspects of diary research***

- diaries are personal accounts of journeys and experiences, and can provide the researcher with uniquely personal experiences about the subject (Carter & Mankoff, 2005).
- they are flexible tools, being able to be structured or unstructured to any level of specification by the researcher.
- they can be electronic or paper, and do not necessarily need to be written (Brown et al., 2000).
- they can be portable and so can be used to record events in situations in which the researcher cannot be present.
- they can operate over a variety of time frames, events and experiences.
- they enable experiences to be captured close to the time that they occurred. This is important because when asked to reflect on life experiences (especially during stressful events) the accuracy of recollection can be called into question



(Gorin, 2001). Using a paper or electronic diary to record events at the time removes these inaccuracies.

Thompson and Holland (2005), discuss the use of ‘memory books’ (similar to diaries) with teenage participants, as a way to explore and understand the self during transition periods. Diaries were therefore suited to the aims of this research because they enabled extensive sampling over a period, without the presence of a researcher. The nature of diaries as personal perspectives into how we construct the self, inspired some of the later work into examining musicians’ narratives through interviews.

### ***Negative aspects of diary research***

Most of the negative aspects of diary research revolve around participant compliance: non-compliance with paper diaries cannot easily be checked, nor can it be rectified later. Another problem is that paper diaries, unlike electronic diaries, have no backup system and so if they go missing a project runs the risk of failing.

### **Semi-structured interviewing**

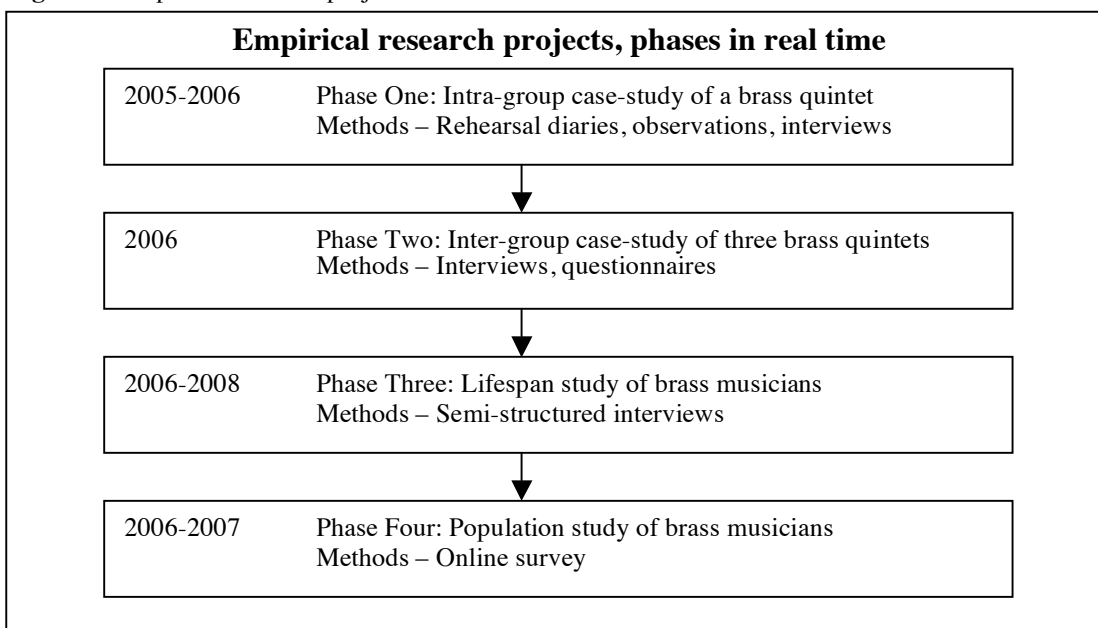
Semi-structure interviews provide a subjective narrative of musicians’ life histories, and their ‘career’ to date in music. Having this type of ‘conversation’ helps to understand how identities are negotiated, however, challenges to this type of research can arise due to the complexities of the interactions between the interviewee and interviewer.

As with any research tool, there will always be pros and cons for its use. Self-narrating a life story will bring problems: accuracies and biases within reflections, limits to an ability to recall events over time, a tendency to gloss over or refuse to discuss negative aspects and so forth (Bluck, 2003). However, interviewing within this process can lead to the prompting and development of detailed discussion of aspects of the life story. The life story has also been shown as an excellent way to ‘organize recollective memories’ and to ‘establish self-continuity and self-understanding’ (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Consequently, it is a significant tool in qualitatively examining changes in participants’ social identities over their lifespan.

## Research phases

This work was divided into four distinct phases: the first two were pilot projects, used to test the effectiveness and robustness of the methods and the second two studies evolved by analysing the successes of the pilot studies. Studies Three and Four were drawn on throughout the body of this work. The details of each research phase is given in Figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Empirical research projects in real time



### *Participants*

It was proposed that this research would examine the following groups of participants:

- *Phase One:* a single brass chamber ensemble, whose members had recently graduated and were in the establishment phase of their lifespan.
- *Phase Two:* three chamber ensembles; one based at a conservatoire and so in an exploration phase of development, and two professional ensembles, one in an establishment phase and one in a maintenance phase.
- *Phase Three:* professional brass musicians and those training for a career in music. Musicians would be drawn from establishment, exploration, maintenance and decline phases of their career.
- *Phase Four:* a large range of brass musicians, drawn together through an international survey and so with many different musical, social, training, and workplace backgrounds and experiences.

## **Phases one and two: introduction to the pilot studies**

### **Objectives of pilot work**

To:

- test a range of academic questions and ideas
- test different approaches and methods for examining these ideas
- learn how to create a positive working relationship between researcher and musician.

As these phases offered opportunities for testing a range of ideas and methods, a battery of methods was employed, including: documenting rehearsals through rehearsal diaries, observations, audio records and semi-structured interviews.

### **Phase one: methodology**

#### ***Aim***

To examine social identity by looking at the functioning of a brass quintet during their rehearsal preparation for a significant performance.

#### ***Design***

A qualitative longitudinal research design was used, with a diary based on ‘event sampling’ techniques (i.e. completing the diary after each rehearsal). Participants were interviewed at the start and end of the project.

#### ***Method***

Several methods was used in this phase; the main method of data collection was the rehearsal diary. This enabled qualitative and quantitative data to be gathered over a period of time. The diaries were handmade, hardback journals which were small enough to fit into a gig bag / music folder (see Appendix F). It was hoped that by investing time and energy into developing diary questions and in making the diaries themselves, there would be an increased level of compliance. A blank copy of a diary entry is included in Appendix G so that a better understanding of the elements that were being measured through the diary can be developed. Two examples of the non-compliant and rejected methods are in Appendices D and E.

Semi-structured interviewing techniques and questions were also developed during this phase as well as in Phase Two.

**Phase two: methodology**

*Aim*

To compare the relationship between identity, lifespan stage and group development across three chamber ensembles.

*Design*

A naturalistic, cross-sectional design was used to compare three ensembles at three distinct points in their group development, and in the lifespan of their members.

*Method*

Methods were developed from those used in Phase One. Subsequently, one rehearsal and one concert were observed for each group. Semi-structured interviews were the main method of investigation in this study. These were conducted with each member of the group, often before or after a rehearsal. A list of the interview questions that were asked during this phase have been reproduced in Appendix C.

## Phases one and two: results of pilot studies

### Introduction

Focusing on a family of instruments and instrumentalists was a unique approach in music psychology. Research typically uses socially constructed subject pool, such as an orchestra, brass band, or educational establishment. By focussing on musicians within an instrument family, the various social and musical groups are embedded in the musical lifespan and could be examined more completely than would otherwise be possible.

Phases One and Two were pilot studies for the larger work in Phases Three and Four. The pilots aimed to explore the relationship between belonging to a small group and developing a music related social identity.

### Participants

Phase Two used three brass quintets at different stages of their development, and whose members were at different stages of their lifespan. The details of each group are provided in the table below. Phase One involved working with just one of these quintets, group two.

**Table 3:** demographics of phase two chamber ensembles

Group	Lifespan Stage of development	Average age of members	Number of years together	Formation	Gender	Personnel changes
Group one	Exploration	19.2 years	2 (still at college)	Standard brass quintet	3 men 2 women	1
Group two	Establishment	24 years	6 (all had left college >1 year ago)	Standard brass quintet	3 men 2 women	2
Group three	Maintenance	32.4 years	11 (all had left college >5 years ago)	Standard brass quintet	5 men	3

The participants in each group were considered to be at different lifespan stages of development: the participants of Group One, for example, were in their second year of study at a music conservatoire and so in their exploration phase. Group Two's members had all left college within the previous five years and so were in their establishment phase. Group Three consisted of musicians in their maintenance phase, whom had all left college over eleven years ago.

Not only were the musicians at different lifespan stages, but the groups were also at different stages of development. Each group had experienced an increasing number of personnel changes, depending upon the age of the group. All of the groups were formed in the accepted brass quintet formation: two trumpets, trombone, french horn and tuba.

### **Compliance with different research methods**

Some methods were more effective than others in gleaning useful data: for example, a pencil and paper test was administered (see Appendix D), but then not used due to partial non-compliance. This occurred because one participant opined that despite a confidentiality agreement, answering this type of test might compromise the current functioning of the group.

Efforts were made in this study to remind musicians to complete an entry after their rehearsal, via a text message, which was sent after rehearsal. This could not, however, guarantee success.

### **Conclusion**

Unfortunately, this research was beset by these problems: one member of the group did not complete any diary entries, which in a small qualitative project like this (n=5) is a significant problem. Thomson and Holland (2005) raised some interesting points about non-compliance in diary studies, as half of their participants did not produce 'memory books', despite being given detailed instructions and a comprehensive equipment pack:

'Reasons given...included that the book had become too private, it was too risky to write things down where others could find it, it was not their style to write things down, they had lost the book, or forgotten to bring it along. Loss and forgetfulness themselves may have other underlying meanings, including a desire for privacy...reflecting

...resistance to researchers' attempts to see into their intimate worlds.' (Thomson and Holland, 2005: 206)

Although the pilot Phase One, was meant to run for six months of rehearsals, and cover two major events (The Park Lane Trust concert and The Royal Overseas League Competition), halfway through the period under study, when the diaries were being recalled to be logged on the computer, they were stolen and could not be retrieved by the police. This illustration of the cumulative but fragile nature of this method of data collection helped to make the decision about its re-use as a tool in this research.

The learning acquired from these first two phases was subsequently used to design the methodologies for Phases Three and Four.

### **Phase three – narrative interviews: methodology**

#### ***Aim***

To examine musicians' accounts of their lives to date, through narrative interviews.

#### ***Design***

Musicians were drawn from across the lifespan. Participants were then categorised as belonging to one of Super's four lifespan stages: exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline.

#### ***Method***

To successfully locate suitable samples of musicians, a snowball sampling technique was adopted, whereby current participants suggested others who might be willing to take part in the research.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen to provide as broad as possible a subjective narrative of a musician's life history, and their 'career' to date in music. The interviews, as discussed in more detail in Chapters Eight and Nine, were broadly based upon the lifespan: questions beginning with how they started playing their instruments, and towards the end, getting them to focus on what retirement or being unable to play might mean to them.

Interviews were structured around a set of well-researched and pre-determined questions relating to social identity (Appendix H). Social identity themes were woven throughout the musicians' narratives, and efforts were made to ensure that all of the questions were covered (even if these were not covered in order).

#### ***Allocation to the lifespan cohort***

Each narrative was read and a decision made on a case-by-case basis as to which lifespan stage they currently belonged. Participants belonged to

- the exploration stage if they were in tertiary education.
- the establishment stage if they were up to eight years post-tertiary education.
- the maintenance stage if they were settled into their career and post-30.
- the decline stage if they had retired, had made clear decisions to step down from a position or in some way scale down their musical performance work.

These stages corresponded to Super's phases in his life-career model (1980).



## **Phase three: results and discussion of the interview study**

### **Selection process**

Many musicians were successfully contacted through a small group of initial contacts in the professional music world. Participants were selected through a snowball sampling technique, on the assumption that participants were recommended who would be willing to take part and so would be more open about their lives than if they had been contacted for research by 'cold calling'. Word of mouth, and post-interview discussion with current participants was usually fruitful.

### **Lifespan stage**

Participants were selected to fit into one of Super's four lifespan cohorts: experimentation, establishment, maintenance and decline (Super, 1980). Initially, equal numbers of participants were wanted in each stage. However, as the interviews continued and more questions were developed, it was decided to focus some key questions around the establishment and exploration phases, so a few extra musicians were recruited in these sections.

### **Demographics**

The 41 participants in this study were drawn from across the lifespan. They ranged from 18 to 65 years of age, and the average age of a participant was 28.8 years. Nine were female, and 32 male. All except one were British born brass musicians, from a variety of musical backgrounds (brass bands, orchestras, military bands, specialist music schools and colleges). Participants were either attending conservatoires where they were specialising in first study brass instruments, or they were working primarily as brass instrumentalists within the professional music world. Their work was multiple and varied, frequently involving orchestral, sessional or chamber work, often in the form of concerts, recordings or tours, and they were based in London, Glasgow or Cardiff. A summary of each case is found in Appendix V.

### **Interview analysis**

Analysis of the interviews contributed to all of the empirical chapters. As such, some of the demographic data is used and expanded near the start of these chapters; much of the detail is described here.

### ***Interviewing and interview process***

The interview session began by asking participants how they began music and a little of their family background. This helped them to adjust to the interview process, feel comfortable being interviewed, and to ground their story near the beginning of their lives.

### ***Interview questions***

The interviews were semi-structured around a set of three central questions, which were related to musical careers and identity over the lifespan and are detailed in Appendix H. The questions asked participants to reflect on their musical careers to date, and to consider their aims and ambitions for the future. Musicians reflected on their achievements (musical and other), their perceptions of themselves as musicians (and in other roles), and the place of music within their life and its contribution to their sense of self. They discussed their musical education and development, significant events and transitional points in their careers and the unique influences of various ensembles or experiences on their self-concept.

Narrating a lifespan to a stranger is not necessarily an easy task. However, having a list of questions enabled participants to be prompted where necessary, establishing a sense of flow over the course of the interview. Prompts also encouraged participants to think further about events or identity related concepts, sometimes more than normal.

Questions were not necessarily asked in the order that they are presented, but at the end of the interview it was ensured that all questions and ideas had been covered over the course of the participant's narrative.

### ***Transcription***

As soon as the interview was over, notes were made in a journal about impressions and important ideas developed during the interview process. This was used as an aide-memoire during the analysis. The interviews were entered onto the computer as soon as possible once the interview had been completed. The researcher conducted the interviewing and transcribing, as transcription was seen as an integral part of the analytical process.

### ***Analytical process***

Each interview was analysed using thematic network analysis, its principle purpose to, 'seek to unearth the themes salient in a text at different levels, and thematic networks aim to facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes.' (Attride-Stirling, 2001: 386) This process organised data themes into three connected streams: global themes, organising themes and basic themes, and was ideal as some themes already existed

through the use of stages to segregate within and between participants' interviews. The text was then put through a six stage analytical process, as detailed by Attride-Stirling (2001): coding, theme identification, network construction, describing and exploring the networks, summarizing networks, interpreting findings.

### ***Validity and reliability***

The list of questions ensured that cross-comparisons between participants could be made, thereby ensuring a level of consistency across the body of interviews.

In general, the Exploration Group was the most difficult to interview and had the shortest interviews. They tended to be less vociferous about their musical activities and less open in discussing their narratives. This could be a natural consequence of their age. Habermas and Bluck (2000) suggest that the 'life story' emerges during adolescence, and the age span of this group still crossed over into adolescent years: being younger would naturally mean that there was less narrative to be discussed.

Alternatively, it could be an effect of the participant-researcher relationship. Interviews were often conducted in the informal or relaxed environments of musicians' homes, or in a bar or coffee shop prior to a gig. However, many of the establishment cohort were interviewed within the more formal environment of a music college, and for some who did not know the researcher there may have been some reluctance to talk to a psychologist.

Occasionally, some indication of the researcher as a musician, arose. This was never initiated within the discussion, as it was felt that to do so might lead to assumptions about a level of tacit knowledge concerned with 'being a musician.' However, an example of an encounter where this became important is highlighted in the following exchange

*Interviewee:* 'Um...let me try and explain. I did county youth stuff, then got into NYO, but kept doing some brass band stuff...errrr. [pause]. Do you play anything?'

*Interviewer:* 'Yes trumpet, but I mainly did brass bands though'.

*Interviewee:* 'Ahhhh.....well you know what it's like then.'

### **Conclusion**

The appropriateness of this method of accessing information is discussed further in Chapter Ten.

## **Phase four – online survey: methodology**

### ***Aim***

To examine the opinions and beliefs of a large number of brass musicians about brass music-making. To collect data about the brass musician.

### ***Design***

An online survey, promoted through: trade magazines (Brass Band World, The Bandsman, The Brass Herald), the Internet (Facebook, The Mouthpiece and other online chat forums).

### ***Method***

A survey was devised, and piloted by six randomly chosen professional musicians known by members of Group Two (Pilot Phases One and Two). It was run on the Internet for a full year from January 2006.

### ***General coding and analysis process***

Thematic content analysis was used throughout to extract information from the online survey. The process varied slightly, depending upon the questions and aims of the chapter, and where appropriate thematic analyses were corroborated with quantitative frequency analysis. Below is a specific example of the type of process used to refine the data.

### ***Specific example of coding and analysis process***

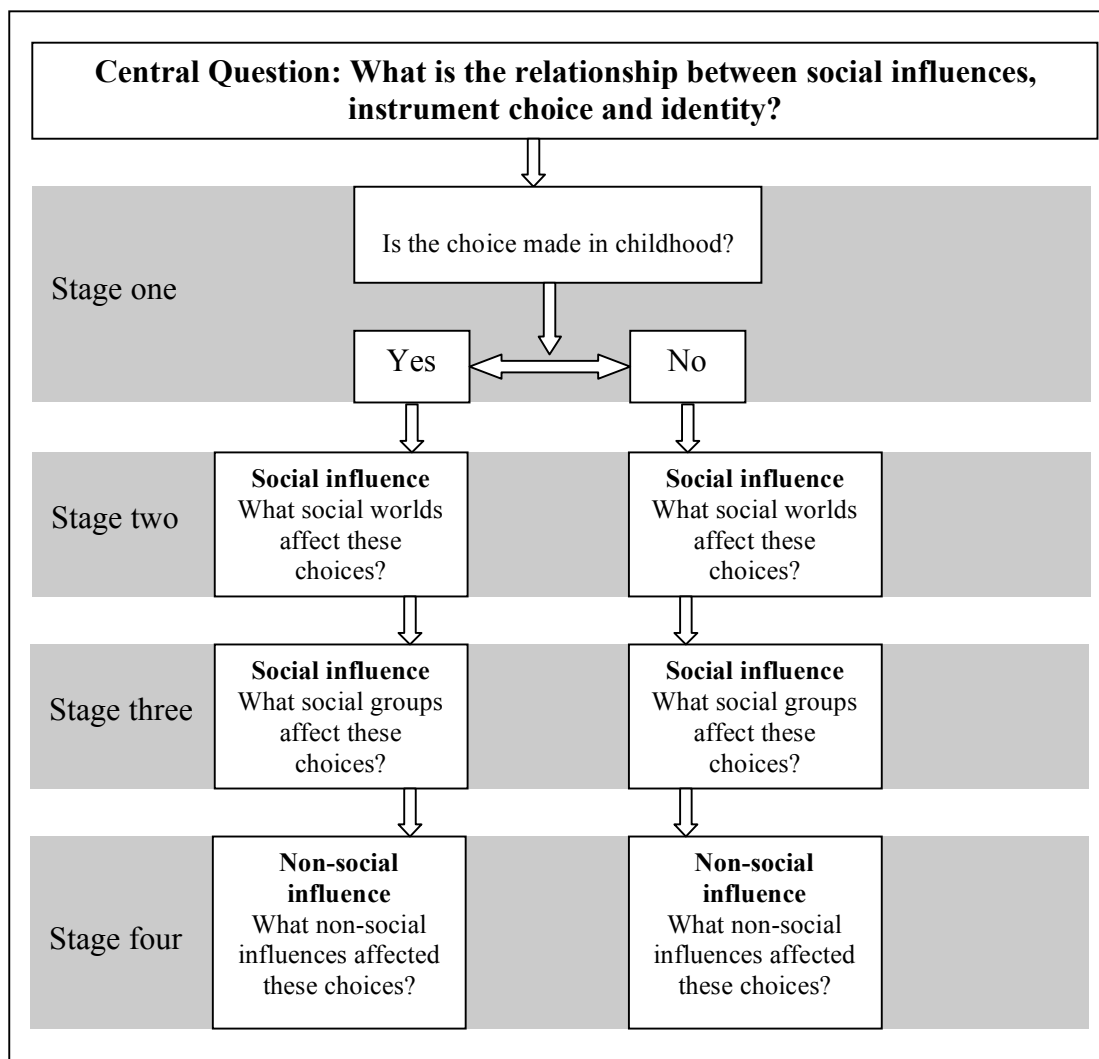
Section Three, Chapter Five asked questions about social influences, instrument choice and gender. The social identity framework allowed a form of thematic content analysis to take place, where quotes first clustered around existing themes and then sub-themes emerged during the iterative coding process.

Initially, many of the social influences on instrument choice appeared idiosyncratic, for example,

‘It was the only one left in the cupboard at school!’ (os. 507)

‘It was an easy way to miss science lessons at school (which I hated)’ (os. 392)

Figure 3a describes the social identity coding framework that was applied to this data.

**Figure 3a:** Iterative stages of social identity analysis [original]**Stage one: high level coding**

The responses were read through and early childhood choices, or decisions made later in life to change instruments or to take up brass as an adult learner were noted. The responses were divided into two representative categories: early childhood choices (informing Section One of the results) or later choices (informing Section Two).

**Stage two: secondary level coding**

The data was re-read and coded for recall of the categories in table 3a.

**Table 3a:** High order categories

High order categories
The home, The school, Local musical ensembles, Individualistic reasons

**Stage three: tertiary level coding**

High order categories were divided into social identity / music related themes. An example of these themes for the school ‘social world’ is given in Table 3b.

**Table 3b:** Social group / category themes within a higher order category

<b>High order theme / social world: school environment</b>	
Social Groups	Impetus
Peer group	Influence of key friends / role models
Music group	Wanting to belong to a band / orchestra
Formal education	Influence of classroom lessons – opportunities to experience different kinds of music Influence of adult musical role models
Extra-curricular education	External groups / events coming into the school Group demonstrations / workshops / concerts Peripatetic demonstrations / workshops Peripatetic teachers as role models

**Stage four: coding of non-social responses**

The responses referring to ‘non-social’ elements were analysed in the final stage.

Similar individualistic responses were clustered together into smaller themes. Examples of these themes are given in Table 3c.

**Table 3c:** Coding framework with exemplars for non-social choices

<b>Higher order theme: individualistic responses</b>	
Theme	Examples
Availability	It was the last instrument left in the cupboard!
Cost	Free peri brass lessons were introduced at school (in a small village in Yorkshire). I was given the euphonium but had never heard of it before!
Auditory appeal	The sound. 17 years ago I gave up a moderately successful freelance trumpet playing career for a much more lucrative (and also very enjoyable) career, but even as a trumpet player I preferred the sound of the horn.
Visual appeal	Seeing trombones in my school brass band lunchtime rehearsal. I like the way they looked.
Fit of instrument to the child	It just seemed to fit me! (When I was a child, I really wanted to play trombone but my arms were too short! - I'm glad I took up the cornet now though)
Fit of child to the instrument	Given to me by teacher relating to mouth size!!!
Ensemble role	I love sop because it is a difficult instrument to play. It is very exposed and I am a complete exhibitionist. I love the sound it produces when played well. I couldn't imagine playing a bass or anything that is hidden within the band.
Chance	Got given it at school. I wanted a trumpet but went for lunch first and got to the music room last (and) was given a tuba.

## Phase four: results and discussion of the online survey

### Demographics

Five hundred and seventy-two participants took part in the online survey between 2006-07. The only qualifier to be included was that they must consider themselves a brass musician. The survey provided many analytical variables: gender, age, lifespan stage, job type / musical role, and geographical location. Some of these variables are now examined to develop a clearer picture of the population of respondents.

### *Ages, lifespan decade, and gender*

Participants ranged across the lifespan, from 14 to 82 years. The average age was 36 years.

**Table 3d:** number of male and female respondents in each age category

Age category	Men	Women
10-19	32	38
20-29	140	70
30-39	66	33
40-49	71	28
50-59	44	12
60-69	25	2
70+	11	0
Total	389	183

When the sample was divided into lifespan decades and then by gender it showed that the distribution was skewed, with more responses from musicians in their twenties and thirties than other age groups. Participation in the survey steadily decreased with age. However, the skewness of the age and gender distributions might have been partly due to the sampling method, as the research was promoted over the Internet, brass websites and through a number of brass magazines.

When segregated by gender, every age category (except the teenagers) showed significantly more responses from men than women. This pattern reflects a gender bias involved in instrument choices that has an effect on music making in later life. The ‘job type’ or musical role that participants held also showed some gendered patterns, as examined in the next section.

### *Musical roles*

Participants belonged to one of four ‘musical role’ categories: amateur, professional, semi-professional, music student.<sup>2</sup> These categories were defined with qualifiers, for example, ‘professional musician, music is my main source of income’. (See Appendix I for further details). A single category was self-selected by each participant as being most representative of their current state of musical participation. Table 3e indicates the number of participants in each of these categories.

**Table 3e:** UK and non-UK participants by musical job type

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Semi-professional</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Amateur</b>
UK	395	56	42	40	257
Non-UK	177	42	58	33	44
Total	572	98	100	73	301

The total numbers of responses for professional, semi-professional and student categories ranged between 73-100 responses. The average number of participants in a cell was 45, with the exception of the UK amateur category. This category had five times the numbers of participants (n=257). The disproportionate level of responses is testament to the popularity of brass banding as a leisure pursuit in the UK and is considered during the analysis and discussion.

When gender is included as a variable, Table 3f is produced. There are clear gender divisions between the types of roles that male and female brass musicians are undertaking, with increasing male representation in the semi-professional and professional categories, and contrasting decreasing representation of female musicians noted in the sample.

<sup>2</sup> A notion of self-assigned ‘labels’ such as amateur musician, professional musician etc are central to identity research, and further discussed in Chapter Eight.



**Table 3f:** Percentages of male and female respondents in each category

<b>Role Type</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Amateur musician	68%	32%
Music student (at a music college or specialist music school)	60%	40%
Semi-professional musician (music is not your main source of income)	80%	20%
Professional musician (music is your main source of income)	85%	15%

### **Location**

Three hundred and ninety-five participants were based in the UK, 177 were from outside the UK including Europe, Central and Southern America, Australasia and the Far East. The majority of the non-UK responses, however, were from North-American musicians. This is not altogether surprising as there are distinctive banding cultures in the UK and North America. Band programs are frequently part of the North-American education system, with high school marching, symphonic and concert bands. The UK has few ‘formal’ banding educational programs, but has a strong socio-cultural heritage of brass bands.

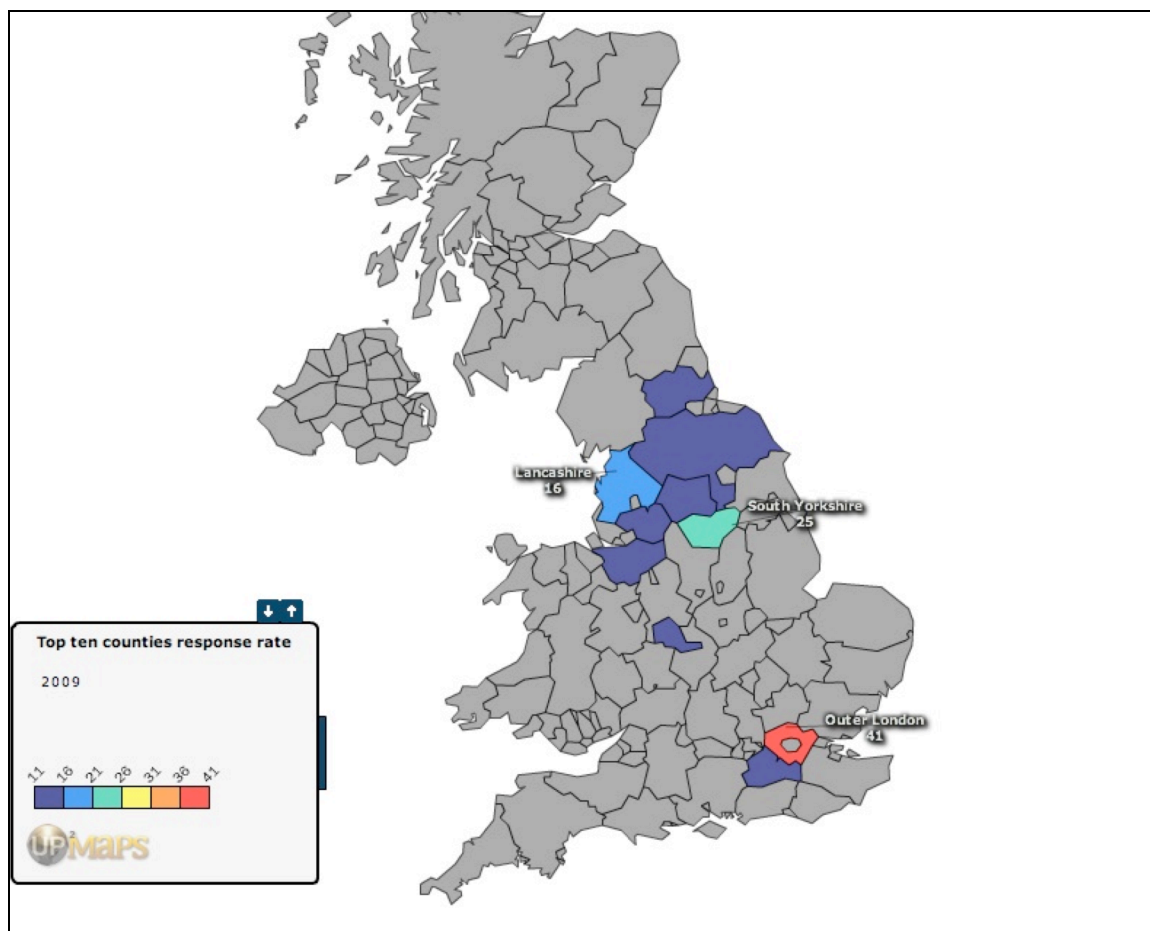
### ***Geographical distribution***

Despite a social history of brass bands emerging across the UK (Herbert, 2000) folk wisdom associates amateur brass bands with ‘the north’ of England. (Possibly, due to northern industrial associations, and the historical alliances between industry and banding, see Chapter Six). Other folk wisdom makes geographical connections with ‘becoming a professional musician’ and a draw to ‘the south’, usually to London, often initially for study and then to obtain work (as discussed in Chapter Four).

Questioning these and other folk beliefs was behind some of the initial inspiration for this body of work. The volume of responses in research phase four has meant an increase in the validity of studying this sample as representative of a population. One element of this can be to examine the geographical distribution of the respondents, and so begin to question whether there is any empirical support for these folk beliefs.

Figure 3b illustrates the ten UK counties that had the most number of brass musician participants respond

**Figure 3b:** UK county map documenting the ten counties with the most responses



Outer London had the most responses ( $n=41$ ), followed by South Yorkshire ( $n=25$ ) then Lancashire ( $n=16$ ). These concentrated pockets of responses correspond to the areas traditionally felt to be the northern ‘home’ of brass banding (Yorkshire and Lancashire), and the southern centre for musical culture (London). This pattern could tentatively be considered to re-affirm the cultural folklore of a north-south divide in amateur and professional music-making.

This county data is further examined by breaking down the responses into their constituent job types. This only strengthens the picture of the amateur / professional, north / south brass divide. Table 3g indicates the responses for each category within each county.

**Table 3g:** Frequency of respondents in job categories by county

<b>Job category</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>South Yorkshire</b>	<b>Lancashire</b>
Professional	14 34.14%	2 8%	2 12.5%
Semi-professional	6 14.63%	1 14%	1 6.25%
Student	11 26.82%	4 16%	3 18.75%
Amateur	10 24.39%	18 72%	10 62.5%
Total	41 100%	25 100%	16 100%

Given as number and percentage of the whole

London had the highest percentage of responses from professional musicians, but there were also sizeable responses from the other categories as well. This may reflect the dense population of London and the popularity of music making. Similarly, the spread of responses for South Yorkshire and Lancashire show 60 - 70% of responses were from amateur players.

## **Conclusion**

### *Sample*

The nature of an internet survey is such that there is little control over possible respondents, making a truly random sample difficult to find. It is therefore not known whether this sample was representative of the overall brass instrumentalist population.

Possible biases may include:

- access to the internet; this could have reduced the overall numbers of older players responding; if this is true, then some of the qualitative evidence may have been missed such as changes that have taken place over time e.g. choice of instruments.
- readership of the two brass journals which advertised the on-line survey; it is not known how this might have affected the sample, but could have reduced the pool of potential non-UK respondents, depending on the distribution of journals.

However, the sample was relatively large, and larger than could have been obtained through a postal questionnaire. It was also larger than many of the samples used in the literature. For the purposes of this research, it was therefore assumed that the sample was fairly representative of the brass-playing movement as a whole.

The size does mean that some tentative conclusions about brass musicians as a population can begin to be made: this section has presented some of the initial findings which are relevant to later discussions. It has shown that social categories (gender) and social groups (job type) are valuable factors to consider in analyses. It has also begun to indicate that temporal factors and an understanding of the musical life course are important to this sample and so must be considered within later analyses. The wealth of variables involved in Phase Four, has meant that there were multiple ways that the data and this population can be analysed. This is developed in the following chapters.

# **Section Three:** Instrument, Choice and Identity

Chapter Four - Instrument choice and preference: a literature review

Chapter Five - Analysing the influence of social groups on instrument choice and identity

## **Instruments, choice, and the self-concept**

‘Your father, on the other hand, favoured a mahogany wand. Eleven inches. Pliable. A little more power and excellent for transfiguration. Well, I say your father favoured it - it's really the wand that chooses the wizard, of course’, Mr. Ollivander said. (*From Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone (Rowling, 1997: 63)*)

This quote illustrates the range of social and personal influences pertaining to a significant childhood choice, with the wand being paralleled to the childhood selection of a musical instrument. It specifies the influence of the fictional character’s father on this choice, and implicitly calls upon the influence of social groups in the decision-making process.

In selecting a musical instrument, the choice may be influenced by parents or the wider social groups of the family or school. Non-social, individualistic elements also shape instrument choice.

Musicians often found it difficult to express in any depth the audio or aesthetic appeal of their instrument choice to their childhood selves – almost as if, as in the quote above, the instrument selected them. It is this process, the beginning of their lives as musical performers, which this section examines.

## **Section Three**

### **Instrument choice and identity**

#### **Section Structure and Rationale**

In order to clarify potential contemporary influences on musical identities, a review of the literature needed to be carried out. Again, the purpose was to provide a foundation for the detailed qualitative research carried out in Phases Three and Four.

#### **Section structure**

*Chapter Four* is a literature review of the music research considering instrument choice.

The *research questions* asked in chapter four are:

1. How is instrument choice commonly understood in music; what type of research is conducted, what populations are studied, and what questions are normally asked?
2. How is instrument choice linked to identity in this literature?
3. How have instrument choice and identity been researched within the wider social worlds of childhood?

*Chapter Five* builds on Chapter Four by investigating two gaps in the literature: first it examines the role of gender in selecting brass instruments, second it investigates the place for a broader understanding of instrument choices as being embedded within three social worlds. The objectives of Chapter Five are:

1. To enhance understanding of the formation of early musical identities.
2. To explore in more detail how brass instrument choice is linked to gender.
3. To explore in more detail how the broader social worlds and groups have great significance for musicians.

*This section is a key contributor to both the third and fourth objectives, on factors influencing musical identity during the lifespan.*

Chapter Four

## **A musical perspective on instrument choice and preference**

### **Introduction and aims**

This review comments on the music psychology literature relating to instrument choice. The majority of this literature has focussed on the role of gender in childhood instrument choice and preferences. A social identity perspective, however, would suggest that gender is but one of the influential social categories involved in this process. As such, the music psychology literature was thoroughly explored for research that adopted a more inclusive, social perspective on instrument choice, for example exploring other background variables.

### **Literature review**

#### **Research perspectives**

##### **Instrument choice: a lifespan perspective**

At the centre of this chapter is a broad and enduring music psychology question: why do musicians specialise in certain instruments, and what factors affect their choices? This chapter starts near the beginning of the musical lifespan, establishing some of the founding elements of the complex relationship between instruments and identity development.

The relationship between music and identity often begins early in the lifespan, with decisions to play musical instruments made often, but not exclusively, in childhood. These decisions are made because of the opportunities and support provided in childhood social worlds. Music-making also enables a range of personal and social skills to develop, as it requires commitment, dedication, practice and the ability to work alone and with others (Macnamara et al., 2006; Welch et al., 2004). As such, it can be an important part of a child's general development.

Given the opportunities and appropriate support, children's musical skills may continue to develop throughout their adult life, often becoming a dedicated leisure pursuit or the basis of a professional career. The factors that enable and shape (or prevent) the emergence of a strong, positive musical identity are therefore key not only to that child's experiences, but also their future musical experiences. Sloboda (2005: 271)



suggests that early, negative, musical experiences at school, can have life-long negative effects on the self-perception of musical abilities.

### **Instrument choice and the lifespan: developmental and educational perspectives**

Children's involvement in participatory music (inside and outside of school) has been linked to academic success (Southgate & Roscigno, 2009). If participatory music making can have such a powerful impact upon development, then it is important to investigate the factors influencing early instrument selection, and the short and long-term effects of social and musical groups on identity.

Research concerning childhood influences on becoming a musician have mainly been based in the developmental and educational fields of music psychology (Manturzewska, 1990; Burland, 2004; Davidson & Borthwick, 2002; Lamont, 2002). This research is wide-ranging, but often focuses on musical ability and developing musical expertise, for example, the now somewhat contested place of deliberate practice (Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996; Ruthsatz et al., 2008); the role of parental support and developing a motivational environment (Hallam, 2002; Gembris & Davidson, 2002); and examining childhood family environments and nurturing a musical identity (Burland, 2004)). Sometimes, the research takes a holistic view of the musically developing child.

‘The most important factor in developing a child’s musical talent is providing a stimulating environment encouraging his or her first musical responses if and when they occur. Coupled with this is the necessity for appropriate musical opportunities and support from parents and teachers’ (Kemp & Mills, 2002:6)

More commonly, however, these developmental and educational frameworks are used to inform individualistic traits such as the critical period for learning and the ideal age that a child should take up an instrument, personality characteristics and their impact on instrument uptake (Kemp, 1996), or the psychological pre-requisites of becoming and staying a successful musician (Macnamara et al., 2006). While some research is beginning to link the environment and musical behaviour (Sloboda, 2005; Davidson & Borthwick, 2002), a broader framework, such as SIA gives a more complete approach to examining instrument choices.

## **Gender as an influential social category in instrument choices**

### **Gender and music-making**

The social identity approach (SIA) views gender as a social category that can shape our social identity, and music psychology and music education research frequently consider music-making in relation to gender. Green (1997; 2002b) considered the powerful influence that gender can have in music, noting that women and girls may be successful and prominent within educational settings, but constitute a minority of professional performers. Green suggests that girls reproduce the historical legacy of music, undertaking conventionally feminine musical roles (singing, playing keyboard etc.) She argues that the classroom supports and promotes gender-specific constructions, whilst children are negotiating their gender identities. Consequently gender directly influences their musical choices and practices.

The limited empirical research concerning early musical decisions has meant that the relationships between instrument choice and self-concept remains unclear, and the literature suffers because it frequently examines gender as the primary underlying factor in instrumental choice to the detriment of other potential factors being investigated. Secondly, that where the literature does examine gender, it frequently associates gender preferences with actual instrument uptake. Both of these assumptions ignore the plethora of ‘other factors’ that can be implicated within these decisions.

### **Critique of gender preferences and gendered practices**

#### ***Restricted questions***

Since the late 1970s there has been an expansion in research concerning the gender-typing of instruments and musical practices (Griswold & Chrobak, 1981; Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Abeles & Porter, 1978). However, this research has often been limited in the questions that it sought to ask, focussing primarily on:

- The extent to which instruments are associated with masculine or feminine attributes
- The extent that girls and boys make gendered instrument choices
- The extent to which parents have gendered schemas about children’s instrument choices and musical practices

***Limited samples***

Gender preference research tends to draw on child or adolescent samples. O'Neill and Boulton (1996), for example, recruited 150 boys and girls between 9 and 11 years, and asked their preferences and reasoning for selecting particular instruments. Delzell and Leppla (1992) examined the preferences and gender associations of fourth-grade elementary school students for certain instruments. By using school-age participants, real-time ideas about children's musical preferences and choices could be gathered, however:

- many of these childhood studies were made at single time points.
- they often do not account for the changes and development of children's identities over time.
- they frequently ignore the wealth of other factors involved in this process.
- they do not embed the work within the real-life social context in which these decisions will naturally occur.

Some studies have used adult participants (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Griswold & Chroback, 1981). In these studies either music and non-music undergraduates were selected as comparison groups for gender preferences, or, researchers have asked individuals to assume parental roles and make hypothetical instrument choices for their hypothetical son or daughter (depending upon the research condition). Such studies therefore extend this body of research by looking at adult's reflections on their instrument choices over their lifespan.

***Education-orientated research***

The education-orientated nature of much of this research enables comment upon educational policy and musical practices, but it ignores the fact that instrument choices are not fixed and may well change over the lifespan. It does not consider that, at a young age, the self-concept may not be fully formed, and so answers to questions about gendered associations and music-making may not be fully considered. Asking adults about their childhood decisions gives an opportunity for considered, mature, reflections on musical life choices. As with any research method, there is the possibility of introducing other biases, such as forgetting or confabulation.

### ***Approach***

Harrison and O'Neill's intervention study (2000) exposed children to counter-gender stereotypic musical models in a real world, 'field study'. Most of the gender, instrument and identity research, however, tends to be experimental, examining hypothetical reasoning or gendered preferences for instruments. It usually uses a standard approach: a paired-comparison test to assess instrument preferences. This method is often idiosyncratically developed to suit the researcher's needs, making cross-comparisons between studies is difficult.

### **The gender-typing of musical instruments**

Early research examined the masculine / feminine perceptions of instruments (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Griswold & Chrobak, 1981). Flute was always considered the most feminine instrument, followed by violin. Trumpet, trombone and drums were indicated as masculine instruments. Recent reviews of this early research have found these gender associations to be consistent, regardless of whether they were made by children, adults, musicians or non-musicians (Zervoudakes & Tanur, 1994). Harrison conducted a literature review (as part of a larger investigatory study) into the stereotypical behaviours associated with instrument choice and gendered participation (Harrison, 2003). He examined eleven studies between 1978 and 2003, and developed a 'profile' of the instruments that were frequently stereotyped. Two outcomes are important from this research: in studies that included a tuba, this was deemed the most masculine instrument otherwise the percussion was the most masculine. Secondly, trumpet, trombone, drums or 'lower brass' were also always masculine instruments.

These findings in the literature demonstrate that brass was perceived as a relatively homogeneous gender-typed family of instruments. Brass instruments are always masculine, with the lower brass usually considered 'more masculine' than the higher brass, however, there has been no detailed and consistent exploration of this finding. The range of instruments within the brass family and their uptake has not, as yet, been explored in the literature.

The gender-preference studies have a number of weaknesses: Abeles and Porter (1978) developed the MIPCSF<sup>1</sup> as a standardised test for measuring gender preference of instruments, by placing them on a gender continuum. However, the amount and type of instruments used within this measure often changes depending upon the research. As yet, no research has considered a single family of instruments (brass, woodwind or strings); they have tended to use the MIPCSF as a basis for a study and augment it with a selection of other instruments.

The MIPSCF is limited to a selection of instruments found within the American school education system. It does not include a wide range of instruments drawn from across a set of ensembles. Yet, the roles that the brass musician can adopt within an orchestral brass section, a brass band, and a big band are very different, as are the types of brass instrument found in each context. As gender preferences were not only linked to the instrument, but to the social and historical culture of a specific ensemble, then this type of scale begins to be less valid as a research method.

Much of the gender preference and gender choice literature examines ‘gender stereotypes’, without due consideration of the distinct psychological meaning of the word stereotype. A psychological perspective sees stereotypes evolving through social comparisons made between social groups. Often the only ‘groups’ being considered in these cases are gender (boy / girl) categories. However, other groups could be considered, such as the ensembles in which the instruments are used, and the social constructs and social histories of these groups: a cornet player for a championship section brass band maybe gender stereotyped, but this stereotype also includes a range of associated behaviours and beliefs. A cornet player for the Salvation Army Staff Band would also be gender stereotyped, but probably have a range of different associated behaviours and beliefs within this stereotype. The MIPSCF abstracts the instruments from their social contexts, but gender and its associated behaviours are socially constructed elements of our worlds. Therefore, the social group / ensemble in which that instrument is employed may affect the gender-typing beliefs / preferences about instruments.

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<sup>1</sup> MIPCSF is the Musical Instrument Paired-Comparison Survey Form, used as a standardised test in Abeles, H. F. (2009) Are musical instrument gender associations changing? *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 57, 127. P. 131

### **Recent literature on gendered preferences and practices**

All of the recent evidence points to musical instruments still perceived as gendered, which has a considerable impact on music education (Green, 1997; Green, 2002a). Two national UK (Hallam et al., 2008) and US (Zervoudakes & Tanur, 1994) surveys examined instrument uptake across education systems. Zervoudakes and Tanur (1994) found a rise in women's participation in educational musical ensembles between the 1960s and the 1990s, a finding echoed by Delzell and Leppla (1992). Zervoudakes and Tanur's (1994) research discovered an increase in women's participation on 'historically male and female instruments'. They attributed this to the 'rise of feminism...and the increased sensitivity to issues of gender stereotyping among teachers' (Zervoudakes & Tanur, 1994:64). However, when re-examining the data to account for an increase in female participation, they found that the proportion of women playing female instruments increased over time, but that the proportion of women playing male instruments stayed the same or decreased. They therefore concluded that gender-typing and gender-based musical practices have stayed relatively similar over time.

The most recent research in this area has compared current data on instrument preferences and participation to earlier studies (Abeles, 2009). Although Zervoudakes and Tanur (1994) and Delzell and Leppla (1992) suggested changes are occurring with regard to instrument gender associations, Abeles suggested that boys and girls are playing approximately the same instruments (Abeles, 2009). His work also showed that girls were more likely to 'cross-over' and play gender non-conforming instruments than boys (Abeles, 2009:134). This is not necessarily a surprise, as the first work into gender preferences found girls more likely to select a wide range of instruments, whereas boys selected a very restricted range of instruments, focused on the masculine end of the spectrum (Abeles & Porter, 1978).

### **Summary of gender literature**

#### **Participation of girls in school music**

Despite women's progression towards social equality in many areas of adult life, musical practices and instrument choices remain gendered. School music is generally felt to be a 'feminine' occupation, with the exception of composition and electronic music making (Green, 2002b). Hallam *et al.* (2008) showed that 60% of those learning

instruments at school were girls and the instrument–gender literature showed an increase in the number of girls participating in music-making between the 1970s and 1990s. However, Zervoudakes and Tanur (1994) have shown that despite the increase in female participation in school music-making, the gender-typing of instruments and musical practices persists.

### **Preferences**

The gender preference literature suggested that the gender associations with instruments were relatively stable over time, in terms of their strength and type. The strength and type of gendered choices and preferences began to be illustrated even in the earliest work in this area (Abeles & Porter, 1978). They showed boys' choices and preferences were always firmly fixed within a narrow, masculine spectrum. In contrast, girls selected a broader range of instruments, but as they grew older these became fixed at the feminine end of the spectrum.

### **Breadth of impact**

The flexibility that girls show towards instruments has meant that girls are more likely to 'cross over' than boys to gender conflicting instruments. Literature is beginning to address the motivations and experiences of those who actively select an instrument opposite to their gender (Sinsabaugh, 2005), but most of this has been conducted in small case-studies. Eros' current literature review illustrates the breadth of impact that these gendered choices hold (Eros, 2008), including:

- noting the effect of peer groups and friends on gendered choice, and the perceptions of other students on those who cross the gender lines in their choices.
- the gendered choices and influence of musical directors and conductors.
- the effects of in school demonstrations on gendered uptake.
- the long-term effects on the gender composition of ensembles.

The complex web of relationships between choice, gender and society can no longer be ignored, as they hold a significant impact upon current and future musical practices.

From an academic perspective, these relationships are quite muddled: research has been carried out in at least two different ways with some researchers working on instrument preferences and gender, whereas other researchers examine children's actual instrument choices in school music education, and their gender. Since none of this research indicates whether these choices are maintained or changed over time, and much of it is

limited because it abstracts ideas about gender identity from social context. Little research examines the lived experiences within the social context and where it does, it is often based on case-studies (Sinsabaugh, 2005; Conway, 2000). With the exception of Harrison and O’Niell (2000), there has been very little in the way of successful analyses of interventions.

One of the most important points to illustrate from all of this research is that instrument gender preferences or associations do not necessarily equate to the gendered uptake of instruments. Hence there is a need to look at other factors involved in the preferencing and uptake of musical instruments.



### **Implications for a study involving brass musicians**

A study focussing specifically on brass musicians offers a good opportunity to examine a family of instruments that are considered to be masculine, and so associated with masculine behaviours and stereotypes. This short overview has suggested a number of avenues that could be examined in more detail:

- *Brass stereotypes* - are all instruments in this family deemed equally masculine? If not, how can the gender-brass stereotype be reconsidered?
- *Instrument choices* - these may or may not be different to gendered perceptions. Do the real-life instrument choices correlate with expected gender associations?
- Do brass instrumentalists have conscious recollections of masculine perceptions of instruments influencing their choices?
- What brass instruments do girls learn? Is gender a factor in their decisions? What attracts them to these masculine instruments in the first place?

Perhaps, however, the masculine nature of brass music-making can be seen more positively? Much of the gendered music literature could be described as feminist, promoting the activity of female musicians because for so many years they have been overlooked. Harrison (2007) suggested that gender and instrument preferences can provide many more barriers to boys than to girls: boys have a much more restricted gender role in music-making, as illustrated by their narrow preferences and choices in the earlier literature (Abeles & Porter, 1978). Girls have more options, because they can cross gender-lines with greater ease than boys (by selecting or playing an instrument that is deemed masculine). For a boy to select a feminine instrument, at least within an educational setting, may encourage bullying, negativity and derogatory comments concerning sexuality from his peers.

The fact that there is an increasing amount of female participation, and that girls seem to be able to participate more easily on cross-gender instruments, raises a number of interesting philosophical questions about brass playing. If direct action was encouraged to engage more girls in lower brass playing, how might this impact on boys' music-making (bearing in mind that this is one of the limited areas in which it is socially acceptable for boys to play music)? How could an increase in the number of female brass musicians impact upon the masculine nature of this gendered activity? Could this affect the developing musical identities of boys? As brass is a 'socially acceptable' way into music making for boys, perhaps it is equally important to encourage them in this area to try and increase boys' interest and participation in music.

## **Alternative social influences on instrument choice**

Gender is a pervasive social category, affecting many aspects of musical preferences, choices and behaviour. Recent research, however, is beginning to offer a broader view of the social influences that might affect instrument choice. This research can begin to provide a more holistic approach to understanding and examining musical practices. This would further academic research, and support sustainable musical practices and musical identities.

### **‘Musical instrument choice...some descriptive, some causes and some background factors’**

This sub-title above is taken from one of the few published papers that directly consider the range of background factors on instrument choice (Chen and Howard, 2004). Their research examines: the types of instrument selected, the ages at which they were chosen, the range of instruments that were played and the types of social support and musical opportunities offered in the home and in school. Their sample is a selection of music and non-music students drawn from a number of higher education institutes in Australia. The research is reflective, as opposed to looking at the active choices made by a group of children (as did many of the gender preference papers).

### **Range of factors**

Chen and Howard listed a number of factors that they believed might be involved in the instrument-choice process. These are cited in the order in which they were mentioned:

- the physical factors of the instrument and the child: children differ in body and hand size and in manual dexterity, and ‘instruments differ in many ways: portability, maintenance required, physical movements needed to play.’ (Chen & Howard, 2004: 818)
- an attraction to the instrument’s sound.
- The presence of a role model that plays the instrument.
- The positive encouragement of a parent.
- The presence of an instrument in the family home.
- A sibling’s instrumental choices / practice.
- The needs of a school ensemble.

These were cited as only a few of the possible factors involved in instrument choice. However, Chen and Howard have received little systematic academic investigation. Amongst the results were two tables containing the percentages of their respondents who,

- a) cited certain influential factors in their musical history, and
- b) cited certain influential factors for starting and continuing their instruments.

These tables are redrawn below, but with the factors re-ranked in percentage order.

**Table 4:** Chen and Howard's table of participants who cited various influential factors in their musical history that affected instrument-choice decision-making p.223

<b>Percentage of participants who cited various factors in their musical history</b>	
<b>n=157</b>	
Had parental encouragement to play main instrument	89.6
Had financial support	89.1
Had formal instruction	88.5
Playing most preferred instrument	74.7
Played in school band	74.5
Had family member who played an instrument	74.2
Family home contained instruments	63.1
Finance was a barrier	36.3
Saw demand for main instrument	36.1

**Table 4a:** Chen and Howard's table of participant responses for reasons cited regarding starting and continuing a musical instrument p.224

<b>Main reasons cited for starting and continuing a particular instrument; some cited more than one reason</b>		
<b>n=157</b>		
	Starting	Continuing
Liked sound / instrument	22.9	65.6
In a band		17.8
Parental choice / encouragement	17.8	
Career (not in band)		15.3
Instrument available in home	13.8	
Studying for degree		13.4
Instrument available / required	8.9	
Sense of competence / accomplishment		7.6
Teacher available	7.0	
Band needed player	5.7	
To compose		5.1
Instrument easily portable		1.9

Their results illustrated a network of factors, but highlighted that most participants had parental encouragement (and many at least one parent who played an instrument), and that the majority also had financial support and formal instruction on their instruments. Their current instrument (as it was adults who were responding to the survey) was often their preferred instrument. The reasons for starting an instrument were similarly varied. The most popular reasons were that the individual liked the sound or the shape of the instrument, that their parents chose or encouraged their music-making, or that the instrument was available in the home. These results show the importance of music-making in developing and continuing a musical identity. Chen and Howard explored a few of the reasons for continuing music: the sound of the instrument was central: 65.6% cited this as a reason for continuing, compared to 22.9% as a reason for starting. The second most popular reason for continuing with an instrument was to do with the demands of a band, at 17.8%. These findings illustrated that both social and individualistic reasoning were important in instrument choice. The next chapter builds on this, examining the role of influences in the home in more detail, specifically the roles of parents. Continuing an instrument also seemed to be attributed to individualistic reasons (sound) and social reasons (the demands of the band).

### **Relationship between background factors and gender**

As most of the research concerning instrument choices has focused on gender, many of the studies mentioning background factors are actually part of gendered investigations. For instance, Hallam, Rogers and Creech examined instrument uptake across the UK, stating that,

‘The gender stereotyping of particular instruments...may depend on a range of factors, including the shape or size of the instrument, its pitch, quality of sound, or the need for particular characteristics in order to play it, for instance, physical endurance.’ (Hallam et al., 2008: 7).

Abeles (2009) discussed the work of Graham (2005) and Sinsabaugh (2005), two researchers who have examined background factors in more detail. Both were principally investigating gender and instrument selection, but during the course of this work examined other background factors. Abeles described the research as,

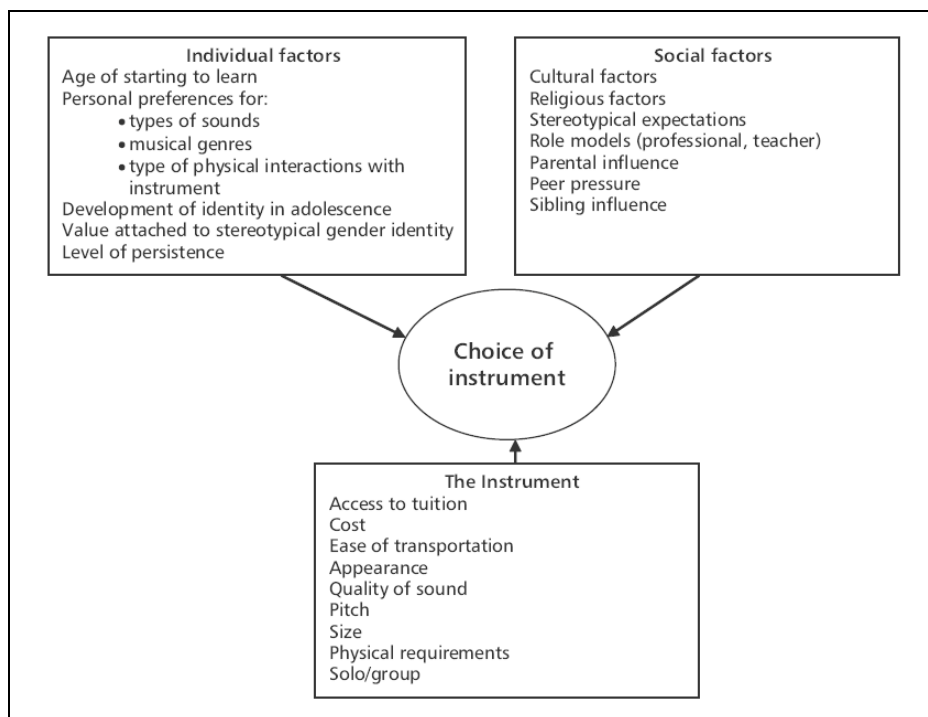
‘Graham (2005) examined college instrumentalists’ reasons for selecting a band or orchestra instrument. Her results produced eight factors including physical properties of the instrument and influences of father, mother, and male or female relatives as well as influence of the teachers. Sinsabaugh (2005) continued with this line of investigation by studying middle and high school students who crossed over gender stereotypes in their instrument choices. She explored family, peers, personality, and school environment as factors in these non-traditional choices. ...She confirmed that a variety of factors – including instruments’ sounds; students’ body sizes; and family, peer, and teacher opinions – influenced students’ decisions to play a particular instrument.’ (Abeles, 2009: 136)

## Conclusion

### Background variables and a social identity framework

Gender and other background variables can be organised within different frameworks to better understand the relationships between them and to develop a positive musical identity. Hallam, Rogers and Creech (2008) constructed the following figure to explain and explore instrument choice and identity.

**Figure 4:** Factors affecting instrument choice. Taken from Hallam, Rogers and Creech (2008:15)



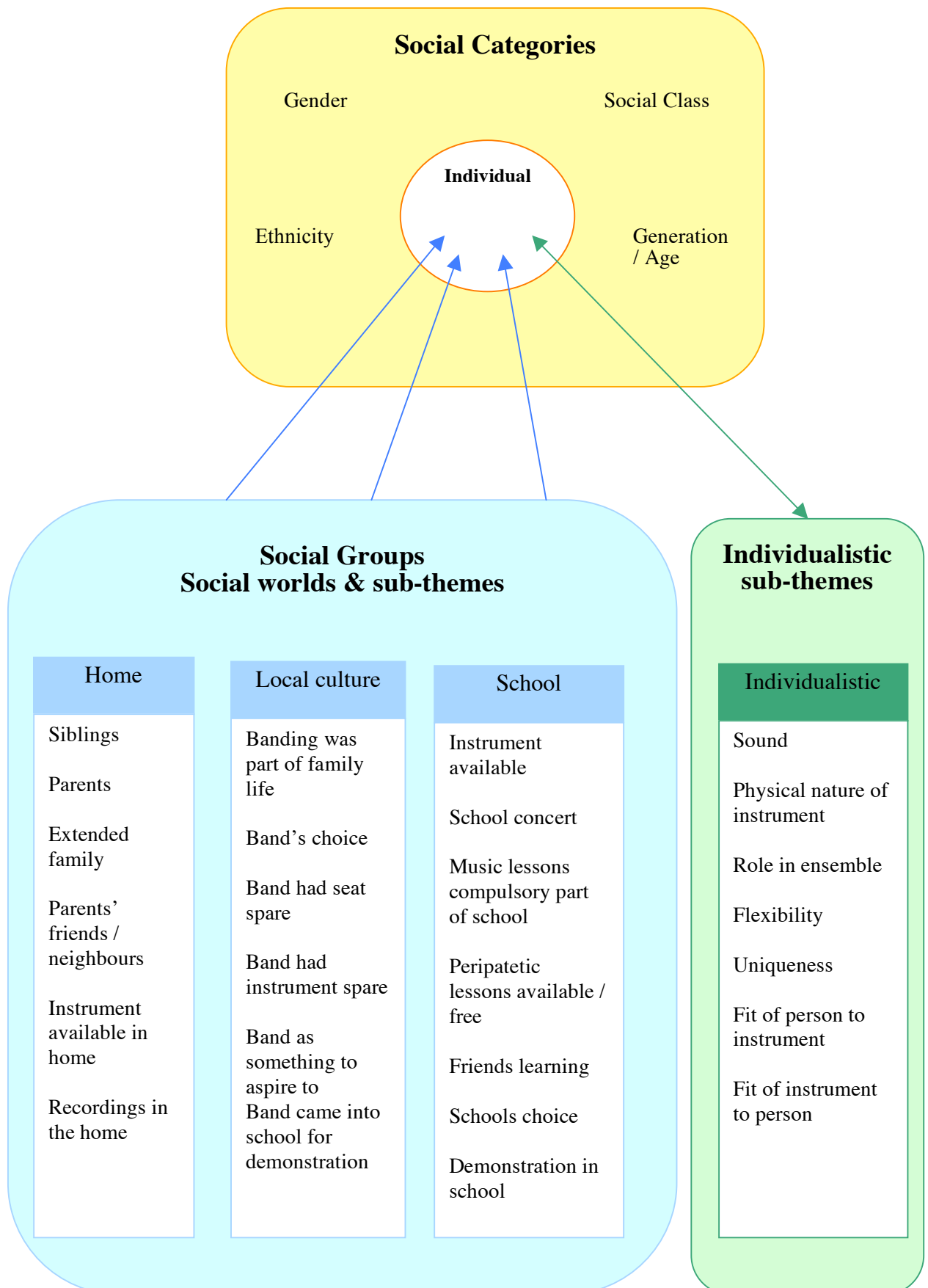
Their decision, though not empirically researched, listed internal and external factors:

- a preference for sounds / shapes
- interaction with the instrument including: the physical skills necessary to play, and the psychological temperament needed
- access to, and availability of an instrument.

Their diagram gives some sense of the social and personal motivators involved in instrument choice. Consideration of the internal and external motivators (both social and personal) makes intuitive sense. However, a SI approach would place the child at the centre of the diagram, and so illustrate the developmental relationships between the child and his or her social worlds. This would move the emphasis onto the reciprocal, developmental nature of identity and instrument choice, widening the understanding of identity and early music-making.

This approach would include gender as a social category among a range of others, but not as a category or group that was more important than others. It does not show preference for one theme over another, but it does begin to show how these variables could help an individual's musical identity (be this social or personal) to emerge. A diagrammatic representation of such a network is presented on the next page in Figure 4a.

Figure 4a: proposed new diagram of instrument choice and social worlds



Chapter Five

## **Analysing the influence of social groups on instrument choice and identity**

### **Introduction**

This chapter uses SIA to re-examine the relationship between instrument choice and identity. It looks at the real-life choices and reasoning of the adult brass musicians who took part in Phase Four of this research. It builds on the body of previous music literature in two ways: first, by re-examining and extending understanding of the relationship between gender and instrument choices for brass musicians and secondly, by investigating some of the social worlds, social groups, and categories that are involved in this process. One social world (the home) is looked at in detail.

### **Broad research questions**

- What do adults recall as the major influences in their decision to take up a musical instrument?
- What social groups and categories influence instrument choice?
- How can these influences be linked to developing a positive musical identity?
- What individualistic factors influence instrument choice?

### **Chapter aims and structure**

This chapter mirrors the broad themes of the literature review.

- *Part one* investigates gender and instrument choices for a large group of brass musicians. It augments previous research, not least because it focuses only on brass musicians, and so examines a family of instruments that is universally considered masculine. The aim of this section is to challenge a number of commonly held beliefs concerning brass playing and the gender-typing and gender-practices associated with being a brass musician.



- *Part two* uses SIA to frame and explore other social motives for instrument choice across the lifespan.

### **Methods**

The methodological stance, the background to research Phase Four, and a discussion of survey methodology is in Chapter Three. A full copy of the online survey is in Appendix I. The coding framework described in Chapter Three, was used to analyse ‘other influences’.

## **Results and discussion**

Most of the data used in this chapter was drawn from research Phase Four, the online survey. Participants were asked to reflect on their instrument choices and the inspiration behind these decisions. The questions explored musicians' demographic details, playing history, the pleasures and pains of performing, their musical and non-musical careers, and their beliefs about gender in music-making.

### **Part one**

Research in Phase Four has a large, international population of brass musicians. The global nature of the sample has to be taken into account when considering these results, because of the influence that culture has on musical practices. The sample drew participants from across the lifespan, and from across all types of brass music-making. The amateur musician responses were the most prolific out of all the musical role categories (professional, semi-professional, music student, amateur).

### **Participant demographics**

This population overview examines a number of these variables in relation to their instrument choice.

#### ***Nationality***

The online nature of the survey produced national and international responses and these were discussed in Chapter Three. Key findings were that:

- three of the role categories (professional, semi-professional and music student) were of a similar size for UK and non-UK participants.
- the amateur category had nearly six times more responses from UK than non-UK residents, probably due to the amateur brass band scene in the UK.
- location differences are shown to be important in later analyses where the influences of social worlds are examined, partly due to opportunities available to musicians.

Consequently, an analysis of participants' social worlds was made on UK residents only.

***Age and gender***

The ages in this sample ranged from 14-82 years, therefore including musicians from across the lifespan. The average age for male musicians was 36 years, and for female musicians was 29 years. The discussion about the samples of the participants in Phases Three and Four demonstrated a skewness in the age distribution of the participants, towards younger respondents.

Thirty percent of respondents were female; a ratio of approximately 2:1 (388:184).

## Instrument choice

Although the literature indicated a growing female presence in all aspects of music-making during school, brass instruments were consistently classified as masculine in most of the choice and preference studies. The literature does begin to indicate that some brass instruments may be more masculine than others but only a small number of brass instruments were included in the MIPCSF scale. There is therefore scope for a more detailed analysis of the gender perceptions of instruments and instrument uptake by gender, across the whole brass family.

## Categorising the brass family

The brass family can be categorised into three groups: higher, middle and lower brass. These categorisations are based on the size and sound of the instruments. The instruments used in the online survey are placed into their categories in table 5.

**Table 5:** Brass instruments divided into higher brass and lower brass categories

Higher brass	Middle brass	Lower brass
Soprano cornet	Tenor horn	Euphonium
Cornet	Baritone	Tenor trombone
Flugel horn	French horn*	Bass trombone
Trumpet*		Bass / tuba

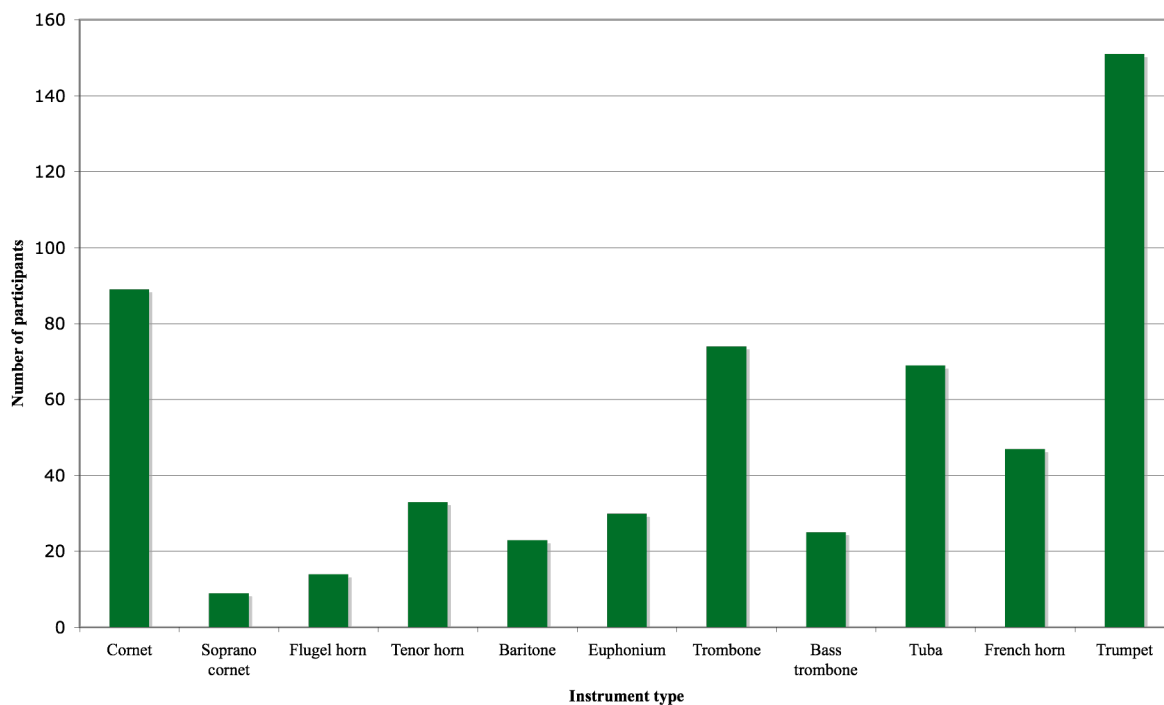
\*Indicates instruments that are not part of a brass band

As the same embouchure technique is used for playing all of the brass instruments, there is an unusual level of flexibility across the brass family. In principle, a brass musician has the ability to play all of the instruments (with the possible exception of trombone because of the slide positions rather than valve combinations). Brass instruments are also employed in a variety of genres and ensembles; so, for example, a trumpet player could play within an orchestra, a big band, or (using a cornet) play in a brass band. This flexibility is central to developing and sustaining a positive musical identity throughout the lifespan, and is discussed at the end of the results.

### Instrument choices

Figure 5 presents the total numbers of responses for each brass instrument. The instruments are presented in the order that they would be found in a brass band, with the higher brass on the left and the lower brass on the right. The two instruments that are not used in a brass band – trumpet and french horn - are placed on the right hand side.

**Figure 5:** Total responses for each brass instrument



The majority of the responses came from trumpet, cornet, trombone and tuba players.

The most popular instruments therefore include both high and low brass, and also brass band and non-brass band instruments.

This sample was then re-analysed for gender-related patterns in instrument choices.

This is illustrated in figure 5a.

**Figure 5a:** Stacked bar graph illustrating the numbers of male and female responses for each instrument

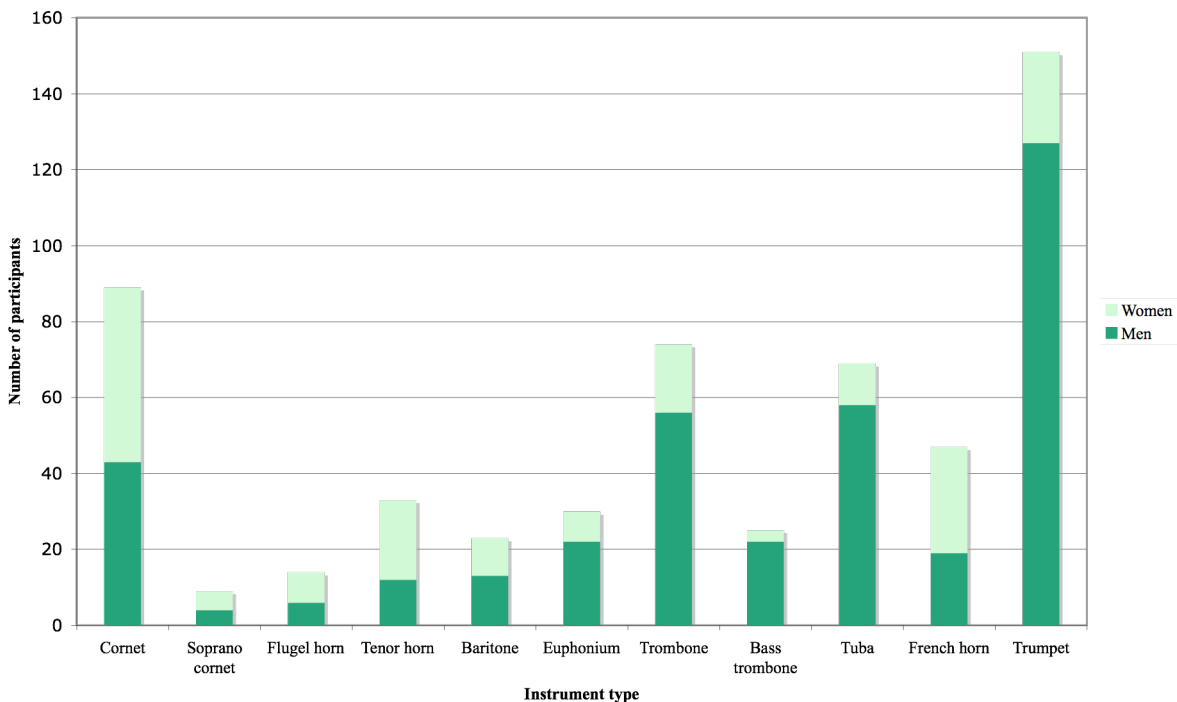


Figure 5a shows disparities between the numbers and types of responses from the male and female instrumentalists.

***Frequency of response by gender***

For most instruments, there was a greater proportion of responses from men than women: for example, there were 127 male trumpeters to 24 female. However, the cornet, flugel horn, french horn and tenor horn categories all had more female than male respondents, indicating that not all brass instruments are necessarily favoured by men, and thus that not all brass instruments can necessarily be considered equally masculine.

***Modal responses by gender***

The top five modal responses for men and women’s instrument choices are ranked in table 5a.

**Table 5a:** Ranked modal responses for male and female instrument choice

Women: top five instruments	Men: top five instruments
cornet (n = 46)	trumpet (n = 127)
french horn (n = 28)	tuba (n = 58)
trumpet (n = 24)	trombone (n = 57)
tenor horn (n = 21)	cornet (n = 44)
trombone (n = 18)	euphonium & bass trombone (n=23) <sup>ψ</sup>

<sup>ψ</sup> euphonium & bass trombone tied equal fifth, with 23 participants playing each

When instruments are ranked according to popularity for men and women, the ratio of men to women within this subset of the whole sample was maintained (30% female, 70% male). The most frequent choice of women was the cornet, at 46 responses. In comparison, this was the men's fourth most popular choice, at 44 responses.

The most popular categories of instrument for men and women were smaller, higher brass instruments. This might suggest that size and sound could have less to do with gendered choices, as both women and men favoured small instruments. However, more men had a tendency to play lower brass than women, with three out of the five most popular choices for men being lower brass, but four out of the five most popular choices for women being higher brass.

Therefore, although size may be important in instrument choice, small does not necessarily equate to feminine: there may be other instrumental or social attributes that are important: the role the instrument takes within the ensemble, the histories of the ensembles, the flexibility of the instrument across genres and ensembles, and the sound of the instrument. A cornet, for example, is used only within a brass band. A trumpet, however, is used within many different genres and ensembles. It must also be remembered that students very often begin on a cornet or trumpet because they are lighter and easier to carry than many of the other brass instruments, and many participants simply did not see a need to change instrument.

'Started on french horn, but was only 8 and couldn't carry a double horn around - Given a (lighter) tenor horn instead, then moved 'down the band' via baritone, then just stayed as a euph player.' (os. 269)

'Was taught to play by my dad in the local brass band - started on horn and never changed - love it!' (os. 171)

### **Women's instrument choice across age group**

Having established that women's choice of brass instrument differs from men's, the question needs to be answered: 'Has this changed over time?' Respondents in their 40s and 50s will have had very different musical and social histories to those in their teens or 20s.

To gain some level of environmental and cultural control over the data, it was decided to select only brass band instruments for this analysis, leaving out the instruments that were purely orchestral (trumpet, french horn). The following table (5b) indicates the numbers of women who selected instruments from the upper, middle and lower brass groups. (See p86. for categorisation of instruments in groups).

**Table 5b:** Frequency of female responses reflected as percentages of the age group sample

	Upper Brass	Upper Brass %	Middle Brass	Middle Brass %	Lower Brass	Lower Brass %
Teenage n=24	10	42%	5	21%	9	38%
20-29 n=44	24	55%	10	23%	10	23%
30-39 n=31	14	45%	10	32%	7	23%
40-49 n=21	10	48%	7	33%	4	19%
50+ n=8	1	13%	5	63%	2	25%

There were steadily decreasing numbers of participants across the upper brass, middle brass and lower brass categories and the sample sizes are too small for a statistically significant finding. (A chi-square was conducted and found to be non-significant (chi-square = 9.229, df = 8, p-value = 0.32334)). However, they appear to indicate that although female participants consistently seemed to select smaller, higher pitched instruments, there might have been a recent opportunity for teenage girls to play lower brass.

It would be rash to suggest that this indicates that gender associations with lower brass are changing. However, it would be worth following this up to see whether this group of women retain their instrument choice over time.

### **The usefulness of ‘other variables’ in instrument choice**

Before moving onto the discussion and conclusion, it is important to acknowledge that there was a wealth of ‘other variables’ that were mentioned in participants’ responses

The literature review mentioned numerous ‘other variables’ that might be important in instrument choices, which have seen limited systematic research. Some of these variables are examined below:



### **Sound**

The sound an instrument makes seems to have an intrinsic, individualistic level of appeal in instrument choice; a frequency analysis was conducted to search for sound-based keywords in the data. Table 5c illustrates the responses:

**Table 5c:** Frequency of responses recalling sound-based keywords

<b>Key Word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Sound	31
Timbre	5
Loud	4
Noise	8

48 out of 395 participants recalled sound as having some influence in their decision-making process. The instrument's sound can be heard live or through recordings, and the emotional impact is something that is not forgotten even later on in life. This participant, like many others, used emotive language ('I fell in love') to describe her reasoning:

'My mother was playing a Henry Mancini recording of Exodus and I fell in love with the sound of the french horn.' (os. 59)

On some occasions, something specific about the sound of the instrument itself, was detailed. For this participant it was the pitch of the cornets that attracted him, but note that this factor was not the only one in the decision-making process (he had musical role models to inspire him as well).

'There were many members of my mother's family playing in the village brass band (uncles and cousins) and as I wanted to practice music my parents thought this was a preferable to lyric song. I chose the Bb cornet because I liked the high sounds (I would have even preferred the soprano cornet, but there wasn't a need in the band).'

### *Sound in combination with other factors*

The sound of the instrument was rarely the only influence; the quote above and the one below show the importance of role models (as discussed later in this chapter) and the sound of the instrument, in the development of musical identity:

‘My cousin played Trumpet and I liked the sound of it, so my parents bought me one and I started having lessons and went from there.’ (os. 569)

### *Sound and role*

The link between the sound and the role of the instrument appeared to be important, especially for those who had made a number of different instrument choices over their musical careers. For others, as they developed their musical identities, they discovered that the role of a different, deeper instrument suited their temperament better than the instrument they were currently playing.

‘I played tenor trombone for many years until I discovered the POWER! (bass trombone).’ (os. 436)

‘Simply the best, the best sounding instrument played in brass bands. Nothing else comes close. It is the king pin of the band linking all the groups and sections together and is a solo instrument in its own right.’ (os. 267)

### *Sound and visual appeal*

Often the appeal of an instrument’s sound was accompanied by its visual appeal.

‘Beautiful sound. I was in music since 5 years old, and at 11 I decided I wanted to play a wind\brass instrument. I visited a concert where my future trumpet teacher and my future colleague performed and was astonished by the sound. And a trumpet is beautiful. And it has only three keys :-)’ (os. 65)

Brass instruments were frequently perceived as easy options for children who perhaps would not have excelled at other instruments. The adult below describes how his school education suggested he was poor at music, but playing the trumpet appealed

because it looked easy and the sound was loud. In learning to play he felt special and found that his developing musical identity set him apart from his other classmates / 'bandmates'.

'We were given a musical aptitude test in school. I had one of the lowest scores. The music teacher looked at my grade and said, "You'd be a good trumpet player." So after getting a student trumpet and some rudimentary lessons it turned out I did have some talent. I learned to play much faster than my bandmates and I liked making loud sounds, so I was hooked. It was something that set me apart.' (os.37)

### ***The sound and later choices***

The appeal of an instrument's sound was not always an immediate, emotive, childhood influence. For some, early decisions were made for other reasons (in the case below, to 'be like dad') but the sound, later, became one factor among a number that were important to the musician.

'I was moved onto the horn from trumpet. I think it was popular at the time in primary school and it was pretty. As I got into my teens it was all about the sound the instrument made.'

'My Dad used to play and I originally took it up when I was a kid. I changed to Euphonium in secondary school, and then did nothing for a long time before taking up trumpet again a few years ago. What inspired me? Jazz, the sound, "being like Dad" (when I was a kid), and more recently wanting to be good at a difficult instrument.

### **Lifespan, musical choices and musical identities**

It is often forgotten in the literature that music-making is a lifelong pursuit; instrument choices are frequently seen as single choices that are only made in childhood.

However, as people change and develop through their lifespan, so too does their music-making; musical identities need to evolve and adapt.

### *Children changing instruments*

Children often do this quickly and within a short space of time. Participants in this study discussed starting on one instrument and then moving to another (either dropping or maintaining their first instrument) for a variety of reasons.

‘I started playing violin at junior school and our music teacher was very keen to encourage pupils who showed an interest to get involved. Brass seemed a logical alternative so for many years, I played both.’ (os. 43)

‘I played piano from the age of 6, and then Violin from age 8 to 12. I didn't get very far on the Violin (Grade II in 4 years), and had a friend who played trumpet - his brass teacher was well cool, and I asked her if I could learn from her. She had a Euphonium player who was doing his A Levels, and she needed someone who would fill his place in the school brass band when he left. She asked if I would consider the Euphonium, I said yes, and the rest is history.’ (os. 233)

Instrument changes occurred for a variety of reasons: not ‘getting on with’ an instrument appeared to be quite common. However, one positive aspect of playing brass was that if a student does not like one instrument in the family they can easily change to another.

‘I started playing the trumpet at the age of 12, as I had heard "Trumpet Voluntary" on a CD and wanted to play it. I joined a brass band a couple of years later, where I was given a cornet which I actually much preferred playing. It was then suggested that I move onto soprano cornet as the current player was leaving shortly and needed a replacement. (os. 87)

Although participant 87 first took up the trumpet, opportunities arose allowing him to migrate onto the cornet and then to soprano cornet. He managed to make at least one of these transitions relatively easily, and saw this as a positive change in his musical identity. These external motivators appear to be absolutely central in later lifespan musical decisions.

***Ensemble requirements***

Fifty-nine participants mentioned a factor in their instrument choices that was related to the demands or requirements of the band.

‘I used to play Eb Tuba up to about three years ago. I was never really suited to it though in terms of producing a big sound. A vacancy in my band came up on Baritone and I gave it a go. Now I feel I've got so much more potential, much more my instrument.’ (os. 96)

‘Started on cornet, got bored (really not a cornet player), moved to baritone, got bored, moved to trombone as there was a vacancy in band, been here ever since. Planning to move to bass trom after the areas.’ (os. 268)

As this participant illustrated, it is often the case that an opportunity to change instruments presents itself naturally. Musicians may not necessarily have been searching for an opportunity, but had a sense that they were not suited particularly well to an instrument. For others, age and the demands of the instrument became too much, especially where the parts were high and exposed:

‘It was the next stage having spent the previous 30 years on Soprano Cornet’ (os.476)

‘After playing soprano cornet for 25 years, a change became necessary, my cornet tutor suggested french horn.’ (os.210)

A small number of the participants in this survey came to instrument choices later in life as adult beginners:

‘Having played clarinet and saxophone since I was nine I fancied a complete change, partly to see what it would be like learning an instrument as an adult. The trombone looked like fun, and is a jazz instrument.’

## Summary and discussion of findings: gender

*Results indicate that,*

- gender has an impact upon instrument choices, and this has been maintained across the generations.
- brass instruments are still taken up by more men than women, and continue to be considered predominantly masculine instruments.
- when the respondents' actual choices were considered, women showed preferences for the smaller higher instruments; men had a slight preference for the larger, lower brass instruments.
- however, the three-way relationship between the frequency of responses, gender and instrument type, cannot be solely based on the size of the instrument; the most popular instrument for men in this study was the trumpet. This may indicate that other factors (social or personal) could be relevant to instrument choice.

*Future research* needs to expand on these qualitative findings with a detailed quantitative analysis looking at masculine-feminine preferences over the whole brass family. Additionally, the influences of other background factors also need to be developed: for example, at the time of choosing an instrument, the availabilities of different instruments in comparison to the number of males and females wanting to play them may have limited their choices. Some of these other influences are explored in the next section.

*There are numerous implications* to these findings. It is important that both parents and children begin to re-consider the gender assumptions about brass instruments and brass playing, and that there is a conscious realisation that brass playing, at least within an educational context, is no longer a masculine pursuit. (See Appendices N and P for a selection of album covers by male and female brass artists as examples of the gendered / non-gendered nature of brass music-making, depending upon perspective.)

The growing female presence demonstrated in the higher brass instruments should be exploited by appealing to the women who already play to become more visible as brass educators, mentors or role models. This could be achieved by strengthening the links between local musical cultures and the education system, for example using local brass bands with a distinct female presence as musical exemplars within schools. Such

efforts may help counteract children's and parents' beliefs about gendered instruments and musical practices.

The numbers presented so far in this chapter have highlighted gender differences in the uptake of brass instruments. However, the need for education of both adults and children, about their music-based gender schemas, was highlighted by a young professional trumpeter in research Phase Three:

'I used to teach this ten year old girl trombone in Golders Green. One evening her mum gave me a lift back to the train station in her four by four. She turned to me and said, 'Is it normal for (*name of daughter*) to play the trombone. Do you think she's a lesbian?'" (hs. 23 tpt)

Gender assumptions about instrument choice and identity have received the most amount of research within the instrument choice literature. Having approached this by expanding the understanding of the masculinisation of the brass family, it is time to turn to the more under-researched area, the recollections of background influences on musical choices.

## Part two

### Background influences on musical choices

#### The emergence of social worlds

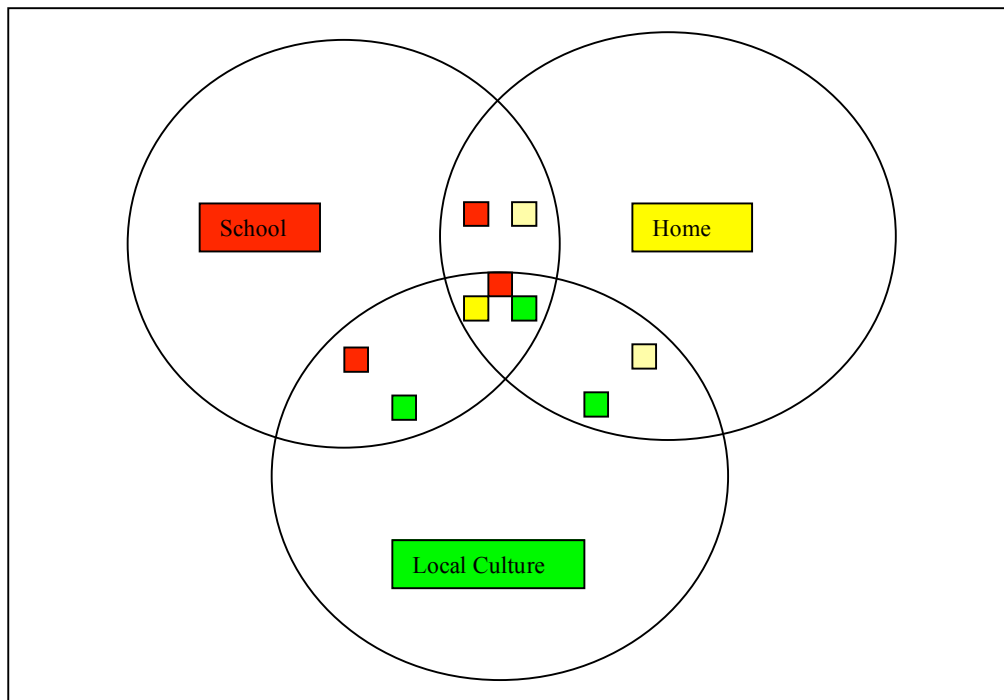
The literature showed a lack of research empirically examining or discussing the broader picture of musical choices and opportunities. It may be obvious, but is nonetheless important, that a thematic analysis clustered reasoning around three ‘social worlds’: the home, the school, and local musical cultures. Typical examples of influences from these social worlds are given in Table 5d, below:

**Table 5d:** Typical examples of influences from distinct social worlds

<p><b>Home:</b> ‘Always wanted to play brass as grew up with my dad and brothers in a band.’ (os. 201)</p> <p><b>School:</b> ‘Was given the chance at school, liked the sound, started playing – haven’t ever stopped’. (os. 18)</p> <p><b>Local Culture:</b> ‘I was ‘allocated’ a B flat bass at the age of 13 in a championship section band in Cornwall! I think it was a combination of being big for my age and them finding it hard to replace the player who was retiring! (os. 249)</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The examples above showed that each world occupied a physical space / place. Each world had its own culture, with its own social rules and practices. They often contained membership hierarchies, and the members (in this case young musicians) valued their place and the opportunities / support that these social worlds gave them. Often the social worlds overlapped in their opportunities and support for developing a musical identity, as schematically represented in Figure 5b.



**Figure 5b:** Schematic representation of potential overlap between social worlds

These social worlds play a central part in the relationships between music, identity and instrument choice. The overlaps or tensions between these worlds may contribute to the development and maintenance of musical identities, and perhaps, as well, to the end of early musical aspirations. As yet, little research has acknowledged these worlds and their relationships through empirical investigation.

### Relationships between social worlds

The relationships between social worlds were very important in this analysis. The following table illustrates the percentages of responses (from the UK sample only) that discussed different social worlds.

**Table 5e:** Percentage responses mentioning social worlds

Social world	Percentage
Home	32.3%
Local culture	32.7%
School	42.9%
None	13.3%

This analysis showed that the most frequently mentioned social world was the school. Sometimes, however, a social world was spoken of in conjunction with one or more worlds. For example,

‘School encouraged the playing of an instrument and I was a big fan of Herb Alpert at the time and so chose the trumpet’ (os. 263)

‘My father played in championship brass bands and so I started on the cornet and then picked up the trumpet when I was at school for wind bands, orchestras, and brass ensemble playing’ (os. 444)

In these cases participants 263 and 444 were coded as mentioning more than one social world. 444, for instance, discusses an interaction between home (his father’s influence) local culture (his family participation in brass bands) and opportunities to change instruments and try out new ensembles whilst at school.

The following table details the percentage of responses that recalled either single social worlds or combinations of social worlds in their recollections.

**Table 5f:** Percentage of the UK sample mentioning social worlds as single entities, or in conjunction with other worlds

Single social world responses	% of total
Home	15
School	28.3
Local culture	11.9
Combined social world responses	
School and home	7.5
School and local culture	10.1
Local culture and home	8.4
School, home and local culture	4.8
None	13.8

These answers, which were produced through free recall, allowed participants to respond exactly as they wished. There was no list of possibilities from which to select all their influences, and so this analysis is simply of their first thoughts; about how their

choices were influenced. More than half the sample (55.2%) recalled information that could only be referenced to one social world. Approximately one-third (30.8%) recalled influences that cited more than one social world. The remaining 13.8% discussed influences that could not be categorised into any of these social worlds. These were often individualistic influences to do with the sound or the shape of the instrument.

The most frequently reported single social world was school. This is probably because the opportunities to hear and play music often arise early within a child's schooling, something which is especially important if there are few or no opportunities to get hold of instruments in other environments. The second most important environment was home, probably because of the strong relational roles that family members take in a young person's life: as role models to be copied or competed with, as authority figures, or as enablers and motivators.

This section has discussed a simple, social identity-driven, thematic analysis that has raised the idea of social worlds being relevant to understanding instrument choice and musical identity. This suggests that, by examining the relationships between these worlds, new ways of sustaining and developing musical identities may be revealed.

The influence of the home social world on musical identity is discussed next. The home has been selected because a brief analysis of school influences showed similar patterns (because the opportunity was there (instruments were available) and there was school based encouragement (teachers / friends). It was felt that an analysis of home influences might provide a more useful analysis.

### **The home as a socio-musical influence**

Social identity sub-themes analysed are: opportunity and encouragement, role models (adult, gendered and parental) and a musical home.

#### ***Opportunity and encouragement***

The social world of the home contains a wide range of influences on instrument choice. These influences clustered around a number of sub-themes: opportunities, support (emotional and practical), motivation and musical exposure; as detailed below.

**Table 5g:** Range of home-based influences

<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Quote</b>
Opportunity	'It [a cornet] was hanging in dad's shed as a child...I had to play it.' (os. 287)
Emotional / practical support	'My mum played, and so did all of my uncles and grandparents.' (os. 123)
Motivation	'My sister had just moved onto euphonium, so I thought I would make use of her spare cornet. I guess I wanted to be a bit like her.' (os. 47)
Musical exposure	'Was inspired by seeing a family friend playing, and listening to my parents' Glen Miller records.' (os. 85)

#### ***Role models in the home***

One of the higher-order themes that tied the sub-themes in table 5g together was 'relational' figures within the social world of the home. These figures could be called role models, although their role and relationship to the musician may be more complex than a simple role modelling of behaviour.

Relational figures were some of the most frequently cited influences in this analysis. They were central in the child's choices and future musical identities, often because they provided the opportunities and / or encouragement to take up music.

‘My parents were keen for me to learn to play an instrument - when asked which one I'd like to learn I just blurted out trombone without really thinking about it.’ (os. 230)

These figures were role models in the broadest sense of the term, because they were not necessarily musicians, but they did have the capacity to facilitate music-making. Their level of musical ability did not seem to matter to the child at all. Non-musical role models inspired children by encouraging them and finding them opportunities outside of the home; they were facilitators and supporters of their children's musical choices. Musical role models, however, often became so because of family banding traditions, and so the child became involved in music-making in the home and at band.

‘I picked up a tenor horn from the school music cupboard. I attended the band my dad was conducting, and from there I graduated to tuba via everything in between.’ (os. 117)

The key inspirational figures involved in these instrument choices were adult family members, siblings and neighbours. The following table (5h) was produced by searching for keywords within the responses that related to salient individuals in the home social world:

**Table 5h:** Frequency analysis for role model key words

Role model 'key word'	Frequency of responses
Father / Dad	26
Mother / Mum	11
Parent	11
Granddad / Grandfather	5
Grandmother / Granny	0
Grandparent	1
Uncle	4
Aunt	0
Brother	6
Sister	6
Sibling	2
Family	6
Cousin	1
Family friend	3
Neighbour	1
Salvation Army	4

The most important figures were parents. The table details 87 separate accounts of important relational figures within the social world of the home, amounting to 22% of the UK sample. Analysis showed that the range of figures included adults and children, immediate and extended family, and friends and neighbours of the family. A Salvation Army upbringing was included in this count because of the all-encompassing family nature of this movement. Many echoed the following sentiment: 'No choice I'm afraid! Given to me at the Salvation Army' (os. 145).

#### *Adult role models*

By far, the most frequently cited role models were adults. Analysis of these responses showed gender differences: there were 35 occurrences of adult male role models (father / dad, granddad / grandfather, uncle), 11 of adult female role models (mother / mum), and 12 where the gender was unclear (parents or grandparents). (There were also a few where it was unclear whether they were adults.) Further analysis of the responses revealed that it was often the case that male role models were musicians: respondents often stated that their dad / uncle / granddad played. Fewer of the female role models

were cited as musicians in their own right. They were more likely to be facilitators of music-making.

### ***Gendered musical role models***

25% of the responses were gender-non-specific, recalling parents, family friends or neighbours as role models. Gender was not intended to be the exclusive focus of this section, but because 40% of the respondents recalled male role models it is worth exploring the gender division a little further.

#### **1) Men as musical role models**

Thirty percent of respondents recalled their father as inspirational (the other 10% of respondents specifying male role models mentioned uncles or grandfathers) and there was a range of reasons for their influence.

**Table 5i:** Sub-themes involved in the 'male musical role models' category

<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Quote</b>
Emulation	My dad is a horn player (os. 498) My dad and my granddad played so it was natural that I should follow in their footsteps (os. 354)
Motivation	Disaffected with academia at school, I joined the Army as a Junior musician at the age of 15. I wanted to continue my drums & percussion, but it wasn't needed. My Father had played trombone, so I asked to do that instead. (os. 168) My father played Euph, I began on a 'smaller' instrument, but went onto Euph, then flugel, then bari, then horn, then bari, even cornet, Bb Bass and Eb Bass and have been known to help on percussion (os. 276)
Listening tastes	My voice broke, I wanted to play a horn (because my dad liked Denis Brain I think) but the teacher I tried out with recommended Trombone (os. 446)

**Table 5i:** Sub-themes involved in the ‘male musical role models’ category (continued)

Sub-theme	Quote
Cross-social worlds	I previously played the recorder and when lessons stopped being offered at school it seemed natural to progress onto another wind instrument. My father is a trumpet player and my interest in the instrument led me to that choice. (os. 308)
Opportunity and availability across social worlds	My father played in championship brass bands and so I started on the cornet and then picked up the trumpet when was at school for wind bands, orchestras, and brass ensemble playing (os. 444) My dad used to play, so we had one in the attic. I wanted to play an instrument, and brass appealed because it was loud! (os. 381)

This table illustrates the range of influences that fathers could have on their children’s musical education; they could motivate their children, and also provide inspiration through their listening or their musical practices (if they were musicians). The idea of relationships between social worlds also emerged as important, often providing the opportunity (os. 381) as well as the motivation to play brass (os. 444). If the parental role model was, or had been a performing musician, this often opened opportunities to their children: instruments were available at home, or because the home world and worlds of local music-making merged (often because brass banding can be, by its nature, a family pursuit).

## 2) Women as musical role models

### *Frequency of responses recalling gendered role models*

The contrast between the frequencies of responses that recalled male or female role models was remarkable: eleven recalled female role models, whereas 36 recalled male role models. Out of the 11 responses that recalled female role models, six responses were made by women and five by men, however, of the 36 responses mentioning male role models, six were made by women, and 30 by men. Each set of responses varied in its age range: those who mentioned female role models were significantly younger than those who mentioned male role models.

- respondents mentioning female role models: Age range 14-47, mean age 23 years.



- respondents mentioning male role models: Age range 15-65, mean age 37.5 years.

The only female relational figures discussed were mothers, whereas male role models included fathers, grandfathers and uncles.

Five out of the six women who discussed female role models (their mothers) talked of role models that played music, not just facilitating music-making. With the greater proportion of women talking about female over male role models, there may be some important inferences from this finding.

### *Nature of the responses*

The responses discussing mothers, revealed them as either the facilitators of music-making, or (more rarely) the musical inspiration themselves.

‘My mum said, “Do you want to play in a brass band?” I said “Yes” and a cornet was put in my hand.’ (os. 498)

‘Followed in the footsteps of my mother who also played the tenor horn. I have also played the cornet but find the horn easier to play.’ (os.372)

### *A musical home*

Responses have illustrated that in many cases, adult figures in the home helped to develop a positive, musical, family environment that motivated, supported and gave opportunities to make musical choices.

The social world of the home did not have to be extremely musical to encourage music-making. Sometimes simply hearing music being played through the television or records was enough to inspire a child:

‘Couldn’t stand listening to violins, and chose the trumpet out of a story book.’ (os. 483)

‘Why french horn rather than trombone, trumpet, etc? I think it was my grandparents playing me recordings of Dennis Brain playing Mozart's horn concerti...’ (os. 505)

Also, salient figures within the home often gave opportunities to children to become involved in music-making outside the home. The overlap between home and other social worlds can motivate and inspire children, but often in ways which adults perhaps would not understand immediately. The quotations below illustrate the importance of getting out to musical events, but also highlight that the individualistic appeal of an instrument or a musician's behaviour became the appealing / motivational reasons for the person's musical choices.

‘Used to watch my grandma singing in G&S operas and the trombones in the orchestra were painted crazy colours!’ (os. 479)

‘Was at an Acker Bilk concert and saw the trombonist mucking around and thought I want to play that!’ (os. 469)

Although there is a lay perception that musical children must come from very musical homes, the results have so far shown that it is not necessary for parents to be extremely accomplished musicians in order for a child to develop a positive, sustainable musical identity. What is more important is that some music occurs in the home (even if it is simply playing different types of music on CD), and that parents are supportive of music listening and music-making. From the responses given, it is clear that for children, inspiration comes from a wide variety of places: often musicians recalled that a concert or demonstration was motivational, but simply because music was seen as being fun or the instrument's shape or sound appealed to them.

Thus, links between the home world and other social worlds are important in giving a child opportunities and support for music-making - but experiences do not necessarily have to be expensive, time consuming or involve a parent being musical.

*Parents as musicians*

Having said that homes need be only slightly musical (but very supportive) to encourage musicianship, inevitably there were a few responses from musicians whose parents were also professional musicians.

‘Both my parents play the french horn (that's how they met - playing in the staff orchestra at BBC), plus my mum's a peripatetic brass teacher around Lancashire, so we had plenty of french horns around the house. Started playing piano, then recorder, then my brother started the horn (he soon gave up and has ended up on the cello), so maybe that was an incentive...copying my brother? Not really sure why the horn. Guess I must've liked the sound that I heard ringing round the house when my parents played.’  
(os. 403)

‘Both parents were professional musicians - Mum played flute and Dad played piano, so I guess I was always going to take up an instrument, then I was always taken to Dad's Sunday afternoon jazz gigs in Leicester and instantly knew I wanted to play trumpet after seeing it on stage. No idea what age I was at the time, but it was always trumpet trumpet trumpet.’ (os. 467)

Where the parents of respondents were professional musicians, the home world was an extremely musical environment, with many potential influencing factors: easy access to musical instruments, their availability in a relaxed and informal environment, and multiple musical role models – whether parents, siblings or pupils of their parents. There was support and opportunities in and outside respondents’ homes, as described in the two examples above. However, these quotes also demonstrate a certain level of inevitability about the respondents’ music-making.

Participant 403’s discussion of her brother demonstrates that developmental ideas about sibling rivalry and emulation of behaviour may well be important in children’s musical choices and musical identities.

Beyond the social factors these two examples also show detailed individualistic reasons for instrument choices: the sounds that were part of the home environment, and the appeal of the trumpet. These two participants are unique because their parents were not only direct musical role models, but also facilitators: exposing their children to music in the home and beyond, and offering them structured and unstructured support in music-making.

### **Conclusions of the home as a socio-musical world**

This study has revealed that the important factor is not whether the parents of respondents worked as professional musicians, but whether they were practically involved in music (and became musical role models), and/or whether they encouraged music-making in their children (so fulfilling an educator / parental role). Brass banding in particular often involves the whole family (Russell, 2000), and so these influences may be uniquely powerful for children growing up in brass-playing (or brass-appreciating) families.

Music-making can be inspired by musical and non-musical figures in the home, and these figures are very often the parents. In the case of the brass musicians in this study, the father was often influential; if a female figure was mentioned, it was always the mother. Where mothers were mentioned they were often the facilitators of the music-making, not always emulatory role models. However, where mothers were musicians and cited as role models they tended to inspire music-making, particularly in their female children. The importance of parents' dual role of musical mentor and musical facilitator means that a parent who feels they are unmusical should still be strongly encouraged to contribute to their child's musical education and instrument choices.

This section has discussed the idea of social worlds and the relationships between them. It has examined clusters of themes that arose when examining the inspiration behind instrument choices, specifically social identity themes that were connected to the social world of the home. The smaller social groups within the home - family, extended family, neighbours *etc* - all contribute to children's musical instrument choices, as does the environment that these social groups inhabit. The figures within social worlds contribute to developing relational social identity; this is a two-way process (for example, the parent-child relationship or the music teacher-pupil relationship), in which each party has a role and the relationship between the two affects the development of social identities for both parties.

One of the most interesting results in this short analysis was that five out of the six women who discussed female role models (their mothers) talked of role models that played music, not just facilitated music-making. This shows that although female musical role models are rare in this family of instruments, when they are present, they are powerful forces for inspiration in instrument choice. With the greater proportion of women talking about female over male role models, there is some indication that being

a female musician may encourage and inspire more girls to take up music. The differences in age-range and mean ages in the samples that talked of these gendered parental role models may be an indicator of a generation of girls now in their teenage years and early twenties who are being inspired by a relatively new wave of female brass musicians.

Women do not have to be musical role models themselves, although they can be very positive musical role models where they do play something.

The intention was to investigate other social factors involved in instrument choices; by asking adults to freely reflect on their inspiration behind their instrument choices, giving participants unlimited space to respond, and placing no cues or restrictions on their responses, a unique perspective on instrument choices and identity has emerged. For some, it was a choice that occurred in childhood and the emerging musical identity was strengthened over the lifespan, for others it was a choice that evolved as social / musical opportunities opened up, and the musician's self-concept altered as a result.

### Discussion and conclusions to section three

Most of the previous literature considering instrument choices has focused on a few variables relevant to childhood choices. Assumptions are made that preferences will result in actual choices, and there is a sense of finality and fixedness about these childhood choices. The wealth of other influences is drastically under-researched, and has been restricted by research trends in music psychology.

This research provides a more holistic approach to understanding and examining musical practices, both in terms of furthering academic research, and in terms of practical solutions and interventions to encourage positive music-making and the development of sustainable musical practices and musical identities.

Social Identity Approach provides a hierarchy of groups and categories which can influence musicians' social / musical identities. The investigation showed that the development of *relational social identities* is central in the process of creating and establishing a sustainable musical identity. This form of identity was influenced by the sociological approach to social identities, (see Chapter Two).

Brewer, however, has argued that these identities arise by defining the self in relation to others (Brewer, 2001). She argues that these form an important part of our social identity as they arise through the interrelationships that form within larger social groups or categories. In the case of this analysis this would include the family units in the home social world; the class; the ensemble; and teacher-pupil relationships. Brewer (2001) discusses the interdependent nature of these SI's, stating that,

‘Behaviours expressed by one individual are dependent on and responsive to the behaviour and expectancies of the other parties in the relationship. Even highly prescribed social roles must be adapted to some extent to the characteristics, needs, and skills of the specific other(s) occupying complementary roles. Hence, relational identities reflect the influence on the self-concept of societal norms and expectations associated with occupying particular roles or social positions, and the nature of the specific interpersonal relationships within which that role is carried out.’ (Brewer, 2001: 118)

Thus, relational identities would begin to account not only for the influence of parents, siblings and neighbours, but also for the influence of music teachers and close friends in

the school environment. The theory of relational identities sees the role of the instrumental pupil and the music teacher / parent as one that can impart musical skills or a love for music, but also one that carries with it expectations about future possibilities for musical identity. The young musician implicitly learns about the social identity of 'being a musician' and 'being a music teacher' through the music-based relational identities that evolve through these partnerships.

Applying a social identity perspective to the relationships between musical instruments, choice and the self-concept shows a much more complex picture than the current music literature indicates.

# **Section Four:** Gender and Music- Making

Chapter six: A socio-historical  
approach to gender and music-making

Chapter seven: Examining gender and  
music-making



## **Gender and music-making: historical analysis and contemporary experiences**

‘...She plays good for a girl... the usual comment from men about all-girl bands. It was during the 40s and 50s, because the war was on and girl bands were in. At that time the women were just beginning to get a toehold in the big time. I tell the girls today they’re walking on our backs because we paved the way for them. I didn’t mind those comments at the time, but I don’t like to hear it now. You don’t go up to a man and say ‘you play good for a man.’ But you know what? I didn’t have that problem. See, Diz and those guys never said, ‘You play good for a girl.’ They’d just say, ‘Damn, girl, you’re good.’ I never had a problem with that because I wanted to be defined as a female.’ (*Enstice & Stockhouse, 2004: 34 talking with Clora Bryant*)

Clora Bryant was a pioneering professional female trumpeter during the 30s and 40s, yet she and other female instrumentalists were frequently omitted from contemporary jazz histories. This excerpt, however, acts a partial narrative of women’s experiences in professional music-making. Women were seen as inferior musicians (and for many associations made between their musical ability (or lack thereof) and their gender). Discussing all-female ensembles indicates some of the slow but positive historical changes women have experienced in music-making. The quotation demonstrates the importance of the relationship between the self, music-making and gender, showing that ‘being female’ can and should be retained as an element of musical identity.

From a research perspective, this excerpt demonstrates the power of interviews, developing and exploring narratives, and the need for an historical perspective to provide the foundation for discussion of contemporary musical behaviours. As Bryant suggests: today’s musicians are ‘walking on our backs because we paved the way for them.’ Dahl (1984) described researching women’s involvement in jazz as ‘Like what I imagine collecting butterflies to be – you go out with your net to many a remote, even secretive spot to track your shy and elusive quarry’ (Dahl, 1984). This is a sentiment that resonated strongly whilst developing this section.

## **Section Four**

### **Gender and music-making**

#### **Section Structure and Rationale**

Contemporary influences on musical identity in early life have been considered in the previous section; in it, gender became clearly evident as a key influence, but not the only one. This section focuses on gender in two ways, initially by considering the social and contextual influences on women brass players and their musical identities, from a historical perspective and then by looking at current influences on musical identity in relation to gender.

*Chapter six* is a socio-historical literature review into gender and musical practices. It investigates women's musical practices and their development as brass instrumentalists.

The *research questions* asked in chapter six are:

1. How has being a musician changed over time, especially for women?
2. How was music-making, particularly brass music-making gendered?
3. What roles have women undertaken within music-making?

*Chapter seven* builds on Chapter six by investigating the experiences and identities of contemporary female brass musicians, through an analysis of data in phase four coupled with an analysis of the narratives in phase three. The objectives of chapter seven are:

1. To assess the current culture regarding women playing in brass ensembles.
2. To compare participants' perceptions against this.
3. To gain a picture of people's real experiences of playing in ensemble.

*This section is a key contributor to the final two objectives, assessing the importance of gender as a key influence on developing musical identity both in a historical sense and across the lifespan.*

Chapter Six

## **A socio-historical approach to gender and music-making**

### **Introduction**

This chapter emerged from recognising gaps in existing musical, psychological, and gender knowledge, as well as being in response to changing practices within contemporary amateur and professional music-making. It is common knowledge that brass music-making has a history depleted of women, and is a masculine pursuit. As yet, however, there has been no detailed consideration of how, why, and where brass music-making may have developed these associations, and how or why these associations may or may not be altering, given the contemporary cultural portrayals of female musicians. This argument is developed through both a socio-historical and socio-cultural perspectives.

In examining musical identities from socio-historical and socio-cultural perspectives, this literature review is dissimilar to the other reviews in this work. Other chapters focus solely on contemporary literature, whereas this work combines historical and contemporary perspectives. It examines recent and historical academic literature as well as incorporating contemporary photographs and stimuli in an approach that is more akin to Cultural Studies. There are a number of reasons for this inclusion:

Historical musicology and music history have often operated in a boundaried manner, much of the research functioning within a self-contained socio-historical vacuum. Music psychology, in contrast, is more interdisciplinary in its approach to research, and yet it has rarely looked to historical literature to advance current studies. However, links can be made between both music psychology and historical musicology by looking at the gendered music literature. Most of the early research into gender and music-making adopted a historical stance; for example, collating historical documents and texts into a contemporary volume (Neuls-Bates, 1995); or as an edited volume of academic discourse and discussion concerning women's historical roles in music-making (Bowers and Tick, 1997).

This research takes a similar historical approach to examine women's changing roles in brass music-making, developing ideas about the musical instrument and gender identity. To link this chapter more fully to the empirical research in the next chapter (and throughout the thesis), the idea of women's roles within musical and wider society is then examined through commentary on media imagery and interviews concerning female classical musicians.

This chapter is divided into three interlinked parts:

*Section one* examines the complex interplay between social identities, accepted musical practices, and instruments as gendered objects. This historical discourse provides grounds for questioning how women's roles in music-making have changed, and how gender has shaped perceptions of musical instruments and musical participation.

*Section two* explores brass music-making and the changing perceptions of women. Two movements of social reform in the 1860s are discussed: The Salvation Army, which used brass bands to 'spread the word', and Sax's social experiments encouraging women to play brass as a measure against tuberculosis and to earn an income (Ellis, 1999). The social commentary<sup>1</sup> on both schemes helps to advance ideas about brass music-making and social identity. The section ends with a discussion of the contemporary social commentary<sup>2</sup> surrounding present-day instrumentalists.

*Section three* concludes the chapter by discussing women's roles within the brass band movement. It investigates the changing perceptions of women's presence in this movement, whilst also briefly discussing the emergence of all-female ensembles.

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<sup>1</sup> Two cartoons are examined in detail during this chapter (see appendices K & L ). Many other sources and references about the Salvation Army were taken directly from the archives at Durham University

<sup>2</sup> Album imagery, photographs and newspaper articles (see appendices N-U )

## Part one

### Historical perspectives on the social act of music-making

#### The public and private spheres of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

‘What is that you are saying, Fitzwilliam? What is it you are talking of? What are you telling Miss Bennet? Let me hear what it is.’ ‘We are speaking of music, madam,’ said he, when no longer able to avoid a reply. ‘Of music! Then pray speak aloud. It is of all subjects my delight. I must have my share in the conversation if you are speaking of music. There are few people in England, I suppose, who have more true enjoyment of music than myself, or a better natural taste. If I had ever learnt, I should have been a great proficient. And so would Anne, if her health had allowed her to apply. I am confident that she would have performed delightfully.’ (*Excerpt from Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen*)

Musical activities were commonplace in the upper classes of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain. Music was an important social tool, whether through concerts, practice, or simply as a topic of conversation. These activities were undertaken by men and women, but in different ways. Women’s musical participation occurred in the private sphere of the home: music was a tool for small-scale, localised social engagement. As implied in the excerpt a symbol of femininity, within the home it could illustrate female gentility, compliance, social standing and accomplishment.

Women’s private acts of music-making and social engagement have long been overlooked by music scholars, perhaps because of the lack of related formal documentation and evidence. The public musical world, on the other hand, was well-documented though thoroughly masculine. Music-making, whether conducting, composing or being an instrumentalist, was a masculine domain, and music was a profession only undertaken by men. (Bowers and Tick, 1987; Neuls-Bates, 1995) Because of the disparity in documentary evidence, scholarly work has often failed to identify women’s contributions to music in this period, and drawn the false conclusion that women took little part in music-making.

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries music had an important role in society. Investigating its practice indicates a great deal about socio-musical identities of the time, providing some idea of how ‘being a musician’ for amateurs and professionals have changed. Once the evolution of the female professional musician is set in this

masculine historical context, it is easier to understand current gender imbalances observed in 21<sup>st</sup> century ensembles. This approach begins to illustrate the gender stereotypes associated with the musician, music-making and the instruments themselves.

### **Social representation and social identities**

Social conventions governing music-making during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were based on socially acceptable practices for men and women, which would now be considered restrictive and stereotyped. It was acceptable for women to play some instruments and not others, as it was for men. One way to explore accepted social and musical identities is to examine portraiture of the time. For the upper classes, being portrayed with a musical instrument was popular, and it publicly reflected ideas about their identity, social standing, wealth and power.

Leppert (1993) explored the relationship between instruments as ‘portrait props’ (rather than instruments to be played) and the gender of the portrait subject. He found gender segregation in instrument choices, and believes that these were based on socio-cultural ideas rather than musical ones. These public images perpetuated and reinforced the gendered characteristics of instruments, with small boys being captured with toy and full size infantry drums (Leppert,1993:117) and other socially acceptable masculine instruments (the violin, cello or flute). Yet, real musical practices were different for men:

‘There is no question that upper-class males played harpsichords, spinets and pianos during the period, though in lesser numbers than for other instruments. Yet very few chose to be painted with keyboard instruments...on account of it seeming effeminate.’  
(Leppert,1993:122)

This quotation reinforces the earlier concept of two different types of musical identity: the public and private. Being considered ‘effeminate’ would not have been something to publicly and eternally be displayed through portraiture.

Women were encouraged in instruments appropriate to their gender: singing, keyboards and guitars. Leppert discusses portraits of girls with tambourines as being the female equivalent to the boys being featured with drums (Leppert,1993:153). Again, tambourines were not necessarily played, but were symbolic of the subject's femininity. Being pictured with other feminine instruments could indicate wealth and status, and hint at a level of musical accomplishment. As a consequence, musical instruments became a tool to define women's socially acceptable identity.

Music therefore served a number of social purposes: it provided social entertainment, but it was also a tool through which SI was reflected. SI's were shaped through socially constructed notions of gender appropriate behaviour. Women could sing and play a limited number of instruments, which neither hinted at sexual impropriety, nor required physical exertion: the flute for example, was considered phallic and so inappropriate. The piano, however, could be lightly touched with the finger tips, enabling a woman to maintain her composure. Men had more flexibility in their public and private musical identities, but were still immortalised with overtly masculine instruments.

The social gulf between men and women was vast and evident in both the practical and symbolic use of musical instruments. Instruments were used in the construction of public social identities, and the importance of gender to public social identity meant that the pre-existing gender stereotypes relating to particular instruments were reinforced and perpetuated. Associations between instruments and gender were *socially driven*, not necessarily musically. It was not, as might have been expected, the timbre of an instrument which determined the gender associations with an instrument. Symbolic associations were more important; for instance, the phallic connotations of the flute, or the connection between lute playing and prostitution. For an instrument to be considered feminine, it needed to enhance femininity and it must require little movement or exertion, enabling women to appear talented and retain grace, poise and social standing.

### **Social change: late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Gender continued to play a central role in both amateur and professional music-making during this period. As in the preceding century, women's musical choices, roles and achievements were shaped by non-musical criteria. For much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was improper for a woman to deviate from traditionally 'feminine' instruments. Performing

in public was, for the majority of women, improper, sharply contrasting with the home-centred image of wife and mother. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw large social and cultural development, especially in the upper classes for whom women's suffrage began in the 1860s.

The Industrial Revolution had begun earlier in the century, and so the late 1800s was a time of swift economic and social growth, when heavy investment in the arts was taking place. Wilson (2005) describes the late Victorian world as witnessing a,

‘remarkable musical revival in Britain, with a flowering of concerts and operas. This in turn led to the founding of the Guildhall School of Music in 1880 and the Royal College of Music in 1883.’ (Wilson, 2005: 206)

Historically, higher education was only open to men. Nevertheless, as women's social roles were changing, higher education opportunities were evolving and expanding. Women began to fight for the chance for further education. Parallels can be drawn between the worlds of music and medicine: traditionally both were male vocations. The London Medical School for Women was founded in 1875, yet once qualified, women struggled to enter the profession and to be taken seriously as doctors. This was due in part because it was asking for deeply ingrained social expectations, values and attitudes to change (Furst, 1999; Hume, 1964; Garrett Anderson, 1939).

The music conservatoires were perhaps even more progressive, offering limited amounts of co-educational opportunities for women. The Royal Academy of Music began to offer a limited amount of co-educational opportunities that were simply unavailable at universities.

‘[Conservatoires] became a haven for women musicians who, banned from taking music degrees at Oxford or Cambridge, found it difficult to study abroad.’ (Bernstein, 1986)

Visible, public development of female musicians occurred once educational opportunities arose. Until this point, universities had been male domains. As a result, women's music-making partially emerged from its hidden position in the private,



amateur spheres of the home, and social entertaining, and into the public domain. This did not mean that women could easily move into being professional musicians, but it was the start of change. Tick & Bowers (1986) describes these swift socio-musical changes:

‘Whereas in 1870 women played the piano, harp, or guitar for the most part, by 1900 there were professional violinists and professional all-women orchestras. In 1870 women composers wrote parlor songs; even fewer wrote parlor piano music. By 1900 there had been premieres of concertos and a symphony by American women.’ (Tick & Bowers, 1986: 326)

However, as in medicine, women’s transition into the public musical spheres faced real barriers, just one being the continued existence of all-male professional ensembles. Women with higher education and talent tended to move from being serious amateur performers in the home, to the semi-public pursuit of music education, and back into the home environment of music-making, becoming a music teacher. Although higher education gave women a semi-public visibility as musicians, their employment in music still remained domestic. Even the positive development of women as music teachers was not without its problems: society expected music teachers to be men, and seemed to have less respect (thus less pay) for female teachers (Neuls-Bates, 1995). Nonetheless, music teaching eventually became one of the few areas of accepted and profitable employment for women, important in a society that placed such behavioural restrictions on women.

Publicly at least, music was a patriarchy until the end of the 1800s. The emergence of the women’s movement encouraged partial acceptance of women as educated equals. With this came the breaking from prescribed roles, and tentative female footsteps into public musical life. Educational reform drove ‘being a musician’ beyond the realm of a serious leisure pursuit, but society struggled to accept the public practices of female professional musicians. This historical perspective demonstrates the music and gender links between public and private, amateur and professional, social worlds. This perspective begins to show how instruments may have become gendered, because of gendered socio-musical practices.

***Music as a gendered practice: an historical lens on gendered instruments***

The social beliefs and practises of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries have shown the strength of the relationship between gender, identity and music. Musical activities were influenced by social beliefs, but they also reinforced social gender identities: not only did women appear less genteel if they played the wrong instrument, but men would also seem less masculine. The differing cultural roles of men and women led to the gender stereotyping of musical activities. Concurrent with this was the gender stereotyping of instruments.

Instruments considered feminine (during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) were the viol, lute and voice, with the gradual addition of the harp, guitar and keyboards. They were feminine because they required little movement or physical exertion, and could easily be played in the home. Men had more flexibility during this period, making their instrumental choices from strings, woodwind or brass. They tended to publicly disassociate from feminine instruments, to avoid their masculinity being questioned. (Leppert, 1993)

The gender-stereotyping of instruments may have arisen through social beliefs and accepted practices for men and women, but it may also have hinged on a range of physical factors: the size and shape of the instrument, the pitch or timbre of the sound, or the perception that to become accomplished on a particular instrument a musician requires certain personal characteristics.

With reference to the brass family, the physical factors and social beliefs drove the larger, heavier instruments to be considered ‘masculine’. Specific social connotations, such as the use of bugles and trumpets in military work, will also have contributed to the masculinisation of instruments. Other physical factors were socially constructed ‘rules’; for example, it was considered unsightly for a woman to put her lips to something and play,

‘Distended cheeks and swollen lips are not marks of beauty nowadays; and while this is so the flute and other wind-instruments are unlikely to come into fashion.’ (Gillett, 2000: 76).

What appears at odds with current 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking is that for more than two hundred years (until the end of the 1800s) the violin and the flute were considered

extremely masculine. Gillet cites two socially ingrained reasons why violin playing was unsuitable for women:

‘The first of these causes is found in the highly gendered perception of the instrument itself and in the mode of its playing; the second is found in the violin’s close association with sin, death and the devil.’ (Gillett, 2000: 78)

She describes an ‘informal ban’ on women’s violin playing declining from the 1870s, leading to an eventual ‘glut’ of female violinists at the turn of the century. It is no coincidence that these changes occurred at the same time as feminist social movements developed, and women’s access to education increased.

These ideas indicate that instrument gender associations are not fixed concepts: the flute was once considered masculine, yet now it is consistently seen as one of the most feminine. Therefore, viewed from within this historical period, the associations between gender, music and identity can be seen as flexible, fluid, and in so doing, they illustrate the potential for slow social change.

In setting the scene through this historical perspective, Part One has provided a sense of how gender as a social construct has prescribed and restricted music-making in general. The focus of the argument now moves from musicians in general, to discussions specifically on brass musicians.

**Part two**

**Perspectives on female brass musicians**

**‘My best men are women’ – The Salvation Army as an early feminist movement**

The Salvation Army was founded in Britain, in 1865, by evangelist minister William Booth and his wife. It was primarily seen as a religious method of social reform to support the under-classes. Yet at a time when women had little autonomy, economic power and certainly no political power, when they were frequently considered inferior to men, the Salvation Army stood out as a unique supportive environment, open to all regardless of sex or social standing. It offered the opportunity to belong to a,

‘force of men and women knitted together in holy love and fellowship for the purpose of inducing mankind to submit to God and embrace the salvation provided for them in Christ.’ (Salvation Army, 1914)

***Equality within the Salvation Army***

God came before anything else, and united men and women in their work. Catherine Booth (William’s wife, now regarded as the Mother of the Salvation Army) was an educated and prolific writer, and frequently championed the cause of women as God’s ministers. She believed that:

‘One of the greatest boons to the race [for all to embrace salvation] would be woman’s exaltation to her proper position, mentally and spiritually. Who can tell its consequences to posterity? If indeed there is in Jesus Christ ‘neither male nor female’ but in all touching His Kingdom they are one, who shall dare thrust woman out of the church’s operations or presume to put any candle which God has lighted under a bushel?’ (Larsson, 1974)

Because of her influence, one of the leading principles in the Salvation Army was the right of women to an equal share of salvation work. The Army guidance manual contains a short chapter on the social position of women in this movement, supporting women holding seats of power and authority, and stating that they were not to be held

back from such positions because of their gender. Women were to be treated as equal with men in all of life's intellectual and social relationships. This was remarkable for the time, both in terms of women's social standing (sex-segregation and the belief that women were inferior to men was commonplace), and in terms of the patriarchal traditions associated with Christianity. Some difficulties arose when women moved up the ranks, not only working with men but taking roles which gave them command over male officers. Yet, with the belief that God was uniting men and women in their fight, these prejudices eventually died down (Salvation Army, 1990).

There has been little or no academic consideration of the Salvation Army as a feminist movement, but this work is suggesting that it must have played a significant part in the early emancipation of women in general. The movement allowed women to experience equality: it encouraged men to see women's capabilities and to accept them in different social roles. It offered social equality of the highest order, equality in the eyes of God: incredibly significant in an era where religion was central to life, reflecting some of the, then current, controversies surrounding Darwin's evolutionary theories and the 'declining sense of the miraculous'....with the 'public acceptance of evolution.' (Wilson, 2005:187)

### ***Music in the Salvation Army***

From the outset, music was a way to reach people with God's message. Music was always composed by Salvationists to reflect the strict, almost military, yet endlessly positive character of the movement. Ensembles began as singing groups, grew into motley bands of instrumentalists, and eventually evolved into brass bands. (At the same time as the Salvation Army developed, brass bands were evolving, and so these became a logical tool for evangelism).

From the start, the Salvation Army instigated rules concerning the purpose and conduct of the bands and its members.

'They are to work for the good of the corps and for the salvation of souls, and for nothing else. We are not going to stick them up on the platform, nor march them through the streets for them to perform, and to be admired. They are to go there and blow what they are told, and what the Commanding Officer thinks will be best for the

good of the corps and the salvation of souls, and if they won't blow for this object, let them stop their playing.' (Boon, 1966: 203)

The bands and the music, because they provided social entertainment, helped to counteract some of the early hostility towards the movement's customs. The bands were still criticised on a musical level, often becoming metaphors for a lack of musicality: 'a horrible noise worse than a Salvation Army band' (Boon, 1966: 206), an opinion still common today (Wilson, 2005):

'Booth's most famous rhetorical question – 'Why should the Devil have all the best tunes?'- must puzzle anyone with an ear. To compare the hurdy-gurdy noises made by the Sally Army with Haydn's masses, or even with the conventional Anglican psalm-settings, would suggest that the Devil was in fact comparatively lacking in musical advantage.' (Wilson, 2005: 187)

### *Female Salvationist musicians*

As a movement that has encouraged both gender equality and brass music-making throughout its history, it might be expected that the Army would be a champion for the female brass musician: at the very least, a movement where women have had opportunities to develop as brass musicians. However, the early brass bands of the army contained no women. Cox (2007) has suggested that there were Salvationist women in the very early string bands and singing groups, but it seems that the gendered nature of brass instruments and the gender-restricted social practices of brass music-making (for example in the secular brass bands of the time) transferred into the Salvation Army.

Brass music is a mainstay of the contemporary Salvation Army movement, with well-known and highly regarded bands. (See the website [www.theisb.com](http://www.theisb.com).) The International Staff Band (of the Salvation Army) (ISB), has produced some eminent professional musicians who have worked in the wider world of professional music-making, however, very few are women<sup>3</sup>. The Canadian Staff Band, for example, was an

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<sup>3</sup> One notable exception was 'Maisie Wiggins, who was probably (the) best known. She has been described within the Army as a true pioneer for female brass musicians everywhere' (Boon, 1985). Having soloed with Salvation bands as a child during the 1930s, she went to music college in Manchester. Music college provided her musical education that enabled her transition into orchestral playing, and she

all-male unit until the end of the 1970s. The first woman entered this ensemble in 1988 (Green, 2009). The idea of a woman working in this all-male environment was incongruous enough to be thought worthy of cartoon social commentary (see Appendix J).

### ***The impact of the Salvation Army***

The movement influenced the social identities of all those involved, and upon external perceptions of the movement and its members. It is well documented that the Army's work as a whole was subject to ridicule, and even open, organised persecution. (Gammie (no date); Larsson, 1974; Salvation Army, 1990) Becoming a Salvationist in the 1800s meant renouncing one's 'sinful life', and turning away from the seedy underbelly of Mid-Victorian London. Many of the behaviours associated with this world were excessively masculine: fighting, drinking, gambling, and using prostitutes. In asking people to turn from these markers of working-class masculinity, the Salvation Army created a counterculture that was frequently perceived by outsiders as unmasculine or even effeminate. Booth was a maverick with regard to his perspective on women's capabilities and so, encouraged by his wife, gave women opportunities equal to the men. This was proactive, but contributed to the notions of the Salvation Army as effeminate within society. An example of this is in appendix K: a cartoon illustrating Booth dancing in women's clothing with a tambourine.

The Salvation Army has received limited academic attention within music and gender studies. It is, however, an interesting area for studying the historical roots of gendered perceptions and women's musical activities, especially with regard to brass playing. Although promoting equality, the masculine notions and practices associated with brass playing in wider society transferred to the movement.

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eventually became principal trombonist for the Halle. She went on to become the only female British bandmaster in the Salvation Army

### **Brass as a preventative health measure: a 19<sup>th</sup> century social experiment**

In France in 1862 (the same time that the Salvation Army began in Britain), Alphonse Sax, the brother of the famous instrument maker who created valved brass instruments, launched a campaign to:

‘Prove that women had the physical capability to play brass instruments, that practising such instruments was beneficial to their health and moral welfare ...and that social impediments to their performance in public as female brass-players were based on blind prejudice.’ (Ellis, 1999: 224)

Given the masculine associations with brass, this is somewhat surprising, but Sax was a social reformer full of emancipatory idealism. He was motivated by personal interest and the scientific thinking of the time: he believed in a link between health and music, and thought that lung exercises were paramount in staving off respiratory illnesses, especially tuberculosis which was common at the time. Women could only undertake limited employment at the time, and he felt that music might be an opportunity for lower class women to earn a living. Thus, brass playing became a preventative health measure *and* a method of social reform.

To twenty women willing to participate in his course for female brass players, Sax offered free instruments, six months of free lessons, and a prize-giving competition. His objective was, ‘to prove victoriously, in public, what one can do with an orchestra consisting exclusively of women’ (Ellis, 1999: 224).

Unfortunately, Ellis’s research finds no first-hand accounts of the women’s experiences. However, she does provide evidence of the acceptable social and musical practices for European ladies, ‘Brass playing was certainly not considered a genteel pastime, women who did attend required a male chaperone, which placed the course out of reach of the class of women Sax was trying to reach.’ (Ellis, 1999)

Sax’s experiment pushed the boundaries of suitable social practice for women, but when viewed from a social identity perspective, it begins to provide insight into the roots of the relationship between music, gender and identity.



*19<sup>th</sup> century social perspectives*

Ellis turns to the social commentators of the time to understand the impact of this experiment. Women were the weaker sex, and certainly too weak to play brass instruments. Sax circumvented the ‘weakness’ associated with femininity by seeing this musical experiment as a medical therapy: brass playing would improve lung capacity and so overcome ill-health. Ellis, however, described the social commentators as not discussing the health benefits, but having opportunities to focus on the female form:

‘Such appreciations of women’s health and strength appear tinged with erotic delight.’  
(Ellis, 1994: 232).

The sexual objectification of female instrumentalists was also portrayed in the cartoons of the time, which often played on the supposed social impropriety of the women’s musical behaviour. This probably emerged from the conflicting gender and musical messages created by coupling the socially accepted delicate femininities of being a woman, with an activity that is universally seen as masculine.

Cartoonists did not stop at the objectification of the female instrumentalists, and Sax as the leader of this attempted reform was an easy target for gendered ridicule. Appendix L is an illustration of Sax depicted as a woman. This can be directly contrasted to the cartoon presentation of Booth. They were both striving for social reform, and believed women had capabilities beyond the rigid roles that society prescribed. They may have been driven by health concerns and by God respectively, but cartoonists of the time readily noticed the gendered aspects of their separate missions. In championing change and so supporting women, these men went against the socially acceptable gender norms of the time. In doing so they became targets, however, these cartoons serve to illustrate the social practices and social identities of the time, and as such are a suitable bedrock from which to examine contemporary perspectives.

## **21<sup>st</sup> century depictions of female musicians**

Present-day media coverage of female brass musicians is understandably minimal: there are few high profile women working in this area. What there is, however, still indicates gendered ‘traditions’ (although much more subtly than in the 1800s). An examination of some of the media coverage gives indications as to the contemporary social attitudes surrounding female musicians and female brass musicians.

### *Images of female musicians*

For the current wave of classical crossover artists, image is everything. Nowhere is this more prominent than with the electric string quartet Escala: this group came second in the ITV show Britain’s Got Talent in May 2008, and over the course of the last eighteen months, their public image as talented, glamorous, young women has been honed. Appendix M gives two examples of images from their work, illustrating two sides of the acceptable public face of the female musicians. The first image depicts them in powerful, yet sultry stances: interestingly the instruments (without which they could not have a career) reside in the lower third of the picture. The eye is drawn not to these objects of music-making, but to them as objects of desire. The second image of this ensemble is part of an advertising campaign for the hosiery manufacturer Pretty Polly: yet, there is an absence of visible hosiery (as well as string instruments!) The image espouses qualities culturally associated with women and girls: it is a gentle and summery picture, they are sat in a field of white flowers and yellow corn, wearing medium length white dresses (a cultural symbol of virginity and purity).

### *The scarcity of female brass musicians*

There are fewer female brass musicians in comparison to other female instrumentalists. In addition, there are generally fewer brass soloists because the repertoire, rightly or wrongly, is perceived as limited in comparison to piano or violin repertoire (Herbert & Wallace, 1997). During the data collection phases, however, the same ‘well-known’ names were regularly mentioned: the trumpeters Anne McAneney, Ingrid Jensen, and Kiku Collins, and the trombonists Katy Jones, Hellen Vollum and Becky Smith. The up-and-coming soloists Alison Balsom and Tine Thing Helseth were also talked about in the internet survey, and they are currently receiving increasing levels of public attention.

### *Imagery of female brass soloists*

The images used in Balsom and Helseth's CD covers are detailed in appendices N and P. They were images of elegant femininity in their glamorous and attractive in evening dresses, but both hold their 'masculine' trumpets. Balsom's website ([www.alisonbalsom.com](http://www.alisonbalsom.com)), is similarly well-crafted: it still promotes glamorous female imagery, but also a human and less sexually objectified image (Appendix N, ppXXX and XXXI).

### *Contrasting images*

A number of contrasts can be made between the album covers and some of the other images within the appendices: not only are there other album covers, but some 'real' images of brass musicians.

- Appendix Q documents the uniform and personnel changes in the Kibworth Band from 1920 – 2001. This illustrates the masculine nature of banding and the male, military style uniforms that were popular.
- Appendix R shows images of Boobs and Brass (one of two UK all-female brass bands) at the Whit Friday marches in 2009. This shows the masculine 'military look' being retained by female banders. It is clearly a core part of the banding identity and their identity as musicians, but is no more flattering in pink!
- Appendix S is a Decca compilation of the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble (PJBE). This is a typical promotional image of the PJBE at a mid-point in their history (between 1952 and 1981). Their image has no glamorous marketing behind it, and can be directly contrasted to contemporary sleeves. Yet this work still sells because of the musical skill and legacy established by the PJBE.
- Appendix T illustrates male objectification, which is more rare (but not unheard of). Chris Botti's record company state on the Night Sessions album that he is the 'the sexiest trumpeter since Chet Baker'. The sleeve portrays him as conventionally attractive on the front cover, but half-naked on the inside..

Whether objectifying men or women in music-making, this occurs because of the current state of production and marketing that is felt necessary to sell albums. Although not the place for further discussion, it needs to be recognised that having an audience

that consumes music with its eyes instead of its ears will be problematic for the continuing quality of music.

### *The written press*

Sexual objectification is just as conspicuous in the written press as the visual. An article promoting one of Balsom's concerts in the Chicago Time Out drew implicit gender comparisons even in the title: 'Trumpeter Swan' (the article is included in appendix O). At least half of the writing was spent discussing her image in relation to her music-making, something that would simply not occur for a good-looking male brass musician. Balsom often talks of her looks as working against her talent and abilities, but it is these and her gender that have made her newsworthy and marketable. The Independent reported:

'James Jolly, editor-in-chief of Gramophone, said: 'Marrying thrilling musicianship with the looks of a marketer's dreams, Alison Balsom is the very model of a modern classical musician. If a single young artist puts the trumpet on the map it will be Alison Balsom.' (Jury, 2006)

In a recent article in The Times (also in Appendix O) she discussed how she is compared to Mezzo-soprano classical cross-over artist Katherine Jenkins <http://www.katherinejenkins.co.uk/>. She was quick to illustrate the tensions between looks and marketing, versus, talent and musical ability.

'I do feel I'm unfairly bracketed with her [Katherine Jenkins], and I'm not embarrassed about saying that. If the comparisons were with musicians I completely admire, ones who have inspired me with their talent, integrity and artistic vision, then perhaps . . . but to be compared with someone who is not necessarily immediately associated with those qualities is an obvious insult. We're both young and blonde and classical so we must be the same.'

Much of the press coverage is similar to Geelhoed's article in Time Out, and so this article was a refreshing change. It included insightful arguments around music and the visual appearance of the artist made by Balsom, but focussed on the nature of her

talents, abilities and her future career. This however, is by no means the standard response to her work. One hundred and forty years on from Sax's social experiment, it is astounding that social commentary still sees the combination of music and gender as a newsworthy article.

Balsom is a pioneer in the classical and brass solo world for many reasons. Her musical abilities are outstanding: her approach to trumpet playing is uniquely lyrical, and her talents as a performer and arranger make her an exceptional musician. Yet, tensions arise between public recognition in this capacity, and between being a 'marketer's dream'. Winning Young British Classical Performer in 2006, and being the first British woman to win 'Best female' at the Classical Brit awards in 2009 has ensured Alison Balsom has become a very public face of brass music-making: her public discussions of the difficulties arising from the tensions between public recognition of talent or appearance, and the consumption of classical music. Her public comparisons to the attractive but musically inferior classical crossover artists point to the ways that gender and music-making relationships are manipulated within the commercial classical world.

On a positive note, although Balsom is a musician who is highly marketable, *and* one who is extraordinarily talented, if her talent could be discussed more by the media, then perhaps Society would begin to move away from a situation where the gender / instrument relationship, or the attractiveness of the musician was the first and only elements of female musicians to be considered in depth. Women like Balsom have an opportunity to effect genuine changes in attitudes towards music-making, both within the public, the marketing, and the music profession: her appearance on the last night of the proms (September 12<sup>th</sup> 2009) will have brought wider attention to her than ever before, providing an opportunity to inspire developing brass instrumentalists. The thoughts and comments by Balsom on working in the contemporary classical world as a high profile soloist, and the sensitive critique by writers like Alan Franks in *The Times* is an encouraging marker of change.

### Section three

## Brass bands, banders and banding

### Introduction

Slightly earlier than the Salvation Army started, there emerged the secular brass band movement in the UK.

‘The invention of the cornet and other keyed brass instruments led to the phenomenon of brass bands [first appearing] in 1832.’(Fletcher, 1987: 20)

Fletcher drew comparison between brass bands and the ‘singing movement’, as epitomised by the Salvation Army prior the formation of its brass band. He linked their popularity to their ability to foster and strengthen social identities.

‘They were relatively easy to set up and proved useful adjuncts for industry, creating and proving a healthy team spirit – just as chauvinistic singing and the playing of rugby football created and proved team spirit among the sons of the gentry.’ (Fletcher, 1987: 24)

Fletcher furthered this argument by suggesting that the singing movement died out to be replaced by banding because,

‘instruments do not sing words. Industrial bands have therefore been able to lose their Christian trappings, whilst retaining their social functions.’ (Fletcher, 1987: 25)

This idea has little weight, as brass banding and Salvation Army banding were both prevalent musical movements during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and still exist today. The motivation behind both movements may have been social control (in brass banding) and social reform (in Salvation Army banding), but they both played religious repertoires. This section discusses the emergence of brass bands, the progression of women through this movement, and their place in developing musicians’ musical identities, or ‘creating and proving a health team spirit’ as Fletcher described above.

### **Academic perspectives**

The UK has an eminent social and cultural history of brass banding, but academic work in this area has been limited. This may have arisen from the academic focus on ‘art’ music, whereas brass bands were ensembles created by the upper class men of industry for the 19<sup>th</sup> century working-class man, a movement that had little to do with ‘art.’ The research that is available has only been conducted since the 1970s. It is usually created by enthusiastic musicians turned academics, and employs a social history or narrative perspective to the movement (Taylor, 1983; Herbert, 2000; Newsome, 2006). Precious little research into current trends and practices in the brass band movement exists. Current, unpublished research often adopts this historical stance, exploring bands and identities associated with playing during their heyday (Etheridge, 2009). Jones (2007) stands alone in investigating the social and group identities within The Brighouse and Rastrick band, taking an historical perspective and a present-day ethnographic stance. There is little or no current, published, empirical or experimental work that uses brass bands or banders as its subject matter. Consequently, the emergence and development of female brass banders is still – from an academic perspective at least – not well documented, and where it is, there may be only a few pages dedicated to women’s presence in brass bands, and usually within a larger social history text. As a result, the ‘real picture’ as was, and the current changes remain inadequately documented.

### **The social history of banding**

It has its origins in the working class heavy industry of the industrial revolution (Taylor, 1983: 5), and so is associated with class and gender identities. Warnings were given to the music critics of the 1950s not to make class-based assumptions as to the type and quality of the music because of its popularity:

‘The fact is, the average professional musician and musical journalist carries on his labours amongst the higher and middle classes of the country; the brass band is essentially a working-class possession, and he is apt to lose sight of it... [it is one of the] biggest forces in our national musical life today, and no feature of that life (except, perhaps, choral singing) is so bound up with everyday existence of the mass of the population.’ (Percy A. Scholes, *Everyman and his music* – quoted in (Cook, 1950))

As a musical form it developed the perception of being popular, easy to master and so required little musical talent,

‘[It has] become immensely popular, to amateur players because of the comparative ease in learning to play the brass instruments, to listeners (before the spread of wireless) because of its suitability to open-air performance.’ (Cook, 1950: 40)

The (relative) newness of the ensemble and its populist nature limited the repertoire, ‘the repertoire, too, is somewhat restricted and not of very high quality.’ (Cook, 1950). By the 1950s, this was changing, with ‘a number of distinguished composers like Elgar, Holst, Ireland, Vaughn Williams, having written special pieces for competitors to play.’ (Cook, 1950) This may still contribute to current stereotypes associated with this music-making.

Brass bands were, and still are, built on a system of competition and hierarchy, similar to the football league. The top level bands are championship level, then first, second, third and fourth sections, supported by a ‘feeder’ youth section. The movement is amateur, as payment is usually only given to conductors or deputies. One reason brass banding was, and still is, popular with the musicians, is that membership is a creative outlet through which strong social and musical identities can develop. These identities are perpetually reinforced through yearly competitions, however, gender continues to remain an important part of this identity because of the masculine, working-class roots of the system.

### **Women in banding**

However popular this form of music-making with the bandsmen and their audiences, the whole system was entrenched in working class masculinities; women have played supporting roles throughout most of brass banding history, fundraising for uniforms, instruments, and band rooms and providing refreshments for concerts.

‘Ladies’ committees’ had long been a crucial feature of the fund-raising mechanism, while women had, of course, also featured in the audience at concerts. One provincial paper even claimed that a number [of women] were present at the 1920 National contest, where the ‘woman enthusiast...takes her knitting and makes a day of it.’ (Russell, 2000: 80)

Women were usually restricted to the role of musical supporters until change was forced upon all aspects of life (including music) with the First and Second World Wars



(Herbert, 2000). During this time, women took up musical roles that were originally occupied by the men. The 1930s also saw see cultural shifts in brass music-making with the female children of bandsmen learning to play:

‘By 1938 a handful of female players appeared. In March, a slow melody contest at Dinnington in South Yorkshire was won by 13-year-old cornet player, Grace Cole, of Firbeck Colliery Band, with 8-year-old Betty Anderson of Leicester Imperial in third place on tenor horn.’ (Russell, 2000: 80)

War may have been a catalyst for change, but more sustainable foundations were built post-war with the creation of youth bands: the National Youth Brass Band (NYBB) was created in 1952 and it is believed that by 1954 15% of the band were female (Russell, 2000: 81). However, although youth bands gave opportunities for some girls, this was not sustainable music-making as the majority of the brass band movement was still restricted to men.

‘Whenever a National Youth Brass Band course finishes, there are some players who will have to leave the band because they’ll be over the age limit of nineteen.... I remember saying to some of them: ‘Come on there are plenty of bands to play with.’ ‘There aren’t,’ they said, ‘This is the only good band we can play in – the other good ones won’t have girls.’ (Newsome, 2003: 98)

Change within brass bands occurred very slowly, and most likely because of the ingrained masculine social identities in banding.

‘The “old school” resisted the inclusion of women into their music-making and associated activities. Even in the 1980s there were brass bands holding votes on whether to allow women; eventually reality, commonsense and the growth and scope of government legislation on equal opportunities removed any resistance.’ (Greaves & Can, 2001: 65)

Resistance, however, may not have been fully removed. It is politically incorrect to hold gendered beliefs, and so these attitudes may have gone underground and in many

cases may not even be recognised by the musicians themselves. There are still barriers to women in brass bands, especially with regard to their permanent membership of championship section bands. These are prestigious ensembles with highly skilled musicians, but many refused to accept female players until the 1990s. One option for women in bands and other ensembles was to create all-female ensembles: these however have had limited success, but are worthy of further investigation.

### **All-female ensembles**

All-female orchestras, chamber ensembles, big bands and brass bands have developed<sup>4</sup>, but they have had a chequered history and reception. They were often the only way that women could participate music-making in any genre or ensemble.

These ensembles were opportunities to perform music in public, and were one way into professional music-making, especially during the early twentieth century. Had they been successful as a concept they might have been opportunities for women to come into their own as musicians, to obtain regular work, to prove their musical worth and to develop a network of female musicians. Unfortunately, many ensembles, especially the early swing bands, became nothing more than promotional tools or novelty acts, with marketers playing on their gender to attract audiences.

Many female musicians who played with all-male bands were stereotyped: Tucker (2001) described the female singer as a ‘musically unskilled sex object’ and female instrumentalists as,

‘freaks in ways that girl singers were not, especially girl musicians who played instruments thought of as masculine: drums, trumpets, saxophones etc.’ (Tucker, 2001: 413)

All-female brass bands have had almost no documentation. Appendix U is an image of the Sydney Ladies’ Brass Band taken in 1937, however, this was probably a unique venture in the history of banding. Newsome cites the ‘all girls band’ as being perceived

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<sup>4</sup> Current ensembles include: Diva (an all-female 15 piece jazz ensemble based in the USA <http://www.divajazz.com>), and Bones Apart <http://www.bonesapart.webs.com/> and Bella Tromba <http://bellatromba.co.uk/about/> which are chamber ensembles.

as the answer to the barriers to women's progress once they had left the Youth band circuit.

'the male chauvinist big bands like Black Dyke, Besses and Brighouse won't have girls – it's blatant, outrageous prejudice. Anyway, Elaine Wolff came up with an answer, with her all girls band, which was formed about two and a half years ago.'(Newsome, 2006: 330)

Wolff's band, however, only survived from 1981 to 1988. There are two all-female brass bands in the UK. It is slightly ironic that, in line with the previous roles of women in bands (as charity fundraisers) 'Boobs and Brass' was set up as a fundraising venture. The images of the band in appendix R depict a band with a visually strong gender identity:

- the title of the band plays directly on the gender of its members.
- the band marks their social identity as a group, and their individual identities as women by wearing pink uniforms.
- women adopt all musical roles in the groups with the exception of one of the percussionists and the conductor.

Yet history would suggest that these types of band have limited survival within the broader musical worlds, although there is no research into why this might be the case. Herbert (2000) sums up the changing role of women in brass bands in the following manner:

' It is a matter of interpretation as to whether their breaking into the band world represented the achievement of any significant level of 'social liberation' by women. At one level, of course, it did, in that a tightly male world had been breached. Nevertheless, it is equally the case that their place within the bands reflected and was constrained by male values.' (Herbert, 2000: 81)

## Conclusion

By adopting a socio-historic perspective to women's music-making, this chapter has recognised dramatic changes in the accepted practices and social identities of 'the female musician.'

Female instrumentalists have moved from the private and amateur musical worlds to public professional practice, but this has not been a smooth progression: even today, the public presence of women (especially in brass) within prestigious ensembles is limited to a few outstanding musicians.

The precise and contained differences between accepted *historical* musical practices for men and women, have been argued as the foundations for many of the instrument - gender associations, the remnants of which are still felt today. Gender has a significant influence on musical practices and identities, but the historical foundations of this association are rarely acknowledged within current music psychology research. This historical perspective, however, has shown a level of fluidity within the gender - instrument relationship (such as the changing gender associations with the flute or violin); this is an encouraging idea, suggesting that these archaic and inaccurate associations will eventually become outdated.

The nature of brass music-making as a masculine pursuit has meant that women's involvement has always been controversial. Historically wind or brass playing required 'unsightly' physical actions, which would have prevented its uptake. This work has shown that a few women had opportunities through a maverick social reformer in 1865, but that this action was derided as being socially inappropriate for both Sax and the women involved in the scheme. This was some of the earliest examples of female brass musicians being objectified as sexual objects, rather than their musical abilities being examined. This objectification is no longer covert, but has become widespread in contemporary society, because of its active and socially accepted use as a marketing tool in the contemporary classical world.

The brass band movement and The Salvation Army both developed during the 1800s, and these movements are places in which many brass musicians have trained and developed. The Salvation Army used bands as a tool to further the word of God, but their development was inspired by the national, secular, brass band movement, that emerged in conjunction with the Industrial Revolution. Brass bands were ensembles that were built on, promoted and reinforced working-class masculinities. These social identities were such that they transcended the gender equalities promoted throughout the

rest of the Salvation Army movement, with no women playing in Salvation Army bands until the 1980s.

Women's roles have changed in the banding movement: time has shown them move from positions as wives, supporters and fundraisers of bands, to active musical participation. This progression has, however, been unbelievably slow, and vigorously prevented at the start, especially within the higher echelons of the hierarchical banding system. Bands in many ways are still fraternities of musicians, and although gendered practices did not necessarily occur because of initial prejudiced beliefs, the upholding of gendered practices today is unacceptable.

This discussion has raised questions about how contemporary brass musicians have developed their social and musical identities in practice. Is gender still considered a factor in music-making? Are gendered practices and associations still present? Are there still barriers to women's progression in music, and if so are they being recognised and overcome? These questions will be addressed in the next chapter.

## **Examining gender and contemporary brass music-making**

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this chapter are:

- to assess the current culture regarding women playing in brass ensembles and to compare participants' perceptions with this.
- to gain a picture of people's real experiences of playing in ensembles, and the perceptions of the role of gender in music-making.

### **Methods: investigating the current culture**

#### *Assessing the situation*

An attempt was made to assess real levels of employment, in relation to gender, in musical ensembles. Contact was made with a variety of organisations, and databases were searched for statistics on male and female participation in music-making, both as a form of employment and as a leisure pursuit. Organisations included:

The Office for National Statistics databases

The British Music Information Centre

Women in Music

British Association for Brass and Wind Ensembles

The Musicians' Union and

The Incorporated Society of Musicians.

Orchestral employment patterns were estimated by an internet search of twenty orchestras chosen at random through the Association of British Orchestras' website, as of July 2008.

### ***Perceptions of the situation***

In addition to understanding patterns of participation in brass music-making, participants' perceptions of the current culture were directly investigated through the online survey. Five gender-related questions were asked in this survey:

- 1) Since the mid 1800s women have had opportunities to play brass instruments, yet it would seem that many groups still have predominantly male brass sections. Do you agree with this statement?
- 2a) Do you think a stereotype exists for brass players?
- 2b) Do you think a stereotype exists for female brass players?
- 3) Do you think that gender has affected your musical aspirations and desires?
- 4) There are few female principal players in many ensembles. Do you agree with this statement?
- 5) Have you ever experienced difficulties working with a group because of your gender?

After each question, musicians had the opportunity to qualitatively expand their answers.

### *Analysis of on-line survey perceptions*

Responses were quantitatively analysed, measuring the percentages of yes / no / don't know responses. The additional qualitative comments were then thematically analysed, to look for common and salient themes that could further current knowledge of gender and brass music-making. These qualitative online responses were then deepened by thematically examining a cohort of narratives from research Phase Three.

### *Analysis of Phase Three cohort of narratives*

These case-studies were selected from the 41 narrative interviews in Phase Three. They were chosen because they were felt to be representative of the new wave of professional female brass musician. Interviews were taken from instrumentalists specialising in french horn and trombone. As well as talking to those few who had made a success of their careers, an interview with a participant who had chosen to give up working as a musician was also included.

## **Results and discussion**

### **External perceptions: the current brass music-making culture in the United Kingdom**

#### *Quantitative analysis*

It was difficult to accurately assess brass music making in the UK. Initially, the Office of National Statistics was contacted, however the data available was not sufficiently detailed. A number of professional bodies were also contacted, but were unable to provide much useful information. The British Association for Brass and Wind Ensembles believed that they had approximately 65 amateur concert bands registered nationally. This was, however, only a small window onto amateur music making involving brass, as they felt many groups were unregistered. The amateur music-making picture involving brass is very broad and is therefore difficult to quantify in any meaningful manner.

National bodies such as the Musicians Union and The Incorporated Society of Musicians were little help in providing figures for the numbers and type of musicians in work (much less the gender, or types of roles that they occupied). The assessment of professional music-making in the UK had to be conducted by assessing a random selection of professional ensembles, including: full size orchestras, opera orchestras, BBC ensembles and chamber groups from throughout the UK. Table seven indicates the figures for male and female participation, as provided on these orchestras' websites in 2007.



**Table 7:** Male and female participation in professional classical ensembles over 2007

Ensemble	Female Trumpet	Male Trumpet	Female Trombone	Male Trombone	Female Horn	Male Horn
Northern Symphonia	1	1	0	3	0	2
London Symphony Orchestra	0	3	1	3	1	2
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra	0	2	0	3	0	3
London Philharmonic	2	3	0	3	1	5
BBC Symphony Orchestra	0	2	1	2	0	4
The Philharmonia	0	3	0	2	0	5
London Sinfonietta	0	1	0	1	0	1
Halle Orchestra	0	2	1	1	1	4
BBC Philharmonic	1	2	0	2	0	5
London Mozart Players	0	2	0	3	0	2
City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra	0	4	0	2	1	4
BBC Wales National Orchestra	0	3	0	2	1	4
Ulster Orchestra	0	2	0	3	0	4
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic	0	3	0	3	0	5
Royal Scottish National Orchestra	1	4	0	2	1	4
BBC Concert Orchestra	1	2	0	3	0	4
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra	0	3	0	2	1	4
Scottish Chamber Orchestra	0	2	0	3	0	1
Royal Opera House Orchestra	0	4	1	5	0	6
Orchestra of English National Opera	1	2	0	3	0	4
Welsh Opera	0	2	0	2	0	4
Opera North	0	2	0	1	0	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>80</b>

The total scores show dramatic gender differences in the professional orchestral world, with approximately one female musician for every ten male musicians. The higher, perhaps more feminine brass instruments, had more female practitioners than the lower brass; with ratios of 1:7.7 female to male trumpeters, 1:11.4 female to male horn players and 1:13.5 female to male trombonists.

## Participants' perceptions

### *Quantitative analysis*

Table 7a shows the responses to the gender-based online questions.

**Table 7a:** percentages of responses to questions from online survey sample

Question	Yes	No
1) Are brass sections predominantly male?	390 (66.9%)	181 (33.0%)
2a) Do stereotypes exist for brass musicians?	443 (86.4%)	70 (13.6%)
2b) Do stereotypes exist for female brass musicians?	225 (39.4%)	346 (60.6%)
3) Has gender affected your musical aspirations?	89 (15.6%)	482 (84.4%)
4) There are few female principals, do you agree?	390 (49.9%)	270 (50.1%)
5) Have you experienced difficulties working with a group because of your gender?	63 (25.8%)	447 (74.7%)

Note: not all questions were answered by all participants.

Many respondents saw brass ensembles as predominantly male groups. They believed that a brass stereotype existed, but fewer thought that there was a separate stereotype of female brass musicians. The majority of respondents did not perceive their gender to have had an impact on their aspirations, nor had they felt that their gender affected their work with a group. However, 25% did see this as having caused some sort of problem, and it must be born in mind that the respondents were male to female in a ratio of 2:1.

### *Analysis of responses of cohort from Phase Three*

Table 7b summarised the participants who were taken from the online survey and whose narratives were used in this chapter.

**Table 7b:** Summary of key case studies

Participant identifier	Instrument	Musical employment	Age
AB	French Horn	2nd Horn London	24
SB	French Horn	Principal Horn Scotland	38
KJ	Trombone	Co-principal London	27
LL	Trombone	Retired	24
RD	Trombone	Freelance London	28
GB	Trombone	Freelance London	36

*Qualitative analysis: participants' perceptions of current culture*

Participants ranged from amateur to professional, with varied musical experiences, and general themes relating to gender and society are discussed first. Interwoven within these are investigations of participants' beliefs about the gendered practices in their particular ensembles or musical experiences. As many of the online respondents were amateur brass musicians, this section continues by looking at brass band culture and orchestral experience and finishes by looking specifically at the roles of women in brass music-making.

*Brass ensembles: an overview of gender patterns*

The previous chapter illustrated that women have gradually been accepted as musicians and then as brass musicians over time. The perceptions of society and the musicians themselves have changed, and more women are having careers as brass instrumentalists. However, when asked if ensembles and sections were still fraternities of men, 66.9% of the sample thought men dominated ensembles and 33% believed that they did not. A semi-professional jazz and orchestral trumpeter summed up the situation,

'In all the playing that I do, I encounter a small amount of women in brass positions. My quintet is all guys, the band I played with last night had one woman playing trumpet and one on horn, but otherwise all men on brass. That is fairly typical of my work as a musician.' (os. 22)

This sentiment was representative of many of the participants' experiences.

*Brass bands and society*

As women's social opportunities and roles developed, so did their opportunities to continue banding. Participants suggested that the fraternity associated with banding was dying out, in parallel with the broader, accepted, cultural changes in women's roles.

'In my own experience, a woman playing a brass instrument is an innovation which is fairly recent historically, about 1970s onwards. I would say that one of the reasons for this is women began to gain more independence in society in the 1960s. Before the 1980s, many brass bands would not have women players, neither would the London Symphony Orchestra.' (os. 168)

The last 15 to 20 years however, have seen major developments in the involvement of women in banding, with many feeling that there was considerable increased musical participation by women.

‘Very few brass bands do not have women players now. My experiences is that they make up 40 % of the band.’ (os. 175)

### *Brass bands and social identity*

The working-class masculinities traditionally associated with brass bands created them and sustained them as all-male environments. For much of the time women were restricted to youth bands; few filtered into mainstream banding until the last fifty years, and this pattern still seems to be occurring in bands.

‘More women play in the lower sections...as you go up to higher sections you tend to see more men.’ (os. 277)

A number of respondents indicated that women are beginning to take leadership roles within the youth and lower section bands.

‘Out of the eight principals in Youth Brass 2000 four of them are women.’ (os.179)

‘In the band I conduct (Gillingham Imperial, 2nd Section West of England) soprano, principal cornet, flugel, principal horn, solo baritone are all female. I see this wherever I go.’ (os. 124)

As the numbers of all-male bands have reduced and more women generally seem to be playing brass instruments, women’s position in the band movement has positively changed, with a few ‘token’ women in the higher, prestigious bands.

‘The brass movement has always been dominated by men, however this is changing particularly in the lower section bands. Female players are starting to be allowed more

involved in the better bands, although there is a smaller proportion of female to male players in the very top bands.’ (os. 130)

The pace of change for women in banding has been slow and gradual. The official disbanding of all-male ensembles was often cited as evidence that banding was now somehow gender equal, and that there was no discrimination.

‘I don't think that this is about discrimination - just that until recently more men than women took up brass instruments in school. I think that though obviously there are certain brass bands that exclude women, there are more and more women playing in the profession and the 'tradition' of all male brass sections is changing.’ (os. 153)

Yet, as the participant below discusses, to have even a small percentage of bands that remain all-male units is to provide role models, a group ‘image’, and so a gendered social identity to young people training within the band movement.

‘There are only three remaining brass bands in Great Britain (to my knowledge anyway!) who's [sic] players are all male. The bands that allowed only men, have always been some of the leading bands in the country, so there are only a small percentage of these bands. However it does not set a good example to other bands, and in the last 10-20 years, many of the top brass bands have allowed women to play which is great. There are so many amazing female players around and my personal feeling is that it is so sexist. The bands would argue that it is only tradition.’ (os. 327)

As the literature review showed, this type of environment promotes and reinforces behaviours associated with a masculine culture. The hierarchical nature of banding, and the fact that few women belong to the higher, and therefore more successful bands, will lead to a prototype (conscious or not) of a successful band member being male. This is because success within the banding world is hierarchically driven: high-achieving, highly-skilled musicians are those that can be readily accepted into these top bands.

The idea that it was acceptable for all-male bands to exist until the mid to late 1990s is something defended by a number participants as being ‘traditional’, and so somehow acceptable. As banding is based on a competitive hierarchy, comments often illustrated high levels of dedication and commitment to these ensembles by the brass band players.

(One participant who took part was driving 250 miles twice a week for a championship band rehearsal). These ensembles are a central part of many brass musicians' social identities. Subsequently, to have the most powerful ensembles / social groups within this hierarchy as all-male groups, sends out clear social messages: 'these are the type of people who can succeed', and 'this is the type of behaviour that is acceptable within this group'.

### *Orchestras*

Brass sections also have a prominent role in orchestras. They are important to study as not only were they mainly male environments, but they have been found to be the central ambition of many music students aspiring to a career as a professional musician (see Chapter Nine). Historically, orchestras do not have the working class masculinities of brass bands, but perceptions of the changing presence of women brass instrumentalists in them, are similar. As \_\_\_ illustrated:

'I'm currently the only woman in my brass section, and I was appointed 100 years after the orchestra's first concert, so a) what took them so long, and b) they've got some catching up to do...' (\_\_\_)

AB was the first woman ever to be appointed to the brass section of this orchestra, and that was in 2005. This orchestra had its first freelance female instrumentalist in 1936, although this was considered unusual. Why does women's progress in professional music-making seem slow, especially in brass sections? How do these ensembles create their identities, and what are the experiences and perceptions of the women who are beginning to work for these organisations like? One professional orchestral trombonist who responded to the online survey described the general situation in music this way;

'Many of the orchestral sections are mostly male, yet in the youth groups I work with I have seen completely female brass sections. The chance of seeing an all-female cornet section at Black Dyke is, I fear, many years off - but that is as much to do with prejudice in the brass band movement as it is to do with the talent of the female players coming through the ranks.' (os. 18)

This statement emphasises that professional orchestral sections are ‘mostly male,’ but that youth groups contain a significant number of female brass players. There are therefore a number of things that might be occurring:

- 1) more women might be playing brass instruments in childhood and adolescence, but they are not selecting to train for the profession.
- 2) women are training in tertiary music education, but they are not moving into music.
- 3) women are training and moving into the profession but they are not pursuing careers as instrumentalists.

A brief assessment of brass players attending some of the music colleges during 2007 and 2008 (appendix W) suggests that the ratio of men to women was in the region of 2.3:1 at undergraduate level, with approximately one-third of both men and women continuing on to postgraduate level. Numbers of women attending at postgraduate level were very small, making comparison difficult. Possible reasons for this difference may be around considerations of future risks to employment in the profession, and future family commitments. This is, however, a further indication of barriers within the lifespan to women developing a career in music.

The outlook, for professional and amateur orchestral music-making, seems somewhat bleak for female brass musicians.

‘All the brass sections I have played in have been predominantly men. At work there are only 2 women in the brass section (french horn players) out of a total of 23 brass players.’ (os. 76)

Orchestras, like brass bands, were usually fraternities of musicians, and it is only through legislation that women became involved in these ensembles. (The USA appears to have been slightly ahead of the UK in this respect). Research has shown that ‘blind auditions’ (where musicians are auditioned behind a screen) ‘fostered impartiality in hiring and increased the proportion of women in symphony orchestras’ (Goldin & Rouse, 2000: 715). This policy has not yet been adopted by UK orchestras.

*Qualitative analysis: perceptions of women's roles*

Participants considered that women undertook different roles to men in ensembles. The survey showed some recurring themes relating to this: instrument choice and the demands instruments made on the players, women as leaders, principal roles and iconic female instrumentalists, and gender-related barriers.

*Instrument choice*

It was perceived that women 'naturally' took up different instruments. The earlier chapter on instrument choice showed female brass musicians played the higher and middle range brass instruments. However, there is another aspect of instrument choice not yet explored: the physical nature of instruments and the demands and technique required to play them.

Brass playing was described by many as an extremely physical exercise, and one which was especially pronounced when playing the larger brass instruments. Potential female players were perceived as having a restricted instrument choice in what was already a restrictive musical field. On occasion, the stereotypical belief that women's smaller lung capacity actually prevented them from playing was still mentioned. However, it was generally other practical elements that were seen to be barriers to women playing the larger instruments, for example, the ability to physically hold and carry an instrument that was by its nature very heavy and very large.

'The lower brass at least tend to be quite physical instruments, more so than a lot of instruments, and its a natural fact that the average guy is stronger than the average girl. ...not that that is really a reason, and there's nothing to say a woman can't play them just as well, but it seems to be the case that they generally don't play them.' (os. 479)

Occasionally musicians might develop this idea, seeing the physical nature of brass playing was linked to socially constructed ideas about gender and femininity.

'Brass was seen as manly, physical, strong and women were and still are considered delicate, unable to hold their own with the boys. However, I am not sure that is the case anymore unless this is imposed upon a female by her family.' (os. 41)



*Women and leadership*

The responses to ‘There are few female principal players in many ensembles’ saw an even divide in yes / no responses: 49.9% : 50.1%, which therefore begs the questions: ‘What is the real situation?’ and ‘How does the real situation differ from people’s perceptions of it?’

Some respondents believed that women had a limited presence in leadership positions, (whether as section leaders, ensemble leaders, conducting or musical director roles).

‘I feel as a female I am never offered the principal seat over another male of the same standard. Even when I do grab the principal seat I am often made to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome but this is only in one of the orchestras I play with, the conductor is female perhaps she is stereotyping musicians as nearly every section has a male lead except those without males in the section.’ (os. 489)

This has been echoed by recent research, that suggests that women are ‘less likely than men to apply for leadership positions (Bennett, 2008b: 89). Yet, this may not be the only reason for women’s lack of presence in these posts. Participants suggested that they did not apply because they ‘know [they] wont [sic] get the work’, or because family commitments were prioritised at certain life-points. Others felt that women were perceived as lacking in confidence in their playing and so it was believed that they would make poor leaders. Some suggested that women could not relate to the other members of a section where that section was all-male. The dearth of women in leadership positions has an impact not only on the talented female musicians who are not achieving these posts, but on the development of future musicians’ perceptions and beliefs about accepted social identities of others:

‘I was at a band contest yesterday and out of the number of bands I saw there was only one woman principal cornet player and the boy next to me said 'That’s well weird they have a woman principal,' and also it's rare to have a woman conductor.’ (os. 241)

*Iconic figures*

Having discussed the beliefs and reasons surrounding women in leadership roles, musicians in the online survey and interview studies cited a small core of well-known,

high-profile, female musicians: fifteen survey participants spontaneously mentioned the same cohort of female ‘names’ as evidence that women were represented in brass music-making.

‘Anne Mceneny. Michelle Ibbotson. Helen Vollam.’ (os. 243)

‘Katie Price Angela Whelan Anne Macanenie (spelling) Tracey Redfern, Principal of BBC Concert (can't remember name).’ (os. 494)

A number of these ‘iconic women’ had already taken part in the online survey, and so were contacted to take part in the narrative interviews. They talked about their perceptions of their careers and ‘belonging’ to this group in the following way:

‘I think there are ummm a group, or a few real superstars. And I’m really not one of them. I’m not being modest here.’ (\_\_\_)

‘If you look at \_\_\_ she really is kind of a superstar. She’s lovely and she is a real inspiration. I’m good friends with her and she is just such a phenomenal player, so versatile; orchestrally she’s fantastic, she has a job, she also does chamber music, she’s good on the alto, she does solo recitals...she is so versatile and so good. Then there are a couple of others like her as well. \_\_\_, who’s principal of the (\_\_\_\_)orchestra. Again, phenomenal. Those two really stand out as the most outstanding females. A lot is to do with their character. They are both very determined, very self disciplined. They have worked very hard as well.’ (\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_\_ (without prompting) discussed this same set of women. She had been on the periphery of this group, and provided a different perspective having chosen to end her career in music and move into project management.

‘Obviously there are the amazing people, BS, KJ but they are so far above the other blokes, technically, musically. They can’t be ignored. Also, (\_\_\_\_) they are a female trombone quartet.’ (ni. ll. tbn.)

She saw these trombonists as having formed an unofficial network because of their gender identity and musical ability. \_\_\_\_\_ did not see this unofficial group as a positive, mutually supportive entity, as might be expected, because of the shared gender. Instead she admits to competitiveness between herself and other musicians. The reason for this was not given, and so one can only surmise: perhaps because she sees herself as an outsider, despite being a female trombonist?

‘There is a network, although again they wouldn’t want to admit this. But I would generally give gigs to other men. Why? Because they wouldn’t give them to me. Although we all know each other, there is a bit of rivalry between us. I can’t understand why, but there is. We are all trying to make it.’ \_\_\_\_\_

RD’s earlier comments indicated a group of highly regarded female ‘superstars’, but that this group was broader and more inclusive than a few iconic players. She sees herself as part of this wider social group;

‘Those two stand out, but there’s also that female quartet they are good. There’s another Scottish lass who’s freelancing, so there is a real group of us actually.’ (ni. rd. tbn)

This core of female musicians held top performing roles, or were soloists. It appears therefore that where women have moved into higher status, visible, performance roles, others remember them. Their musical identities are accepted and they are respected for their abilities. It is only when in these positions of power that consistent changes can happen. RD discussed a central set of qualities that are needed to work as a musician: Versatility and flexibility, plus determination and self-discipline.

#### *Difficulties experienced because of gender*

The final question in the survey asked if musicians had experienced any difficulties playing in ensembles because of their gender. It was encouraging that 74.7% felt they had never experienced any difficulties relating to gender, however 25.8% felt that they had. This question was very often interpreted as asking about discrimination – either positive or negative.

Many were keen to point out that they had not been discriminated against, feeling that gender inequality was perhaps due to historical precedence, or tradition: 'it's the way things always have been.' Many felt that blatant discrimination was uncommon, and that where it occurred, it was quickly stopped.

'It's not an issue for me and it's not an issue for anyone in my band. We had an MD once who was a bit sexist so I took him on one side and explained that he was causing offence, he was horrified and stopped straight away.' (os. 530)

Neither was it felt that music-making was, or should be, the place for positive discriminatory practices.

As social roles change, so too do attitudes and practices relating to gender. Positive discrimination may be adopted as a policy to influence the gender balance of groups, particularly in workforces. This is a controversial practice and some participants were keen to illustrate their dislike of this type of policy in music-making.

'I don't subscribe the quota theories that there should be proportional representation of sexes / races / ages etc. in all walks of life. As long as no one is held back by their sex, race, age etc. and equal opportunities exist then fine. There are a number of exceptional female brass musicians currently in lead positions.' (os. 230)

In terms of why people had experienced difficulties working due to gender, a variety of themes were cited: the negative attitudes of leaders in ensembles, particularly some 'old school' conductors; a failure to obtain leadership positions, or where they did obtain them, a failure to be taken seriously as leaders; balancing their roles as a musicians against their other social identities, such as being a mother; difficulties socialising with other musicians because they were the only woman there; and finally sexuality and the homophobic beliefs some musicians encountered.

**Table 7c:** Thematic discussion of difficulties due to gender

Theme	Comment
Conductor influence	'I was once conducted by a man who was openly sexist and disagreed with women being in Championship section brass bands. At one concert, he made all the women in the band stand up to be given 'a round of applause' for being 'so fantastic', remaining openly sarcastic whilst he delivered this speech.' (os. 193)
Sexuality	'As an openly gay man, there are certain brass musicians I will never work with again as they have been so openly and unashamedly homophobic. There are also bands where I know I wouldn't be welcome for the same reason. Maybe that's why I make sure I run the bands I play in!' (os. 386)
Family life	'Due to finding childcare for the children' (os. 587)  'Lots of women don't have time to dedicate their lives to music, therefore losing out on opportunities. ' (ni. gb. tbn)
Leadership roles	'I am never offered the principal seat over another male of the same standard. Even when I do grab the principal seat I am often made to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome but this is only in one of the orchestras I play with, the conductor is female perhaps she is stereotyping musicians as nearly every section has a male lead except those without males in the section.' (os. 489)
Socialising	'I am often the only female in the section and am usually overlooked for social events among the older and male players.' (os. 547)  'In high school, especially in marching band there were always jokes and teasing about being the only girl trumpet, but all of that was in good taste and not taken seriously or intended to hurt anything. Then senior year the fact that I was the only girl made the director choose someone else as section leader because they would be more able to relate to the other members. In the small brass ensemble I play with at university there are sometimes awkward moments when the guys realize that a girl is listening to their discussions, but for the most part I guess I have never had difficulties working musically with a group because of gender, just difficulties/awkwardness in the social, post rehearsal aspect.'(os. 523)

Part of being a musician is learning to develop the musical and social skills to become proficient musicians.

'The majority of amateur brass bands have a good mix of men and women - if the player is best for the seat they will be there - regardless of sex.' (os. 171)

Many participants believed that gender simply did not matter, or at least that it should not matter in music. Music was described as a 'great leveller across age, race and gender.' (os. 347) and musicians felt that they and others were rated on their musical abilities.

‘My brass band has a female principal cornet, flugel & solo horn. I feel there is a lack of female players throughout the brass world but once inside I believe they are assessed on their ability rather than their gender.’ (os. 248)

‘That’s just the way it seems to have happened - I don’t think there’s anything sexist in it. All the groups I have played in have always had the strongest player as lead, whatever sex they are.’ (os. 226)

For the majority of participants the restrictions and opportunities in music had nothing to do with gender. In many other cases, gender had not even been considered as an influential force on musical practices.

‘It has never occurred to me that I might be a male brass player. I’m just a brass player.’ (os. 165).

These difficulties may have far-reaching effects, not least the inability to progress a promising career. It was not possible to analyse all the data to determine the genders of those who did experience gender-related difficulties; it must also be remembered at this point that male respondents outnumbered female respondents in a ratio of 4:1. Interpretation therefore needs to be done with care, as many of the comments made could only have come from women, or from men experiencing sexuality related difficulties.

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*Working in an all-male section*

Many women talked about the pleasure they derived from working in all-male sections, and how much they often enjoyed being the only woman in a section. There was often a sense of reluctance in discussing negative aspects of being a woman in a man's world. However, there is also the argument that \_\_\_ makes which is simply,

'I mean the thing is, people who wouldn't want to work with a woman wouldn't book me. Do you know what I mean? So I've not really come across that in London, but I know there are sort of areas of it.' (\_\_\_)

Despite having trained in orchestras \_\_\_ says, 'in terms of pursuing brass bands at a higher level, I've just heard some horrific stuff. All that competitive male ego crap, it's ridiculous!' These 'horrific experiences' seemed not to apply to this cohort's working lives, either because they were just not getting booked for work where their gender might have been a problem, or that on the rare occasions where comments were made they 'toughed it out'. Frequently the comments were from outside their section.

'If I'm honest I would say you are aware of it [being a woman in a man's world] but it is rarely if ever a problem. I've been very lucky, I have never found any kind of strange attitude. For example, if I think last night I was with the Bournemouth Symph, to be honest it was absolutely lovely, the trombones and the brass. It's not anything to do with them, it was just this old guy on guitar...he's from somewhere in Scotland and he was talking about me giving it some. So I just kind of laughed at first about me 'giving it some' but he kept going on at everything I played. How thin is the line between being chivalrous and being a total bastard? It got a bit wearing...'(\_\_\_)

*The impact of role on social identity*

As roles change, then the expectations on a person change to fulfil the requirements of the group to which that person belongs, and therefore their social identity. This change is clearly shown in \_\_\_'s experiences of moving from freelancing as a horn player in the early 1990s, into becoming principal horn of an opera orchestra in the mid 90s.

‘I did like being a female principal of a male section (laughs) Don’t tell X<sup>1</sup> that! But I quite liked it because it um, for the first time I didn’t have to prove anything. Whereas before I would have been the only female, going in as a female player to all male sections. Then I get the ‘oh you’re a girl you can only drink X number of pints.’ But obviously if you are going in as a principal player then they have to, well it’s not the same dynamic. It’s just not. You’re not expected to do anything and if you join in it’s kind of a bit of a bonus. So I quite like that. So it’s more balanced I suppose.’ (\_\_\_\_)

She is also the only female in an all male section. For her though there was a striking difference between going in as a freelance horn player and going in as a principal player. In the former she was expected to fit in with the existing masculine culture. As principal, however, she described the experience as ‘not being the same dynamic,’ the pressure of fitting into the culture had diminished because of the role and responsibility that she held with that seat. This power that she had now gained helped it to feel ‘more balanced I suppose.’

#### *Experiences of all-women groups*

The previous chapter briefly explored the development of all-women groups. Some of the women in the case studies had taken part in these types of ensembles, however, their experiences were not always the positive, powerful, enhancing experiences of belonging that might be expected. Such ensembles appeared not to enhance identities, nor did the musicians particularly want to be seen as having this as part of their identities.

‘Although they wouldn’t want to admit this, they and I would generally give gigs to other men. Why? Because they wouldn’t give them to me. Although we know each other there is a bit of rivalry between us. I cannot understand why, but there is. We are all trying to make it.’(\_\_\_\_)

‘I was in an all female band once (never again) and the first trombonist seemed to have such a competitive streak, mainly because she was scared I might be better than her.’  
(\_\_\_\_)

There is at least one current, well-known, all-female brass ensemble. None of the women who belong to this group took part in the interviews and so it is difficult to

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<sup>1</sup> X is her husband, and a member of the same orchestra



know how they feel they are perceived, yet there were a number of musicians who mentioned this group during their interviews.

‘It has done wonders, um, but it is almost like they are doing it as a joke. But everyone laughs behind their back about it. Rather than it being a really great thing.’ (\_\_\_\_)

### *Qualities for success*

The women selected as case studies were chosen because they had achieved as professional performers, but the all-important question of how they did this, remains. The qualities suggested fall into two groups: personal qualities and musical/ability.

‘I would say that they are generally considered to be very strong people, not least because they are often outnumbered by men, some of whom may be prejudiced against them.’ (\_\_\_\_)

‘You have to be disciplined, passionate, able to deal with failure (as that IS going to happen, regularly, to varying degrees), supportive, competitive (in a positive way, that will mean you progress in developing your technique, rather than trying to ‘beat’ other people), a positive thinker, believe in yourself, conscientious, dedicated.’ (\_\_\_\_)

She further suggested that, ‘all the qualities associated with brass mentioned earlier apply, only maybe to a greater degree’ for women than men. Understanding failure and competitiveness were central to her identity, and she demonstrated a slightly different approach to both of these than might be expected; normally, failure is avoided at all costs, however, ‘the fragile nature of playing the horn’ will lead to underperformance on a task, not quite getting a passage right, or as she sees it, failure. Competitiveness is a trait that usually requires others against whom to be competitive, however, in her case she sees it not as ‘beating’ someone but as being personally competitive with her playing.

\_\_\_\_ also mentioned another important quality: being social.

‘I am competent, I can go in.... put me on second trombone and [I] get on well with people, which is really important. I find it quite easy to adapt to social situations, um,

so I've got that in my favour and I won't go in not having seen the music or know[ing] what I'm playing. So I prepare well, and I make a reasonably good sound.' (ni. rd. tbn)

Outside of the musical world it may seem strange to consider socialising an important aspect of work. An individual's worth in more conventional careers would perhaps be measured by looking at productivity. On the surface this would seem to be the antithesis of spending time being social. Music, however, is an entirely different matter: being sociable is key to fitting into a group, to developing a sense of belonging and to making music with others. Having a sense of being easily adaptable to new social situations (integral to each new work environment of a freelancer) is just as important as being able to play well enough to work with a group.

There is also a sense that not only are certain playing qualities essential to be a successful musician, but other qualities are needed to work within this sort of masculine environment,

'I mean you have to put up with, the kind of laddy, you have to put up with – well you have to be broad shouldered, thick-skinned and not easily offended. Yes they are the things, fairly disciplined, not easily offended, not a prude, yeah I mean if you were a.... Well if you were some sort of archetypal flute / fiddle player, you'd probably be shocked by your average brass section. But when you grow up with it....'(\_\_\_\_)

She used musical stereotypes to discuss identities associated with being a brass musician, setting herself apart from 'an archetypal flute / fiddle player' and implying that her own temperament allowed her to cope with 'laddy' culture in ways that these other instrumentalists might not. Some of this ability to cope came from experience. In contrast \_\_\_\_ discussed how growing up in this masculine musical culture lead her to developing a social identity which she described as 'half bloke.'

'I think I'm half bloke though! I've been in a brass band since I was twelve, and that is totally male dominated. I enjoy it, they think it is great having a girl play trombone in a brass band. And I like the attention, if I'm honest. I do say to a lot of people, I think I'm half bloke. You get used to it don't you?' (\_\_\_\_\_)

*Gender and orchestral identity*

Social identities can be linked to the identities of the ensembles in which musicians worked. Orchestras had distinct attitudes and identities related to both the personnel as well as the type of orchestra, its schedule, its repertoire and its history.

I can't see a girl going into \_\_\_\_ because it is very much a boys kinda lets get drunk atmosphere. I mean I go out with them and it's great fun, um, but in a work situation I think they like it like it is. Same as Covent Garden, that is very much a man's area. Quite a few women wouldn't get into the brass department there. (\_\_\_\_)

In these two orchestras the masculine attitudes associated with the musical stereotype of brass musicians dominate the brass sections. Some of this cohort have worked on a freelance basis with two of these orchestras, and were happy to talk about their experiences as part of this 'boys club.'

'What I don't enjoy say are some journeys with \_\_\_\_, we have these classical spectacular trips and I really didn't enjoy it. There was a lot of laddish behaviour; going out and getting paralytic every night. Sort of going to a strip bar and stuff like that. There's no sexism or anything overt towards me, but that kind of behaviour doesn't really appeal. I'm really sociable and I totally love going out for a drink with the blokes, having a good laugh. But that was a bit too much.' (\_\_\_\_)

This work was important because of the experience and prestige it conferred, but aspects of it did not fit with her social identity. In enabling women to belong to this masculine world, changes in the behaviour and the dynamics of the group occur. As well as changes in the identity of the group and the social identities of the other players.

'What's funny is that they'll actually tend to behave themselves when you're sitting there. I got comments from one the trumpet players here, he tapped me on the shoulder one day and said, 'Do you think you could come in more often, they are an awful lot better when you're around.' You find that some of them, especially if they've got a good relationship with their partner, girlfriend, wife, whatever, you'll find that you get treated a lot better by them.' (\_\_\_\_)

## Conclusions

For many years gender appears to have been an unspoken part of ‘being a musician’: the musician’s world was masculine, and the ensembles and sections were often seen as ‘brotherhoods’. Women participate in and occasionally dominate the youth music scene, which is reflected in the increasing numbers of women involved in brass banding. Until recently women’s presence in the banding hierarchy was restricted, but social changes are now forcing the higher-level bands to include female musicians. This hierarchy has meant that they are seen as fully integrated and almost in equal number in the lower section bands, and appear to be ascending the sections.

The gender division is equally noticeable in the professional orchestras, where most of the brass sections are male environments. In some ways the orchestral profession in the UK is behind the changes that have occurred in the banding system. The lack of female role models may have been instrumental in women not seeing the opportunities to further their training and move into the profession as instrumentalists. Alternatively, awareness of the traditional restrictions may have impacted on their willingness to take the risk of entering the relatively unknown world of professional female brass musicianship, not to mention the problems of opportunity and acceptance.

As with many significant social changes, equality of participation in brass music-making at all levels, will take some time to occur. It needs attitudes to change throughout musical training, so that instruments are no longer seen as gendered and likewise attitudes which are embedded within the histories and traditions of ensembles, to be actively dismissed.

In the case of musicians, their social identities are also moulded by the ensembles that they work with or the brass sections to which they belong. Although there seems to be very little overt discrimination occurring in the work place, gender remains a factor within this environment.

Many of the ideas discussed in this chapter reflect findings from the literature review, both in terms of social identities at an organisational group level (orchestral identity, women and cultural change) or identities formed through relationships with smaller groups, such as colleagues in a brass section. Women are under-represented not only in brass sections, but as leaders within ensembles. A section will not function effectively and allow themselves to be lead by a principal that they do not want, cannot communicate with, or do not understand.

Postmes (2006) suggests that,

‘Communication plays an essential role as a mediator between individual meanings, and as a constructor of social meanings. Yet at the same time, communication is only possible because it draws upon a common understanding, a common language and interpretative framework, as contained within a common identity.’

Gender maybe an unspoken element within music-making, but masculine social behaviour, which is an accepted part of ‘being a brass musician’ has helped to form this common understanding and a common language between musicians in many ensembles. To have a woman participating in this situation would be unusual, and to have a female leader in this situation would be even rarer, for they would need to be accepted and adopted within the group as one of their own. Women have overcome this by not being implicitly measured by their gender, but instead measured by the one aspect that the men and women have in common: their musical skills and abilities. Thus, many of the professional female musicians are exceptional high fliers in the performance world, working as soloists, or sitting in principal positions within ensembles.

# **Section Five:** Vocation, Identity and the Lifespan

Chapter eight: Music and vocational perspectives on working lives in music

Chapter nine: Examining being a professional musician across the lifespan

## Vocation, identity and the lifespan

‘You would take anything in those days, it didn't matter what it was. Yes. If somebody had the audacity to ring you up and ask you, do you want to do a gig? You just said yes.. Without a doubt. But I rather sort of staggered into the freelance well to begin with, and it has only been latterly, in say the last 20 years that I have really realised what to have a job, a job is good.’ (*Interview with H, professional french horn player*)

H was an interviewee in this research. Here he reflects on his life and career in music, discussing his transition from university to a professional performance career, and the differences between having a freelance career and a salaried orchestral post.

This section seeks to explore the relationships between vocation as a professional musician and identity development over the musical lifespan. It builds up a picture of the contemporary arguments within the literature, and how this is played out (or not) in the real musical worlds, lives and careers of professional classical brass musicians.

## **Section Five**

### **Vocation, identity and the lifespan**

#### **Section Structure and Rationale**

As in the previous section, this section looks at another key factor affecting people's musical identities: vocation. In particular, it looks at how young musicians' vocations are influenced, and how it too affects musical identity. There were a variety of reasons to look in depth at vocation: it affects many people's futures and potentially for a long time, funding for higher education needs to be spent in the most effective way and therefore such research could contribute to this, there are many opportunities for taking forward further research into vocation, and this piece of work could potentially contribute to the knowledge base. Lastly, limiting the amount of in depth research into factors affecting musical identity was necessary to ensure the whole project remained manageable within the time restraints.

*Chapter eight* is a literature review into the music research that considers careers, training and the professional musician. It discusses vocational concepts of protean and boundaryless careers, which are relevant to understanding professional careers in music and the musical identity development of professional musicians.

*Chapter nine* explores the lifespan and changing musical identities of professional brass musicians. The objectives were based around the lifespan phases, these are:

1. To examine the role of musical training in developing a positive musical identity and so preparing the musician for a career (exploration phase).
2. To explore how musicians develop their musical careers as performers immediately after training (establishment phase).
3. To investigate how musicians perceive their musical identities once their careers have been established, and how these identities change towards the end of the career (maintenance and decline phases).

*This section contributes to the final objective of assessing social and cultural contextual influences.*



Chapter Eight

## A lifespan approach to the working lives of musicians

### Overview

This review explores perspectives on careers in music. It is divided into three parts: *Defining the musician*. This part explores how the term musician is defined and used in the music literature, which gives a sense of the ambitions, values and practices of professional musicians.

*Investigating careers in music*. This part examines how music careers are understood in music research. It:

- critiques the work of the conservatoires.
- critiques the lifespan research investigating professional musicians.
- illustrates how a more ‘career’ orientated lifespan framework could be employed.
- introduces the findings from the musician led / orientated work.
- introduces the vocational literature. This part examines how contemporary careers have been defined in music (as portfolio careers), but how they might be better understood by adopting the research terms of the vocational literature.

## Introduction

‘Dancers share a devotion to an art form that requires discipline, dedication and commitment. And while they also share the indignities of low pay with many other different types of workers, as professionals they are uniquely committed to long hours of effort required to perfect their art, while undergoing the risk of physical injury and emotional distress, and forging a career that is likely to begin in elementary school and end before they are 40. For professional dancers reaching the end of their performing careers, the economic, psychological, and educational difficulties for which they are often ill-equipped are likely to have a profound effect on the rest of their lives. If we are to sustain a cultural activity that rests on human accomplishment we must understand the career transition difficulties faced by those who are some of its best exemplars.’ (Jeffri & Throsby, 2006: 54)

This is from one of the few papers examining the nature of performance careers, and the development and potential loss of professional identity. Although the subjects were professional classical dancers, the passage has significance to many employees in the arts.

Like dancers, a high percentage of a musicians’ career is based around performance, and is often objectively and subjectively assessed and valued through performance. Performances however, give only tantalising small glimpses into the world of the professional musician: these events belie the thousands of hours practice required to develop their skills (Ericsson & Charness, 1994), as well as their continuing professional development and life-long dedication to their craft (Louth, 2006). Many classical musicians suffer the indignities of relatively poor pay (in comparison to their years of training) and, similar to the dancers, they may develop a sense of being undervalued (Missingham, 2006).

With an ability to play an instrument and a desire to become a professional musician, comes a need for other skills: a disciplined practice regime, effective self-promotion, networking and interaction skills, and practical entrepreneurial / business skills. Few academics have yet considered this broad skills-base, and those that have are usually conducted from a transitional or developmental perspective. Early music psychology research saw musicians’ skills from a developmental perspective, focussing on talent and ability as central in becoming an elite musician (Manturzewska, 1990). Transitional

work has changes in skills (and identities) as musicians move in and out of higher education (Burland & Pitts, 2007; Parncutt & MacPherson, 2002; Creech et al., 2008). Rarely has it explored the range and changing nature of a classical musicians' skills-base, and what this may mean for a musicians' identity.

Instrumental skills, like dance, are developed through childhood and adolescence, and are honed over the course of the lifespan (Gembris & Davidson, 2002; Davidson & Borthwick, 2002; Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992; Dobrow, 2007). In conjunction with this comes the need for considerable physical and psychological endurance, strength, memory and dexterity (Parncutt & MacPherson, 2002) similar to athletes and other performance-based vocations. Musicians, like dancers, have physical limits to their musical careers. The psychological and emotional effects of a career in music have been explored from an individualistic psychology perspective, including examining traits such as stress (Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992), personality (Gillespie & Myers, 2000), or psychopathology (Wills, 2003). They have also been examined within broader psychological frameworks with their own set of traditions, such as organisational psychology (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007; Allmendinger et al., 1996), vocational / management psychology (Dobrow, 2007).

Understanding musical careers is becoming an increasingly important and popular field of research (Kirschbaum, 2007; Bennett, 2005): changes in higher education have led to a wealth of practice-lead research from the UK's music conservatoires, much of which is concerned with the effective preparation of undergraduates to move into the music profession (Mills et al., 2006; Mills, 2004a; Miller & Baker, 2007; Gaunt, 2007; Purser, 2005). This work is pioneering in the sense that it offers opportunities to measure a unique population as well as having a direct and applied impact with research.

There are, however, inherent problems in researching musicians' careers: first, there are few official national statistics detailing musicians' actual employment patterns. Second, musicians' careers have a narrow research history, much of which is dated and restricted to the classical musician. Third, music conservatoires have traditionally been performance-lead, practice-based institutions; they have no tradition of scientific research. As a result, research stemming from, and yet studying conservatoire education, needs to be read with caution: competition and government 'targets' may give the potential for self-serving bias within the work.

Careers and identities are intimately linked, especially where music is concerned. Some researchers have begun to investigate music as a life-long process described as ‘have a calling’ (Dobrow, 2007). As musical careers evolve, musicians’ professional identities must also change, but only a few music studies address notions of careers, lifespan and identities (Burland & Davidson, 2004; Manturzevska, 1990).

### **Defining the term *musician***

To satisfactorily explore musicians’ identities it is important to define the term *musician*. Exploring and so defining the term musician has become a potent, topic of debate (Bennett, 2008a; Pitts, 2005; Mills et al., 2006; Mills, 2004a). Initially, this might appear easy. Most people would consider that they knew and understood what a musician was, yet, Grove does not contain a stand-alone definition. Within Grove, Nettl examines the term *music* (Nettl, 2009) and his discussion can be paralleled to a discussion of the term *musician*. He sees that there are multiple classifications and characterisations of a musician; a plethora of approaches to examining musicians and musical behaviour; and that there may be significant demands and consequences in producing this type of definition. Nettl approaches this by exploring accepted vernacular usage of the term:

‘the automatic response of most Western Europeans to the statement, ‘I am a musician’, which may most commonly be, ‘you are? what do you play?’, suggesting that, in thinking of music, most people do not consider composing...or even singing as the primary musical activity, but instrumental performance.’ (Nettl, 2009)

Being a musician is therefore equated to being a performer, which is understandable given that listening, playing and practising an instrument, are, from a young age the nexus of ‘being a musician.’ Yet, where professional musicians have discussed their careers (MacDonald & Wilson, 2005; Bennett, 2008a), the musician = performer equation is too simplistic. Musicians talk of many possible roles and identities involved in working as a musician, and so devising empirical research to present a single authoritative definition of this term would be futile.

## **Current definitions**

Contemporary debate has used focus groups to examine and define careers of professional musicians (Bennett, 2008a; MacDonald & Wilson, 2005). Bennett (2008a) worked with a *wide range* of participants who could all be defined under the broad concept of ‘being a musician.’ Participants concluded that the idea of the musician as performer was correct, but a ‘somewhat incomplete definition.’ Being a musician could also refer to engaging in activities other than performing, but which were still connected to the world of music. Roles could include performance work, but also entrepreneurial work (organising concerts, promoting ensembles), working in the ‘business’ side of being a musician (preparing invoices, tax), and teaching related work (peripatetic, group teaching, conducting), personal practice and other skills which needed time to be worked on. Bennett’s discussion encompassed ‘notions of success, career expectations, performance careers, and the importance of intrinsic career satisfaction’ (Bennett, 2008a: 1). However, she argues against musicians seeing themselves through a ‘hierarchy of success.’ That is to say that ‘being a musician’ should not be about solely attaining a position as a world class soloist, or belonging to an elite orchestra, for this reinforces notions of performance ability equating to success. This raised questions about how musical identities are linked to performance and success, and how these may change over the lifespan of the musicians. These are empirically examined in the next chapter.

## **Being a musician**

### *Values and value-judgements*

Musician is a term imbued with personal and social significance. It is both a label and an identity that is part of the subjective self-perception, and the objective value-judgments of others.

### *Childhood and adolescent transitions*

Sloboda (2005) showed that being seen as ‘the musician of the family,’ regardless of actual musical ability, can confer a positive and socially reinforceable musical identity. Pitts (2005) suggests that musician is a value-loaded term. The term was embraced by some of her teenage participants and rejected by others during times of transition. Those who embraced it made more successful transitions, and so the term can confer a strong positive musical identity.

### **Amateurs and professionals**

The qualifiers amateur / professional are frequently applied as explanations of a state of musical ability. They are widely understood as conferring accepted states of musical activity. In arguing against an obvious amateur-professional divide, Finnegan (2007) talks about these states as:

‘A professional musician earns his or her living by working full time in some musical role, in contrast to the amateur who does it for love and whose source of livelihood is elsewhere.’ (Finnegan, 2007: 13)

Her ethnographic work examined the social worlds of local music-making, seeing many complexities and variations in musical identities and musical practices within these ‘amateur’ spheres. For some, music was their only source of employment, for others music was part-time work for the occasional fee, and yet for others it was enjoyable but serious recreation outside work, more inline with Stebbin’s concept of serious leisure, which is defined as

‘The systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience.’ (Stebbins, 1992: 3)

Serious leisure is particularly appropriate to being a brass musician because it fits into the brass banding culture. One of the most important qualities of serious leisure is the relationship between the behaviour and identity. Stebbins states that, ‘one’s conception of oneself or of one’s role...is enhanced as a result of serious leisure participation’ furthermore that the self-concept is augmented ‘through the expression of unique skills, abilities and knowledge.’ (Gould et al., 2008: 50)

### Relationships between concepts of amateur and professional

All types of music-making can affect identity, but Finnegan's work shows complex overlaps between activities and identities, and that the lay-perceptions and assumptions associated with terms like amateur or professional can place restrictions on our perceptions of these identities,

'It quickly becomes obvious not only that...there are degrees of 'professionalism', but that professional music feeds directly on local amateur activities and would be impossible to sustain without them.'(Finnegan, 2007: 17)

The interplay between musical worlds and musicians is complex. Amateur and professional are useful adjectives for describing many types of behaviours including music. However, they are mainly vernacular terms that confer general states of being and behaviours, and are laced with objective assumptions and values.

#### *An amateur-professional continuum*

Finnegan suggests that an amateur-professional continuum, where musicians could belong to different points along the scale, depending upon their musical activities and lifespan point. In this way, the labels of amateur and professional become a framework to enclose different types of states and behaviour.

**Figure 8:** The amateur-professional continuum and assumptions frequently made about these states

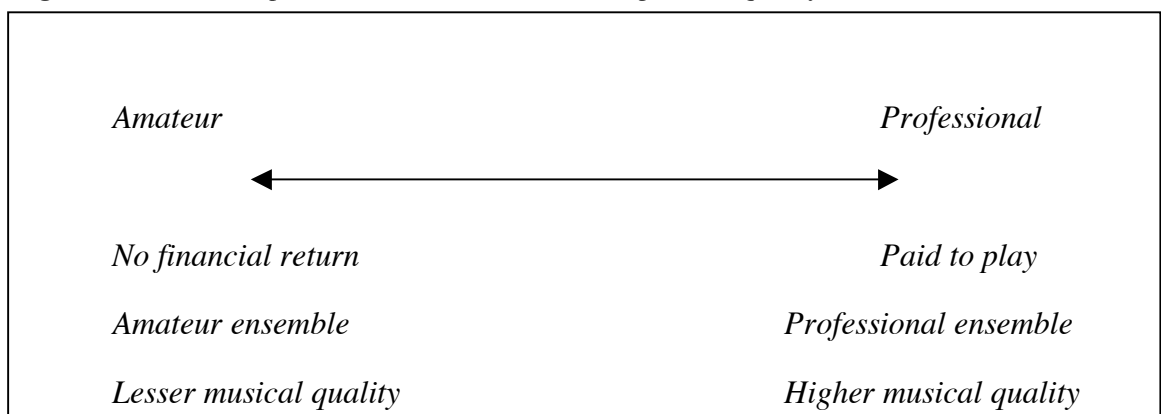


Figure 8 illustrates the extremities of the continuum, and some of the vernacular assumptions about these states. Rather than being separate and distinct states, this scale gives more fluidity to the concept of 'being a musician.' Stebbin's 'serious leisurite'

might not be a professional musician, nor would they be at the amateur end of the spectrum. When starting to consider the real-life experiences of professional musicians it is important to recognise the changing identities of being a musician in this flexible and fluid state: a concept that comes into its own if 'being a musician' is considered across the lifespan.

***From the objective to the subjective***

Although 'amateur' and 'professional' are terms often used by non-musicians, for musicians themselves, notions of amateur / professional are less significant. Value in being a musician can be found in the performing aspects of the activity, and therefore in the experiences and social identities derived from the ensembles that they work with. The musician's identity is complex because of its subjective and objective elements, and the values that musicians place on different aspects of their work. This has recently been discussed by Mills,

'For many individuals, their 'professional identity' takes the same form of words as their job title, which is a facet of their objective career. For example, an individual who is employed as an accountant may feel that this is also their professional identity. However, within music the situation is often more complex. An individual who derives most of their income from instrumental teaching, for example, may have a professional identity of musician or performer or composer. An individual who is director of a conservatoire, for example, may have retained the professional identity of musician or composer.' (Mills, 2004a)

Musicians have a complex, subjective identity, which is not necessarily related to the time spent or financial rewards gained within the broad practices associated with being a musician. Mills talks of musicians who may spend all of their time teaching, but they do not see themselves as a music teacher, subjectively they feel they are a performer. This is a crucial idea in examining musicians' identities and is further explored in Chapter Nine.

***Calls for a redefinition***

Propositions have been made for redefining or broadening the term 'musician' away from the musician = performer concept (Rogers, 2002; Burland & Pitts, 2007; Bennett, 2008a). The calls are entirely understandable: the changing nature of careers in music



and the apparent decrease in performance opportunities (Polifonia, 2007), may mean that a musician's sense-of-self will need to be dramatically readjusted to survive within the contemporary musical world. Yet, with the exception of Bennet (2008), these calls have not thoroughly examined the values that are placed on performance within identity, and how these values change as a natural part of lifespan and career changes.

## Examining careers in music

### Introduction

‘I think 25 years ago a successful musician had a very distinct career path. Wigmore Hall Debut, few more concerts, recording, big salary. And life is really not like that for any but a tiny percentage of musicians now.’ (Lang, Friday 17th July, 2009)

There is increasing academic interest in the work patterns of the creative industries, including musicians amongst other artists. This interest comes from: a socio-economic perspective (Menger, 1999), emphasising skills and attributes required to develop careers in the arts (Bridgestock, 2007; Bennett, 2008); an educational perspective (Welch et al., 2004), focussing on conservatoires and alumni career paths (Mills et al., 2006; Mills, 2004; Mills, 2004a); and finally, an organisational psychology perspective (Allmendinger et al., 1996; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003), which sees the orchestra as the organisational home for musicians, and so the musician *as* an orchestral musician.

These perspectives all contribute to the complex academic understanding of professional music-making.

The opening excerpt indicated that musicians’ careers can no longer be considered a sequential series of performance roles. It is increasingly common to hold a *portfolio career* (Mills, 2004a; Burland & Pitts, 2007): the term employed in music mainly with reference to the ‘new careers’ of recent graduates. This type of career emerged in the vocational literature as early as 1976, with Hall’s description of the *protean career*.

‘The protean career is a process which the person, not the organisation, is managing. It consists of all of the person’s varied experiences in education, training, work in several organisations, changes in occupational field, etc. The protean person’s own personal career choices and search for self-fulfilment are the unifying or integrative elements in his or her life. The criterion of success is internal (psychological success), not external.’ (Hall, 1976: 201)

There are parallels between notions of *contemporary careers* and the freelance work generally associated with the music profession. Calls have been made within the vocational literature to encourage interdisciplinary working (Arthur, 2008). Yet, to date

Bennett (2008) is perhaps the only music literature adopting vocational concepts to the careers of contemporary classical musicians.

## **Perspectives on musicians' careers**

### **A national picture**

The pan-European work group Polifonia suggest that music, like many professions, is experiencing change because of the social and economic developments in the consumption of music.

‘The music profession is in fact undergoing shifts and certain trends have become visible. But the full extent of these changes is not yet quantifiable, as they appear to be affecting the greater society at large.’ (Polifonia, 2007: 13)

The unknown aspects indicated above seem central to the problem, but cannot be investigated if they cannot be defined. Polifonia do suggest some patterns saying that,

‘while less long term employment jobs in the traditionally secure areas such as orchestras and full-time teaching are available on the market, short time employment and free lancing are on the increase.’ (Polifonia, 2007:13)

It appears therefore, that a career in music is becoming even more insecure.

### **Governmental involvement in music education**

Changes to careers were highlighted in 1998, when the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) reported on the practices of UK music conservatoires (HEFCE, 1998). Governmental interest placed some pressure on conservatoires, not least because unlike universities, conservatoires had not previously been required to provide information about graduate destinations.

‘What information they [the conservatoires] have is patchy, and focused on the ‘successful’ graduate rather than maintaining a consistent, comprehensive and long-term profile of those they have trained. This is changing, due largely to HEFCE’s criteria for ‘premium’ funding....The crucial criterion here is that ‘more than 75% of

graduates are working primarily in professional music performance, as performers of music, within five years of graduating from the institution.’ (Rogers, 2002: 12)

The 75% graduate performance makes no account for increasing student intake and the decreasing opportunities for performance work. Bennett (2005) discussed HEFCE’s suggestions by asking whether ‘performance is the only worthy profession for a conservatorium graduate?’ and whether ‘conservatories advocate that they only train for a career in performance?’ (Bennett, 2005: 101). Governmental recommendations of this type formalise the understanding that a successful musician is one who works in performance. In general, governmental input has led conservatoires to question their practices and efficacy in training the musicians of the future. It has encouraged research into existing educational and training practices, and questioned the social and cultural demands for musicians and the types of careers that they hold. Governmental involvement has therefore increased the self-awareness of tertiary institutions, whilst encouraging musicians to be more reflective on their own practices.

### **Critiquing the impact of external influences**

#### ***A wealth of research***

External social changes and governmental involvement has had a range of effects: it has encouraged rapid growth in pioneering research into musicians’ training and future careers. Yet a lot of this work is based at the conservatoires, and may well have been one of the outcomes of the HEFCE paper (1998). The breadth of conservatoire-based practitioner-led research, and its pros and cons, is worthy of further exploration as it has formed a large part of music’s research-based knowledge of musicians’ careers

#### ***The development of music education networks***

Another impact of governmental interest was the development of cross-national project groups, such as the aforementioned Polifonia. This started in 2004 as the ‘largest project on higher music education to date’ (2009) concerned with developing research and networks across conservatoires to understand the education and future employment of music graduates.

#### ***Alumni projects***

Alumni work has questioned the roles, practices, identities and experiences of past college students for example, the Working in Music project based at the RCM. This

came about because of the HEFCE recommendations, with titles such as; ‘Working in Music: Becoming Successful’ (Mills et al., 2006), ‘Working in Music: Becoming a performer-teacher’ (Mills, 2004a). It filled a gap in musical knowledge by developing a large-scale, quantitative investigation into the musical careers of past students. It suggested new ways to understand portfolio career working, professional identities, and the place of teaching in musicians’ lives.

### ***Overview of conservatoire research***

Much of the conservatoire-based research has lead the way in understanding musical training, and so musical careers, over the last decade. Practitioner-researcher directed projects have been praised for, ‘inform[ing] practice, increase[ing] understanding of teaching and learning process’ whilst allowing for the personal development of the researcher (Cox & Pitts, 2005). This work has encouraged other practitioner-researchers and academics to come together in conferences such as ‘The Reflective Conservatoire’ (GSMD, 2009), reflecting the rapid, international development of this type of research as well as a startling array of topics. Topics have included: exploring the nature of one-to-one instrumental teaching (Purser, 2005; Gaunt, 2007), actual and potential curriculum changes (Miller & Baker, 2007), health and wellbeing of student populations (Williamon, 2006), understanding undergraduates perceptions of the music profession (Corkhill, 2005) and alumni projects mapping musical careers (Mills, 2004a; Mills, 2006).

### ***Adapting to a changing environment: new courses***

Conservatoires have been praised for their flexibility and adaptability to new challenges (HEFCE, 1998; Rogers, 2002). They are visibly adapting to new challenges and a changing work environment by altering courses and developing new ones. For example, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD) has developed a masters course in leadership studies related to music, as an additional, specialised training course. This is a natural outcome of training adapting to the perceived demands of a career in music. However, warnings may need to be taken from Carruther’s critique of the Canadian and US university music programs: he has levied criticism at the over-specialisation and ‘curricular crowding’ in some higher education programs saying,

‘Universities strive to produce not only ‘better’, but also employable musicians. Ironically, whilst acknowledging that students must be prepared to undertake and

manage portfolio careers, many schools of music are revising extant programmes and introducing new ones to address very specific career streams.’(Carruthers, 2008: 131)

The development of new programmes are, on the one hand, positive adaptations to perceived change, but on the other, their real applicability, importance and relevance for students entering the world of work needs to be stringently assessed. Although Carruther’s comments are discussing non-UK university education, there is a danger that conservatoires may begin to replicate courses already offered by new and old universities.

***Adapting to a changing environment: course content***

In addition to the new courses, the GSMD has begun to respond to the demands of portfolio career working by developing additional elements to its existing courses. The ‘Centre for Orchestra’ has been described as a ‘major new initiative in orchestral training, education and early career support for young professional musicians’ (Dyson, 2009: 4). Dyson reports that it will provide a platform for further development of orchestral musicians, an interesting idea considering that they are already meant to be training musicians in this and other types of performance work.

Course content and the effectiveness of alterations to undergraduate courses are rarely evaluated in the peer-reviewed literature. This may partly be due to conservatoires being in direct competition with each other, but perhaps also because changes are relatively recent and so evaluations may not yet be possible. Another consideration is that of publication bias: negative or inconclusive results may never have gone to publication.

An exception to this is Miller and Baker’s discourse concerning undergraduates’ insight into their future careers and current training (Miller & Baker, 2007). They saw conservatoires beginning to recognise changes in the profession, and reflect this in their training.

‘The career of a musician today is likely to be a portfolio one, combining several paths. RNCM adopts a flexible approach in preparing students for this aspect of their future. The innovative Supporting Professional Studies strand of the curriculum enables students to develop specialist, business and transferable skills necessary for survival in the profession.’ (Miller & Baker, 2007: 5)

Miller and Baker discuss students' perceptions of conservatoire training, essentially as a place to develop performance skills: not an unreasonable assumption, given the historical divide between UK conservatoires and universities.

'Our interviewees had come to study at a conservatoire, they felt, because of the focus on performance and, sometimes due to the college's status in that arena. Universities and other higher education institutions provided a broader musical training, they reflected, with a more 'academic' bent.' (Miller & Baker, 2007: 9)

They state that their curriculum changes in the form of increased pedagogical training, 'was responsible for making notions of a portfolio career more concrete.' (Miller, 2007: 14)

### ***Ensuring the quality of conservatoire-based research***

Conservatoire-based research needs to have a comprehensive and outward-looking approach to musicians' careers. To date, much of the research has been conducted in-house. Each institution has its own strategies and targets, and research groups based at conservatoires may therefore have a vested interest in their own research outcomes. If research becomes too self-focused or self-fulfilling it is at risk of resulting in

- a reluctance to share knowledge and outcomes with other institutions, as conservatoires are in direct competition with one another.
- a danger of publication bias, with research on unsuccessful strategies remaining unpublished and the property of the institution, rather than being shared with other groups also investigating the same problem.
- a potential delay in the development of an accurate understanding of training needs, the effectiveness of training and changes occurring within musicians' working environments.

The question remains as to whether the conservatoires are therefore best placed for conducting unbiased, real-world research about musicians' careers. An alternative solution would be for conservatoires to concentrate their efforts on cross-institutional collaborations with external research bodies, and more detailed national work. This would support the development of a coherent, large-scale, interdisciplinary

understanding of the general nature of training and careers in the cultural sector, as well as the specific problems faced by musicians.

## **Lifespan research in music**

### ***An orientation to research***

Lifespan research is an approach that is ‘concerned with the description, explanation, and modification of developmental process the human life course from conception to death’ (Baltes, 1980: 66). It is related to ages and phases of growth, but is not restricted by them. One way to examine musicians’ identities is therefore to look at the shifts and negotiations in the self-concept over the course of the lifespan. Music-making may occur in many contexts and ‘roles’ across the lifespan: for a musician this might be voluntary, freelance work, contracted work, teaching, master-classes. A lifespan perspective enables investigation into how identities associated with these roles and contexts interact and change at different points. Applying this framework has some advantages over the current non-lifespan research:

- it provides a broader perspective than much of the conservatoire work.
- it provides a perspective close to reality, as the sample includes those who are actively working in the profession.
- the methods used within this framework provide a depth to the ideas about identity. Once these ideas are then placed back into a lifespan framework, both the detailed and the general pictures can emerge of identity and careers.

### ***The life-career rainbow: a holistic lifespan framework***

The particular framework adopted in this research is Super’s life-career rainbow (Super, 1980). A considerable part of the lifespan is occupied by our role as ‘worker,’ Super’s model makes it clear that this role is only one of nine roles in our adult life, and these shift in and out of importance over time. The roles shift in importance over the lifespan. He marked these phases as growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline, which marks this as lifespan ‘stage theory.’ Music is a lifelong pursuit, and being a musician is a practice which can occupy and is affected by many of these roles. Therefore, although the empirical focus is on ‘professional musicians,’ (those who



make their living in music) this framework is important in grounding these notions of work and professional identity within a holistic perspective on the self.

### ***Lifespan work in music psychology***

Music psychology rarely investigates musical behaviours across the whole lifespan, tending instead to focus on parts of the lifespan. Historically, it has examined childhood development and musical behaviours. Academics have recently begun to examine transitions within the lifespan, especially during the time that musicians go into and come out of tertiary education (Mills et al., 2006; Burland & Davidson, 2004). This work is valuable for music educationalists as it enables questions about the roles and practices of tertiary education to be answered. However, of more relevance here is the work of the few that have looked at the whole lifespan.

Manturzevska adopted a full lifespan perspective in examining the professional classical musician (Manturzevska, 1990). Her work is regularly cited as an exemplar of lifespan work in music. Many of the positive aspects of this work were drawn on in developing this study: the mixed method approach, the narrative interviews, and the general concept of studying the whole musical lifespan. However, there are also some negative aspects to this work which are rarely mentioned.

This work was heavily grounded in the developmental / skill-acquisition / expertise development trends of the 1980s. Much of the analysis focused on related aspects, for instance, discussing the ideal ages for elite musicians to begin their instrumental training. Her sample drew on two groups of musicians: outstanding Polish musicians (n= 35), and a pool of descriptive-matched musicians registered on a Polish record of musicians (n= 130). Her cohorts were loosely defined by age group and by ‘being conscious of similar historical events and economical, political, and cultural consequences.’ These aspects were ascertained through the qualitative biographical research.

The interviewing for this work took place between 1976 and 1980, meaning that contemporary problems and debates about current musical careers and notions of ‘being a musician’ could not have been addressed. Her sample was born between 1890 and 1960: the most ‘contemporary’ cohort was born between 1953 and 1960 and was 20-27 when interviewed. This cohort overlaps in age with the participants in the ‘decline’ phase of the empirical research in Phase Three (see Appendix V) of this project. Manturzevska’s work may not necessarily reflect the development of contemporary musicians.

***The development of a model***

One of the prevailing benefits of Manturzevska's work was the creation of a model of musical development over the lifespan. Her model divided the musical lifespan into six partially overlapping developmental stages, from 0-75 years. It followed an Erikson developmental pattern, with each stage beginning at a distinct time point, and musical activities increase, peak and decrease in each stage. As is traditional for developmental research, she described each stage as a critical period for learning specific musical skills and abilities.

This model worked well to answer the 'longitudinal' developmental questions about musical behaviour. However, it is a little too fixed and comparatively lacking in the depth of detail within each lifespan phase for use as a framework in this research; there are few details about how a musician might transfer from one stage to another in adulthood, and few details about the various occurrences that help to formulate a career in music, which would be vital to this study. There was, for example, no 'stage' for the period immediately after graduation.

Studying working professional musicians is still fairly uncommon in music psychology research. Manturzevska's study makes a unique contribute to the literature: it opens the way for a more detailed study of careers and identities in music, whilst encouraging a lifespan perspective to be adopted.

**Examining the musician: music research in musicians and musical careers**

The working lives of adult professional musicians are little understood. Some academics have justified investigating classical musicians by saying that our knowledge of classical musicians and the music profession tends to be drawn from biographical accounts of the famous soloists and conductors (Mills et al., 2006). These accounts are inherently biased, and focus only on the prominent careers of celebrated musicians. The real working lives of classical musicians have been overlooked, at least within academia.

Brodsky (2006) suggests that one of the complications of investigating musicians is because they are a closed and specialist population that are 'difficult to penetrate' and it is hard to win over their confidence (Brodsky, 2006: 673). This is a little misleading, as orchestral musicians have been studied, often in personality research (Kemp, 1996; Langendörfer et al., 2006), and attention has been drawn to the time spent developing

the relationship between researcher and musician (Davies, 1978). Organisational approaches to musicians' careers have explored sensemaking and sensegiving in these groups (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007), the processes through which sensitive organisational problems are understood and acted out within an organisation.

What is missing is research that explores the day-to-day lives and identities of practising professional musicians. Cottrell's ethnographic approach to professional music-making in London illustrates thought-provoking ideas about the nature of musical careers (Cottrell, 2004), for example, the role of a musicians' sound in their musical identity, and the usefulness of social networks in acquiring work. Cottrell's work is the only fair and thorough source of research on the professional musician to date, and so there is a place for the empirical research reviewed within this chapter and implemented as part of this project.

What does exist has often used outdated notions of career patterns, the idea of freelancing as a 'non-personhood' (Fredrickson & Rooney, 1988), or the assumption that the professional musician is commonly an orchestral musician with a 'well patterned job system.' Menger (1999) describes their work in the following way

'Among the salaried artists working on a long-term basis, musicians and their careers meet a rather well-patterned job system that has often been studied...Bureaucratic careers can be found in permanent orchestras with positions ranging on a well-defined scale of status.' (Menger, 1999: 547)

To understand the musician, we have to look beyond the boundaries of music research: two areas of interest are the voluntary sector, which can work to support musicians, and organisational psychology where 'the musician' as an orchestral musician has been investigated.

*Voluntary-sector research of professional musicians*

This research can help to illustrate some of the performance elements of a musical career: two surveys have recently been conducted, one by the Musicians Benevolent Fund (MBF, 2007) and one by the Musicians' Union (Missingham, 2004).

The following findings were cited in the MBF survey, and have relevance to this discussion:

- The MBF found that teaching was a key factor in musicians' ability to earn a living, especially as a recent graduate. This is important to consider in the light of the earlier Polifonia research suggesting that teaching opportunities were decreasing, which may cause difficulties for future graduates.
- Teaching and related activities were ranked as the activities that took up most time, followed by performing and rehearsing.
- '70%<sup>1</sup> of respondents cited advice from other musicians as contributing to their skills and development. This was particularly important for musicians aged 34 and under.' Thus, social networks and a culture of informal learning through colleagues and through the process of becoming and being a musician.
- 33% of respondents had to supplement their income with non-music related work.
- 'Respondents simultaneously highlight[ed] very busy working lives AND decreasing work opportunities.'

These findings show an industry in change. They show the multiple and varied nature of musicians activities as part of being professional musicians. They also highlight the importance of informal networks and groups in understanding musicians' social identities.

The Musicians' Union survey of 176 professional orchestral musicians (Missingham, 2004) showed a similar picture:

- '89% of respondents did music work outside their orchestral contracts to supplement their incomes. 44% of those who did music work outside of their orchestral contracts taught music.' (Missingham, 2004: 9)

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<sup>1</sup> n=1888 for professional musicians which represented a 4% response rate out of the total number of surveys sent out

- ‘23% did work outside of music to supplement their income...but their choice is limited to those which enable them to decide either the amount or the timing of this work to accommodate the variability in their main orchestral music work.’ (Missingham, 2004: 10)

The survey indicated that more non-contracted short term performance work was being offered, and that there was an increase in musicians taking on non-musical additional roles. The average wage for an orchestral musician in 2005 was £28,579, and that the average length of time working in that post at that salary was 21 years. This provides a basis for understanding why musicians may feel disgruntled about their worth and value in society. Their salary does not compare to the hours of skill and dedication needed to obtain these ‘prestigious’ positions. One of their respondents said

‘What sums up the state of things to me is that the LSO were paid more (in actual terms, let alone relative) for Star Wars in 1977 than its sequel in 2001. Yet the budget on the film in 2001 was about a million times more.’ (Missingham, 2004: 43)

These findings begin to indicate the real lives of musicians and highlight some of the problems that musicians are facing in contemporary classical music.

### ***Organisational psychology perspective on musicians***

An organisational psychology approach to the musician and musical careers has meant that focus is placed on the structure of the organisation that shapes the musicians’ identity (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2004; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Allmendinger (1996) for instance, found that the orchestral musician had high levels of internal motivation but lower levels of general satisfaction and satisfaction with their career growth. This organisational perspective provides insights into the musician and the music profession. However, as a body of work, it is limited in the sense that it sees the musician as an orchestral musician. In doing so, it fails to look beyond the organisational boundaries and the influences on identity from other parts of the musicians’ career.

### **Summary of perspectives**

Musical careers are difficult to academically address for the following reasons:

- There is a limited body of academic research, so ideas are in their infancy and have a limited foundation upon which to build.

- Where there have been bodies of work these have been restricted to fields, and so to the methods, approaches and ideas of that area. (E.g. the occupational research into the orchestral musician as discussed in organisational psychology).
- There is insufficiently detailed official employment data for musicians, due to the techniques used to collect national data.
- Defining the role of a musician is often subjective. Unlike other professions, the title of musician can mean any or all of a number of specialties (e.g. instrumentalist, orchestral musician, soloist, composer, conductor, arranger, teacher etc.)
- Musicians have been seen as specialist populations, difficult to access and even harder to gain an accurate picture about.
- The rapid cultural changes in the consumption of music, and so the demands on musicians with different specialisms, are difficult to assess. Knowledge about these changes is spread across many academic disciplines. Accessing this information requires cooperation between academia, official sources, and real-world knowledge of the challenges musicians feel they are facing. It is therefore difficult to develop an accurate picture of recent changes across the range of specialisms.

## Understanding portfolio and protean careers

### A national perspective

Part of the problem in understanding musicians' careers is that there is little top-level data, historic or current, to draw upon. Without a base-line, change is hard to measure, but without detailed enough collection methods an accurate picture of employment will never be created.

Menger (1999: 544) and Bennett (2008) call for immediate changes to national data collection strategies, as the careers of 'artists' (including musicians) cannot be adequately assessed or understood through current data collection methods.

'The fact that census data necessarily rely on self-definition as an artist is itself a controversial issue as many artists hold employment outside of the arts...Data collection processes do not allow for such employment patterns...Significantly, if the fluid working lives of artists is a sign of things to come in the general workforce, the inclusion of data of multiple job-holding and new occupational categories is essential to statistical collections.' (Bennett, 2008: 16)

The government's 'snapshot of the creative industries,' suggests that portfolio working is 'the norm' for craftspeople (DCMS, 2008: 210). *Portfolio careers* has become the popular term adopted by the music literature to describe musicians' work patterns. The HEFCE recommendations described these careers as

'a mixed portfolio approach to careers (with less interest in available salaried employment), involving performing in a variety of ensembles / circumstances, composing and teaching (including workshop / creative projects).' (HEFCE, 1998: 5)

Further suggestions are made that musicians' careers have always had a portfolio nature: HEFCE describes career patterns of musicians as 'involv[ing] multiple sources of employment and changing mixes of activity. Teaching and performing are common elements and self-employment predominates' (HEFCE, 1998).

Later, HEFCE makes the casual comparison between global career changes and musical careers, seeing 'flexible patterns' of musical employment 'emerging more generally.'. An awareness of the changing, global face of careers and employment has therefore

begun to filter into the music literature. Bennett (2008) relates the global changes in career patterns to musicians' careers by saying:

'Musicians are part of a growing sector of the workforce within which casualisation and multiple employments are rife. In fact, the cultural workforce as a whole pre-empts employment trends in many Western countries. The traditional linear career model has little relevance to the cultural sector, wherein people self-manage their careers in what have been described as 'protean' careers.' (Bennett, 2008: 2)

### **Variations in understanding a portfolio career**

Although *portfolio career* is widely adopted and so accepted as a definition of musicians' careers, there appear to be subtle variations in the emphases placed on the term. Rogers (2002) see musicians occupying a 'series of roles different from and broader than the act of performing or composing' (Rogers, 2002: 4), a definition that helps to move away from the musician solely as performer, complementing ideas at the beginning of this chapter. Yet, the emphasis is on a *series* of short-term roles, not necessarily concurrent multiple job holding.

Mills's alumni projects were particularly interested in understanding the types of careers that graduates had, and many of the associated papers talk about portfolio careers. They discuss the contemporary musicians' career in the following manner,

'Some successful performers in the UK do have salaried posts, for example with Orchestras or opera companies, but this is not usual (Mills&Smith, 2002). Many performers derive their income through a portfolio of fee-paid work with a wide range of contractors, including some that are based overseas, and through initiating and organizing events themselves.' (Mills, 2004:179)

This definition gives the sense that *portfolio working* is something that salaried musicians do not do: that it is something that is new, and relates to taking on other types of work because of the reduction in performance opportunities / increasing competition for performance work. Yet, the empirical research in this chapter shows that many musicians, whether they are salaried or not salaried by a company, can and do work in other performance and non-performance roles (see Maintenance Section of Chapter 9).



Gaunt (2007) has suggested that portfolio career working is more common in the wind, brass and percussion teachers than the string teachers. In addition, he suggests that brass teachers often shared students between themselves, supporting each other when other work came through.

Decreasing opportunities for work is not only occurring in performance areas, but also in teaching. Teaching is an important part of a musical career and some have seen it as integral to musicians' professional identity (Mills, 2004a). Mills's work has also investigated the concerns of music students about music teaching, particularly in the classroom environment (Mills & Smith, 2002). Bennett (2008: 95) explores the role of teaching from a wider perspective: she suggests that musicians work in a number of roles, and when ranked by the time spent in each, the most effort is exerted in 'teaching, followed by performance, business and ensemble direction (conducting).' Bennett's (2008) *protean career*, describing musicians' self-employed freelance status can be linked to the vocational literature where there have been calls for more interdisciplinary research.

## **Perspectives from the vocational literature**

### ***Calls for interdisciplinary research***

'One of the key factors in the separation of different approaches to careers scholarship lies in a tendency to adopt different definitions of the term *career*. Psychologists write about the career as an individually perceived sequence of work roles, thus neglecting the wider social contexts in which careers unfold...They also focus on identity to mean an individual's sense of him/herself, rather than one's role in society.... These definitional differences once more encourage separate disciplines to stay apart.' (Parker et al., 2009: 7)

This excerpt illustrates two interesting criticisms of the careers research: first, that psychological approaches to careers have been bound in the individualistic traditions common to the North American approach to social psychology. This has meant neglecting the social context of work, and also the sense that work is only part of the multiple roles that an individual occupies within their life: work is not the only contributor to the self-concept, but it can be a major part of it. Second, there is an inherent problem in having multiple research traditions exploring 'careers', for it does not encourage shared knowledge or communication between approaches (as discussed

in Chapter Two). Careers research contains numerous bounded research traditions including organisational, occupational, management or educational perspectives on careers (psychology can be used as an approach within any of these traditions (Arthur, 2008)). Academics are increasingly calling for more interdisciplinary conversations across and between research areas, because the separate schools of thought seem to lead to restricted research practices and development of ideas (Arthur, 2008). This can be especially problematic when it comes to defining terminology: without shared definitions of the same problem there cannot be successful development of knowledge. Arthur's (2008) research, however, defines *career* in a way that is adaptable for the interdisciplinary study of careers.

'The term *career* as 'the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time.'  
(Arthur, 2008: 166)

A career in music would therefore be 'the evolving sequence of a person's music-related work experiences over time.' There are several positive points to make about this definition:

- It defines a career in a broad enough way to reflect the views of the career-related research traditions, but also to include academic and applied perspectives upon music and music-making.
- It applies to any type of music work, not just performance roles.
- There is a complete absence of value-laden terminology about the nature of a successful or sustainable career in music.
- There is a sense that 'the person' is a valuable part of understanding careers, and so the beginnings of the idea that career and the self-concept are connected.
- There is a sense that the temporal nature of work is important, but that work is only part of what makes a person throughout the life course.

Some of the most recent interdisciplinary research into careers considers the passage of time as one of the most salient points for the interdisciplinary study of careers:

'These disciplines can come together through a shared focus on work and on "the effect on people of the passage of time." ...Across all of the disciplines, it is the insistence on

the relevance of time that distinguishes the concept of career...from related ideas about jobs, work, even vocation, where time may not be taken into account.’ (Parker et al., 2009: 1)

Time is also central to this study: first, because of the interdisciplinary nature of this research, and second, because an understanding of time enables a holistic approach to understanding musical careers. Therefore, musicians’ narrative accounts of becoming and being a professional classical musician (as used in research Phase Four) produce material ideally suited to this concept of musical careers. This research phase allowed musicians to narrate their lives-to-date from a music perspective, enabling them to create and comment upon their self-concept in relation to a musical career, as well as broader more cultural comments about the changing nature of working in the music profession.

Having defined the term *career* in a way suitable for this type of interdisciplinary research, the next important step is to examine the more general perspective on how careers have changed and in recent years.

### ***Old perspectives on careers***

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a ‘career’ as a linear, work-based path that evolved over the course of an individual’s working life. Long-term contracts and job security were common practice. It was normal practice for many workers to stay with one company for the all of their working life. Roles and responsibilities may change and develop for that individual within that company. Others may change their role or organisation a few times within their working-life, and these changes may often coincide with significant lifespan points (for example, having a family, turning forty etc.) This organisation-bound, minimally mobile, hierarchical, secure career was accepted practice for many, and would eventually lead to a comfortable retirement. The careers literature has described these relationships in the following manner:

‘[This type of work involved a] notion of hierarchical dependence and stable relationships. As a consequence, loyal and dedicated workers could aspire to a job for the rest of their lives, and the organization would respond by offering job security.’  
(Savickas et al., 2009: 3)

There has, however, been a decline in the prevalence of the traditional, organisational career. Flexibility is increasing and the nature of working practices are changing, including changes in contracts (more short-term); job-sharing; working times and the working day; home / work life balance; the location of work, with more home-working and virtual-working as organisations become more global. There are expectations that careers and jobs can be changed over the lifespan. A career is no longer embedded within an organisation; it is now the responsibility of the individual. It is therefore becoming likely that a different type of person will thrive and develop sustainable careers within these new demands.

‘Today, occupational prospects seem far less definable and predictable, with job transitions more frequent and difficult. These changes require workers to develop skills and competences that differ substantially from the knowledge and abilities required by 20<sup>th</sup> century occupations. Insecure workers in the information age must become lifelong learners who can use sophisticated technologies, embrace flexibility rather than stability, maintain employability, and create their own opportunities.’ (Savickas et al., 2009: 4)

### *New perspectives on careers*

‘The current economic and employment relationships...are defined in many cases by less loyalty, greater mobility and less certainty.’ (Briscoe & Hall, 2006b: 5)

The shift away from organisational careers to a new orientation has been described with various terms in the vocational literature: contemporary careers (Arthur, 2008), protean careers (Hall, 2002) boundaryless careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) kaleidoscope careers (Mainero & Sullivan, 2006), new careers (Arthur et al., 1999). To make understanding a little easier, the term ‘contemporary career’ will be adopted here to refer to current careers which exhibit elements that were / are considered ‘contemporary’. i.e. careers that are self-directed and not bound to a single organisation. The music literature, on the other hand tends to favour the term ‘portfolio career’ or ‘portfolio working’ to mean a career within this ‘new’ working culture. Once this is established, the perspective from the music literature will be generated, and arguments as to a way forward proposed.

‘While once, and possibly still considered radical, protean and boundaryless careers have ironically become a part of the new status quo.’ (Briscoe & Hall, 2006a: 1)

The new careers literature contains two models of career that are now standard parts of the ‘new career vernacular’: the boundaryless career and the protean career. These are independent but related constructs, described in the following manner.

*Boundaryless careers* go beyond organisational boundaries. They can be objectively defined by others, or subjectively by the individual, and have been described as,

‘easy to visualise in the contemporary employment context where job descriptions, organisations, work-home boundaries, and other career features seem to be dissolving or reorganising themselves continuously.’ (Briscoe & Hall, 2006a: 2)

The boundaries and flexibility therein, are not only physical but also psychological,

‘a boundaryless career [is] one that involves physical and / or psychological career mobility. Such a career can be then viewed as characterized by varying levels of physical and psychological mobility.’ (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006: 22)

*Protean careers* are self-directed and independent, and are usually centred on the subjective perception of the individual. They have further been described as,

‘A bit harder to literally picture (changing shape), but the need to define the shape of one’s career through identifying and expressing values and directing career behaviour can be clearly seen as an adaptive response to the volatile, uncertain, and ambiguous work environment.’ (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006: 22)

Although these constructs sound similar, they have been shown to be independent but interrelated (Briscoe & Hall, 2006b). Individuals who see themselves as having a protean career are likely to cross career boundaries, and a boundaryless person is likely to act in a protean manner. Briscoe and Hall (2006) suggest that an individual has different levels of protean and boundaryless career ‘attitudes’.

‘We view protean and boundaryless career attitudes as independent yet related constructs. That is, a person could display protean attitudes and make independent, inner-directed choices, yet not prefer cross-boundary collaboration. In comparison, a person could embrace a boundaryless mindset, yet rely on one organisation to develop and foster his or her career. There are a myriad of possibilities.’ (Briscoe et al., 2006: 32)

Briscoe, Hall & Frautschydemuth (2006) constructed two attitude scales to measure boundaryless and protean mindsets. The most important factors were

1) self-direction and 2) value-driven career attitudes. Example items from these factors are,

‘I am in charge of my own career.’ (Self-direction)

‘I’ll follow my own guidance if my company asks me to do something that goes against my values.’ (Values-driven)

(Briscoe et al., 2006: 34)

For *boundaryless career attitude measurement*, the most important factors were 1) boundaryless mindset and 2) mobility preference, for example,

‘I enjoy working with people outside of my organisation.’ (Boundaryless mindset)

‘If my organisation provided lifetime employment, I would never desire to seek work in other organisations’ *Reverse scored* (mobility preference).

The authors concluded that protean and boundaryless attitude scales measure distinct but related constructs. They also show that constructs vary across career stage and context, re-affirming that these are attitudes that are being measured and not underlying personality traits or individual differences.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the subjective and objective perceptions of being a musician, highlighting the value that is intrinsically placed on performance elements of the musical identity.

In examining the music and vocational literature, it has illustrated the limits to music research, in terms of seeing music holistically. It has shown the potential limits to the current waves of music psychology research that considers ‘the musician’ and the training for a career in music. The vocational literature has the potential to provide an improved terminology, definition, understanding and so more rigorous ways for investigating careers in music. It has paved the way for questioning how professional classical musicians have developed their careers and musical identities over the course of their lifespan, which is addressed in the next chapter.

## **Becoming and being a professional musician: perspectives across the lifespan**

### **Overview**

#### **Introduction**

Understanding how musicians perceive their careers and identity as a musician is a central part of investigating ‘the musician’ as a social category.

This chapter explores how ‘being a musician’ changes across the lifespan, from the perspectives of musicians who are predominantly professional classical performers and those training to become musicians. To provide context, a review of the impact of postgraduate musical education on musical identities, would have been useful, but has, as yet, not entered the body of published literature. The chapter is loosely structured around four sections reflecting the lifespan phases as defined in Super’s life-career rainbow: exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline.

#### ***Method***

The methods have already been introduced and discussed in Chapter Three. This section therefore serves as a brief reminder of the methods and participants. It adds some more details by discussing the particular challenges that were faced in analysing and structuring a discussion. Postgraduate musical education has, as yet, seen no discussion within the music literature.

#### ***Participants***

Forty-one participants were drawn from across the lifespan, ranging from 18 – 65 years. Nine were female, and 32 were male. All except one were British born brass musicians, and they came from a variety of musical backgrounds (brass bands, orchestras, military bands, specialist music schools and colleges).

Participants were either attending conservatoires where they were specialising in first study brass instruments, or they were working primarily as brass instrumentalists within the professional music world. Their work was multiple and varied, frequently involving orchestral, session, or chamber work often the form of concerts, recordings or tours and they were based in London, Glasgow or Cardiff.



***Data and structure of themes***

The data is drawn from the narrative interviews in research Phase Three. As the interviews were extensive and detailed, a small selection of significant themes are analysed and discussed in this chapter. The nature of this type of data meant that some themes crossed over these lifespan phases. Teaching for example, was something discussed with all of the participants. Reflections on the role of teaching in being a musician however, are therefore discussed in the Establishment Phase section of the results.

## The exploration phase

This phase referred to the time immediately after secondary education. There is a sense that to become a musician, a promising student must attend a music conservatoire for their tertiary education. The path to a career in music appears, at least within lay perspectives, to be very linear, as indicated with this recent discussion of graduate musicians in the Independent.

‘Picture the teenage instrumental player, bursting with talent. The route to a career seems straightforward: get into a major conservatoire, practice like stink, and emerge into an admiring world. For some it really is that simple. For the rest, the choices can be more complex.’ (Homfray, 2007)

Yet, as this quote and the previous chapter suggested, the paths to being a professional musician are changing, as are the demands on professional musicians. What therefore are the real experiences and training paths through this phase of a musician’s life? This section therefore examines:

- The paths that this sample have taken through tertiary education.
- Musicians’ perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate music training.
- The role of tertiary training in contributing to a positive musical identity.

Examining the current experiences of those in this phase (i.e. those who were in tertiary education when they were interviewed) and the reflections of those who have passed through this phase creates a detailed picture of the impact that conservatoires have had on developing musician’s identities.

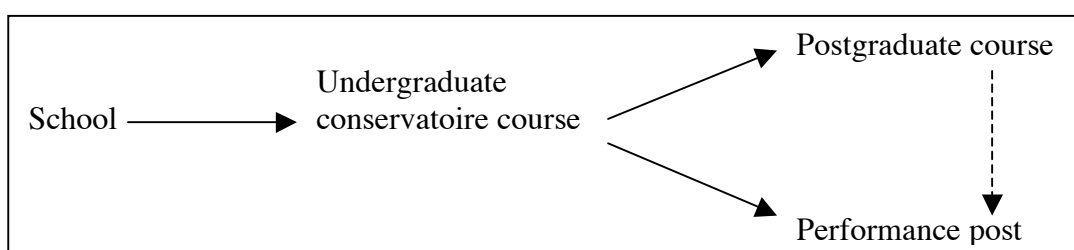
## Pathways through the exploration phase

### Conventional or unconventional paths?

Interviews were analysed and coded in detail as to the pathways that all of the musicians took through this phase of their lives. (The data is included in Appendix V). They were first coded as to whether a path was conventional or unconventional.

A conventional path was one that from 18 years onwards followed a linear, unbroken route from secondary to specialist tertiary education at a conservatoire, with some going into postgraduate study, but others going straight into performance work.

**Figure 9:** Conventional pathway through exploration phase



An unconventional path was seen as *anything* that deviated from this pattern of training through this phase.

Unconventional paths included a range of experiences and explanations. Some attended conservatoires, but dropped out part way through. Some trained in entirely different areas, such as the army (ds.m.btb) or manufacturing (lg.d.tbn) prior to going into higher education,

‘I left Guildhall in my second year because I was getting loads of work and didn’t see the point in it.’ (cs. d. btb)

‘My parents said you’re not good enough to go to music college...I had to leave school at 16 and I took an apprenticeship... I did that for four years, but in the meantime I kept my music going’ (lg.d. tbn).

Others did not go to music college at all, training instead in pharmacy (kj. es.tbn) or politics, philosophy and economics (hp. d. hn). Some broke up their musical training with non-musical work in-between taking undergraduate and postgraduate courses at a

conservatoire (nb. ex. hn) (sh. es. tbn). Some took university undergraduate courses, but then selected to take a postgraduate course at a music college (am. ma.tbn) (ds. ma. t). Unconventional paths therefore involved a range of musical and non-musical training possibilities.

It needs to be remembered that all of this sample involved in this part of the study were all performing musicians: they spent the majority of their time and earned the main part of their income through their performance work. Analysing these pathways therefore meant analysing the routes into a performance career. When classified in this way,

- 16 musicians had conventional paths
- 18 musicians had unconventional paths. (The eight undergraduates were not included in this analysis as they had not completed their training paths.)

Thus, the real-life routes to a performance career are not necessarily the same as the lay belief that to become a successful classical musician, training must follow the conventional liner route.

### **Potential routes through the exploration phase**

The data was recoded to establish exactly the types of routes and training that this sample undertook. The training was broken down into six categories:

- UC = undergraduate course taken at a conservatoire,
- UU = undergraduate course taken at a university,
- U0 = no undergraduate taken.
- PC = postgraduate course taken at a conservatoire,
- PU = postgraduate course taken at a university,
- P0 = no postgraduate course taken.

There were 9 possible combinations of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and a frequency analysis of these combinations is presented in Table 9.

**Table 9:** Frequency analysis of the training combinations through the exploration phase

Combinations		Lifespan phases			
Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Frequency	Establishment	Maintenance	Decline
UC	PC	8	7	1	0
UC	PU	0	0	0	0
UC	P0	10	4	3	3
UU	PC	7	3	4	0
UU	PU	0	0	0	0
UU	P0	2	1	0	1
U0	PC	1	0	1	0
U0	PU	0	0	0	0
U0	P0	0	0	0	0
		Total sample	15	9	4

The first two columns indicate the possible training routes. For example, UC followed by PC meant that a musician attended an undergraduate course at a conservatoire and a postgraduate course at a conservatoire.

The frequency column showed how many participants across the sample took this route. The next three columns indicate how these participants were spread across the lifespan, enabling an assessment of any route patterns over time.

NB. The exploration phase students (n=13) were not included in this analysis because they were still going through this phase and did not have complete path combinations.

### General trends in training combinations

#### *Higher education is essential*

To have a performance career in music it is essential to have some tertiary education.

The most popular pathways through this phase were:

- Undergraduate at a conservatoire + no postgraduate (n=10),
- Undergraduate at a conservatoire + postgraduate at a conservatoire (n=8),
- Undergraduate at a university + postgraduate at a conservatoire (n=7).

Thus, to have a performance career in music, training does not need to be exclusively based at a music college, but for most musicians part of their training will probably be at one of these institutions.

Out of the 28 musicians who were working as professional musicians, 10 of these had not attended a conservatoire for their undergraduate training. Instead, they had taken undergraduate courses at university. An important finding is therefore that it is not essential to have taken an undergraduate music course at a conservatoire to become a professional classical musician.

### *Course combinations and possible trends over time*

Table 9 indicates the frequency with which different course combinations were taken by the whole sample. However, it also shows the training combinations by cohort, which was initially conducted to look for trends that might emerge over time. The sample sizes however precluded further quantitative analysis, and so a qualitative approach was taken to further examine these pathways.

#### *Pathway: UC + P0*

Attending a music college at undergraduate level and not taking any postgraduate course was common; this option was frequently followed by going straight into a salaried orchestral post or relatively secure freelance work (see Appendix V Table 2). This was particularly evident in the later decline cohort, all of whom went from their training into a job.

#### *Pathway: UC + PC*

Undertaking both an undergraduate course and a postgraduate course at a conservatoire is perhaps becoming more popular. Many of those who had taken this combination were in the establishment cohort.

#### *Pathway: UU + PC*

Taking an undergraduate course at a university and then a postgraduate course at a conservatoire was a path that a few chose from all of the lifespan cohorts. This is not the most common route into the profession, but it seems to have been an accepted pathway for a long time.

### **Perspectives on being a successful musician**

Analysing participants' reasons for taking, considering, or rejecting a postgraduate course illustrated two central aspects of 'being a musician':

- the social elements of the identity
- the musical / technical aspects of the identity.

These were crucial to becoming and being a brass musician, and they were elements that changed in importance and value over the course of the lifespan, and are discussed throughout the rest of this chapter.

### **Postgraduate education at conservatoires: participants' reasoning**

The quantitative data suggests that there are two types of people who take postgraduate courses: those who have taken undergraduate courses at music colleges and those who have taken academic undergraduate courses elsewhere.

Qualitative thematic analysis of the interviews produced a range of reasons for taking, or considering, a postgraduate course. These were broadly based on developing the two central components of a musical career: either furthering their technical / musical skills, or furthering their 'professional development' through social networks and contacts.

**Table 9a:** Themes relating to taking a postgraduate performance course

<b>Reasons for taking a postgraduate performance course</b>
1. Opportunity to be funded, which may earn more than freelancing
2. Time to develop further instrument skills
3. Time to explore a specific area of playing
4. Opportunity to work with a new mentor / teacher
5. Chance to work in a new environment
6. Opportunity to develop new social networks
7. Not considered, seen as an extension of undergraduate training
8. Can't think of anything else to do, opportunity to stay in a 'safe place'
9. Biding time until the 'music world wants you'
10. First opportunity for further instrumental training

***Reflections on postgraduate education at a conservatoire***

The merits in taking a postgraduate course varied depending upon the person, their educational path, their musical ambitions, and their sense of self. For some it was an opportunity to change the environment they worked in, to develop the networks that they associated with, or to change the teacher that they worked with.

***Professional development: social aspects of being a musician***

The social element to developing a career in music was a central part of a musician's current identity and future career development. A postgraduate course gave many people the opportunity to develop new networks and contacts, as well as their musical skills.

‘Well, I found a postgrad half and half a waste of time. The cost is massive, but hopefully that year you can meet more people.’ (cb. es. tpt)

***Professional development: technical skills***

The one-to-one teaching elements of a postgraduate course were key in having a positive and worthwhile experience.

‘I did four years undergraduate and one year postgraduate all in the same place. That was mainly because in the end of my fourth year a new teacher came, Tim Jones, the principal of the LSO. And he came to teach, and I thought this is great; it's not worth moving. I was at college, he was giving me lessons and they were completely different from what I have had before. Absolutely. Different style. I really enjoyed it.’ (nh. es.hn)

NH's comments about staying in the same environment but learning a new style and approach to horn playing were central to his developing identity and technical skills as a horn player.

Postgraduate courses are also about the transition, from training to going into the professional world. Both of NH's horn teachers were supportive in easing the transition into the profession, so much so that he left his postgraduate course after a year (instead of completing two years) because he felt that there was, ‘only a certain amount of work



that you can get as a music student.’ He had also been, ‘working quite a lot when [I] was at college, since my third year, through my teacher.’

Other musicians saw postgraduate courses as providing a safe, known environment in which to work. They indicated that perhaps there was no need for some musicians to be there, but that for some reason they could not make the transition into the world of work quite yet.

‘So I think a lot of people who stay on at music college, are those that probably don’t need to be there, but they are there because they are a little bit scared to kind of just not be there’ (rd. es. tbn)

### **Exploration phase: considerations of a postgraduate course**

When those who were currently studying on undergraduate courses at conservatoires, were asked about doing postgraduate training, there were mixed perceptions: some felt that they were almost becoming a necessity.

‘I want to try and avoid it [doing a postgraduate course], but there seems to be a need to these days. Most people do one. I think I would go somewhere else.... London, Guildhall. I like the teachers there, I’ve got some good friends there so it just sounds good.’ (d. ex. tbn)

Others said that they had

‘been advised to try not to do a pg course. Hopefully, [teacher A] and I think [teacher B] also said, if you’re getting enough work then you shouldn’t have to. If I’m not getting enough work, then why not.’ (mp. ex. tpt)

A postgraduate course can therefore begin to be seen as a time of facilitated transition into the music profession, where work can be sought, contacts and networks developed within the safe confines of the conservatoire.

One student illustrated the beginnings of these networks, by talking about how she was trying to keep contact open between herself and different colleges. A sense of being 'known' was therefore important in their future identity.

'I've not had a lesson with anyone there yet [RCM], but they said I could have one this year. I keep in contact with them so as I can audition for a post grad and they know me. I will probably audition everywhere just to see. To do one year just to see what its like down there, and go there to get contacts and that.' (nh.ex.hn)

On a more worrying note, postgraduate courses may become a less productive time for those who were perhaps less likely to have careers as performers. KA discusses the notion of 'waiting until the profession needs you.'

'I'm pretty scared about the future...As my teacher said to me in my last lesson, there's no point in stopping studying. Until the profession needs you, you don't stop being a student.' (ka. ex. hn)

Postgraduate courses can therefore serve two functions: personal instrumental development, and network development, easing the way into a professional career. If taking a postgraduate course is becoming the norm, questions need to be asked about why this is the case. What do students really gain from an extra year or two on top of their undergraduate degree in terms of developing their musical skills? Alternatively, is it a necessary 'safe haven' in which musicians can wait for work, overlapping professional work with college ensemble work and lessons until the individual feels ready to move into the profession.

### **Participants with university undergraduate degrees**

A completely different approach to postgraduate education was found in the sample that took unconventional paths to their performance careers. Postgraduate courses became a gateway to becoming a professional musician, rather than simply playing at a professional standard.

The cohort of musicians who did this (n=10), took a variety of undergraduate courses, including, politics philosophy and economics, pharmacy, English and experimental

psychology. Five others took academic music degrees at universities, including Cambridge, Goldsmiths, Kings, York and Melbourne University.

Eight out of ten went from their undergraduate course into a performance postgraduate course at a conservatoire. One participant described her belief that,

‘there are certain people [musicians] who go to university [as opposed to music college] because they are almost so technically accomplished and so on top of things that they don’t need four years to chug away at it.’ (rd. es. tbn)

Whether or not this is true is debatable, as this cohort cited a variety of reasons for selecting a different course of study. They talked of having other passions or strengths which they wished to pursue; of being worried that they may ‘possibly be bored by music college’ (mg. es. tbn); or that being a musician was just not something that was considered at 18.

‘It was just the way that things worked out. And I went to public school, and therefore to go into a pure music profession at that time, they wanted academic results so you know that’s the way I went. They said to go to Durham and do something sensible.’ (hp. d. hn)

### **Going against the trend**

Two participants in this cohort did not fit the pattern of a university undergraduate course followed by a postgraduate performance course: KJ and HP. HP initially went to Durham to be ordained and to do ‘something sensible’ (not music) as this was the socially acceptable path to take. KJ’s narrative was unusual, but it illustrates some significant ideas about training and developing a musical identity which can be generalised to other musicians.

KJ took a pharmacy degree at Manchester. During her final year there she auditioned, trialled and then took the trombone job with the BBC Welsh. KJ discussed this transition in the following way;

‘I did music at Chets for five years...But then I went and did pharmacy at Manchester. There was still loads of music going on...I just wanted to do something different I think. I’d already had arm / shoulder problems, *not* problems, but just like, it wasn’t really bad. But I was quite little as a teenager, I was quite a late grower and I think that all that amount of playing put quite a strain on my body really. And I just thought well, if its going to happen it will happen...I can still practice. And I’d had a lesson with professional teachers for an hour and half every week from the age of 13 to 18, there’s not much more someone can tell you about playing the trombone to be honest. Not rocket science, you know. It was quite useful in a lot of ways because I had to become my own teacher. I found that quite enjoyable, finding more out about my own playing by myself really.’ (kj. es. tbn)

Her early musical training combined with later postural problems, helped her to decide to train in a different area. She saw the musical skills that she had developed early in life as something that could be maintained on her own outside of formal education.

Training at a specialist music school had been physically demanding, but it had provided her with enough musical and non-musical skills for her to have developed a strong, positive musical identity as a trombonist. KJ had a desire to try to work in other fields, but was secure enough in her musical identity to know that she could maintain her practice and return to music if she wished.

High levels of self-awareness helped her to develop a positive musical identity that survived her transition into a non-musical higher education environment. Her positive musical identity and confidence in her musical skills and abilities, helped her to become self-directed in her practice: She practiced effectively enough, and had high enough levels of motivation to gain a seat in a BBC orchestra without formal higher education training in a conservatoire. This sense of *musical autonomy* seems to be a trait that was more typical of a musician in their establishment phase, as they moved into professional work. The establishment phase required more self-directed motivation and musical creativity, later this autonomy was seen to be removed in some musicians in their maintenance phase, as all of their artistic control and creativity is channelled through an orchestra, and their musical decisions were no longer their own.

### **Establishing and strengthening a professional identity**

Aside from the two unusual participants who went from a non-musical university undergraduate course, the other eight took postgraduate degrees to enable them to develop their practical music skills and to immerse themselves in the communities and networks that support the music profession. These choices often reconfirmed their identities as instrumentalists, enabling them to improve their musical skills and become part of the musical community; hence the idea of postgraduate courses operating as a gateway to the profession. Here they could begin to develop socio-musical identities as professional musicians. RD explores her transitions through higher education in the following excerpt.

‘When I left school I went to University because I didn’t know what I wanted to do, so I did a music degree at York. I really loved playing, but I wasn’t sure that I had what it took, or that I was dedicated enough, or any of those things. That’s why I went to do a music degree and tried to get a good teacher, which I managed to do and it was great. Then I thought, if I still like it in three years time then, work hard and go and do a postgrad in music. Which is what I went to do, I went to the Royal Academy in London.’ (rd. est. tbn.)

RD was unsure of her musical identity before university, because she was not certain whether ‘she had what it took’ to work in music professionally. Her discussion showed her love of playing, but a lack of self-belief in her dedication to music. She described her reasoning for taking a postgraduate course as

‘well it was there to get me up to a level where I could consider being a professional, rather than going in and considering myself at a professional standard and just using it [postgraduate course] as a kind of continuation of lessons.’ (rd. es. tbn)

Postgraduate studies opened the door to ‘being a professional,’ not simply a way to put off other decisions, or to have further lessons. Part of her identity as a musician had developed by weighing herself up against various social groups. Here she describes early, unfavourable comparisons at Junior Guildhall.

‘I had no real idea of the standard at all. At JGSMD there were people in my year who were real high fliers, Alison Balsom *etc.* So I got by, but I wasn’t sure when I got to the academy what the level would be.’ (rd, es, tbn)

In not seeing herself as a ‘high flier’ RD became doubtful of her identity as a trombonist. This was not enough, however, to believe that there was no way of becoming a professional trombonist. Three years studying undergraduate music in York and having a good private teacher there re-confirmed her identity as a musician. Reflecting on her beliefs about herself and her ‘fit’ into music college she described being

‘kind of pleasantly surprised that I was, you know [at a good standard for postgraduate conservatoire training]. You hope and hope you’ll be better than the 18 year olds but I honestly didn’t know. So I kept my head down, worked hard and really got a lot out of it. It improved my standard but it was also the time and space that I really need.’ (rd, es, tbn)

### **Gateway to becoming a professional musician**

RD’s illustration that her postgraduate course helped her to ‘become a musician’ as opposed to simply being of a professional standard is central to exploring the development of musical identities through higher education. For those who wanted to be a musician but trained elsewhere, postgraduate studies provided a vocational means to do this. There was much less variation in the reasoning and themes about deciding to do a postgraduate course from this sample, whereas the rest of the approaches to postgraduate education were quite mixed.

### **Exploration phase - discussion**

Analysing the pathways through this phase has shown the importance of tertiary education, but also the range of educational possibilities within this phase that have all resulted in a performance career. It has also begun to show how these experiences can contribute to developing a positive musical identity, which in conjunction with the right teacher / mentor support can ease the way into a professional career.

Given the wealth of data collected during the interviews, and because most of the current music literature has not considered the role of postgraduate education as a separate entity, it is worth briefly discussing other general trends.

#### ***Ambitions and identity: or the ‘I want to be principal of the LSO mentality’***

All of the musicians in their exploration phase at the time of interview showed ambitions for performance careers: usually desires to hold positions in first class orchestras. For example, ‘Working in an orchestra, that’s still the dream! That’s what I want to do.’ (c. tpt. ex).

These ambitions appear to be a normal part of becoming a musician, and may be integral to the motivation driving many musicians through their training. However, when musicians in the later phases reflected on how their ambitions had changed during their careers, they too had often begun college with similar high-status performance aspirations, but had adapted their identities to the work situation that they had achieved. Two participants described this state of being, as the ‘I want to be the principal of the LSO mentality,’ a description which places performance ambitions at the heart of young musicians’ identities. Not only that, but these ambitions were fixed, high-level orchestral performance ambitions. At least two ideas can be developed from this:

- how do musicians go about achieving this ambition?
- why might these ambitions occur?

#### ***Achieving the performance ideal***

When asked how they would manage and whether they could perceive their future careers, a typical response was

‘I’ve no idea! [laughs] something you don’t think about? Yeah [laughs] I dunno, I’ll see how it goes. If I’m not getting any work then obviously I’ll have to look into something else I guess. But, I just don’t know. I’m trying not to think about it. [laughs].’ (d. tbn. ex)

Other participants were slightly more aware, career focussed and motivated.

*Interviewer:* What are your thoughts about becoming a professional musician?

R: Quite worried about it! It's good work, but i'll see what happens. Something will come along. I've got my own plan of what I want to do when I leave.

*Interviewer:* What's that then?

R: I'd like to do a postgrad first of all. Somewhere else, definitely, then just get bits of work, keep on teaching, and then progress to auditions and things.

In the previous chapter it became clear that 'being a musician' is a protean and boundaryless career option. As such, it is important that musicians begin to develop a realistic idea of their futures, placing themselves in charge of their own careers: developing a positive concept of their future work and future identity as a musician is important in their success.

One interviewee stood out amongst all the exploration interviewees, for having a positive concept of his musical identity. When he talked about entering the profession he was

'Not too worried about it. Obviously there are going to be worrying times, but if you're good enough and you've got the contacts, you do a good job every time you go, you'll get asked back.' (mp. tpt. es)

MP had a positive, pragmatic and confident assessment of transitioning and working in the music profession. His confidence was in part developed through his contacts and networks that he had developed and maintained outside of his college education:

'I get quite a few concerts at the moment and I'm only in my second year of college. They aren't concerts through the college, but because I've been in the north so long, I know ex-students that have been here. They give me their gigs that they can't do.' (mp. tpt. es)



For MP, having already begun to establish a reputation as a musician in ‘the north’ meant that he retained and was able to use contacts whilst at college. This supported his whole musical development.

### *Teachers as mentors*

The colleges provided environments and networks that helped musicians to develop their social and musical identities. Key figures in the undergraduate careers of this sample were always their music teachers. Music teachers were without fail, classed as role models by the musicians whom they taught, and these people had huge impacts on the developing musicians’ social identities.

‘Quite a few, I’ll be honest, John Miller for one. He taught me for five years. Without him I wouldn’t have auditioned for NYO, I wouldn’t have won the under 18s International Trumpet Guild at 15. All the kind of things that I have done over those five years have been because of him saying, ‘do this’, ‘why don’t you try that?’ Reese Owen is my new teacher, he plays with the Liverpool Philharmonic. Every week I have a lesson I get inspired, and that is the kind of thing you want being taught.’ (mp. tpt. es)

There is some irony in their position as musical role models for students: they were role models not as ‘teachers’, but as performers. No student aspired ‘to be a music teacher’, but they did aspire to the performing careers of their teachers.

Teachers fulfilled a transitional role for some students, mainly in postgraduate education, but for some this occurred during their undergraduate course. For those who were somehow ‘ready’, teachers supported and encouraged their decisions to audition for jobs, or provided them with some work in the industry to begin to get their name known.

Teachers were not so much the distant instrumental teacher that a typical conception of the teacher – student relationship might imply. They became mentors as well as being an inspiration and a performance role model. It is interesting, therefore, that the musicians did not value ‘becoming a music teacher’ as part of their future identity. Despite having excellent teachers to whom they looked up, teaching remained a financial necessity rather than a motivational aspect of music-making.

***The development of non-musical skills***

The recent researcher-practitioner led research emanating from conservatoires has meant many curriculum changes, showing that colleges are doing much more than previously, to equip students with the skills to hold successful careers in music.

However, current and past students still had the same criticisms of the system: they felt that there were only a few, highly competitive opportunities for ensemble work during their undergraduate years. There was a sense that these opportunities were decreasing as more students meant more competition. Many of the students also felt under-prepared in non-musical skills that would be relatively easy to rectify. These skills included writing program notes, understanding tax and being self-employed, or managing their workload.

***The role of postgraduate courses in developing a musical identity***

Although postgraduate musical education has, as yet seen no discussion within the music literature, this work showed that an extra one or two years at postgraduate level is becoming ‘the norm’, or even required of musicians. In practical terms, this places the length of course in line with other vocational professions (medicine, dentistry, veterinary science). However, the expense of studying in this manner, especially as many of the colleges are in London, may not be offset by the financial rewards of a later career in the music profession. None of the musicians in the decline phase had taken postgraduate courses, having gone straight into work. For those in the maintenance phase, postgraduate courses had been taken because their undergraduate courses had been taken at a university, and they wanted the opportunity for some vocational training.

***Postgraduate as a gateway to a professional musical identity***

These courses serve an important and interesting function during the exploration/establishment phases: they can provide opportunity and training for more technical musical skill development, but their primary function appears to be to provide time and space for a musician to develop personally, and in so doing, develop a footing within the profession. During this period, students may acquire more performance work, whilst developing their social networks and contacts.

These courses can support an overlap between the exploration and establishment phases of a musician’s career. This overlap eases the transition between the phases, helping to maintain stability and to re-affirm a positive musical identity as a performer. This can

all be achieved while still in the safe environment of a college. Sometimes the transitional process was marked with tensions between a musician's musical identity and opportunities, and the demands and identity that were placed onto the musicians whilst they were attending college. There were restrictions placed on how much work an individual could undertake, and if there were clashes between college commitments and outside work then the college work had always to come first. These tensions were mentioned quite regularly by the younger cohorts interviewed, and may be a natural part of moving through the transition between two phases or two social identities: that of the college musician versus that of the performing musician.

### ***Social and musical skill development at postgraduate level***

For some musicians a postgraduate course provided the opportunity to hone specific musical skills and abilities, to meet and develop new contacts, and to try out new mentors. This was particularly evident in one participant's narrative, which described a turbulent time at undergraduate level, driven by an urge to prove his teacher wrong. This musician was then given some lengthy patches on the Fame tour. During this time, he realised that, with some judicious funding applications, he could return to college and take a postgraduate course, earning more than he had freelancing, as well as having the time to develop further skills. He only knew he was lacking in these skills by having the real-world performance experiences.

SH's narrative illustrated how a positive musical identity could be developed through an *apprenticeship* style approach to training and transitions. This may be a model that could be expanded and put to further use within the training institutions.

Brass musicians have a reputation for being extraverted, for socialising, and for drinking. This has been very broadly discussed in the personality and stereotyping music literature (Kemp, 1996; Langendörfer et al., 2006; Bell & Cresswell, 1984). The stereotyping literature usually draws parallels between brass musicians and string players, seeing them as polar opposites in terms of their traits and behaviours (Davies, 1978). However, rather than seeing 'socialising' and drinking as a negative behaviour, this element seemed to help forge a strong sense of community and camaraderie amongst many of the brass musicians who took part in this work.

## The establishment phase

### Introduction

Establishment occurs immediately after formal higher education. Pilot phase participants often suggested that they would ‘give it five years’ (h. es. tpt) to launch and establish their careers. Thus, participants were selected for this phase if they ranged in age from 22 to 30 years, regardless of the type of musical work they were undertaking. This phase sees careers launched, and the aspirations and opportunities discussed during the exploration stage beginning to be tested. CB described his development and transitions during this phase by saying,

‘Well, I found postgrad half a waste of time. The cost is massive, but hopefully that year you can meet more people. Anyhow, September and October straight out of college was a bit of a crappy time, all of a sudden it started to pick up. It’s not one type of stuff or another really, it just all started to pick up. As well as all the amateur stuff of course, but this is now another level. But, if it doesn’t work out in the next couple of years, I won’t be heartbroken. I’ll give it a maximum of five years to make it, but whatever else I was doing I would still play the trumpet.’ (cb. es. tpt)

A number of pilot questions helped to develop an understanding of which participants would be included in the establishment stage: they were asked to reflect on how this stage had evolved or might do so in the future.

### *Participants*

Fifteen participants belonged to this stage, five were female and ten were male. Eleven had taken undergraduate courses at conservatoires and ten had successfully completed postgraduate courses. Immediately after graduation, five went directly into jobs. Others were establishing themselves in various types of freelance careers, all with different balances between performance work and other types of work.

### **Establishment: developing a protean career**

#### **Performing and being a musician**

The musician’s relationship with their instrument has been nurtured for the majority of his or her lifespan, so unsurprisingly this work is showing much weight and value being

placed on ‘being a performer’. The following exchange about musical identities summarises some of the performance assumptions made by musicians and non-musicians in defining being a musician.

*Interviewer:* ‘Do you think that you have a musical identity? That is to say I guess, what role does music play in your identity / place does music have in your life?’

*RD:* ‘I don’t think that music is all I stand for, the thing is that when people talk about musicians or performers...if you say ‘is he or she a musician?’ They are really asking if he or she is an instrumentalist. They assume that a musician is someone that plays an instrument, whereas it is so much more than that. I did a music degree and you know a lot of my friends are composers of music, teachers, or music academics. So I think coming from a background where I have not just gone to music college changes your perception on being a musician.’ (rd. tbn. es)

The self – instrument – performance relationship has become even more central to the self-concept by this stage. This became clear when talking to horn players about their self-perception in relation to their instrument. Horns occupy an almost transitional space in an orchestra, being brass instruments but also being written and scored for as a woodwind instrument. NH was about a year into his establishment phase when he was interviewed, and had this to say about his identity as a horn player.

‘As a horn player I wouldn’t lump myself in with anyone else, but I would say I’m more brass than woodwind. I think, probably, because of the mentality of belonging to the brass! Having said that, the horn is very versatile, for example in this *Wind in the Willows*, it is with a wind quintet and it is very light all the way through. Very clean, very out the way. You can’t do that as well on other brass instruments. So, you do have more versatility on the horn, that’s why it is in a wind quintet. So yes, horn player but more brass!’ (nh. es. hn)

Part of NH’s musical identity as a professional horn player came from working with brass sections and woodwind sections. In this excerpt he sees that the ‘mentality of the brass’ as contributing a considerable part, but the technical virtuosity and skill from working as though he were a woodwind instrument. It becomes apparent, therefore, that musical sections and groups contribute some very specific components to a

musician's identity, which appears to be expressed and conferred through the instrument that they play.

The relationship between a player and his or her instrument, as the previous chapter indicated, remains under-researched in the music psychology literature. This is despite the fact that this relationship is key to the identities of this sample, and in future musical careers. The musicians in this study valued the performing and the performance nature of their careers as the most central part of their identity. One establishment musician developing his career said,

'Every musician wants to earn his living from performing ideally, and there are plenty of successful freelancers out there... At the moment, well I don't really work with any orchestras regularly enough but when you're getting paid for it everything's equally important really. If you're getting paid for it then I suppose that's your priority at that moment.' (ml. tba. es)

ML's comment indicated the central role of performance in his identity. His seeing 'plenty of successful freelancers out there' supported his future identity development. This contrasts with the idea that musicians are always driven by intrinsic esoteric creative desires.

### **'Success' during the establishment phase**

In discussing whether she felt that she had succeeded in her career RD said,

'I suppose you could measure it by looking at my tax return really, and am I making more money than last year? Yes I am! How many more orchestras have I started going into this year? [more than last] Good! Because In a sense I suppose I feel like it's going well and it's progressing. But, you can never...I think I'm doing all right when I'm able to get a mortgage, buy a house....'(rd. tbn. es)

This highlights the external and internal possibilities for measuring 'success' as a musician. She talks of possible external measures in terms of financial gain, and the numbers of orchestras she is working with. The emphasis is on upward mobility and on performance. Her comment shows that some level of success will be measurable to her

when she has the financial stability within her career to buy a home. Yet, these external measures can be contrasted to her later comments about internal motivation:

‘I don’t feel that I haven’t made it, but I don’t feel that I have. I just feel that I’m enjoying it and I’m where I’m at!’

Most musicians indicated that performing and being an instrumentalist were not the only part of being a musician. Yet, performing appears to consistently be the element of the definition of a musician’s identity which was valued.

### **The role of teaching in the establishment phase**

The exploration phase showed teaching became an important role in the later development of a musician’s social identity. Music teachers were revered as instrumental / performance role models, but they were not revered for their teaching. Teaching was not something that any of them aspired to do, and yet it seems to be holding an increasingly important role in the establishment phase. Even some of the musicians who were living at home saw that there was some necessity to teaching,

‘I quite like what I do, but I think maybe I need to find some teaching to supplement the real work.’ (bh. hn. es)

Tensions arise between the identity of ‘being a musician’, and so developing a performance career, and the necessity of taking on teaching and ‘being a teacher’ for financial security. Very few of the musicians in this phase talked about enjoying or being motivated to teach. Many musicians are expected to teach all of the brass instruments. Yet most have only received limited, performance orientated training on a single instrument by the time they leave tertiary education. BH, a classically trained french horn player, discusses her first and only attempt at teaching beginner trumpet.

I wouldn’t enjoy it, I know that for a fact. I know I’m rubbish at it. I taught this beginner trumpet and I was a total spastic. This kid was like ten and we spend the whole lesson and I just did not know the fingering for D flat, and I couldn’t not work it out. I played the trumpet and I was like no, no, no, no, no, no. Then he got this book

out and I was like, it's all three! All three, how could I have missed it? Then I thought oh God, maybe I'm not cut out to do this. I'd be cut out to teach horn players, but to find a horn only teaching position its impossible. My heart's not in looking for teaching work, that's the thing. I mean I am so lucky, so lucky living at home, but it would be nice not to live at home. (bh. hn. es)

### *A lack of teaching instruction*

Her experiences were not unique, others discussed and laughed about their difficulties teaching particular instrumental students. Yet, throughout these discussions were unspoken assumptions that, as these musicians had received instrumental tuition themselves, they would automatically be able to teach and inspire young musicians. None had received any formal teaching experience in their tertiary education, and so they were all left to rely on their intrinsic knowledge of teaching, built up through years of being taught.

### *A financial necessity*

Teaching was, and in many ways always has been, a fundamental part of a musician's identity. Although it is not the part of the career that is valued by the musicians themselves, at least not in this lifespan stage, it is a central in developing a career, as it provides financial stability through regular work. In comparison, short-term performance work can be notoriously unreliable.

‘With freelancing you can have a week of no work, or you can have a month of working everyday. But, that week of no work completely buggers you up’ (bh. hn. es)

The importance of teaching as part of a future career was anticipated, even by those who had no immediate pressure to take up this type of role (because they lived at home).

‘At the moment I have loads of work and I'm really really busy. But there will come a time, quite soon probably, where I have got a month and say three gigs. So that regular income [from teaching] is quite important. It pays the rent, so it is definitely something that will become part of my career.’ (nh. hn. es)



In contrast are the experiences of HS: she was a freelance trumpeter who had left college three years earlier at the time of interview.

‘I’ve been teaching in Haringey, which is north London. Um, through a friend. It’s miles away from where I live and I would like something nearer me. It is still only about ten or eleven hours a week, which is not really enough.’ (hs. tpt. es)

HS indicated the necessity in taking on work like this, which was inconvenient, but of great benefit. Others had established a range of sustainable teaching opportunities as part of their commitment to developing a career as a freelance musician. This part of being a musician was rarely brought up voluntarily in their discussions of their identity as a musician. The interviewer often had to ask if they taught. The exchange, and an indication of some of the problems musicians felt they faced teaching is illustrated in the following discussion.

*Interviewer:* ‘Do you teach at the moment?’

RD: ‘Yeah instrument teaching. It is a bit of...well I do it to pay the bills, but some of it I do enjoy.’

*Interviewer:* ‘Can you tell me a bit more about the teaching?’

RD: ‘To be honest it totally depends on the student. I’m teaching at a school where people are learning for a variety of reasons and invariably they don’t practise. If a kid comes in really enthusiastic I don’t mind it and I can have a good session and then go out feeling that they’ve learnt something. But, if they come in and they clearly don’t want to be there, it is very hard to be motivated with that. So I don’t know: teaching probably not, or music journalism or something - something I would like, writing maybe.’ (rd.tbn.es)

The last part of RD’s comments make little sense until the rest of the context is known: an earlier question asked what the interviewee might do if he or she suffered illness or injury and could no longer play. Even in this situation RD did not see teaching as an alternative career path,

Do you teach? I did some last year, but at the moment I am doing none. Is that something that suits you or not? No, its not that it doesn't suit me, it is that I haven't found the right place yet. Because I have been moving around a lot I find that, well I need somewhere local, but that is not going to happen because there aren't those sort of schools. (rd.tbn.es)

### **Being a self-employed musician**

Framing accounts of working lives within music and vocational career concepts, provided a more comprehensive approach to understanding musicians' careers and identities. The first problem faced was how to generally describe and define musicians in terms of their employment.

This sample most often referred to their careers under something that could be termed self-employed freelance artists, even when they were contracted full-time to a single ensemble.

'Most musicians work under freelance conditions. By and large we are self-employed, even where we are contracted with one orchestra.' (mg. tbn. es)

The term *freelancer* was the vernacular adopted to refer to a distinct career choice within the boundaries of self-employed freelance musicians. Musicians actively developed careers as freelancers, showing no desire to look for a permanent orchestral position.

'I'm quite happy freelancing for the time being. I've got some great work coming up, and people know me now, well everyone tends to know...you know I split up with my girlfriend, even that bit of knowledge gets people thinking well he might be up for...So, yeah freelancing its great for now.' (sh. tbn. es)

Thus, to be a musician was to be considered as a self-employed freelancer. However, within that general musical identity, some choose to 'be freelance musicians.' i.e. to develop a career entirely based on short-term performance work (as opposed to long-term, fixed performance contracts with orchestras).

This gave an opportunity to develop a *performance continuum* (similar to Finnegan's amateur-professional continuum) to represent the range of possibilities for musician's performance-based self-employment. At one end of the spectrum would be musicians who were contracted to a single ensemble, usually an orchestra, and undertook no other work. At the other end, would be musicians who chose to fill their working time with a sequence of freelance performing jobs, but had no long-term performance contracts. The narratives showed musicians working at various points along this continuum, often changing the balance and nature of their work over the course of the lifespan.

***Being a self-employed musician: orchestral contracts***

Five of the establishment cohort held full-time orchestral posts. This brings into question earlier arguments surrounding the decrease in long-term performance opportunities: given this premise it might be expected that there would be fewer establishment participants securing orchestral positions, yet a third of this group had full-time posts, and four out of five of these had auditioned during college and secured these roles either before or just after graduation.

'It's going to sound like a cliché, because I mean quite literally, with there being so few jobs....At the end of my second year an audition came up with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in Cardiff, which I was in two minds as to whether to go for. My teacher, thank goodness, persuaded me that I ought to go. I was worried that I would make a fool of myself. And in hindsight that made me work my socks off for the audition. I played the audition piece from memory, which apparently no one else did. But I thought that I had to do something to separate myself from everyone else. Otherwise....well I wanted to make myself be something in their memory. So I did that, and I eventually got the job half way through my third year. I wanted to finish my degree, so I drove up and down the M4 a lot, to commute from Cardiff to the academy, then I joined the Philharmonia just after my graduation.' (cj. btbn. es)

CJ's experiences auditioning, securing and working in a contracted post whilst completing his degree were similar to the narratives of other establishment participants. AB auditioned for the LSO in her final year at the Guildhall, and said that, 'maybe I have my ideal musical job...2<sup>nd</sup> horn at the LSO...we'll wait and see.' (ab. hn. es).

These orchestral-contracted establishment musicians continued to develop their protean careers, regardless of them achieving financial stability through their performance

contracts. The motivation for doing this is internal and subjective: they talked of personal musical development, extending themselves in terms of their musical abilities and experiences. Taking on other performance opportunities helped to push them forward musically and kept them developing, it also helped to keep them connected to their social networks of musicians.

***Being a self-employed musician: freelancing***

Ten of the establishment participants described themselves as freelance musicians. This tended to refer to a general state of being self-employed as a musician, but having no full-time long-term contracted post with an orchestra. Only a few participants could be placed right at the end of the continuum, *only* undertaking short-term freelance performance work as all of their identity.

‘I was really lucky. I had a 12 month tour of Fame after my undergrad, but then I’d heard from Matt and Ed that you could get a lot of money to do a postgrad. So I went back to do a course. I tried to make myself into the best freelancer possible. I’m doing ok now...no I don’t teach at the moment, I don’t really want to.’ (sh. tbn. es)

Although SH talked of financially surviving solely through his freelance work, other musicians were not in this position. Three of the musicians starting out in this phase were able to remain in London and move back to their parents, alleviating the financial pressure and insecurity associated with starting a career in music.

‘Since I’ve moved back home, September was completely dead. I did absolutely nothing. I was literally.... It is really hard. I actually just practiced. I had a couple of weeks off over the summer, you know to go on holiday. Errr. And really I didn’t play much at all. I got back and I was like, well ‘I could just bum around’ you really really can.’ (nh. hn. es)

Many musicians were unable to do this and needed to take on additional work to become financially secure. One establishment participant reflected on his friends in this phase,

‘The most common mix is for people to do quite a lot of teaching when they first leave music collage, then try and gradually build more playing into it. A lot of people often say they'll give it five years, and re-asses what they're doing after that. If they are happy and successful then keep going, if not...well, look at PC.’ (mg. tbn. es)

## **The maintenance and decline phases**

The maintenance phase was characterised by musicians who were older than thirty (the end of the establishment phase) and who were settled in their careers as musicians.

The decline phase was characterised by musicians who had made an active decision to step down or away from part of their performance career. This section discusses the nature of ‘freelancing’ and ‘having a job’ as reflected upon by all of these musicians, their reflections need to be examined together to obtain a sense of how musicians may move through their careers.

### **Orchestral work**

As indicated earlier, the desired career in music was always a career as a performer, with the ideal being an orchestral post within an orchestra. Many of the establishment phase participants, and most of the maintenance participants had these types of careers. CJ described himself as a ‘performer, I spend about 90% of my time doing performance work. The rest is just all the other stuff, bit of teaching, paperwork, driving around that sort of thing.’ (cj. es. tbn).

Orchestral work, however, was not as simple as having a single contract with an ensemble: the orchestras in the UK are each run and funded quite differently from each other. Many musicians in this phase talked of orchestras as having ‘personalities,’ and of needing to fit in with a different ‘groups of lads’ depending upon which ensembles they were working with. The Association of British Orchestras (ABO) described the following types of orchestras (Table 9b).

**Table 9b:** ABO descriptions of orchestras in the UK

<b>Type of orchestra and description</b>	<b>Examples of orchestras, selected because they have been discussed within the interviews</b>
Contract Symphony Orchestras: pay full-time salaries.	Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), Northern Sinfonia
Freelance Orchestras: fixed membership, with salaries, but they are ‘essentially freelance orchestras.’	London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO), London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), Philharmonia Orchestra (PO), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO).
Companies with their own orchestras: musicians are employed on full time contracts for all of these examples.	Birmingham Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, English National Opera, English Touring Opera, Glyndebourne on Tour, Opera North, Royal Opera House, Scottish Opera.
The BBC: the BBC has five orchestras all on full time salaries (with pension).	BBC National Orchestra of Wales (Cardiff) BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (Glasgow) BBC Symphony Orchestra (London)
Chamber orchestras: the ABO divides these into general, period and contemporary ensembles.	English Chamber Orchestra, English Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Sinfonietta

At this point, the idea of being a contracted musician or being a freelance musician becomes almost redundant; many musicians have orchestral contracts but take on work outside of this role,

‘I’m a freelancer I guess. I work 35 weeks a year for \_\_\_ and then I do the quintet and stuff...teaching outside of that. They are really good with the quintet work, I can often work it around their work.’ (am. tbn. ma)

The maintenance phase can be characterised by a few more of AM’s comments

‘I am very lucky to be in a position now where I can turn down muddy field gigs. I’ve got more freelance work than I can take on which is a really great place to be (am. tbn. ma)

‘I don’t think I was ever the sort of person who said I want to be principal of a London Orchestra. But you become quite satisfied with what you do. I mean one day, maybe it would be nice, but I’m happy with what I do (am. tbn. ma).

### **Skills and abilities to be a performing musician**

#### ***Skills and abilities required as an orchestral musician***

Musicians are required to audition for an orchestral post, as and when positions are advertised as available. After rounds of auditions, a select group of musicians are then assigned trials to work with the orchestra. These are essentially patches of work where a potential new member comes and sits in a section, and an informal process of testing the ‘fit’ between the section and the individual begins.

‘Being on trial raises similar issues but this time the player must find a balance between ticking the orchestra’s boxes musically and socially, while also being themselves. It’s no good being offered a job in an orchestra where they think you are something you are not as you will only be unhappy. This also depends on a player’s age and experience: if its someone who’s been in a job before, maybe not enjoyed it as much as they’d hoped, then they are more likely to be themselves. Whereas someone straight out of college who is doing their first professional trial is more likely to be led astray and not be truly themselves.’ (mg. tbn. es)

This quote illustrates the tensions between the sense of self and practices as a musician, and the very real impact of social groups on identity and practices. MG talks of differences in approaches to auditioning for orchestral jobs, between those who have experienced contracted work and those who are at the start of their establishment stage. Musicians’ perceived beliefs about the social and musical requirements of a section, and the impact this can have on a musician’s identity can affect whether they obtain more trial work or eventually are appointed the job.

#### ***The nature of orchestral / performance careers***

When the establishment participants’ orchestral careers are considered within the earlier performance continuum, they do not fit at the extreme right of the diagram. None of the participants spent all of their time in their orchestral roles, all taking on additional



freelance performance work around their orchestral commitments. In contrast, some of the maintenance and decline participants took on little or no other performance work, and had often held their jobs for a considerable length of time.

‘By the time I was in my third year five trombone jobs came up in Great Britain, this was about 1981, and I thought go for it. So the principal trombone job came up in the \_\_\_ and I thought, yeah. I got trials elsewhere too, and by the spring of ‘82 that was me in a job.’ (lg. tbn. ma)

LG held the principal trombone position for twenty-five years, the only other work was a ‘squeaky gate group doing the odd education thing’, (colloquial expression for an impromptu group, usually brought together for a single event), and even this was with other members of the orchestra. This excerpt from LG’s narrative acts as an exemplar to the changing nature of musical careers, both in terms of how a career can change over the lifespan, and how music careers maybe changing from a cultural perspective.

#### ***Skills and abilities required as a freelance musician***

Participants saw a distinct set of skills and abilities required to be a musician. Within the career, however, both contracted and freelance musicians were seen to need the same basic skills, but utilised them in different ways. In discussing what he thought was required to be a successful musician, MG explored how musicians interacted and approached work with different orchestras when freelancing.

‘To be successful can require a ‘chameleonic’ nature, both socially and musically: orchestras, especially the brass sections, vary greatly in social dynamics and musical attitudes. For example, one brass section may all be the best of friends, go out at lunch and after work to enjoy a few pints, really take a lot of care over the detail of the music and the sound / balance of the whole orchestra. On the other hand, you may get an orchestra that goes off to do their own thing at lunch and require someone who musically really gives it some (volume), and jokes about during rehearsals (farting etc.) This maybe seems a little extreme, but these are the calls that the freelance musician must make if he/she wants to be booked on a regular basis with an orchestra.’ (mg. tbn. es)

MG was an establishment phase musician with an orchestral contract, nonetheless, having freelanced around his orchestral contract and experienced auditioning from the perspective of a section auditioner and as the auditionee. His comments were particularly useful in shedding light on how ensembles and sections within these ensembles can influence upon a musician's behaviour, and so shape a musician's identity. HP described the difference between the qualities and temperament needed in freelancing and orchestral work, saying that;

'When you are in a job your standards are just as high. But the nagging of insecurity is less, because you know that you could have a bad day, and you're still going to be in the job. Of course you are. If you're playing in front of some sort of fixer, who happens to be in the orchestra as well, and you're not playing as well as you might. Inevitably, you think are. So there's a bit more pressure' (hp. hn. d).

The psychological approach of freelancers has to be different to salaried orchestral musicians, so much so

'that being a freelancer you have to be tougher. You have to be much more secure. If somebody said to me, would you rather be in a job or freelancing? There is no doubt, that I would rather be in a job. It is a very very fickle profession. Inevitably, like all artistic organisations, it doesn't matter whether you're a poet or a painter or whatever you are, you still don't have anything that is necessarily hard and fast. You go in and do a gig, and then you won't be asked back by that organisation for another six months think you have to be very careful not to get too paranoid. (laughs).

You know it's picking up the, 'my god what did I do syndrome?' Then you're fine, you have to be very very careful, that when you hear somebody else has gone into a job not to think that you're a bad player...all these things beset the brain (laughs). And you have to be very careful that it doesn't get you down. *how do you manage that?* Go and have a pint!! No no (laughs).' (hp. hn. d)

### **Understanding the career**

Some musicians in this sample had held posts in the same orchestra for the majority of their careers. One difficulty with this can be that a certain amount of boredom and dissatisfaction can creep into their perceptions of work. This was certainly something

that was found in the organisational psychology literature (Allmendinger et al., 1996).

One participant described his dissatisfaction with an orchestral career as,

‘I think you could train a monkey to sit in an orchestra.’ (lg. tbn. d)

And yet,

‘I rather sort of staggered into the freelance well to begin with, and it has only been latterly, in say the last 20 years that I have really realised what to have a job, a job is good. In the BBC they are a marvellous offshoots. I mean like, and they look after you extremely well they are very very good employers. And they give you a pension at the end of it, it's not bad. It's not a particularly good pension, that doesn't matter. It's still a pension.’ (hp. hn. hn)

### *The musician from a vocational perspective*

For those who had obtained an orchestral contract quite early on and rarely deviated from this position throughout their careers, their careers were often boundaried, and not the protean / boundaryless careers that might be typically expected of a musician. Most of their career was held within the restrictions of the orchestral organisation, with little else in the way of musical stimulation and personal musical development.

These musicians often had less autonomy about their working lives, and so for some, the sense of personal creativity began to suffer, and disillusionment could creep in. It would be incorrect to suggest that all orchestral musicians in the later lifespan stages had lost a sense of autonomy, as some had long-term contracts with an organisation, but flexible freelance arrangements around these contracts.

In contrast, the others in the establishment phase who were interviewed, however, strove to maintain a protean attitude and approach to their work. An argument could be made that this occurs through financial necessity, orchestral salaries being low in relative economic terms (see previous chapter). Yet most of these contracted musicians talked of going into the profession expecting a protean career, and of being extremely lucky to have secured a post so young and straight from college. Establishment participants were actively pursuing a new-style protean career, and they tended to maintain an approach which was flexible, adaptable, creative and seemed high in internal-levels of protean and boundarylessness (in terms of their attitudes).

### **Stepping down from a performance career**

Inevitably, performance careers cannot be sustained forever. This realisation came to many musicians remarkably early on in their careers. Establishment and maintenance phase participants all talked of people they knew who had to stop their performance careers because of illness and injury. This often became apparent for these musicians when they realised that recover from a hectic touring schedule or series of concerts was taking more time than normal. Often some began to adapt, changing their lifestyle and stopping drinking for periods of time. Alternatively they took up ‘physical warm-ups,’ realising that as well as warming up the instrument, they too were part of the process and needed to ‘do a series of stretching exercises before I play now. I realised this late last year as my back and shoulder were beginning to hurt from holding the trombone.’ (cj. tbn. es).

The nature of performing and performance was such that participants in the decline phase had made active decisions to step down or away from their performance careers. (Not necessarily stop them all together, but leave a prestigious position). This was because of the stresses that the playing and the lifestyle had put on them over the years.

‘And so, when the opportunity came to sit down on the second that has been a big question mark, It really has. How many people have asked me why did you make that decision? Was it pressure here? Yeah. One does see the writing on the wall as a player. That player sitting there in his 40s or 50s, certainly in the brass world it's about stamina, it's also about a burning desire - again do you want to keep on playing Beethoven five for the 20th time? And I said no, I think it's time.’ (lg. tbn. d)

## Conclusions

This chapter has illustrated the changes in musical identities of professional classical musicians across the lifespan. It has opened up new areas for possible research, as there have been no lifespan studies of this kind with contemporary classical musicians. The data was examined both across all four phases, and within each phase. Examining all of the phases together showed that there were two broad skill areas required for musicians to have successful careers: the social and the musical (including teaching), and the findings pertain to these.

### *Key findings*

- Postgraduate education was perceived as an important gateway into the music profession and therefore a key influence on changing musical identities.
- Central to many musicians' success was frequently the overlap between postgraduate courses and the early stages of their careers. Occasionally, such an overlap existed between undergraduate courses and the performance career.
- Important influential figures within this overlap were the music teachers, who moved from the skills-based figures to become individuals who would guide, mentor and facilitate student transition into the performance world.
- Students did not perceive teaching as a valuable component in their musical identities, with some students in fact fearing teaching. The 'craft' of music may be handed down in a master-apprentice style approach for many, but this does not mean that they know how to be a master.
- For the establishment musicians, performing remained key to their musical identity. However, teaching also moved into a prominent position for many, as it was a way to finance their existence with some security.
- Once entering adulthood and a performance career, musical skills were taken for granted. The focus therefore shifted from this to the social: The social elements of a career helped to establish informal networks within musical communities, through which musicians gave out or obtained further performance work.
- Being skilled in the social aspects of playing and performance were key in securing future work, but they also contributed a great deal to musician's current identities as performers. Knowing how to adapt both musically and socially to a new performance situation, and therefore perfecting this 'chameleonic nature' was central to musicians' identities and future careers as performers.

- A musician's career is rarely seen in the same light as an athlete's, and yet the very physical nature of playing became obvious to many early in their careers: either because they were beset with injuries, or because the lifestyle of a performing musician became something that wore them down. Related to this was the development of performance careers within and beyond the boundaries of organisations. Most musicians strove for salaried orchestral work, and yet if this was not approached in a boundaried and protean manner, musicians ran the risk of becoming disillusioned with performance careers

***Recommendations for further work***

- The musical training and careers literature needs to be developed by further consideration of the large role that postgraduate education appears to play in musicians' careers. It also needs to reflect on whether changes in music-making culture and in college practices have changed the position of postgraduate education for current and future music-students.
- Teaching students how to teach peripatetic instrumental skills might therefore be a useful development within undergraduate teaching.
- Future work could benefit by adopting the terminology of the vocational literature, and possibly working with attitude measure and vocational specialists to try to understand how these changes in attitude and approach to orchestral work might occur.

**Section Six:**  
Becoming and being  
a musician

Chapter Ten – Discussion and  
conclusions

## **Becoming and being a musician: summary and conclusions**

Preceding chapters have discussed musical identity through literature critiques and empirical observations, both of which offered original insight on the process of becoming and being a brass musician. Although focusing on a specific subject group, the findings have wider implications for research and musical practice. This chapter commences with a synopsis of the research objectives and findings, culminating with a discussion of how musical identity can be reconsidered by incorporating socio-musical groups. The research is then evaluated and suggestions for applications and further developments are made.

### **Summary: research aims and objectives**

This work aimed to extend scholarly understanding of musical identity and the influence of social groups. It was designed to fulfil the following central aims

- To assess the effectiveness of social identity theory when applied to musical identities, within the interdisciplinary field of music psychology.
- To determine the outcomes of applying social identity theory to musical identities among brass musicians.

Chapter two examined the fundamental aim of this PhD from a theoretical stance, showing that it is possible to bring SIT and MI together, and so form a space in which contemporary and valuable research could occur.

The thesis developed to examine a number of objectives, these were:

- To carry out a literature review of the concept of identity within both the music psychology and social psychology fields.
- To explore the methodologies commonly used for examining identity within music psychology and social psychology.



- To identify and assess the importance of early influences on developing musical identity when it is considered as a social category.
- To examine changes in social and cultural contextual factors influencing musical identity over time and across the lifespan.

These objectives were examined throughout the thesis, and the relationship of specific objectives to sections have been highlighted at the start of each section. Below is a summary of the research in the context of the aims and objectives.

### **Research summary – a discourse on identity**

The work investigated and accounted for the integral, nascent relationship between the social context and identity. The diversity of music and psychology research relating to musicians' identities drove this work to consider a wide range of literature. Resulting discourse interwove original combinations of literature with discussion emanating from the findings of the empirical research.

*Section two:* Began with a literature review, deepening the understanding of musical identity by examining the connections and theoretical possibilities between music and social psychology. It illustrated the concept of social identity, discussing the evolution of the theory and approaches in social psychology over the last fifty years. This was contrasted with the recent development of musical identity as a concept in music psychology. The section concluded by showing that an original approach to musicians' identities could be made if both concepts were drawn together and examined within the field of social music psychology.

The methodologies section justified the qualitative approach to research, and the specific techniques applied during the experimental research. A participant summary commenced the illustration of the brass musician as a research subject, highlighting facts about the participants involved in this work.

*Section three:* Examined the relationship between instrument choice and musical identity. *Chapter four* reviewed the contemporary literature on instrument choice, finding it restricted to childhood choices and identities, the majority of which

implicated gender as an influence within this choice. *Chapter five* was divided into two sections. The first built on the gendered nature of the contemporary literature, finding that brass instruments were still gendered but that they did not all have the same levels of masculinity: women chose different instruments to men, and although there were increasing numbers of women playing brass, many found barriers to their musical progress over their lifespan. The second part took a broad social identity framework to instrument choice and identity. It acknowledged that for many this choice was made during childhood. Thus, the choice became important in developing a positive future musical identity. As the data were drawn from adults' reflections on their musical choices, musical identity became a fluid concept, changing over the lifespan as other musical and instrumental choices opened up.

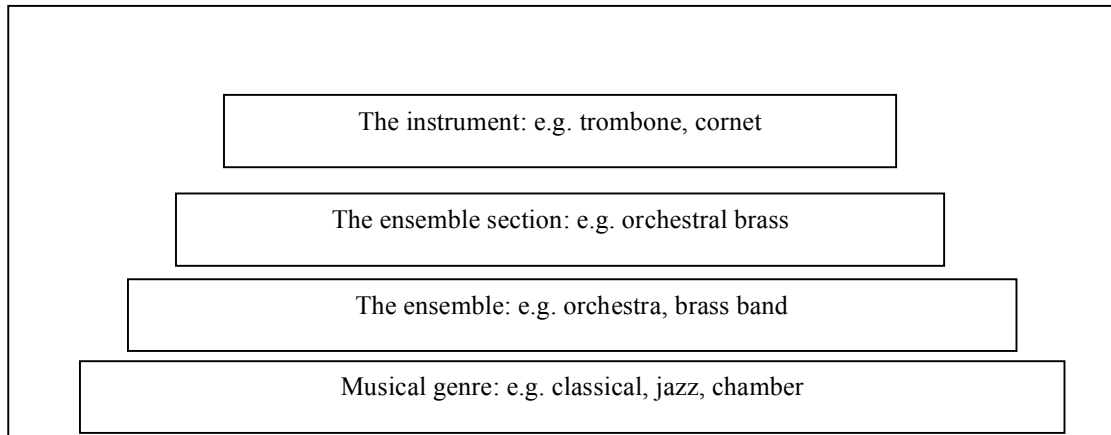
*Section four:* Built upon the gendered aspects of the previous section. *Chapter six* examined the socio-historical stances to gender and music-making. It developed the idea that gender, musical practices and identities are culturally embedded. It showed that behaviour, social practices and social expectations associated with female musicians slowly change over time. This sense of change provided a positive foundation from which to explore contemporary practices. *Chapter seven* examined the contemporary experiences of the few female professional brass musicians in the UK. It investigated their perceptions about gender and music-making, and their experiences as female artists working in a predominantly masculine environment.

*Section five:* Developed the account of professional female brass musicians, this section further investigated the relationships between identity and vocation. *Chapter eight* considered the current debates around defining a musician. It illustrated the paucity of music psychology literature into the working lives of musicians, and showed that by looking to the established vocational literature, the nature of musicians' careers could be better understood. *Chapter nine* examined how musicians' socio-musical identities evolved over the lifespan. It used the accounts of trainee and professional brass instrumentalists to consider musicians' working lives and identities. It illustrated how the social worlds and groups that surrounded them help to construct their identities, and that these identities changed over the course of the lifespan.

**Social identity perspective on brass musicians***The musician's identity*

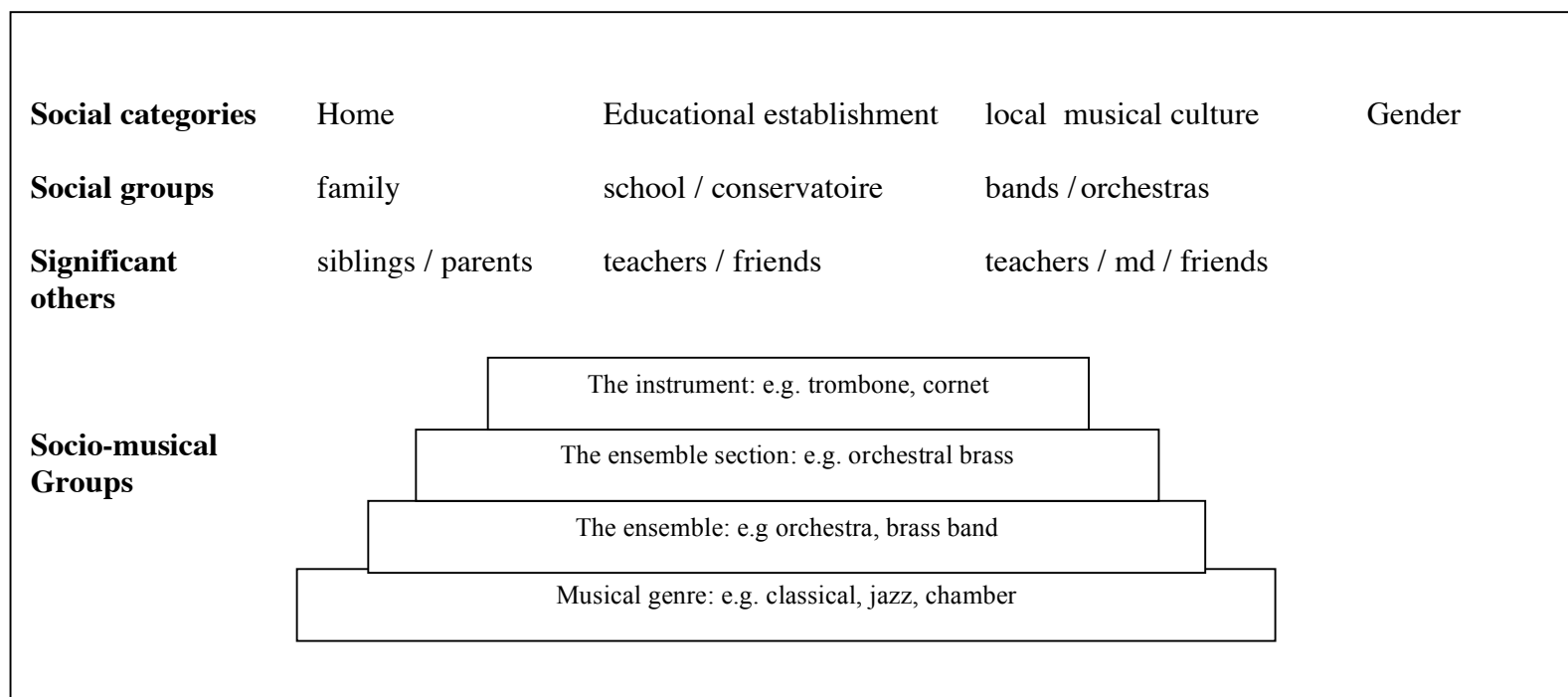
Once musicians' identity is considered from a social identity perspective, a range of socio-musical groups are influential on identity.

**Figure 10:** socio-musical groups influencing identity



Around these socio-musical groups, a range of social categories played an important part in identity. Other social groups were nested within these categories, as were significant people / relationships, all of which contributed to musicians' socio-musical identities. These are detailed in figure 10a.

**Figure 10a: Socio-musical and other groups, affecting musicians' identity and investigated within this work**



*The musical genre*

Brass is uniquely flexible in the instrumental world: once the skills have been mastered the instruments can be played in classical, jazz, chamber, popular, and brass band music. These genres broadly affected musicians' socio-musical identity. For example, amateur brass banders derived their musical identities from their membership of a particular ensemble, but also as being part of a national and international community of banders. The community was based on competition and loyalty to banding and a particular band. This collective identity was enhanced through the involvement of family and friendship networks within and between ensembles. The collective identity of 'being a bander' was reinforced through the relationships and behaviours expected and involved in the ensemble, and the nationally accepted 'culture' of banding. These collective identities were often held throughout the lifespan. Brass banding was also the route through which professional musicians often came into professional music-making. Often, their identity as a bander was retained as it provided foundations for skills and networks which were important within their professional careers.

*The ensemble*

Musicians' ensembles had important and distinct impacts upon their identity. Banding was based on a hierarchical and competitive national system, which meant that not only the movement, but the individual bands commanded loyalty and became an important part of a musician's identity.

Ensembles evolved their own unique group identities, which also contributed to musicians' sense of self. For professional musicians, the ensemble held different functions at different points during their careers: in the exploration phase musicians aspired to belong to prestigious orchestral ensembles, with little regard for the skills needed to do this, nor the sorts of behaviours that would be required once in these groups.

Once in later phases the ensembles held different meanings. For those who were freelance-performing musicians, there was an expectation to easily move between performance opportunities, being described as 'sociable chameleons.' They needed to have a solid skills-base (including musical and social elements), a positive core musical identity to draw upon, and an ability to adapt to any group situation. Similarly the

ensemble held different meaning for long-term contracted-orchestral musicians, which changed depending upon the lifespan phase.

### *Ensemble sections*

Most large ensembles contain specific sections to which the musician belonged, for example, the brass section in an orchestra or the cornet section of a band. Each section formed a distinct social group, more akin to the work teams studied in organisational psychology. The overt and subtle comparisons between sections (for example, strings versus brass) played a part in musicians' identities, as did the engendering of a section or group identity.

For orchestral musicians brass sections were positive support networks: for those that were contracted to them full time, a sense of camaraderie and belonging to a 'great group of lads' evolved. For those that were freelance musicians, often working in a variety of short-term orchestral jobs, life became that of a 'sociable chameleon,' where judgements needed to be made about the best ways to work within a particular section.

The musical skills needed to work with an ensemble were often an element of the job that was taken for granted. It was the social interactions within a section, both inside and outside of rehearsal, were the key elements to the musical identity of the musician and to the identity of the section.

### *Instrument and identity*

The types of instruments musicians played were highly significant to their identity. Many saw the instrumental roles within a section as central to their self-concept. These roles were often musically driven, for example the skills and demands of a principal trumpet position (and so the identity of a principal trumpeter) were different to those of a second player.

Musicians often felt that their particular instrument required a certain type of personality or approach to playing. Participants talked of the instruments as requiring or helping to develop a set of traits and behaviours, on a personality-level this often related to a need for confidence or egotism.

The relationship between instrument and identity could be further investigated by applying a social psychological understanding of stereotyping or personality and behaviour to this work.

## **Evaluation**

### **An approach to evaluation**

This work can be evaluated at a number of levels: the suitability of the approach, methods, the research process and the findings. Arguments about the methodological stance and methods employed in the study were detailed in chapter three, and specific approaches given closer examination in empirical chapters. The question here is whether this was an effective way to investigate the research objectives and upon reflection what improvements could be made?

Music psychology is an established field, flexible enough to work in partnership with other areas and approaches. This work therefore combined it with social psychology in an effort to return some of the ‘social elements’ to an increasingly cognitive discipline, and to examine the social side of musical behaviour. In many ways placing the research in the field of social music psychology was the right decision, however, it did introduce some difficulties in weighing up whether to adopt principles and strategies from music, psychology, or a balance of the disciplines.

### *The research problem*

This work has fulfilled its objectives using a qualitative approach and methodology. The breadth of the objectives were important because they helped to maintain the research and its outcomes within the real world, and to develop an applied understanding of range of musicians’ identities within a social context. However, such breadth can also be a problem, because it can mean that work becomes unwieldy, especially where qualitative data are collected. The research phases produced a wealth of data, not all of which could be discussed within this work: decisions had to be made about where and how to focus the analysis in order to present a thematically coherent argument.

*Sample size and data*

One challenge to working in social music psychology was the question of sample size. Coming from a background of mainstream cognitive psychology, it felt appropriate to use large samples (at least they were large from the perspective of the research usually carried out in music). The reasoning was simple: a large sample would move findings away from the individual experience and small case-studies that are often used in music. A large sample enables findings to be corroborated across participants and gives more validity to generalising from this population to other musicians. However, they run the risk of becoming unwieldy and were this work to be repeated there would be a number of avenues for change.

*Retaining the sample size and developing data handling*

If the sample sizes were retained because of their importance in validating and giving scope for generalising the findings, then a form of electronic analysis might be employed. The data management program QSR NVivo could be used to comprehensively code and manage the data: it could be a useful measure in controlling and cross-checking the narrative interviews in this study. This might take some of the pressure and potential for bias away from paper and pencil analysis, strengthening the rigour of the work.

NVivo was not used in this instance as it was felt to add an extra layer of distance between the researcher and the subjects' experiences. However, if it was seen as a data management system, and not so much an analytic tool, it might prove a useful way for handling large amounts of data. Combining NVivo (as a data management system) with reading and analysis away from the computer would have helped to streamline the data handling in this project, and would make repetition of the study with another large sample more feasible.

The same concept could be applied to the online survey data. The quantitative responses were easily handled using Excel, however, the short qualitative responses might have benefited from using an electronic method. Pennebaker's Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count would be ideal, and has been applied to examining the language use in autobiographical musical experiences (Kruger & Lammers, 2006). Despite it already having been used to examine narrative accounts in music, it was not adopted here



because it was felt to be too much of a textual analysis, which was not the original aim of this work.

*Reducing the sample size*

Were a decision made to reduce the sample sizes, different handling and analytical techniques could have been adopted. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) could have been adopted as an approach which examines how a particular person in a particular context makes sense of a specific phenomenon. This approach gathers qualitative data to examine the meaning-making associated with a phenomenon or perhaps a life event: in many ways it would be ideal for understanding musicians' narratives, or at least in understanding a particular part of event in these analyses.

In this instance, however, the broad conceptual careers and lifespan frameworks threw up numerous variables of interest, rather than just one important time point or event central to musicians' identity. For example, the concept of 'career' is a multi-faceted, multi-role phenomenon. Musicians could consider themselves professional or amateurs, freelancers or contracted, or anywhere along these continuums. To do justice to the broad idea of musical identity and being a professional musician, a sample needed to be used that was representative of a population of performing musicians across the lifespan. Once the lifespan framework is added in, and the idea of drawing musicians into cohorts is added into the research problem, the sample size needs to be increased to make any meaningful analysis of these stages.

The phenomenological aspects of IPA have been criticised when employed in narrative research (McAdams, 1993). For example, a researcher might be accused of over-interpretation: digging below the surface and search out deeper meanings that may not always be present in the narrative. It has also been suggested that researchers may fall foul of naïve responses to the narratives, taking everything that they are told to them as an empirical truth. IPA could prove a positive future development for this research, providing an avenue through which questions and ideas raised in this work could be investigated in greater depth. For instance, this research raised the idea of exploring identity across the lifespan phases. IPA could be applied to a new cohort of establishment musicians to examine their narratives about job choices and the decision-making processes involved in taking on or rejecting work.

## **Future possibilities**

### **Strengths of this research**

This research stands out from much of the previous literature and empirical music research because of its holistic and real-life approach to examining musical identity. Triangulating methods meant that research findings could be validated and corroborated with each other.

The type of data, the size of it, and the various analytical techniques and approaches, meant that the data could be analysed by age, experience and gender to expose trends in musical careers, and in changes to social and musical identity over the lifespan.

The questions posed within the body of the work were only a few of the many possibilities for this data, and there are a number of ways that the research could be developed in the future.

### **The lifespan perspective**

#### *Musician as performer*

A notion of the musician equating to being a performer has been argued against in the literature, with the emphasis instead being placed on the musician as having multiple roles and identities, and so a need to be equipped to handle these. This work has shown that the valued aspects of being a musician were the performance opportunities, regardless of how much of their time was actually taken up with paid professional performing.

The centrality and values attached to the performance aspects of a musical identity needs to be better understood from a lifespan perspective. The lifespan perspective has shown that the value of performing music changes: for example, exploration phase musicians had ambitions for prestigious performance positions, yet the demands of performing in an orchestra or developing a freelance career took a toll over the lifespan, with some falling out of love with music, and others experiencing or worrying about illness and injury affecting their livelihood.

Further research could explore musicians' careers as performance careers, which are similar to athletes or dancers. By taking this approach sustainability might be encouraged within the career. Musicians could be supported in learning to practise efficiently and effectively in ways that will not cause them muscular or skeletal problems. They could also be supported in developing psychological strategies for

coping with performance problems as they arise, so equipping them with physical and mental resilience for a long-term performing career.

### **Training needs and implications**

Assessment of training needs and its implications is some of the most well-trodden ground in recent work on musicians' identities, and so these developments and recommendations are made with some caution.

#### *Increasing opportunities*

Musicians indicated a need for broader training opportunities, as well as more instrumental training and performance opportunities within the colleges. Apprenticeship schemes might be one way around these difficulties in the training. By creating formal links between higher education institutions and external organisations, musicians could be given opportunities to work, or at least to shadow, in a range of musical placements - much in the way that medical schools train their doctors through academic and hands on training in a range of specialties.

#### *Mentoring*

There were two aspects to mentoring which could be followed up. First that teachers need to become more aware of the profound influence that they have on their pupils, and not simply as purveyors of instrumental skills, but as role models. They have a hugely influential position throughout musicians' lives, but their position at colleges seems especially important in furthering and developing the young musicians career in the professional musical world. They often facilitated some of the musicians' first professional orchestral opportunities. Positive reinforcement was not the only motivation for students, with some achieving positions at colleges or on post-graduate courses simply because they had been told they were 'not good enough and so I worked bloody hard to prove him wrong.' (sh. es. tbn).

#### *Organisational responsibility*

Perhaps more honesty needs to be applied both from the music teachers at the colleges, and from the colleges themselves. One criticism of the colleges has been that they are accepting too many students for the amount of work that is perceived as being available. As the appendix W showed, conservatoires are producing a considerable number of brass students per year. Assuming the sample in this study is representative, and they all have ambitions for maintaining and developing performing aspects of their careers,

and all believe that they will be able to turn to teaching as a stable financial resource whilst they develop their performing careers. This simply does not make sense at the individual or cultural levels. There will be limits to the numbers of brass and music teachers that are required, and so steps need to be taken within training to support students and increase their awareness of their abilities.

First, that the colleges are honest and upfront about a student's ability early on in their training. If they are not showing the necessary performance skills or potential, then they need to be made aware of this, and guided towards alternative careers. All students need to understand the many music-related opportunities that exist, whether or not they are aspiring for a performance career. Second, their general skills-base and awareness of their many skills needs to be improved. Colleges can no longer retain their ivory tower mentalities; it is not enough just to teach technique-specific skills, they need to provide performance opportunities and training for all, broaden their training beyond performance and instrumental skills, whilst also providing emotional and psychological support (something that the institutions seem to do well already).

#### *Postgraduate training*

Postgraduate musical training appears to be occupying a changing role. Few older musicians undertook postgraduate training, but it seems to be becoming an increasingly common move for students. This is an interesting development in musical training culture. As one participant pointed out,

‘I didn't do a postgraduate. What's the bloody point? I've already done four years, what on earth am I going to learn in an extra year? I see so many students just wasting all that money on another year, and really....’ (m. ex. tba)

Tensions will arise between the costs and benefits of postgraduate training. The role of and experiences associated with postgraduate training need further exploration, as well as the drop-out rate from the training. (A number of musicians in this study dropped out of postgraduate training half way through). Perhaps postgraduate training might be a time where performance apprenticeship schemes could be put in place?

## **A careers perspective**

### *Understanding careers*

This work has opened up opportunities for closer future examination of the professional musicians career. Of particular interest might be examining transitional points in the career, particularly how a musician might successfully manage retirement or, cope with illness or injury that prevented performance. This sustainable management of a career might be something as simple as teaching students how to physically warm up, stretch and learn to handle long hours performing.

Of central importance to developing an adequate understanding musicians careers is a need to start using better terminology and definitions within music research. There exists a body of well-researched and highly applicable concepts which could replace portfolio careers. This can offer measurable variables and methods through which to measure them (boundaryless or protean career attitudes).

Measuring levels of boundaryless and protean career attitudes in those developing and those with established careers might improve understanding of successful careers, and how, for example, creativity might be maintained within a career.

This would have many implications for orchestral organisations, for example, encouraging ‘continuing professional development,’ having musicians involved in the running and organisation of the orchestra, and having them put more artistic input into the organisations. As these musicians often already have links with the local communities, their knowledge and local musical networks could be used to strengthen the organisational involvement in the community, but also giving the musician more involvement and input into their career.

## **Conclusion**

This work has demonstrated the potential for music psychology and social identity theory to inform one another more effectively than has been the case in the past. It has shown how the links between various theoretical perspectives (SIT, SIA) and the real-world could be established, which have significant benefits for practitioners and researchers alike.

# Appendices

## Glossary

**Boundaryless Career:** ‘a boundaryless career [is] one that involves physical and/or psychological career mobility. Such a career can be then viewed as characterized by varying levels of physical and psychological mobility.’ (Sullivan, 2006)

**Brass Bander, banding:** A musician who plays in a brass band. The act of this is colloquially referred to as banding.

**Career:** ‘The evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time.’ (Arthur, 2008: 166)

**Conservatoire (also music college, college):** The English term for a higher educational institution specialising in the performance instrumental training of musicians. The term conservatoire is used interchangeably with the term music college, or simply college throughout this work.

**Deputising (also depping, dep):** ‘Where a musician is committed to being in two places at once, the solution is to engage another musician as a deputy, commonly referred to as a ‘dep’, who is sent to play in the prior engagement, thereby releasing the first musician to undertake their preferred work. This process is properly known as deputizing, but more commonly described as ‘depping’ or ‘sending in a dep.’ (Cottrell, 2004: 60)

**Freelancer, freelancing:** A musician who undertakes freelance music work, either solely or as part of his/her general career.

**Identity:** Used in a generic way to refer to a sense-of-self, or self-concept, meaning the whole self. Social psychology breaks this down into two independent components – social identity and personal identity.

It has also been adapted within a broad array of science and arts disciplines to explore the relationship between the self and the group.

**Musical Identity (MI):** A concept developed in the music psychology literature that, ‘music plays a fundamental role in the development, negotiation and maintenance of our personal identities’ (MacDonald et.al 2009).

**Personal Identity (PI):** Psychological concept at the other end of the spectrum to social identity: part of the individual’s self-concept that is unique and personal to him, often related to individualistic personality traits.

**Portfolio Career (see also protean career, boundaryless career):** The term frequently adopted by the music literature to refer to a career composed of a number of different roles, and components to ‘being a musician.’

**Professional Musician:** In this case only, professional musician is referred to as someone who has or is currently making the majority of their living through performing music. Argument

**Protean Career:** ‘A bit harder to literally picture (changing shape), but the need to define the shape of one’s career through identifying and expressing values and directing career behaviour can be clearly seen as an adaptive response to the volatile, uncertain, and ambiguous work environment.’ (Sullivan, 2006)

**Social Identity (SI):** Psychological concept: ‘Part of the individual’s self-concept, which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership’ (Tajfel, 1982: 251).

**Social Identity Approach (also social identity perspective):** The interactionist metatheory home to social identity theory and a number of other social psychological theories (developed by Abrams and Hogg (2004)). It ‘spoke to a wide range of other group and identity-related phenomena, including areas such as gender, cohesion, social facilitation, leadership, stereotyping, and social influence.’ (Abrams and Hogg, 2004: 100)



**Social world:** a social category (the home, school, or local musical culture), that often occupied a place / space. Was all encompassing, often including other social groups. Consisted of its own cultures, social rules and practices.

**Socio-musical identity:** Phrase developed to describe the influence of musical social groups and categories on musician's identity.

## **Abbreviations and acronyms of frequently used terminology**

ABO: Association of British orchestras  
BBC Symph: BBC Symphony Orchestra (London)  
BBC Welsh: BBC National Orchestra of Wales (Cardiff)  
Chets: Chetham's School of Music  
EUYO: European Union Youth Orchestra  
GMJO: Gustav Mahler Jugen Orchester  
GSMD: Guildhall School of Music and Drama  
ISB: International Staff Band of the Salvation Army  
JGSMD: Junior Guildhall School of Music and Drama  
JRNCM: Junior Royal Northern College of Music  
LPO: London Philharmonic Orchestra  
LSO: London Symphony Orchestra  
MD Musical director  
NCO: National Children's Orchestra  
NYBB: National Youth Brass Band  
NYJO: National Youth Jazz Orchestra  
NYO: National Youth Orchestra  
PO, 'The Phil': Philharmonia Orchestra  
RAM: Royal Academy of Music  
RCM: Royal College of Music  
RNCM: Royal Northern College of Music  
RPO: Royal Philharmonic Orchestra  
RSNO: Royal Scottish National Orchestra  
SO: Orchestra of Scottish Opera  
TCM: Trinity College of Music

## Appendix A Participant Identifiers

The empirical data used within this work was coded with a set of parenthetical alphanumeric codes. These provided information about the research phase and some participant details. It is not necessary to understand this information whilst reading the work. However, it is useful for the reader were they to want to draw themes of the research together themselves. Some or all of the following code could be given within the text:

CODE = (ka. ds. hn. [tcpg])

Refers to the following information:

KA = the participant's initials

ds = the methodology used to collect this information (diary study)

hn = the participant's instrument (french horn)

ex = the lifespan stage (exploration)

[tcpg] = the job role (Trinity College postgraduate course)

**Table A:** Abbreviations and translations of codes

Data gathering method		Instrument abbreviations		Life stage	
Narrative interview	ni	Trumpet	tpt.	Exploration	ex.
Diary study	ds	Cornet	cnt.	Establishment	es.
Online survey	os	Soprano cornet	sopcnt.	Maintenance	ma.
		Flugel horn	flghn.	Decline	de.
		Tenor horn	thn.		
		French horn	hn.		
		Baritone	bari.		
		Euphomium	euph.		
		Trombone	tbn.		
		Bass trombone	btbn.		
		Tuba	tba.		

The size of the interview and diary data sets prevented the use of pseudonyms, instead participants were anonymised with their initials. Online survey respondents were anonymised with a unique number, automatically assigned once the survey was complete. For example, (os 138) is a code referring to:

os = online survey, research phase four 138 = participant's unique identifier

## Appendix B Life-Career Rainbow

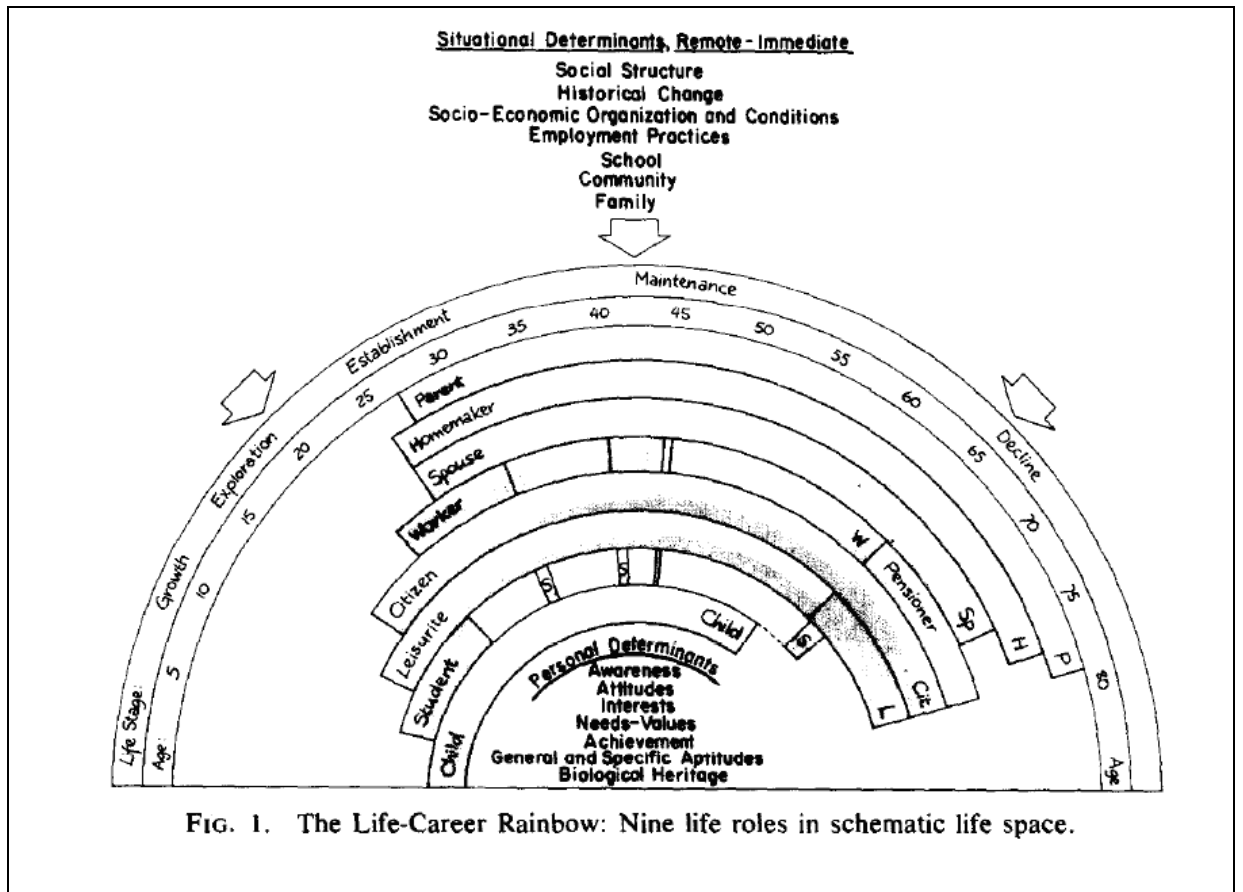


FIG. 1. The Life-Career Rainbow: Nine life roles in schematic life space.

## Appendix C Questions for pilot phases

### Chamber ensemble questions

Why did you start *Name of chamber group*?

Why do you play chamber music?

How often do you rehearse / what sort of gigs do you do?

Where is it going as a group?

What are the goals of the group?

Do you try and emulate any groups?

Who do you think is the leader of the group?

Who does most of the organising?

How do you separate personal gripes with people away from the music?

## Appendix D Example of non-compliant pilot material in pilot phases

This appendix is a copy of one of the methods that caused non-compliance within the pilot studies.

### Team Process Review Form

#### Instructions

Answer all of the questions with the names of two group members – please do not include yourself

Question	Name 1	Name 2
1. Which members of the team can be most easily influenced by others to change their opinion?		
2. Which are least able to influence others to change their opinions?		
3. Which have clashed most sharply with others in the course of the last 100 days?		
4. Which try to keep themselves in the limelight?		
5. Which are most likely to put personal musical goals above team goals?		
6. Which are most likely to put personal goals above team goals?		
7. Which have shown the greatest desire to accomplish something?		
8. Which have wanted to avoid conflict during group discussions?		
9. Which tend to withdraw from active discussions when strong differences begin to appear?		
10. Which have sought to help in the resolution of differences between others?		
11. Which have competed most with others?		
12. Which have done the most to keep the group lively?		

## Appendix E Personality tests employed in the pilot phases

### Personality Questionnaires (Short Forms)

*Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you **agree or disagree with that statement**. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other. (Gosling – Big 5, 2005).*

Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Moderately	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### I see myself as

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Extraverted, enthusiastic.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Critical, quarrelsome.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Dependable, self-disciplined.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Anxious, easily upset.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Open to new experiences, complex.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Reserved, quiet.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Sympathetic, warm.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Disorganized, careless.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Calm, emotionally stable.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Conventional, uncreative.

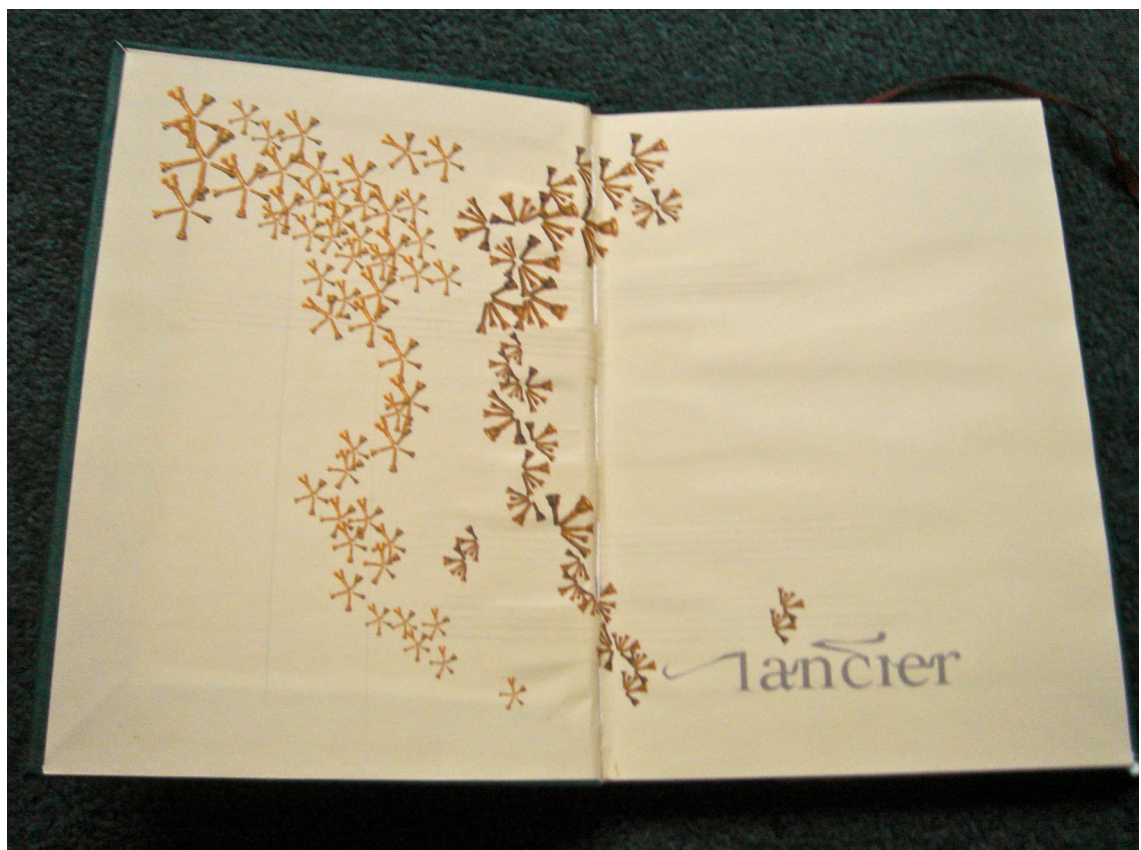
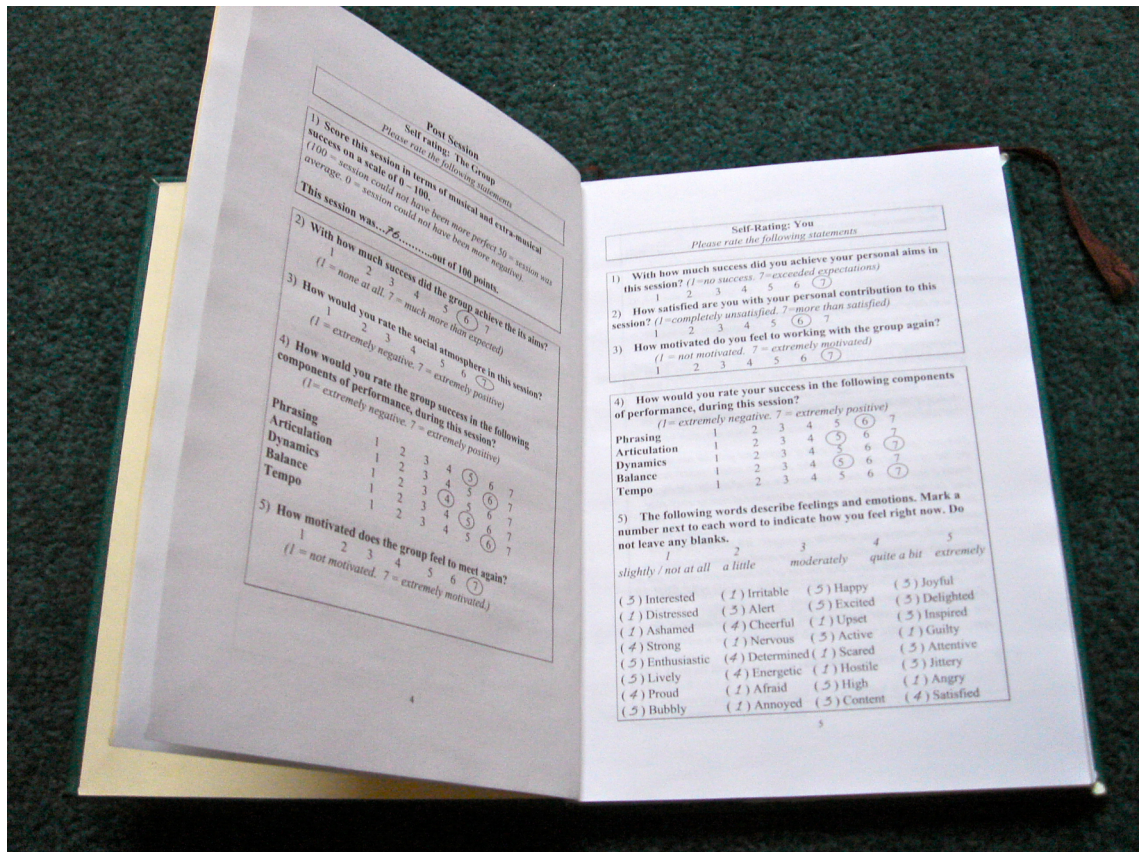
*Here is a list of 48 questions. Please can you circle **Yes** or **No** in response to the statement. (Francis and Brown 1992).*

1. Does your mood often go up and down? T F
2. Do you take much notice of what people think? T F
3. Are you a talkative person? T F
4. If you say you will do something, do you always keep your promise no matter how inconvenient it might be? T F
5. Do you ever feel 'just miserable' for no reason? T F
6. Would being in debt worry you? T F
7. Are you rather lively? T F
8. Were you ever greedy by helping yourself to more than your fairshare of anything? T F
9. Are you an irritable person? T F
10. Would you take drugs which may have a strange or dangerous effect? T F
11. Do you enjoy meeting new people? T F
12. Have you ever blamed someone for doing something you knew was really your fault? T F

- |                                                                                                   |          |          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 13. Are your feelings easily hurt?                                                                | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 14. Do you prefer to go your own way rather than act by the rules?                                | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 15. Are <i>all</i> your habits good and desirable ones?                                           | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 16. Do you often feel 'fed-up'?                                                                   | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 17. Do good manners and cleanliness matter much to you?                                           | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 18. Do you usually take the initiative in making new friends?                                     | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 19. Have you ever taken anything (even a pin or button) that belonged to someone else?            | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 20. Would you call yourself a nervous person?                                                     | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 21. Do you think marriage is old-fashioned and should be done away with?                          | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 22. Can you easily get some life into a rather dull party?                                        | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 23. Have you ever broken or lost something that belonged to someone else?                         | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 24. Are you a worrier?                                                                            | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 25. Do you enjoy co-operating with others?                                                        | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 26. Do you tend to keep in the background on social occasions?                                    | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 27. Does it worry you if you know there are mistakes in your work?                                | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 28. Have you ever said anything bad or nasty about anyone?                                        | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 29. Would you call yourself tens or 'highly-strung'?                                              | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 30. Do you think people spend too much time safeguarding their future with savings and insurance? | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 31. Do you like mixing with people?                                                               | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 32. As a child were you ever cheeky to your parents?                                              | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 33. Do you worry too long after an embarrassing experience?                                       | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 34. Do you try not to be rude to people?                                                          | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 35. Do you like plenty of bustle and excitement around you?                                       | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 36. Have you ever cheated at a game?                                                              | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 37. Do you suffer from 'nerves'?                                                                  | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 38. Would you like other people to be afraid of you?                                              | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 39. Have you ever taken advantage of someone?                                                     | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 40. Are you mostly quiet when you are with other people?                                          | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 41. Do you often feel lonely?                                                                     | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 42. Is it better to follow society's rules than go your own way?                                  | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 43. Do other people think of you as being very lively?                                            | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 44. Do you always practice what you preach?                                                       | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 45. Are you often troubled about feelings of guilt?                                               | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 46. Do you sometimes put off until tomorrow what you ought to do today?                           | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |



## Appendix F Images of diaries used in pilot phases



## Appendix G Example of blank diary entry

### Instructions

These diaries are to tell your stories as musicians early on in your careers, as you spend at least some of your musical life rehearsing and performing within a chamber group.

As a researcher I am interested in the story of this chamber group, its ups and downs and the complexity of its functioning as well as how it emerges and develops over a period of time. I must stress that I am not interested in the very intimate level of your daily lives, nor is this meant to be an intrusive, time consuming exercise that becomes an irritation. I see it rather as a way to enable you to have an opportunity to talk about your careers, ambitions, goals and the ins and outs of life as part of this group. These diaries are confidential documents that will eventually be combined with the other members of your group, and reoccurring themes and ideas will then be pooled at a group level and the groups' story will be documented.

K.Gee@sheffield.ac.uk

This information will be combined with interviews and repeated questionnaires over the next twelve months to develop an encompassing narrative of your musical lives.

Date..... Time of meeting.....

- 1) Was this a) a Rehearsal b) a Concert (please circle).  
2) Are you rehearsing for particular goal? (please detail)

.....  
Where / whom was this concert for? (please detail)

- 3) Have you taken any photos to attach to this diary entry? If so, please can you email them / detail film number.

4) AIMS: What were the aims of this session?

5) What attitude / approach did you bring to the session today?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please circle.

1= Extremely negative - I should have stayed in bed.

7= Extremely positive - I am very upbeat.

Could you choose a word to describe your attitude?.....

6) Overall can you give a rating for your current mood state?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 = Extremely sad 2 = Quite sad 3 = A bit sad 4 = Neutral

5 = A bit happy 6 = Quite happy 7 = Extremely happy

7) In your own words could you please describe this session?

(This might include a description of the event; pieces you played; how you felt you performed; how you felt the group performed; how it compared to last time you met; was it a success; did you achieve any goals that you set out etc.)

**Self – Rating: The Group**

*Please rate the following statements.*

**1) Please could you score this session in terms of musical and extra-musical success (the session within the context of the bigger picture) on a scale of 0-100. (100 = session could not have been more perfect 50 = session was average. 0= session could not have been more negative).**

This session was worth.....out of 100 points.

**2) With how much success did you achieve your group aims?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*(1=No success at all. 2=Much more success than expected).*

**3) How would you rate the social atmosphere in the session?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*(1=negative. 7=positive).*

**4) How would you rate the group success of the following musical performance components during the session?**

*(1=negative. 7=positive)*

<b>Phrasing</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Articulation</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Dynamics</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Balance</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Tempo</b>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**5) How motivated does the group feel to meet again?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*(1=totally non-motivated. 7=extremely motivated)*

**Self-Rating: You**

*Please rate the following statements.*

**1) With how much success did you achieve your personal aims in today's session?**

*(1=No success. 2=Much more than expected)*      1      2      3      4      5  
6      7

**2) How satisfied are you with your personal contribution to the groups' session?**

*(1=completely unsatisfied. 7=more than satisfied)*      1      2      3      4      5  
6      7

**3) How would you rate the group success of the following musical performance components during the session?**

*(1=negative. 7=positive)*

<b>Phrasing</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Articulation</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Dynamics</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Balance</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Tempo</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**5) How motivated do you feel to working with the group again? (1=totally non-motivated. 7=extremely motivated).**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**6) The following words describe feelings and emotions. Please mark a number next to each word to indicate how you feel right now.**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>slightly or</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>moderately</i>	<i>quite</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>not at all</i>	<i>little</i>		<i>a bit</i>	
( ) Interested	( ) Irritable	( ) Happy	( ) Joyful	
( ) Distressed	( ) Alert	( ) Excited	( ) Delighted	
( ) Ashamed	( ) Cheerful	( ) Upset	( ) Inspired	
( ) Strong	( ) Nervous	( ) Active	( ) Guilty	
( ) Enthusiastic	( ) Determined	( ) Scared	( ) Attentive	
( ) Lively	( ) Energetic	( ) Hostile	( ) Jittery	
( ) Proud	( ) Afraid			

## **Appendix H Narrative interview questions and prompts**

This appendix is a copy of the interview sheet that the researcher used during the interviews.

### ***Introduction***

Explain that collating ‘life stories’ of brass musicians who are different stages of their career. Encourage them to talk about themselves.

***Question:* Can you talk a little about how you began music, and your family background?**

### ***Prompts:***

- When did you start, how long have you been playing?
- What instrument(s) do you play?
- Does music run in your family? / parents / brothers / sisters
- At what point did you know music was what you wanted to do?
- Did you have any musical role models whilst you were learning?
- Do you still have any?
- Have you any notable school experiences / teaching / lesson experiences?
- Did you go to music college / university? If not, why not. If they did do they remember why they made those choices? Why did they select a particular college, or go to university instead of music college?

***Question:* Can you tell me about transitional points within your career? For example, making the transition from education into the music profession?**

### ***Prompts:***

- How difficult / easy did you find the transition from higher education into the professional world?
- Were your aims to freelance or to go for a job, why make those choices?
- How do you begin to develop your career as a professional musician?
- What would your ideal job / work be?

- How did you build up your career? – were you interested in orchestral, chamber music, solo career?
- How do you manage freelancing? - Do you think that you need a certain temperament to be a musician, or a freelance musician?
- What qualities do you need to be a musician?
- Would you say that music was integral to your identity?
- Do you think brass musicians suffer from stereotyping?
- If you were twenty again, would you make the same choices?

***Question:* Can you talk to me about the ups and downs of developing your career?**

***Prompts:***

- What keeps you motivated?
- How have your aims and ambitions changed?
- Has your focus (playing / teaching) shifted throughout your career? Where are you now with this, more playing / teaching?
- How long will you keep on doing music for?
- Can you see yourself retiring?

## Appendix I Online questionnaire

This appendix details the questions online survey questions. Some differentiation occurred depending upon the ‘job status’ of the respondent. The following codes were used to indicate where a question was answered by a particular type of musician.

---

MU – questions asked to full time musicians.

---

AM – questions asked to amateur musicians.

SP – questions asked to semi-professional musicians.

---

MUS – questions asked to music students.

---

The rest of this appendix consists of the online instructions and questions.

### Online Questionnaire - Instructions

**This questionnaire takes approximately fifteen minutes to complete. All responses are confidential and will be treated anonymously.**

*Please read the questions carefully and then answer as fully as possible. If you cannot answer place an N/A in the response area.*

**Thanks for taking part**

*All Name:*

**All Age:**

**All Email:**

**All Phone number:**

**All Where do you live?**

Please tick the box if you would like to be contacted for further research.

### About you

**All Are You:** Male                  Female



**All** Are You: Music Student (at music college / university)

Amateur Musician

Semi-Professional Musician (Music is not my main source of income)

Professional Musician (Music is my main source of income)

**All** What is your main brass instrument?

Baritone

Bass Trombone

Cornet

Euphonium

Flugel Horn

French Horn

Tenor Horn

Trombone

Trumpet

Tuba

Other, please specify:

**All** How long have you played that instrument? (In number of years)

**All** What inspired you to choose that instrument?

---

**All** To what level have you studied music? *Please tick all that apply.*

No formal qualifications

Associated Board, Guildhall or Trinity Exams

GCSE

A Level

Undergraduate      University      or      Music College

Postgraduate      University      or      Music College

Other (such as diploma, LRAM) *Please specify*

## **Day to day life**

**MU** Are you?

Freelance Musician

Employed by one organisation

Other *please explain*

**MU** What would your ideal musical job be?

**MU** If you were not a musician what would you do?

**MU** Does the lifestyle of a musician live up to your expectations?

**All** What is most stressful about being a musician?

**All** What is most pleasurable about being a musician?

**AM SP MUS** What is your main source of income / job? (For example, freelance work, bar work etc.)

**AM SP MUS** Given the choice would you take music up as a full time career? Y/N

**AM SP MUS** What is the most stressful aspect of performing music?

**AM SP MUS** What is the most pleasurable aspect of performing music?

**MUS** Why did you choose to attend the music college that you went to?

**All** Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not be applicable to you. Please indicate next to the statement the extent to which you agree or disagree with it. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies to you more strongly than the other. Short form personality questionnaire (Gosling et.al)

**All** What type of group do you perform with most?

Big Band

Brass Band

Chamber group

Orchestra

Any other (*Please explain*)

## **Brass playing and players**

**ALL** Do you think brass players are very different from other musicians, for example string players? Y / N

Can you explain how?

**ALL** Do you think that brass musicians have a certain personality? Y / N  
Can you explain?

**ALL** Do you think stereotypes exist for brass musicians? Y / N  
Can you describe the stereotype?

**ALL** Are these stereotypes self-developed or imposed by others? Y / N  
Expand?

**ALL** There are many jokes about brass musicians and their instruments:  
(For example: *What is the dynamic range of a bass trombone? On or Off*  
*How does one trumpet player greet another? Hi I'm better than you*)  
Do you think any of these types of jokes contribute to the brass player stereotype?  
Y / N

**ALL** Do you think that stereotypes differ depending on the brass instrument played?  
Y/N  
Please explain

## **Brass and Gender**



Since the mid 1800s women have been encouraged to play brass instruments yet it would seem that many groups, from jazz to brass bands to classical, still have predominantly male brass sections.

**All** Do you agree with the above statement? Y/ N  
Can you explain why?

**All** Do you think a stereotype exists for female brass players? Y/ N  
Can you explain this stereotype?

**All** Do you think your gender has affected your musical aspirations and desires?

Y / N Please elaborate.

**All** Do you think your gender has affected the level of success you have achieved so far?

Y / N Please elaborate.

**All** There appears to be a lack of female lead players in many groups.

Do you agree with this statement? Y / N

Can you elaborate upon why this might be?

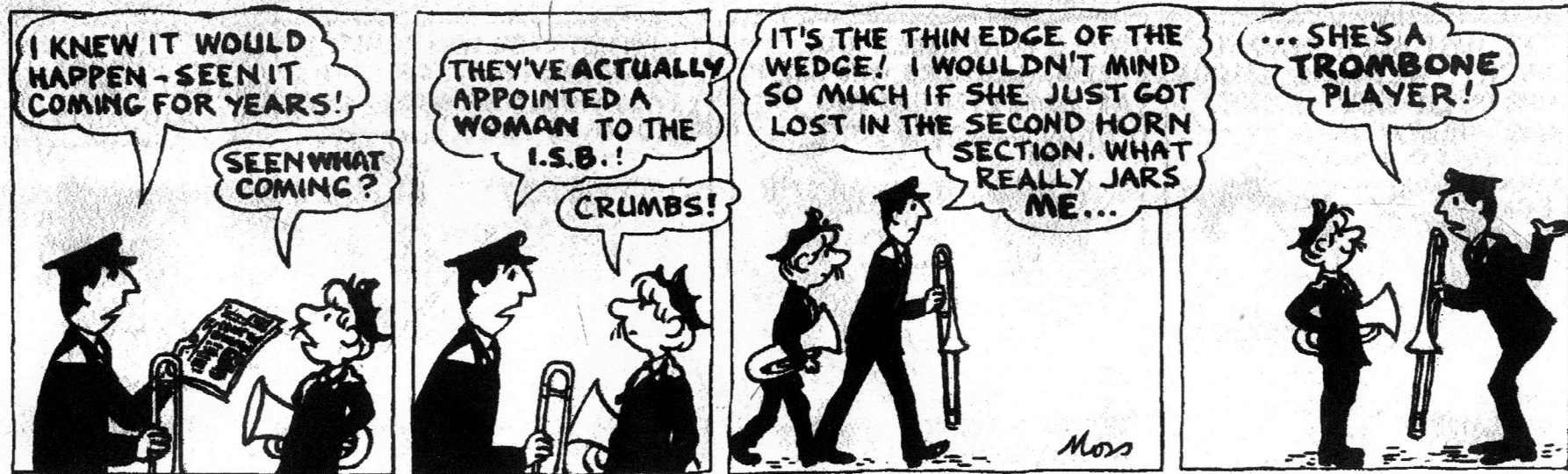
**All** Have you ever experienced difficulties working with a group of musicians because of your gender? Y / N

**All** Do you have any comments on this questionnaire or anecdotes you would like to add?

Appendix J Cartoon commentary on women entering the Salvation Army's International Staff Band

Moss, Jim (2002) *In Tune with Mutt and Bone*. By Gladys L Moss in co-operation with the Publishing Dep't: Salvation Army UK Territorial HQ: London

### THE DISTAFF SLIDE



## Appendix K Cartoon of William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army

Taken from Pamela Walker (1991) 'I live but not yet for Christ liveth in me: Men and masculinity in the Salvation Army 1865-90', in M.Roper & J.Tosh (eds) *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*. London: Routledge, pp. 92-112.



## Appendix L Alphonse Sax the social reformer

Taken from Ellis, K (1999). Women, Brass-Playing and the Instrument Trade in 1860s Paris. Journal of the Royal Musical Association, 124,2. P. 94  
Original source: St. Stephens Review. 1892. (British Library)



**Appendix M Promotional imagery from Escala**

Official promotional photo shoot





Advertising imagery for Pretty Polly



## Appendix N Imagery relating to Alison Balsom

First album cover



Third album cover



‘The band jacket look never goes out of fashion.’

Louisa Tuck (cello), John Reid (harpsichord) & Alison Balsom (trumpet),  
Matt Fretton's "this isn't for you": London's first classical music club’



Concert tour extremes



# Appendix O Written articles Alison Balsom



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### Trumpeter swan

Trumpeter Alison Balsom brings a breath of fresh air to the brass world. By Marc Geelhoed

It becomes very clear early in our interview that it would be unwise to suggest that most of British trumpeter Alison Balsom's success derives from her looks. Like any other entertainment industry, classical music isn't immune to cashing in on the sight of a thin blond with a good smile, but such considerations aren't supposed to matter in the august halls of Art. So while Balsom has recorded with EMI Classics since 2002 and was a New Generation Artist with BBC Radio 3, it's not just cynics who might wonder whether her playing will stand up when she makes her Chicago debut on Ravinia's Rising Stars series Friday 20.



PIECE OF BRASS Alison Balsom ponders her career path.

"I have to work extra hard to make people take me seriously and show that I have something to say musically, and that it's not just a marketing gimmick," says Balsom with a posh English accent. Had she settled for gimmick status, she wouldn't have released the disparate—and excellent—collections of Baroque music and trumpet transcriptions she's recorded so far. "I'm constantly trying to prove myself and have to keep my standards as high as possible." That stems from studying with John Wallace and Håkan Hardenberger, two very adventurous trumpeters.

Balsom allows that the PR photos may have helped her career, but insists that they matter less and less. "I'm sure that I wouldn't be working still if I hadn't been coming up with the goods," she says. "I wouldn't be getting gigs with good orchestras if I couldn't play." A week after her Ravinia recital, she solos with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. As a New Generation Artist with BBC 3 Radio, she performed with each of the BBC radio orchestras in a wide range of repertoire, and, as she's quick to point out, appearances don't count when you're on the radio. "It comes much less down to moxie and much more down to playing music," she says.

Every trumpeter who wishes to become a soloist, or even play a simple recital, comes face to face with the instrument's limited solo repertoire. Pianists and violinists have a vast repertoire studded with masterpieces, but trumpeters have to show a bit more ingenuity and determination to find satisfying works. Balsom skirts the issue by turning existing works into trumpet solos.

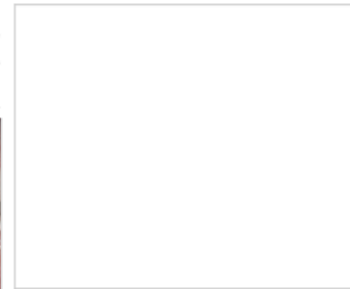
"I love to play arrangements of things, if it's appropriate [to the trumpet]," she explains. She's constantly fielding requests from musician friends who suggest possibilities for new solos, but doesn't act on all of them. "There's a way that I know the trumpet that I just know what will work and what won't," she says. "Mozart is much, much harder to do [than works from the Baroque]," but she makes exceptions. Caprice, her most recent disc, includes two well-known Mozart movements, the Rondo alla Turca and the Queen of the Night's high-flying aria "Die Hölle Rache" from *The Magic Flute*. "It's very diva-esque in style," she says of the aria, a quality that translates well to an equally flashy trumpet solo.

"I try to give a new angle to the trumpet," Balsom says of this weekend's recital. The few acknowledged masterpieces of the trumpet recital repertoire—Hindemith's Sonata, Berio's Sequenza X—are conspicuous by their absence. "I decided to go for the French and the more delicate works," she says. "If I put the big, serious pieces together, it's bound to have been done before."

Playing concertos with orchestras has been done before, as well, and Balsom adds a new wrinkle to that. With her violinist boyfriend, she plays concertos with a quartet of trumpet, violin, cello and harpsichord. They make their New York debut in May. Stealing a page from Lily Allen's self-confident guide to dating, she doesn't sound too concerned about the quartet's fate if she and her boyfriend split up. "I'll have to find another one!" she says, leaving it open whether she means a boyfriend or a violinist.

Balsom solos Friday 19.

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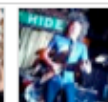
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From The Times

September 11, 2009

## Alison Balsom: 'don't compare me to Katherine Jenkins'

**She's blonde and in classical music, but that's where the comparisons with Katherine Jenkins end**

Alan Franks

It's usually asking for trouble to stress a musician's uniqueness. Someone, often a *Times* reader, will tell you of another performer or composer who has matched the feats of your subject, and politely scold you for skimping on your homework. However, in the case of the young classical trumpeter Alison Balsom, the claim of singularity seems less rash. The clues are there in that last sentence: classical; trumpeter; Alison. Put it this way, if there is another such trumpetress blowing around these islands, she has kept herself well muted.

This summer she was named Female Artist of the Year at the Classical Brits. It is the latest in a sequence of honours over the past three years, beginning when she was hailed, also by the Brits, as Best Young Performer. With an appearance at the Last Night of the Proms tomorrow, the 30-year-old virtuoso stands not only at the threshold of serious celebrity but also on the brink of an alluring dilemma.

When she and others consider this dilemma, the precedent of her contemporary, the mezzo soprano Katherine Jenkins, is never far away. There are at least superficial similarities, in that both are blonde, good-looking, classically trained British musicians with eclectic tastes, outgoing personalities and a strong sense of mission. Balsom, her image consultants and her recording company EMI all see the appeal of commercial breakthrough and musical crossover, as Jenkins's albums regularly top the classical charts.

Balsom has made no secret of her own ambitions of playing with such diverse artists as Kanye West, Mark Ronson and Eminem. At the same time she sees serious differences between her own and Jenkins's aspirations, and she expresses these with a slightly weary diplomacy.

"I do feel I'm unfairly bracketed with her, and I'm not embarrassed about saying that. If the comparisons were with musicians I completely admire, ones who have inspired me with their talent, integrity and artistic vision, then perhaps . . . but to be compared with someone who is not necessarily immediately associated with those qualities is an obvious insult. We're both young and blonde and classical so we must be the same. I can forgive that. In a taxi I get asked, 'What do you do, love?' . . . Oh, I love Katherine Jenkins.' I don't find that upsetting; I feel she has done fantastically well and I really like her as a person, but the comparisons are not made by anyone who has thought it through."

She is speaking in a café in the German town of Leipzig, a couple of hours after bringing a capacity audience at the concert hall in Weimar to its feet with her playing of Haydn's Trumpet Concerto in E flat. She cuts a dazzling figure on the concert platform. She is tall, bejewelled and designer-dressed but utterly focused on the music. By the end of the 15-minute piece she looks moved almost to tears by the sound that has been coming from around and within her, and then by the effusive rows of spectators rising from their seats. One reviewer, after hearing her perform a programme of Vivaldi, Handel and Purcell in Bath, wrote: "You have to imagine a stunning blonde, sexier than any model but dressed just like one, playing with such brio that I wanted to dance. It was amazing."

It's a peculiar job, she says, one that she always wanted to do, and now loves doing, but which doesn't lead to



anything else. Weird is the word she uses. "And weirder as you get older. When you start out, you think, 'Am I going to make it? Am I going to be good enough?' That does diminish, but then you find yourself wondering whether you would feel more comfortable if you thought there might be something else coming up when you reached 60."

When she tells the story of how she came to play the trumpet, there is both gratitude and regret — the first at the quality of the teaching she received, the second at how threadbare music tuition in schools has become since then. She grew up in the small Hertfordshire town of Royston. Her father was a builder and her mother was involved in the placement of children in foster homes. Although neither was a musician, there were instruments in the house, as well as a genetic gift that seems to have come down from her grandfather, a natural and self-taught pianist.

There was a moment of epiphany when her parents took her to see the great Swedish trumpeter Hakan Hardenberger play the Hummel concerto at the Barbican. It was there that she realised her vocation was to be a soloist rather than one of the orchestral players. By this time she was 10, and had been playing for three years. The great jazzier Dizzy Gillespie had been her first inspiration. "I remember thinking it was not so much about the trumpet itself; the singing sound he was making just happened to be through that instrument."

There was Bill Thompson, who taught her at the Tannery Drift School in Royston until she was 9, then Adrian Jacobs at Greneway School for the next four years. Then came the Junior Department of Guildhall School of Music, where her teacher was the trumpeter John Miller, who is now director of brass studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. She says she was so devastated when he went north that she thought she'd have no choice but to follow him there and then give up the instrument when he died of old age. "He was a huge influence in a way that neither of us expected," she says. "His teaching was all about sound. We didn't actually play anything from the repertoire for seven years. I loved it so much I never wanted it to finish."

Why so few like her? It has to do with the history of the instrument, she says, and with the "macho place" it has occupied in Britain's mining communities and military bands. "So people assume it has to be played in a macho way, whereas the truth is that, if an instrument is any good, it has to have a masculine and a feminine side. I find it very interesting when I take masterclasses: the girls tend to make it gentler, nicer to listen to, while the boys tend to be more confident, more brazen."

With her in Leipzig this evening is her boyfriend, Edward Gardner, the 35-year-old music director of English National Opera. They have been going out for six months. They first met when they were working with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra three and a half years ago. She later asked him if he would conduct for her *Caprice* album. He recalls that it was the first such request he had had. To which she replies that if she'd known that she would never have asked him.

His presence has had an enormous impact in her life, she says, and he nods to say this is mutual. "To have someone so talented and passionate," she says of him, "who can understand the highs and lows of being a musician, all the irrational thoughts and emotions, that's amazing."

He's managed to fit the German trip into his own busy schedule — he's currently working on the ENO production of *Turandot*, Puccini's last opera, with the director Rupert Gool. The admin of romance is not easy. "Even on our second date," she says, "he was asking me what I'm doing in January 2012. We just have to be really organised. We are both being asked to take on more than we can, and we have been fortunate with our timetables so far."

"The more I talk to Alison," he says, "The more I realise how different our lives are, musically. For me, it's all about looking after the orchestra, so I have my back to the audience." "Yes," she says, "you are looking after the others and I am looking after myself. Your job is to bring everyone together and make sure they're OK."

"It takes my breath away when I go to her concerts," Gardner says. "I think she is simply unbelievably good. It's the sheer beauty of the sound, even if I have heard it a number of times."

Apart from making a record each year, Balsom also reckons to play about 75 concerts, although last year she did a good deal more. When the challenges aren't musical, they are nautical. Like the yachtswoman Ellen MacArthur, she came from a landlocked county but developed a passion for sailing. She lives within reach of the waters around Studland Bay in Dorset, where she and the family regularly went on holiday.

Does she ever think about starting a family of her own? "Of course I do. I know it would be quite a challenge to make that work. But not impossible. People do it all the time, and I would relish that challenge."

That other challenge — how to proceed as a potentially very famous musician — is enough to be going on with. It is not just her own profile she thinks about raising but also that of the instrument she plays. "It's a huge battle to fight," she says. "Just to try and be a great musician, to play well enough in public, is hard enough. So is trying to change the [public] psyche in relation to the trumpet, and to the classical music it plays. The fact that I wear nice dresses and jewellery does not mean that I want to be branded as a light classical artist. All these things I am trying to juggle, and if I want to make any headway I'm going to have to work at it all the time."

Alison Balsom plays the Last Night of the Proms tomorrow ([www.bbc.co.uk/proms](http://www.bbc.co.uk/proms)). She performs Haydn with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic at Philharmonic Hall on Sept 17 and 18, and at Preston Guild Hall on Sept 29

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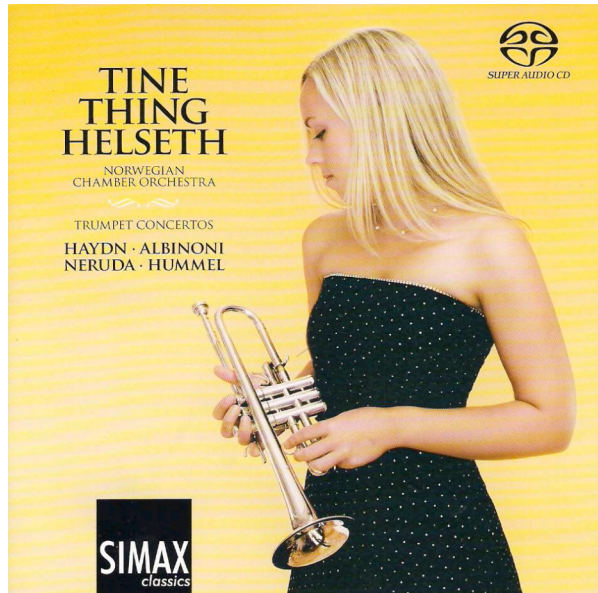
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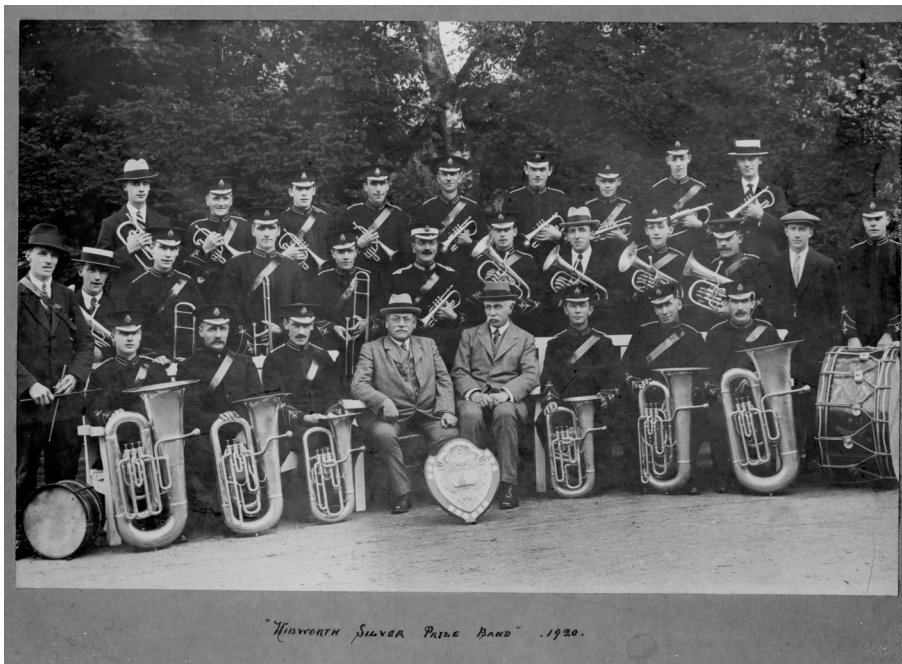




Appendix P Imagery from Tine Thing Helseth's first album



Appendix Q Kibworth band from 1920 – 2001

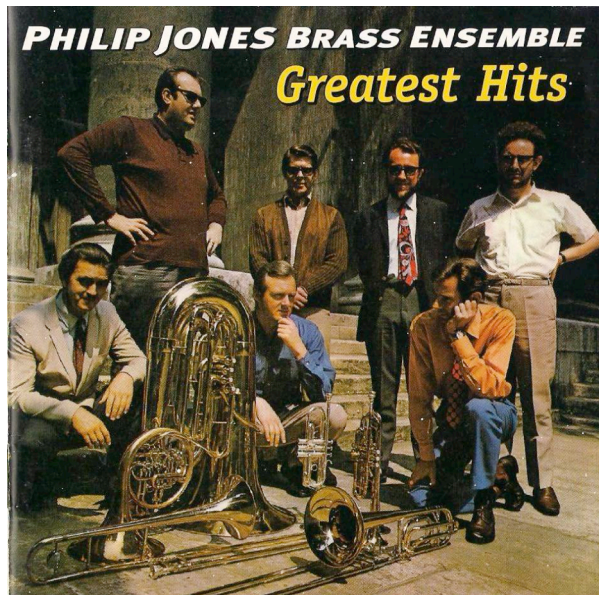




**Appendix R 'Boobs and brass' at the Whit Friday marches**



Appendix S The Philip Jones Brass Ensemble album cover



Appendix T Chris Botti album cover



**Appendix U Example of all-girls brass band and ladies dance band: Sydney 1938**

Source for these is unknown, although the brass band image is used in the Greaves and Can (2001) *Legends in Brass: Australian Brass Bands of the Twentieth Century*

Ladies dance band at Trocadero 1938



All-female brass band



## Appendix V Demographics and interview statistics

General interviewee demographics and interview statistics

Name	Age (at date of interview)	Cohort	Instrument	Status at time of interview	Length of Interview (Time)	Length of Interview (Words)
HP	65	Decline	Horn	_____	23.39	7043
LG	48	Decline	Trombone	_____	41.41	3337
SBd	35	Maintenance	Trumpet	_____	35.31	3711
MB	55	Decline	Trumpet	_____	44.48	6355
CS	51	Decline	Bass Trombone	_____	30.03	2484
BMcG	22	Exploration	Trumpet	_____	39.41	4950
AL	44	Maintenance	Trumpet	_____	31.03	3463
SB	38	Maintenance	Horn	_____	35.22	5013
KJ	27	Establishment	Trombone	_____	25.00	2579
CJ	26	Establishment	Bass Trombone	_____	42.00	3918
NG	23	Establishment	Trombone / Euph	_____	49.52	5251
AB	24	Establishment	Horn	_____	36.00	1900
DS	34	Maintenance	Bass Trombone	_____	50.24	6397
RD	28	Establishment	Trombone	_____	53.22	4000
LL	24	Decline	Trombone	_____	25.24	2695
NH	23	Establishment	Horn	_____	43.00	3934
AS	29	Establishment	Horn	_____	27.17	1892
NB	24	Exploration	Horn	_____	12.53	1025
SH	24	Establishment	Trombone	_____	36.23	3295
R	19	Exploration	Trumpet	_____	22.00	1497
C	19	Exploration	Trombone	_____	17.34	902
KA	21	Exploration	Horn	_____	22.30	1964
CB	25	Establishment	Trumpet	_____	24.00	1707
MP	25	Establishment	Tuba	_____	29.02	2587
MPro	23	Exploration	Tuba	_____	43.00	4576
JK	23	Exploration	Trombone	_____	25.44	3536
S	23	Exploration	Trumpet	_____	35.13	5200
DS	34	Maintenance	Tuba	_____	27.00	1576
AS	34	Maintenance	Horn	_____	38.52	5783



BT	34	Maintenance	Trumpet	_____	24.36	2564
NK	31	Maintenance	Trumpet	_____	37.31	3476
AM	35	Maintenance	Trombone	_____	36.45	3782
HS	23	Establishment	Trumpet	_____	49.27	5376
DH	26	Establishment	Trumpet	_____	48.31	5390
BH	24	Establishment	Horn	_____	37.00	5275
ML	24	Establishment	Tuba	_____	74.00	8334
MG	23	Establishment	Trombone	_____	43.29	5269
L	19	Exploration	Trumpet	_____	28.00	1000
N	20	Exploration	Tuba	_____	34.00	2202
MP	19	Exploration	Trumpet	_____	54.17	3343
N	19	Exploration	Horn	_____	38.06	2210
D	18	Exploration	Trombone	_____	16.00	1086

\*LL has been removed from analyses in chapter four as her age makes her an outlier in the decline phase. Her data is mainly used in chapter five instead  
\_\_\_\_\_ Confidential data, available from author on request

Interviewee demographics: career orientation

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Undergraduate education</b>	<b>Postgraduate education</b>	<b>State immediately after graduation</b>
KJ	University degree	No	Job
CJ	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Job
NG	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
AB	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Job
RD	University degree	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
NH	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
AS	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
CB	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
MP	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance & research fellow
HS	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
DH	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
BH	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Job
ML	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Freelance
MG	University degree	Conservatoire postgraduate	Job
SH	University degree	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
<b>Maintenance</b>	<b>Undergraduate education</b>	<b>Postgraduate education</b>	<b>State immediately after graduation</b>
SB	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Freelance
AL	University degree	Conservatoire postgraduate	Job
SuB	University degree	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
DS	Army	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
DaS	University degree	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
AS	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
AM	University degree	Conservatoire postgraduate	Freelance
BT	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Job
NK	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Freelance
<b>Decline</b>	<b>Undergraduate education</b>	<b>Postgraduate education</b>	<b>State immediately after</b>

			graduation
HP	University degree	No	Job
LG	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Job
MB	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Freelance
CS	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Job
SLL*	Conservatoire undergraduate	No	Freelance
Exploration	Undergraduate education	Postgraduate education	State immediately after graduation
N	Conservatoire undergraduate	n/a	n/a
MP	Conservatoire undergraduate	n/a	n/a
L	Conservatoire undergraduate	n/a	n/a
D	Conservatoire undergraduate	n/a	n/a
Ni	Conservatoire undergraduate	n/a	n/a
MP	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	n/a
S	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	n/a
JK	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	n/a
NB	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	n/a
KA	University undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	n/a
C	Conservatoire undergraduate	n/a	n/a
R	Conservatoire undergraduate	n/a	n/a
BM	Conservatoire undergraduate	Conservatoire postgraduate	n/a

## **Appendix W Conservatoire admission figures**

This data is drawn from the CUKAS annual report. They are the ‘conservatoires admissions service’ established in July 2005. This is a specialized online admissions system. They deal with applications for,

### **Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham**

[www.conservatoire.bcu.ac.uk](http://www.conservatoire.bcu.ac.uk)

### **Leeds College of Music, Leeds**

[www.lcm.ac.uk](http://www.lcm.ac.uk)

### **Royal College of Music, London**

[www.rcm.ac.uk](http://www.rcm.ac.uk)

### **Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester**

[www.rncm.ac.uk](http://www.rncm.ac.uk)

### **Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow**

[www.rsamd.ac.uk](http://www.rsamd.ac.uk)

### **Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff**

[www.rwcmd.ac.uk](http://www.rwcmd.ac.uk)

### **Trinity College of Music, London**

[www.tcm.ac.uk](http://www.tcm.ac.uk)

(Extracted from p.6 of the CUKAS annual report)The table below is extracted from the 2008 annual report: ‘Applicants and acceptances by principal study discipline, 2007-2008’ (pp.20-27)

Accepted admissions 2007 and 2008 to the seven conservatoires in the CUKAS remit

Instrument	Undergraduate				Postgraduate				Total	
	Male		Female		Male		Female			
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Trumpet	48	47	21	24	23	22	8	9	100	102
Trombone	36	30	11	8	16	7	2	5	65	50
Bass Trombone	8	6	1	0	3	3	0	1	12	10
French Horn	20	17	12	15	11	11	5	18	48	61
Tuba	19	17	5	1	3	3	0	0	27	21
Cornet	9	6	7	6	0	1	2	0	18	13
Flugel Horn	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Tenor Horn	2	4	6	4	0	1	0	1	8	10
Baritone	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	4
Euphonium	11	11	3	7	2	2	3	4	19	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>308</b>

Rates of application, offers and acceptances at each college for 2007 and 2008

	Birmingham Conservatoire		Leeds College of Music		Royal college of music		Royal Northern	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Applicants	663	731	582	478	770	802	760	817
Offers	305	330	305	184	196	206	200	268
Acceptances	156	145	201	95	92	108	112	140
	Royal Scottish Academy		Royal Welsh College		Trinity College			
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008		
Applicants	544	550	475	533	910	902		
Offers	184	165	183	179	311	300		
Acceptances	114	95	104	90	164	166		

First study instrument admissions by gender

Instrument	Undergraduates				Postgraduates				total	
	male		female		male		female			
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Trumpet	48	49	21	24	23	22	8	9	108	106
Trombone	36	30	11	8	16	7	2	5	69	51
Bass Trombone	8	6	1	0	3	3	0	1	14	11
Horn	20	17	12	15	11	11	5	18	52	63
Tuba	19	17	5	1	3	3	0	0	29	23
Cornet	9	6	7	6	0	1	2	0	19	14
Flugel	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Tenor Horn	2	4	6	4	0	1	0	1	8	11
Baritone	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	4
Euphonium	11	11	3	7	2	2	3	4	20	24

