The Chamber Musician in the Twenty-First Century

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Editor

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Cover image, including the Marmara Piano Quartet, courtesy of Mehmet Bayraktar.

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About the Editor

Mine Doğantan-Dack is a musicologist and a concert pianist whose playing has been described as "an oasis" and "heaven on earth". She is internationally regarded as a leading figure in Music Performance Studies and has published many articles on music performance and edited several books, including *Recorded Music: Philosophical and Critical Reflections* (2008), *Artistic Practice as Research in Music* (2015), *Music and Sonic Art* (2018), and *Rethinking the Musical Instrument* (2022). Mine was born in Istanbul and studied at the Juilliard School (BM, MM) with the eminent Russian pianist Oxana Yablonskaya on a scholarship from the Turkish Ministry of Education for Young Artists. While at Juilliard, she won the prestigious William Petschek award. Mine also holds a BA in Philosophy and a PhD from Columbia University in Musicology. She performs as a soloist and chamber musician and has given concerts in USA, UK, Germany, France, and Turkey. She has performed most of the major piano concerti with various orchestras, participated in the Mozart Bicentennial Festival in New York, and recorded the music of JS Bach and Scriabin for WNCN. She has also recorded various programs for Turkish radio and television. Mine is the founder of the Marmara Piano Trio and received an award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for her work on chamber music performance. Mine is also the artistic director of the London-based orchestra Ensemble Vita Nova. She is a member of the Honorary Board of the Anselmo Academy of Music and the Arts in New York, dedicated to bringing music and arts education to children from all backgrounds. Mine regularly gives lecture-recitals and conference presentations. She taught performance and performance studies at Middlesex University, the University of Oxford, and currently teaches at the University of Cambridge. Her recent projects include two edited volumes for Routledge on *The Music Performers' Lived Experiences*, forthcoming in 2024.

About the Authors

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Dave Camlin's musical practice spans performance, composition, teaching, socially engaged music practice, and research. A singer/songwriter by trade, his musical practice is motivated by the idea of music making as a creative resource for fostering kinship and living more sustainably, as a potent form of civic imagination. He lectures in music education at the Royal College of Music and Trinity-Laban Conservatoire and was Head of Higher Education and Research at Sage Gateshead from 2010 to 2019. His research explores the relationship between aesthetic and participatory traditions of music making and highlights how the implicit tensions within these contrasting perspectives can be resolved through a foregrounding of their "paramusical" benefits and effects. His research focuses on group singing, music health and wellbeing, musician education, music and virtuality, and Community Music (CM). He has pioneered the use of Sensemaker® "distributed ethnography" as a method for research into cultural phenomena and has won the National Trust's Outstanding Achievement Award in 2019 for an AHRC / Arts Council England–funded mountaintop singing project, The Fellowship of Hill and Wind and Sunshine, and was co-chair of the Special Interest Group (SIG) in singing and mental health for the March Network.

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Jane W. Davidson is Professor of Creative and Performing Arts at the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music and Chair of the Creativity and Wellbeing Hallmark Initiative, University of Melbourne. Her scholarship has contributed to the study of musical skill, music as social interaction, arts for wellbeing outcomes, music and emotion, and opera performance. She has published extensively and has been a recipient of research grants in Australia and internationally. She is also an opera director, currently coordinating the MMus in Opera Performance. Previous roles at the University of Melbourne include Acting Director of the Victorian College of the Arts, Head of Performing Arts, Associate Dean Research, and Associate Dean Engagement. She has also been Deputy Director of the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, President of the Australian Music & Psychology Society, Vice-President of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music and Editor of the academic journal Psychology of Music. She is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

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Elizabeth Haddon SFHEA, LRSM, is a Senior Lecturer at the University of York, where she devised and leads the MA in Music Education: Instrumental and Vocal Teaching. Her research focuses on instrumental pedagogy, creativity, and musical performance, particularly in higher music education, and her output includes *Making Music in Britain: Interviews with those behind the notes* (Ashgate 2006), as well as two co-edited books with Pamela Burnard: Activating Diverse Musical Creativities: *Teaching and Learning in Higher Music Education* (Bloomsbury, 2015) and *Creative Teaching for Creative Learning in Higher Music Education* (Routledge, 2016). Her published research also includes the exploration of empathy and partnership in piano duet playing and performance with Mark Hutchinson, mental health in the higher music education context, and investigating pedagogical approaches across cultures.

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Neil Heyde is the cellist of the Kreutzer Quartet and Professor of Music and Head of Postgraduate Programmes at the Royal Academy of Music. As a soloist and chamber musician, he has appeared throughout Europe and in China, the USA, and Australia, broadcasting on the major radio networks and recording more than 40 discs, many in collaboration with composers. This experience is central to his research, which focuses on exploring the ways in which musicians communicate with one another and relationships between performers and composers, past and present. He has published on collaborative relationships, instrumental choreography, and issues in interpretation. He is editing Debussy's three late sonatas for the *Œuvres completes de Claude Debussy* and is working on a series of interconnected projects that explore some of the ways in which instruments are "not just tools". He is completing a solo project with composer Richard Beaudoin on a series of six pieces, each a form of transcription of an iconic recording: Argerich playing Chopin, Casals playing Bach, Debussy playing Debussy, Gould playing Schoenberg, Monk improvising on Johnny Green, and Maggie Teyte and Alfred Cortot performing Debussy. His teaching draws extensively on recordings as a means for discovering the richness of musical relationships.

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Mary Hunter is A. Leroy Greason Professor of Music Emerita at Bowdoin College in Maine, USA, where she taught music history, music theory, and courses on Middle Eastern music, music and gender, and music in everyday life. She has written books and articles on 18th-century opera, 18th- and early 19th-century chamber music, and on the ways the ideologies of classical music play into the experiences and language of performers. She is an active amateur violinist.

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Mark Hutchinson is a Lecturer in Music at the University of York, where he is a member of the Contemporary Music Research Centre and the Musical Cultures and Communities Research Cluster. His research focuses upon creative approaches towards the analysis of recent contemporary music. His book Coherence in New Music: Experience, Aesthetics, Analysis (Ashgate, 2016) uses ideas from a variety of different disciplines to argue for a novel concept of coherence within recent classical music. He has published articles examining overlaps between music, literature, and philosophy in works by Henri Dutilleux, Tōru Takemitsu, and Georg Friedrich Haas. He is also active as a piano accompanist, chamber musician, and oboist.

Kanga, Zubin

Zubin Kanga is a pianist, composer, researcher, lecturer, and technologist. His work in recent years has focused on new interactions between live musicians and new technologies, including motion and bio-sensors, AI, analogue synthesizers, new interactive instruments, magnetic resonators, interactions with live-video, and internet-based scores. Zubin has premiered 120 works and performed at many international festivals, including the BBC Proms, London Contemporary Music Festival, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (UK) Melbourne Festival (Australia), Festival Présences (France), Klang Festival (Denmark), Podium Festival (Germany), Resonator Festival (Sweden), November Music (Netherlands), and Borealis Festival (Norway). Recent collaborations include those with Alexander Schubert on his internet-based work *WIKI-PIANO.NET*, with Nicole Lizée on her *Scorsese Etudes*, and with Philip Venables on *Answer Machine Tape*, 1987,

a concert-length piano and multimedia work exploring the life of artist David Wojnarowicz. After graduating from the University of Sydney and the Royal Academy of Music, Zubin was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Nice and IRCAM and a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he is now a Lecturer in Musical Performance and Digital Arts. He is also the Principal Investigator of Cyborg Soloists, a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship–funded project exploring new music–technology collaborations between artists and industry.

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Elaine King is a Reader in Music at the University of Hull. She is a performer and musicologist with research interests in performance studies, music psychology, music education, and music analysis. Her doctoral thesis focused on the nature and effects of interaction in cello–piano duos during ensemble rehearsal and performance. Since then, she has published widely on different aspects of solo and ensemble playing, including breathing, rehearsal strategies, gestures, and small group work. She has co-edited four books with Ashgate/Routledge Press: *Music and Gesture* (2006), *New Perspectives on Music and Gesture* (2011), *Music and Familiarity* (2013), and *Music and Empathy* (2017). She is currently working on three projects: STROKESTRA (in partnership with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra), Chinese Whispers (language learning through choral singing), and Transitions in Music Education. She is the Associate Editor of the journal *Psychology of Music*, Action Editor for *Music and Science* and a member of the Editorial Board for the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*. As a performer, she is a cellist, pianist, and conductor. She directs the University Camerata and is involved in other regional chamber ensembles and orchestras when time allows.

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Performance studies scholar David Kjar is an Associate Professor of Core Studies and Music History in the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. He has performed with early music ensembles in Europe and South and North America. He holds a Master's degree in historical performance (Natural Trumpet) from the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and a PhD in musicology from Boston University. His research grounds theories and philosophies on early music in specific performance experiences (performers and listeners), reframing the early music movement as a sonically constructed and heard Other Performance. He presents internationally on the topic and has published on Wanda Landowska, the early music movement, and authenticity in 21st-century contexts. He is committed to better understanding what constitutes a 21st-century artist, especially within conservatory training. The Paul R. Judy Center for Innovation and Research from the Eastman Institute for Music Leadership (Eastman School of Music) recognized this commitment with an innovation grant. He is the Executive Director of the Center for Arts Leadership at the Chicago College of Performing Arts, helping emerging professionals cultivate artistically and financially sustainable career paths. He is also a member of the international editorial board of the forthcoming journal *Performing Arts Histories*.

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Amanda E. Krause is Lecturer in Psychology at the College of Healthcare Sciences, James Cook University, Queensland. As a music psychology scholar, she studies how we experience music in our everyday lives from a psychological perspective. Findings from her research have made significant

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Maria Krivenski is a conservatoire-trained classical pianist, with a wide performing experience both as a soloist and chamber musician. She is also a music lecturer and piano tutor at Goldsmiths, University of London, where she has received the Peake Award for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. As a researcher, Maria has focused on the teaching/learning practices and the culture of musical performance in a university context. Her study, "'Feeding back' in musical performance: exploring feedback practice in relation to students' and tutors' learning and teaching experience", was funded by the PALATINE Development Award scheme. She has participated in the large-scale, EU-funded research projected PRAISE, contributing to the development of a social timeline for musical performers that facilitates online tutor and peer feedback. Maria has been awarded a PhD from the University of Sheffield for her research on emic understandings of classical musical performance in a university context.

McCaleb, Murphy

Murphy McCaleb is a senior lecturer in Music at York St. John University. He received his doctorate in ensemble performance studies from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire after studying trombone performance and chamber music at the University of Alaska and the University of Michigan. As a bass trombonist and pianist, Murphy engages in a wide range of music, including classical, jazz, rock, folk, electronic, and experimental and has performed in two Glastonbury Festivals as part of the New York Brass Band. He has recorded on multiple albums, most recently *Mythical and Angry*, a funk collaboration with progressive rock drummer Andy Edwards, and Flora Greysteel's *From the Ground*. His background in musical direction includes an installation at the Illuminating York festival in 2016 and a four-star-reviewed run of Gavin Bryars' Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2019. His first book, *Embodied Knowledge in Ensemble Performance*, was released by Ashgate in March 2014.

Montanari, Allegra

Allegra Montanari enjoys a multi-faceted career as a change management consultant, nonprofit entrepreneur, creative leader, and professional cellist. She currently supports the Business Advisory Service practice at Slalom, a global consulting firm focused on strategy, business transformation, and technology. Before finding her way to consulting, Ms. Montanari founded the nonprofit Sharing Notes, which has since delivered live music to over 35,000 people hospitalized throughout Chicago. She served as Executive Director for eight years, growing the organisation from a small student group to an award-winning nonprofit. Appointed to the leadership of Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts in 2017, Allegra combined her background of teaching, entrepreneurship, and performance to serve as the founding Director of the Center for Arts Leadership. Allegra has led presentations of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, the College Music Society's National Conference, and the Royal Music Association (UK). As a

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Rae W. Todd is a freelance clarinettist and independent researcher. He completed his PhD in Music Performance at the University of Hull in 2020 with a thesis on the phenomenon of play in professional chamber ensemble rehearsals and a portfolio of performances that featured a recital with the Berkeley Ensemble. He has performed widely across the UK as a soloist and chamber musician, including in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the Lincoln International Chamber Music Festival, and the Red Cross International Summer Concert Series. As an orchestral musician, he has performed with the Welsh National Orchestra, the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra, Culture: Orchestra, Hull University Camerata, the York Guildhall Orchestra, and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Orchestra and Wind Ensemble. He continues to pursue research on aspects of music making when time allows.

Thomas, Kerry

Kerry Thomas received her Bachelor of Musical Arts in the spring of 2022 in Music and English from Roosevelt University. Kerry has worked for the Chicago College of Performing Arts Center for Arts Leadership since 2018, first as a research assistant and currently as its Grants Manager. A trumpet player, Kerry has interests in both musicological research and performance. She recently completed her Honors undergraduate thesis, "Composing the Grand Ole Opera: Hidden Critiques of Southern Life, Liturgy, and Literature in the Operas of Carlisle Floyd." In the thesis, Kerry reveals how Floyd glosses the source material for his operas to explicitly comment on the United States, particularly the American South, arguing that Floyd's operas can be taken to be overtly political and, at times, as forming explicit critiques on American life. Kerry will continue her musicological pursuits in graduate school.

Waddington-Jones, Caroline

Caroline Waddington-Jones is a Lecturer in Music Education at the University of York. She has published in various leading peer-reviewed journals in music education and psychology, as well as guest-editing a Special Issue of Empirical Musicology Review and co-editing a volume on music and empathy research for Routledge with Dr. Elaine King. Caroline's research interests include technology and music learning; music and wellbeing; equity, diversity, and inclusion in music education; and music and empathy. She is currently the PI of two research projects. The SMILE research project (funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation and SEMPRE) aims to develop and evaluate a new online resource for staff in special schools to help to address the current equality gap in music provision for disabled pupils. Meanwhile, the CoMusicate project (funded by Closing the Gap Network) works with people with lived experience of severe mental illness to design new technology that will support social and creative interaction through music and sound. Caroline has a strong commitment to musical inclusion and works with organisations such as Live Music Now, Music in Hospitals and Care, The Amber Trust, and Sounds of Intent to bring more music learning opportunities to disabled children and young people.

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I am grateful to Laura Wagner, Books Manager and Editor at the Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI), for inviting me to act as the Guest Editor for a Special Issue of the online journal Arts on chamber music—an initiative that gradually turned into this book project. I would like to express my special thanks to Oliva Andereggen and Jelena Milojevic, Assistant Editors at MDPI, for their enthusiasm and their continuous support, and for making the process of preparing this volume for publication a thoroughly enjoyable one. I also extend my thanks to the MDPI Production team for their meticulous work on the manuscript, as well as the layout and design of this book.

I would particularly like to express my gratitude to all the authors not only for their expert contributions that made this book possible, but also for their perseverance and patience in bringing this project to completion in the face of all the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. To each of my chamber music partners, past and present: I am grateful for the joy and inspiration you brought and continue to bring to our music making.

As always, I dedicate this volume with devotion and love to my husband, Dr. John Dack, and our daughter, Yasemin. Without their daily support, this book would not have seen the light of day.

Abstracts

Introduction: Setting the Stage

by Mine Doğantan-Dack

Ensemble performance research has emerged as a thriving area within music psychology and music performance studies over the last few decades. There are various scholarly and historical factors behind this development, including the growing interest in the social, collaborative, communicative, and collective nature of musical behaviour and practices, as well as the philosophical challenges posed by post-modern thinkers to the notion of the "autonomous individual" as the basis of moral and political value. In this introductory chapter, I discuss these and other factors that have motivated a surge in ensemble performance research recently, and explain why the term "chamber musician" rather than "ensemble musician" has been adopted for the title of this volume. I also discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the fundamental relationality and sociality of human existence, and the extent to which a music performer's artistic being and becoming rely on other musicking individuals. In this connection, I emphasise the idea that all music making is an intersubjective and social experience. This introductory chapter also provides detailed summaries of the other contributions to the volume. One of the important themes that connect all the chapters is that 21st-century chamber musicians have various educational and professional concerns and needs that are different from those of their counterparts in previous eras. In addition, the authors share the belief that music educational programs can present chamber music making as a pathway to developing performing artists who will also be active in society and culture as ambassadors of positive change, promoting—through their artistic activities—inclusivity, diversity, and equality. As an edited collection, this volume makes an important contribution to the growing research literature on chamber music performance, which exists largely as individual journal articles.

Chambering Music

by J. Murphy McCaleb

Chamber music occupies a complicated position within 21st century society. Borne out of a tradition of participatory domestic music making, the term now simultaneously refers to both an activity and a repertoire. However, there is little evidence that either of these maintains a similar cultural locus to chamber music's origins. The modern activity of chamber music has been primarily professionalised and elite, with its repertoire as part of the established canon of Western Art Music. Within musicological writing, chamber music is regularly noted as being emblematic of an equal society and characterised by its intimacy. Paradoxically, this equality and intimacy is within a performative framework that is exclusionary: although chamber music is still hailed as an intimate art form, there are limits to its inclusivity. Whilst it may have been more accessible at its origins, it does not fulfil the same societal niche now. This chapter attempts to evaluate chamber music as a form of interpersonal musicking within the 21st century, prompting an exploration of how chamber music may be redefined to escape potential anachronism.

Encounters with Participatory Music

by David A. Camlin

This chapter explores the creative tension between the "aesthetic" and "participatory" dimensions of music's power—where the performance of music is about the performance of "relationships" as much as it is about the performance of "works". It explores the significance of such a tension for the emerging professional musician, primarily by analysing the experiences of a small group of undergraduate students from the Royal College of Music, London, UK, in their encounters with participatory music as part of their studies. In particular, it discusses the impact of such experiences on students' perception of their own musicality, in terms of benefits to aural memory, improvisation skills, and emotional communication in performance. Their descriptions of their encounters with participatory musical practices suggest that, far from being a distraction from or a negation of their emerging identities as performers, the experience helped them to locate their own musical identity within a more holistic understanding of the complexity of music's humanising and emancipatory potential for people and society. The chapter highlights some of the epistemological challenges that students trained in classical musical performance may face in order to participate authentically in participatory/socially engaged musical practices. It concludes with a summary of the perceived benefits for students of engaging with such practices, especially those benefits which might support their development in the practice of chamber music.

Empowering the Portfolio Musician: Innovative Chamber Music Pedagogy for the 21st-Century Artist

by David Kjar, Allegra Montanari and Kerry Thomas

The portfolio musician is not a 21st-century concept. Any history of music reveals numerous performers whose careers entailed multiple and various musical sources of income. However, 21st-century musicians are profoundly cognizant of the role conservatories play in their careers. They see themselves as multifaceted socially conscious individuals, rather than technicians on a singular path to artistic success. Confronted by an oversaturated market and the immediacy of income required to pay exorbitant student loans, sole employment in an established organisation is less viable—and less desirable. Faced with these realities, 21st-century emerging professionals are prone to experiencing identity crises and often receive little assistance from their conservatory curriculums (SNAAP 2014). Calls are growing louder, however, for a radical rethinking of how musicians are educated in ways that are essential to 21st-century careers (Sarath et al., 2017). In this chapter, we amplify that call by investigating institutions that represent diverse approaches to chamber music education. We consider chamber music for its unique structure; most chamber music ensembles do not use a conductor and do not respond to an external artistic prompt. Consequently, chamber ensembles emphasize nonverbal, empathetic communication between musicians. They also operate on an increasingly independent basis; members occupy additional roles, serving as both business and artistic managers to successfully engage the public. Thus, chamber-music training provides a good case study for analyzing the changing social and economic landscape of the 21st-century music profession. Moreover, building on our analysis of educational modes used by institutions for training portfolio musicians, this research investigates what now constitutes chamber music. How does repertoire, personnel, venue, and listener–performer–composer agency define it? Additionally, how do or can conservatory curricula deliver such a new definition for their emerging

professionals? This line of questioning serves the larger purpose of understanding the innovative role chamber music plays in contemporary collaborative music making and listening, responding to current hypotheses and discourses on the empathetic nature of music. We examine contemporary issues in chamber-music pedagogy with a mixed-method approach. We survey faculty, students, and alumni of American and UK institutions to gather big data on the state of conservatory training. To nuance these data further, we conduct interviews with faculty, staff, and students in standout chamber music programs. Finally, we focus on innovative chamber music endeavors at our present institution, investigating the Chicago College of Performing Arts string chamber music program and the 1st-year professional training course.

Evolving, Surviving, and Thriving: Working as a Chamber Musician in the 21st Century

by Caroline Waddington-Jones

Existing research into chamber musicians' careers has offered insights into both musical and social aspects of these musicians' work together. However, in addition to their tendency to focus solely on the experiences of string quartet musicians, these earlier studies document the experiences of chamber musicians of the late 20th century. With the rise of the internet and digital technologies, innovative approaches to audience development, and cuts to arts funding and education, much has changed for UK-based chamber musicians in the 21st century. This interview study with professional chamber musicians at different stages in their careers explores the challenges that these musicians face and the wide-ranging set of skills that they have developed in response. The vocational nature of this work is emphasised, and many of the financial, entrepreneurial, and logistical challenges are outlined. Various barriers in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion are identified, and implications for higher music education and for the future of the profession are explored.

Transactional Culture of the Portfolio Career Chamber Musician: A Case Study

by Jane W. Davidson and Amanda E. Krause

The literature and case study data presented in this chapter explore the micro- (interpersonal) and macro-level (organisational/cultural) experiences between professional chamber musicians, the venues that engage them, and the audiences in attendance. They are explored in terms of a series of transactions—acts of giving and receiving and embracing the need to compromise. From this perspective, emergent themes include the delicate balancing of economic, esteem, and diversification values for both performers and venue in planning; music cohesion and interpersonal social interaction as important at all levels and across all stages of planning and executing performances; and considerations of the balance between familiar and novel encounters, informality, and experiences of social inclusion regarding interactions amongst performers and audience members. It is clear that both specific and subtle transactions shape the motivations, planning, and execution of ensemble performances. While stakeholders all inevitably have different and varied experiences, their transactions contribute to the virtuous cycle of the embedded environmental social, cultural, material, and technological factors and the action afforded that constitutes chamber music performance. The "art of ensemble performance" seems to be a distributed process that is dependent on critical interdependent transactions amongst all stakeholders.

The Many Faces of the Freelance Performer of Contemporary Music in the 21st Century

by Zubin Kanga

This chapter examines the many non-musical skills that are required of the freelancing contemporary music performer. Recent generations of musicians working in contemporary music are increasingly self-managing their work rather than having agents or management teams. These musicians now need to learn the skills of agents and managers as well as those of marketers, PR agents, lawyers, fundraisers, project managers, social media managers, and compositional coaches. The increasing use of digital technology in both their performances and their marketing also demands that new skills be acquired, from a wide knowledge of computing and audio-visual hardware to skills in programming, photography, and video editing. This chapter has two main parts. One is a case study of one of the author's own touring projects, examining the many skills and costs required during the two years of commissioning and performing. The second is a survey of mid-career freelancing contemporary music performers—performing as soloists and chamber musicians—that sheds further light on the range of skills developed and utilised by contemporary music performers, their approach to self-training in these skills, the time and financial pressures of self-managed work, and some of the troubling discriminatory issues that they have faced as freelancers. Finally, a number of recommendations address these systemic issues, with the aim of creating a more sustainable, artistically vibrant, innovative, and diverse contemporary music culture.

Partnership in Piano Duet Playing

by Mark Hutchinson and Elizabeth Haddon

This chapter discusses factors contributing to the development of partnership within the rehearsal process of a piano duet, explored previously in relation to empathy. A reflective–analytical approach was utilised in which the participant-researchers undertook reflective writing after each of eight rehearsals; this dialogic undertaking produced a substantial body of rich data. Further thematic analysis for this chapter revealed processes concerning individual qualities and joint possibilities; trajectories of foundational elements that underpin creative exploration and key issues relating to preparation; ensemble leadership; communication roles, modes, and strategies; shared creative musicianship; and possibility thinking. These are discussed in relation to the literature on partnership within other fields. The findings have implications for ensemble rehearsal and performance as well as for educators working with chamber musicians, in particular through the consideration of concerns relating to communication strategies, sharing and developing ideas, and issues of roles and responsibility. The role of the shared reflective writing in facilitating various aspects including longitudinal recall is also discussed in relation to its influence on the development of the partnership. These concerns are relevant to those involved in chamber music within non-formal contexts as well as musicians within formal and educational settings.

"Let's Play!": Professional Performers' Perspectives on Play in Chamber Ensemble Rehearsal

by Rae W. Todd and Elaine C. King

This chapter explores the phenomenon of play in the context of professional chamber ensemble rehearsal and argues that play lies at the heart of it. The account begins with an interrogation

of the concept of play and a distinction is made between "playing music" (that is, how the term play is ordinarily used in making music) and "play" (that is, the social and cultural activity that manifests in many contexts). Characteristics of play are identified according to existing research conceptualisations. Within the domain of musicology, it is noted that previous studies on play and music performance focus on activity about scores and sounds. To date, there is a lack of insight into music performers' understandings of play, as well as little emphasis on the way in which play is experienced among co-performers, such as in small ensembles. A novel empirical enquiry was undertaken to gather professional chamber performers' perspectives on play through post-rehearsal reflections using video recall of live footage. The performers revealed nuanced understandings and experiences of play and highlighted "moments" of play as uniquely positive experiences. Play was vital in enabling the performers to "make the music their own". These findings are cross-compared with existing research perspectives, and the implications for the performers and researchers are discussed.

A "Naked Violin" and a "Mechanical Rabbit": Exploring Playing Relationships in Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello (1922)

by Neil Heyde

We are fortunate to have been left an unusual and very personal account of the players' work with Ravel on this piece at the time of its creation. The "naked violin" and "mechanical rabbit" of the title are characterisations of the two instruments that appear in Hélène Jourdan-Morhange's *Ravel et nous* (1945). (Jourdan-Morhange was one of Ravel's most important collaborators in the 1920s.) Her description of the violin as "stripped of decent attire" suggests that this piece presents a peculiarly "exposed" approach, and this chapter explores some of the ways in which the explication of the musical relationships embodied in this extraordinary piece of chamber music offer a particularly distinctive picture of the ways in which relationships between players in chamber music are also played out through the instruments. The chapter establishes the nature of some of the "games" in which players of this music engage, exploring in particular the roles of open strings and harmonics in shaping the interactions. In order to understand the implications of Jourdan-Morhange's characterisations, some comparisons are drawn with Ravel's other pieces from the surrounding decade.

Asynchronous Small Group Ensemble: An Exploration of Technology-Mediated Chamber Music Making in Higher Education

by Maria Krivenski

The practice-led study discussed in this chapter explores the creative and pedagogical affordances of asynchronous small group ensembles in a higher education (HE) context, with a particular focus on four-hand duets. A qualitative multiple-case study design was adopted, which combined a range of auto-ethnographic and ethnographically informed data-construction strategies. Data were analysed through thematic analysis (TA). Within the limitations of this study, findings indicate that the "virtual ensemble model" proposed and discussed here is an artistically meaningful and pedagogically valuable form of chamber music: it affords unique opportunities for deep learning, joint creativity, and artistic fulfilment. Furthermore, it promotes the development of musical and technological literacies that can facilitate (student and professional) performers' participation in

online music communities and access to online collaborative music-making opportunities. Findings suggest that the inclusion of virtual performance in HE curricular activities can play an important role in enabling performance students to acquire the experience, skills, and mindset they need to embrace the evolving roles and identities of the 21st-century classical musician.

Amateur Chamber Music: Repertoire and Experience

by Mary Hunter

Although there are a growing number of studies in the literature about the participation of adult amateur musicians in classical music making, there is relatively little written about chamber music, particularly about the relationship between repertoire and experience for this group of musicians. This essay, which is theoretically underpinned by Robert Stebbins' work on "serious leisure," is based on 55 responses to a questionnaire I sent out in early 2020; most of the questions required answers in a free-form prose style. In addition, I solicited 15 lengthier responses (some written, some in-person interviews). The respondents fell into essentially equal groups: one of string and piano players, and one of those who played wind or brass instruments. Although there is some difference between the repertoire of the two groups, mainly concerning the smaller proportion of acknowledged 18th- and 19th-century masterpieces for winds and brass, attitudes toward the experience were much more similar than different between the groups. Four themes ran through the responses: (1) amateur chamber music is an intense, important, and generally happy experience for its participants; (2) respondents tend to think of works as "units of personal experience" rather than as elements of a free-standing repertoire; (3) the virtual sociability provided by chamber music playing is important to most of these musicians; and (4) respondents viewed music making as embedded in, and in many ways about, a series of nested and usually familiar communities.

Introduction: Setting the Stage

Mine Doğantan-Dack

The preparation of this volume for publication coincided with what has become one of the greatest global health crises in living memory, the COVID-19 pandemic. Overthrowing established and familiar ways of life in a matter of a few weeks around the globe, this unprecedented situation brought great challenges and uncertainties for humanity. The social fault lines that the pandemic laid bare as it crumbled economies and social structures globally prompted some profound reflections on our relationship with our planet and our fellow human beings. The necessity of lockdowns and various quarantine regimes in fighting this disease brought the *fundamental relationality* and *sociality* of human existence into full view. While digital communication technologies played a vital role in helping individuals, families, and communities cope with feelings of loneliness and desperation arising from enforced and prolonged physical isolation these *virtual* settings at the same time foregrounded their own "otherness" in relation to human intersubjectivity, as established and sustained in *actual*, face-to-face contexts (Dos Santos et al. 2020; Zhang et al. 2021).

As musical performances started to be cancelled within days following the official declaration of COVID-19 as a "pandemic" by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020,[1] performers not only had to deal with the artistic and emotional impact of these cancellations, but also face a long period of financial uncertainty. In an interview she gave on 13 March 2020, British classical violinist Miriam Davis noted that "On top of the sadness and anxiety of the virus situation, every musician I know is now facing bankruptcy", adding that her performance of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto was cancelled with just 4 hours' notice following "the cancellation of every other concert in my diary for the next 2 months" (Classical *f*M 2020b)—a sequence of events that I experienced first hand, as I myself went from performing 20–25 chamber music and orchestral concerts each season to the prospect of performing no concerts for an indefinite period of time. While I tried, similarly to other musicians, to carry on with an adjusted version of my daily practice routine during the lockdowns (Gersten 2020; Nusseck and Spahn 2021; Wilson 2021), the absence of face-to-face music-making contexts soon threw into sharp relief the extent

[1] Wigmore Hall, the Royal Opera House, the Royal Albert Hall, and the Barbican Centre in London closed their doors until further notice during the week starting Monday, 16 March 2020. Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., and the Berlin Philharmonic Hall had already shut down the previous week. The cancellation of various music tours and festivals quickly followed (Classical *f*M 2020a).

to which a music performer's artistic being and becoming rely on other musicking individuals, and highlighted the existential significance of music therapist Gary Ansdell's words: "it takes two to musick" (Ansdell 2014, p. 160). Indeed, a performer is always part of a cultural, artistic, and affective community of musicking individuals and makes music with and for them even when they are physically distanced or absent. There *is* a sense in which all music making is an intersubjective and social experience. Musicologist Nicholas Cook said as much when he wrote that "there is no music-making that is not in some sense collaborative" and that "there is in a sense no such thing as a solo performance" (Cook 2013, pp. 69, 286). A cardinal component of learning to become a performing musician in fact concerns cultivating, foregrounding, valuing, and promoting the fundamental relationality, sociality, and mutuality of music-making practices.

While *ensemble performance research* emerged as a thriving area within music psychology and music performance studies over the last few decades,[2] the great majority of the literature on this topic exists as individual journal articles.[3] Some milestone publications in edited book format that contributed significantly to the consolidation of music performance studies as a discipline during the 21st century either do not feature the topic at all or give it little space.[4] Indeed, it is only very recently—in February 2022—that the first edited collection entirely dedicated to research on the psychological, social, cultural, and musical processes involved in ensemble music making—a volume titled *Together in Music: Coordination, Expression, Participation,* edited by Renee Timmers, Freya Bailes, and Helena Daffern—has been published (Timmers et al. 2022).

The surge in ensemble performance research has been motivated in part by the growing interest in the social, collaborative, communicative, and collective nature of musical behaviour and practices (Malloch and Trevarthen 2009; Sawyer 2014; Clarke and Doffman 2017; Cook 2018)—an interest that has been driven itself by wider historical and scholarly factors. Among these are the challenges that began to be posed during the second half of the 20th century—by post-modern philosophers such as Jean-François Lyotard (1929–1998), Michel Foucault (1926–1984), and Jacques Derrida (1930–2004)—"to the Enlightenment notion of the *autonomous individual* as the

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2 At the time of writing, Academia.edu, a networking platform for academics, lists 69, 860 research publications tagged under "music ensemble performance research".

3 This is in contradistinction to the very large literature on chamber music *repertoire*, which exists in the form of books in addition to scholarly articles. See, for example: (Ferguson 1964; Berger 1985; Tovey 1989; Baron 2015; Keller 2011; Radice 2012; Murray 2015).

4 For instance, (Parncutt and McPherson 2002) does not include a chapter devoted to instrumental chamber ensemble performance; Rink (2002), Davidson (2004), Williamon (2004), and Rink et al. (2017) each has only one chapter that discusses issues in ensemble performance. Two chapters in (Fabian et al. 2014) are concerned with this topic.

basis of moral and political value" (Doğantan-Dack 2020b, p. 42). Problematising the ideal of the self-determining individual, these challenges prepared "the philosophical grounds for the notion of the socially and discursively constructed self—the notion that one cannot be or become a self on one's own" (ibid.; also see Taylor 1989). Similar challenges were raised in psychology research, which, throughout the large part of the 20th century, promoted an understanding of learning and creativity as functions of the individual mind: in this connection, Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) is often referenced as the initiator of a paradigm shift towards knowledge acquisition as a socially and collaboratively achieved endeavour (Doğantan-Dack 2020b, p. 42). During the last couple of decades of the 20th century, the impact of these developments started to be felt more broadly in the cognitive and social sciences as researchers began to explore the processes underlying human *intersubjectivity* (Carassa et al. 2008)—processes many of which are at the foundation of group music making. The emergence of *evolutionary musicology* around the same period is another factor that further stimulated scholarly interest in the social and collaborative dimensions of musical practices, as theories about the evolutionary origins and the significance of musicking in terms of its power to bring about physical and emotional coordination among individuals and to facilitate social bonding, social cohesion, self-other merging, etc., started to be proposed (Cross 1999, 2003, 2010; Huron 2001; Cross and Morley 2010; Dissanayake 2010; Morley 2013; Killin 2016; van der Schyff and Schiavio 2017). It would be difficult to overstate the role played by the paradigm shift in music scholarship during the 21st century in rendering ensemble performance research a thriving area: as the disciplinary ontology and epistemology continue to shift their focus from musical text to musical performance, from product to process, from music as autonomous works to music as socially and historically situated cultural practice, from the performer as a self-effacing figure in the service of *Werktreue* ideology (Cook 2013, pp. 13–16) to the performer as creative artist (Rink et al. 2017), the collaborative, intersubjective, collective, and participatory emerge as the artistic and educational exemplar in musical performance. Solo performing—which throughout the 20th century has been promoted as the highest form of musicianship and highest aim in a professional career in the western art music tradition (López-Íñiguez and Bennett 2019)—is being transformed into a sub-category within the increasingly diversifying musical activities and cultural roles undertaken by classical music performers.

Within this burgeoning research literature, there has been a proliferation of the terms "ensemble performance" and "joint musical performance" in preference to "chamber music performance" or "chamber ensemble performance", even when a particular research study focuses on what would standardly be considered as chamber music ensemble practice (e.g., string quartet, piano trio, wind quintet, or various duos performing western art music repertoire. See, for example, Rager et al.

2013; Schiavio and Høffding 2015; Bishop and Goebl 2017; Macritchie et al. 2018; Chang et al. 2017). Given that the terms "chamber music" and "chamber music performance" carry with them a specific cultural-historical baggage rooted in 18th- and 19th-century European cultural ideals, the move towards more generic terms in research can be seen as one way that the discipline manifests its aspiration to engage with some of the pressing social and civil rights issues in the 21st century. "Ensemble performance", which, as a term, is neutral with regard to repertoire and performance personnel, can more readily serve a diverse and inclusive scholarship in music performance studies in comparison to the term "chamber music performance", and at the same time sidestep the complexities of the cultural-historical baggage that "chamber music" brings.

Nevertheless, professional performers continue to refer to themselves routinely as "chamber musician" in their biographies. To cite just a few examples: Nicola Benedetti's biography describes her as a "devoted chamber musician" (Benedetti n.d.); Toby Hughes introduces himself as "Double bass soloist and chamber musician" (Hughes n.d.) on social media; and pianist Marian Hahn is described as "an avid chamber musician" by the institution where she teaches (Johns Hopkins Peabody Institute n.d.). In an article published in *Strings Magazine* in 2015 sub-titled "19 String Players Talk About Their Passion for Playing in Small Ensembles", each performer interviewed uses the word "chamber music", and some refer to the "chamber musician"; none of them use the term "ensemble musician" or "ensemble music" (Anonymous 2015). Furthermore, in the context of programmes and courses focusing on historical and/or contemporary western art music repertoire, many, if not all, music education institutions continue to refer to the "chamber musician" who develops ensemble musicianship skills under their roofs. The Royal College of Music, London, for instance, notes on its website that "RCM students perform regularly as soloists and chamber musicians at major concert halls" (Royal College of Music n.d.); on the website of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, one reads that "The Guildhall Symphony Orchestra and Chorus perform regularly in the 2000-seat Barbican Hall, while chamber musicians give recitals there as part of the acclaimed LSO Platforms: Guildhall Artists series" (Guildhall School of Music and Drama 2021).

There are several reasons I have chosen to adopt the term "chamber musician" rather than "ensemble musician" for the title of this volume. Firstly, I have conceptualised and designed this volume specifically with the aim of addressing the diverse challenges that twenty-first century musicians working in small groups face as music students and professional performers as well as exploring their multifaceted artistic practices. The volume is thus about musicians who routinely refer to themselves as "chamber musicians". In this connection, the chapters included in this volume collectively contribute to the growing criticism of the narrow artistic path imposed on practitioners of western art music performance—including chamber

musicians—by an ideology rooted in 19th-century discourses and practices that continues to generate various negative consequences, such as performance anxiety, the stifling of creativity, and career-related disappointments (Leech-Wilkinson 2020). Critical reflections on the unhealthy practices that have shaped classical music performance culture since the 19th century—such as its hierarchisation of musical roles and values, encouragement of perfectionism and of competition instead of collaboration, and discouragement of diversity (Scharff 2015; Hill 2018; Bull 2019; Leech-Wilkinson 2020)—form a unifying thread that runs through the various chapters in this book. The contributions go beyond identifying and critically scrutinising the diverse challenges that the contemporary chamber musician faces, however: they also explore novel developmental and professional paths through which the musical and social practices of the 21st-century chamber musician can become more relevant for and more closely integrated with 21st-century lives. This requires, among other things, engaging critically with the cultural-historical baggage that chamber music performance practice continues to entail and exploring novel pedagogical practices and career paths—not to mention novel repertoire for 21st-century chamber musicians. This volume, consequently, places the performer at its centre and introduces *participatory, collaborative, and socially engaged musical practices* as defining the emergent activity domain of the 21st-century chamber musician. The volume proceeds from a critical scrutiny of the cultural-historical baggage that the term "chamber music" has accumulated as repertoire and as activity over the last couple of centuries and moves through contributions that discuss institutional pedagogical issues and professional concerns as well as the inner musical and social workings of chamber music ensembles. The volume finally turns to an exploration of the experiences, attitudes, and values of amateur chamber musicians, an awareness of which is beneficial for the professional chamber musician in the 21st century.

In Chapter 1, Murphy McCaleb offers a new conceptualisation of "chamber music", both as repertoire and as an activity that will make it more relevant within contemporary cultural practices. In his words, he attempts to "evaluate chamber music as a form of interpersonal musicking within the 21st century." In the first section of his chapter, McCaleb discusses the problems involved in the definitions of "chamber music" provided in the literature. Observing that chamber music making deviated from its participatory historical origins, he goes on to propose a fundamental rethinking of the relationality that the practice engenders by placing the performers and the audience within radically egalitarian contexts. The model he puts forward foregrounds the intimacy of the relationships chamber music making encourages and the economy of resources it relies on. The result is a new practice that is predicated on not only making music in small groups but also on making musical and dialogic *relationships* and *experiences* with the participation of co-performers *and* audiences. According to McCaleb, this new practice requires a new term: *chambering music*.

The theme of participatory music making is picked up in Chapter 2 by David Camlin, this time in the context of an educational setting—the music conservatoire. The chapter first explores the tensions and challenges that emerging professional performers experience when they encounter participatory and socially engaged musical practices. Trained in accordance with the demands of a perfectionist and competitive culture based on the presentation of reified musical "works", classical performers, when they are exposed to different relationships in different participatory settings, are confronted with the task of re-evaluating their understanding of the notion of "musicality" and developing an awareness that this notion involves much more than being "perfect" in accordance with the dictates of a particular discourse. They come to realise in such settings that music making is at the same time, and fundamentally, the performing of human relationships. Among the important findings of Camlin's qualitative study are the many benefits that participatory encounters bring: these experiences teach the emerging professional performer how to respond and adapt to dynamically evolving and unpredictable environments; enhance their communication skills; increase their creative freedom; and significantly, find their own artistic voices. In Camlin's words, "The development of a more dialogic and relational mindset toward music making also represents an invaluable attitudinal shift which can help students transform the 'hotshot' mindset of conservatoire training into something more collaborative, in preparation for taking up professional roles in chamber music practice."

The concerns that are raised by David Kjar, Allegra Montanari, and Kerry Thomas in Chapter 3 resonate closely with the issues that McCaleb and Camlin articulate in the first two chapters of the volume in connection with the traditional discourses and performance practices of western art music. After providing a critique of the conservatoire culture, which is based overwhelmingly on the cultivation of a "sonic aesthetic", the authors emphasise the crucial role that chamber music making can play in educating socio-politically aware portfolio performers. Quoting Loren Kajikawa, who wrote that "music needs not only to become more diverse and inclusive but also to come out into the world and help to create spaces for everyone to play" (Kajikawa 2019, p. 171), Kjar, Montanari, and Thomas put forward the idea that the development of musicianship should include recognising the importance of community engagement. In this connection, they explore the innovative pedagogical approaches that are currently being implemented in various US institutions and mobilising chamber music training as civic training. By cultivating not only collaborative skills but also openness to cultural plurality, these novel chamber music performance contexts have the power to challenge the radical individualism (and indeed radical collectivism, I would add) that has become pervasive globally, and encourage the development of collaborative communities that flourish through the practice of inclusivity, diversity, and equality. Another important discussion

presented in this chapter concerns the dissonance that emerging classical performers experience between the training they receive in educational settings and the demands of the marketplace they face upon graduation. Recognising the problems posed by discourses that frame 21st-century classical musicking in neoliberal terms, Kjar, Montanari, and Thomas suggest that for performers to be able to contribute to musical culture as socio-politically aware musicians, they need to develop an awareness of the economic and political mechanisms that turn the wheels of musical culture: in the absence of such awareness, it is difficult to develop the ability as well as the resilience to negotiate and subvert the negative consequences of the demands imposed by the marketplace. In promoting the value of a more inclusive and diverse musical culture and the value of more socially engaged learning within the music conservatoire, Chapters 2 and 3 can also be read as contributions to the emerging field of Critical Higher Education Studies,[5] which "seeks not only to understand higher education, but also to critique its dysfunctional practices, and undo and transform its undemocratic and narrowly conceived structures" (Doğantan-Dack 2020a, p. 50).

In Chapter 4, Caroline Waddington-Jones focuses on the wide-ranging skills that professional musicians who carve out career paths in chamber music need in order to meet the challenges they face in the 21st century. As the author notes, these skills are "far removed from the music-specific skills that they and their predecessors honed over many years of musical training": they also include entrepreneurial as well as digital literacy skills. Waddington-Jones observes that as professional contexts for making a career as a chamber musician have become increasingly competitive since the 20th century—while funding opportunities have been on the decline—many classical performers are now turning to portfolio careers, which is becoming "commonplace" and "a great way to diversify income via music, or to add music to other career exploits" (Hatschek 2014). The chamber musicians who were interviewed by Waddington-Jones as part of her qualitative study also emphasise the potential of portfolio careers to make more rounded musicians. In spite of the various financial challenges and discriminatory barriers that 21st-century western art music performers face in establishing careers as chamber musicians, they continue to place chamber music performance at the heart of their portfolio

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[5] Critical Higher Education Studies is a branch of Critical University Studies that "looks beyond the confines of particular specialisations and takes a resolutely critical perspective. Part of its task is scholarly, reporting on and analyzing changes besetting higher education, but it goes a step further and takes a stand against some of those changes, notably those contributing to the 'unmaking of the public university'" (Williams 2012). Critical Higher Education Studies promotes "engagement and dialogue on the evolving role of higher education (HE) in contemporary society and its link to broader political, social and economic structures at national, global and transnational scales" (Moscovits and Dillabough 2020). See also, (Arvanitakis and Hornsby 2016; Smyth 2017; Noble and Ross 2019; and Bottrell and Manathunga 2019).

work because of the high value they place on the musical experience and the repertoire, the collaborative opportunities the medium offers, and the creative control it affords. Similar to Camlin, and Kjar, Montanari, and Thomas, Waddington-Jones emphasises the need for higher education institutions to prepare their students for the realities of the profession outside the walls of the institution. In this connection, the author puts forward the important suggestion that embedding the development of self-reflection and self-insight into music curricula can further foster professional development. Crucially, she argues that music education institutions need to give more consideration to how they portray artistic and professional "success" to their students in order to ensure that they can make realistic or "informed decisions as they visualise their futures and design their careers".

In the next chapter—Chapter 5 by Jane W. Davidson and Amanda E. Krause—the authors take the reader further into the career "realities" of the 21st-century chamber musician by exploring the ways they negotiate the different dimensions of the professional ecosystem of chamber musicking. Davidson and Krause adopt the term "transactional culture" to describe this ecosystem as a series of micro-(interpersonal) and macro-level (organisational and cultural) negotiations and dialogues—a continuous, deeply intersubjective process of giving and receiving, where compromise becomes unavoidable. Performing chamber music emerges as a "distributed process, dependent on critical interdependent transactions amongst all stakeholders." The chapter focuses particularly on those transactional processes that involve audiences and venues and afford chamber musicians performance opportunities. The authors argue that in order to be able to sustain their ensemble's identity and gain employment, chamber musicians need to collaborate with various organisations and create meaningful experiences for their audiences. These collaborations, and the transactions they involve, necessitate skills that go beyond the well-documented musical, cognitive, and social skills ensemble musicians acquire as they make music together. The discussion in this chapter once again highlights the pressing need to develop marketing and social networking skills and strategies in order to have a career as a chamber musician in the 21st century, as well as the lack of training in these kinds of skills in higher educational contexts. The case study presented by Davidson and Krause explores the relationship between chamber musicians, a particular venue (The Melbourne Recital Centre, Australia), and their audiences. Their findings indicate that all of those who are involved in the actualisation of a chamber music performance event—the performers, venue managers, audiences, and other relevant organisations—converge around certain expectations: high-level musical and ensemble skills, depth of emotional experience, audience engagement and the communication of intimacy, and entertainment. In addition, the case study shows that for the 21st-century chamber musician, a portfolio career has very much become a norm, and that building resilience through the

attainment and maintenance of musical as well as entrepreneurial and facilitative skills is an indicator of a sustainable career in chamber music performance.

Chapter 6 by Zubin Kanga reinforces many of the research findings presented by Davidson and Krause. In addition to discussing the skills that freelancing 21st-century musicians require in order to secure an income, Kanga scrutinises in detail the skillset that is required of performers specialising in contemporary music and utilizing technology. Kanga argues that in order to survive and thrive in contemporary musical culture, musicians working as soloists and/or chamber musicians need to learn at least some of the skills of agents and managers, marketers, PR agents, lawyers, fundraisers, project managers, social media managers, and compositional coaches—a perspective that captures my own experiences as a chamber musician managing the activities of a London-based professional piano trio, the Marmara Piano Trio, for more than a decade. While most of these skills can be identified as "entrepreneurial", Kanga notes the association of this term with "neoliberal ideologies of market power and economic growth" and argues that this does not sit comfortably with many musicians, for whom the priority is "rarely the maximisation of profit" but rather the creation and performance of new music, and the collaboration and sense of community that these activities afford. The author thus prefers to refer to these skills collectively as "non-musical" skills. One of the important discussions in this chapter concerns the issue of discrimination against women, ethnic minorities, and neurodiverse performers within freelancing and contemporary music contexts: while there is research about the contemporary music *industry*, there is currently insufficient research about the experiences of performers of contemporary music. The implication, as noted by Kanga, is that "discrimination among new music performers cannot yet be acknowledged or tracked" within the larger research community. Kanga's research on UK-based freelancing performers constitutes an important step towards rectifying this situation: the abhorrent stories of racism and misogyny that some of his respondents shared indicate the extent of the problem and the urgency with which it needs to be addressed, both in research and within the industry. The chapter also provides valuable recommendations for tackling the challenges that solo and ensemble performers of contemporary music face: these include the implementation of the non-musical skills that freelancing performers need within higher education music curricula; more funding for performers of new music; and greater collective organisation among performers themselves to share information, knowledge, and skills.

The next three chapters in this volume take the reader away from issues related to building professional careers in chamber music performance to the inner (psychological, social and musical) workings of chamber ensembles. While concern with the well-being of the 21st-century chamber musician continues to be a thread that connects all of the chapters in this volume, this unifying theme

appears in highly situated, local contexts in Chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 7 by Mark Hutchinson and Elizabeth Haddon turns to the context of the piano duet. Through an autoethnographic study, the authors explore the factors that contribute to the development of "partnership" during rehearsals and discuss the different values—values regarding intersubjectivity, collaboration, and creativity—that emerged from their lived experiences as partners in a piano duet. The authors explain that they employ the term "partnership" to refer "specifically to a dyadic collaboration that is highly mutual and that carries a strongly positive affective dimension." The experiential and reflective microcosm that Hutchinson and Haddon present in this chapter in fact constitutes the very groundwork from which the relational, social, participatory and collaborative skills that chamber musicians require and value in all professional contexts spring forth. In many ways, chamber music rehearsal processes function as learning grounds for the development of intersubjectively shared musical, as well as non-musical, values. According to the authors, chamber music making offers performing partners the possibility to forge a kind of relationship that goes beyond the typical transactional or collaborative interpersonal encounters where "the subjective boundaries of the participating individuals remain intact" (Rabinowitch et al. 2012, p. 116): in chamber music contexts, performers are also able to orient themselves "around the desire to transcend individuality per se" and explore what Rabinowitch et al. (2012) call "merged subjectivity". Picking up a research thread suggested by Camlin in Chapter 2, Kjar, Montanari and Thomas in Chapter 3, and discussed in Chapter 4 by Waddington-Jones—a thread concerning the importance of *self-reflection* in the development of the professional performer—Hutchinson and Haddon emphasise the role that their dialogic reflective writing and analyses played in the development of a meaningful partnership, noting that these also facilitated interpersonal growth and significantly contributed to "possibility thinking", a concept articulated by Anna Craft to highlight the creative drive human beings possess to transform "what is given to what might be in all aspects of their lives" (Craft 2015, p. 153). As the chapter highlights the affective and transformational pedagogical potential of chamber music making contexts, it also contributes to the growing literature on transformative and affective learning environments. The dialogic journal employed as part of this study attests to the authors' journey in affective learning, which is "concerned with how learners feel while they are learning as well as with how learning experiences are internalised so they can guide the learner's attitudes, opinions, and behavior in the future (Gano-Phillips 2009, p. 3), and in transformative learning, which involves "the process of effecting change in a frame of reference . . . When circumstances permit, transformative learners move toward a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience" (Mezirow 1997, p. 5). Further research can explore the benefits of music curricula that explicitly

incorporate affective and transformative learning. The earlier chapters by Camlin, and Kjar, Montanari and Thomas can also be read as pleas for the inclusion of these pedagogical approaches in the education of chamber musicians in the 21st century.

Chapter 8 by Rae W. Todd and Elaine C. King continues to explore the dynamics of chamber music making in the context of rehearsals. Through case studies that scrutinise the post-rehearsal reflections of the participating performers on the documented rehearsal sessions, the authors discuss how professional chamber musicians describe their experiences of "play" during episodes of "playing music" and how they understand the notion of "play". "Play", as explored in this chapter, concerns certain social activities that are universally observed among children as well as among adults in a wide variety of contexts. The authors emphasise the difficulty of defining the phenomenon of play and its fuzzy conceptual and practical boundaries. They note that "playing music" does not necessarily overlap with "play" in making music: while the participants in their research project distinguished, in general, the "ordinary" realm of playing music from "play" during rehearsals, in some cases, there was slippage in the performers' descriptions of "playing music" and "play". The chapter also provides useful literature reviews on the phenomenon of play, and on music performance and play. Todd and King show that many of the characteristics of play as conceptualised in the research literature can also be observed in the context of ensemble music making during rehearsals. An important finding of their study is that chamber musicians experience moments of play as highly positive episodes, with the implication that making play a regular part of ensemble rehearsal would significantly impact the well-being of the 21st-century chamber musician. "Playing" while "playing music" can create more participatory experiences, encourage creative engagement with the music, and prompt performers to make the music their own—simultaneously weakening the negative effects of the work-centric ideology that has permeated western art music performance environments since the 19th century (Leech-Wilkinson 2020). The readers will note that Todd and King's empirical findings regarding play in chamber music rehearsals by professional musicians resonate closely with the hypothetical and playful chambering music session that McCaleb imagines in Chapter 1, where all of participants feel free to play with the piece they chamber together. Future artistic research projects can explore the conditions under which play, as a highly pleasurable activity, can be routinely introduced into live chamber music performance contexts.

The next chapter, Chapter 9 by Neil Heyde, continues the theme of "play" in the context of a particular piece of chamber music: Maurice Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello. Heyde argues that the performative constraints that Ravel built into this composition enable, and in fact encourage, playing with the musical materials in a musical "game". The chapter explores Ravel's Duo in detail in order to articulate "what is special about [the composer's] games [and] why performers love

playing them". Arguing that Ravel mobilises the natural musical resources of each instrument to create the structural design of the music, Heyde focuses on a particular game he identifies in the Duo, namely the game of "predictive listening", which involves, among other things, the management of the harmonics. Through selected examples from the music where the open strings or shared sonorities play crucial roles in performance, the author discusses how each performer needs to imagine, predictively before the event, the sound and shape of their ensemble partner's line, as the musical materials are handed over from one part to the other. In this connection, chamber music making emerges as an ideal site for developing aural skills and thereby improving musicianship (also see McNeil 2000; Slette 2014). In this chapter, Heyde also highlights the opportunities that Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello opens up for immediate and intimate contact with the instruments and suggests that at times, the musical games invite the two instruments to work as if they were one instrument.[6] The emphasis the author places on the embodied-material foundations of chamber music making that intertwine the instrument, music, and the performers points to an area that offers much potential for further research. In Heyde's words, "Ravel's games seem to be particularly interesting in the way that they engage personal 'choice' with instrumental 'facts' . . . [as] he provides material not only for some strangely thrilling gameplay, but also a heightened awareness of the curious intimacy that we have with our instruments and instrumental selves."

In Chapter 10, Maria Krivenski presents research that provides an opportunity to compare some of the basic social and musical processes of ensemble music making as they unfold in synchronous and asynchronous contexts. Asynchronous group music making in online virtual ensembles became ubiquitous during the COVID-19 pandemic (Fram et al. 2021), as music performers were cut off from live, face-to-face, interactive, and synchronous performing contexts and resorted to technologically mediated practices to create some form of collaborative musicking. Noting that these mediated ensemble performances have been criticised for compromising too much and being poor replacements for the live, face-to-face musical encounters, Krivenski instead proposes explorig them as offering a *different* mode of ensemble performance that can artistically and pedagogically expand, rather than replace, traditional chamber music practices. The chapter presents the practice-based "Virtual Duets Project" that the author carried out during the pandemic with the participation of staff and students from a university music department in the UK. The ensembles featured in this project include voice and piano; violin and piano; two pianos; and electronic keyboard and piano, performing music by Franz Schubert, Lili Boulanger, Gabriel

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[6] I made and discussed the same point in reference to the performance of Ravel's Piano Trio (Doğantan-Dack 2010).

Fauré, and Claude Debussy. The process of forming the virtual ensembles involved the preparation of "leading tracks" by the performers in each group, who recorded their own parts without any external guidance or constraint—a method that is unlike the more common practice of playing with a pre-prepared reference track.[7] Swapping their leading tracks with their ensemble partners, each performer was then asked to listen to and rehearse with the leading track created by their partner and record a "response track". The performers also engaged in synchronous reflective dialogue via Zoom, as they listened to early multitrack drafts prepared by the author of their ensemble performance together. One of the most important findings of this project is that technologically mediated, asynchronous chamber ensemble performances can have significant pedagogical benefits for music students in fostering a deeper understanding of the role of active listening in group music making. The chapter furthers the research thread initiated in previous contributions—notably in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 7—regarding the role of reflective dialogue, by showing that dialogic reflection by the duet partners on their musical intentions was a key facilitator in the evolution of the creative process. Once again, dialogic peer-feedback and reflection emerge as fundamental tools that prompt deep learning—a process that involves the initiation of critical thinking, the creation of new connections between different concepts, and the integration of what is being learnt into what one already knows (Filius 2019, p. 14). While digital technologies have generated a culture of "being alone together" (Turkle 2011), Krivenski's contribution to this volume shows one way technology can be put to use to foster "being together alone".

Chapter 11 by Mary Hunter, the final chapter in this volume, is about amateur chamber music making and, in some important ways, brings the discussion full circle to the social-historical baggage that McCaleb unpacked in Chapter 1. Even though the ecosystems of professional and amateur chamber music making are intertwined through various social, financial and musical relationships, the experiences of amateur chamber musicians are under-represented in scholarly research. Echoing McCaleb, Hunter notes that this is partly because musicological enquiry prioritised chamber music as repertoire and focused on composers and works. Based on the ethnographic study she presents, Hunter argues that the attitude of amateurs towards chamber music as repertoire and as activity are distinct from those of professional performers. While amateur musicians do cherish the personal connections they forge with a cultural tradition that created "masterworks", the presumed ethical obligation to be loyal to the composer's intentions, which continues to drive performance making in the professional world of western art music (Hunter and Broad 2017),

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[7] Reference tracks are usually generated using virtual instrument software or as pre-recorded backing tracks (Rutgers University 2021).

is either absent or significantly diminished in amateur settings. The attitudes and values of amateurs in relation to chamber music making are more similar to those that play out in the *chambering* contexts that McCaleb imagines in the first chapter with the aim of transforming the practice and rendering it more inclusive. As Hunter notes, the experience, which is cherished by amateurs, that "a work is more yours than the composer's, and that your version of it, however imperfect, is central to your sense of yourself as a musician" can also be empowering for professional chamber musicians.

As attested by the 11 chapters in this volume, 21st-century chamber musicians have various educational and professional concerns and needs that are different from those of their counterparts in previous eras. While they highly value collaborative opportunities, the distributed creativity, and the repertoire the practice involves and prioritise these factors over maximizing profit, they are also aware of the demands of the market that often require them to acquire additional, non-musical skills to be able to generate regular income as chamber musicians. The narrow artistic path that has been imposed on practitioners of western art music by an ideology rooted in 19th-century discourses and practices is no longer adequate to satisfy the artistic aspirations, and indeed the financial requirements, of a career in chamber music in the 21st century. Chamber music performance practices can contribute to undoing the unhealthy environments that have been shaped since the 19th century through the hierarchisation of musical roles and values, the promotion of perfectionism and of competition, and the discouragement of diversity (Scharff 2015, 2018; Hill 2018; Bull 2019; Leech-Wilkinson 2020). Music educational programs can present chamber music making as a pathway to developing performing artists who will also be active in society and culture as ambassadors of positive change, promoting—through their artistic activities—inclusivity, diversity, and equality. The research shared by the contributors in this book also draws attention to the crucial role that dialogic practices and reflection can play in the education of the 21st-century chamber musician. I hope that this volume will inspire musicologists, music psychologists, and music educators to undertake further research on the 21st-century chamber musician and that it will also inform policy makers about the contemporary ecosystem of ensemble music making and its values. Above all, I hope that this book will play a role in improving the well-being of contemporary chamber musicians and in empowering them—by motivating them to explore novel artistic and pedagogical practices and career paths, as well as novel repertoire—and rendering their artistic activities more relevant for and more closely integrated with 21st-century lives.

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Chambering Music

J. Murphy McCaleb

1. Introduction

In 2008, Leon Botstein published an article in *The Musical Quarterly* entitled "The State of the Business: Chamber Music America after Thirty Years". In exploring the magazine's anniversary issue, he focused on the range of advertising woven throughout, covering artists, venues, concert series, universities, and festivals. Initially noting the "air of superiority and command [that] suffuses many ads" (Botstein 2008, p. 2), Botstein was sceptical of the stability of this musical ecosystem. For all of the special events planned, all of the excellent music being made, and the plethora of up-and-coming ensembles and composers being featured, he noted that "a sense of desperation lurks beneath the surface of this anniversary issue" (ibid., p. 3). Thirteen years later, this analysis still feels apt; Botstein could have been easily describing issues of *Chamber Music* from 2019, 2020, or 2021. These issues contain not only a significant number of advertisements, but also a number of feature articles that elaborate on the particular unique selling points of an ensemble, artist, composer, or venue. There is a lingering sense that this economy is made up of far more producers than consumers, and that chamber music—both the repertoire and the act of playing it—is fighting to maintain traction within wider society. Although the qualifying features of the phenomenon that Botstein refers to as "chamber music" are not directly articulated, several parameters become apparent. The range of ensembles referred to is broad, including everything from "string quartets to trios, brass and wind ensembles, and from percussion ensembles to odd duos and jazz groups" (ibid., p. 2). In contrast, the social context for these ensembles is perceived to be narrow, where "making a living as a performing musician" is intrinsically tied to "audiences and financial support" (ibid., p. 3). Thus, the chamber music Botstein is concerned with is rooted in professional performance to an audience, a presumption which bears unravelling in order to make sense of the practice within 21st century society.

Through exploring the recent issues of this magazine, two features become apparent. First, the chamber music economy, at least in the United States, where the journal *Chamber Music* is centred, is heavily reliant on governmental grants and philanthropy. Performers are not only being advertised within its pages, but they are also targeted by advertising for competitions promising monetary reward and public acclaim. Additionally, there are standing items in the magazine concerning grants and other funding, which have been awarded to aspiring artists. Most notably, Chamber Music America provided USD 1.2 million to chamber

musicians and organisations in 2020 through its six grant programmes (Chamber Music America 2020). Reports such as the UK Live Music Census demonstrate similar reliance on non-commercial funding for classical musicians in the United Kingdom, where "49% of all respondents . . . who identify as classical musicians have applied for funding or support programmes for the purpose of supporting live music performance in the past [compared with] 10% of respondents to the musician survey who identify as rock musicians" (Webster et al. 2018, p. 77). Given that chamber music is a subclassification within classical music, it is likely to be subject to similar financial models.

Second, chamber music as a genre is less popular than others as a form of live entertainment. In 2015–2016, 7.6% of British adults attended a classical music event at least once, compared to 30.7% who attended another genre (not including opera or jazz) (Arts Council England 2016). Participation rates of American adults were similar, with 8.8% of adults attending at least one classical music concert in 2012 (ICPSR 2013, p. 12). Although these surveys do not provide granular distinction between the sizes of ensembles, chamber music, as a smaller unit of classical music, would, therefore, only achieve a proportion of that audience. Chamber music features more infrequently in the provision of music venues across the UK, of which less than 20% regularly host chamber music ensembles in comparison with 70% hosting original bands and 42% hosting cover bands (Webster et al. 2018, p. 53). Although a number of organisations support amateur chamber music ensembles globally, little data exist to gain an accurate understanding of how many people play chamber music in private settings. Furthermore, 10.1% of British adults played a musical instrument for pleasure in 2015–2016, although the Taking Part Survey that collected this data did not specify the instruments or genres that people were engaging with (ibid.). Similar research reports that 12% of American adults played a musical instrument in 2012, and only 2% performed or practised classical music (ICPSR 2013, p. 10). Although certainly not a precise indicator of popularity, it is perhaps telling that the 2017 *Oxford Handbook of Music Making and Leisure* includes scant reference to chamber music in deference to a number of other genres and music making-contexts (Mantie and Smith 2017). More research is needed to gain an accurate picture of the incidence of chamber music in daily life, but available information suggests that it is neither a large feature of musical events across anglophone cultures nor a common form of recreational activity.

At the end of his article, Botstein proposes that the future of chamber music should lie more firmly within academia:

> The marginal and impractical and yet prestigious in culture is protected within the college or university and is funded by patrons who often have no personal interest in the subject matter. Philanthropists of higher education rely on the scholarly community and its expertise and believe that the

> preservation and extension of the traditions they uphold are important goals in themselves. The culture of musical performance can benefit from taking greater refuge within campus walls, particularly in urban areas. (Botstein 2008, p. 5)

The first sentence is a particularly telling assessment: chamber music is marginal and impractical, yet culturally prestigious. As highlighted previously, chamber music may well have become marginal in economic or cultural capacities at this point in time. The label of "impracticality", however, could bear further critique. Given Botstein's focus on the financial details of the chamber music ecosystem, perhaps he is arguing that its production is not as economically viable as other forms of music making. Within a capitalist framework, however, chamber music is surely *more* economically viable than many other forms of art music, particularly symphony orchestras.

In several ways, Botstein's article echoes Susan McClary's critique of avant-garde composition ("difficult music") more than thirty years ago (McClary 1989). In contrast to McClary, however, Botstein concludes that a way of rectifying this situation is to further cloister chamber music within academia—*not* address its supposed marginality or impracticality. Botstein's recommendation that chamber music would benefit most from "taking greater refuge within campus walls, particularly in urban areas" (Botstein 2008, p. 5) prompts a number of questions about the musical heritage he is seeking to preserve. What makes up the "culture of musical performance" within chamber music? Is this culture significantly distinct from other forms of joint music making? To what extent is this culture linked to a certain demographic? Additionally, and most importantly, what is this culture being preserved in light of? Botstein's clarification that urban areas may present a greater risk to the culture of chamber music performance is problematic in that it aligns perceived cultural value ("prestigious in culture") with demographics, belying an underlying assumption that chamber music is at odds with urban musical life.

This chapter endeavours to expand on the conversation started by Botstein, providing a state of play of chamber music within the 21st century. The first part of the chapter situates chamber music in 21st century society, investigating the extent to which it may be considered simultaneously culturally valuable and anachronistic. This will primarily entail establishing a more nuanced definition of the phenomenon and identifying the greater narratives it is woven into. In Botstein's article, and thus far in this chapter, chamber music has been primarily considered as an activity; this does not account for the vast array of repertoire that is also referred to as "chamber music". Untangling the dual nature of this term provides insight into the nuanced ways that this phenomenon is encountered within society. The second part of the chapter proposes how chamber music may be considered as a dialogue between an

activity and a repertoire, allowing it to be repositioned within 21st century society in order to address its potential marginality, impracticality, and even prestige.

There are two factors to note about the framing of the material presented in this chapter. First, this work has emerged from a distinctly anglophone perspective, and thus the extent to which it may be extrapolated to other social, cultural, and economic contexts may be limited. Second, and more importantly, the aim of this chapter is not to address chamber music in relation to a society which presupposes that chamber music is inherently valuable or necessary. It could be argued that a significant amount of writing about chamber music is produced by and for those people who already assign cultural value to it. Rather, this chapter attempts to more objectively evaluate chamber music as a form of interpersonal musicking within the 21st century.

2. The Noun

Mark Radice's (2012) *Chamber Music: An Essential History* is a fascinating musicological document, but perhaps not for reasons the author would have intended. Woven through numerous descriptions of works and historical anecdotes about composers are allusions to the nature of "authentic" chamber music. At times, this authenticity is grounded in historical concepts, such as situating Scacchi's *musica cubicularis* exclusively within private residences (Radice 2012, p. 1). As the book progresses, however, this attachment to historical precedent becomes restrictive in oddly specific ways. According to Radice, chamber music is not authentic, real, or good if it displays any of the following characteristics:

- Takes place outdoors (p. 55);
- Has a conductor (p. 215);
- Does not balance musical interest across all performers (p. 105);
- Is written for two violins, a viola, and a cello, but the ensemble is called something other than a string quartet (p. 106);
- Calls for more than one piano (p. 92);
- Does not have "nuance, complexity, and delicacy" (p. 273);
- Is not representative of the core musical heritage in western art music (p. 210).

The vast amount of semantic baggage that accompanies Radice's concept of chamber music is evident in this document. That a book that proclaims to have an essential history of the practice has such a precise view as to what counts as chamber music suggests that the phenomenon could fall afoul of rather stringent gatekeeping. Whilst such exclusionary views about what is and is not chamber music is common in the literature written a century ago (e.g., Boughton 1912; and Pierce 1925), it is somewhat surprising that it is present in a 21st century textbook.

This prompts two observations about modern understandings of chamber music:

1 Definitions of chamber music are often heavily dictated by historical precedent;
2 Although the historical contexts that engendered chamber music may no longer exist, modern impressions of those contexts maintain some imagined level of measuring authenticity.

For all the evident passion for chamber music, there is a level of criticality missing from Radice's text, particularly around the use of language. Throughout the book, the term "chamber music" is used to refer both to a specific repertoire of musical works and a type of performance, with the overall emphasis far in favour of discussing musical works (and, oddly, their tonal features) than practice. This is common across academia, where "chamber music" appears to overwhelmingly refer to chamber repertoire. Books such as Melvin Berger's (1985) *Guide to Chamber Music*, James McCalla's (1996) *Twentieth-Century Chamber Music*, and Paul Jeffery's (2017) *Player's Guide to Chamber Music* are primarily catalogues of repertoire, with some passing comments on performance. This is perhaps more indicative of musicological trends than anything else; musical performance started to gain traction as an object of research only at the turn of the 21st century. However, as has become widely recognised within musicological discourse, musical practice and musical repertoire exist in tandem with each other, and thus there is a need for *both* versions of the term "chamber music" to be investigated.

The distinction between music as an activity and an object has been explored from a sociological perspective by Roy and Dowd (2010). According to them, these different conceptions of music prompt different means of engagement. Music as an activity is "something always becoming that never achieves full object status, something unbounded and open, something that is a verb (musicking) rather than a noun" (Roy and Dowd 2010, p. 186). Music as an object, however, "has a moment of creation, a stability of characteristics across time and place, and potential for use and effects ... [and thus] can be abstracted from its time and place and put into new contexts" (ibid., p. 184). This ontological duality provides a useful starting point to understand chamber music. Thus, for the purposes of this chapter, I use the terms "chamber musicking" (activity) and "chamber repertoire" (object) to help clarify which meaning of "chamber music" I am referring to at any given time.

2.1. Chamber Musicking

In its broadest capacity, the activity of chamber music is a form of musicking that involves a small number of performers, each playing their own part (Chamber Music America 2021). Although generally disregarded, a key caveat to this definition is that chamber musicking adheres to a large number of implicit conventions in western art music. The instruments used are primarily orchestral, and the musicians are generally expected to be performing from notation. In an even broader sense, chamber musicking exists in a worldview which distinguishes between composer,

performer, and audience. Whilst contextualising chamber musicking explicitly within western art music might appear pedantic, not doing so suggests that the activity includes *any* small ensemble musicking from around the world (see Griffiths 2003; and Harrison 2006). From this perspective, the umbrella of western art music is a useful demarcation.

Central to many definitions of chamber musicking is location. As composer John Luther Adams notes, chamber music speaks "directly to the importance of the places in which we make and listen to music. It also implies an intimacy and immediacy we don't usually experience in a large concert hall, theater or opera house" (Adams 2001). Historically, chamber musicking was often rooted in private residences, and served as a means of entertainment for those participating or observing. However, as concert halls and other public venues became the cultural sites for western art music, chamber musicking itself became both less private and more formal. Its social function pivoted; rather than being a recreational activity for the performers, placing the practice on stage distanced the performers from the audience, reinforcing that they were more spectators than active participants. This pivot illustrates a transition between two of Thomas Turino's fields of music making practice: "participatory musicking", where "there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants" (Turino 2008, p. 28), and "presentational musicking", which centres around performances that are "prepared by musicians for others to listen to" (ibid., p. 52). Chamber musicking's shift from a participatory activity to a presentational one is not unique, as similar transitions in music making in general have happened throughout the 20th century. As the practice of chamber musicking moved from homes to other performance spaces, the resulting void in the recreational ecosystem was filled by other forms of music making, particularly with garage bands and other home-grown ensembles. In the 21st century, technological advancements have encouraged new forms of private recreational musicking to emerge, including karaoke; bedroom music production; or video games, such as Rock Band or Guitar Hero. In a way, whilst people could historically engage with music that required multiple parts within their homes through chamber musicking, karaoke machines, computers, and games consoles have obviated the need for other people to be present to allow a form of private musicking to take place. None of this is to say that chamber musicking, in its traditional sense, cannot be found in modern homes, but that for the most part it has been supplanted by other activities.

Although it has moved away from its participatory roots, chamber musicking is consistently characterised as an exemplar society rooted in equality, with Chamber Music America going so far as to highlight its "potential to exemplify democracy, mutual respect, and empathy" as a core value (Chamber Music America 2013, p. 5). This democratic environment requires each player to demonstrate a high level of independence (Neidlinger 2011, p. 22). Christopher Small writes that chamber

musicking "is much more sociable and even intimate [than other forms of classical musicking]; it affords greater autonomy, more self-direction, to the individual performer and the opportunity for more spontaneous interaction with others" (Small 2001, p. 354). This independence—and the resulting democratic musicking that follows—does not come without prerequisites. As Susan Bradshaw argues, chamber musicians not only need to understand their parts, but also need to be responsible for the workings of the whole piece (Bradshaw 1977, p. 8).

As a by-product of this egalitarian approach, chamber musicking does not traditionally require a conductor (Chamber Music America 2021). However, this restriction has eased as the complexity of pieces has increased, a move which has not been without contention. Bradshaw bemoans *Pierrot Lunaire* as a watershed moment that shifted the nature of chamber ensembles towards mini-orchestras, where performers could effectively relinquish their own global understanding of how pieces worked (Bradshaw 1977, p. 7). More recently, the use of a conductor may *still* be perceived to sully chamber music; in his aforementioned textbook, Radice is careful to distinguish Arnold Schönberg's *Ode* from his "authentic chamber scores" as it relies on a conductor (Radice 2012, p. 215).

Chamber musicking may well be emblematic of an equal society, but participation in that society has preconditions—mainly that performers are well-versed enough in the conventions and theory of western art music to navigate their part independently and have the technical prowess on their instruments to execute it. Having such a participation threshold is not uncommon across other activities in society—consider other types of musicking, sport, etc.—but clarifying these preconditions is important in understanding how chamber musicking has shifted in relation to other activities. Although the threshold for participation in chamber musicking may not have changed dramatically, there has been a transition from a notation-centric music literacy towards a digital music literacy over the 20th century, meaning that potentially fewer people are in a position to engage with the preconditions inherent in many forms of chamber music (cf. Dahl 2009). Pauline Griffiths cautions against presuming that barriers to entry are financial; instead, noting that "for most of the population, the barriers of entry to the arts . . . such as knowledge and skill, mean that choice is not even possible" (Griffiths 2003, p. 30). Thus, although it is still a recreational activity for some, perceived barriers to entry might limit the extent to which the wider population engages in chamber musicking in their own homes.

2.2. Chamber Repertoire

The content performed in chamber musicking is "chamber music" as an object: chamber repertoire. The existence of a canon of chamber repertoire is perhaps an outgrowth of one of the overarching narratives of western art music in the last two

centuries related to the rise (and critique) of the "work" concept, or the idea that musical works may exist as objects that transcend their individual manifestations in performance (Goehr 1994). Whilst there are certainly long-standing philosophical debates as to the primacy of the work-concept, its cultural presence is certainly felt through the creation and maintenance of the canon (Talbot 2000).

The common characteristics of chamber repertoire are intimately linked to the process of chamber musicking, resulting in numerous parallels. Designed for a small number of performers, chamber repertoire features musical lines which generally move independently of each other. The balance of complication and importance across the parts within a piece of chamber repertoire is particularly important, as this interplay provides the template upon which the purported intimate social relationships are founded. Reframing the relationship between chamber musicking and chamber repertoire in terms of sport is useful in summarising the characteristics of this repertoire. The rules of a sport are designed to encourage specific sorts of behaviour and interaction. In non-competitive sport, in particular, the chief priority is presumably to create the context by which people can share a specific kind of interaction with each other. In the "sport" of chamber musicking, pieces are generally designed to encourage performers to interact in such a way as to generate egalitarian relationships. Thus, chamber repertoire is generally noted to balance parts in terms of musical interest, technical challenge, and complexity (Radice 2012, p. 106).

More abstractly, chamber repertoire has been described as being particularly valuable within western art music and western society in general. Christopher Small captures what he perceives to be a prevailing view of chamber repertoire by its fans as "such rich musical treasures, some of the most refined and beautiful, most intimate and satisfying, and above all most spiritually elevating and intellectually stimulating of all works of music" (Small 2001, p. 340). Janet Levy similarly points out how describing a non-chamber work as chamber music has been "something *to* achieve—an ultimate status" (Levy 1987, p. 12). To Radice, this body of work goes so far as to represent the core musical heritage in western art music (Radice 2012, p. 210), containing "nuance, complexity, and delicacy" (ibid., p. 273). Although the extent to which these statements are true is subjective, it is important to recognise that chamber repertoire—and, as a by-product, chamber musicking—is imbued with a large amount of cultural importance by different groups in western society. Within this canon of western art music, William Weber notes that chamber music was deemed the "pinnacle" of 19th century classical genres (Weber 1999, p. 354). Thus, in this context, Berger's (1985) *Guide to Chamber Music*, Keller's (2010) *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide*, McCalla's (1996) *Twentieth-Century Chamber Music*, and Radice's (2012) *Chamber Music: An Essential History* reinforce not only the content of this canon, but also that this canon exists in a somewhat linear and modernist fashion.

2.3. Narratives of Exclusion

Exploring the shift of chamber musicking from the private to the public sphere and the enshrinement of chamber repertoire within canon may provide insights into how chamber music's role within society may have changed. This broad narrative was highlighted by Christopher Small at the turn of the century:

> When chamber musicking becomes professionalised . . . there is introduced into the encounter a further distancing [between participants]. Under the day-to-day pressures of professional performance the little society can become less and less egalitarian and may fall increasingly under the command of one strong member of the group. As that happens, relationships with listeners become also more distanced, and the larger the setting the more distancing there will be, until finally, however wonderful the musical works may be that are being played, however superb the performers, the conviviality that gave birth in the first place to that mode of musicking has fled. Maybe we are prepared to pay that price, in the interest of greater refinement of playing, but we should be aware that there *is* a price. It's something we might remember when we use the word "professional" as a term of approval and "amateur" as one of abuse. (Small 2001, p. 354)

The trajectory that Small outlines has become apparent when considering chamber music's accessibility to general audiences. In their work on young adult listeners' perspectives towards chamber music concerts, Lucy Dearn and Stephanie Pitts note that such events are generally perceived as requiring a certain degree of knowledge to appreciate, find meaning in, or engage with (Dearn and Pitts 2017, p. 44). Regardless of its accuracy, this expectation leads to the perception that both chamber musicking and repertoire are only enjoyed by a subset of the larger population; in particular, one which has been trained to "understand" this music. The resulting exclusivity could have opposing impacts on different potential audiences. Some audiences may view this exclusivity as a benefit—a cultural "members-only" club which grants prestige to those who participate. Others, however, may view this exclusivity as alienating, reinforcing cultural class distinctions. Pulling chamber music further into academia may encourage it to be even further entrenched in its exclusivity, or unpopularity, propagating a cloistered existence which increasingly distances it from commercial canon and practices.

Little research has been conducted on both audiences' and performers' participation in chamber music. However, pockets of specific information are available, which allow some conclusions to be inferred. Looking at audience behaviour in Sheffield, chamber music concerts are principally attended by people over 45 years of age and within the upper- and middle-middle class social grades (Barlow and Shibli 2007). This demographic trend is not new: even in the late 1980s,

Janet Levy recognised the class relationships embedded within chamber music when she wrote:

> For many people, part of [chamber music's] captivation may reside in the "memory" of chamber music's having originated in performances in salons of the upper classes. This now archaic link with the upper classes and connoisseurship has a mystique that dies hard. At the same time there is the quasi-contradictory and vicarious experience of democracy: the listener witnesses the democratic functioning of equals on a team. There is also the alluring mystery of ensemble-playing without a conductor. Thus some of the covert valuing of chamber music might, paradoxically, be understood as providing vicarious experiences of the best of both worlds—the aristocratic and the democratic! (Levy 1987, p. 14)

In an Australian context, Pauline Griffiths writes that chamber music audiences form "a narrow social group", and that chamber music "remains unattractive and therefore off limits to most Australians despite the communication strategies of music organisations and their attempts to let people know what is going on inside concert halls" (Griffiths 2003, p. 23). Thus, it is arguable that the mystique of connoisseurship has not yet died at this point in the 21st century.

2.4. The State of Play

Emergent through the previous explorations of chamber musicking and chamber repertoire is a kind of paradigmatic tension centring around the nature of inclusion and intimacy. For being an artform that has the "potential to exemplify democracy, mutual respect, and empathy" (Chamber Music America 2013, p. 5), there are several features that can be interpreted as minimising opportunities for egalitarian interaction between participants. Fundamentally, both chamber musicking and chamber repertoire exist in a framework that reinforces a distinction between composer, performer, and audience. Chamber musicking has broadly shifted from a participatory activity that is centred in domestic environments to a presentational activity in public environments. Chamber repertoire, the "object" of chamber musicking, not only requires a certain level of musical literacy and proficiency to play, but is also potentially viewed by audiences as needing a musical understanding to appreciate fully.

As Christopher Small writes, "every musical performance is inescapably to some degree a political act" (Small 2001, p. 349). The democratic environment ostensibly maintained within chamber musicking is only contained within the performers themselves, and is generally structured according to the framework dictated by the chamber repertoire. Agency, in this instance, is limited to those actively playing

music, and even then, that agency may be constricted within a *Werktreue* framework.[1] Thus, although chamber music in the 21st century is still hailed as an intimate art form, there are limits to its inclusivity. Whilst it may have been more accessible at its origins, it does not fulfil the same societal niche now.

3. The Verb

One possible route to addressing the potentially increasing anachronistic nature of chamber music in the 21st century goes back to the core of the ambiguities explored earlier in this chapter. This is not rebranding chamber music for a younger audience, but rather exploring how framing it in terms of its overarching principles may allow its relevance to modern cultural practices across society to become clearer.

Existing definitions of both chamber musicking and chamber repertoire appear to be preoccupied with surface-level details—the number of players or parts, where the musicking takes place, the instruments being used, etc. This categorisation of details allows authors such as Radice to make comprehensive lists of what counts as real, authentic, or good chamber music. These definitions are paradoxically rigid and fluid: rigid in that there are a number of qualifying features that can be used to gatekeep "authentic" chamber music, but fluid in that the existing literature on chamber music does not consistently agree on those qualifying features.

3.1. Music-as-Discourse

As useful as it is to discuss chamber musicking and chamber repertoire as distinct aspects of chamber music, establishing such a dualistic divide may itself be too rigid. Sociologist Martyn Hudson suggests that Roy and Dowd's distinction of music as an activity and an object (2010) does not fully capture how music acts and is interacted with in society. Rather than viewing music as an ontological duality, he proposes to "examine both at once in the study of music-as-discourse where music hold within it discourses from society that can be described and that have ideological impacts in the social world" (Hudson 2014, 2.9). Along those lines, therefore, defining chamber music as the sum total of the characteristics of chamber musicking and chamber repertoire might be limiting. Exploring the discourse between activity and object may yield a more nuanced understanding of what chamber music is and, importantly, what it could be. In this context, two discourses arise through the

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[1] *Werktreue* is a performance culture "characterised by the principle of the performer's fidelity to the composer's presumed 'intentions' in a musical work" (Leistra-Jones 2013, p. 399). As Lydia Goehr explains, a performance will have met the ideals of this culture "when it achieved complete transparency", allowing "the work to 'shine' through and be heard in and for itself" with minimal interpretative residue left by the performer (Goehr 1994, p. 232).

shared characteristics of chamber musicking and chamber repertoire: the centrality of intimate relationships and the economy of resources.

The first discourse that emerges is the centrality of intimate relationships. Both popular and academic writing about chamber music highlight it as a paragon of "an egalitarian, convivial society" (Small 2001, p. 354). This is most overtly manifested through chamber musicking, as the micro-society created through performance is one in which individuals are autonomous and hierarchy is flattened, to varying degrees. Such a social network is not spontaneously generated, though; chamber repertoire lays the groundwork for these relationships similarly to how the rules of sport might be constructed. Such repertoire is designed to encourage the generation of these intimate relationships—if only for the duration of the piece—through balanced complexity of parts and nuanced interplay.

The second discourse taking place is around an efficiency of resources. There is a certain economy at the core of chamber music, which emerges as an interplay of activity and object. This mainly concerns drawing from a capped pool of resources: in particular, a limited number of musicians, instruments, and parts. Such an economical approach to musicking could be considered to extend to an efficiency in space usage, recalling the original terminology of "chamber" playing. What were once practical requirements of performance have bled into compositional constraints, which have then become standardised. This economy of resources, particularly in terms of personnel, helps create an environment where chamber music's intimate relationships can thrive. Each participant is there due to the fact that their part and performance provide an essential element of the experience.

Considering these two discourses simultaneously *within the context of western art music* might yield a perfectly viable understanding of chamber music. Within a wider context, however, these discourses could be ascribed to entire genres of popular and folk music. A jazz combo, a ceilidh band, and an indie rock band all share features with chamber music, and thus could be folded into consideration of these discourses. The 21st century provides an opportunity for us to reconsider what chamber music means, which may involve stripping away the cladding of the genre, i.e., the descriptors used to distinguish it within a wider market, and identify its values.

3.2. Chambering Music

Considering these two discourses between chamber musicking and chamber repertoire allows us to reframe what it means to engage with both an activity and an object. In other words, to engage in both an activity and an object in these discourses is to embody their shared inherent ideologies and values. Hence, I propose that it is useful to consider the term "chambering music" as a means of opening up the concept of chamber music to encompass the positive and inclusive aspects of this

social phenomenon: *to chamber music is to create intimate musical experiences through an economy of musical material.*

Chambering music centres on intimacy. Lauren Berlant writes that "to intimate is to communicate with the sparest of signs and gestures, and at its root intimacy has the quality of eloquence and brevity. But intimacy also involves an aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story about both oneself and others that will turn out in a particular way" (Berlant 1998, p. 281). Within both chamber repertoire and chamber musicking, two key intimate relationships are developed: the sonic relationships between musical parts and the interpersonal relationships between performers. However, neither chamber repertoire nor chamber musicking encourages the development of *intimate* relationships with audience members. Herein lies the crux of the issue. Audiences may observe performers enact intimate relationships and listen to intimate sonic relationships between musical parts, but they are, by and large, external to these relationships. Thus, to chamber music is to create intimate musical experiences *for all participants* through an economy of musical material. Recalling Turino's terminology, chambering music would shift the activity from a presentational mode of performance to a participatory one (Turino 2008). Through this, the lived relationships between participants would reflect what sociologist Veronika Zink describes as an "affective community": "a specific form of collectivity that can be characterised by a shared sensuality eliciting an implicit sense of commonality and immediateness" (Zink 2019, p. 289). Zink proposes that such affective communities maintain social values "informed by the belief in a seemingly enlivened and, hence, basic form of collectivity that is in direct contrast to modern visions of a functionally organised, alienating society governed by instrumental reason" (ibid., p. 297). Thus, exploring how music may be chambered would entail fundamentally reimagining the relationships between all participants in the encounter, pursuant of what Zink calls "a playful form of practicing convivial connectivity" (Zink 2019, p. 290).

The remainder of this chapter explores possible implications of chambering music. Recalling Berlant's definition of intimacy given above, what would an aspirational narrative about something shared through chambering look like? Who would be involved? Ultimately, how would it turn out?

4. Flattening Hierarchy

Chambering music expands the scope of intimacy to include all those partaking in the experience of the live performance. Its full extent requires a flattening of the artistic hierarchy typically found in presentational music, placing the performers and the audience in parity with each other. It is difficult to imagine how intimate relationships can be developed between parties whose power or degree of control vary dramatically. Chambering music validates and elevates audiences' experiences.

By extension, the composer should not hold sway over the performers or the audiences, and the performers should not hold sway over the audiences.

Positioning performers and audiences as parties in equal dialogue with each other—and, consequently, in open dialogue with chamber repertoire—would certainly require adjustments in accepted societal roles, but I do not think this is unachievable. It would, however, mean dismantling the formality and mysticism around western art music in particular, and musical performance in general. To fully embrace chambering music is to move away from a hierarchical model of musicking and make it more about sharing creative moments—more about the human connection that helps manifest that creative moment.

4.1. Limiting Numbers

Blurring the boundaries between performer and audience impacts the practicalities of performance. It is difficult to imagine how intimacy may be developed effectively across large numbers of people. Thus, concert halls and venues that are designed to maximise acoustic properties and to seat proportionally larger audiences than performers are likely not effective places to chamber music. From an economic standpoint, chambering is not a model that will maximise profits for minimal expenditure. Instead, it is more about audiences engaging in deeply personal experiences with performers, building up relationships, and sustaining their engagement. Catalysing those experiences will likely mean performing in environments that encourage intimacy: smaller spaces with less public thoroughfare or disturbances and increased privacy.

This physical intimacy between performers and audiences becomes revealing in other ways, particularly around the manual act of performance. Performance is not aseptic or sterile; creating sound requires *effort*, and musicians move, breathe, grunt, shift, sigh, shuffle, etc., while operating their instruments. The acknowledgement of these sounds in the chambering space—which Peter Kivy recognises as signifying sonic authenticity (Kivy 1995, p. 48)—may further humanise performers. Ultimately, all of these steps may further dismantle the sense that audiences are on the outside of an imaginary museum. Performances such as those promoted by Sheffield's Music in the Round do well to reconfigure conventional performer/audience physical divisions,[2] as they seat audiences closer to and around performers, provide more spoken introductions than may be usually present in other classical music performances, and broadly adopt a more informal style than other chamber music series. Lucy Dearn and Stephanie Pitts, who have extensively researched this

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[2] For more information about current activities by Music in the Round, see: https://www.musicintheround.co.uk (accessed on 21 September 2021).

initiative, note that "these features have been reported by regular [Music in the Round] audience members to contribute to feelings of accessibility and inclusivity, building audience community through familiarity with the performers and the opportunity to watch other audience members as they listen" (Dearn and Pitts 2017, p. 47). However, these features could be applied to an even greater extent.

4.2. Repositioning Repertoire

Placing performers and audiences in such close proximity and as equally agentic participants has a further impact on the ontological nature of performance. Rather than performers striving to precisely articulate a *Werktreue* ideal, practised and honed for audience consumption, chambering music would encourage performers and audiences to more openly explore chamber repertoire together. This would shift performances again from presentational towards participatory modes, with repertoire becoming less "a set item [or] and art object" towards "a set of resources, like the rules and stock moves of a game refashioned anew during each performance" (Turino 2008, p. 54). Divisions between rehearsals and performances blur, in this instance, allowing repertoire to be explored by performers in conversation with audiences.

From another perspective, however, the relationship among performer, audience, and repertoire may become more of a continuous narrative than a one-off event. Developing such a relationship with a work may involve revisiting it repeatedly, exploring and playing with it, breaking it and mending it. Performers are familiar with this through the process of rehearsal, although there may be varying degrees of perceived authority to not just play, but play *with* a piece and explore potentially radical interpretations of it.[3] Audiences may develop similar relationships with repertoire through repeated listening, although again, the degree of agency in these relationships may be limited. Through chambering, both parties may be able to play with the intricacies of pieces, *living* the music within a shared experience. Repertoire thus becomes the material that prompts the joint exploration of sound. Chambering is less about recreating a work to a particular standard, but more about using works as opportunities to explore, grow, and live with other musicking people. In a way, this is similar to gamification, the process of "using game design elements in non-game contexts to motivate and increase user activity and retention" (Deterding et al. 2011, p. 9), where non-playing and playing participants are playing non-competitively together. By extension, chambering music side-steps the notion of a canon of chamber repertoire in favour of localised canons. These canons may

[3] Performers' interpretations of a piece may be impacted by a number of factors, not the least of which is their perceived role in relation to their conception of "the work". More conservative interpretations may result from a presumed obligation to adhere to a *Werktreue* ideal—a musical worldview that perceives performers as those articulating rather than creating works.

not arise through wider historical importance or greatness (Desler 2013, p. 387), but rather through shared experience of pieces together.

4.3. Chambering in Practice

The following imagined narrative may provide insight into how chambering music may look in practice. This is certainly not intended to be prescriptive, but is offered as an illustration of how chamber musicking and chamber repertoire may be repositioned to allow for more broad participation and engagement.

The session begins as it always does: with a round of coffee and general conversation. The brass quintet and five audience collaborators are well-acquainted with each other, and have been playing together in various combinations on and off over the last year. Today they're meeting in a smaller rehearsal space that would only fit a few more people than those already present. After catching up about their families and day-to-day lives, a handful of people start flipping through sheet music on an iPad. One person suggests a piece to warm up with, something to help the whole group centre their listening and breathing. They decide on *The Webster Cycles*, by Steve Peters (1981), a semi-improvisatory piece structured around all the words in Webster's Dictionary that can be spelt with A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. This has become a personal favourite of the chambering group, as it not only helps the brass players warm up their instruments and bodies, but also slows the whole group's breathing and clears away thoughts of busy lives and to-do lists. People are seated throughout the space, with some audience collaborators in-between performers and some at the fringes of the group, situating themselves where they prefer the resonance in the space. After the piece finishes, someone remarks that there ended up being some notable gaps between phrases in this play-through, prompting the trumpet players to joke about how they ended up synching more than they intended. The horn player points out how much they find the longer words such as CABBAGE or DEFACED fun to play, simply because there are so many options for interpreting those sequences of notes—a comment echoed by an audience collaborator, who likes being surprised by different interpretations of phrases. Another person comments that they always like finding a place to sit at a particular spot between the tenor and bass trombonists, as they can feel the resonance in their chest particularly well.

Having settled into the space, the group discusses what to play next. The bass trombonist has recently acquired a copy of Joan Tower's (2006) *Copperwave* upon the recommendation of a friend, and suggests that as an option. The group agrees, so they all start looking through the parts. The brass players start unpacking their various mutes, and the audience collaborators comment on the performance instructions and ask about some of the techniques required. Scanning through the sheet music, people point out areas that might be a bit more complicated to put together. The environment feels part open rehearsal, part workshop, with everyone

sharing their initial thoughts on the music. Reading through an online review, an audience collaborator flags up how much the piece is influenced by Latin music, sparking a moment of understanding in one of the trumpet players working on deciphering a particularly tricky rhythm. After identifying the main sections in the piece, the group decide to tackle them in order, agreeing to pause at the trumpet cadenza. They establish a conservative tempo amongst themselves, then count in. As the players launch into the piece, the audience collaborators stay focused—some tap their feet and groove along, some watch the notation go by, and some close their eyes and focus on listening. The play-through is not polished; in fact, some sections slip slightly out of the grasp of the players. Errors are not received with derision or shock, but instead treated as elements of risk and edge-of-the-seat tension. The pleasure that comes from attempting tricky technical gymnastics within an instrumental part is shared with the audience collaborators, and at times, players and audience alike laugh at successfully navigating complicated phrases. Once the group reaches the trumpet cadenza, everyone relaxes, and conversation begins again. After some immediate conversation around particular parts, the floor opens up, and people discuss what they found most exciting, interesting, or challenging. Even though technical details are mentioned—tricky rhythms to align, chords that could be tuned more quickly, or dynamics which went by unnoticed—the discussion is as much about the joy of encountering this new music together as it is about highlighting things to try differently in subsequent playing. Before launching into the next run-through of this section, everyone has an opportunity to discuss their experience. One person tells a story about how this piece reminds him of his favourite salsa band, and the rest of the group chuckles at how seemingly everything leads back to this band for him. The group continues through the piece, taking the time to learn it together. Audience collaborators' input is valued by the performers, who use that to inform how they interpret their parts and pull the piece together overall. Having read through each section, the quintet plays through the whole piece. Some players comment on how much trickier some sections are when buried in a much longer play-through, some collaborators remark on how well the themes of the piece link together when heard back-to-back, and all agree that this is a piece they would like to return to again.

As the session nears its end, the group decide to return to a piece they worked on several sessions prior—an arrangement of Debussy's (1910) *La fille aux cheveux de lin*. The players and collaborators had explored a number of the different recordings of arrangements available in the time since that session, and started off by discussing what they particularly liked about each. Working through the piece, the group jotted down notes about how they might shape their specific interpretation—stretching time slightly more in some places and speeding it up in others. The brass players discussed some of the practicalities of these decisions, with the bass trombonist

flagging up how at times their breathing patterns may have to change at different tempi, and a trumpet player pointing out how lingering on a high note would be lovely, but optimistic, this far into the session. When the main decisions are sorted, the conversation settles, and the group begins to play. This is a piece they all know well, and both players and collaborators inhabit the performance as they would a well-loved piece of clothing.

5. Conclusions

Marginal, impractical, yet prestigious: Botstein's description of chamber music captures three possible reasons why its intimacy has been limited. At present, the social sphere within which intimate relationships occur through chamber musicking and chamber repertoire only encloses the performers and the work being performed. When audiences encounter chamber music through performances or recordings, they may observe intimate relationships being played out, but their participation is somewhat limited—their role is dictated within "a functionally organised, alienating society" (Zink 2019, p. 297). This is not to say that audiences do not impact a concert's atmosphere or performers' actions, but that the degree of agency audiences have is significantly less than that of performers, and thus, they are not fully participating in the potential affective community. Audiences may have a window into narratives "about something shared, [stories] about both oneself and others" (Berlant 1998, p. 281), but they are excluded. Ultimately, this kind of power imbalance between participants may result in chamber music being perceived as being "at odds with the contemporary age" (Griffiths 2003, p. 11), where its prestige is wrapped up in a "now archaic link with the upper classes and connoisseurship" (Levy 1987, p. 14).

Underpinning the surface-level features of chamber music are two recurrent themes: the centrality of intimate relationships and the efficiency of musical resources. These themes become more evident if chamber musicking and chamber repertoire are not considered to be two parts of an ontological duality, but rather two parties in dialogue with each other. The liveness of this back-and-forth between activity and object can be framed as a verb: "to chamber" music is to approach musicking in a manner which is motivated by the creation of affective communities, which elicit "an implicit sense of commonality and immediateness" (Zink 2019, p. 289). Principally, such an endeavour entails flattening social hierarchies among composers, performers, and audiences; limiting the numbers of participants; and repositioning repertoire as the prompt for activity rather than the ideal goal. From this perspective, chambering music in the 21st century involves a potentially wider array of practices than would normally be considered chamber music in its most traditional sense. Chamber music, the noun, is enriched by chambering, the verb. To chamber music is to create a recurring, sustainable creative space that centres around personal, human relationships between all parties, where all people contribute to the shared

experiences. Centring chamber music around the creation and maintenance of intimate relationships could address chamber music's potential marginality within the 21st century.

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Encounters with Participatory Music

David A. Camlin

1. Introduction

It is increasingly the case that students training for a professional career in music will have some encounter with either formal music education, more socially-engaged musical practices or both as part of their studies (Bennett 2012). Historically, such encounters may have been perceived as a distraction from or, at worse, a negation of students' emerging identity as performing musicians (Freer and Bennett 2012). Accordingly, such encounters may not have been considered an important part of a student's development as a performing artist. However, when student musicians encounter participatory music, what they discover is a more complex, less familiar, often exciting and sometimes uncomfortable experience of the performance of human relationships through music, which may inspire them to pursue participatory music or music education as an important dimension of their future careers. In a less direct way, such encounters may also prepare them for the collaborative and relational world of chamber music, by involving them in more dialogic musical exchanges where there is an emphasis on mutual "subjectification" (Biesta 2014, p. 18) through music, i.e., *showing up* for each other, each party finding their own voice within a "simultaneous dialogue" (Barenboim 2009, p. 20) of polyphony. Such encounters may also help with students' musical confidence by giving them opportunities to be musical outside of the perfectionist culture of the conservatoire. Above all, being able to accommodate some of these paradigmatic shifts in thinking about and experiencing music's quality and value is what lies at the ehart of the benefits of the encounters described in this chapter.

Aesthetic and Participatory Traditions

Undergraduate conservatoire students will have spent years in dedicated individual/solo practice in order to realise their aspirations as professional performers within the performance traditions of the concert hall. In general terms, one might characterise their professional development as falling within a Kantian paradigm of aesthetics involving "an exceptional instinctive talent enabling true artists to produce outstanding objects of beauty that express vital ideas for aesthetic perception and appreciation among those with cultivated aesthetic tastes" (Väkevä 2012, p. 93). An attendant perfectionist attitude manifests itself in the conservatoire in the form of "musical hierarchies and vocational position taking" (Perkins 2013) within an atmosphere of intense competition. While this may be a necessary element of students'

preparation for the competitive world of professional practice, it can also impact negatively on their health and wellbeing (Perkins et al. 2017).

Such immersion in aesthetic traditions may also render participatory music practices as more unfamiliar musical contexts for undergraduate conservatoire students. In participatory settings, there is a stronger emphasis on the realisation of social relations through collective musical performance (Turino 2008, p. 36; Camlin 2018), where a more "relational" aesthetic centred around "the sphere of human relations" (Bourriaud 1998, p. 44) is emphasised, and where notions of musical "quality" are inextricably connected to the social context of participation (Chernoff 1979, p. 153). In this "construction of a shared habitat" (Bourriaud 1998, p. 56), music becomes "a social praxis that springs from people's shared musical actions, understandings, and values" (Silverman et al. 2013, p. 4). In other words, it is fundamentally a relational practice:

> The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organised sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance; and they model, or stand as metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world and even perhaps the supernatural world. (Small 1998, p. 13)

Of course, we should not think of these different emphases as belonging exclusively to any particular musical practice. Indeed, the "performance" of both works and relationships might be seen to be integral to all kinds of musical performance.

Some of the apparent tensions between performing traditions—the aesthetic tradition of performing "works", on the one hand, and the participatory tradition of performing "relationships", on the other—can be at least partially resolved when one considers the "paramusical" (Stige et al. 2013, p. 298) benefits which arise from within both aesthetic and participatory dimensions of music (Camlin et al. 2020, p. 2). For example, the impact on the wellbeing and mood of all those participating is valued equally highly in both traditions, as are the affordances for social cohesion and social bonding, which appear to attend all instances of musical endeavour in one way or another.

Similarly, we might recognise the notion of entrainment (Clayton et al. 2005)—both musical and neurobiological (Camlin 2021)—as underpinning all kinds of musical performance. While we might view Small's idea of the performance

of relationships as a metaphor for how musicking might unite its performers and participants, a neurobiological understanding of the musical process enables us to make a stronger claim: that the performance of relationships through music may be literal as well as metaphorical. The phenomenon of "self-other merging as a consequence of inter-personal synchrony" (Tarr et al. 2014, p. 1) highlights how the neurobiology of those engaged in musical activities may come to attune to and resonate with that of their co-participants, through the sympathetic entanglement of neurobiological, musical and neurohormonal mechanisms (Camlin et al. 2020, p. 12). Understood in this way, we can see how musicking might contribute to the phenomenon of "limbic resonance" (Lewis et al. 2001, pp. 169–70), an interpersonal neurobiological connection which underpins the experience of a healthy relationship. In other words, musicking might provide the conditions of "safe danger" where people can experience relational intimacy, even love (Camlin et al. 2020, p. 12). This capacity of music to forge a deep sense of interpersonal connection is recognisable across the whole spectrum of aesthetic and participatory traditions and is an essential basis for claiming music as a unified, pluralistic and diverse human experience.

However, these contrasting traditions have historically given rise to more dichotomous positions, perhaps especially so in response to educational and cultural policy developments over the last 40 years (Wright 2013, p. 15). Discourse has often reduced discussion of the complexity of musical experience to more binary arguments concerning "product vs. process" or "excellence vs. access/inclusion" (Camlin 2015a, 2017). Especially in institutions such as conservatoires—charged with the preservation of aesthetic traditions—an attendant culture of perfectionism has often occluded a more critical appraisal of participatory musical traditions. While these debates have ultimately stagnated, involvement in participatory music activities—or music education more broadly—can be "sometimes viewed as a less prestigious alternative to performance" (Hallam and Gaunt 2012, p. 140) for aspiring musicians:

> Coupled with dominant discourses placing performance as the pinnacle of success for a musician (Bennett 2008), it is not uncommon for students to feel 'second-rate' if they redefine their career aims to include activities beyond performance. (Perkins 2012, p. 11)

Encounters with participatory music for some conservatoire students might even be taken as a "negation" of one's primary identity as a performing musician. Using the psychological model of "possible selves",[1] Freer and Bennett (2012), for example, studied the attitudes of student musicians toward an emerging

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[1] In other words, "the selves that we would very much like to become. They are also the selves we could become, and the selves we are afraid of becoming" (Markus and Nurius 1986, p. 954).

musical identity, which included that of music educator. What they discovered was that for many music students, identifying as a music educator was perceived as "a negative outcome that follow[s] from an unrealised or unattainable performance goal" (Freer and Bennett 2012, p. 275).

Recent studies suggest that these historical tensions between performer and teacher identity may have become less pronounced in recent years (Pellegrino 2019), with some reports suggesting that for professional musicians, these kinds of encounters provide "an opportunity to see the power of music more directly and to gain a stronger perception of what it means to be a musician" (Ascenso 2016, p. 4).

Nevertheless, the developmental challenges facing "those musicians who think of themselves also as teachers" (Swanwick 1999, p. i) is very much bound up in the sheer complexity of the musical activities in which they may be involved. This complexity is compounded not just by the different kinds of music which students may encounter in participatory music settings, but also by the diversity of people who populate those practices and the many different kinds of human relationships implicated within such participation. Small's philosophy emphasises the way in which the music itself can become a way of experiencing those relationships:

> The relationships of a musical performance are enormously complex, too complex, ultimately, to be expressed in words. But that does not mean that they are too complex for our minds to encompass. The act of musicking, in its totality, itself provides us with a language by means of which we can come to understand and articulate those relationships and through them to understand the relationships of our lives. (Small 1998, p. 14)

In truth, the encounters described in this chapter might be seen to be encounters with community music (CM), but within the conservatoire, there remains some resistance to the term, connoting, as it does, a set of practices which may be perceived as heterodoxical to the aims and values of the institution. Philosophically, there are no grounds for limiting discourse about music in this way, but the prejudice remains. CM itself is a contested term, a diverse and pluralistic set of situated practices which evade a definition and consensus (Higgins 2012, p. 3; Brown et al. 2014; Camlin 2016), often hinging on ideas of music both as an "intervention" and as a series of "acts of hospitality" in the Derridaean tradition:

> Community music may be understood as an approach to active music-making and musical knowing outside of formal teaching and learning situations. Community music is an intentional intervention, involving skilled music leaders, who facilitate group music-making experiences in environments that do not have set curricula. Here, there is an emphasis on people, participation, context, equality of opportunity, and diversity.

> Musicians who work in this way seek to create relevant and accessible music-making experiences that integrate activities such as listening, improvising, musical invention, and performing. (Higgins 2012, p. 3)

While the terms "community music" and "participatory music" remain closely related, they are not synonymous. For the purposes of this chapter, I will refer mainly to the latter insofar as it emphasises more relational as distinct from more presentational forms of music making (Turino 2008). What sense, therefore, do contemporary music students make of their encounters with participatory music, and what insights into their emerging identity as musicians do these encounters afford?

2. Methodology

2.1. Justification of Approach

The experience of participatory music is highly individualised and also "situated" in socio-cultural contexts that are as diverse as the practices contained within them (Camlin and Zeserson 2018). Therefore, a general understanding of what it may mean to engage in participatory musical practices can only go so far—for each individual so involved, a personal perspective of what such engagement means to them may be taken as a more valuable indicator of significance. This study, therefore, did not set out to make general inferences about universal experiences of participatory music; rather, it attempted to understand the practical and epistemological complexities and challenges faced by individual students from a conservatoire background as they developed their agency within participatory music settings and explored, through dialogue with more experienced practitioners, how some of these complexities and challenges might be addressed.

2.2. Participants

Half (n = 5) of the participants involved in the study were undergraduates at the Royal College of Music, London (henceforth, RCM), who had undertaken an elective module in participatory musical practices, where they were required to co-lead music workshop activities across a range of settings, including with groups of children, young people and adults, in early years and in health and wellbeing settings, as well as with groups of participants experiencing some kind of disadvantage, e.g., disabilities or forced migration. The remainder (n = 5) were musicians with more established practice in participatory settings, purposively selected to represent a breadth of experience from music/theatre performance, music health and wellbeing, music education and socially engaged music contexts outside of the RCM. Ethical approval for the study was given by Conservatoires UK (CUK) via the RCM Ethics Committee on 5 December 2019, and informed consent was obtained from all participants as

a pre-condition of participation. There were not considered to be any significant ethical issues associated with the study.

2.3. Methods

In order "to understand the perception [of the experience] in terms of the meaning it has for the subject" (Gallagher and Zahavi 2012, p. 7), a more phenomenological method of enquiry was employed, consisting of three phases:

A. Participant Questionnaire (n = 10)—an online questionnaire consisting of a series of open questions as prompts for participants to reflect on their experience of participatory music;
B. Focus Group (n = 7)—a face-to-face participant discussion of each other's questionnaire responses, with those able to attend. All questionnaire respondents were invited but 3 were unable to attend;
C. Prioritisation Exercise (n = 7)—a collective prioritisation exercise conducted during the focus group, where participants identified and organised emerging themes into a hierarchy of significance.

2.3.1. Questionnaire

The initial online questionnaire invited participants to reflect on their experiences of their encounters with participatory music and the impact of such experiences on their development as performing musicians, using a series of open questions:

1. Please tell me about your practice as a musician;
2. Please tell me about your encounter/s with participatory music, i.e., music workshops, music facilitation, leading groups;
3. What do you/have you enjoy(ed) about this kind of work?
4. What (if anything) do you find/have you found challenging about working in participatory settings?
5. What do you think are the benefits of being involved in this kind of work?
6. What impact (if any) does being involved in participatory music have on your practice as a performing musician?

2.3.2. Focus Group

All participants were subsequently invited to participate in a focus group to discuss the emerging themes of their collective reflections. Prior to the focus group, all participants had access to all the anonymised questionnaire responses. During the focus group, participants were given a set of instructions to:

1. Discuss the questionnaire responses together (sharing the "air-time" equally between them);

2. Identify themes which they felt were significant;
3. Organise these themes in terms of their perceived significance.

To minimise bias, the researcher remained outside of the discussion, except when responding directly to a question (Denscombe 2017, p. 206; Eros 2014, pp. 279–81).

2.3.3. Data Analysis

This approach led to the generation of three sets of complementary data sources for analysis:

i. Participant questionnaire responses;
ii. Transcript of focus group discussion;
iii. Diagram of prioritisation exercise.

The approach to data analysis was broadly inductive, using the themes identified by participants during the focus group prioritisation exercise (iii) in order to build categories of analysis from participants' own interpretation of respective thematic significance. These categories were then used to undertake an initial coding of the other data at both (i) and (ii). A further round of inductive analysis was undertaken on those data which had eluded categorisation during the initial coding, identifying further emerging themes and organising data around those themes.

3. Findings

3.1. Stage 1—Results of Focus Group Thematic Prioritisation

The focus group thematic prioritisation exercise (iii) resulted in a concept map, created by the participants, of nine themes organised in three layers of significance, from 1 (highest) to 3 (lowest):

1	Power and Hierarchy	Mindsets	Purpose	Diversity/Representation
2	Communication	Complexity of Relationships		Setting/Environment
3	Risk/Adaptability		Skills	

This categorisation reflects the general feelings of the focus group participants about what they deemed significant not just in the stories they had all shared, but in their subsequent discussions of them.

3.2. Stage 2—Initial Analysis

These categories were then used to undertake a deductive coding of the other data (i and ii), using Nvivo software. Phrases or exchanges in the data which corresponded with any of the categories were highlighted accordingly, and a hierarchy chart of the coding density was developed, consisting of three main emergent themes with eight

dependent categories. The two main themes related to a contextual understanding of the experience (situational factors) and an awareness of the professional attributes required to meet those situational complexities; a third theme was identified as diversity and representation (Figure 1).

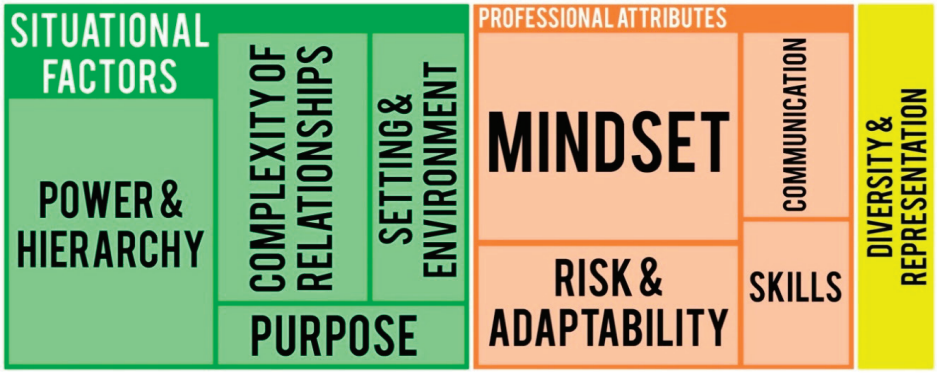

Figure 1. Focus group themes: coding density. Source: Graphic by author.

3.2.1. Situational Factors

Situational factors included developing an understanding of the setting itself; the different power structures within settings; the complexity of the different kinds of relationships involved; and having a clear understanding of purpose. In the following sections, I illustrate some of these issues by referring to either questionnaire responses (Q-x) or focus group comments (FG-x).

- Setting and Environment

One of the challenges of working in participatory settings is the need to adopt an approach which responds to the specific context. Rather than having pre-formed ideas about what might be achieved, this involves responding to the unpredictable and evolving environment of the participatory music workshop and the many factors which condition it:

> You respond within the moment whatever happens in the moment. So it's knowing that you can't plan for what's going to happen. But knowing that actually, you're going to be challenged but also you believe that some way you will have the resources to be able to rise to that challenge and find the right way. (FG-7)

This issue of drawing on internal resources to meet the needs of the situation was also configured in the minds of some respondents as part of the performer–audience relationship:

> The musician has a responsibility to the audience and the audience, particularly if it's a vulnerable audience, puts you in this position of responsibility where you have to rise to the occasion. (FG-3)

- Complexity of Relationships

For some respondents, these disruptions to the orthodox relationship between performer and audience were an artistic justification for their involvement in participatory settings, with one commenting, "I've always been drawn to musical situations in which the divide between performer and audience is blurred" (Q-8). The blurring of conventional performance boundaries was also described in situational terms, as another level of complexity requiring awareness, attention and reflexivity:

> There might be some settings where there's a clear separation between performers and audience. And some settings where everyone's either participants or potential participants. And sometimes there are situations where people have to move fluidly between those. (FG-5)

Through the experience of shared music making, this blurring of performance boundaries also enabled musicians to encounter other people as unique individuals, rather than as "representatives" of a more homogeneous grouping such as an "audience member" or a "participant":

> Sharing the experience of making music has allowed me to get to know people who I would probably not have otherwise met, which has generally been very rewarding. (Q-4)

This sense of musicking as a form of "bridging" social capital in order to "generate broader identities and reciprocity" (Putnam 2001, p. 23) was also discussed in terms of the personal motivations, values and capabilities of those who sought out this kind of musical experience:

> I do feel that often community musicians, people who want to do this kind of thing, feel able to connect with other people and communicate music and musical ideas towards groups that other musicians who don't go into community music may feel unable to. (FG-4)

For some, participatory music provided opportunities to explore music from a very different perspective, as a "performance" of relationship, where the impact can be profound:

> Understanding the impact this might have on you as a musician is understanding the complex way that relationships form within different musical settings. (FG-7)

- Power and Hierarchy

Within these diverse contexts, one common feature discussed was an awareness of the tension of power relations experienced in the participatory music workshop setting, especially where they challenged assumptions about hierarchy and leadership, or where they were about facilitating the creative ideas of other people rather than one's own:

> Allowing for a true democracy in the group is something I've been challenging myself with all through my career. If I compare projects I run now with that first project I participated in while studying, I can feel quite proud of how much I devolve creative decisions to the group. This comes with confidence of course but I think a leader needs to be conscious of this choice and I'm not sure it's something that is being taught in conservatoires too much. (Q-8)

> There's a big difference in saying as a participatory music facilitator, I am going into this space with these people and whatever comes out of it, comes out of it; as opposed to going in as a leader or a teacher and [having] a really planned idea of what you're going to do. (FG-2)

These more dialogic approaches might be especially challenging epistemologically for musicians whose professional expertise is based on values of discipline, precision and acting on clear instructions from others, e.g., a conductor. However, being able to participate in situations where power is distributed more equally across a group can also be empowering:

> If you remove hierarchy from a social situation, you can potentially get chaos. But I think if you remove hierarchy and power, you also encourage freedom. The settings that I've felt like I've learned the most from are settings where I've felt on a par with the people who are educating me. (FG-5)

There was also a recognition that engaging in these more dialogic ways of being musical was helpful in developing a collaborative set of values and mindset which would be of direct use within a chamber context:

> As chamber musicians you eliminate a hierarchy. As soon as you make that [performing] group smaller or you remove a conductor to make it chamber or there's three or four, everyone is the conductor, everyone is responsible. If you're engaging with participatory music you're encountering different ways of negotiating power and hierarchy, and that's going to give you different insights that might help you work more collaboratively with peers in the chamber system. (FG-5)

- Purpose

In the focus group in particular, there was much discussion about the idea of purpose and how it underpins the work in two important and related ways. Firstly, the idea that understanding the anticipated outcomes of the work is vital in shaping one's involvement in it was emphasised. If one of the ways in which community music might be understood is as "an active intervention between music leader or facilitator and participants" (Higgins 2012, p. 3), then understanding what is intended to be different as a result of the intervention shapes and conditions everything that happens in a setting:

> Without purpose we wouldn't really have anything. We wouldn't be doing this. We wouldn't be doing workshops if we didn't have some kind of purpose in there, if there wasn't a purpose of being there. (FG-4)

Secondly, involvement in participatory music also contributed to musicians' "greater sense of purpose beyond yourself" (Q-9), with one commenting "it feels like it completes me as a musician" (Q-6). The development of a "logos" (Frankl 1946, p. 104), i.e., not just finding the purpose of a musical intervention but discovering more of the purpose of one's existence as a musician, is significant in understanding the powerful impact of this work on those who practice it:

> I think there's probably something, not necessarily a simple thing, but some kind of complex web of stuff that links us all and the other people that do this kind of work. There might be things in our own musical practice that have shifted us into participatory settings. (FG-2)

3.2.2. Professional Attributes

Discussion around the attributes that are necessary to undertake this kind of work professionally—i.e., as a musician paid to facilitate such activities—centred around not just the development of specific contextual, pedagogical and communicative skills, but also on the psychological attributes such as mindset, resilience and adaptability, which enable responding authentically and reflexively in the moment to the complexity of participatory musical situations.

- Skills

Previous studies have highlighted the development of specific skills necessary to work in participatory settings, in terms of personal, interpersonal, musical, cognitive and teaching skills (Ascenso 2016), or the development of musical and pedagogical skills within specific participatory contexts underpinned by ethical values and critical reflection (Camlin and Zeserson 2018). Whilst acknowledging this wide range of

necessary skills, participants' discussion centred more around the importance of a "growth mindset", or "the belief that abilities can be cultivated" (Dweck 2012, p. 50), as an important attribute which enabled the development of those skills:

> I think that that growth mindset thing resonates; within participatory music settings, I've got so much better as a musician from trying stuff that I just wouldn't have done before. (FG-2)

- Psychological Attributes

Psychological factors related to mindset and reflexivity were raised as factors in developing a capability for risk taking and adaptability.

> This may be a generalisation, but I think there's a tendency for conservatoires to be more fixed mindset environments [with] the idea of talent [as something] you're just born with, not something you actually develop. But within community music settings I find that the reason why I felt so much more relaxed is maybe not because the music is any less good. It was just the fact that the peoples' mindsets are different—people were more [of a] growth mindset, "oh, how can I learn? How can I get this bit right? (FG-6)

> I feel challenged in new ways with each new project, which I enjoy as I know I'm expanding as a person all the time. (Q-8)

> Some of my most memorable musical experiences have come from volunteer or paid work in participatory settings. This work has often taken me out of my comfort zone, spatially, socially, emotionally and culturally, but these experiences have generally been positive and I think pushed me to be more adaptable and understanding in areas of life outside of work as well. (Q-4)

> For me, it's personal risk. It's about doing things which feel less than comfortable. (FG-3)

- Musical Communication

A significant finding of this study was related to the impact that working in participatory settings can have on skills of communication, not just in terms of developing interpersonal communication skills, but also in terms of emotional communication through music. One participant shared a touching story about musical encounters in a care home which had a significant impact on their musicianship:

> Working with people with dementia, I found it's really improved my memory of music and [emotional] communication as a musician because

> it's forced me to look people in the eye when I play. I was playing for those suffering with dementia and played a medley of Elvis songs, and one man just started crying. It turned out that his wife had just passed away and that was "their" song. And so what I did, I was looking at him directly, I completely just focused more on the communication and didn't have to look at the music because I already had it in my head, it was easy. But I focused more on just looking at him and just going, it's okay. Let's play this for you and just feel what you want to feel [in] the moment, that's okay. And I feel that that has really [been valuable] as a musician, going into my final recital, that confidence to look people in the eye and just [play]. (FG-4)

Another echoed similar sentiments, in terms of the personal impact of similar encounters:

> I believe that the closeness I have felt as I sing with someone at their hospital bedside, or when I resonate within a circle of improvising older women for whom singing is not a profession—these moments have changed me. I find I search out those moments more often than the one in which I sing until the applause arrives. (Q-8)

This important impact on musicianship can often be overlooked when thinking about work in participatory settings solely in terms of "giving something back" to society. In these encounters, the performance of music clearly becomes enhanced through the "performance" of relationship: "You keep that with you, that idea that I've played music that's really touched someone" (FG-7). In turn, this highlights a deep power of music through the "intent of connecting emotionally to the feeling of the piece" (FG-1) to facilitate a powerful emotional response in a listener/participant: "it's about acknowledging the audience, the responsibility that you have as a musician" (FG-3).

3.2.3. (Neuro)Diversity and Representation

An important aspect of working in participatory settings for some respondents was also related to the emphasis on individual difference and accounting for the unique personal identities of all those involved, including the musicians themselves. As one respondent with a neurodiverse condition expressed it, "all of our brains are wired in different ways. One person's brain is different from [another's], so it's good to have different personality types and different ways of learning that come into it" (FG-4). In the performance of relationships implicit within participatory music, being able to be seen and heard as a "unique, singular being" (Biesta 2006, p. 9) validates not just the experiences of participants, but the musicians as well:

> As someone who has a learning difficulty and having a negative experience with school, my purpose is to ensure that children now are better cared for

in that moment that I have. Yeah. A part of my mental health is empathy. (FG-6)

While the discussions in this study centred more specifically around the representation of neurodiversity, one might extrapolate that the performance of relationships implicit within participatory music provides a vehicle for the articulation and emergence of more marginalised identities in terms of gender, race, disability, class, age, sexual orientation and other individual identities "to enable people to find self-expression through musical means" (Bartleet and Higgins 2018, p. 3) and through the development of "cultural capabilities" (Nussbaum 2007; Wilson et al. 2017).

3.3. Stage 3—Secondary Analysis

Once the initial analysis of data had been undertaken using the pre-determined categories identified through the focus group, significant amounts of data remained uncoded. Accordingly, a secondary stage of analysis was undertaken to code and analyse these uncoded data, using an inductive coding approach with Nvivo software in order to allow themes and categories to emerge. This approach yielded four additional main themes with dependent sub-themes, which illustrated more of the complexity under discussion, as represented in the following tree map of the theme density (Figure 2).

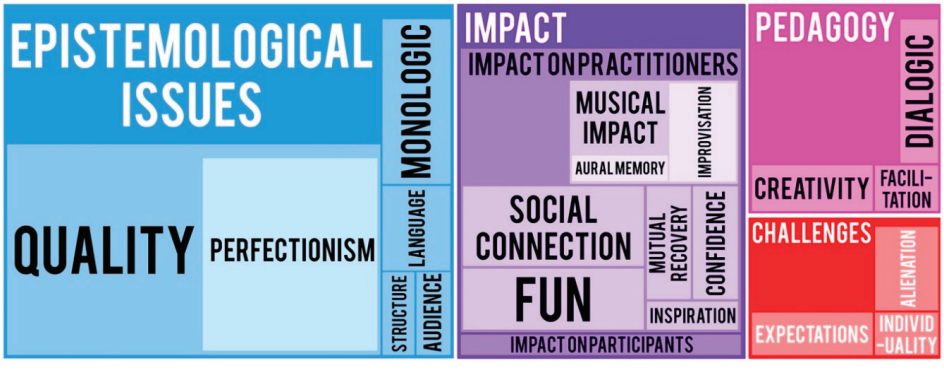

Figure 2. Emergent themes: coding density. Source: Graphic by author.

3.3.1. Epistemological Issues

The most significant of these complexities related to epistemological issues of "thinking differently" about music and what it "means" from the perspective of participation:

> It's given me an awareness of the importance of knowing how others see music, and that everyone experiences music differently; trying to understand that creates a better experience for all involved. (Q-2)

> What this kind of work is doing is bringing you into contact with more of the complexity of what music actually is in the world. It's more than what you might get within a training environment, [where] it's very easy to stay in a box and be happy with that. In some ways it's terrifying but incredibly helpful. (FG-7)

- Quality

At the heart of these epistemological shifts is an awareness of the complexity of the notion of "quality" in musical contexts, which can be an especially tough shift to make for conservatoire students steeped in a culture of perfectionism. Elsewhere, I suggest that musical quality is contingent on its situation (Camlin 2015b, 2018), and it is in grappling with these contingencies that more of the complexity of musical quality is revealed:

> As a professional musician, realising the actual impact of music rather than the strive for perfection [is beneficial]. I think that the quality is different. There is less dependency on getting every individual note absolutely perfect and it's more to do with the overall feel and yourself as an educator as opposed to your ability to play any flat in tune. (FG-6)

There was also a recognition that quality is understood in different ways in different musical situations:

> I disagree with [participatory music] being lesser [and the idea that] you don't have to audition to be a community musician. You do. It's just different skills. You have to be able to entertain an audience as a community musician, you have to connect. You have to have the chops and to be able to connect—it's a different audition. (FG-3)

Similarly, there was also a recognition that these standards of quality are not fixed, but they vary as the context changes between more presentational and more participatory dimensions of performance (Camlin 2015b, 2018):

> I think if you have [an] ensemble that get[s] together just for the community aspect or a bit of therapy or stress relief, that's got a very different dynamic to "okay we've got this community based ensemble, and we're all from the local area, but we've got a concert in three weeks. We need to deliver this concert. All of a sudden the dynamic changes because you're showcasing what you've got. You leave the safety of your space, your room. You're opening up to the public and everyone wants it to be good. (FG-7)

- Perfectionism

These epistemological shifts, from more "absolutist" perspectives toward a more "multiplist" or "evaluativist" understanding (Kuhn 2008, p. 31), are rarely easy to make and may be more challenging for conservatoire students simply because of the perfectionist culture within which they develop as musicians. We might think of this culture of perfectionism as a transparent medium rather like the water in Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant's "fish in water" analogy, where the fish "does not feel the weight of the water, and takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 108). It is part of their everyday existence as musicians:

> It's also that level of prestige that you feel you have to live up to, like Royal Academy, Royal College. There's that [sense of], the Queen's watching me and you think, "oh, I better be good. (FG-4)

As Bourdieu and Wacquant elaborate, "because this world has produced me, because it has produced the categories of thought that I apply to it, it appears to me as self-evident" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 109). Developing an appreciation of music beyond a perfectionist paradigm can therefore be both challenging and liberating. Ironically, loosening the perfectionist grip and embracing wider notions of quality can also result in a creative freedom which in turn enhances performance:

> As a perfectionist studying in an environment that is so focused on achieving a very high standard of performance, sometimes it can be difficult to remember that there are other ways of looking at music than attaining perfection. Studying participatory music and realising its powerful effect on others has freed me up creatively in my playing. It made me realise that there is a world outside of the perfectionist world that I sometimes live in. Participatory music has helped me to connect emotionally with audiences in my performances rather than always focusing on delivering a technically "perfect" performance. (Q-1)

This benefit to performance was recognised in other ways as well:

> [Participatory music has] made me recognise my primary reason for performing it to provide an experience for both myself and the audience, reducing my anxiety about perfection and making me a more comfortable, happier performer. (Q-2)

Some acknowledged that being more attached to participatory and relational values rather than an aesthetic of performance "abstracted from those social relations" (Turino 2016, p. 303) led to more favourable outcomes in some settings:

> I work with babies and two to three year olds. They do not care if they are on the beat. They're not going off and practising. They're literally just there because their parents have brought them or because they want to have fun. Perfectionism is something that's maybe relevant for some contexts and not for others. (FG-4)

The idea of quality as multi-faceted and contingent on its situation was also clear:

> I think the idea of perfection is different for everyone. I conduct a community choir and for some in the choir, perfection is getting it perfect. For some in the choir, it's getting all the right words. For some in the choir, it's turning up, and that is a massive achievement regardless of what they sing. (FG-7)

Meanwhile, for others, the perfectionist ethic was also present in participatory settings:

> I spend so much longer trying to get everything perfect with my non-auditioned people than I do with my auditioned people. The amateur people really want to be good, and they really work on it at home, so the word perfection is almost more in the room. (FG-3)

3.3.2. Challenges

When speaking of challenges, the participants tended to mention two types: the challenges faced within a participatory session; and a more subtle awareness of some of the challenges of alienation faced generally by musicians within the conservatoire system, and related to the perfectionist culture described above, that might be ameliorated by engaging in participatory music. This second kind of challenge will be discussed later.

Of the first kind of challenge, some are related to the complexity and "messiness" of human relationships which are activated through the work:

> I have found there is often a tension between facilitators wanting to keep emotions out of the music session and this being an unrealistic expectation given the vulnerability of certain participants and the things music-making might bring up for them. It is challenging to provide emotional support for participants or manage conflict without derailing the session for other participants. (Q-4)

Others expressed it in terms of pressures arising from simply leading a session, or "always being needed by the participants" (Q-6), as well as pedagogical challenges:

> Finding a suitable starting point that is inclusive of all participants. That is to say there is sufficient challenge, without it being too overwhelming, especially when there is a range of ages and abilities. (Q-5)

Some of the perceived challenges were more musical in nature, especially as they related to notions of score reading vs. aural learning:

> I have found it difficult to adapt my practice to suit different groups—for example, if the group has no previous experience with musical notation. As a musician I am very much used to reading notes and am comfortable with musical terminology. Sometimes it can be difficult to know how to approach a session where musical jargon is not appropriate. (Q-1)

Relating to issues of quality and its contingency on situation, there were also challenges related to "reviewing and seeing progress: as we don't work towards a performance it's sometimes hard to see if we are making any progress and I need to become better at reviewing our sessions" (Q-3). None of these challenges were considered insurmountable. Rather, with a "growth" mindset, they might all "become less challenging with experience and learning" (Q-2).

3.3.3. Impact

When it came to discussions around impact, because the focus of the questionnaire was on the perceived benefits to the practitioners rather than their participants, most of the responses and subsequent discussion were around the impact on practitioners. However, at least some of that impact was expressed as an empathic appreciation of participants' development and the inspiration that this brought:

> The participants' enjoyment and seeing their creative voice and ideas develop as the session goes on. Also how their confidence grows and individual characters open up due to their excitement. (Q-2).

> Seeing the participants (and their parents/carers) grow in confidence and become more open-minded as the sessions continue, is a real inspiration. (Q-1)

- Fun

Closely related to this, the atmosphere of fun and enjoyment which characterises many participatory musical contexts was recognised as a significant part of what makes the work satisfying:

> I enjoy working with young people, particularly early years participants as their behaviour makes me laugh and smile and gives me relief from what can be a challenging profession. (Q-2)

> The willingness to explore music at the most basic level—enjoyment. I find that after these classes I am always smiling and the children are happy to try new things and ideas. (Q-3)

> Being part of these projects has allowed me to see the fun in music again. I have had the chance to see people playing or using their voices in uninhibited ways, even under challenging circumstances and within the contexts of complicated lives. Seeing how much people enjoy making music and feel proud of what they can do is great, and it is very satisfying to observe changes in participants' confidence and skill over longer periods of time. (Q-4)

Again, these participatory settings were often contrasted with the perfectionist culture of the conservatoire, especially in terms of their accessibility and capacity for inclusion:

> Being reminded of the enjoyment music can bring in a setting without the elitism and pressure of conservatoire. Cultural benefit of inclusion and social connections being made. (Q-2)

> It reminds me that music is for all and to be enjoyed. Sometimes I forget this with the technical demands of playing. (Q-3)

- Social Connection

Respondents also spoke of the ways in which the development and "performance" of a range of different musical relationships impacted on them greatly:

> The most rewarding thing is the personal joy that I get from connecting with people through music. Getting to know people, not necessarily through speaking to them, is fascinating. (Q-1)

> I really enjoy working alongside similarly minded musicians who believe music should be accessible and enjoyable for as many people as possible. (Q-2)

- Mutual Recovery

Some talked about "alienation" from more formal practices as underpinning their motivation, and for them, involvement in participatory music practices was effectively a way of "recovering" some of their own mental health which they felt had suffered through the intense experience of conservatoire training:

> As someone with a mental health condition, I find that it is just as beneficial for me as the participants. I get so much out of group music-making and through community music, I have been able to discover skills I have that I never thought were there. (Q-1)
>
> Psychologically I find it reduces my anxiety as I am not constantly surrounded by the pressures and competitiveness of conservatoire and I have a setting where I can simply enjoy making others happy with my music and creating without pressure or strict constraints. (Q-2)

- Confidence

As one way of gently subverting the "hotshot" mentality of professional musicians who are "often brought up short when they begin playing chamber music [because] nothing has prepared them to attend to others" (Sennett 2012, p. 13), encounters with participatory music can reveal new psychological dimensions to being musical, especially in terms of general musical confidence:

> Since being involved with participatory projects, I have noticed that my confidence as a musician has grown. I no longer feel the same need for perfection and I am much more likely to voluntarily join in with singing in other contexts. (Q-4)

- Musical

A key insight from this study was also the impact on practitioners' own musicianship arising from involvement in participatory music. Being able to access the relational, participatory and fun dimensions of music in more presentational performances can be transformational:

> Instead of aiming for a "musical ideal" in rehearsals at the cost of offending fellow musicians (something I'm ashamed of from my early years straight out of college!) I now focus on the social interactions and relationships with my colleagues—I believe this has made rehearsals a more positive experience for all and resulted in better musical communication—it also means that my current musical projects are not only musically fulfilling but are also built upon mutual respect and as a result I feel much happier in my career and I feel all the projects I'm involved in are now 'going somewhere. (Q-9)
>
> I am more comfortable performing: if you can persuade a room of 250 nurses to sing, an oratorio is a slightly less daunting prospect! (Q-6)

> My ability to improvise parts or adapt parts is better, and [my ability to] loop around a section or whatever it is you need to accompany is much better from having led choirs. Specifically leading choirs makes me a better accompanist, and it makes me much better at feeling the speed and showing the pulse, knowing the pulse. (FG-3)

- Aural Memory and Improvisation

Again confirming previous findings (Ascenso 2016, pp. 21–22), there were specific perceived benefits to musicians' aural memory and improvisation skills:

> This aural memory thing is really specific—it's a skill that you didn't have as a musician from three years of conservatory [training] but you got it from doing this; that's really pertinent. (FG-3)

> I teach in Early Years settings. I have to memorise the music and I have to know how to improvise because it could mean, say when I want happy music now I have to go, 'yay, I'll play you some happy music.' So then I have to be able to improvise and I have to be able to memorise which is something that I've never had to do with college. So then it's something that I need to do. (FG-6)

3.3.4. Pedagogy

There were also clear pedagogical benefits of being involved in more andragogic/heutagogic approaches (Price 2013, p. 212) and being able to apply "pedagogical sensitivity" (van Manen 2008; Huhtinen-Hildén and Pitt 2018) to different situations (Mather and Camlin 2016), emphasising a much broader pedagogical attitude to musical development:

> I particularly enjoy it when the participants have the confidence/know-how/skills to be able to work collaboratively amongst each other, so that I am less of a leader—more of a facilitator in a scaffolding kind of way. (Q-5)

4. Discussion

Taken together, the combined themes resulted in the following hierarchy map of coding density (Figure 3):

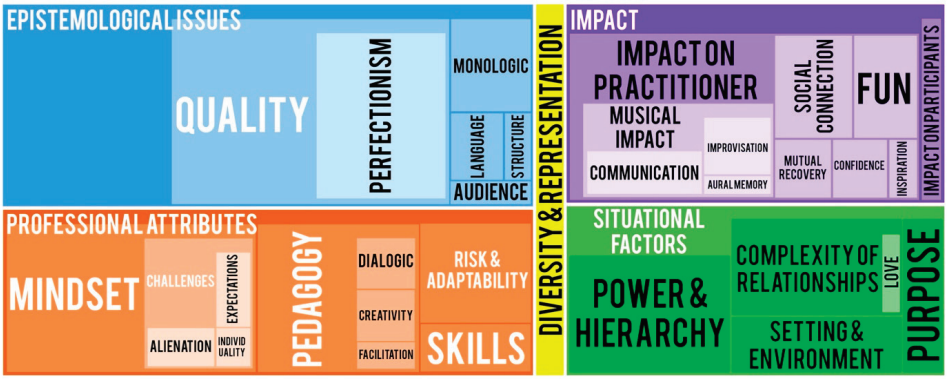

Figure 3. Combined themes: coding density. Source: Graphic by author.

In broad terms, the findings of this small study support the conclusions of previous research about the impact these kinds of encounters have on a musician's identity, skills (personal, interpersonal, musical, cognitive and teaching) and wellbeing (Ascenso 2016, p. 4) in a variety of complex ways. A situational understanding of music—and an appreciation of the complexity of power and other kinds of relationships which underpin musical situations—encourages musicians to develop a more holistic understanding of music's power and the range of benefits attributed to it (Hallam 2015). A range of professional attributes need to be developed in order to engage effectively with participatory music, including the development of practical, musical and pedagogical skills, and also psychological attitudes or mindsets in order to face and adapt to risks and challenges associated with the work. The impacts on musical confidence and personal wellbeing—as well as on aural memory and improvisational skills—can be considerable in terms of being able to "see the fun in music again" (Q-4) and apply the relational dimensions of musical communication back into one's professional performance practice.

4.1. Shifts in Attitudes, Assumptions and Values

Of particular significance in this study is the way it highlights some of the epistemological challenges involved in thinking differently about music in order to make sense of and participate authentically in participatory musical practices. In focusing primarily on the experience of classically trained musicians at the start of their careers, this study demonstrated some of the shifts in mindset that are necessary to handle disruptions to more familiar monological structures of power and hierarchy which characterise the kind of formal musical learning found within conservatoire settings. Developing a more holistic understanding of music's power is necessary to accommodate a broader appreciation of quality as contingent on situation and purpose:

> It's crucial to understand the many different ways of being good at music, and to develop your own ability to share ideas. (Q-7)

Therefore, the epistemological shift described herein cannot be over-emphasised, both in terms of the challenge it represents and the potential benefits it can bring. Recognising the value of more dialogic modes of pedagogy and practice can be inspiring and emancipatory, but they can also destabilise a world view built on perfection, competition, monologic conceptions of quality and relationships characterised by power and hierarchy. However, inhabiting the kinds of "dialogic space" (Bakhtin 1981; Wegerif 2012; Camlin 2015a) which often characterise participatory music activity and encountering the creative freedoms and possibilities therein represent valid and useful preparation for a career in music, especially one with active involvement in chamber music contexts. With more of an emphasis on music as the performance of relationships, the importance of each individual voice (including the student's) in both musical and spoken exchanges emphasises the unique contributions that each member can make and highlights the value of the interplay between personal and collective expression.

Some of the focus group discussion centred around a challenge related to alienation, which we might theorise as relating to the pressures arising from being part of a "rational community" of music through membership of the conservatoire, where individual "insights and utterances become part of the anonymous discourse of universal reason" (Lingis 1994, p. 3). The realisation of musical "works" can be achieved with many combinations of musicians, all of whom are, to a greater or lesser extent, dispensable, and this can inevitably result in individuals feeling less actualised in terms of their potential. This contrasts with the kind of discourse outside of a rational community, i.e., the "community of those who have nothing in common" (ibid. p. 12), where the utterances of everyone present have equal value:

> In the rational community our voice is a representative voice, while it is only in the other community that we speak in our own, unique and unprecedented way. This in turn means that it is only in and through our engagement with the other community, that is, in and through the way we expose ourselves to what is strange and other, that we come into the world as unique and singular beings—and not as instances of some more general "form" of what it is to be human. (Biesta 2006, p. 67)

For conservatoire students, this tension can manifest itself as a form of alienation, where the competitive culture of perfectionism can be debilitating. For some, musical situations outside of the conservatoire open up spaces where personal identity in music can be forged or strengthened:

> Everyone feels some kind of alienation with the conventions of the professional musician world. And whether that's because of the instrument

> they play or because of the environment they come from or because of the pressure that they feel, the feeling of not quite connecting with the conventional musician background is what draws people towards community music. (FG-1)

In a participatory setting, where the emphasis is on the performance of relationships, "who" is participating matters at least as much as "what" they are participating in. Through involvement in participatory settings, musicians can therefore develop more of a purpose to their musical identity because it very much matters that it is *them*—a unique and singular musical individual—who is leading the work.

This epistemological shift has clear beneficial impacts for those looking to develop their musical identities within chamber music contexts, where "who" is performing matters much more, and where the performance of relationship is absolutely essential to the realisation of musical works. The way that individual performers within a chamber context attune to and synchronise with each other in subtle musical and neurobiological ways in order to realise compelling performances is, at heart, a *relational* sensitivity. Participatory music is a clear training ground within which to develop such sensitivity, without the pressure of public performances judged solely on their capacity to fulfil the expectations of the "rational community" of the conservatoire.

There are, of course, many other benefits to involvement in participatory settings which go beyond musical impact. These "paramusical" or "more-than-musical" benefits (Stige et al. 2013, p. 298; Camlin et al. 2020, p. 2) include music's positive impact on mood, identity and wellbeing as well as its affordances for social bonding. Respondents in the study identified the "fun" aspects of participatory music as musically and socially liberating and the relational aspects as profoundly inspiring, all of which point toward a more holistic appreciation of music's power.

4.2. Human Solidarity

Beyond these considerations, participatory music settings also provide opportunities for certain kinds of freedom—freedom from the often debilitating culture of perfectionism; freedom to be oneself, and to be valued as such; and freedom to encounter participants as fellow human beings with diverse and unique personalities, creative aspirations, dreams and ambitions. Encounters with participatory music are also encounters with other human beings in the Arendtian sense of an encounter between "beginners", i.e., people who "set something into motion" (Arendt 1977, p. 176). In this dialogic exchange between "beginners"—as we each articulate our personal truths through our musical expression—we reveal ourselves as "unique, singular beings [in a] world of plurality and difference" (Biesta 2006, p. 9). When one steps out of the conservatoire/concert hall and into

participatory settings, one encounters other human beings as unique and singular individuals too, rather than as interchangeable representatives of any broader "rational community", and this changes all those involved in the participatory activity, especially the musician:

> [Engaging in Participatory Music] not only makes you a better musician but it makes you a better musician by making you a better person. (FG-6)

> I want my musical experience to be a situation in which I might interrogate the world about me. Participatory work allows me to do this. Performance without interaction is too allegorical; it is a comment upon life rather than an instance of it. (Q-8)

Due to the tendency to conceive of musical value primarily in terms of its aesthetic quality, the shift that conservatoire music students need to make in order to engage with participatory music authentically is, therefore, not just a practical one in terms of developing a range of new skills. It is also an epistemological shift, or a "break" with the world view of the conservatoire, which is as much about developing a complementary set of values to the ones customarily in use within the conservatoire system. In order to embrace music as a holistic practice, an emphasis on perfection needs to be transformed into an emphasis on positive and empowering relationships, and this requires a good degree of critical reflection in a supportive environment. The benefits of such an epistemological shift may also extend beyond developing competencies in participatory musical settings. The development of a more dialogic and relational mindset toward music making also represents an invaluable attitudinal shift which can help students transform the "hotshot" mindset of conservatoire training into something more collaborative, in preparation for taking up professional roles in chamber music practice.

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Empowering the Portfolio Musician: Innovative Chamber Music Pedagogy for the 21st-Century Artist

David Kjar, Allegra Montanari and Kerry Thomas

1. Introduction

The portfolio musician is not a 21st-century concept. Any history of western art music, for example, reveals numerous performers whose careers entailed multiple and various musical sources of income, ranging from George Frederic Handel to Fanny Mendelssohn to Béla Bartók to Yo-Yo Ma and to Terence Blanchard. 21st-century performers also see themselves as multifaceted, socially conscious individuals, rather than technicians on a singular path to artistic success. For the most part, however, this is not what traditional conservatory education imbibes in young artists today (SNAAP n.d.), who are nevertheless profoundly cognizant of the role conservatoires play in their careers. Confronted by an oversaturated market and the immediacy of income required to pay exorbitant student loans (particularly in the United States), sole employment in an established organisation is less viable—and perhaps even less desirable. Faced with the realities of competitive work environments and financial burdens, 21st-century emerging professionals often experience identity crises and receive little assistance from their respective conservatories (SNAAP n.d.). In response to such crises, Stepniak and Sirotin (2020) recently chided US music schools for "pretending they are serving classical music performance students", pointing to the deficit of "training and [preparation for] the needs of the marketplace" (ibid., p. 3). Yet, the crisis goes beyond that of professional identity, sinking deep into the psyche of the artist. For many musicians, professional failure is tantamount to personal failure. Furthermore, performing musicians who do not already see vast and widespread acceptance of themselves—or of people who look, talk, or live similarly—in classical musical institutions may view professional failure as a confirmation that this is an industry in which they do not belong.

The dissonance created between performance-training and marketplace needs is further emphasised by social movements progressing at a rate far beyond the adaptability of the conservatory. The demands for racial equity in response to US events in the summer of 2020 prompted new calls for a radical rethinking of how musicians are educated in ways that are essential to 21st-century lives. Visible movements, such as Black Lives Matter, continue to apply pressure and demand accountability. In response, classical musicians are holding institutions to their

word regarding oft-cited diversity, equality, and inclusion statements posted on their websites and other promotional materials. Nina Sanchez, CEO of Enrich Chicago, has elevated efforts in her city to combat systemic racism within the arts and culture sector (Sanchez 2021). The theatre and music conservatoires within our own Chicago College of Performing Arts took part in the anti-racism workshops and seminars Enrich Chicago provides in order to train institutions to actualise such inclusion statements. Loren Kajikawa (2019), in his chapter on the legacies of white supremacy in US schools and music departments, already called for such efforts well before the summer of 2020, warning that

> we can no longer tolerate a discipline that prioritises aesthetic objects over the people who create, perform, and listen to them. As a discipline, music needs not only to become more diverse and inclusive but also to come out into the world and help to create spaces for everyone to play (ibid., p. 171).

In accordance with Kajikawa, new centres, committees, and faculty/staff positions focused on equity in higher education pedagogy are germinating throughout US academia, all in the hope of producing more spaces for everyone to play. Additionally, these equitable training spaces can be musical. Housed within the School of Music and filled preferably by someone with a PhD (or Masters) in music history, theory, or ethnomusicology, Yale University's recent allocation of a Director of Equity, Belonging, and Student Life is one manifestation of the merging of equity and professional music training into one entity.

Engaging curricular diversity, interdisciplinarity, equity, and inclusion—with an astute eye on the realities of the marketplace—have become paramount for educating music students. Celia Duffy (2013), for example, detailed major curriculum reforms undertaken at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, advocating for inter-conservatory approaches to music training. Sarath et al. (2017) recently put forth a new manifesto for North American music educators built upon creativity, diversity, and integration that charges educators to "break out of the traditional ways of doing things" (ibid., p. 3). However, which traditions do we value as relevant today, and which keep us restricted to exercises that no longer support students to grow in ways that encourage their careers? Following this line of questioning, Stepniak and Sirotin (2020) implore us to see the classical music industry as more than a seat in an orchestra and reimagine a new kind of training. In this chapter, we reveal how progressive chamber music training, in various guises, can be a vessel for 21st-century portfolio musician training.

2. Chamber Music Training as Civic Training: Recognizing Invisible Values and Denied Borders

Recent calls for a re-evaluation of music training have not come without precedence. Henry Kingsbury (1988) was perhaps the first to formally explore

conservatory training from an anthropological perspective while teaching piano at Midland University during the student unrest over the war in Southeast Asia in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As a music educator, he became "increasingly concerned with the importance that music and music making played in the personal lives of these young adults" and later set out in his book, titled *Music, Talent, and Performance: A Conservatory Cultural System* (1988), to reconsider the role these socio-political matters can play within higher music education (ibid., p. 3). Along similar lines, a committee formed by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in the 1980s found that chamber music, in particular, has "specific educational attributes that can contribute to students' professional or non-professional training", pointing to possible "sociological and economic implications" (NASM 1982, p. 1). NASM's account of chamber music training is one of the earliest that fuses, through proposed curricular reform, economics with socio-politics. Until relatively recently, though, economic and socio-political implications have had little effect on the practical training of emerging professionals (SNAAP n.d.), especially in the context of the musical aesthetics imprinted onto such training.

However, in her ethnographic research on music training as a signifier of (white, mostly male) middle-class values, Anna Bull (2019) recently pointed to a critical re-evaluation of aesthetics, in particular, as one of the starting points for (in)fusing social equity within classical music training. In this regard, Bull is worth quoting in full:

> Classical music education can be understood as a cultural technology for forming a middle-class self. The value of classical music is invisible partly because those who are attributed value because of it do not realise that this is happening [...] it is only those who have had to fight against being positioned as valueless for whom this value is visible. Classical music's value is upheld through a quintessentially middle-class practice: closing off spaces where it is stored. However, unlike in other spaces of middle-class boundary-drawing such as private schooling or gated communities, the boundaries are denied. Rather than existing in physical space, they can be found in the aesthetic of the music which requires years of investment of time, money, and effort to be able to successfully embody, and which is seen as 'autonomous' from the social world rather than doing this political work of exclusion (Bull 2019, p. 175).

Two intertwined points stand out in Bull's account of classical music's cultural technology: (1) only those who have had to fight against being positioned as valueless *see* the (problematic) values of classical music, and (2) the boundaries that encircle these values are laden in the aesthetics of the music. These phenomena are embedded in conservatory training, which centres primarily on cultivating a sonic aesthetic.

Conservatory training, however, is really only the end of the line. Indeed, as Bull points out, the pathway to admittance to a conservatory requires years of investment of time, money, and effort, making the conservatory demographic, due to the social-economics of US society, predominantly upper middle-class and white—and, until recently, profoundly unaware of such privilege. Not all institutions are the same. Recent surveys of music conservatory students at the Chicago College of Performing Arts, for example, revealed that 40% identified themselves as a person of colour. Nonetheless, the curricular emphasis on technique, interpretation, and a narrow sonic ethos preserves such middle-class white values, which are perceived as colourless, classless, and genderless absolutes. From our own institution, we heard common tropes such as "Dominant chords don't have colour" or "Wagner's *music* influenced every composer after him so we can't cancel it". Often validated with historical authenticity or notions of developmental lineage, these autonomous, aesthetic stances are reinforced and engrained in emerging professionals through conservatory training.

Such problematic pedagogical stances are further underscored by the staging of blind or anonymous auditions for orchestral positions, which mask the discipline's exclusive values and boundary-drawing with a mirage of sonic equity. The screen (and the sound dampening carpet) comprises a materially visible but culturally invisible border that removes all trace of the individual, preserving the so-called universal values of classical music. According to William Cheng (2020), anonymous auditions "bring bodies under erasure, all in order to adjudicate them purely as a vessel of musical production" (ibid., p. 65). Relying on screens can make us "complacent and complicit" in the unjust policies in our training institutions. Cheng warns: "put performers behind screens too habitually, and we might forget why we need to do so [in the first place]" (ibid., p. 68). In other words, the audition screen not only blocks our view of the candidate, but also the exclusive values of classical music nestled deep within a gated community—values which are preserved often unknowingly in the curriculum of conservatory. Years of investment in classical music training perpetuate a single definition of success or payoff, such as winning the orchestra position. Moreover, this single-minded approach to individual and institutional training not only erases the diversity of musical identities but also the individual's sense of humanity. Lesson after lesson, year after year, the invisible borders of classical music close in, and emerging professionals eventually no longer see the full array of musical possibilities, no longer see music as culture—and even if they were able to see such an array, they may not recognise its value. It is no wonder that in the SNAAP surveys, conservatory alumni report numerous identity crises during their time at the conservatory. It is during this time that those invisible borders—and the values nestled within them—start to materialise. Sarah Ahmed's (2012) findings support such a materialisation. In her ethnographic study of diversity

workers in institutional life, she claims that a "wall is what we come up against: the sedimentation of history into a barrier that is solid and tangible in the present . . . a barrier that remains invisible to those who can flow into the spaces created by institutions" (ibid., p. 175).

However, as Bull (2019) asserts, those values *are* heard loud and clear by those who feel unvalued within the invisible gates of the conservatory—what one of our own students in CCPA referred to as the "mystical barrier of entry" (CCPA-MCSF[1]). Moreover, recent student town-hall meetings at our institution revealed how people of colour, whose voices were previously ignored, are frustrated by not seeing themselves in their studies and industry. Addressing such issues of identity crises require far more than one approach, and far more than one attempt at each of them. Yet, seeing music as culture, a vision Christopher Small (1998) identified as "musicking" at the turn of this century, has opened doors for performers to connect civic engagement with professional training, providing a highly needed update to Bull's (2019) lament of the cultural technology of classical music pedagogy.

Realizing music training as civic training can be manifested in various ways, many of them intertwined. First, educators can recognise the artistic and economic value of diverse careers as portfolio artists. Second, seeing community engagement as an integral part of one's musicianship provides new musical paths for truly authentic civic engagement. Third, when conservatories clear sonic space within their gated walls for cultural plurality, those walls, as well as the exclusive values they contain, can no longer remain invisible. Finally, when conservatories purposely cultivate a sense of inter- and intrapersonal identity for their students, the potential for new avenues expands tenfold. Students become entrepreneurs, political leaders, and freethinking artists with direct connections to their communities. In this study, we find that chamber music (or perhaps more accurately, chamber-musicking)—as a socio-political, economic, and artistic act—plays an integral role in this civic training, some of which is now taking place in select conservatories.

3. Initial Research and 2017 Strategic National Arts Alumni Project Annual Report

In the hope of exploring at a local level the prospects for radically rethinking conservatory training, we piloted a study in 2018 that focused on three case studies from the Chicago College of Performing Arts. This initial endeavour evolved into a multi-national search for innovative music pedagogy, particularly throughout the United States and United Kingdom. With generous support from our Deans Rudy

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1 Music Conservatory Student Forum, Professional Development Committee, 18 October 2019.

Marcozzi and Linda Berna[2], in 2019, we shared our findings at the University of Cambridge as part of the Royal Music Association's Study Day for the Classical Musician in the 21st Century. While in the UK, we visited three institutions in London (Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Royal College of Music, and Royal Academy of Music) to gain more insight into progressive professional development in UK conservatories. During our brief meetings with the directors and faculty of these institutions, three approaches emerged as pillars for professional development in conservatory settings: artistic identity development, cross-genre collaboration, and local community engagement. These themes led to our focus in this chapter on 21st-century innovations in chamber music ensembles and training in progressive conservatory curricula.

Furthermore, we drew both data and inspiration from the findings of the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP). Since 2008, SNAAP has collected data on arts graduates from across North America and Canada through a web-based survey distributed by the Indiana University Centre for Postsecondary Research. By partnering with arts institutions (music, design, studio art, theatre, architecture, etc.), SNAAP gathers and collates data on graduates' experiences within the following areas:

- Satisfaction with curricular and extracurricular experiences;
- Current and past education and employment;
- Relevance of arts training to work and further education;
- Types of art practiced and how often;
- Support and resource needs following graduation;
- Experiences as teachers;
- Income and support, student debt and other financial issues.

SNAAP findings reveal the portfolio musician as more than a viable path, but more often than not, as the path to artistic success. According to the 2017 SNAAP report, 67% of graduates surveyed are currently employed in the arts. Additionally, 43% of graduates occupy more than one of three professional identities within the arts (artist, teacher of art, and arts administrator) with 11% of those currently working in all three fields.

In one of the questions in the survey, SNAAP asks graduates to rank skills needed for their careers against the skills they acquired at their institution. These data indicate where arts education institutions fall behind in serving students and alumni with regard to career readiness. The 2017 survey found that the six most frequently cited skills needed in the workplace were also the skills cited as the most frequently left out of arts school curricula. These included financial and business management

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2 Both of them Emeritus since 2022.

skills (81% needed, 58% deficit), entrepreneurial skills (71% needed, 43% deficit), networking and relationship building (94% needed, 32% deficit), technological skills (93% needed, 29% deficit), persuasive speaking (91% needed, 27% deficit), project management skills (94% needed, 26% deficit), and leadership skills (93% needed, 25% deficit). The top three so-called "skill gap categories" were consistently cited among men, women, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic-Latino, and white graduates (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample from the SNAAP report, relating recent graduates' skill deficits with regard to their school or conservatory's curricula in relation to skills they perceive as necessary to their current professional roles.

Skills and Abilities	Acquired or Developed at Institution	Needed for Job	Percentage of Deficit
Financial and business management skills	23%	81%	−58%
Entrepreneurial skills	28%	71%	−43%
Networking and relationship building	62%	94%	−32%
Technological skills	64%	93%	−29%
Persuasive speaking	64%	91%	27%
Project management skills	68%	94%	−26%
Leadership skills	68%	93%	−25%
Clear writing	72%	90%	−18%
Interpersonal relationships and working collaboratively	79%	97%	−18%
Teaching skills	60%	76%	−16%
Research skills	75%	88%	−13%
Broad knowledge and education	90%	96%	−6%
Critical thinking and analysis of arguments and information	89%	95%	−6%
Creative thinking and problem solving	93%	98%	−5%
Improved work based on feedback from others	92%	95%	−3%
Artistic technique	92%	79%	+13%

Source: (SNAAP n.d.).

Collecting data on student debt, the 2017 survey also found that "Compared with 15% of non-recent graduates, more than one third [34%] of recent alumni said the student debt they acquired while at their institution had a major impact on their career and educational choices" (SNAAP n.d.). The considerable increase in the proportion of alumni whose career choices have been substantially impacted by student debt is alarming. Debt debilitates arts alumni and their ability to participate in the arts, both through their work in the arts (by way of cost of auditioning and

having enough time to study their music outside of other jobs and responsibilities) and in terms of the time and financial ability they may have to participate. These data corroborate claims of increasing student debt as well as the professional, social, and personal ramifications it may have on graduates' lives.

Other than student debt, the major area of disparity between recent graduates and non-recent graduates is that recent graduates are more likely to evaluate their coursework as:

- Encouraging acts of ideation or brainstorming (92% vs. 86%);
- Introducing them to a wide swath of career types (83% vs. 79%);
- Including career development in curricula (53% vs. 50%);
- Exposing them to a wide array of paths outside the arts (54% vs. 48%).

Additionally, recent graduates are 12% more likely to rate themselves as having taken full advantage of career services during their degree (55% vs. 43%). These areas of disparity point to the ongoing implementation of career-based and entrepreneurial values into arts education institutions, while the skill gap categories above suggest that such institutions still have a long way to go.

4. Chamber Music as Portfolio Musicking

Chamber music has a unique structure that allows artists to collaborate with a level of agency and individuality unparalleled in other areas of performance. Most chamber music ensembles do not use a conductor, drawing, rather, on a mutual, intrinsic artistic prompt. They also operate on a more independent basis. Members necessarily occupy additional professional identities, serving in both business and artistic roles to successfully engage the public and fulfil their mission. Thus, chamber music training is a good blueprint for understanding the changing social and economic norms and necessities as they pertain to the 21st-century music profession.

Chamber music is also uniquely pragmatic for young artists, as it comprises the sonic landscape of weddings, religious services, and corporate events, to name a few, where the symphony orchestra or concert soloist is a practical impossibility. Its flexible repertoire, size, and instrumentation subvert the ubiquity of the canon in relation to other types of musical ensembles. This often means that while young musicians train in conservatories to win competitions and symphony jobs, their careers would immediately benefit most from developing creativity and problem-solving skills inherent to chamber music. Keeping in mind the current concerns for public health concerning COVID-19 in this year of publication, there are several countries in which chamber music is the safest (and often only) answer to how musicians can continue to play with one another in a way that resembles professional music making before an international pandemic. At the time of this publication, String Chamber Music at the CCPA, for instance, is the only class in

the conservatory schedule meeting almost exclusively face-to-face; almost all other practical and academic courses are taking place online.

However, what is chamber music in the 21st century? How do repertoire, personnel, venue, place and space, identity, and listener–performer–composer agency define it? Additionally, how do or can conservatory curricula deliver a new updated definition for their emerging professionals? These questions are key to understanding the innovative role chamber music plays in contemporary collaborative music making. In this chapter, we do not provide a comprehensive survey of chamber music and its role in forming professional musicians within the setting of the music conservatory, but instead focus on how isolated chamber music training in various contexts constructs new relevant and multifaceted approaches for the training of the practice. We do this in the hope of revealing the potential chamber music has for portfolio training. We feel our findings are valuable for scholars, but perhaps even more so for young professionals in the field, and for conservatories hoping to glean more from the training of successful young artists. Our findings are also of value for instructors and curriculum designers at such institutions, who are in the process of evaluating and scrutinizing what students are learning; why they are learning it; and what is truly relevant for creating well-rounded, fulfilled artists. Through such a lens, chamber music in this chapter emerges as a consequence of openness, a tool for cultural questioning, a practice for self-discovery, a mode of community engagement, an interpersonal connector, an identity builder, and a crisis manager.

In order to examine these contemporary elements of chamber music pedagogy, we gathered big data on the state of conservatory training by surveying faculty, students, and alumni of US and UK institutions. To nuance these data further, we conducted interviews with faculty, staff, and students in standout chamber music programs. All except one of them, i.e., Ensemble Connect, are part of conservatoires. We shared a refined draft of this chapter with all of our interlocutors and integrated their feedback into our text. We are especially appreciative of the Paul R. Judy Centre for Innovation and Research at the Eastman Institute for Music Leadership. Their grant enabled us to observe and interview students, faculty, and staff at the New England Conservatory and Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Additionally, we localised our focus by interrogating innovative chamber music endeavours at our present institution, looking closely at the Chicago College of Performing Arts string chamber music program (undergraduate and graduate students) and the first-year professional training course for undergraduates, which requires students to give chamber music performances in the community. First, we turn to Ensemble Connect.

4.1. Openness as Consequence of Chamber Music: Ensemble Connect

At the modern offices of Carnegie Hall in January 2020, we met with Director Amy Rhodes and Senior Manager of Education Deanna Kennett of Carnegie Hall's Ensemble

Connect Program as part of our weekend trip to attend Chamber Music America's annual conference. The juxtaposition of Carnegie Hall's iconic façade with the contemporary and corporate conference room in which we met set the stage for the many approaches to art that New York City offers. We hoped to learn more about Ensemble Connect (EC[2]), which is structured as a chamber music program for young professionals as opposed to a graduate fellowship program or training orchestra. We spoke specifically about the best ways to define success for young professional musicians and the metrics by which we should establish professional studies curricula in music training programs. A program of Carnegie Hall, the Juilliard School, and the Weill Music Institute, Ensemble Connect is a two-year fellowship for post-graduate instrumental musicians. The program comprises 16–20 fellows and emphasises chamber music over a solo or orchestral repertoire. The live audition for the 2020 cohort required all applicants to perform a standard chamber work for three or more players in addition to the more traditional audition fare of solos and etudes.

Though conceived as a program that would eventually grow to the size of a full orchestra, Ensemble Connect founders quickly realised that this model was unsustainable (EC). Fortunately, this adjustment led to benefits that define the core of the program today. Small groups yield deep relational connections, both amongst themselves and in their communities. According to Rhodes, "The work that we were doing with our 16 fellows was so deep that we could not imagine how to make that model work with a much, much larger group" (EC). With these guidelines in place (or rather, with a lack of guidelines), fellows focus on six key areas of professional development and their intersection with chamber music:

- In school (fellows work in New York City classrooms);
- Interactive performance development (developing and adapting programs for different audiences);
- Audience engagement;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Leadership and advocacy (which requires fellows to develop personal mission statements, prompting them to consider their place in society, etc.);
- Reflection and connection (processing how all six key areas fit together holistically).

In Kennett's words, "We don't have anything that's as formal as a curriculum. We don't have faculty either, so we're lucky in that we have the flexibility to pull from leaders and topics that we think would be particularly compelling" (EC). Training musicians for the 21st century requires such flexibility in focus. Ensemble Connect

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[2] Carnegie Hall in January 2020, Ensemble Connect, Director Amy Rhodes and Senior Manager of Education Deanna Kennett. In-person interview (Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Avenue). 3:30 PM EST on 16 January 2020.

recognises the myriad career options available to their fellows and exposes them to as many of these options as possible. As performers, fellows are expected to play "repertoire from the Baroque Era to written the day of performance" (EC). As teaching artists, each fellow is paired with a New York City public school and their respective instrumental music teacher, where they assist with classroom teaching 25 days a year. Fellows are given the opportunity to curate two shows from start to finish—from the programming to the setup of the performance space to the social media marketing—with an emphasis on thinking through the audience's experience from the moment they step into the performance space. Additionally, each fellow concludes their fellowship by conducting a presentation to a mock panel focusing on an entrepreneurship project plan that they have worked on throughout their two years. Ensemble Connect fellows will conclude their time in the program having been exposed to multiple disciplines within music and consequently the possibility of diverse income streams, not typically valued by artists of this level who so often fall into the singular pursuit of a traditional performance career. Rhodes and Kennett were quick to add that there is not one definition of success for alumni of Ensemble Connect. Even alumni who go on to pursue traditional performance paths still find ways to incorporate education and/or community engagement into their performing careers. Even ignoring how artistically experienced these fellows must be to gain entry into the program, they are much more adaptable as performers, and some might argue, more broadly employable in the arts by the end of their two years. The benefits of the fellowship program cannot be mentioned without including the value of putting "Carnegie Hall" in one's resume, and the added advantage of joining a vast network of fellows and alumni.

With Ensemble Connect, chamber music as a flexible form ultimately becomes a unique vehicle for larger socio-musical 21st-century questions: How do we serve our community as artists? How do we create connections as musicians amongst ourselves and for our audience? How do we make relevant connections for any audience into the music? How do we fit into the world? Musicians are less likely to confront these questions in standard realms: standard repertoire, standard ensembles and instrumentation, and standard curricula. The route of challenging the traditional with curiosity and creativity provides fellows with greater opportunities to learn about music as they learn more about themselves. Rhodes concurs: "They're seeing a lot of different options, learning about a lot of different approaches, and then coming out of it with at least some thoughts about what they really want to do, or the things they don't want to do. And [they are able to] make those choices themselves with purpose" (EC). Although not housed within a conservatory, Ensemble Connect's focus on connecting performers and local communities—giving emerging professionals experiences that foster conscious career choices—provides a compelling model for conservatory curricula.

4.2. Chamber Music as Cultural Questioning: Boston Conservatory at Berklee

On Tuesday, 10 March 2020, we made our way to a large rehearsal space in the Boston Conservatory at Berklee. We situated ourselves on the tiered seating in the back of the room, directly behind an arch of students positioned in front of a massive projection screen (Figure 1). The class was running late, as the IT staff was busily trying to set up a video conferencing session for the special guest. With instruments in hand, the students waited anxiously for the session to begin with no sheet music, music stands, or conductor, but this was not the reason for the tension in the room. We were on the cusp of the COVID-19 epidemic in Boston, which had reported cases and deaths over the weekend. None of us knew that the epidemic would become a global pandemic. At that moment, though, we looked forward to observing the Silk Road Creativity Lab class. Michi Wiancko and Judith Eissenberg lead the Lab: the former is a member of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble, while the latter is the second violinist of the Lydian String Quartet. The Lab enables conservatory students to explore music beyond the Western canon through non-traditional ways of ensemble musicking, such as improvisation. The picture in Figure 1 captures this moment. Guest speaker Kinan Azmeh could not travel to speak in person due to the pandemic-related precautions in New York City. Here, students improvise together with Azmeh via video-chat for this week's topic, "Music in the Arab World". Early the following morning, over bagels and coffee, we sat down with Judith Eissenberg in the bustling Pavement Coffeehouse, just around the corner from the Conservatory. We were eager to talk with her about the ways the Creativity Lab contributes to chamber music training.

Drawing on Kofi Agawam's assertions (2003), Judith Eissenberg reminds us from the outset of our conversation that "Western harmony is one of the most powerful colonizing forces" (BOCO-JE[3]). Eissenberg is one of the two instructors for Boston Conservatory at Berklee's Silkroad Creativity Lab. The lead instructor of the Creativity Lab, Michi Wiancko, is an artist of the class's namesake ensemble, Silkroad Ensemble, founded in 2000 by Yo-Yo Ma to deepen cross-cultural understanding through music. Eissenberg is the Chamber Music Coordinator at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, and the chamber music connection runs deep in the Creativity Lab, but not via instrumentation or canon. Students are asked to improvise and respond to one another on their instruments, a pedagogical tactic which systematically breaks down the most preserved aspects of traditional classical conservatory education, including the expectation that students create and repeat what they are told to do without questioning. With the goal of each student cultivating their own "musical citizenship", the class is predicated upon interaction with a revolving door line up of guest artists. These artists are Kayan Kalhour, a

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[3] Judy Eissenberg. In-person interview (Pavement Coffee Shop, 1096 Boylston St., Boston). 8:00–9:00 AM EST on 11 March 2020.

Kurdish kamancheh player, representing classical music of Iran; Sandeep Das, an Indian tabla player and 2017 Guggenheim fellow who frequently expands upon conventions within Indian classical music; Judd Greenstein, American composer of music that often features variable instrumentation and influences, as well as the founder of the ensemble The Yehudim; Gabriela Lena Frank, composer-in-residence at the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, and the winner of a Latin Grammy; Mazz Swift, an American self-proclaimed "Violin/Vox/Freestyle Composition Artist", and Kinan Azmeh, a Syrian clarinettist, improviser, and composer.

Figure 1. Last face-to-face session of Boston Conservatory's Silk Road Creativity Lab in 2020 with Syrian clarinettist Kinan Azmeh zoomed in from New York City. Source: Photograph by authors.

Eissenberg describes the chamber music training in this classroom as an analogue for civic engagement within any profession:

> I think the conservatory is a great place to have a firm foundation in musicianship, skills, and listening. And then, because we're all meeting each other online [and] in person it's like whatever the world's doing we should be doing. In fact, we should be leading it, and we should also be leading initiatives for social change like climate change. They need to have skills like talking to people who live somewhere else, [whom] maybe we're

in conflict with. And you can't just go in and speak English, you have to learn the other languages. Or there's no respect, right? (BOCO-JE)

For a class that aims to imbibe its students with a scepticism of western art music's ubiquity in their respective lives, students are expected to sincerely engage in their guest's art.

In the opinion of Eissenberg, the upshot of this cultural scrutiny is courage. She says "[At first] Michi and I were wondering if this class was working. We always ask that question. We could tell in that class cause not only are they more courageous, they have more skills to improvise all different ways" (BOCO-JE). Additionally, while professional trajectories are broached in this class, for the students of the Creativity Lab, this line of questioning is secondary to a healthy musical citizenship, unencumbered by an unthinking adherence to the classical music of a small region of the globe. For this class, teaching chamber music is teaching a set of values, most notably, listening. In the Creativity Lab, knowing enough to listen and perform outside of one's own culture is the highest form of chamber music, perhaps the highest form of musicianship.

The Lab's multicultural yet conscious non-colonizing creative engagement with musical worlds outside of classical music provides one viable response to Marianna Ritchey's (2019) sobering critique of entrepreneurial approaches to the field. Looking at collaborations between artists and global corporations, Ritchey explores how "neo-liberal capitalism has [not only] profoundly shaped contemporary ideas about classical music ... [but also] how the idea of classical music itself has been useful to contemporary capital" (ibid., p. 1). According to Ritchey, the effort to "drag artists into the real world" has essentially created new artistic currency minted from the keywords of neoliberal theory: innovation, entrepreneurship, disruption, and flexibility, while at the same time, corporations such as Google and Intel draw on historical ideas and stereotypes of classical music to "appear virtuous to the populations they plunder" (ibid., p. 2). Though both artists and corporations have benefited from their interactions, Ritchey asks what the cost of this relationship is and, in particular, the cost to classical music. The neo-liberal cost is even embedded in the evaluation of the field, with Ritchey stating that much of the discourse surrounding the decline in classical music is essentially a neoliberal tact. Conversations seeking solutions for this decline often point to the "need to eschew traditional funding avenues and instead pursue new performance and branding tactics calculated to appeal to wider, younger audiences", which represents a "democratisation of the art form" (ibid., p. 3). Ritchey asserts that "the *notion* of opening a practice to free market competition [as] a means of ensuring democratic freedom is perhaps the *central* tenet of neoliberalism" (ibid., p. 3). Most pertinent to this chapter, Ritchey laments the "extent to which neoliberal theory has become naturalised in US culture as common sense", pointing to attitudes about training that encourage artists to

become "flexible, adaptable, and self-managing individuals skilled at identifying and serving market opportunities" (ibid., p. 4). Ritchey warns that such ideas "deepen precarity and labor instability in the musical work-force and enable people to accept those conditions as natural, as simply the results of some musicians' lazy refusal to capitalise on their potential" (ibid., p. 20). Rational entrepreneurial action, "in which all decisions are made via an assessment of potential profitability, rather than being grounded in moral or ethical concerns" (ibid., p. 4), is the crux of the problem. If art is created under such free-market circumstances, how can it challenge the circumstance in which it is made? Nonetheless, due to the lack of alternatives in the United States, a neoliberal framing of 21st-century classical musicking leaves the chamber music performer little choice. To make a living, one must play in and, thus contribute to, the world of neoliberal capitalism.

At the end of her book, Ritchey proposes three questions for critical reflection on music and neoliberalism that resonate in different ways with the chamber music training discussed in this chapter: (1) "What if we stopped thinking of musical production as work that required adequate remuneration from the market?" (2) How might music challenge the "timeworn centrality of radical individualism" and cultivate a "collective vision of agency, which might be potentially counterhegemonic under capitalism"? (3) Could artists "reject, refuse or otherwise critique the imperative toward uniqueness and originality, which lend themselves too well to competitive individualism?" (ibid., pp. 148-49). On their own, each of these questions might ring hollow in a chapter devoted to entrepreneurial chamber musicking but, together, they profoundly resonate and prompt other important questions: Without competition, how do we define success? Without adequate remuneration, what distinguishes the career of a professional musician from an amateur one? These questions challenge us to examine why we chose to make music in the first place, how we can join with others to make that music, and how we can cultivate recognition for such a collective's success. They are not easy questions and, as expected, they do not come with simple solutions. The collaboration required in the making (and training) of the portfolio musician is one viable path. In fact, Ritchey implores us to seek out "musical practices that explore entanglements instead of celebrating discrete, individualist, or otherwise teleological perspectives to help us envision more humane and communal tactics for survival than the ones currently articulated in mainstream classical musical discourses" (ibid., p. 148). Indeed, the Creativity Lab is one such opportunity to become entangled in a more humane and communal world, all in hope of forging an artistically and financially satisfying chamber music career.

4.3. Chamber Music in Service: New England Conservatory Community Engagement

The historic Jordan Hall serves as the heart and soul of the New England Conservatory and the site of our meeting with Tanya Maggi, Dean of Community Engagement and

Professional Studies. After meeting at the building's front desk, Maggi guided us through a more casual environment than the acclaimed concert hall where we passed rehearsal studios and practice rooms. As we moved into an old, tiny elevator, we watched as Tanya thoughtfully greeted and checked in with students in casual and personal conversation. As if discussing innovative pedagogy were not sufficient cause for celebration, we met with Maggi in her office on her birthday. Her warm and relational demeanour fit perfectly with the nature of her work, which requires empathy for building partnerships that are mutually beneficial for NEC, its students, and the community organisations with which they work.

Departments that lead community engagement and professional development programs in higher education have increased in both value and visibility in recent years. The changes in defined roles for these programs reflect the ongoing efforts to effectively integrate these departments. NEC's Community Performances and Partnerships (CPP) department is no exception. Prior to her appointment to her current role in 2018, Maggi was the Director of CPP, which she still facilitates. Maggi views CPP as a complement to the Entrepreneurial Musicianship Department (EM). While both departments work with the same student body and may operate with similar types of ensembles, CPP asks students to evaluate and serve community needs, whereas EM prompts students to consider their personal and professional goals. Maggi notes that

> The CPP program from the get-go was designed as a professionally oriented community engagement program where the students are trained at a very high level, and . . . treated as professionals in the world. That means that if a school or senior facility needs something very specific, we are, of course, working with that partnering organisation to figure out who among our students might be a good fit. . . . We're constantly looking at the needs of the community and how to best respond with the resources we have to offer. (NEC-TM[4])

Student responsibilities to community partners range from a one-time school masterclass to sustained relationships with a single partner. Though NEC, not the students, ultimately bears the responsibility for sustaining relationships, Maggi emphasises that this point does not detract from the greater lesson. Through participation in CPP, students act as part of something larger than themselves and are required to put their personal needs (and in many cases, artistic ambitions) secondary to the needs of the partner institution. To do this effectively requires the musician to be flexible and adaptable, and to solve problems. These developed skills, paired with experiential learning in audience engagement, makes students undeniably more

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[4] Tanya Maggi, Dean of Community Engagement and Professional Studies, Jordan Hall. In-person interview (NEC Jordan Hall Office 311). 10:00–11:00 AM EST on 9 March 2020.

employable. Beyond employability, the satisfaction of fulfilling a larger purpose leads to personal well-being and healthy relationships. In essence, good relationships beget a good professional, social and personal life. This needs to be a greater concern of music education.

Within the department, students are offered opportunities through what Maggi calls a "menu approach", where students elect to apply for fellowships, performance opportunities, and optional classes. In a class that Maggi teaches during the fall semester, "Performing Musicians and Community Health", students are organised into eclectic groups, enter into healthcare settings, and perform for patients. Chamber music is particularly conducive to this environment where situations require great sensitivity—initially, a human response to need. Only after understanding a partner's particular scope of need are ensembles parcelled out and placed within their community locations. Students witness the product of hard work over years of relationships built by NEC staff and take part in the continued growth of these partnerships through their ensembles' performances and placements. With CPP, music performance exists as a practical solution to the perennial question of civic engagement:

> It's about really sitting down and getting to know people, breaking down barriers and all the cultural baggage that we bring in when we're bringing western art music into many of the settings we work [in]. We are really mindful of the need to create space for cross-cultural conversation . . . it's embedded in a lot of the training of students. (NEC-TM)

Through this work, Maggi directly confronts the idea that musical outreach in itself is beneficial to those who experience it. With the focus of addressing community needs, Maggi shares that "Most of [CPP's partners] are in Boston, and about 75% are under-resourced schools, senior facilities, and community centres" (NEC-TM). The relational approach that this program prioritises fulfils a growing recognition that in community-based performance, audiences should be seen as collaborators rather than as recipients. Rather than a one-time outreach visit from a string quartet to provide what we call a "drive-by Beethoven" concert, CPP builds ongoing partnerships with years of trust, commitment, and growth.

4.4. Chamber Music as Self Discovery: New England Conservatory Entrepreneurial Musicianship

After navigating the many winding hallways of NEC's early 20th-century building, we entered the offices of the Entrepreneurial Musicianship Department, and as some of the last guests to be admitted to the institution with the quickly approaching pandemic restrictions, we sat down with Annie Phillips and Drew Worden. Our discussion centred on the role of professional studies within conservatory training, though the frank nature with which

our two subjects spoke allowed us to explore topics beyond the boundaries of this framework. As two of our youngest interviewees, they brought understanding and personal experience to the financial obligations, industry realities, and possibilities for the artistic life currently facing their students.

The Entrepreneurial Musicianship (EM) Department at New England Conservatory (NEC) is a hub for advising student careers and projects. Though this department does not specifically serve the thriving chamber music scene within NEC, chamber music groups are the ideal fit for many of its strongest offerings, both in terms of distribution of labour and artistic breadth. EM's role within chamber music takes shape largely through awarding seed grants to student and alumni start-ups and does not fall within the realm of compulsory student education. Students and alumni must take initiative to schedule appointments for career advising and professional development support.

As both of these administrators and performers were quick to note, the profession of chamber music is hardly just performance. Annie Phillips and Drew Worden, Associate Dean and Assistant Dean of Entrepreneurial Musicianship, hope to inculcate this in the students who come into their office for advising. EM—both as an office and in its curricular electives—is about emphasizing the skills and knowledge that musical professionals need beyond technical excellence. Project development often focuses on supporting small groups of instrumentalists hoping to find a way to bridge the gap between academic and professional musicianship. Phillips recalls one group in particular:

> [There is] one team of students. . . . They each have a job, [like] marketing finance, community engagement, production. They're paid to essentially run a small non-profit together each year. Over the summer they come up with an artistic mission, they invite three people to be members of their board which is also made up of the Dean and me . . . they do an on-campus performance in the fall and an off-campus performance in the spring. Totally without my help, they approached the mayor's office and are going to do a performance at City Hall that will open Arts Week. They have a discretionary budget to hire other students. I think they'll collaborate with a projectionist, maybe a student from [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] they're talking to [in order to] activate the City Hall space[5] (NEC-EM[6]).

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5 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project became an online festival.

6 Annie Phillips and Drew Worden, Associate Dean and Assistant Dean of Entrepreneurial Musicianship. In-person interview (NEC 255 St. Botolph SLPC). 1:00–2:00 PM EST on 10 March 2020.

Phillips and Worden have found that musicianship is not, and cannot, be driven by artistry alone. The business and organisational structures bring just as much value as the artistic product. Worden recalls pushing back when students try to

> build a structure and *then* fill it up. . . . [Students hoping to run their own small ensemble say] "I'm going to build a 501(c)(3) (incorporated non-profit designation). And things will be great." Well, [I respond,] you haven't given any concerts yet. You don't have a donor basis. Save yourself a little bit, first grow an audience or donor base. Then see if it makes sense for you to become [an incorporated company]. Be a sole proprietor for a few years. They might not be dealing with enough energy yet. (NEC-EM)

In the EM Department, failure is highly valued as an experience in musical education. Worden and Phillips do not see positive experiences as the basic currency of a good conservatory education. Instead, they view failure as a part of understanding their agency, a constructive way for students to develop a musical identity based on a growth mindset. Phillips observes:

> We assume that because we're in a creative field, that we're growth mindset. But conservatories [don't work like this]. And if you're in a fixed mindset, you're less likely to push through challenges that come to you later. We don't really throw a lot of divergent challenges at students. Everyone thinks that they're resilient because they [continue to] audition. (NEC-EM)

Though there are benefits to the power of persistence, auditions ask little personal agency over musical material. Rather the process asks that those involved recreate the ideas of another, requiring little to no representation of the singular identity of the individual. Experiencing failure in an audition based on one's own carefully considered artistic decisions requires greater self-reflection on what failed and why, prompting problem solving for the next iteration. The contrast between these two types of failures articulates the juxtaposition of growth versus fixed mindset to which Phillips refers. Phillips continues speaking about the student experience in conservatory:

> Well, they don't really fail at producing a concert. . . . That's a challenge when you get out of school. It's not how good you are. So [the EM Department is] thinking of ways to provide choices, opportunities to fail, challenges outside the practice room. It's really important. We want them to be able to push through that outside of school. That's a human thing, not a musician thing. (NEC-EM)

Phillips' statement speaks to the trend where conservatories put the art before the humans that bring the art to life. However, conservatories are acted on by

humans, not the other way around. The term "conservatory" comes from the Latin "conservare", to preserve. If this is all conservatories want to be, they are destined for obsoletion. The data support the need for more human-centric education, citing that primary deficits fall into deeply relational categories: networking and relationship building, persuasive speaking, project management skills, and leadership skills (SNAAP n.d.).

With this in mind, there remains no better test for building relational skills than chamber music and the empathy it requires from its performers. Unlike the aforementioned institutions in this chapter, NEC's EM Department bears no explicit relationship to chamber music. Rather, within EM ventures, chamber music exists more as a facilitator for testing one's identity. It is a way of challenging one's relationship with music, and the longevity of one's place in the world as a musician. Phillips reflects, "I would love for this to not be called entrepreneurship". Worden agrees: "Musicianship isn't a class—it's everything" (NEC-EM).

4.5. Chamber Music and the Interpersonal: New England Conservatory Chamber Music

With a variety of singing, gifts of fancy chocolate, and a beloved metronome named "Torch" (short for "Torture", and turned up at an ear-splitting volume), we were introduced to Merry Peckham, the Chair of the Chamber Music Department at NEC. In one of NEC's rehearsal studios, we had the opportunity to observe her coaching of a graduate string quartet. Peckham's professional experiences as a founding member of the Cavani String Quartet, a performing cellist, and a renowned teacher seep into the knowledge that she passionately imparts to her students. In addition to her coaching, Peckham leads the NEC Preparatory School's Chamber Music Intensive Performance Seminar (CHIPS), and teaches the course "Chamber Music Pedagogy". We had the opportunity to chat with Peckham after the coaching.

Our conversation began with a discussion of the viability of freelance chamber music today. Peckham feels the portfolio musician, or what she calls the "ultimate freelance chamber musician", has changed drastically over the last fifty years. "You couldn't get the same money. There weren't paying series. You can now . . . There are lots of crossover groups, too. They'll turn it into jazz—I love that stuff. The whole ability for a quartet to make their living doing new music. I'm shocked it didn't happen sooner". Peckham notes that today's musicians are driven to form these groups in order to voice their personal and political beliefs. She recognises the power a platform of performance can provide. "Just get your friends together to raise awareness about veganism and play Beethoven!", she says. Peckham notes an increasing trend in current students' desire to add cause-based performances and the desire during their training to work with artists who have successfully done so. NEC offers this opportunity through hosting performances of the musician-led initiative for local hunger relief, Music for Food, founded by NEC viola faculty Kim Kashkashian. Peckham observes that students "want to make a difference with social

justice and develop a core ensemble. They're presenters, develop residencies, they might try to educate people. That's huge" (NEC-MP[7]).

Within the context of chamber music coaching, there's a delicate balance to strike between pragmatic discussions of career possibilities and cultivating the highest form of artistry possible. Peckham showed she was keenly aware of the importance of offering space outside of the session to speak to students about their futures. This individualised attention enables a personalised perspective from a trusted teacher that can be pivotal in clarifying viable next steps since the work of bridging artistic training and professional ambitions requires mentorship. Since students lack experience contextualising themselves as individuals in a competitive industry, faculty such as Peckham can help identify areas of potential success within their goals. Two students with the same level of artistic prowess could have two different directions; for example, Peckham observes a difference between being "the ultimate freelancer", who can "play with strangers, be solid, and get on their toes" and being a fastidious artist and chamber musician, who will "try to go into every minute detail of a phrase" (NEC-MP). The differences in these two types of professionals and their subsequent successes come down to personality more than passion. Within chamber music, much of what Peckham sees or hears as unique to success lies first and foremost in its interpersonal requirements.

Observing a chamber coaching of Peckham's allowed us to see first-hand how the training and application of interpersonal skills contributes to music making. To work on valuing each voice and effective listening, a string quartet practiced switching leadership roles. In an effort to create a cohesive embodiment of the music, students were asked to physically move (to clap, to sway, to stomp, etc.) with beats apart from their instruments and to sing their parts with robust musicality. Throughout the coaching, Peckham challenged students to always be mindful of their individual role within the context of the whole. Within this lens, students are able to experiment in a way that allows them to grow in an understanding of the work as a team. In the SNAAP survey, the top two skills cited as important to work life (in or outside of the arts) were creative thinking and problem solving (98%) and interpersonal relations and working collaboratively (97%). Though not specifically musical skills, these skills (sometimes called "transferable skills") contribute to and can be built from the type of music making that Peckham asks her students to do. The classroom then serves as an opportunity to bring students out of their comfort zones in the name of personal development while, perhaps unknowingly, expanding the possibilities of their portfolio. In chamber music, musicians bend and breathe with

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7 Merry Peckham, Chair of the Chamber Music Department at NEC. In-person interview (NEC main building studio JH104). 4:30 PM EST on 9 March 2020.

one another, and consequently, this interaction is not merely cooperative movement and artistic inspiration, but reflects skill sets needed in the professional world.

4.6. Chamber Music as an Identity Builder: Chicago College of Performing Arts

Known for his soft but strong presence, Adam Neiman combines philosophical thought with practical implementation grounded in his own experience as a solo pianist, chamber musician, composer, artistic director, and full-time educator. As an artist who wears many hats, he brings intimate knowledge of what it means to be a portfolio musician today. He applies his diverse professional experiences as the newest Director of the CCPA String Chamber Program. We had the opportunity to observe sessions with students (Figure 2), as well as a chance to speak to him twice about chamber music training in the conservatory.

Figure 2. Adam Neiman coaching CCPA string chamber music students on pre-performance talks. Source: Photograph by authors.

In his newly appointed role as the Director of the CCPA String Chamber program, Adam Neiman built a new curriculum for string students within his course. Considering the classical components of chamber music education that he wanted to uphold, he decided that additional skills should accompany the transmission of traditional chamber pedagogy. Among these skills are conversations of interpersonal relationships and obligations, as well as the distribution of non-musical responsibilities among the students. Students understand each of these roles as innately necessary and compatible from the get-go. Neiman expands:

> They are given specific functions to fulfil their duties, and the descriptions of roles are carefully worded to demonstrate how each role serves the overarching needs of the ensemble. In the case of the secretary, for example,

> s/he is in charge (among other duties) of collating all ensemble members' research outlines in one document that is passed along to the speaker to assist with the speaker's preparation. In another instance, the secretary collects from all ensemble mates a list of at least five email addresses that are passed on to the publicist for a mass email. They are what makes up the portfolio musician: A portfolio musician is someone who will apply their artistic and creative talents to anything that comes their way. Yes, they have a point of view and desire for a future, but they admit they can't control the future. So they meet that future with their present. (CCPA-PED[8])

As noted, students in each group are assigned at least one of the following roles: liaison, librarian, publicist, secretary, and speaker. The goal of this assignment is for students to reflect on how best to use the skills they have, and to think about how to build new ones. Whether this applies to their future artistic careers or to an entirely new set of skills and priorities is up to the student. It is not the job of the professor to manage how students choose to process information, nor is it the job of a professor to ask students to divine the course of their professional paths as young artists. In the words of Neiman, "We're all portfolio musicians" (CCPA-PED).

Chamber music also plays an important role within a course that encourages first-year students to explore their identity as professional musicians. The CCPA undergraduate music seminar, entitled Professional Musician in Society, operates in a similar way. Taught by a variety of instructors at CCPA and required for all incoming freshmen students, this is a course that asks students to reflect on the professional landscape that they hope to join. They are asked to learn about notable performing arts institutions and how they serve their respective communities. The hallmark of this course is a project where students visit various Chicago organisations—such as Chicago Housing Authority or the Centre on Halsted—that are notable for their closeness with and awareness of one or few particular communities in Chicago. Students perform for the people associated with these organisations after a process of research and reflection that involves considering what music would best serve the specific needs of the population in question. "I view chamber music as the ultimate vehicle for human interaction", says Neiman: "You have people operating together who need to come to an agreement. They need to come to that agreement not by a dictator making them, but by agreement, and in that they all see the logic of [one solution]. . . . That's not a portfolio musician skill, it's a human skill" (CCPA-PED).

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[8] Adam Neiman, Director of the CCPA String Chamber Program. Pedagogical Philosophy Meeting, 18 December 2019.

4.7. Checkerboard Chamber Music Amid Crisis: Heifetz International Music Institute

Our visit to violinist Nicholas Kitchen started in the basement of the lobby of NEC's new building amidst sounds of student conversations and happenings in the nearby cafeteria. Kitchen is known for his work with the Borromeo Quartet and recent leadership of the Heifetz Music Institute. The Borromeo Quartet is in residence at NEC and, the night before, we heard Borromeo perform three Beethoven quartets for Boston audiences in Jordan Hall. The ensemble was one of the first quartets to regularly use technology in their performances, employing tablets with page-turning foot pedals that enabled performers to read from a full score, rather than a single part. This performance also included a projection screen, on which Beethoven's original sketches were beamed, enabling audiences to follow along with the performers.

Little did we know the extent to which technology would soon play a role in the continuation of musical performance and education during the time of quarantine. In March of 2020, COVID-19 began to shut down public and private institutions, as a months-long lockdown commenced. In fact, our interviews in Boston came at the cusp of NEC shutting down. We were the last visitors allowed in the buildings, and the Borromeo concert was the last performance in Jordan Hall, before COVID-19 protocols took effect throughout the city. Kitchen gave a stimulating talk that night on stage, prior to playing the second half of the performance, about the projection of Beethoven's sketches during the performance, and we were excited about discussing his approach during our session. Moreover, the Heifetz International Music Institute, a program for young string players and pianists, slated to begin that summer, was among the few summer arts programs that elected to operate virtually. Therefore, a number of weeks later, we also asked Kitchen to talk about his plans for the virtual version of the Institute at one of our graduate student seminars at the CCPA. We reconnected with Kitchen in the early spring to find out how the virtual summer session fared.

Kitchen believes that the opportunity for students to practice chamber music virtually is a gift, a chance to learn skills necessary for musical training, though not the warp and weft of traditional pedagogy:

> Our efforts [have to be] to really think about what are the ways we can make this a substantial learning experience, including the technical training that's going to come from having to do that kind of recording. . . . We're committed to walking them through that every step of the way. Even where they feel a little frustrated with it, we're going to help them get through it. I had to touch [on] that. I made a recording and it's a tutorial for our students about the way they were going to do this. (ONPERF-NK[9])

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[9] Nicholas Kitchen, Borromeo String Quartet, NEC, and Heifetz International Music Institute. In-class Zoom discussion "MUS 480-01: On Performance". 12:30 PM–1:45 PM CST on 30 April 2020.

If this process did not work for Kitchen and his own ensembles, he was not going to ask it of the students at Heifetz.

The United States continues to struggle with the toll of the COVID-19 pandemic as we write this chapter. For the most part, chamber music groups are the only way many musicians are able to perform together, either virtually or in person. Here is an example of chamber music not being a single solution, but a special case when it is the only solution. When orchestras record asynchronously, as required by quarantine or shelter-in-place guidelines, standard practice is that all musicians perform their part with a metronome in their ear. Kitchen, however, capitalizing on the intimacy of a small chamber ensemble, developed a system of approximating artistic and collaborative live-time response in the recording of an asynchronous chamber work. This strategy, realised with the Apple program GarageBand, involves the creation of multiple tracks for each instrumentalist, some leading, some following, some in time, some rubato. Kitchen affectionately refers to this process as "checkerboard chamber music" (ONPERF-NK). The final product, a tapestry of smaller recorded snippets, allows for expressive musicality in an asynchronous setting. Students then think critically and collaboratively about which direction they want individual phrases and movements to go.

Before the commencement of the program in the summer, Heifetz administration sent a technology package, called a "tech tool kit", to each participant, consisting of a microphone, headphones, and a tripod. Faculty recorded instructional videos on how to create collaborative recordings, and virtual meetings were set up to help students understand the technology they were asked to use. As a result, students were encouraged and instructed to establish a deep familiarity with technology that many did not have before. For the 21st-century, Kitchen does not consider this a bad thing:

> We would be very foolish if we did not put the prime focus on being a better violinist. The core of that has to do with lessons with their instructor. But to be able to add this extra dimension in a rigorous way really gives them lots and lots of things to think about. It's like if you ask yourself "What am I communicating when I play, what am I bringing across?" That's a question you answer for your whole life. (ONPERF-NK)

Overall, the virtual effort was a success. Heifitz participants were layered over twenty chamber works, via the checkerboard method, including music by Mendelssohn, Shostakovich, and Ravel. The institute presented nearly 100 concerts, but the festival's virtual challenges were more than musical. The Institute hired a life coach focused on personal organisation and wellbeing. Participants formed cooking clubs and played cards. Social activities, therefore, intermingled with the recording and sharing of GarageBand tracks. Kitchen found that students indeed

"started to use some of that organisational skill to help them organise their own practice" (ZOOM-NK[10]). The pandemic has heightened an acute awareness of mental health and personal organisation. Emerging professionals, more than ever, must not only better manage their own schedules but remain in touch with their wellbeing. Ultimately, virtual chamber music brought out the "resourceful side of people", becoming "a very real medium for communicating things of value—and for valuing each other" (ZOOM-NK).

5. Engaging the Identity Crisis: A Four-Pronged Approach to Portfolio Chamber Musicking

The identity crisis is legendary at music conservatories. Kingsbury (1988) found in his pioneering study that "for many students, there was a great deal of ambivalence, concern, and social or personal tension relating their musicality to their most elemental sense of self and identity" (ibid., p. 3). Each previous generation of music graduates has its own unique set of economic and social baggage in a nation that does not provide much support for the arts, unlike many European countries. While it is good for graduates to realise their paths at any point, it is best if conservatories endorse this pathfinding exploration from the beginning. SNAAP data, much of which have been cited throughout this chapter, should be spoken of at all arts institutions. Without access to or knowledge of these data, students and their instructors may continue to see the portfolio musician as a backup plan (or a sign of failure—a less desirable alternative), largely ignoring its potential as a viable career path, complete with its own social role and power to influence the world in a meaningful way. We have explored above different avenues through which instructors may broach this topic with their students, either directly or tangentially. These avenues require teaching in a way that acknowledges that students are more than vessels for technical training. Through chamber music—or the act of chambermusicking—students explore courageous spaces for connecting to the world as they progress through conservatory training, in order to not only grow artistically and socially, but also to be able to provide for themselves financially. Such pathfinding, so to speak, can be represented as curriculum development, ultimately making chamber music training a professional development map to guide instructors and students as they forge artistically and financially sustainable careers that address the socio-political challenges of a changing music industry (Figure 3).

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[10] Nicholas Kitchen. Zoom interview 11:00–12:00 PM EST on 13 March 2021.

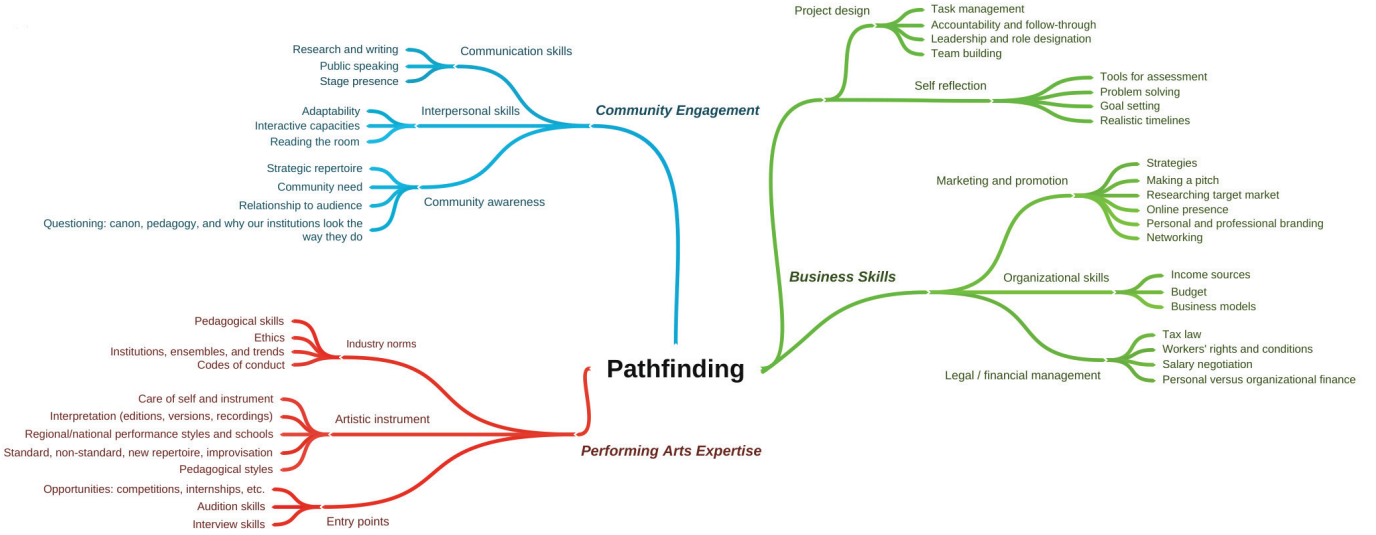

Figure 3. Current curriculum–professional skills model introduced to CCPA faculty and staff by Centre for Arts Leadership. Source: Graphic by authors.

Moreover, institutions can support more enlightened pathfinding by scrutinizing those who provide portfolio instruction. Position titles, especially those including the prospects of tenure, reflect value and status. Entrepreneurial, interpersonal, or career mentoring of students are values that rarely fall within the explicit criteria strongly considered in the tenure process. The adeptness at, or teaching of, these skills rarely appear in the job descriptions of prospective tenured faculty lines. A cultural shift within the conservatory requires new faculty tenure or full-time norms that adopt these values to integrate portfolio training into the curriculum. Though there may be offices in conservatories dedicated to these priorities, they infrequently receive adequate funding, job security, and strategic attention from their overarching institutions. The offices fall as outliers to the academic core of their institution.

Some conservatories choose to enact these values with degree programs that are more open for portfolio careers. In our initial pilot study and foundational survey of performing arts institutions across the United States, we found that most portfolio institutions fit one of four modes. We refer to them as:

- Centerisation: the creation of an office for these values, such as the CCPA Center for Arts Leadership;
- Parallel Focus: offering possibilities for pursuing two degrees simultaneously, such as the Indiana University Bachelor of Science and an Outside Field (BSOF) dual degree;
- Institutional Partnering: collaborating with a professional institution, such as Carnegie Mellon University and the Pittsburgh Opera "Co-Opera" program;
- "Do-It-Yourself": a "create your own major" degree program, such as Berklee's Interdisciplinary Music Studies.

These programs do not prescribe any single path to success through the romanticisation of one type of performance career, nor do they define failure. Alternatively, these programs encourage individual pathfinding by asking students to think critically and comprehensively about what they really want in their own lives, without giving them answers or prompts during their first year. We believe this model is especially useful because although young people do not make these decisions without guidance and support, it is the earnest investigation into one's own life and interests that cultivates the confidence, curiosity, and excitement for a fulfilling professional life. Mark Rabideau's (2018) book *Creating the Revolutionary Artist* recognises the value of such self-reflective models for 21st-century musicians with chapters devoted to "exploring curiosity", "thinking about creativity", "problem-solving", and "diversity and inclusivity". Entrepreneurship is framed and made personally authentic by these values. Indeed, we have found frequently in our first-year seminars that young people do have an ideal vision for their career but are less likely to understand the means by which they will achieve those goals. We now

read Rabideau's book in the first-year seminar in the hope of providing, early on in the curriculum, more insight into what it means to be a 21st-century musician.

Finally, the fluidity of the chamber music canon—barring professional template ensembles, such as the string quartet or piano trio—inherently cultivate prospects for diversity, equity, and inclusion that are much more difficult to enact in larger ensembles, which are frequently fixed in their historical spaces, repertoire, and audience base. Chamber music patronage is more fluid, and there is a degree of intimacy between patrons and ensembles that nurtures an open dialogue on how repertoire, representation, and identity in music can respond to the world at large. Now more than ever, emerging professionals are challenged to produce socially relevant and financially sustainable performances, whether they be face-to-face or virtual, in which conservatory chamber music training plays an integral role.

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Evolving, Surviving, and Thriving: Working as a Chamber Musician in the 21st Century

Caroline Waddington-Jones

1. Introduction

The careers of some of the most successful chamber groups of the late 20th century can be traced through books and film. As a millennial musician and researcher, I find these rich and insightful accounts of the professional lives and working conditions of such groups—for example, the Lindsay Quartet (Gregor-Smith 2019), the Takacs Quartet (Dusinberre 2016) and the Guarneri Quartet (Blum 1986; Steinhardt 2000)—particularly fascinating. Many of the musical aspects of their accounts would be easily recognisable for many musicians: anecdotes about rehearsal banter and the clear passion that the musicians have for their repertoire are timeless. Meanwhile, descriptions of a wider industry with plentiful performance opportunities, stories of seemingly smooth entry to the profession, and an absence of anecdotes about grappling with technology of various forms for communication and self-promotion are much less easy to relate to in 2021. Of course, it could be that the authors have chosen to present the highlights of long and undoubtedly illustrious careers and simply opted to leave out a few of the hairier or more mundane details; however, given the widespread absence of such challenges in these accounts, it seems more reasonable to suggest that today's chamber musicians face different challenges to their predecessors.

1.1. A New Millennium: Challenges and Opportunities

The early 2000s brought great changes across the music industry with the rise of the internet and online technologies. The introduction of the smartphone, with its easy access to media-streaming platforms such as Spotify and YouTube, means that consumers' relationship with music is closer and more immediate than ever, and that musicians can reach potential audiences quickly. Through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube, musicians can create, curate and market their own content, communicate "directly" with their audiences without the mediation of third parties, and collaborate with others. This has presented exciting new opportunities for innovation and creative freedom, and has given musicians more control and autonomy over the production and promotion of their music than ever before (Haynes and Marshall 2018).

However, in order to take advantage of these evolving opportunities for access, reach, and communication, today's musicians must develop entrepreneurial and digital literacy skill sets that are far removed from the music-specific skills that they and their predecessors honed over many years of musical training. These are skills that might previously have been the sole remit of music managers, agents, and record labels, but for today's freelance musicians, and particularly chamber musicians, who must manage the business aspects of their careers, they have become increasingly important to establishing and building successful performing careers (Thomson 2013). The advancement and availability of technology, in combination with the emphasis placed upon these business and technology skills, have begun to change what is required of musicians, as well as the way musicians see themselves. They are not only artists; they are entrepreneurs working in an increasingly competitive environment (Parker et al. 2019).

A key contributor to the competitive environment faced by freelance musicians in the UK in the new millennium is a severe lack of funding for the arts in comparison to the preceding decades. In the second half of the 20th century, the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) was responsible for distributing substantial public funding to arts organisations across the UK. In the late 1980s, under Thatcher's government, the ACGB's funding was cut, with its chairman indicating that the shortfall should be made up by the private sector and wealthy donors (Palumbo 1990). Later came the 2008 financial crash, and governmental budgets for arts and culture across the UK were squeezed; all four regional arts councils have experienced substantial cuts across the last decade (Gottlieb 2013; Dempsey 2016). Subsequently, the notion that arts organisations should fundraise rather than be subsidised by the public has become further ingrained and has since shaped musicians' working lives. It remains to be seen precisely how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect arts funding and audience spending on the arts in the UK over the coming decade; however, at the time of writing, it seems likely that, for chamber musicians, indeed, all freelance musicians, there may be difficult times ahead.

The challenging economic outlook for the arts over the last decade has negatively impacted freelance musicians' working conditions. Various researchers have reported musicians' experiences of precarity within their freelance careers (Umney and Kretsos 2015; Vaag et al. 2014). Since funding is less plentiful now, there is heightened competition for fewer opportunities; meanwhile, contracts are unregulated, leaving musicians open to exploitation and lower rates of pay (Portman-Smith and Harwood 2015). It seems likely that chamber musicians are particularly exposed to these risks, as they tend to be responsible for sourcing their own performance opportunities and negotiating their own fees. The socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus both the precarity of freelance musicians' work and the direct influence of government policy and

funding on their working lives, as the need for physical distancing for audiences and performers has seen months of work for freelance musicians disappear almost overnight.

The culture of competition places pressure on musicians to become savvy entrepreneurs as well as expert artists, and encourages them to develop diverse skill sets and portfolios of work (Bartleet et al. 2012). Musicians are expected to be flexible and able to balance depth and breadth of skill to work in a wide range of musical activities. Portfolio careers allow musicians to curate work in different areas across, and in some cases beyond, the music industry (Bartleet et al. 2012, 2019). The portfolio approach allows musicians to combat potentially precarious working conditions by achieving a balance between "higher risk" options—such as freelance performance work—and "lower risk" options—such as arts administration or education—that tend to be more financially stable (Bennett 2010). Unlike their 20th-century counterparts, chamber musicians of the new millennium may be more likely to adopt portfolio careers as a consequence of today's more challenging economic landscape. For many chamber musicians, aside from financial stability, this diversification perhaps presents an opportunity for musical stimulation too. Musicians have reported that the variety within their portfolios is refreshing and that one area may strengthen another—with teaching informing performance and vice versa being one example (Haldane 2018).

To acquire the versatility needed to build a diverse and sustainable portfolio of work, higher music education curricula must provide students with opportunities to explore different areas of musical activity (Blackstone 2019). In addition to developing versatility and agility within music, graduates need practical business acumen that encompasses not only the various networking, digital literacy, and marketing skills indicated earlier, but also the realities of setting up and managing a business (Bennett 2016). These skills are likely to be particularly important for graduates who wish to make chamber music a substantial part of their portfolio of work, and who are therefore likely to have immediate responsibility for marketing their group and securing performance opportunities; however, research has yet to seek to understand chamber musicians' experiences of establishing and maintaining successful careers in the 21st century.

1.2. Chamber Musicians' Careers in the 21st Century

Existing research into chamber musicians' careers has offered insights into both musical and social aspects of these musicians' work together (e.g., Blum 1986; Murnighan and Conlon 1991). However, as well as their tendency to focus solely on the experiences of string quartet musicians, these earlier studies document the experiences of chamber musicians of the late 20th century. As explored here, the new millennium has brought, and continues to bring, many new

challenges and opportunities for the music industry. The challenges faced by today's chamber musicians, both new and established, are many, and it is no mean feat to forge a successful performing career, as recent studies into the wellbeing of professional musicians have highlighted (e.g., Dobson 2011; Scharff 2015; Gross and Musgrave 2016).

Research has begun to explore the skills needed by freelance musicians more generally to succeed in the music industry of the 21st century; however, it has yet to consider chamber musicians specifically. Chamber musicians are likely to have experienced the arts funding cuts of the last decade directly, since many of their performance opportunities are tied to venues that have previously been subsidised by arts council funding. Unlike larger western art music ensembles such as choirs and orchestras, most chamber ensembles, and certainly those embarking on the early stages of their careers, are now expected to take responsibility for their own promotion, networking, and audience engagement. Despite these numerous challenges, the chamber music scene in the UK remains busy and competitive.

It is, therefore, important that we understand more about the working conditions and career trajectories of chamber musicians in the 21st century. Through collecting and exploring rich data from the musicians themselves on their lived experiences, we can better identify and understand the challenges that they face and the implications that these may have for equality, diversity, and inclusion within the profession. Consequently, there would also be practical applications for the development of inclusive higher music education curricula that focus on graduate employability and long-term flourishing. Research may also provide evidence that enables chamber musicians to negotiate more effectively with policy makers and funding bodies. The present interview study sought to address the gap in our understanding about the realities of establishing, curating, and sustaining a career that centres on chamber music through the following research questions:

(1) What motivates chamber musicians?
(2) What are some of the challenges professional chamber musicians in the UK face?
(3) What skills have they developed to succeed?
(4) What are the implications for higher music education?

2. Method

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight UK-based professional musicians, for whom chamber music made up the majority of their portfolio of work. Seven of these musicians were from the UK and one was originally from South Africa. They were specialists in string, wind, piano, and voice (see Table 1 for details). In order to get a sense of the changes to the profession over the last few decades, three of the participants were recruited from performers who had entered the profession in the decades before 2000; the remaining participants had begun their professional

work in the first two decades of the 21st century. All but one of the participants had undertaken formal training in performance at a higher education institution, i.e., a university music department or a conservatoire.

Table 1. Participants' demographic information.

#	Instrument	Gender	Entry to Profession
P5	Viola	M	1970s
P2	Violin	F	1980s
P7	Violin	F	1980s
P1	Viola	M	Early 2000s
P6	Piano	F	Late 2000s
P8	Clarinet	M	Late 2000s
P3	Voice	F	2010s
P4	Clarinet	M	2010s

Source: Table created by author.

Interviews lasted around 40 min and covered various topics, including: career trajectory; initial expectations; preparation for entering the profession; the challenges of establishing, curating, and maintaining work as a chamber musician; and the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to succeed. It should be noted that data collection took place in autumn 2019, shortly before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, in exploring the interview themes, the potential impact of the ongoing pandemic and its aftermath will be considered alongside future directions for research and practice. Data were transcribed, and then thematic analysis was undertaken in NVivo using an inductive approach modelled on grounded theory; the aim of the analysis was to describe the data and theorise the findings. Themes were developed by collapsing, combining, or extending initial codes. Ethical approval for this research was granted by the Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee at the University of York.

3. Results and Discussion

Analysis of the interview data revealed themes in five broad areas: motivations, the changing landscape of the music industry, barriers to the profession, identity, and skills (see Table 2). Within each of these areas there were broad categories, and, in some cases, sub-categories, which are explored in the section that follows.

Table 2. Thematic framework.

Theme	Categories	Sub-Categories
Motivations	Music Collaboration Ownership	
Changing landscape	Arts economy Perceived value of music	
Barriers	Money Gatekeeping Encounters	Role modelsRealities
Identity	Specialisation Diversification	
Skills	Music Entrepreneurship Social Self-awareness Resilience	Interaction Networking

Source: Table created by author.

3.1. What Motivates Chamber Musicians?

3.1.1. Music at the Core of It All

All of the musicians interviewed agreed that the musical experience itself was their main motivation for building a portfolio of work around chamber music performance and spoke of their endless fascination with the music:

> The string quartet repertoire: nothing can begin to compare really. Violinists and cellists of course have got options like piano trios, and a much bigger repertoire of duos. I think for a viola player, quartets are the greatest thing you can aspire to. Then there's the fact that it's the private voice of the great composers, so it tends to be more personal, more intimate and, as we know, some of their greatest music. (Participant 5 (P5))

The importance of repertoire highlighted by these musicians is consistent with accounts given elsewhere by chamber musicians speaking of their motivations and experiences (e.g., Steinhardt 2000). As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the centrality of the musical experience itself seems to be one of the aspects of chamber musicians' professional experiences that has not changed in the new millennium.

The desire to share their music with audiences was another key motivation that remains unchanged in the 20th and the 21st centuries. As one of the musicians explained, performances are often highlights of their working life that outweigh the less exciting aspects:

> You don't love every moment of your practice. You don't love every moment of the concerts. Sometimes you get fed up with it, but for all of that come these just phenomenal highs when you play to however many people—appreciative people—and you're pleased with what you've done. It sounds really corny, but you look out and you think: "I'm really lucky to be doing this". (P8)

The potential contribution of performing experiences to ensemble musicians' ongoing motivations for performing noted here adds to the existing body of literature on this topic (e.g., Woody and MacPherson 2010; Waddington 2013).

3.1.2. Collaboration

Another key motivation for all of the musicians interviewed was the collaborative aspect of ensemble playing. All participants spoke of their passion for working with other artists to explore new ideas and new ways of working:

> I think what really makes me tick is the musical interaction and the spark and the responding and all of that that you get in a collaborative setup—whether that's two people or in a big group. So, for me, that's a big motivation behind a lot of things that I do. (P6)

This motivation was articulated by all of the musicians in this study, regardless of the stage of their career, as well as in the accounts of other chamber musicians elsewhere (Steinhardt 2000; Gregor-Smith 2019); consequently, this appears to be another aspect of chamber musicians' experiences that has not changed in the 21st century. A lot of music psychology research has been devoted to uncovering the social and musical dynamics of chamber groups precisely because the kind of interactions described and valued by this participant are at the core of what these musicians do (Keller 2014; Bishop 2018).

3.1.3. Ownership

Another motivation identified in the accounts of all of the interviewees concerned the creative control that chamber music affords them:

> That feeling I guess with all music but especially with quartets, of "it's only as good as what you bring into it", because you are very much responsible for it. You're not passive behind a conductor or anything. Just more in control. (P1)

Unlike larger ensembles such as choirs or orchestras, chamber music allows musicians the freedom to decide who they want to work with, what they want to play, where, and how. Of course, it is not necessarily straightforward to

draw together players who have a shared vision and approach to working together (Waddington 2017), but with the right combination of collaborators and circumstances, small-group musical collaboration can be rewarding, as this singer explained:

> I think when you get many of the salaried jobs that are within music, or regular jobs with a bigger company, you lose any creative choice making in terms of programming. If you sing for an opera company or play for an orchestra, you are one of many people and you are part of the process that somebody else is leading. [. . .] Having that ability to be involved in projects where you are able to be creative and with people who are equally adventurous and wanting to explore new things—I think that's what's really interesting for me. I enjoy the rehearsal process and the creating of it sometimes more than the actual performance of it. The performance is important, but actually I feel like the really interesting bit has already happened by the time the performance happens. (P3)

The greater creative flexibility offered by small ensemble work in comparison to larger-scale collaborative performance work was attractive to these musicians. Overall, a combination of creative ownership, inspiring collaborations, and overriding passion for the music motivated these musicians to place chamber music at the core of their working lives. It seems likely that all these features can be observed individually in solo and/or orchestral work as well, but perhaps it is their combination that is unique to chamber music making. These motivations for pursuing chamber music work were considered powerful enough to outweigh the various hardships, explored in the section that follows, faced by today's chamber musicians:

> The hidden fact is that you really would do it for free, but you do your best not to communicate that to anyone. [. . .] It's an idiotic professional choice to make basically. It doesn't add up. The amount of time that you have to put into rehearsing, learning the scores, practising, travelling to rehearsals—all of that stuff—and turning down paid work in order to spend that time rehearsing. You'd basically make a loss if you were to add it up! (P2)

This impassioned but rather sobering characterisation of chamber music as something of an impractical vocation was supported by other musicians' accounts, regardless of when they entered the profession, and highlights the strength of their motivations for making chamber music central to their working lives.

3.2. A Challenging Professional Landscape

Interviewing musicians who established their careers in the 20th century, as well as musicians who have entered the profession more recently, allowed the construction of a picture of how the profession has changed over time. Most striking were the changes to the arts economy in the UK that have had a direct impact on the way these musicians work, how much they earn, and their professional and musical identities.

3.2.1. The Arts Economy

The longer-established musicians described the arts landscape of the 1980s and 1990s as offering an abundance of well-remunerated performance opportunities for UK-based groups:

> Every month we had at least 15 concerts in music societies around the UK. We were playing on the BBC at least twice a month if not more. We were making records for which we were being paid very well. We were doing lots of touring abroad and around the UK as well. [. . .] If I approach now the same music societies that we played at then for the same fee—I mean the exact number that we played for then—they'll say that's far too much and they can't possibly afford it. [. . .] Out of those music societies that we used to play at, there's maybe three or four who are still operating at the same kind of level, but it used to be maybe 120. (P2)

Such frequent, reasonably prestigious performance opportunities are difficult to imagine when faced with today's competitive environment, where such opportunities are relatively scarce. Another musician explained:

> There were fewer groups around in those days. There were more music clubs and therefore more concerts available. The possibility of balancing freelance orchestral work with getting concerts as a chamber musician was probably easier to achieve, because it was all just that much more relaxed. [. . .] It was a smaller pool of players and a larger amount of work basically, so it was just altogether more possible. [. . .] Basically, there was less competition, you didn't have to be as good, and it was easier to find balance. So quite simply we were luckier. We were living in a very fortunate time. (P5)

This account, too, feels far removed from the realities of the bleaker professional landscape that today's musicians face. As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, many of the differences may be attributed to changes in arts funding across the UK. Reflecting on the reduction in the number and quality of performance opportunities in recent years, one of the interviewees offered this explanation:

> I think that various things have contributed to it. Obviously, the Arts Council's demise because a lot of music societies were dependent on that kind of Art Council funding which just evaporated over the years. But I think also some responsibility lies with [certain organisations], who have promoted the people on their roster so that music societies can actually get a concert for £200, because it's subsidised at the other end, and they see no reason why they should pay £2000 when they can get one for £200. I think that has actually led to a huge policy of undercutting. It's a big race to the bottom to see who can get concerts by lowering their fees to a degree that the music societies are then interested. (P2)

These comments are in line with the broader research on musicians' working conditions, which, in some respects, might be described as "exploitative" (Portman-Smith and Harwood 2015). Early-career chamber musicians seem likely to be more vulnerable to this kind of exploitation, since most must negotiate their own performance opportunities and fees and may feel pressure to do concerts for little pay or for exposure.

Some of the challenges in relation to securing performance work were highlighted in this study by the musicians who entered the profession post 2000. One of these musicians reflected on some of the difficulties she experienced in establishing herself during the second decade of the 21st century and explained that finding enough work in a saturated market was particularly difficult:

> I think getting paid performances is a challenge: where to look is quite difficult and then knowing who to talk to about that, and how to get someone even interested in booking you. If you do manage to speak to a promoter, like someone said to me: "We have 200 emails a day from groups just like yours and we can't look at everybody". It's quite difficult to know how to manage that. (P3)

This competitive environment forces musicians to develop a variety of skills and unique selling points in order to make themselves attractive to concert promoters and other bookers, further reinforcing the notion of musicians as entrepreneurs presented in existing research (Parker et al. 2019). For chamber musicians, particularly those in the early stages of their careers, who are unlikely to have agents and bear responsibility for securing their own performance work, this means that there is pressure to acquire effective enterprise skills as early as possible.

In further evidence of both the effects of funding cuts and the challenge of securing work, another of the interviewees noted that when music societies did wish to book their group for concerts, they were unable to offer them compensation for expenses like long-distance travel:

> You end up sometimes missing out on the work because the funding is so squeezed. Sometimes societies would love to book you; a really good example of this is many of the societies in Scotland—particularly in the north of Scotland. They'd like to book a greater variety of groups, but they just don't have the money to pay for the travel up there, so it's very hard for them to present a varied programme. That's a bit frustrating. (P4)

The musicians, then, face the choice between taking the work and making a loss in real terms after travel time and travel expenses are accounted for—the vocational but impractical experience described in the previous section by P2—or missing out on the work altogether.

3.2.2. The Perceived Relevance of Western Art Music

As well as changes to funding for the arts in the new millennium, there was a sense, particularly from the more established musicians, who had been around long enough to witness the changing landscape, that live chamber concerts were now valued less. One of the violinists was concerned that this would become a problem in years to come:

> It was always the case that you would see the average age of the music club or society audience is about 75, and then of course they die off and you just think, "well, who's going to come in next?", and then you'll see the next generation. As I get older, I'm not sure that next generation is an absolute given. My generation, yes they're still interested in music, but the next generation down and the generation after that: "music societies? Why do we need those anymore?" (P7)

This perception of aging audiences and decreasing interest in such concerts from the younger generations is also supported by research (Dearn and Pitts 2017) and paints a bleak picture for the future of chamber music in the UK.

Changes in education policy over the last decade are likely exacerbating this gap between generations with regard to interest in and understanding of chamber music. The UK government introduced the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) for schools in England in 2011—a collection of subjects that are considered to have the most educational value, and a performance indicator by which schools are measured. The EBacc does not include art subjects. In practice, this omission has resulted in a striking reduction in formal music education for children and young people, including instrumental learning (Bath et al. 2020). A recent report commissioned by the Incorporated Society of Musicians (Underhill 2020) has suggested that music education in schools has been further devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with almost 10% of primary and secondary schools in England no longer teaching music at all. One of the interviewees here opined that, as a consequence of these reductions

in music education, "fewer people are interested in going to concerts because fewer people know anything about what concerts are, or what music is, or have a personal connection to it" (P2).

Whilst the impact of the reduction in music learning may not be felt directly in terms of audience numbers at present, the general devaluing of western art music that has been cemented through education policy, in combination with the funding cuts over the last decade, has the potential to result in a lesser appreciation for western art music among future audiences. With chamber music itself arguably something of a niche within western art music, chamber musicians will have to work harder and more imaginatively to combat perceptions of elitism and irrelevance, and to grow their future audiences.

3.3. What Barriers to Inclusion Are There?

The participants were not asked directly about barriers to the profession during the interviews, but, during analysis, key barriers were identified that have important implications for equality, diversity, and inclusion in relation to the study of chamber music at various levels and for chamber musicians at different points in their careers.

3.3.1. Money

The barrier to the profession that came through most strongly in all of the interviews was money, and there were several different ways in which it was seen as a barrier. One interviewee who teaches in a UK conservatoire alongside their performing career noted that the rise in UK higher education tuition fees in 2012 changed students' attitudes towards study and work:

> It's a lot more expensive now than it was [when I was a student]. So even the first and second-year undergrads, they don't feel like they've got all the time in the world. They feel like they've got to succeed and the pressure of having to get good marks—and students have had that for the last century I'm sure but I feel like the pressure's on, because a lot of people are being slightly more realistic with them now, which maybe they weren't ages ago. (P1)

For prospective students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the high tuition fees, particularly for a degree in a subject that does not guarantee a steady source of income upon graduation, may be unaffordable or unjustifiable. Current students are keenly aware of how much they are investing in their training; they have higher expectations of their study experience and of themselves (Vigurs et al. 2018). They know that they must acquire and refine the skills necessary to earn a living when they graduate.

In relation to transitioning into the profession, several of the musicians spoke of the financial barriers that new graduates who are seeking to establish themselves as chamber musicians face:

> It takes quite a while to establish yourself doesn't it? [. . .] It's a gradual process. Initially you do a lot of things for free or for exposure or expenses. I worked a lot with, still do work a lot with, an Irish music promotion company. [. . .] When they were initially starting their company, I'd go over to Ireland a lot and do lots of playing for nothing more than my flights paid and a sofa to sleep on. You do these things to build the profile and build experience and contacts and all of these things. (P8)

As noted elsewhere in the literature on musicians' working conditions, there is something of an expectation that musicians who are starting should take on gigs for experience, little pay, or exposure (Portman-Smith and Harwood 2015). As such, this presents a barrier for musicians who do not have the financial security that would allow them to work for free or for very little pay. Some musicians in this position are fortunate to have financial support from their families; others, like one of the interviewees here, may have worked in a non-musical job to fund the first few months of insecurity. For other musicians, however, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, this barrier may be insurmountable.

This financial barrier around the transition into professional working life is potentially worse for string players who aspire to be chamber musicians. In addition to being open to exploitation as they establish their careers, these players must often also acquire suitable professional instruments:

> Some students come from families with money, so they can afford an instrument, while some students come from absolutely nothing and really need a violin. So, I will tell them that they need to do more free gigs where people choose what they play, because they can borrow an instrument and show off to fundraisers or sponsors. Whereas, for somebody who doesn't need an instrument I wouldn't think that that's a priority. (P1)

In the scenario described by this interviewee, students who do not have a suitable instrument upon graduation may be further disadvantaged. Not only must they find the money for an instrument, but, as they endeavour to do so, they may be forced to take on more performing work for free or without having much creative control or ownership. This reality further disadvantages musicians from less wealthy backgrounds both financially and musically, and may limit the direction that their careers can take in the earliest stages.

The financial challenges of sustaining a career that centres on chamber music were considered by two of the most experienced musicians interviewed. They

suggested that although it was possible to make a living primarily playing chamber music, it was not easy. As P5 explained: "If you've got a big mortgage to be able to support, all of those unpaid quartet rehearsals and things of that sort, those practical things can be the make or break factors". This lends further support to the notion of chamber music as a vocation that "doesn't add up" (P2) economically, and these financial barriers may restrict access to the profession to those from secure middle- and upper-class backgrounds.

3.3.2. Gatekeeping

One route into establishing a successful career as a young chamber ensemble that several of the interviewees described is through winning competitions or young artists' schemes. These tend to open doors to more prestigious engagements and opportunities. One of the musicians described this process briefly:

> It's so subjective what the public appetite and what the potential is for a group. It depends on the competition, it depends on who you're pitted against, it depends who's on the panel, it depends on what mood the musicians are in on the day, there are just so many variables. (P1)

It should be noted that, in the interviews, only three of the five musicians who entered the profession in the last two decades mentioned competition success as being instrumental in their own careers. Whilst success at competitions is not necessarily required to establish a career in chamber music, it certainly helps—a point that was acknowledged by almost all of the interviewees.

The adjudicators of competitions and young artists' schemes have a difficult task. They also hold a lot of power. Winning a competition can be a material boost for a chamber group. Awards often come with concert series or tours, as well as prize money and mentoring. Competition winners are an attractive prospect for concert promoters, and this can help groups to build networks of contacts and cement their reputations. In many ways, competition panels are gatekeepers to early success and opportunities for more stable income. Given the power they wield, it is important then that competition panels are diverse—both socially and musically—to prevent the same kind of groups playing the same kind of repertoire in the same ways from automatically being the most prominent voices within the profession, to the exclusion of others.

3.3.3. Encounters: Role Models and Realities

Some of the more recent graduates spoke of the influence that encountering established chamber musicians had in showing them that it was possible to earn a living as an ensemble musician. As one participant explained, until he encountered these musicians personally, he had not realised that this was a possibility:

> I didn't always know I wanted to be a chamber musician. I grew up in South Africa, so there's not a lot of quartets around to look up to and so I only really discovered what it was when I started studying. I knew what it was, but I didn't really know how to listen to them, or I'd never really seen more than one live in my life. [. . .] I started doing a little bit of freelance work with orchestras while I was at college and seeing what the kind of value of playing was, that there was potential to make money out of music, because I'd never really met anybody who had done it, or understood it first-hand. (P1)

This is an important barrier to inclusion. This participant attributed this lack of access to his geographical location; for others, opportunities to play chamber music and encounter chamber musicians may depend upon their access to performances or to instrumental learning. To aspire to a career in chamber music, a young musician must know that such a thing exists, so they must encounter chamber music and musicians. In addition to knowing it exists, they must also know that it is possible for them: they must be able to relate to the role models they encounter—to be able to visualise themselves in similar roles (Gorman 2017)—and also have opportunities to acquire the necessary skills, both musical and extra-musical.

Within higher music education, there is much that institutions can do to prepare their students for the realities of the profession. One of the musicians explained that despite her own careful planning for establishing a portfolio of work that centres on chamber music, she was not aware of these realities when she graduated:

> I thought that once you were getting relatively high-profile concerts at places, and once people were acknowledging that they were happy to book you and people were happy to pay you money to come and hear you in a concert, I thought that concerts would be financially viable and sustainable, and therefore that promoters would be happy to take you and agents would be happy to take you on; that within a couple of years of leaving college it would be relatively easy to get yourself a manager or some person who would take some of that administrative responsibility away from you. I now think you have to be very lucky to get into that situation, and many of the larger groups that you look at as a student are actually doing most of the stuff themselves. I wasn't aware of that at all. (P3)

It should also be noted that the most recent graduates interviewed here left their postgraduate programmes in the early 2010s, and the intervening years have seen higher education institutions devote more attention to careers and employability curricula for their students. However, it is useful to also consider the important role that instrumental and vocal teachers play in providing direct access to the profession as role models. There needs to be more consideration and transparency around how

success is portrayed so that students are able to make informed decisions as they visualise their futures and design their careers (Bennett and Bridgstock 2015).

3.4. Professional Identity

The musicians interviewed in this study all had established portfolio careers that placed chamber music at the centre of their working lives. All of them did some teaching—many of them as instrumental or chamber music tutors in higher education institutions. Some of them had additional work such as freelance orchestral work, or running chamber music courses or festivals. Most of them had a main ensemble that they worked with; some also had other ensembles they played with regularly. In talking about the decisions that they had made around the balance of work in their portfolios, a tension between diversification and specialisation became evident. One of the violists spoke of his time with a prominent quartet as a period of intense specialisation:

> During all those 20 years with the quartet, I did, I think, no other playing, apart from bits of solo playing locally. There was no time for any orchestral work in London. I think the strength of the quartet's lifestyle and the danger of it was that it was epic, so that when it went wrong, or when you stopped, I had no other contacts, no other experience going on. And after 20 years, I couldn't really go back to being a violinist. [. . .] The downside of always only doing the quartet, even though it means you don't have the problems of scheduling other work in and so forth, is that you are effectively cut off from the profession, and then to get back into it is a hell of a lot more difficult. (P5)

For this player, the advantage of being able to focus solely on the quartet was the total immersion in one thing that was artistically satisfying and all-consuming. He spoke of the unique lifestyle the quartet were able to forge through their imaginative programming and careful curation of opportunities that would likely not be possible for today's quartets in the UK, given the much bleaker arts economy. The danger in specialising, as articulated by this player, is that it has the potential to narrow the musician's skill-set and network. This narrow and deep approach could, at one point, have been advantageous for a chamber musician's career. For today's chamber musicians, however, the disadvantages seem to outweigh the advantages.

Another player also reflected on this tension between specialisation and diversification and how she perceives the focus has shifted over time:

> I did my undergrad 2002 to 2005 and then my postgrad 2007 to 2009, and it felt as though we were still being trained for the industry maybe as it was in the 90s, when there was much more funding available for things and possibly people didn't have to be quite so business-minded as they do now.

> I think the successful youngsters coming out of training now have really got a very astute sense of [. . .] the need for versatility; whereas, I think I was actually actively encouraged not to be versatile but to specialise. I think that's possibly more the old model and it's quite interesting for me that actually I am quite a versatile musician and I have gradually found my way back to that versatility. [. . .] But it does feel like a factor in the whole thing is the way that the industry has changed. (P6)

Beyond the practical, economic reasons for not pouring all of their skills and resources into a single project, and in line with existing research on performers' careers (Haldane 2018), other musicians suggested that building a diverse portfolio of work strengthened the overall quality of their music making.

> I think that you need to have space from each other in order to be able to bring other things into the mix; different life experiences, different musical experiences, they all feed into being a more rounded quartet player or chamber musician. I think that's really important. [. . .] It's important to have the other things too. I think it is possible to [play together] full time, but you might end up killing each other. (P7)

This emphasis on diversification seems to be more important in the 21st century than it was for chamber musicians of a few decades ago. With tougher working conditions and greater precarity in terms of employment opportunities, it is vital that today's players are versatile musicians with diverse networks of contacts and skills.

3.5. What Skills Do Today's Chamber Musicians Need?

Chamber musicians need a wide range of musical and extra-musical skills in order to establish and maintain successful careers.

3.5.1. Musical

All of the interviewees agreed that, above all else, chamber musicians had to be skilled in music performance:

> First and foremost, the performance side of things has to be good. You can't ever forget that what people are paying to hear is the music. (P4)

This player is speaking in terms of the quality of the musical product, but the interviewees agreed that it was as much about the creative process itself. As another player explained:

> You need to keep the music itself at the absolute core of everything that you do. Just the music: that should be the thing that occupies the biggest bit of your mind and your thinking. Let the rest of it take care of itself. (P2)

Of course, this music-centric perspective is in direct tension with the more pragmatic, business-minded perspective—"head vs. heart", as one participant (P6) described it. Another participant described the effect this tension has on his thought process when he programmes a concert:

> You've got to think: "Are people going to want to come to it?" (P8)

Ultimately, there was a general consensus that chamber musicians have to reconcile these two, often opposing, perspectives at some point to find a balance between artistic satisfaction and generating income. It seems likely that this challenge is not unique to chamber musicians; soloists, too, must think strategically as well as musically when they plan their own programmes. For chamber musicians, however, there is perhaps the added complication of the programme being agreed on by more than one musician.

3.5.2. Entrepreneurial

Business acumen has become increasingly important in the 21st century, as the profession has become more competitive. Some of the interviewees felt that the competitive environment has inspired some positive consequences in terms of innovation and creativity:

> Somehow now people have to be a bit more creative and imaginative about making things happen, which has its advantages. The fact that it forces people to be creative is a really good thing but I think it puts a lot of pressure on people to spend time on filling in funding applications and doing all of those other things rather than having the luxury of just practising their craft. (P6)

This account of the way that this business perspective underpins artistic work further underlines the characterisation of musicians as entrepreneurs. Another interviewee described some of the many such skills she employs to pull together a single performance:

> I feel like I have to split my brain so many different ways. I'm the promoter of a group, I do the marketing, I do the design of the concept of the concert, then I need to do the logistics on the day of the concert, and I need to perform. Performing often ends up feeling like it's the last thing that has to be done, and that feels a bit weird. All of these other things need to have happened for the performance to happen. In a way they're more important otherwise you'll never get to the performance, but actually I feel like the performance should be the most important bit but it gets pushed down the pile. (P3)

Since business skills like the ones listed in this participant's account have become essential to success as a chamber musician, higher education institutions must equip their music students with a range of these skills.

3.5.3. Social

An important facet of chamber musicians' work is working with other people. The social dynamics of small groups in any context can be intense, and in the context of collaborative performance, where there are artistic decisions to make and egos to bruise, these dynamics can be fragile indeed (Murnighan and Conlon 1991; King 2006):

> There are all sorts of interpersonal skills that come into play: diplomacy, tact, kindness, honesty, reliability, because for working in particularly a small-group situation you need to be a good colleague in all those general senses. [. . .] You have to learn as a musician what the difference is between criticising somebody else's musicianship and working together to find an idea of how something might go, and that actually it's not a question of right and wrong or superior and inferior; it's just working together to find an agreed endpoint. (P6)

These interpersonal skills seem to be as important today as they have been for decades, probably centuries.

As well as nurturing existing relationships with co-collaborators, the participants spoke of the importance of networking with other artists to generate new and exciting collaborations:

> You need to be good at networking with people—and not just phoning up people on a superficial level, it's like becoming friends with people with similar interests and then looking at how you can collaborate together, because I think that the most interesting partnerships come from genuine relationships with people. (P3)

Interpersonal skills extend beyond the inner workings of the group itself to how well the musicians can connect with audiences and organisers.

> You can't just walk on, play the programme, be very formal, say nothing, and walk off and expect the audience to have a wonderful time [. . .] I think most societies really appreciate a well-rounded evening's entertainment. They want to hear what you've got to say about music, and you're enhancing their enjoyment. (P4)

This point was made by the more recently established chamber musicians who were interviewed. This indicates that this skill may have become more important to today's audiences and, by extension, the promoters who arrange concerts.

Meanwhile, social media has become a new way of reaching audiences in the 21st century. This presents challenges and opportunities for chamber musicians. One of the more established musicians described some of the pitfalls of social media and self-promotion:

> We hate all of the social media, because we're all of a certain age. We weren't raised with that, with the expectation that you self-promote; that you post stuff the whole time. [. . .] This is the thing that I know is affecting youngsters now. They go on social media and they see that all their chums: "Why are they in Seville playing with that group? I thought I was being asked to play that and I'm not", and that brings huge questions about worth and inadequacy, and I think it's extremely dangerous this whole business of comparison. (P7)

There is an excellent point here around the effects of social media on musicians' mental health and wellbeing, given the expectation that they should engage with it to some extent professionally, if not personally. Nevertheless, networking and marketing via social media are important tools for the 21st century chamber musician.

3.5.4. Self-Awareness

All of the musicians interviewed spoke of the importance of developing a critical self-awareness as soon as possible around what they are good at, what they enjoy, and what they want to do. Speaking about his higher education teaching experiences, one of the interviewees explained:

> I guess what students are trying to do early on and what I'm trying to help them with is to figure out what they want to do and what they're good at doing and what they enjoy playing and all that stuff. (P1)

By cultivating these skills in self-reflection during their studies, musicians are then able to make more informed decisions about their working lives (López-Íñiguez and Bennett 2020). The capacity for reflection continues to be important for professional development. One player spoke of a gradual, hard-won awareness of what brought him the most joy musically:

> I was sat there cross-legged on the floor in the middle of the gamelan playing multiphonics and making these huge gongs resonate in the national concert hall and I just thought: "This is it. This is what I want to be doing. I need variety". (P8)

Various researchers have emphasised the importance of teaching students how to engage in self-reflection (e.g., Esslin-Peard 2017), and have come up with innovative ways of facilitating this process (Bennett 2013). Self-awareness through

reflection seems to be a vital skill for 21st-century chamber musicians throughout their careers as they make decisions on everything from who to collaborate with and the kinds of performance projects they find most rewarding, to more practical considerations around working patterns and travel commitments.

3.5.5. Resilience

The final skill that 21st-century chamber musicians need is resilience. To navigate their competitive professional environment, particularly in the early years of their careers, chamber musicians need to develop a thick skin and find ways of maintaining their motivation:

> You have to have great staying power and be very good at putting up with disappointments when you do auditions and you think you've played really well but you don't get anywhere, and when you meet this age-old conundrum that you don't get offered professional work until you've had experience of playing professionally. Little by little you get those few opportunities and you've got to be very persistent and keep finding ways to not get depressed, and basically have a life support system. (P5)

One way of fostering resilience may be through embedding self-reflection in music curricula. The relationship between resilience and self-reflection, whilst not yet empirically explored in relation to musicians, has begun to be explored among competitive athletes, with studies suggesting that self-reflection and self-insight may result in greater resilience (Cowden and Meyer-Weitz 2016).

4. Conclusions

The findings of the interviews reported in this chapter very much support the notion of chamber musicians as entrepreneurs in a competitive environment. This is not to say that they do not place the music at the centre of what they do—it was clear that the musical experience remains the primary motivation for 21st-century chamber musicians. It was also clear, however, that the new millennium has brought many challenges to establishing and sustaining a career in chamber music. The lack of well-paid and high-quality performance opportunities seems to be the main challenge and contributor to the competitive working environment. This, in combination with the devaluing of music within education, waning interest in classical concerts among younger audiences, and a perception of classical music as the preserve of the white and wealthy, has also exacerbated the pre-existing barriers for equality, diversity, and inclusion within the UK's classical music industry, and particularly for chamber musicians. Ultimately, breaking down these barriers will require systemic change from the ground up.

4.1. Removing Barriers: Inclusive Music Education

Today's chamber musicians, and those aspiring to become chamber musicians, face various barriers, particularly in the early stages of their careers, that discriminate against those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This further entrenches the bias towards white middle-class musicians that is inherent within classical music and that is established from the early stages of formal music education (Bull 2019). For the music industry to be truly inclusive, music education must first become inclusive. We must advocate for and invest in high-quality music education for all. There is promising work going on within music education to further this agenda, including how high-quality instrumental tuition can be extended to children living in remote areas (King et al. 2019), how we can improve the quality of music education provision for disabled children (Ockelford 2015), and how we can facilitate meaningful and pupil-centred music learning for children and young people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds (Kinsella et al. 2019). To facilitate musical inclusion, there must be investment both in music education and the arts. The exclusion of music from the EBacc in England has had detrimental effects on the perceived value of music, but it has also further widened the gap between pupils from less privileged backgrounds and their more privileged peers. The EBacc, as a performance indicator, has encouraged schools to focus on teaching the "core" subjects with optional, "less important" subjects, such as music, being side-lined. For some schools, often those with more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, the mounting pressure to perform well on metrics like the EBacc seems likely to be reflected in the decreasing numbers of pupils sitting GCSE and A-Level music examinations (Whittaker et al. 2019; Bath et al. 2020). For the provision and uptake of music education to be improved and broadened, an important first step would be the inclusion of music and other arts subjects in the EBacc.

Ensuring high-quality music-learning opportunities for all, from the earliest stages of musical training through to higher music education, is vital in constructing an inclusive pipeline that leads directly to the profession. Tomorrow's chamber musicians will be the pupils who have opportunities to learn and continue learning instruments, and to encounter chamber musicians, chamber music, and performances.

4.2. Implications for Higher Music Education

At the time of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, a profound effect on the working lives of all musicians. The pandemic has accelerated our use of technology to meet new challenges, and the importance of mastering the skills to utilise these technologies has been highlighted, as artists of all kinds stream live and pre-recorded events, and create and publish new content in response to the evolving situation. New skills have been developed, or existing skills have been

further refined, in relation to online technology for music recording, performance, teaching, and communication. As freelancers, chamber musicians have had to apply their creativity and resourcefulness to create new ways of generating income in the absence of live performances. As we enter a new period of social and economic uncertainty in the wake of the pandemic, musicians and recent music graduates in particular will face greater challenges than ever before.

Whilst higher education institutions cannot combat these new challenges directly within the profession, there is much that can be done to prepare music graduates to work as versatile musicians who are aware of the realities of the profession and will succeed despite the challenging and unpredictable environment they face. In addition to the various skills outlined in the findings here, it is more important than ever that higher education music curricula provide students with opportunities to develop depth of skill in one or more areas, but also interest and competence in others (Bennett 2007). In order to survive and thrive in today's music industry, chamber musicians must be able to be more than chamber musicians. Flexibility in professional identity as well as attitude, and competence in developing new skills, are becoming ever more important as the industry undergoes sudden and unprecedented changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, as well as working hard to widen participation, higher music education must ensure that students encounter diverse and representative role models via instrumental tuition, master-classes and concerts, and that they are well-informed about the realities of the profession.

Whilst the early impact of COVID-19 has been devastating for the arts sector, chamber musicians have been employing their impressive skill sets and creative ingenuity to survive. Meanwhile, the value of music in bringing together communities and lifting people's spirits in the face of extreme adversity has been demonstrated in many different countries, countless times over. As we begin to emerge from the initial impact of the pandemic and plot a new course for the future of the music industry, we are presented with real opportunities for rebuilding the sector with a focus on inclusion and with new ways of engaging with music.

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Transactional Culture of the Portfolio Career Chamber Musician: A Case Study

Jane W. Davidson and Amanda E. Krause

1. Introduction

In the European tradition, musicians have traditionally worked in intimate and domestic to large-scale and public settings. During the Early Modern Period (1500–1800), music was defined by its social function: church, theatre or chamber, the latter name describing the music created for performances located in a palace or large house and sustained through a system of patronage (Halle Rowen 1974). Chamber musicians were employed to entertain family members and guests. Sometimes, the patrons also decided to show off their musical skills to an audience. Vocal and instrumental chamber music evolved, sharing specialised traits that suited a more intimate performance space. Groups and the musical pieces they performed began to be referred to by the number of players and the instruments played, e.g., piano trio (for piano, violin and cello) and string quartet (two violins, viola and cello). The musical forms employed also became standardised: pieces commonly comprised four movements, which engaged specific speeds and harmonic relationships (Baron 1998; Keller 2010). Like any other genre, chamber music has developed over time, with combinations of instruments, numbers of players and musical forms being modified and the performance settings and audience types becoming more diversified (Wilschut 2018). Since the 19th century, the professional chamber musician has come to represent the epitome of collaborative musicianship, requiring consummate expertise to achieve cohesive performances. Achieving this objective requires technical and expressive fluency, subtle timing coordination and musicianship that is constantly responsive to the needs of the present moment. In terms of employment, chamber musicians today usually take freelance work offered by institutions and organisations, and the private patronage of an individual sponsor is a rarity. The systems of employment usually necessitate musicians joining pre-existing ensembles or working to develop and sustain a core ensemble. They must also become proficient in promoting and disseminating their musical products through performance and other public opportunities, such as social media posts (Bennett and Hennekam 2018). There is an increasing trend for centres such as regional or national concert venues to have specialist rooms that offer a more intimate ambience suitable for smaller groups (see Eltham 2012). Chamber ensembles are valued by venue management as they are usually less expensive to engage than larger ensembles (Roodhouse 2010).

The research presented in this chapter draws on case study data collected from chamber musicians performing at the Melbourne Recital Centre, located in Victoria, Australia. The researchers' aim was to explore how modern-day professional chamber musicians, the venues that engage them and the audiences that attend their live performances operate. By observing and analysing the transactional communications of three chamber ensembles and through interviews, the project sought to identify how chamber musicians negotiate around potentially differing values related to artistic skill and endeavour, public engagement and entertainment, prestige and financial viability. While "interaction" (direct involvement with someone else) is often discussed in relation to musicians and their practices, for the purpose of this chapter, we selected the term "transaction", as it focuses attention on the Latin root of the word to *transigere* (to bargain, settle a matter or accomplish), thereby highlighting acts of giving and receiving and embracing a need for compromise for successful performance. From this perspective, the working practices of musicians encompass a complex web of transactions. The current research also enabled an exploration of how these chamber musicians find employment, how their ensembles are booked by a particular venue, how they plan their programs and how the performances function as transactions between musicians and their audiences.

In framing chamber musicians' experiences in terms of the transactions they engage in, the chapter is contextualised particularly within the existing research literature on chamber group development, which reflects the dynamic and evolving dimensions of musical ensembles and their relationships with audiences and venues. This offers insights into the micro- (interpersonal) and macro- (organisational/cultural) experiences of professional chamber ensembles, by exploring the ways they grapple with the musical and social demands of the profession, and manage contacts and communications. The chapter concludes by discussing how the current conditions for those involved in chamber music might fruitfully consider their future, particularly in terms of audience development. It also includes a preliminary discussion of the potential short- and long-term effects of COVID-19 on the transactional culture of the future chamber musician.

2. Chamber Music and Transaction

If culture is "a shared system of values, norms and symbols" (Louis 1981, p. 246), music certainly constitutes a rich part of it. While culture is developed through and contained by societal, organisational and institutional structures, it varies according to who it is experienced by, and where and when it is experienced (Hall and Hall 1990). Thus, regulated social transactions (developed over time) reflect micro- (e.g., interpersonal) and macro- (e.g., social systems) relationships. These complex transactions can be understood as a "patterned transference of material . . .

and immaterial (status and power) items between individuals and groups" (Patel and Rayner 2015, p. 288). Each social exchange involves values, meaning making, attraction, merit, respect, benefit and cost, etc.

Research studies of chamber musicians and their practices highlight the responsive nature of transactional experiences. For instance, a recent ethnography of the Artico Ensemble—a group comprising a singer, bass clarinettist, clarinettist and pianist—shows how musicians constantly modify practices, so that even when the same program is repeatedly performed, differences in audience and venue demand different behaviours from the performers (Wilschut 2018). Thus, as shown in the context of sports (Crawford 2004), music performance transactions operate in a loop-like system: musicians applying knowledge, appraising, evaluating and acting between themselves, in continual response to the audience. As van der Schyff and Schiavio (2022) stated, "Distributed across personal and environmental domains (bodily, social, material, technological)", transactions both "stabilise and evolve over various time scales—-from impulses and adaptations, to how creativity unfolds over rehearsals, negotiations, and multiple performances" (van der Schyff and Schiavio 2022).

A concept that further demonstrates the complexity of transactional culture is that of *affordances*, or the possibilities for action in a given environment. This concept was first described by James Gibson (1966) and includes action in both natural and human-made environments, with different affordances arising depending on the person's background, training and physiology. These affordances may differ within an individual as a result of different stages of development, histories or circumstances. Therefore, for chamber musicians, the music they play affords multiple opportunities for interpretative decision making based on the knowledge, expertise and preferences of the players. Moreover, the personal circumstances and physiology of the ensemble's musicians will generate multiple and changing affordances as they transact with each other to bring the performance to fruition. Affordances will also arise in interactions with the audience who bring their own capabilities, circumstances and history to the event. Similarly, the acoustics and other physical attributes of the concert venue, together with transactions and interactions with its management, will all give rise to a range of possibilities for action, each of which may have performance consequences.

In the context of the current chapter, the transactions that underpin chamber musicians' experiences, particularly those related to exploring performance opportunities and their affordances, are examined. These illuminate a series of highly individualised balancing acts that keep musicians open to expanding their skills and repertoires. Above all things, engaging with venues and audiences to optimise interest may keep the performers motivated and in employment.

2.1. Making a Living

Over the past two decades, changes in practices relating to taxation, music licensing laws, recording and other technological developments alongside arts policies have led to volatility in both earning potential and employment opportunity for musicians (Bartleet et al. 2019). Elaborate business, social and operational transactions have been necessary for musicians to fulfil their career goals, including economic sustainability (Klein et al. 2017). A recent study found that musicians' employment portfolios contained more than 560 different job titles, the most common, 25%, being "instrumental musician", with 10% being "private music teacher" (Bartleet et al. 2019). Of those musicians surveyed, 70% had worked for more than 10 years, and nearly one in three had practised as professional musicians for more than 20 years, giving an indication of the commitment musicians have to sustaining their careers, even though they experience highly variable and evolving circumstances.

Musicians report a love of their craft and the creative and emotional expression it affords, alongside personal identity fulfilment (McPherson et al. 2012). In the study by Bartleet et al. (2019), musicians reported that live performance was their most common paid activity, and it offered them the greatest motivational incentive, personal reward and satisfaction, even though the amount of money they earned was generally not sufficient to offer financial security. Live performance opportunities were also key to musicians renewing their skills and developing new peer networks and creative collaborations. Live performance was also critical for exposure, audience building and linking with various employment networks, such as concert venues and festivals.

It is perhaps not surprising to discover that Bartleet et al. (2019) found strong indicators of resilience in musicians' creative and financial endeavours. Musicians developed skills in both their music-focused and music-facilitating roles, as well as building their ability to promote, plan and negotiate concerts effectively. To find performance work, performers need to demonstrate that their work is valued and supported. To achieve this objective, they must deploy diverse and agile skills in marketing, promotion and social networking. The attainment of both musical and facilitative skills by musicians has been perceived as a sound risk management strategy (Bridgstock and Cunningham 2016).

Higher educational institutions that train elite classical musicians do not typically offer training to address the enterprise and entrepreneurship skills required to secure an income as a musician. However, Bartleet et al. (2019) underscore the pressure on musicians to assuage risks, including being prepared to move to seek employment, and to work highly irregular hours with a wide range of employers (also see Bennett 2016a, 2016b). Additionally, there is a need for musicians-in-training to have up-to-the-minute skills in self-recording, promoting and distribution for digital platforms such as YouTube and Spotify (O'Reilly et al. 2014; Haynes and

Marshall 2018). Equally, although resilience is often an attribute of those who successfully manage these diverse demands, there are many others for whom these multiple requirements lead to stress, anxiety and unfurling physical and mental wellbeing problems (Innes 2021). Certainly, the mental and physical stresses and strains of playing music are increasingly addressed by teaching institutions, with subjects such as music psychology entering the conservatorium and higher education curriculum (see Kreutz et al. 2008; Osborne et al. 2014; Williamon and Thompson 2006), but the stresses and strains of irregular low-paid work, often in evenings, is less frequently addressed (Bridgstock 2013; López-Íñiguez and Bennett 2020).

By exploring the relationship between chamber musicians, a particular venue and its audience, the case studies presented in this chapter permit the investigation of some of the diverse skills and strategies required to cope with these issues and earn a living. However, prior to the presentation of the case studies, it is necessary to understand the specific musical and interpersonal skills demanded of the chamber musician to achieve interpretative and expressive excellence.

2.2. Musical Skill and Interaction

For a chamber ensemble to cohere musically, there needs to be a shared level of skill, with the musicians also needing to be able to come together and draw on common signs, symbols and behaviours to coordinate their ideas on timing and expression (Davidson 1997). Shared affordances relating to musical knowledge along with developed aural and visual skills, including the alignment of body movements and gestures, all contribute to make the musical product mutually understood and communicated. The balance of long-term knowledge and the capacity to manage moment-by-moment modifications bring about the alchemy that makes each musical interaction unique.

A study of the Gryphon Trio (pianist, violinist and cellist) revealed that coordination was dependent on various kinds of subtle intrapersonal cues and interpretations of them, with body sway being the most pervasive (Chang et al. 2019). Similarly, a study of two pianists preparing for a concert of duets revealed that high-level musicianship was coupled with a range of non-verbal gestures, eye-contact and verbal discussion, though the latter was very restricted (Williamon and Davidson 2002). As they approached the performance, the pianists increased eye contact and adapted their body movements to accommodate each other, with the more demonstrative pianist curtailing movement and the less demonstrative increasing movement.

It is necessary to establish shared musical goals quickly since rehearsal time is at a premium (Goodman 2000; Blank and Davidson 2003). For optimal transactional flow, prior knowledge of the 'rules' of music, performance and social etiquette is required. As Davidson and King (2004) report, successful chamber ensembles devise a rehearsal plan for the material they will practice, but always show flexibility to facilitate focus on issues that may emerge. A study of the Kreutzer Quartet (Bayley 2011) revealed how specific player transactions occurred at different times during rehearsal. For example, technical talk, such as deciphering the score and its notation, came early on, with interpretative musical concerns becoming more dominant as the rehearsal progressed. It is also advisable to plan to deploy a range of rehearsing methods, such as working on key structural sections to establish a sense of the compositional arc; rehearsing sections in and out of sequence; and undertaking run throughs to situate tricky moments, build stamina and a sense of trajectory for the whole piece (see Davidson and King 2004).

It is evident that the high-speed processing of complex information and mastery of knowledge and skills is required in chamber music performance and that rehearsal is vital for planning and consolidating skill ahead of performance (Kneebone 2009). In fact, rehearsal is a key site to bring together individual contributions to iron out technical problems, develop shared musical ideas and consolidate expressive aspects; rehearsal can also be regarded as preparation for future unpredictable events during performance. Studying a student string quartet as they practised and then performed revealed how actions that had been well rehearsed enabled quick re-alignment when a performance went awry (Davidson and Good 2002). The immediacy of response required to recover and reunite the team was reported as "being ready to adapt". For example, the first violinist was quickly able to cover for a momentary pitch slip by the second violinist by making a micro-tuning alteration in performance. Researching a popular music quartet, Geeves et al. (2014) revealed how the ensemble came under threat when one player began an unplanned improvisation in performance. Swiftly following the musician deviating from the performance plan, the three other team members used eye contact and gestures to guide them out of the musical problem. This particular example of transactional responsivity within a chamber group highlights the complex distributed cognitive activity across mental, physical and material resources that is involved.

2.3. Intergroup Social Cohesion

Besides the time and strategies required for successful musical goals to be achieved, the group needs to operate as a functioning social unit. Perhaps one of the strongest social aspects in developing transactional fluency relates to building a sense of connection or "affiliation" to the group. An example of an affiliative chamber ensemble can be found in the Lindsay String Quartet, which is presented

as a cohesive musical unit, touring and recording globally for more than 25 years. (Davidson 1997). They had studied together, worked and socialised together and supported one another through difficult periods. Despite a sort of musical equity in the quartet format, they took on very different roles: the first violinist was the public face of the group, speaking at concerts, and working to secure financial support. The other members, also known for their teaching, were perhaps less obviously central to the operation of the quartet.

As work on group function reveals (Douglas 1983), clear roles often emerge, sometimes as a result of struggles within the group. In a group such as a string quartet, cohesion might be facilitated by the instruments being from the same family and making similar sorts of musical contributions; however, there is also interdependence on the maintenance of boundaries. As Murnighan and Conlon (1991) discovered, in string quartets, the fact that there are two violinists can lead to clashes. Additionally, in a group of four, a 2–2 deadlock or 3–1 out-numbering can arise, with either sub-grouping having the potential to play negatively into the overall dynamics. In a string quartet studied by Davidson and Good (2002), a clash in leadership between the two violinists shaped the rehearsal dynamics between players. Detailed analysis of the verbal exchanges of the string quartet members revealed a complex, longstanding web of interpersonal relationships that underpinned and shaped the interactive behaviour between the players.

2.4. Audience Experience

Audiences are experts at detecting and interpreting both the musical and social cues of musicians and understanding the interactions between performers and audiences (Broughton and Davidson 2016). Indeed, it can take as little as two seconds to assess the performer's musical intention (Davidson 1991). The audience members can also appraise the degree of social liking, familiarity and cohesion between the musicians (Davidson 1997, 2009; Davidson and King 2004). Modeling the different social constituents, Davidson (1997) noted the possibility for multiple and often concurrent performer–audience relationships: a whole performance group to the whole audience; a single performer or sub-set of the performers to the rest of the performers and the audience; a single member or subset of the audience to the rest of the audience and the performers; within audience experiences.

Study across multiple case studies and performance contexts has revealed that when attending a live music concert, an audience member (irrespective of genre) is most typically actively seeking a meaningful experience. In such situations, the performer–audience encounter is often shaped by a cycle of "experiencing-preserving-revisiting" (see Burland and Pitts 2014, p. 175). If audience members experience positive and "meaningful" initial encounters, they will seek to re-experience or extend the memory of that involvement. "Meaningfulness" comes

from a range of "in-the-moment" experiences shaped by the interaction of situational (physical and social features of the performance, including the size of the audience), personal (physical and emotional state; temperament and disposition) and musical and performance factors (experience of musical structures and the performers' interpretation of them). Together, these can culminate in strong emotional responses (Gabrielsson 2010), sometimes manifesting as peak, transformative experiences (Karlsen 2014). Social identity impacts can include creating a sense of community belonging (McPherson et al. 2012). Where an initial exchange is negative, there is little or no desire for continued involvement as an audience member. If the quality of experience deteriorates on repeated exposure to performances, involvement will also wane.

A study of music festival attendees (Karlsen 2014) not only revealed that personal, situational and musical factors influenced repeat attendance, but also identified a range of contributory mediative factors. Mediators included the apprehension of the musicians' enjoyment, contact with the musicians, well-known or familiar music, use of humour by the performers, the quality of the work performed and the atmosphere generated (Karlsen 2014, pp. 118–19). These combined factors led to a sense of communal sharing, and it seems that reinforcement among audiences, performers and the programmed content enabled "telling, re-telling and celebrating" (Karlsen 2014, p. 124). Such experience is not exclusive to music festivals; a concert series, regular touring and other repeat opportunities enable such memories and allegiances to develop.

While fandom is typically associated with teenage pop culture, there is strong evidence that followers of classical music are also keen to familiarise themselves with the performance, recordings, social media and personal information of their preferred artists (Burland and Pitts 2014). In exploring the Lindsay String Quartet, Davidson (1997) noted how the strong relationship established among the performers, the audience and a specific venue setting led to a strong following. Over many years, "the Lindsays" developed the Music in the Round Series at the Crucible Theatre's Studio in Sheffield, UK. A distinguishing feature of their performances was that between pieces and movements of works, the quartet members would talk to the audience, explaining the music, how they approached various musical decisions and technical challenges. An anecdote about their personal experiences of grappling with these matters was often thrown into the discussion. The leader, Peter Cropper, was particularly adept at conversing with audience members, asking them for feedback and talking in quite a familiar manner. The venue's "in the round" format and limited seating capacity of only 400 afforded these opportunities. As a result, it was almost impossible to buy tickets for the Lindsays' concerts. This formula of success is clearly appealing to the venue, the performers and the audience. As discussed by Dobson and Sloboda (2014), audience members are eager to feel engaged and involved in

the performance and seek out the live conditions above the passive experience of listening to a recording.

2.5. Summary

The explored literature shows that musicians create a work structure for themselves, and, in the case of those who play music suitable for the chamber format, forming an ensemble is a key component of their portfolio practice. Chamber musicians collaborate with organisations and venues to develop and sustain their ensemble's identity and to gain employment. Collaborative intragroup transactions—both musical and social—are critical to the ensemble's cohesion and emerge from developing shared affordances. Besides intragroup dynamics, how the musicians entertain, inform and move their audiences musically and interpersonally seem vital to building a loyal fan base and secure future engagement with the concert platform. We reflect on these core elements in our case study.

3. Case Study

The following case study involving the members of three ensembles, a significant chamber music venue and several audience members investigates the role of each in creating a chamber music event. In this way, and in focusing on chamber musicians' intragroup transactions, as well as their interactions with audiences and venues, the interdependencies and interrelationships among the three are revealed.

3.1. Venue

The Melbourne Recital Centre (MRC) is one of Australia's premiere live music venues, hosting up to 700 concerts, and engaging with around 400 Australian ensembles and 100 international ensembles annually (MRC Annual Report 2018–2019). This means that more than 210,000 people attend the venue annually. The MRC comprises two concert spaces: The Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, a 1000-seater hall that hosts all styles of performance, from soloist to symphony orchestra, and the 150-seater Primrose Potter Salon, which hosts workshops and lunchtime, rush hour and evening concerts for soloists and chamber ensembles. Both the hall and the salon are internationally acclaimed for their acoustics, designed by the award-winning acoustic engineering firm Arup in 2009. While the size of the ensemble often dictates which venue is used, artists do transition from smaller to larger venues on the basis of demand and growing audience base.

This case study focuses on artists working in the *Local Heroes Series* (LHS) in the Primrose Potter Salon. The series aims to "provide a platform for Victorian and Australian ensembles by subsidising presentation costs, providing a guaranteed fee and support in promotion and audience development" (MRC Annual Report 2018–2019, p. 11). The series aligns strongly with the MRC's strategy to offer a venue

where "bold music makers and passionate audiences make profound connections that resonate for a lifetime" (MRC Annual Report 2018–2019, p. 18). The objective of LHS is to promote live music to audiences by presenting artists and commissioning musical works, thus focusing on place (the MRC), people, platform and program. While these strategic goals include programming that reflects the broad geographic, economic, social and cultural diversity of the state of Victoria, the LHS focuses mainly on classical chamber music (though there are exceptions to this). It was advertised on the MRC's website in 2020 as: "bringing together Melbourne's best artists in a year-long festival of chamber music. . . . [From] strings to piano, early music to contemporary and art song to tango, there's something for every musical taste" (Melbourne Recital Centre 2020).

3.2. The Ensembles in Focus

While there were more than 50 ensembles featured in the 2019 program, three ensembles that offered three concerts that year and had performed in the LHS series for seven consecutive years were selected for close study to gain insights into how they built audiences and developed performance approaches. We explore their interactions and transactions in working with the venue to develop and support both their concerts and broader careers over a considerable timespan. Consistent with the ethics permissions obtained from the University of Melbourne to carry out the research, all ensembles and participants were anonymised using pseudonyms for the names of the ensembles, and numerical codes were applied to each respondent, with P signifying performer and A denoting audience member.

The GM Quartet is an all-male ensemble established more than 15 years ago. It is committed to bringing new music (music composed post-1945) to its audience, and arranging music for the guitar quartet format. SQ Quartet is an all-female ensemble comprising long-established friends in search of opportunities to play their favourite main string quartet repertoire (Beethoven, Schubert, Shostakovitch, etc.), and is known for its sensitivity towards historically informed practices. CK and Associates was selected as it offered a slightly different format, focusing on CK as a well-established Australian pianist who is known for his solo concert and radio work. He has run three concerts per annum within the LHS for the past 7 years, bringing in guests to perform various key works from the chamber repertoire, including piano quintets and piano trios.

These case study data were first collected throughout 2019 and included the following: contextual information provided by the venue and the ensembles via email; field observations of the performances; and focus group discussions with performers, venue staff and audiences. We attended one third of the entire LHS, engaging with the venue, artists and audiences to experience the concerts live and to be able to discuss the impact of the series from the perspective of earning a living,

offering opportunities to invigorate the strategic principles of place, people, platform, and programming developed by MRC (ibid., p. 18) and for public experience.

While demographic details have been withheld due to the ethical conditions of the research and efforts to maintain individuals' confidentiality, a total of eight venue staff, nine performers from the three ensembles and 15 audience members contributed to the data presented in this chapter. Performers and venue staff were purposively sampled. Convenience and snowball sampling techniques were used to recruit audience members to take part in post-concert focus groups. Participating audience members received complimentary concert tickets for their participation in the study. Data were prepared (transcribed where necessary) and analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, providing the practical examples in this chapter.

4. Case Study Results

In this section, we highlight the emergent themes from the literature, which are discussed in relation to the case study ensembles through four main topics: making a living in Melbourne, musical cohesion, intragroup/social cohesion and audience.

4.1. Making a Living in Melbourne

Consistent with music performance more broadly, across the three ensembles, all performer-participants earn their living via portfolio careers. The GM Quartet members make their main income from working in teaching, but all are strongly committed to their ensemble, focusing their effort towards the LHS as an opportunity to present their best work, as well as creating programs that both challenge and excite them. They regard these concerts as high impact for their status as an ensemble, thereby reflecting their reliance upon the prestige associated with the world-class MRC to boost their careers, and highlighting how the success of venues and chamber groups is interdependent.

The SQ Quartet comprises professionals who also play in other ensembles, supplementing their performance-focused portfolio with some teaching. For all members, the quartet is an activity fitted in and around other commitments. They acknowledge that developing the profile of the quartet beyond its current series of performances is not in their purview. The LHS offers important paid work, and diversification of their performance portfolios. It also enables them to brand the quartet as a distinctive entity when promoting themselves as individuals or members of other ensembles in other forums such as broadcasting and recordings. As one member noted when asked about expanding the quartet's work to touring:

> I kind of feel like that's not the most achievable thing . . . there's no money, like, there are no, almost no chamber groups in Australia that survive. (SQ Quartet P1)

For them, the ensemble is not a route to financial stability; rather, each member enjoys the diversification and many different and varied forms of performance.

In the case of CK, LHS gives him ongoing presence in the public eye. He comments:

> Having one concert doesn't give me that much. It's having—I suppose on a career level—having a series there just gives me some sort of regularity of appearances in Melbourne . . . So having a series sort of gives me a regular vehicle to play in one place . . .

While the fees for the LHS performances were commensurate with Musicians' Union rates, and at three concerts per annum, were considered important regular slots in the work portfolio, it is the branding aspect of the series, with its potential for attaining further economic benefit that is critical to CK and his fellow ensemble members. These broader performer goals are strongly supported by the MRC. The artistic planning team note that the series is based on the following:

> A chamber music focus—small and intimate
>
> Enabling artists to build skills
>
> Supporting local artists to develop an audience base
>
> Opportunities to engage with other MRC programs
>
> (regional touring, special events). (LHS 2020)

To provide such opportunities, however, the MRC must use strategies to ensure the ongoing success of LHS, including devising participant selection criteria. When auditioning groups for the series, MRC appraise:

> Focus on professional, with a high level of musical achievement
>
> Clear artistic vision for the group and the proposal
>
> Good support material
>
> Suitability for our spaces—tech, size, etc.
>
> Previous sales at MRC (where applicable)—have they developed their audience?
>
> Connection with audience—Facebook stats, social media presence, our experience with artists from previous seasons
>
> Potential/suitability of work. (LHS 2020)

4.2. Musical Cohesion

Without question, when observing the performers in action and discussing the LHS with them, musical goals and synergies were key points of emphasis, revealing the nature of high-level musical skill, which manifests a deep and impassioned engagement with and strive for musical progress. Indeed, in the interviews, first reactions were typically an appraisal of the quality of the playing.

The GM Quartet spoke with enthusiasm about their feelings of happiness with the sound balance and standard of performance. One of the players noted:

> I really think that the thing that we're still trying to really fine tune in rehearsals, and certainly on stage, is . . . to get this thing [the ensemble] to be a very slick well-oiled machine . . . getting that felt sense of what's going to happen or how someone is feeling the next phrase. (GM Quartet P1)

When asked to think about what had changed in the ensemble from a year ago, the response of another member was revelatory:

> I think a more relaxed group . . . I think, musically, there's much more cohesion. (GM Quartet P3)

This comment indicates that intragroup communications, both musical and social, were transactional rather than interactive. Indeed, critical to the Quartet's progress was a sharing of musical techniques, skills and resources. The distribution of work across ensemble members in the preparation of the concert seemed to bond them, again demonstrating the transactional nature of their relationship. Different members either arranged, composed or sourced music which they felt would work well for the ensemble.

The members of the SQ Quartet highlighted the uniquely rewarding, yet highly competitive, aspects of the string quartet repertoire:

> Quartets are so nice to play, . . . it's like you're a soloist but you've sort of got friends there. (SQ Quartet P1)

Like the guitarists, ensemble playing was seen as an opportunity to hone their craft:

> Every time you play you hope that you are sort of getting better . . . on the way to being more comfortable and better. (SQ Quartet P2)

This mitigated the potential for combative types of behaviours. Nonetheless, ensemble members were also required have developed transactional-style

communication skills to negotiate the challenges associated with this aspect of string quartet performance. The success of the SQ Quartet's endeavours in this regard was evident in CK characterising the LHS concerts as offering a tremendous opportunity for sharing music with others.

Testifying to the MRC's ideal for venue–ensemble communication to be transactional and inclusive, the artistic programming team of the MRC felt that a distinctive feature of the LHS was to:

> Allow for artist-led programming
>
> Repertoire that reflected balance, diversity, vibrancy
>
> Some focus on Australian music
>
> Some music by female composers. (LHS 2020)

In the concerts offered by the three ensembles discussed here, the first two factors were addressed in each concert, with each of the other two addressed in at least one performance across the year. Additionally, all participants referenced the deep possibilities of musical and social sharing inherent to transactional styles of communication, which their spirit makes all the more achievable.

4.3. Intragroup and Broader Social Communication

This theme was clearly articulated by ensemble members, with a sense of connection or association through interpersonal transactions demonstrably vital to the progress of their work. In the GM Quartet, they were keen to note that across their work on the series, there was:

> More harmony. Like, not in a musical sense, but I think between us. (GM Quartet P3)

This included:

> More subtle communication, I guess, rather than big, overt cues. We're getting better at reading body language. (ibid.)

Another member of the GM Quartet noted:

> The more concerts we've done, I think we've really felt as . . . certainly as a group, much more comfortable in our skin and in the room there. (GM Quartet P4)

The final phrase of this disclosure found significant concurrence with the observations of venue staff, who all commented on how increasing venue familiarity led the performers to develop and offer a more relaxed and interactive performance.

As observers watching the ensembles interact with venue staff, the building itself, the venue before and after the concerts, and with us in interviews, the closeness and deep familiarity they shared was evident. Further confirming the transactional nature of ensemble communications, and indeed demonstrating the effectiveness of such an approach, this ranged from jokes, "knowing" looks and glances, to comments or advice shared amongst one another. In conversation, one member would defer a question to another, or recommend a specific individual to speak about a topic as it was their area of strength. There was definitely a sense of camaraderie and mutual support.

On stage and between items, whether spoken or not, there was an interpersonal connection between performers and audiences, which was particularly noticeable in the two quartets. For example, the four guitarists took it in turns to introduce items and would discuss amongst themselves to confirm information. Alternatively, they would sit quietly smiling and agreeing with their colleague who was talking to the audience. The players were aware of this important dynamic, as a member of the SQ Quartet noted:

> I think the audience pick that up, because a few people said to me about the rapport between [us], how much they enjoyed that. So I think that the fact that we all felt good, then, in turn, they felt good. (SQ Quartet, P1)

Thus, rapport is regarded a product of transactional relationships.

4.4. Audience Experience

The study confirmed that musical genre affects audience attendance. Moreover, there appeared to be a correlation between the type of audience member, the ensemble and its musical offerings. With the GM Quartet, the experimental, novel and challenging musical offerings seemed to be what the audience was seeking most of all.

> I sort of like that random event as well. (A1)

> I was more about—I didn't know any of the music—I had never heard any of it before, so I was surprised that I got into a few of the pieces more than I anticipated that I would. (A2)

For those who attended the classically focused concerts, a marked preference for musical experiences that were familiar to them was frequently observed. They were likely to attend to hear a specific composer or work, or because they followed the artists. For both the SQ Quartet and CK and Associates, this was highly evident.

In speaking about CK's concert, one audience member stated:

> Yeah, I guess . . . I attended because I've listened to some Brahms in the past and I really enjoyed Brahms. I like Brahms as a composer . . . just the composer yeah and the instruments. I like stringed instruments. (A3)

Another audience participant speaking about SQ Quartet commented:

> I thought it was a very appealing programme actually. Mainly because it was a quartet, yes . . . Yes, and the composers. Particularly Haydn. I knew that that was going to be fantastic. (A4)

While classical music audience responses certainly indicated that satisfying the attendee's pre-existing musical preferences was helpful to building ensemble–audience rapport, audience members often displayed an openness to accepting something different within a program of otherwise favoured items. Although this point was made in many of the interviews, it is epitomised in the following single quotation:

> Yeah, I also liked the Philip Glass piece, although I like American minimalism in general. I also liked the first toccata from the last piece, which was the first movement that they played. I kind of liked the jarring nature, but I think I went into this concert feeling pretty energetic, just as my mood when I went into that concert. I was feeling pretty like, I could probably run a lot right now. It was [the music] very relaxing, and I have to admit at first I was like, okay, this is a change of gear here. So, when that more jarring, crazy energetic music came at the end, I felt like, oh, this is more my speed right now. So, that was nice. (A5)

Further to these favourable experiences of familiarity, and just as the researchers were attentive to the transactional communication between the players, so too were members of the audiences. One audience member stated:

> I was really compelled to watch how they interacted . . . like musically interacted with each other. (A1)

Another audience member spoke about the guitarists' gestural communication:

> I was very intrigued by watching the different players' faces and their playing styles. Two were facially quite expressive, and two were quite neutral. So I don't know why, I was just watching their faces quite a lot to see—just sort of comparing them I suppose. (A6)

This intimacy of proximity was also apparent in the comment of an SQ Quartet audience member, who stated:

It's the intimacy and I love just watching the eye contact and I just love chamber music. (A7)

Intimacy was explicitly attributed to venue design and size by an SQ Quartet player, again revealing the interdependencies among ensemble, venue (in this case its physical attributes) and audience that is characteristic of chamber group concerts:

I think it's that venue . . . Like, it is quite an open but intimate venue so you do feel like you're more . . . part of the performance. And I think that the fact that you [artist] spoke just makes people feel a bit more at ease and less formal. (SQ Quartet P3)

CK was also acutely aware of the audience and the need to help them feel connected, balancing spoken information flow with playing.

I think it is [important]. People often say that they would like some sort of communication with the performer. Some people talk too much, and I'm very wary of going on and on and on. But I think it's important, and I haven't come across a situation where people don't like it when somebody's talking.

CK's audience members noted:

He was very engaging and he was really trying to contact people and it was nice. He was revealing some little things about himself . . . (A8)

I thought it was really good the way he introduced them [the pieces and the co-performers]. He didn't ramble on and it didn't seem insincere or too practiced. It felt very natural and I thought it added some good insights into the piece and the process, so yeah I liked it. (A9)

Demonstrating the benefits of developing followers for chamber musicians, one audience member stated:

I know so many of them and it's printed. I'll go online, "yep, I know them"—the artists. If I don't, I'll look them up and then I'll spend until 3 in the morning listening to them on my iPad. (A7)

5. Discussion

The literature and case study data have presented evidence of the micro- (interpersonal) and macro- (organisational/cultural) experiences among professional chamber musicians, the venues that engage them and the audiences in attendance. The chapter has shown how all invested parties view values related to artistic skills and endeavours, public engagement and entertainment, prestige and financial

considerations. Additionally, as outlined in the transactional approach to business (Patel and Rayner 2015), "knowledge, appraisal and evaluation", or to use other terminology in the current chapter, "skills, affordances and evaluations" are critical to ascribing value in all transactions. The data presented have shown that plans, actions and responses feed the scope, quality and outcomes of music performance ecology.

Emergent themes include the delicate balancing of economic, esteem and diversification values for both performers and venues in planning and accepting the ensemble and its approach, as well as the works to be performed. Musical cohesion, as well as interpersonal social interaction, offers a further point of emphasis at all levels and across all stages of planning and executing the performances. Pivotal factors surrounding the audience experience include depth of emotional experience, a balance between familiar and novel encounters, informality and experience of social inclusion. There was evidence of individual preference towards certain performance elements.

It has been shown that specific and often subtle transactions shape the motivations, planning and execution of ensemble performances. While different stakeholders inevitably have different and varied experiences, their transactions contribute to the virtuous cycle of the embedded environmental, social, cultural, material and technological factors and the actions afforded, which constitute chamber music performance. The "art of ensemble performance" seems to be a distributed process, dependent on critical transactions for all stakeholders. Indeed, in our exploration of the transactional culture of chamber groups, the interdependency of venues, audiences and ensembles in terms of their musicking experiences and behaviour was particularly noticeable.

Of course, following the data collection and during the period of writing this chapter, the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged the world. One of the financially most deeply affected sectors was the arts, with live events being cancelled globally. To offer insights into the prospects for the music ensembles and MRC entering the 2021 concert season, and as concerned researchers, we followed up with participants to understand how these challenges were affecting them.

The musicians were surprisingly sanguine, although this should perhaps not be unexpected at all. As shown in this chapter, chamber musicians' performance opportunities vary greatly from week to week and year to year, and so they are no strangers to dealing with uncertainty. Moreover, with portfolio careers involving diverse skills and the capacity to build strong interpersonal relationships, afforded by the transactional skills inherent to success in their chosen career, they are well placed to pivot towards fortuity rather than calamity in their approach to the challenges COVID-19 posed and continues to pose. While their concert income had evaporated, those with teaching portfolios became occupied with adapting their

skills to online delivery and acquiring new technical skills in video conferencing and recording. Others took the opportunity to consolidate their personal practice, learn new repertoires or arrange new music. Indeed, for some, taking the time to "smell the roses" and enjoy being with their families was an unforeseen and positive consequence of strict travel and social-distancing restrictions, including curfew. Therefore, while home isolation meant much less performance work and an associated drop in income from that source, it also opened other horizons with both tangible and intangible benefits.

For the venue in particular, a skeleton staff developed strategies and actions to sustain business, as well as to offer support to musicians. This included a series of digital concerts and online competitions (with entrants submitting entries recorded in their home settings). For them, it kept something of the ethos of the venue alive, offering an opportunity for the performers and engagement for audiences in a new forum. Indeed, transactions that are adaptive and creative enable stakeholders to seek routes to realise "COVID-19 Normal", a future in which the culture of ensemble performance can continue, moderated using socially distanced live performance without intervals and online variants suitable for potential lockdowns.

This chapter has not only shown how vital transactions are to chamber musicians, but also how they exist in an embedded environment and are dependent on the individual's skills and the affordances they share with stakeholders. Moving forward, and as we grapple with the challenges of COVID-19 in the sphere of musical performance, the chamber musician may find this model of their music performance ecology useful as a reflective tool to aid in understanding the nature of the transactions they participate in (see Figure 1).

While our case study involving one venue and three ensembles provided valuable insights and confirmed the value of transactional communication, future studies replicating our methodology but involving different and multiple venues, and expanding to other types of chamber ensembles within the western art music arena, would provide further nuance and enable meaningful comparisons to be made.

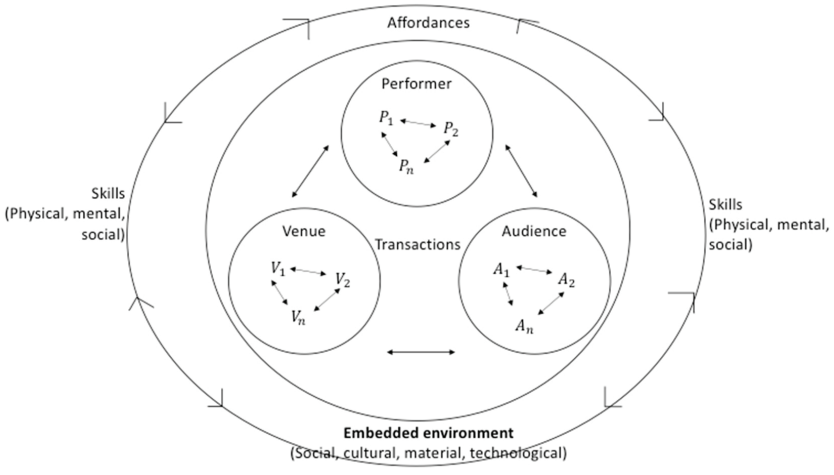

Figure 1. This image shows the transactions among musicians, venues and audiences that are guided by physical, mental and social skills, within an embedded social, cultural, material and technological environment and its affordances. A vital part of this model is dynamic–synergistic flow of informing and transforming factors. (This figure is inspired by van der Schyff and Schiavio (2022) and Davidson (1997)). Source: Graphic by authors.

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The Many Faces of the Freelance Performer of Contemporary Music in the 21st Century

Zubin Kanga

1. Introduction

Performing contemporary music requires a particular set of skills. Understanding new forms of notation, boundary-pushing virtuosity, new instrumental techniques, and the conceptual challenges of articulating complex sonic architecture are among the many challenges that the performer of new music must master. There are other skills and challenges facing the new music performer, however, away from scores and instruments, that are as vital to a performing career as musical expertise.

Recent generations of musicians working in contemporary music are increasingly self-managing their work rather than relying on agents or management teams. These musicians now need to learn the skills of agents and managers as well as those of marketers, PR agents, lawyers, fundraisers, project managers, social media managers, and compositional coaches. The increasing use of digital technology in both their performances and their marketing also demands that new skills be acquired, from a wide knowledge of computing and audio-visual hardware to skills in programming, photography, and video editing. These many faces of the contemporary music performer are largely unseen by audiences, yet they are vital not just to their careers but to the entire contemporary music ecosystem. One might call these "entrepreneurial" skills, but this term connotes an approach that is driven by growth and profit. As a result of the current challenging arts funding environment, many music companies and institutions have adopted neoliberal ideologies of market power and economic growth. Although these practices can be used to support artistic innovation, they should not be mistaken for goals in and of themselves (Ritchey 2019). For individuals focusing on contemporary music, this disjunct between means and ends is even clearer. The priority is rarely the maximisation of profit—it is primarily the creation and performance of new music, with many musicians (including myself) supplementing their performance income with other work despite having a busy performing schedule. I will, therefore, simply call the skills I discuss in this chapter "non-musical skills": unrelated to the craft of music yet necessary for a career as a musician.

The set of skills and approaches I discuss in this chapter are required of musicians working across solo as well as chamber music. There are significant continuities between the working modes, conditions, constraints, and opportunities

experienced by soloists and chamber musicians, with the research findings being relevant for both kinds of practice. The main difference between these modes of working is that in chamber groups, the skills and related responsibilities can be distributed among the members, and coordination between members in undertaking these tasks can be as important to the survival of these ensembles as their compatibility as musicians. Some solo/chamber musicians apply these non-musical skills to a range of repertoire and styles, but as with musical skills, there are also non-musical skills that are specific to contemporary music, requiring a degree of specialisation. As (primarily) a specialist in the performance of contemporary music, I will cover both specialised and general non-musical skills to show the full range required by freelancers.

Although my focus is UK-based musicians and their careers within the UK's new music scene, many of the skills and conclusions can be applied much more widely, not just to other countries but to musicians across many specialties, genres, and styles. This chapter has two main parts. One is a case study of one of my own touring projects, examining the many skills and costs required during the two years of commissioning and performing. The second is a survey of mid-career freelancing contemporary music performers that sheds further light on the range of skills developed and utilised by 21st-century musicians, their approach to self-training in these skills, the time and financial pressures of self-managed work, and some of the troubling discriminatory issues that they face as freelancers.

2. The 21st-Century Music "Industry"

Most musicians and researchers would agree that there is no single music industry, but many different intersecting cultural industries (Williamson and Cloonan 2007; Dromey and Haferkorn 2018). Contemporary classical music is a relatively small and idiosyncratic part of this larger cultural ecology but shares many main features with other larger sectors, and it is subject to the same economic conditions. Although the current generation of freelance musicians faces many new challenges, the economic environment is not so different from the industry of the past. Since the late 18th century, performers have faced similar challenges of self-representation, self-promotion, and tour logistics as well as the economic pressures of live concerts (McGuinness 2003). However, it is also clear that the internet has transformed what it means to be a musician, alongside broader funding and economic changes that have demanded new skills and knowledge (Rogers 2013). Although I touch on this transformation of the industry in this chapter and discuss the views of musicians in my survey, my aim is to provide a snapshot of the skills and economic conditions of the contemporary music performer today, whether these are skills that have been required for centuries or skills that have only emerged in the post-internet age.

There have been a few insightful research projects touching on the specific skills required to be a freelance musician in the internet age. Wilson and Stokes (2002) identify many of the business skills that are required of musicians, stating that their research has demonstrated

> the need to reconcile the virtues of "independence" with such qualities as appropriate partnership and promotion strategies, effective communication skills and financial self-sufficiency in order to optimise exchange conditions for cultural entrepreneurship. Such a reconciliation demands an unusual ability to combine understanding and experience of financial and management affairs with specialist music knowledge and skills. (Wilson and Stokes 2002, p. 51)

Susan Coulson's (2012) interviews with classical musicians in Northeast England offer further insights. She calls them "accidental entrepreneurs", with few of them considering themselves to be running a business and most rejecting the label of "entrepreneurial". Nevertheless, they were likely to self-identify "business-like" behaviours and skills such as organising their projects and maintaining their networks and to emphasise co-operation and community as their priorities (Coulson 2012, p. 251). Coulson identifies a danger in discussing musicians' work in terms of economic impact and, as previously mentioned, I agree that these skills should be measured as tools for artistic aims rather than in terms of entrepreneurial success. Indeed, Coulson's findings chime with my own experience of the current generation of contemporary music performers, who value collaboration and a sense of community over competition.

In another chapter in this volume, Davidson and Krause discuss the demands of a portfolio career on chamber musicians in Australia. Their case study on the GM Quartet shows how the quartet's inclusion in a prestigious series, "enables them to brand the quartet as a distinctive entity when promoting themselves as individuals or members of other ensembles in other forums such as broadcasting and recordings", but these benefits must be weighed against the time commitment required of all of the members and the other opportunities and responsibilities within their diverse portfolios. For them, "the ensemble is not a route to financial stability; rather, each member enjoys the diversification and many different and varied forms of performance".

Gross and Musgrave (2020) have highlighted the psychological pressures faced by self-managed musicians. They discuss the many roles and "logistical and organisational skills and knowledge" required of musicians across a range of genres:

> Many of those we spoke to had a wide variety of roles within their musical work. For instance, some of the roles we heard about alongside music making and music performance involved artist management, starting

> their own record labels, teaching music … applying to third-party agencies, consulting, having a radio show … running choirs or producing for theatres. (Gross and Musgrave 2020, p. 43)

Significantly, they found that "becoming your own brand and presenting what you have to offer in the digital sphere has become a full-time occupation" (ibid.). For emerging artists, it is vital to "catch the attention of a live agent" and, even for established professionals signed to a label, "online work for many is part of a daily routine" (ibid.). On the question of whether the current generation of musicians faces new challenges, Gross and Musgrave argue that the current digital environment "exaggerates existing conditions while producing new ones", which can result in a disconnect between perceived success and financial security. As one of their interviewees explained:

> Because of the way the music industry works, it's all sort of sold to people. It's smoke and mirrors. … From the way you have to promote yourself on social media, some people think I'm a millionaire! [But] I live in my Mum's loft. (Interviewee quoted in Gross and Musgrave 2020, p. 51)

Kirsten Thomson (2013) concurs that the internet age has created unique opportunities and challenges for musicians, stating that "technology has ushered in this era of artist as a free agent, both in control of his or her creative output and able to leverage value on the open market" but also documenting the large number of income sources musicians need to juggle in order to sustain a viable career (Thomson 2013, p. 523). The specific skills and economic environment of contemporary music have been much less researched, with the majority of these studies examining the conditions for composers through academic surveys (Smith and Thwaites 2019; Farrell and Notareschi 2021) and surveys by peak bodies (Sound and Music 2015; Bleicher 2016). With performers forming a vital component of contemporary music's creative ecology, examining their skills and challenges in more detail is vital to ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the whole new music sector.

3. Case Study: Applying the Freelancer Skillset in Tours 2018–2019

In order to examine the skills required of a self-managed performer, I will begin by discussing my own experiences. I am primarily a soloist, specialising in new works combining the piano with new technologies, and have collaborated with many of the world's leading composers, performing 120 world premieres. I have also had a parallel career as a chamber musician, however, performing as a core member of Ensemble Offspring and the Marsyas Trio, and in many guest performances with other UK and Australian ensembles. In 2018 and 2019, I toured a series of programmes featuring newly commissioned works, all using different

combinations of piano and multimedia. The majority of these programmes featured Alexander Schubert's (2018) internet culture-focused work *WIKI-PIANO.NET*. These programmes were performed in different combinations in 27 performances, featuring at major festivals and series across the UK, Denmark, Germany, Austria, France, the Netherlands, and Australia. As sensitive details will be discussed, I have anonymised the composers as well as the presenters when discussing specific negotiations, budgets, and correspondences. I have divided the skillsets into several major categories. Although there are various overlaps, there are also clear distinctions between skills in business and management, legal expertise, marketing and PR, managing budgets, and managing the audio/visual technical requirements of contemporary music.

3.1. Management and Self-Representation

Although management agencies are still taking on emerging musicians as clients, in my experience, this is rare for freelancers working in contemporary music. Indeed, of all the musicians interviewed as part of this research, only one had representation in Europe. For self-managed freelancing musicians, many of the tasks and roles that might have been taken on by agents and managers must be filled by the musicians themselves. And even for those with management, freelancing musicians still need to understand these skills and share many of the responsibilities with their managers.

3.1.1. Networking

Networking is vital for freelancers who are attempting to build relationships with powerful curators and directors. Although networking has become a fundamental part of the industry, it is a skill that musicians are rarely trained in and that many introverted musicians (myself included) find difficult. Locations for networking vary widely. I have had the opportunity to meet curators at concerts on many occasions. These are often random meetings, however, and can be difficult for those without any mutual contacts. In many cases, luck plays a large role in gaining the ear of the right curator.

During the 2018–2019 tour, I also attended events whose primary aim was to create networking opportunities. The most prominent of these was Classical NEXT, held annually in Europe—those I attended were in Rotterdam (The Netherlands) and Hannover (Germany). Classical NEXT attracts festival directors, publishers, and curators from a wide variety of countries (including most of Europe, a number of countries in South America and Asia, and large contingents from Canada and Australia). Although I found this musical marketplace initially daunting, I have had increasing success over the course of three attendances at this event by developing better strategies for building networks and pitching proposals. I was then selected

for a showcase performance in the 2022 iteration, facilitating even greater access and visibility to curators and directors.

Although networking opportunities are theoretically open to all, networking is a practice that can advantage those from privileged, "insider" backgrounds and disadvantage many structurally disadvantaged groups, that is, groups whose disadvantage is embedded within the structure and practices of organisations and institutions. This includes women, members of ethnic minorities, trans and non-binary people, and people who are disabled or neurodiverse (see further discussion below). Another negative side effect of networking is the exacerbation of alcohol overconsumption. Melissa Dobson (2010) has examined the role of alcohol as a career facilitator in socio-professional contexts, particularly after concerts, and argued that the availability of alcohol as well as its cultural acceptance among musicians can lead to a much higher average intake of alcohol, exacerbating addiction and other mental health problems (Dobson 2010, p. 249).

3.1.2. Pitching

Pitching a programme involves contacting a curator and sending a proposal in the form of a programme list and short description. Some curators respond well to themes or other "hooks", and many respond well to proposals utilising professional visual design and photographs. I utilised both of these strategies during this touring period, but I find it difficult to ascertain how much they contributed to a proposal's success. Even for a very successful tour, pitching has a low success rate, making it very time- and labour-intensive. I sent out 111 proposals to festivals and curators from 2017 onwards, which resulted in 27 performances of solo piano and multimedia repertoire in 2018 and 2019—a 24% success rate. Only four of these resulted from "cold calls", where I had no prior contact with the curator or connection via a featured composer—-an overall success rate of 7% when considering the cold calls alone. Even for existing relationships, many follow-ups were often required (in one case up to seven times) to get a response. Although I had complete control over the choice of programmes and presentation to the curators, the extra time and labour of designing, contacting, and following up required many additional hours each week—a significant addition to any musician's schedule.

3.1.3. Negotiation

The final stage of discussions with a presenter is the negotiation of a fee and conditions. In these situations, a representative is far better placed to argue the value of a musician than they are themselves, given an individual's lack of points of comparison for fees and the impossibility of objectively judging one's own value. My own negotiations often featured at least one stage of requesting a better fee or conditions, but the power imbalance when negotiating with large organisations

meant that substantial changes were rare. In the past, I accepted performances for no fee, and emerging performers will often accept these terms in return for the opportunity to perform at a major venue or festival.

3.1.4. Project Management

Planning and presenting a contemporary music concert, even with the support of the presenting organisation or festival, require project management skills. For newly commissioned works, I needed to manage the fundraising and contract writing as well as the negotiations with the composers. In the lead-up to an event, a photographer, designer, PR agent, and programming assistant were often required. In addition, presenters often have many staff requiring different types of information to first negotiate the event and then prepare for it. In one extreme case, the email exchanges with venue staff included:

- A total of 24 emails to pitch and discuss the project, negotiate terms and discuss initial technology and marketing requests;
- A total of 5 emails to discuss programme notes;
- A total of 20 emails to discuss marketing;
- A total of 27 emails to discuss the details of the technology requests.

On the day of a concert, up to 16 staff need management—in one case, I was managing an electronics assistant, a venue manager, two venue AV staff, two lighting staff, a photographer, a piano tuner, a film crew of three, the barman/catering for the interval, the front-of-house staff and two ushers, and my PR agent (who was still organising media engagements on the day of the concert). Managing all of these staff while simultaneously setting up and rehearsing for a concert is a challenging skill that few musicians receive any training in. The logistics of touring also require significant time and organisation, booking travel and accommodation, and planning travel between airports, hotels, and venues with large amounts of equipment. Planning these logistics while also keeping to very tight budgets requires months of preparation.

3.1.5. Legal Expertise

When drafting and negotiating contracts, as well as other music business decisions, I needed a wide range of knowledge of many areas of law. Touring requires knowledge of international tax treaties, visas, and work permits. Drafting contracts for composers requires an understanding of standard contract clauses and language. Negotiations with presenters require an even wider and deeper knowledge of many areas of law. Many musicians have little training or knowledge in these areas, leaving them open to inadvertently agreeing to non-standard or even exploitative contracts. For example, liability and insurance clauses can seem

particularly opaque to the inexperienced. In one case, negotiating the clauses around public liability insurance and liability transference required me to undertake a close reading of that country's insurance law, which saved me hundreds of pounds in costs. Rights over recordings can also have many confusing components. In one contract, I surrendered the commercial rights over the live recording of the concert but negotiated restrictions over the specific ways it could be featured and exploited by the presenter. Many early career musicians lack the experience to successfully negotiate changes to these clauses, putting them at a disadvantage compared to musicians with professional representation.

3.2. Marketing and PR

Although many presenters have their own marketing plans, the majority require artists to implement their own plans to be able to draw an audience while under pressure and ensure a commercial success. The pressure is even greater for arrangements where the musician is receiving a door-split for their fee or taking on the financial risk of hiring the venue.

3.2.1. Print Marketing

My marketing for concerts in the tour involved a combination of physical media and online platforms. Some presenters produced physical media such as season flyers themselves, but additional concert-specific flyers were mostly left to the artists. However, with the cost of design, photography printing, and distribution factored in, the cost–benefit ratio does not always make this an efficient marketing tool. I produced flyers for only five of the 27 concerts in this tour (with design/printing/distribution for four of these totalling GBP 1100), although I also distributed series flyers produced by several venues. As with all of these skills, self-designing marketing materials can reduce these costs, but this also comes with the cost of the musician's time and labour as well as the prior costs of specialist software and self-training in graphic design.

3.2.2. Online Marketing

During this tour, I relied much more heavily on online marketing. I have a moderately strong (by contemporary music standards) social media following of 5200 followers across Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter: moderately high in comparison to many new music soloists and chamber groups, but certainly not the highest, and minute in comparison to major classical organisations such as orchestras or in comparison to musicians in popular music genres, who all consequently wield substantial marketing power compared to contemporary music performers.

My strategy for social media marketing focused on a constant stream of new content across different platforms, often balancing the personal and the professional.

Creating this content and curating four different social media sites (including edited videos for YouTube) with multiple posts per week in the lead-up to a major concert were very time-consuming but have resulted in an average doubling of my audience numbers compared to previous tours. Alongside this distribution of content, documenting events for future marketing requires significant investment, including photography as well as recording and filming concerts. This is very difficult, if not impossible, to do well without outsourcing these tasks to professionals with the right skills and equipment, although such outsourcing often totals over GBP 1000, sometimes resulting in all profits from a concert being applied to cover documentation costs alone. Potential audience members can also be reached more directly through the use of email lists: I have relatively small lists numbering close to 500 people in total, although the difficulty of enlisting new members to the lists and increasing the use of email filters make this a limited tool in comparison to social media, although still valuable for communicating with audience members who are less active on social media.

3.2.3. Public Relations

Public relations (PR) is also a crucial component of any marketing campaign, with the exposure of a feature article or review being worth thousands of pounds in marketing value. As part of this, a press release needs to be written, designed, and sent to dozens of press contacts two-to-three months in advance. Although many of the contact details for arts editors and TV/radio producers are now available online, a PR consultant has the advantage of established relationships with journalists to draw upon. Again, the time–cost benefit needs to be weighed. With the aid of funding, I hired PR consultants for eight performances of this tour at a significant cost (GBP 550–1500 per concert).

3.3. Fundraising and Budgeting

Besides the skills involved in undertaking a tour, there are many major costs involved. Fundraising involves a combination of application to grants from both public funding (such as through the Arts Council England) and non-government foundations and trusts (such as through the PRS Foundation and the RVW Trust), crowdfunding through platforms such as Kickstarter, and approaching private donors, all of which I undertook to fund this period of commissioning and touring. Grant applications can take weeks or months of work, with many requiring more than 20 pages detailing the planned project, its performances, its impact on the community, and the budget and budget justification. My crowdfunding campaigns relied on a persistent month-long campaign of emails and social media posts, offering rewards such as free tickets to concerts, listing in programmes, and an invitation to an afternoon party that I hosted for the donors to meet the composers. Enlisting

donors took the consistent cultivation of these relationships over five-to-ten years and inviting potential donors to concerts in hopes of them being interested in supporting a project when called upon.

Even with significant success in the fundraising for these projects, the costs for any event are high. To demonstrate this, I present the budget for a particular section of the two-year tour in Table 1. Three works were premiered, and the programme was then toured to three other venues for a total of four performances. Both public and private funding supported the project. As it can be seen, despite the funding and fees, I was left with only GBP 775 as profit for a project that required at least three months of intensive preparation for four performances (over three more months), with the majority of my fees being used to balance the budget. A lower-paid European performance that did not cover airfares was included in the tour as part of my long-term career goals in that country as well as some slightly better-paid performances in UK venues, including a festival, a pub-based series, and a university. The costs involved were relatively modest compared to other events, where flights, flyers, and (for self-presented events) the hiring of the venue and staff added thousands of pounds to the expenses.

The profits could be increased through less investment in the marketing/PR and documentation of the event, but I consider these as long-term investments towards future performances, so I weighed these costs against the opportunity cost of removing them from the budget. This type of investment is only an option for performers with a separate source of income—in my case, my academic position. Another possible solution would be applying for a larger grant, but this can be difficult when most public grants and trusts have tight limits for individuals as opposed to organisations or would be unlikely to award a larger grant for a relatively small-scale project. Some schemes are only available for commissioning funds or favour funding for commissioning over performance costs. In addition, most funders will not offer grants to projects requiring them to cover more than 75% of the costs, with some explicitly stating this as a condition (PRS Foundation 2021). Most importantly, many funding schemes do not account for the full extent of the administrative time required by performers to manage the project, including the application for the grant itself.

Given both the scarcity of funding, and the huge demand for it by performers, it should be clear why most solo/chamber performers of contemporary music require alternative sources of income. It also demonstrates the importance of publicly available funding schemes—without these, many contemporary music projects would simply be unviable.

Table 1. Budget for a series of four concerts, 2018–2019.

Expenses	
Commission fees for three composers	GBP 11,500
Specialist equipment for one of the works	GBP 500
Filming/editing for the film part of one of the works	GBP 1000
Filming and editing of the concert video recording	GBP 800
Fee for an electronics assistant	GBP 250
International airfares	GBP 300
UK intercity train fares (including for the assistant at the premiere)	GBP 275
Other travel within cities (including bus/Uber)	GBP 70
Accommodation, including for the assistant at the premiere	GBP 380
Online advertising	GBP 100
PR consultant	GBP 1500
Photographer	GBP 100
Additional equipment for performance	GBP 250
Additional cables/adapters required	GBP 180
Software required for two of the works	GBP 450
In-kind use of already-owned performance equipment (computer, interface, keyboard, cables, and software)	GBP 5200
Total Expenses	**GBP 22,855**
Income	
Funding grants (from public funding and trusts)	GBP 9000
Private funding from an individual donor to commission one of the composers	GBP 4000
Performance fees	GBP 2500
Travel and accommodation (when covered by the presenters)	GBP 430
In-kind provision of already-owned equipment provided by the performer (computer, interface, keyboard, cables, and software)	GBP 5200
Total Income	**GBP 21,130**
Profit/Loss	
Net Project Profit/Loss (without the performer's contribution)	**–GBP 1725**
Net Profit/Loss to the Performer (after contributions to the project)	**GBP 775**

Source: Table by author.

3.4. Technical Skills and Organisation

This tour featured works combining the piano with live technologies, which are the core of my current commissioning/performance projects. The use of electronics and video is a common feature of recent contemporary music, and most soloists and chamber musicians need at least a basic familiarity with the technology to communicate their requirements to venues. Unlike many of the other skills discussed, the skills around the use of audio-visual digital technologies are specific to contemporary music and are only occasionally required by solo/chamber musicians performing historical repertoire.

3.4.1. Knowledge of Equipment and Software

My touring programmes required investment in equipment—cables, adapters, and a sound interface to allow for ease of touring. Although most venues have the required cables and connectors, the precise inventory of each venue would always differ, and it became vital to have my own adapters and cables to supplement the venue's equipment. Building this set of equipment has required ongoing research and investment over the past decade.

The programmes also required a working knowledge of a number of digital audio workspaces (DAWs) and other software. These included: Max for complex live processing (using patches built by composers), Ableton for other live processing and samples, Logic as an alternative for samples (required by some composers), QLab for the syncing of video with click tracks and other elements and the web-based score performance application for *WIKI-PIANO.NET*, with some works requiring several of these to be used simultaneously. Being able to manage the electronics/video parts was not enough; I also needed to prepare and design all of the transitions to make them as seamless and swift as possible, which required many hours of planning and rehearsal. It should be noted that although my programmes utilised a lot of technology, I only required up to a five-speaker sound distribution—many solo/chamber electro-acoustic performers need to manage many more speakers and far more complex electronics parts.

3.4.2. Communication of Technical Requirements

Communication with the venues about the required equipment was also crucial for concert preparation. Detailed discussions regarding the connectivity options for projectors, the locations of power points, available microphones, lighting, and details of the specific PA (public address) system were required for each concert. Communication about the musical needs of each piece further included the number of audio inputs, the location of foldback, and the balance between the electronics and live parts. A typical email is shown below, where I explain the need for a mixer to switch the video source between two different laptops (out of three laptops that were required for this performance):

> For the video mixer—I think we should only need one. If you can mute the screen between pieces then that works fine, but do note that for some works the HDMI signal will come from my laptop and for others from Ben's at the desk, so there needs to be an elegant enough way to switch between these.
>
> For the keyboard, I can bring mine (49 keys) but if a larger one can be found, that would be ideal. Just needs to be MIDI, not weighted or sound producing.

Can I just check that the mixing desk will take at least 9 inputs? And both XLR and jacks?

For lighting, I'll need just one spot above the keyboard, or one on each side (to cancel out shadows).

I have attached a stage plan for your reference. (Kanga 2019)

The stage plan mentioned in the email (Figure 1) is a vital tool for communicating these many technical requirements.

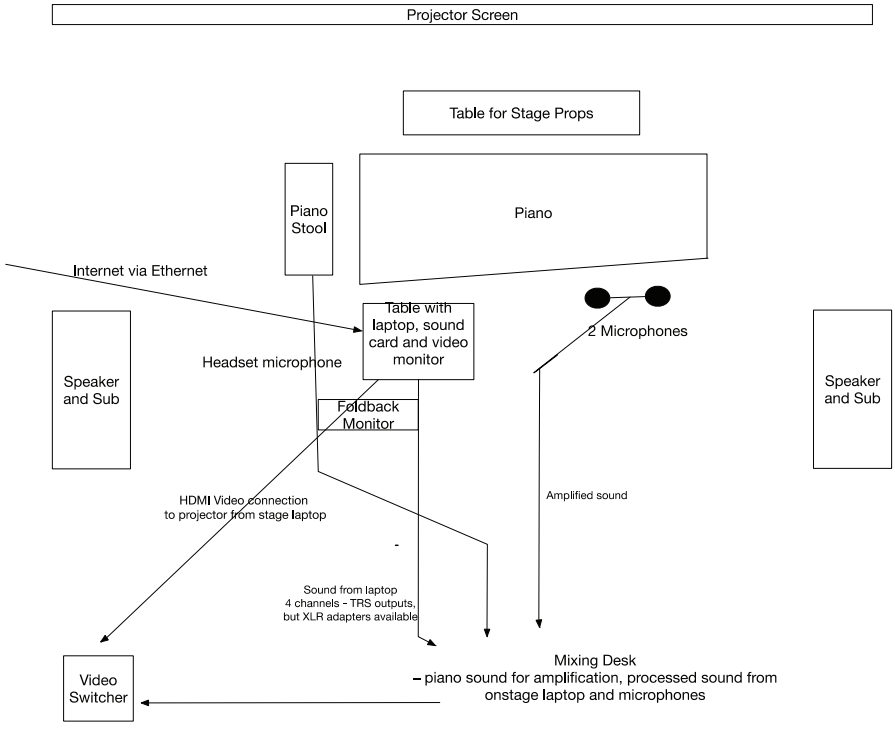

Figure 1. Stage plan created by the author for a Cambridge Music Festival performance, 13 November 2019. Source: Figure by author.

3.4.3. The Costs of Performing with Technology

There are significant time and financial costs to these technical requirements. The setup and soundcheck on the day require an additional four–six hours to a normal setup and an extra hour for packdown. Substantial time is required to communicate with the venues as well as preparing the electronics, including transitions, requiring many hours of additional rehearsal time. Each new software platform requires self-training over many weeks or even months, and the total costs of even basic cables and adapters add up quickly. In some cases, a recital will be so complex that

an assistant is required and paid out of one's own performance fee, as was the case in the budget shown above. All of these requirements create significant barriers to the 21st-century musician in engaging in new music that integrates new technologies.

3.5. The Freelancer's Time

All of these tasks took much more time than the time spent on the music. In the weeks leading up to some of the bigger events with multiple premieres, I was spending 24 hours of practice a week on the programme while spending around 36 hours a week on all of the other non-musical tasks. In smaller chamber groups, this additional administrative burden can be shared by the members, requiring collaborative planning, the sharing of contacts, and the distribution of tasks alongside the musical tasks of learning and rehearsing repertoire. In larger ensembles, distributing these tasks among all of the members becomes inefficient, and a small team around an artistic director usually takes on these responsibilities. In most cases, across this spectrum of solo and chamber music, the additional administrative workload is unpaid or only partially covered by funding. As we will see in the following section, many freelance musicians share my experience and observations about the skills and workload demands of the industry.

4. Survey of UK-Based Contemporary Music Performers

In order to place my own experiences within a larger context, a survey was undertaken in March–April 2019 of freelance solo/chamber musicians, all working in contemporary music in the UK. The survey was sent to a small number of selected performer colleagues by email as well as being posted on Twitter to elicit a wider range of responses, with this tweet receiving 10,128 impressions. Only responses from participants with established careers and a significant track record of featuring contemporary music as solo/chamber performers in the UK were accepted. Although some emerging and international performers also replied, their responses have not been included in this discussion. A total of 14 musicians were selected as eligible, all of whom are mid-career (age 28–48) UK-based contemporary music performers, performing across a number of instruments (piano, flute, clarinet, cello, guitar, percussion, voice). All have established careers and perform regularly at major festivals and venues around the UK, and all of them are self-managed. The survey covered the non-musical skills they use as part of their working lives as well as the challenges they have faced as freelancers. It consisted of a series of open questions to elicit free responses, with some participants writing extended multi-paragraph answers to each question. Follow-up questions followed in several cases via email interviews. All of the participants gave their consent to be included in the research, and all have been anonymised to protect their privacy. The main survey questions are provided in Appendix A.

4.1. Management and Business Skills

Many of the respondents focused on general administrative, organisational, and negotiating skills. Participant 1 (P1) stated:

> Mostly it's organisational skills—keeping track of deadlines, organising to-do lists (especially between [ensemble members] and I, so that the administrative work is divided evenly), maintaining contacts with venues, organising riders for concerts with electronics, negotiating fees (learning when to say "no, thank you" if a fee is just too low), etc. Filling out tax returns also big—have learned this process in four different countries now. My ensemble [is] also a registered business, which means a different tax process. (P1)

P2 also included the organisation of rehearsals and the writing of contracts as well as a number of marketing and staff management tasks associated with self-presented concerts, where there is an even greater pressure to sell tickets compared to concerts presented by a venue/festival:

> Applying for opportunities, proposing ideas, applying for funding, marketing, general promotion, accounting, budgeting, proof reading, designing posters, writing programme notes, liaising with venues/promoters/composers, booking musicians, writing contracts, getting insurance, selling tickets, organising front of house staff, booking venues, planning rehearsals, getting PRS clearance . . . the list is endless! (P2)

P3 mentioned many of the same core skills, which can be well summarised by their self-assessment as being "my own CEO and employee at the same time".

> The skills that I consistently tap into are:
>
> - producing (including running the budget, fund-raising, ensuring logistics run smoothly)
> - marketing (although PR sometimes outsourced to publicist)
> - pitching concerts (including writing proposals)
> - networking (not necessarily with any agenda, but always interesting to meet people and learn)
> - negotiating (including fees and conditions)
> - initiating collaboration (with interesting artists)
> - basically being my own CEO and employee at the same time—with strategising, self-producing records, running social media for direct-to-fan engagement
> - being my own coach—to ensure that I am physically, mentally and emotionally sound to continue delivering the work described above. This is so important (especially considering the competitive nature of our industry), and sometimes easy to be overlooked. (P3)

Among the skills listed, organising, keeping deadlines, social media marketing, pitching, communication with venues and presenters, and negotiation were the most common. More specialist skills such as writing (grant applications and programme notes), design work (using Photoshop and InDesign), technical preparation, and tax returns across several countries were also listed by some respondents. The majority of respondents mentioned that this work takes up a large amount, if not the majority, of their working time. P4 stated that "there are days you have to give over entirely to admin and accounting and forget practicing".

4.2. Skills in Audio-Visual Technologies

Close to half of those surveyed had developed technical skills that allowed them to run their own electronics on stage, while a few said they had an assistant or another member of the ensemble to manage electronics. Only two respondents said that they do not work with electronics at all. P3 discussed the range of hardware and software that they use on stage:

> Yes. I have self-taught myself to use Logic ProX, ProTools, Ableton Live, midi controllers, loop pedals etc., in addition to learning how to wire all my gear... by watching YouTube. (P3)

P1 also mentioned the importance of communicating with venue staff, which chimes with my own experiences as mentioned above:

> Through time, I also learnt how to efficiently and effectively communicate with FOH sound and lighting technicians etc., and streamline my tech rider. (P1)

Although some respondents thought this was a new skill that musicians of the past had less necessity to learn, P5 put this in perspective as a gradual evolution over several decades:

> Perhaps there has been a change from previous generations in skills required as "classical pianist". I think laptops, electronics etc. have been used widely in the generation before already, but perhaps not as commonly amongst pianists who were classically trained. (P5)

4.3. Changing Economic Conditions for the Freelancer

Several respondents discussed the changing economic conditions for freelance musicians. P6 mentioned that the old model of hiring a manager or PR consultant was now much harder to justify:

> I think musicians are having to be increasingly resourceful and self-sufficient. I don't think the economic conditions are there any more

to be able to routinely hire a team of people (even a manager and a PR), especially early in your career. (P6)

P7 went even further, stating that with the availability of contact information on the internet, the portfolio of contacts that an agent/manager could bring is now less valuable:

Yes, I would attribute the cause to the prominence of the internet. Agents and managers used to be crucial because of the databases they held. Now that all that information is available online, these contacts are less valuable. (P7)

However, several other respondents thought that the freelance performers of the past faced similar issues to today and that the main changes are the speed of communication and the need to manage social media marketing. P4 wrote:

The advent of computer technology across all platforms has changed everything and not entirely for the better as there's always a need to respond to things quickly as we can't make an excuse of "it's in the post" anymore! (P4)

P2 put a positive spin on freelancing despite its difficulties, including the ability to make a significant impact on contemporary music:

I think this more portfolio-based approach can create some amazing opportunities, including to define what music is in our own time, and to create approaches to it that are different from the previous generation, but there is a lot of competition for the traditional opportunities and that path is increasingly difficult to follow. (P2)

Clearly, there is a range of perspectives of the effect of the internet on freelancing, but the consensus is that the greater access and opportunities it provides modern freelancers outweigh the additional workload of online marketing and emails.

4.4. Training of Freelancers

The majority of the respondents agreed that almost no training in these management skills was provided to them by teachers or by their educational institutions, despite a number of them having completed postgraduate study. P1 recalled:

None of my teachers had the skills or knowledge to prepare me for this kind of "portfolio" career. The expectation was definitely to get a job, probably in an orchestra. But I think having a varied approach and doing a lot of different things is actually one of the more exciting things about being a musician. (P1)

P8 concurred that these skills were developed out of necessity for any musician who is not signed to management at an early age:

> I think that unless the artist is signed by a major agency/label/management at a young age, the skills mentioned above are those developed by a musician naturally as we progress with age and build our portfolio. (P8)

For some, such as P2, organised self-study was required to develop the skills to manage several businesses as part of their work:

> No formal training but I have always thought of my work as a business and studied, through books, etc., various different aspects of business skills. I find that side of it both a bit annoying—I'd rather be playing music—and sometimes intellectually stimulating. I currently run a few different businesses and am involved in a couple of charities too. These things are an essential part of being a musician and I think being good at them gives a great amount of freedom within a musical career. (P2)

All of these mid-career respondents relied on self-training in the skills required, and as we will see, it remains to be seen whether more formal training options for current student musicians can cover all of these diverse skills and knowledge.

5. Discussion

Having examined the many skills and strategies required by solo/chamber musicians performing 21st-century music, a number of common challenges can be identified.

5.1. Discrimination and the Barriers to Diversity

One major issue raised by the pressures of modern freelancing is that it creates an environment where discrimination against women, ethnic minorities, trans musicians, and neurodiverse musicians can flourish. As Christina Scharff has found (2020), the procurement of work primarily through networking "tends to disadvantage women, as well as working-class and black and minority ethnic workers" (Scharff 2020, p. 17). Networking also favours the extrovert, and artists who are relatively neurodivergent can be seen as not just eccentric, but difficult. This is complicated by changes in perceptions of eccentric behaviour based on gender and race. A large survey of 1000 participants carried out at the University of British Columbia found that white male scientists are seen as being more trustworthy and credible, with behaviour that is perceived as arrogant or narcissistic among women and scientists from ethnic minorities being perceived as charismatic among white scientists (Zhu et al. 2016). Similar studies of freelancing musicians have shown that women are much more likely to avoid self-promotion than men and that they are

more likely to consider these activities immodest or unartistic (Scharff 2015, p. 97). As previously mentioned, there has been a great deal of research and discussion around the lack of diversity of composers in the industry (Smith and Thwaites 2019; Farrell and Notareschi 2021; Sound and Music 2015; Bleicher 2016), but there are very little data available about contemporary music performers. Nevertheless, the data that exist for composers can provide us with some insights into the industry. In the UK, 6% of newly commissioned orchestral works and 21% of all new commissions are by women (Bleicher 2016, p. 6). When it comes to race, the diversity problem is even more pronounced: only 6% of newly commissioned works across the UK are from ethnic minorities (Roberts 2016). The reasons for this diversity problem are not simply a matter of racism and misogyny, although these *are* issues in the industry. Lauren Redhead has written about the tacit criteria for applications that perpetuate unintended discrimination (Redhead 2019). For example, because fewer women are accepted onto young artist schemes to write for orchestras, fewer women have orchestral examples to use to apply for further opportunities, even if those are blind selected.

Although these surveys provide valuable insights into the contemporary music industry, contemporary music performers are not included in any of these studies and are also not treated as a distinct category within Musicians' Union surveys that cover all genres of music (van der Maas et al. 2012). The result is that contemporary music performers remain under-studied, falling into the gaps between these different industry studies. This means that discrimination among new music performers cannot yet be acknowledged or tracked, although these performers face similar discrimination problems to composers. Several of the survey respondents shared stories of shocking misogyny and racism: one female respondent had a performance cancelled after informing the presenter she was pregnant, while another mentioned that the venue staff would only speak with the male members of the ensemble, repeatedly ignoring her questions. I have also experienced this type of discrimination by venue staff as the only non-white member of an ensemble.

There have been some admirable strategies for tackling diversity issues among composers such as the PRS Foundation's Keychange scheme, aiming for 50:50 programming across the UK in the next three years, and the Darmstadt Summer Course's application system introduced in 2018, which has separate application portals with equal limits for male and female/non-binary composers. However, as there are almost no data on performers in the industry, there are no similar strategies for addressing imbalances among contemporary music performers. While blind auditions have had an impact on increasing the number of women and ethnic minorities in American orchestras over recent decades, these processes are not available to freelancers, who rely on face-to-face networking (Goldin and Rouse 2000).

5.2. Funding and the Cost of Modern Performance

All of these non-musical skills that I have discussed above require years of "training through experience" as well as the time spent preparing for each project. The amount of time (50–70%) that I typically spend on these tasks is mirrored by the survey results among other musicians. Outsourcing of some of these tasks is possible, but this comes with additional costs, and the factoring of all of these costs into funding grant proposals renders these applications unviable and unlikely to be awarded.

Another factor is that many funding schemes for contemporary music are primarily aimed towards commission fees for composers, with a more limited number of funding streams being available for performance costs as part of commissioning projects. Emerging contemporary music performers in particular can struggle to secure funding and performance opportunities, while there are many schemes by major funding bodies and institutions that are specifically aimed at emerging composers. As noted above, new music performers are excluded from surveys and also have minimal inclusion in reviews, academic studies of contemporary music, and contemporary music awards, shrinking their voices in this musical ecosystem. The scarcity of funding means that freelancing new music performers without alternative sources of income (including working as session musicians, orchestral jobs, teaching and academia, work in other fields or spousal/family support) are very rare, and the dearth of working-class performers is even more pronounced in contemporary music than it is in the already middle–upper class-dominated classical music industry (Bull 2019). Even modest changes to funding priorities could have a positive impact on these issues of diversity and precarity. Although all musicians face similar challenges—the Musicians' Union "The Working Musician" report found that 56% of UK musicians earn less than GBP 20,000 per year (van der Maas et al. 2012)—precarity and fee levels among new music solo/chamber performers affect the whole contemporary music community, with a particular knock-on effect on composers. Clearly, the long-term sustainability of contemporary music can only be ensured through a greater prioritisation of funding towards the development of early career new music performers.

5.3. Lack of Formal Training in Non-Musical Skills

Given the huge importance of the management, marketing, and business skills discussed, it is significant that neither I nor any of the respondents received formal training in these skills during our music education. However, there are signs of change for the current generation of students, with a number of undergraduate modules being introduced that address self-management skills. For example, the Royal Academy of Music offers "Artist Development" seminars, workshops, and individual tutorials for students, the Guildhall School of Music and

Drama has "Professional Development" elective modules that can be taken in each undergraduate year, and professional skills are increasingly integrated into university performance courses. This type of integration has been my own approach as an early career lecturer, including lectures on budgets, marketing, fundraising, and the pitching of programmes within solo performance modules as well as in my tutorial sessions, and I am also planning a module that is specifically focused on professional development that would allow these topics to be covered in greater depth and detail. The question remains as to whether these modules adequately prepare students for a freelancing career given the huge variety and depth of skills discussed above and the relatively low proportion of time students will spend studying them. Indeed, López-Íñiguez and Bennett's (2020) recent research found that most music courses did not adequately prepare students for their careers, with the musicians who self-identified as "learners" having greater long-term success through the sustained career-long self-study of new skills (López-Íñiguez and Bennett 2020).

There is also an opposing perspective that adding these options to already crowded curricula means that students miss out on important core musical skills and knowledge. Furthermore, it could be argued that this type of vocational training erodes the central philosophy of universities, i.e., that education is valuable in and of itself. I would argue that the move towards acknowledging the importance of these non-musical skills is a positive development, but such courses will never fully replace the need for emerging musicians to self-study the particular skills they require for their own individual career pathways.

6. The Future of the Contemporary Music Performer

In discussing solutions to the challenges raised in this article, one could reasonably argue that changing the entire economic environment would have immeasurable benefits for both musicians and musical culture. Many of these non-musical skills are requirements of the current funding environment and musical marketplace, and a mechanism that could ensure a stable living wage for freelancing musicians would have benefits for performers, composers, and presenters. However, given that this is unlikely to occur in the UK, or, indeed, most other countries, in the short term, we can consider some steps that could not only make the lives of mid-career performers more viable but also encourage and support new young performers to embark on freelancing careers in contemporary music.

These recommendations apply to both solo performers who must manage all of these challenges themselves as well as to chamber musicians, who can distribute the challenges and skills among various players in administrative roles. However, as in my own case, many musicians straddle both of these categories and face many variations of these challenges across the many simultaneous strands of their career.

An easily achievable recommendation is for the regular collection of data on performers of contemporary music to complement the wealth of data collected on composers. Structural inequalities could then not only be identified but could also be addressed with targeted action, such as through the extension of initiatives such as Keychange to performers. Further UK-based opportunities for networking and pitching by performers alongside composers would not only assist emerging performers in becoming established in the scene but would also help to create greater programming diversity among UK presenters.

As previously mentioned, these skills are being introduced into tertiary education at universities and conservatories. Although I do not recommend these become a compulsory component of the tertiary syllabus, the widespread adoption of these courses and their honing to address the specific skills that are relevant for today's freelancers would provide a much-needed base level of knowledge for some of these fields. As with all good tertiary teaching, the aim should not be to provide all of the knowledge students require for freelancing but the tools for them to continue to learn, research, adapt, and develop throughout their careers.

Although I see major structural economic change to be unlikely, some modest changes to the economic environment could have major benefits for the performers of contemporary music. More funding should be available to performers of contemporary music, not just when they are premiering new works, but for training and the development of non-musical skills. Furthermore, particular funding priority should be given to emerging new music performers. Without them, emerging composers find that there are few (and dwindling) performance opportunities for their music.

Several of these recommendations are dependent on a fundamental change in the relationship between composers and performers. Performers currently shoulder a substantial proportion of the unseen and unpaid administrative workload for projects. They also receive less acknowledgement for their creative contributions to the work in mainstream media and academia and, by extension, by audiences. This is not to suggest that composers are not financially struggling as well, and there are many who contribute in major ways to these management tasks by presenting series, directing ensembles, or simply being proactive in the fundraising, technical preparation, marketing, and concert presentation of their music. However, making the sharing of these responsibilities, skills, and management tasks a mainstream expectation rather than a welcome exception would ultimately benefit both performers and composers.

Finally, greater collective organisation between performers could have significant benefits for the community. Sharing information about opportunities and presenters and sharing the skills and knowledge needed to self-manage a career as a performer would assist emerging and established performers alike, with a pooling of expertise and the ability to discuss topics such as fee levels, discrimination,

and funding as well as artistic knowledge about composers and existing repertoire. Such community discussion currently exists within small social communities of performers, but a more organised professional association would facilitate not just the sharing of skills and knowledge but representation through a united voice that could help to influence changes in industry practice, funding, and the acknowledgement of creative value, just as composers' associations have done for a century.

At the time of writing, the global COVID-19 pandemic has vastly reduced the activity of the UK's contemporary music scene. It may be idealistic to expect that positive or even paradigmatic change for the industry might be more achievable after this hiatus. However, if any of these recommendations could be implemented on the other side of this crisis, it could lead to a more sustainable, artistically vibrant, innovative, and diverse contemporary music culture.

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Appendix A. Survey Questions

The following survey questions were posed to contemporary music solo/chamber performers:

1. What proportion of your performance work is self-managed (i.e., pitching your own solo work, or your ensemble)?
2. What skills, other than your performance skills, do you regularly need to use as part of procuring, organising and delivering these performances? What tasks are required (e.g., pitching concerts, marketing, negotiating, etc.)?
3. Have you had any training in any of these non-musical skills, or have you just learnt from experience? Have you become especially skilled in particular tasks?
4. What proportion of your working time as a musician gets taken up by non-musical work such as administration, marketing and emails?
5. Is working with electronics/video part of your practice and what skills have you had to develop to set up and run these aspects of your performances?
6. Do you think there has been a change from previous generations in the skills that are required of solo musicians? If so, what do you think are the causes behind this change?
7. Have you ever experienced discrimination in the industry (sexism, racism or another type of discrimination)?

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Partnership in Piano Duet Playing

Mark Hutchinson and Elizabeth Haddon

1. Introduction

In this chapter, we examine factors contributing to the growth of a piano duet partnership. We begin by considering the concept of partnership and outlining salient features in relation to the literature, before presenting our understanding of its importance within our duet work. As with many terms relating to interpersonal dynamics, the term "partnership" carries a broad range of meanings in different academic contexts. We have chosen this term as our focus for a few reasons, all relating to the image of the participants as musical "partners": firstly, it places emphasis on the specifically *dyadic* nature of the duet relationship, due to the fact that, by definition, it involves only two people; secondly, it implies a high degree of mutuality, equality, and shared ground (in comparison with the broader image of performers as "collaborators", for example, which can encompass a wide range of interaction types); thirdly, it hints more strongly at the empathetic and affective dimension of the working relationship, the way that shared musical experiences can give rise to a sense of "merged subjectivity". In this chapter, we highlight the significance of these facets of collaboration within the specific context of the piano duet format and trace their emergence in our own experience as duet partners. Within this text, then, we use "collaboration" to refer to any co-working ("collaborative") relationship or situation, and "partnership" to refer specifically to a dyadic collaboration that is highly mutual and that carries a strongly positive affective dimension. In using the term in this way, we are drawing on the legacy of writers such as Vera John-Steiner (2000), whose classic text on creative collaboration described particularly mutually supportive and equal dyadic collaborations using the language of partnership. For John-Steiner, transformational partnership arises out of "multiple perspectives, complementarity in skills and training, and fascination with one's partner's contributions" (John-Steiner 2000, p. 64), and creates "the potential of stretching one's identity ... through the interweaving of social and individual processes" (ibid., p. 188).

The idea of partnership has been identified as beneficial to many domains including business, education, social work, and voluntary sector organisations, particularly in terms of the integration of provision, finance, resource, and sharing of expertise, risk, and personnel (Cameron 2001; Boydell and Rugkåsa 2007). Much of the literature in these domains focuses specifically on institutional partnerships, particularly the intersections between public services and the private

sector that are central to neoliberal models of government; the focus of this research is thus primarily on identifying the attributes essential for successful and sustainable cooperation. For Mohr and Spekman (1994), these include commitment, coordination, interdependence, and trust, as well as the quality of communication, information sharing and participation, and appropriate conflict resolution techniques. Successful partnerships also need an agenda that is "transparent and respectful of different viewpoints" (Edwards 2005, p. 48); they must be underpinned by "belief in the creative potential of joint working towards purposive change", "vision and imagination", consideration of "power and representation", the "absence of organizational and personnel barriers", and "operational understanding and role clarity" (El Ansari et al. 2004, pp. 279–80). Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen memorably characterises partnerships such as these as "possibility-creating machines" which "can be used as accelerators for partners' development" (Andersen 2008, p. 147) whilst acknowledging their fragility: "they have to be continually created and recreated, which increases the risk that they become dissolved" (ibid, p. 139). This concept of the partnership as a "possibility-creating machine" proved highly relevant to our own experience, and we will return to it later.

Dyadic partnerships of individuals (for example, in coaching, academic supervision, sports, and nursing) may also show the attributes detailed above. In these contexts, partnership focuses on the contributions of the individuals towards a shared goal (Reed 2011). Role definition may be undertaken (Petre and Rugg 2004) and each participant is viewed as "a respected, autonomous individual with something to contribute to a joint venture" (McQueen 2000, p. 726). Here, the attributes highlight "trust, honesty ... respect, ability to know what the other is thinking and is wanting, negotiating skills, dependability/reliability ... power sharing and equality" (Reed 2011, p. 57). Gottlieb et al. (2006) emphasise the importance of "person-centred goals" and "the creation of a dynamic process that requires the active participation and agreement of all partners in the partnership" (ibid, p. 8).

Within the literature, it seems clear that partnership is understood as an active process; it requires a commitment to individual and joint development, and sensitivity towards specific attributes and working procedures which may negotiate potential fragility and tensions, enabling the construction of a valuable and lasting relationship. Surprisingly, although there are frequent references to partnerships in musical performance within material relating to concert promotion, there has yet to be a comprehensive academic exploration of the concept of musical partnership. In the context of pianist and singer/instrumentalist duos, Moore (1962) elevated the perception of the pianist from subordinate to partner, while Katz has since argued that "collaborator" is more representative of the relationship (Katz 2009). Within piano accompaniment/collaboration, Roussou identified five roles for the pianist:

"co-performer, soloist, coach, accompanist and collaborator" (Roussou 2013, p. 511), relating both to "functional" aspects, which "ensure the success of the musical partnership", and to "socio-emotional behaviour", which facilitates confidence and security (ibid., p. 514). Similarly, Blank and Davidson (2007) highlighted the importance of the socio-emotional relationship in their study of partnerships in piano duos (two pianos), noting the importance of non-verbal communication between the two players as well as of dialogue and openness to each other's ideas. They found equality between players in decision making concerning repertoire and administration, shared goals, the flexibility of adoption of either "leader" or "follower" roles, and noted that duos can develop "affective" relationships which "can lead to very powerful and long-lasting partnerships" (ibid., p. 245). Our research explores these issues in the context of our own piano duet partnership, focusing especially on how a partnership might develop over time.

2. Chamber Performance and Interpersonal Dynamics

The nature of the evolving duet partnership documented in this chapter was strongly influenced by the interpersonal setting. The participants already knew each other fairly well (as colleagues in the same music department, and for some time prior to that as a teacher/student dyad), and there was also a deliberate decision from the outset that the duet partnership would be formed not with any specific performance in mind but rather as a space for enjoying learning repertoire together and reflectively exploring issues around the development of the partnership. As a result, the primary goals of the partnership were relational and internal to the two researchers. This setting is distinct from most discussions of partnership in the literature on management, business, and sociology, where dyadic relationships are "typically directed at the accomplishment of some common objectives or goals" (Ferris et al. 2009, p. 1379), with the implication that these objectives are fixed and external to the group—for example, a project or negotiation to be completed or a pre-established working environment with ongoing tasks or deadlines. Moreover, dyadic relationships in these settings often revolve around what might be termed transactional interactions: in other words, they are driven by each participant's desire to maximise the mutual benefit for the dyad in its end goal whilst preserving individual interests. The metaphor of the "psychological contract" is widely used to describe these relationships (see, for example, Ferris et al. 2009, p. 1381), and this metaphor naturally brings with it concepts of mutuality, obligation, and entitlement, as well as a clear orientation towards an externally defined end goal.

There are numerous reasons why musicians choose to play within chamber ensembles, and many of these fit naturally within the transactional, goal-oriented model of partnership described by Ferris and others—for example, contexts of professional performance or recording, worship and ritual, educational assessment,

teaching and coaching, community outreach, or directed self-improvement. Other motivations may include enjoyment, widening knowledge of repertoire (Burt-Perkins and Mills 2008), elevating individual standards of playing (Ford and Davidson 2003), and developing communication skills transferable to other areas such as instrumental teaching (Burt-Perkins and Mills 2008). However, chamber music performance also offers the potential for a notably different model of interpersonal interaction—one oriented not around the maximisation of individual and mutual benefit but around the desire to transcend individuality per se, to explore "merged subjectivity" (Rabinowitch et al. 2012) and ways of communication that are non-transactional and focused on process rather than product.[1] Indeed, even in settings driven by clear external end goals, the dynamics of interaction within chamber ensembles are often more complex than simple transactional models can describe, because of the centrality of the affective dimension in music making; as Elaine King notes,

> ensemble musicians share a particular bond—a love of music and the desire to play it—which underpins the dynamic relationship between them. In effect, therefore, ensemble musicians, whether amateur, student or professional, are potentially involved in a *close* working relationship that mirrors the experiences in everyday lives among partners, families and friends. (King 2013, p. 253; emphasis original)

This is particularly the case in amateur and domestic contexts, where external goals of public performance or the attainment of a recognised standard of expertise are less important than the mutual enjoyment and relational enrichment produced by shared aesthetic experiences. It is noteworthy in this regard that, since its inception, the piano duet genre has been especially associated with domestic settings, in particular through the opportunity it provided before the era of recording for amateur music-lovers to participate actively in their enjoyment of canonical works (Christensen 1999). Not only that, but the physical setup of the duet environment (two players at one instrument) is particularly conducive to explorations of merged subjectivity, as noted elsewhere (Haddon and Hutchinson 2015; Oinas 2019). Certainly, the experience of partnership formation documented here illustrates the way in which ensemble music making in a reflective setting can create a trajectory of interpersonal growth—moving gradually from individual, explicit, and conscious communication towards collective, implicit, and instinctive acts of musical creativity

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[1] Sometimes, these different potential motivations for ensemble interaction can collide. See, for example, the account in Burt-Perkins and Mills (2008), in which a chamber group formed to play music for enjoyment struggled with the transition to the more goal-oriented context of conservatoire-level performance assessment.

which are highly fulfilling. Our findings illustrate several specific components of this trajectory.

3. Method: Rehearsal and Reflective Writing

During a four-month period, the two pianist-researchers met eight times to rehearse a duet arrangement of Beethoven's Symphony no. 2, using the edition by Schirmer, first published 1894, anonymous arranger. Discussion of ideas for research took place during the first session; a process of documentation and exploration ensued through a shared reflective diary which commenced by email after the first rehearsal, with both pianists writing individually, sharing their writing, and reflecting further after each rehearsal.

Through an extended process generating over 15,000 words, the diary enabled immediacy of data entry following rehearsals, freedom of expression, and the possibility for dialogue, clarification, and expansion. Writing enabled us to "articulate and elaborate ideas, to clarify viewpoints and attitudes, to discuss abilities and feelings, to affirm ideas, behaviours, processes and the project itself, and to witness progression of a musical project as well as individual and joint understanding" (Haddon and Hutchinson 2015, p. 142). Additionally, we felt that "early recognition of the privilege of open access to the thoughts of the co-participant motivated investment and reinvestment in the activities of writing and rehearsal" (ibid.). This enabled "mutual recognition and appreciation of the value of both the project and of the participants" (ibid.), and echoes the values of commitment, respect, and shared belief outlined above as essential to effective partnerships.

Analysis of the use of learning journals in music education reveals benefits for higher education music students including goal identification; goal influence on practice, articulating issues of responsibility and modes of student–teacher relationships (Carey et al. 2017), as well as problem solving, group dynamics in band formation for popular music students, reflective capacity building, and instrumental technique (Esslin-Peard 2017). However, the process of reflection with teacher oversight (Carey et al. 2017) or moderation of e-journals presents tensions between freedom of expression and potentially writing to please others. Commitment to developing a "safe space" (Fernsten and Fernsten 2005) for the process is essential. In our case, our reflection was not moderated by any outsider but was constructed through a dialogic process of reflection, sharing, and responding. This dialogic journal (e.g., Roderick 1986; Roderick and Berman 1984) allows for a greater degree of honesty, as well as providing the space for the parameters of the partnership to be continually renegotiated, in line with Andersen's concept of the fragility of the "possibility-creating machine". This process is not without vulnerability. Writing without an external facilitator in a non-supported process required us to consider issues of sensitivity, empathic attunement, analytic tactfulness, and writing styles;

as we became more comfortable in this process, our diary entries became longer, more detailed, and many ideas were raised and discussed in depth. Following a period of maintaining a critical distance from the writing and from further rehearsal, we analysed the diary material from the perspective of empathy (Haddon and Hutchinson 2015). We subsequently decided to explore another theme evidenced in the writing, that of partnership.

4. Data Coding and Analysis

After discussing potential approaches to coding, we decided to jointly code and thematically analyse the data by hand, using an iterative, recursive process in which themes emerged from the data (Braun and Clarke 2006) rather than imposing pre-constructed themes or codes. Subsequently, we coded portions of the diary separately before meeting to compare codes. This process was repeated to enable clarification and agreement. While our insider perspective raises potential concerns of objectivity, Murphy et al. suggest that "rather than regard being an insider as a threat to the rigour of research, the partnership model celebrates it as a sharing of interactions and interpersonal opening to each other" (Murphy et al. 2016, p. 16). Reflexivity was supported by the critical distance between data analysis and rehearsals; the dyadic collaboration enabled checks on the individual interpretation of material. This process affords insight into the qualitative understandings held by the participant-researchers of their shared construct of partnership. Where diary extracts are quoted below, 'M' and 'E' are used to distinguish the participants (primo played by M and secondo by E in this context).

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1. Dialogic Journal: Productive and Protective Function

The decision to combine rehearsals with an ongoing dialogic journal via email served to accelerate the formation of a creative working musical partnership, in which we acted as "co-participants" and "co-constructors of educational experience" (Roderick 1986, p. 308). Our journaling allowed us to explore different approaches towards communication both within and outside the rehearsal space, and it allowed whatever took place in the rehearsals to be re-evaluated both individually and jointly at a later point. This reflective process served both a *productive* and a *protective* function within the dynamic of the evolving partnership. The diary enabled us to discuss practical ideas and challenges relating to rehearsals and provided an additional avenue for communication that was deliberately more detached from the rehearsal process itself, both temporally and physically. In this way, it could act as protective insulation against many of the immediate pressures associated with rehearsal communication, such as concerns about the progress of a group,

or individual ability. Moments of possible conflict or insecurity within rehearsals could be resolved quickly by means of the "side channel" of the shared reflections; collaborative processes could be constructed, and the productive and protective functions created an enhancement of the rehearsal process.

The process of coding identified four strands of activity underpinning the development of the duet partnership, each of which traced a distinct trajectory as the partnership became stronger:

- Identifying *joint and individual responsibilities*, with a trajectory of increasing comfort in the complementarity of our roles;
- Exploring different *communication* strategies, with a trajectory of increasing dependence on embodied musical knowledge rather than explicit verbal dialogue;
- Establishing *freedom to experiment*, with a trajectory of increasing confidence in creative instinct rather than conscious analysis in problem solving;
- Taking *shared creative ownership* of the duet process, with a trajectory of increasing security in adapting the score to our own purposes.

These strands were interwoven throughout the diary entries, and in each case, there is clear evidence of shifts in the nature and purpose of these activities as the partnership becomes more established—sometimes gradual and sometimes more epiphanic, arising from a particular activity or discussion. Each will be considered in turn; quoted material is extracted from the shared diary entries.

5.2. Joint and Individual Responsibilities

From the outset, there was a clear sense of mutual commitment to the shared enterprise. Diary entries show that following Session 1, we both referred positively to "evolving a duo partnership" [E] and to its "appeal" [M], and this clear desire to invest in the process remained throughout the diaries. The initial shared impetus of "evolving a partnership" was paired with the specific activity of learning Beethoven's Symphony no. 2; the fact that there was no specific performance date in mind enabled us to focus on establishing a collaborative partnership rather than on preparing a polished product. Nonetheless, these starting points did lead us to articulate more specific areas which could be developed jointly or individually. In the first session, we both suggested areas to work on together: gestural cues, stylistic authenticity and colour [E], dynamic control, pedalling, and legato touch [M]. Alongside these shared concerns, individual development goals emerged during the initial rehearsals as we became more aware of our individual role within the partnership. E, playing secondo, noted, "I need to work on stamina and being able to create a richer and fuller sound to support . . . I need to get out of my comfort zone a bit", whereas M, playing primo, felt that "my *tremolandi* were clearly not nearly rhythmic enough . . . and several

chordal/passages were very uneven or else not legato enough" (Session 1). The act of playing together thus inspired individual work: as M noted, "certain technical difficulties became very evident in playing together which I'd not noticed on my own" (Session 1), and this led to altered practice methods, including replicating the duet seating position and working without pedal.

Individual goals were thus ultimately focused on the collective perspective. To this end, M wanted to "try and ensure that I could imagine the other part at least to some degree whilst practising because that had such a big bearing on issues of interpretation, dynamics, etc." (Session 1). Sometimes an individual area of responsibility emerged directly as a result of the construction of a shared goal. For example, after the first session, M observed that "sometimes I wanted more pedal, but didn't want to just grab it myself. [. . .] Actually, not having access to it did make me think a bit more about a legato touch at the top". Further reflection after Session 1 led to M's observation that "once I realised that you were tending to work with a drier pedal-touch than I might have, I just took that as a given and tried to adjust my playing to compensate". Therefore, within this partnership context, the shared goal of thinking more creatively about pedalling required M as primo player to think anew about his approach to touch, as part of ceding control of the pedal to E. This division of responsibilities—E pedalling and M responding—was itself not taken for granted; later rehearsals experimented with alternative role divisions, as discussed further below, and this led to an informed understanding of the ongoing responsibilities within the partnership.

The process of negotiating joint and individual responsibilities in the first few rehearsals allowed both participants to recognise and accommodate mutual strengths and weaknesses, interpretative as well as technical, and to observe variance and difference, which are important foundational considerations for partnership. Following the first rehearsal, E observed that "M tends towards much louder and full-toned playing than I do. [. . .] M is a much more gestural player than I am", whilst M noted that "our phrasing did tend to vary: I seemed to work over longer phrases, but didn't articulate smaller gaps as well"—a distinction which E attributed partly to "M's greater recent involvement in orchestral playing". A key issue for both of us was the desire to establish a consistent joint approach without limiting individual freedom unnecessarily. M's lengthy response to E's comment about gesture following Session 1 illustrates this well:

> When I think about it, I see that I am a more gestural player than you . . . [so] what I thought were totally instinctive lead-ins were perhaps actually you just reacting sensitively to my unconscious but actually perhaps quite visible leading gestures? In which case, whilst that has a certain pragmatic benefit (i.e., we tend to be together most of the time), it does potentially constrain your freedom to take the lead at times where it would

be beneficial, simply because my more overtly gestural manner might end up taking over without me meaning it to. So I'd definitely be interested in exploring subtler cues.

This comment also illustrates the value of the reflective process itself in articulating joint and individual responsibilities. The conversational nature of the diary entries and responses enabled both participants to examine aspects of their interaction more closely and to address possible barriers to collaboration in a measured way. This process rendered the changing nature of interactions visible as the rehearsals continued: once joint and individual areas of responsibility were established after the first few rehearsals, they receded into the background and became a more instinctive part of the partnership—differences of interpretation becoming the basis for constructive discussions *within* rehearsals, for example, rather than tacit elements to be unpicked afterwards via reflection. As M observed after Session 4, "by this stage in our playing together I actually really enjoy the differences between [E]'s interpretative approach and mine—often I find that what I'd choose to do myself is made much more interesting when it interacts (or occasionally collides) with her choices". This progressed towards E noting after Session 6 that "it's not so much the sense that we're working towards a common goal, but that we both have more freedom within the relationship now to express our potentially different thoughts about how we will achieve that goal". This revealed a developing sense of security in the shared process: "however we try to express these feelings, the other person will respond, add to and enhance the verbal discussion or performed musical communication . . . the partnership is strengthened through exploration and experimentation . . . there's a degree of security and freedom that's developed as a result of that, and which feels like a strength which we will continue to nurture" (E, Session 6).

The trajectory of process articulated in the diary entries shows that initial commitment was sustained through identifying and working on joint and individual areas and developing a collective perspective: one which enabled individual and instinctive freedom underpinned by the security of response from the co-player. Concerns about initial responsibilities moved through creative exploration towards shared ownership in which divergence was viewed as an opportunity to establish frames of reference and their boundaries, supported by specific communication strategies.

5.3. Communication Strategies

The exploration of different approaches towards communication, within and outside the rehearsal space, was a central component in the development of this duet partnership. During the early stages of collaboration, post-rehearsal reflection through the shared diary enabled open lines of communication, both musical and

interpersonal. In terms of musical communication, M noted in response to E's first diary entry that several of her observations drew his attention to musical issues that "I'd really not noticed . . . not something I would have consciously recognised if you hadn't pointed it out", expressing the hope that through the process "I'll become more consciously aware of musical decisions that I am often making instinctively at the moment". E commented in response that the reflective process "can only be beneficial to a developing understanding that informs and supports what happens when we're actually playing". This sense of positive openness was particularly important when discussing areas for improvement revealed by a rehearsal: the diaries gave an opportunity for the other player's perspective to add reassurance to any uncertainties about technique or sound, and often provided a means for one player's concerns to form the basis for joint work in future sessions. For example, E noted after Session 1 that "M tends towards much louder and full-toned playing than I do . . . and probably felt a bit under-supported at times", expressing a desire to "create a richer and fuller sound to support him"; in response, M affirmed the observation of the differences between the two players, but cast it in opposite terms:

> I really agree with what you said about volume/fullness of tone, although I saw it from a different angle: I wouldn't say that I felt under-supported (not consciously, anyway), but once you pointed out our generally *mf*+ dynamic range, I did feel liberated to drop it down several notches, and was very pleased (even at this early stage) at how much of an improvement it felt expressively to have more lower dynamics to work with.

One person's concerns could thus easily become a point of creative development for the partnership, enabled through the enlightening and affirmative perspective of the other player. This likewise fostered a sense of security within the communication process and produced a virtuous circle whereby we both felt increasingly empowered to articulate musical ideas and concerns honestly and openly. As the partnership became more established, these conversations increasingly shifted from within the reflective diaries (where any possible areas of conflict and misunderstanding could be pre-emptively resolved) to the rehearsals themselves: later diary entries are less concerned with revisiting aspects of each participant's playing from the previous rehearsal and more occupied with considering the nature of the working process.

One facet of this evolving sense of security and openness was the gradual negotiation of different communication roles within the partnership, tied to the respective strengths of the two players. In the early diary entries, there is a clear sense of treading carefully as we try to establish the parameters of our communication, particularly in the light of our former teacher-pupil relationship (M had taken piano lessons with E some years previously). E had noted after Session 1 that "we did both apologise—M more than me, and sometimes when it was me who'd gone wrong!",

and M suggested that these apologies could convey "vestiges of the old teacher–pupil relationship—'oops, I should have practised that a bit more'?". Following Session 2, E commented that "M is definitely more diplomatic than me and is more likely to suggest that he modifies his approach rather than I modify mine. [. . .] I guess through writing this I can say clearly that he shouldn't hold back from commenting on what I'm doing, especially if he doesn't like it!" E identified one moment in the rehearsal where:

> I definitely went into "teacher mode" . . . and made a few technical suggestions . . . it didn't feel like a bad thing at the time for the left hand trills which hopefully might help make them as good as the right hand ones, but I probably should have waited because I'm sure he would have sorted them out on his own!

In response, M again highlighted the positive aspect of this interchange:

> When you were making suggestions about those trills . . . I found that it felt more like a "lesson" for a moment. [. . .] The thing is, this wasn't a negative experience for me, because it was genuinely very helpful. [. . .] Perhaps at present I don't think so naturally about those kinds of technical details, but could instead make sure that I come forward with suggestions about larger shapes, harmonic processes, etc., where they feel helpful?

This exchange established two key foundations for communication between the two participants. Firstly, it gave *permission* for each to comment openly on the other's playing, without fear that this would disrupt the equality or equanimity of the partnership. Secondly, it affirmed that each participant had a distinctive *role* to play in this kind of communication, just as each had distinctive strengths as a performer: E tended to comment more on localised issues of technique and sonority; M on longer-range harmonic, textural, and "orchestral" features. The "teacher mode" that caused E concern could thus be rehabilitated as an acceptable means of communication within an equal partnership by acknowledging that it was complemented by M's ability to comment in more detail on other aspects of interpretation. This is reinforced by later diary entries, where the interplay between different kinds of expertise is clear, as M's entry following Session 5 demonstrates:

> There were a few more brief "teacher-student" moments in this rehearsal, with a few bits where I wasn't sure about a technique, or how to bring out a passage best. [. . .] Towards the end of the session, as we started working on texture in the fourth movement, I was able to make some suggestions myself, so that was nice—I didn't want to feel like I wasn't pulling my weight! It was good to have a balance.

Over the course of the diaries, it is possible to see a wide variety of different "modes" of communicative engagement emerging, each with their own character and expectations. The natural shifts between these different communicative modes are vital to the effectiveness and enjoyment of the rehearsal sessions, avoiding the kind of fatigue that might have arisen from a long time spent communicating only in one way or about one aspect of the music (or in a way which foregrounded one participant's skills or knowledge above the other's). Table 1 identifies some of the various modes of communication experienced during the partnership and summarises their role and features.

Table 1. Modes of communication in the duet partnership.

Mode of Communication	Role and Features
Performance mode	Modelling a performance; focus on playing through long stretches; M (primo) generally assuming leadership role gesturally; increases in frequency as competence and shared interpretation develops.
Teacher mode	Fixing technical issues; focuses on small segments; E often takes the lead.
Interpretation mode	Discussion of expressive dimension of music, intended effect, etc.; varies between local and long-range focus; E and M share leadership equally but with different emphases.
Experiment mode	Testing out hypotheses about technique or interpretation (e.g., pedalling, rubato, alterations to notation) by trying out varied/extreme versions of them; no pressure to get it "right"; sense of fun and freedom.
Rapport mode	More general, personal discussion and "catching up" on life events outside of music; important for building trust and for understanding of progress; often merges naturally into music making; acknowledgement of shared effort and enjoyment.
Reflective mode	Looking back over the process of a rehearsal in the subsequent diaries and responding to each other's comments.
Strategic mode	Planning subsequent rehearsals, rehearsal aims, shared outwards-facing goals (performances, presentations, writing).
Professional mode	Delivering a performance, presentation, or piece of writing—these all occurred at the end of the time period of the diary.

Source: Table by authors.

The development of these different modes of communication relied on each player's willingness to explore new strategies of interaction in a positive manner. This, in turn, opened up a space for cyclic processes of problem solving and experimentation within the rehearsal space, whereby an area of interest or concern was identified, then explored creatively (and possibly resolved) using one or more of the modes listed above. It is noteworthy that each mode corresponded to a different way of approaching the music (and other aspects of the duet partnership), as well as to different divisions of responsibility between us. There is even a different level of shared or individual identity—from the sense of shared subjectivity necessary for a fluent performance to the independence evident in discussing each other's lives or comparing ideas about interpretation. The underlying affective dimension of the partnership was crucial to all these different modes since it enabled the "empathic, emotional kind of musical intention" essential to shared musical learning (Schiavio et al. 2020, p. 3). In Vera John-Steiner's terms, it created "emotional scaffolding" that could underpin different kinds of communication, by

> creat[ing] a safety zone within which both support and constructive criticism between partners are effectively practiced. Collaborative partners can build on their solidarity as well as their differences; complementarity in knowledge, working habits, and temperament adds to the motivation needed for effective partnerships. (John-Steiner 2000, p. 128)

The freedom with which we could move between these modes (with attendant shifts in our sense of "being" as a partnership) gave flexibility to rehearsals and allowed us to maintain a sense of agency and commitment as the partnership developed.

Again, this process of development followed a clear trajectory. The simplest way to describe the shifts in communication strategies over the course of the rehearsal process would be to say that the "default language" of the partnership moved gradually, over the course of a few months, from text to speech to music. In the early stages of the partnership, a lot of time and energy was devoted to *verbal* discussions of musical ideas. At first, much of the most detailed analysis took place within the diaries, perhaps because of the additional reflective space they allowed, but as the partnership became more established, the rehearsals themselves became the primary arena for communicating about performance. As a result, diary entries for the first three or four rehearsals contain frequent references to quite detailed discussions about specifics of tempo, gesture, dynamics, and specific technical issues. In the later stages of the documented rehearsal process, communication about performance increasingly shifted *away* from words (either written or spoken) and was instead mediated more directly through acts of musical performance, as noted by M, following Session 8:

> What particularly struck me is just how "settled" a lot of interpretative issues have become, ones that we did (at one time or another) spend quite a while talking about—they seem to have become quite natural now, which is great, and shows both how helpful the in-depth discussion was, but also how it can then gradually feedback into a more instinctive engagement with the performance experience.

E noted similarly:

> Today we didn't do a lot of talking until afterwards when we discussed the session and looked at a couple of small points. There's a lot that kind of can't be said, in a way, because it's musical communication that is too fleeting to pin down, or if you tried to, you might not really want to define it, or would get bogged down in thinking why something worked, or not.

There is a link here with a more general principle about ensemble coordination and musical interpretation which Murphy McCaleb has outlined persuasively in his book *Embodied Knowledge in Ensemble Performance* (McCaleb 2014). McCaleb critiques the tendency in much existing research on ensemble coordination to map ideas from linguistics naively onto musical performance: he observes a "tacit assumption that performers operate in a manner similar to those involved in conversation" whereby "information is "pushed" from one person to another through intentional action on behalf of the sender"—a paradigm that "is rooted not in musical performance but in social interaction" (McCaleb 2014, pp. 41–42). McCaleb argues that this viewpoint unhelpfully privileges verbal, propositional kinds of knowledge *about* music, when in fact his own studies of ensemble rehearsal suggest that the players are primarily concerned with more procedural knowledge of *making* music, a knowledge that takes shape ultimately through action rather than words. As he puts it, "music may serve not only as a mode of interaction but also as a form of knowledge . . . In discussion [within rehearsals], performers look for metaphors to describe what is *already understood* as musical content" (McCaleb 2014, p. 57).

Verbal communication within rehearsals is thus best viewed as a means of reaching towards musical experiences which are understood as a form of knowledge in themselves; given the highly multimodal nature of musical experience itself,[2] it is hardly surprising that performers should find themselves reaching towards multiple different modes of communication in rehearsal in order to capture and share their own musical knowledge. Moreover, the embodied, active nature of musical knowledge encourages a similarly embodied, active approach towards

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[2] For more on the multimodal nature of music perception, see Johnson and Larson (2003), Larson (2012), and Zbikowski (2009).

shared experience. In other words, a musical partnership is at its most effective when it relinquishes the concepts of "message", "sender", and "receiver" enshrined in linguistics (with their attendant connotations of individuality, distance, and propositional knowledge), and instead embraces ensemble performance as an *action* that performers take together, in the context of a working partnership rooted in mutual understanding and trust.

5.4. Freedom to Experiment

The distinction between verbal and musical knowledge also reflected another important dimension of the rehearsal process. From the third rehearsal onwards, one of the most frequently recurring themes of the diary entries (and rehearsals) is the tension between instinct and conscious awareness in processes of interpretation. In almost every core area of duet performance—pedalling, rhythmic coordination, phrasing, dynamic balance, etc.—we frequently found ourselves caught between the desire to make thoughtful decisions as a partnership and the realisation that this level of conscious awareness could also potentially get in the way of fully committed, expressively rich interpretations, by forcing a level of detachment from the immediate physicality of performance. This issue could be applied to all kinds of performance, of course, but it is particularly relevant within the context of a musical partnership (particularly a piano duet), with its radical sense of mutual interdependence and shared leadership (Oinas 2019). The issue of coordination was an early example of this tension, as M described after Session 2:

> I feel like I learned something very early on about over-thinking things! After the previous session, and our discussions about gesturality, etc., I decided to try and be more understated, because I didn't want my gestures to get in the way of natural musical expression—but the result was that at first our ensemble was a lot less secure than the time before, and I also felt quite constrained in my playing. Once we talked a bit about the gestural side, and agreed that we'd both noticed this, I decided to revert more to my previous style, and that seemed to work a lot better. I think essentially I do just tend to move around a lot naturally in playing, and trying not to "overdo" this ends up with my playing suffering as a result of the sense of physical constraint.

One way in which we worked to harness this tension in a productive way was by processes of free experimentation. When there was uncertainty about a technical or interpretative decision, instead of attempting to find a conscious "right answer", we deliberately sought out more extreme possibilities to test and reflect on. In the case of gesture, we explored "whether we always need a big 'lead-in' or whether we can be more subtle about some of them. And the extent to which our gestures are

'matching' or independent" [E]. A further example of experimentation from early in the process arose following difficulty with pedalling. M wrote after Session 2:

> At one point, I felt like I wanted some pedal in a decorative passage but that it was impractical (because it was too fast) for [E] to pedal it for me; so we tried swapping and me having the pedal . . . I felt a bit on tenterhooks as I was using it (and quite timid with it as a result) because of the big effect it has on secondo articulation.

Just as the experience of switching pedal roles made M more instinctively aware of the interconnections between the two duet parts and shifted his attention from his own desire for more pedal towards a greater awareness of its effect on the secondo line, so too E found that the experiment increased her own sense of the performance as a shared process at an instinctive rather than conscious level, "my playing felt extremely weird with [the pedal] out of my control . . . I realised more powerfully what it feels like to need pedal and not have it".

A similar experiment was applied to expressive timing in the second movement of the symphony, following a discussion during Session 4 about the appropriate level of rubato:

> . . . we played the last page with permission to do as much as we fancied . . . to exploit the boundaries felt liberating, and also to discover that we could allow ourselves to think differently about ensemble and not worry so much about being precisely and uniformly in time with each other [E].

This experiment illustrates a growing sense in the emerging partnership that conscious discussions about interpretation could be overtaken by more instinctive, improvisatory decisions from either player—with the result, paradoxically, of an often *greater* sense of ensemble cohesion and precision. This resonates with the concept of planned and emergent forms of coordination and the ensuing process of navigation from uncertainty to flexibility in achieving coordination (Bishop and Goebl 2020): E noted that "whenever I consciously thought about playing really well in time and watching, it was always less successful than just going with the flow" (Session 4); M independently felt after the same session that "the more we "try" consciously to listen to one another, watch each other, "follow" each other, etc., the less successfully we do so; on the flip side, the more we immerse ourselves in the music . . . the easier it seems to be to stay together, presumably via subconscious cues which are more quickly reacted to". The result was a change both in rehearsal process and in performance strategy, as M noted a month later after Session 7:

> I was . . . struck . . . by how much more time we spend playing than talking now— usually, it's little details we note before trying things again, but we

> do seem more willing now to get a rough idea and then experiment with it in performance, rather than having to work out exactly what we want in words and only then try to realise it. [. . .] It also means that we seem more relaxed now about changing things spontaneously in the course of a performance.

The security fostered by other aspects of the developing partnership bore fruit in an approach towards experimentation that could afford to take risks in the interests of open exploration, without pressure from imminent performance deadlines. This again demonstrates the relevance of Andersen's (2008) description of partnerships as "possibility-creating machines", whereby the "object of exchange . . . is primarily possibilities, including possibilities for the self-development of the individual partner" (ibid., p. 142).

5.5. Shared Creative Ownership

One area in which this sense of emerging possibilities was particularly evident was our approach towards the duet score of the Beethoven symphony. From very early in the rehearsal process, we started thinking about the implications of the shift from orchestra to piano duet, and "the extent to which we can 'make [the transcription] our own'" (E, Session 1). Our initial diary entries anticipated "discussion of editions and extent to which we will view this as orchestral reduction/piano in its own right" (E, Session 1). M reflected after Session 1:

> I don't think I've really given enough thought to what this version of the piece "is"—I'd just been treating it by default in quasi-orchestral terms . . . I do like the starting-point that the orchestral aspect gives us—i.e., a collection of ideas about how we might colour different passages differently, etc.—but certainly we should feel free to develop these how we want.

This interest also sets up projections for the future within the partnership and actualising this became possible after reflecting on individual preferences and competencies. After Session 2, E wrote: "Today revealed more of our individual instinctive preferences—Mark at one point said something about "full-blown romantic" whereas I'd say I'm coming at it from a more classical HIPP style". M wrote likewise, "it was really good to be able to talk through things like phrasing, because it helped me to understand better why we'd naturally tend to do things a bit differently". Later on, after Session 3, E wrote that "the discussion of pianistic and orchestral makes me think that we may have different feelings about the duet version of the symphony, which is interesting, and not a negative thing at all, as it opens up discussion and therefore leads to experimentation".

Building awareness of individual backgrounds and preferences is acknowledged as valuable to aid understanding of individual perspectives in a partnership, and

through this process, we shared listening suggestions of symphonic recordings as well as discussing the origins of our individual understandings of sound qualities. We identified various areas where we felt constrained by the arrangement and dissatisfied with the aural outcome, particularly in relation to texture, timbre, and tessitura. Our process of experimentation here reflected the pedagogical concept of "possibility thinking" outlined by Anna Craft, cited in (Cremin et al. 2006): a process at the heart of creative learning which "is exemplified through the posing, in multiple ways, of the question 'what if?' and ... involves the shift from 'what is this and what does it do?' to 'what can I do with this?'" (Cremin et al. 2006, pp. 109–110). If partnerships are "possibility-creating machines", it is because they enable this kind of "possibility thinking", and thus empower participants to find creative solutions to underlying problems. In the case of our duet partnership, through jointly asking "what can we do with this?", we began processes of experimentation exploring low-level alterations of dynamics, such as exploration of the quieter levels of playing; we then investigated creatively varied ways of playing *sforzandi* and worked on note lengths (Session 2). In the diary, we acknowledged this as part of a process of "developing our collective feeling" (E, Session 2) which enabled us to "come up with the beginnings of a unified conception for some quite close details and also for longer-range shapes" (M, Session 2). However, this process also involved taking a more flexible approach, for example, experimentation in specific places with doing "our own individual expression to make a more undulating and intriguing expression" (E, Session 3):

> Allowing ourselves to experience this kind of diversity actually seems to give us a kind of unity—maybe by realising that what might seem like beyond the bounds works really well and therefore gives us a green light to do our own thing within the partnership. So, by embracing diversity we can be more unified! (E, Session 3)

This highlighted our enjoyment of different approaches. After Session 4 M wrote, "often I find that what I'd choose to do myself is made much more interesting when it interacts (or occasionally collides) with [E's] choices". This led to the observation that a "strengthened compromise" between individual choices might result from a process where instead of trying to find a "middle ground" we "try and go all out on our own way, and see where we differ through that—then use that to move towards a shared interpretation which we can both stand behind" (M, Session 4). Although as a partnership, we valued the idea of "unity" in our playing and interpretation because of the sense it created of a shared aesthetic experience, this notion of "unity" was framed within an understanding that our interpretation was constantly evolving: we were not aiming to replicate fixed interpretive ideas but rather aiming to establish a relationship in which we could be increasingly agile, creative, and responsive.

Within Session 3 we also began a process of textural refinement, starting with our mutual dislike of long *tremolando* passages and feeling that they were a formulaic rather than musical solution to orchestral textures converted to duet format. We began exploring "the more pianistic qualities of the duet arrangement, being free to alter it occasionally where this helps that come through" (M, Session 3). It also seemed apparent that "at times the textures which come out are still a bit "too much" for the sonority of a piano (at least over extended periods of time) and may need a little cleaning up here and there!" (M, Session 3). In particular, our first play-through of the finale was "quite dispiriting in terms of sound—it just felt very turgid, thick, and undifferentiated" (M, Session 5) due to doubled thirds and octaves, and sections of continuous, loud passagework. Following discussion of how the original duet arranger might have been conceptualising the orchestral sound that they were familiar with and contrasting that with our experience of historically informed performance practice,

> we started to cut elements of the texture and to change dynamic phrasing so as to pare it back a bit. The effect was transformative—all of a sudden it felt like it had much more space to breathe, more room for variety in dynamic and articulation, and more rhythmic vitality. (M, Session 5)

These instances of experimentation liberated our playing and encouraged us to place no limits on areas for exploration and creative engagement. They reinforced the sense of our ongoing rehearsals as a creative process to be enjoyed, independent of any overarching "product". They highlighted our increasing sense that the rehearsal environment had become a "safe space" (Haddon and Hutchinson 2015, pp. 149–50), one in which myriad possibilities could be explored without fear of judgement or embarrassment.

6. Conclusions

The components detailed above present elements crucial to the building of partnership. The foundations of joint aims and commitment are supported by co-created evolving cycles of action and reflection, which accommodate divergent experiences and perspectives. These are underpinned by an understanding of the self and of the other player, including preferences, strengths, weaknesses, and circumstantial aspects, all of which contribute to minimising conflict and maximising meaningful development of partnership, for example, through productive and enjoyable rehearsal time. In the early stages of playing together, our intention was not to specifically focus on creating a successful and long-standing partnership: this is likely to reflect the situation of many dyads choosing to play together for enjoyment who seek to explore this potential and to extend their own knowledge of music and performance abilities. Through articulating this process, key elements are

revealed; we find that much of our experience resonates with the characteristics of partnership identified at the start of the chapter. Nevertheless, it is also emphasised that "there is no single, agreed definition" of partnership; partnership is "fluid" and needs work and time to develop (Harrison et al. 2003, p. 5). Therefore, while our experience may inform, confirm, and affirm the experiences of others in similar contexts, it is not our intention to present a prescriptive route for others to follow.

Our findings also show congruence with aspects of social familiarity investigated by King (2013) in relation to chamber ensemble rehearsal. The close working relationship which we experienced was in its infancy, although supported by a high level of social familiarity. Our accounts of the rehearsal process indicate that although we experienced instances of "hesitancy" involving "discourse and rehearsal activity characterised by broken-up conversation, a high frequency of verbal exchanges within talking segments, rapid discussion of musical ideas and short bursts of activity—lots of stop and starts in playing and talking" (King 2013, pp. 262–63), we also achieved a "flowing frame" of "discourse and rehearsal activity characterised by relatively long utterances, sustained focus on particular musical issues or longer playing segments" (ibid., p. 263) and mutual praise in our early rehearsals. This is similar to King's description of the transactional style of established duos rehearsing unfamiliar music. In our case, it is likely that the dialogic diary, as a side channel, provided an acceleration of progression towards the "flowing frame" by acting as a container for "hesitancy" dialogue, which suggests that the values of the dialogic journal are worth further investigation.

Analysis of dialogic diary entries has identified various elements which contribute to establishing secure foundations and sustaining engagement and commitment in this piano duet partnership. The use of the shared diary was vital to the development of a partnership which could function as a "possibility-creating machine" (Andersen 2008, p. 147). It enabled processes to be revealed which concern individual qualities and joint possibilities, trajectories of foundational elements that underpin creative exploration, and the value of the secure space for collaboration. Duet playing provides opportunities to enhance technical and musical understanding and to engage in role sharing and role switching, with benefits for empathy, interpersonal skills, and attention as listeners to ensemble, balance, and dynamics; beyond this, it is also possible to conceptualise it in terms of partnership through the "creative potential of joint working towards purposive change" (El Ansari et al. 2004, p. 279). This process of collaboration has also affected how we operate in other musical areas of our lives as teachers and performers by giving us a model that we can use to encourage our own peers and students to embrace reflection as a part of their musical and personal development. As M noted after Session 3:

> It's really beginning to strike me how much of an impact these sessions are having on the way I think about ensemble playing. I don't know how much stems from the freedom and level of discussion in the sessions themselves, and how much from the reflection we do around them, but over the last few weeks I've really been thinking about a lot of elements of accompaniment and of my own playing in a different way. [. . .] It's also got me thinking a bit about the kind of creative dynamic there might be in my own piano teaching, especially at higher levels. [. . .] So it's clear that this duet partnership is having an impact on a whole load of other areas of my musical life, which is really encouraging.

The process has also provided an impetus to consider the role of self and other within the partnership. While concerns to enable partner equality highlighted our desire to facilitate communication and responses (verbal, musical, and empathic) in a shared learning process, as educators, we consider the potential benefits of a partnership model of collaboration as a highly positive alternative to a transmission-based model within instrumental learning. However, a transformative culture deploying collaborative possibility thinking, activation of creativity, and shared goals also requires a safe and supportive space. The contribution of the dialogic journal appears not only to have deepened the individual and joint understanding of the processes at work within these months of rehearsal but also to have strengthened the safe space in which these were happening. Further research could explore dialogic reflection to examine its role in the development of partnership, in addition to developing a greater understanding of the mechanisms of responsibilities, communication, and experimentation within a dyadic musical partnership.

Finally, for education to be transformative, it requires "practices that trigger the learners to challenge or question personally held perspectives and assumptions, which necessitate reflection and discussion and which have the capacity to allow the learners to reconceptualise previously held convictions or beliefs" (Sellars 2014, p. 27). These practices may develop through the processes detailed above, including collaborative and individual reflection, the exploration of multiple modalities of communication, and experimenting with divergent interpretations whilst celebrating shared experiences. Fundamental to all of these processes is the solid bedrock provided by a model of partnership that is founded on empathy and shared enjoyment, which provides the "reciprocal and interdependent relationship" (Coutts 2018, p. 295) necessary for possibility thinking, and enables collaboratively responsive rather than replicative approaches to musical performance. In our view, this model of partnership is central to the armoury of the chamber musician in the twenty-first century.

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"Let's Play!": Professional Performers' Perspectives on Play in Chamber Ensemble Rehearsal

Rae W. Todd and Elaine C. King

1. Introduction

Professional chamber ensemble performers in the western art music tradition will undoubtedly spend many hours "playing" in rehearsals across their lifetime. The phenomenon of "play", however, is relatively underexplored in this context, despite long associations between music and play.[1] In modern Anglophonic traditions, the term is prevalent in musical encounters: "what instrument do you play?", "let's play that piece again", "let's play through the opening bars", "let's play around with that idea", "can you play the melody like this?". Moreover, it is not uncommon to hear musicians referring to themselves and others as "players", such as "ensemble players", "orchestral players" or "clarinet players".[2] Beyond this, the word "play" is used in a range of everyday contexts, such as to describe children's "playtime" or to denote people engaging in different pursuits, including games (e.g., "to play chess"), sport (e.g., "let's play football"), drama (e.g., "role play") and theatre (e.g., "did you enjoy the play?").

In general, play, as a verb is associated with actions (e.g., "to play football", "to play a musical instrument", "to play with a friend"; "a smile played across his lips"; "she played the main character in the film"); and, as a noun, it documents events in time and space (e.g., "the premiere of the play is tonight"; "it is play at lunch"; "there is little play in the mechanism"). This chapter focuses on Anglophonic usages

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1 Reichling (1997) suggests that the genesis of this association antedates Apollo and the Muses. Etymologically, the association is made in the English language from 400AD: the word "play" is rooted in the Old English *plegan* and Middle English *pleien*. This referred to a range of actions and activities, including playing music (Online Etymology Dictionary n.d.). In other languages, up until the 1400s, the word "play" was not always used in the context of music; for instance, instrument noun derivatives were used in Ancient Greek (e.g., the guitar *kithara* became "to guitar" *kitharizo*). Interestingly, the etymology of "play" (*paizo*) in Greek has the same root as "child" (*pais*) along with the word for "train" or "educate" (*paideuo*) (Apostolaki, Artemis. Personal Communication, 20 January 2022). A distinction was also made in Ancient Greek culture between play (*pais*) and sport or games (*agon*), while the Roman word for "play" (*ludus*) encompassed both types of activity (Huizinga [1938] 2016).

2 Related to play, "player" also derives from Old English (*plegere*) and Middle English (*pleiere*), denoting "one who takes part in pastimes or amusements". It is believed that musicians started being referred to as "players" in Modern English from around 1400 (Online Etymology Dictionary n.d.).

and applications, and we acknowledge that terminology in other modern languages varies, such as the German "spielen" and "stück", and the French use of the verbs "jouer" and "faire".

Given the breadth of the use of the word in everyday language, both within and outside the domain of music, a distinction is made for the purpose of this chapter between "playing music" (that is, the notion of play as it is ordinarily used in making music) and "play" (that is, the pervasive social and cultural activity that manifests itself in many contexts).[3] The ensuing account focuses specifically on investigating the latter in the context of professional chamber ensemble rehearsal, which reflects the research interests and performing experiences of the authors. It is assumed that "playing music" does not necessarily overlap with "play". Indeed, existing analyses of ensemble music making (e.g., Ginsborg and King 2012) suggest that chamber performers distinguish (albeit subtly) between the use of these terms in their rehearsal talk: for example, playing music is reflected in the phrases "'let's play through the piece", "let's play from the beginning" or "can you play that again?", while play is implied in the phrases "let's play around with that idea" or "let's play about with the tempo". There is limited understanding, however, about the phenomenon of play in this context. So, how do professional chamber ensemble performers understand and experience play in their rehearsals? This chapter will be divided into four sections. Section 1 conceptualises the phenomenon of play according to existing research so as to provide insight into its characteristics; Section 2 considers musicological perspectives on play in relation to music performance; Section 3 reports the findings of a novel empirical enquiry that gathered professional chamber performers' understandings and experiences of play in their rehearsal activity and cross-compares the data with research perspectives; and Section 4 highlights the implications and directions for further research by way of a conclusion.

2. Conceptualising Play

Play, as a social and cultural phenomenon, has received considerable research attention, yet it is extremely difficult to define. Play is "complex" and "ambiguous" (Eberle 2014), and the task of understanding it has been regarded by some as "futile" (e.g., Gilmore 1966; Power 2000; for a history of play research, see Henricks 2019). Eberle (2014) recognises that conceptualisations of play need to accommodate "diverse pursuits", from peekaboo to baseball, as well as a "mix" of human experiences, including physical, social, emotional and intellectual experiences

[3] The term "musical play" is used in literature on play and music making within school-based learning environments where the focus is on experience and exploration (e.g., Berger and Cooper 2003; Niland 2009).

(pp. 214–17). This breadth is reflected in dictionary definitions which typically describe play as functional (such as when referring to a type of action or activity, encompassing "diverse pursuits") and experiential (such as when detailing the social or emotional effects or rewards of engagement in an action or activity), although differentiating the functional and the experiential is not always possible. For example, the Cambridge Online Dictionary (n.d.) lists four instances of play which reflect such descriptions, all of which may be considered as both functional and experiential: first, to engage in activity for enjoyment or recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose; second, to take part in a sport; third, to be cooperative; and fourth, to represent a character in a theatrical performance or film.[4] However, the idea of play-as-function and play-as-experience provides a simple (albeit crude) way to delineate the phenomenon and much of the existing discourse focuses on conceptualising the latter.[5] Two main issues have preoccupied researchers over the past several decades: first, identifying the characteristics of play; and second, understanding its boundaries (that is, what is and is not play). Both issues are often interrelated, as discussed below.

There are many different types of play experiences, including symbolic, imaginative, fantasy, solitary, social, child's play, object play, rough-and-tumble, physical and competitive.[6] Each type of play involves one or more physical, emotional, motivational and cognitive features, all of which may develop, undergo transformation and connect events for the duration of a particular play episode (Sutton-Smith 1997). Beyond recognising types of play, researchers have characterised how play operates. In his seminal text *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, Huizinga [1938] (Huizinga [1938] 2016) posited play as "a voluntary activity … executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted …, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is 'different' from 'ordinary life'" (pp. 28–29). Building on this perspective through the work of Burghardt (2005), Henricks (2006) and Eberle (2014), seven basic characteristics of play emerge in the literature:

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4 Upton (2015) explores the same distinction (functional and experiential) in his research on acting.

5 Some philosophers argue that play transcends the boundaries of human experience altogether. For example, in her cultural and political critique of play, Shields (2015) builds on the work of Johan Huizinga, Mihai Spariosu and Friedrich Nietzsche by arguing that play exists partially outside of the human experience and defies linguistic articulation. She describes play as the "feeling of Otherwise"—that is "a basic [metaphysical] force" (p. 298)—thus opening up complexities about the notion of play as a lived experience. Furthermore, she suggests that play enables people to imagine alternatives, including different cultural verities.

6 For a taxonomy of "play types" (see Hughes 2011, p. 98).

1. Play is voluntary: people play because they want to and not because they have to.[7]
2. Play is purposeless: it exists for its own sake; thus, players do not have a specific purpose or reason for engaging in it. If there are "stakes" at hand (such as when there are material consequences attached to the play), these may diminish the experience of play.
3. Play is special and set apart: it is recognised that play is not "ordinary" life, even though it might mimic it.[8] It normally takes place in a particular (physical) setting, such as the playground, field, woods, ring or room, and involves inhabiting a different (mental) world.
4. Play is fun: it is acknowledged that fun might involve a range of feelings, including enjoyment and tension.
5. Play has rules: rules, implied or explicit, help to organise play (such as turn-taking), make it fair (or not!) and sustain interest. Rules will vary widely and may be different to those followed in everyday behaviour. Additionally, they provide fixed boundaries for play in that they only apply in a certain time and/or place.
6. Play is a process: it involves experiencing different "elements", whether positive or negative, and different patterns of "motion" and "mood" that are regular, irregular, repetitive or even transitory.[9]

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7 Interestingly, Huizinga makes a distinction between work and play in relation to artistic pursuits. He describes music performance as a kind of "free play", but points out that training and expertise are required to do this, which relies upon work ("labour") rather than play.

8 Some writers argue that play is not necessarily set apart from ordinary life; that there is interaction between "real" and "play" worlds (e.g., Dewey 1910; Fink et al. 1968; also see Reichling 1997). Bateson (1955), for example, claims that humans (and animals) must be aware that they can simulate, or refer to, other activities in play, so they must understand that play is not "real". He posits that these worlds are intrinsically linked because the real world is present in the play world through meta-communication; that is, communication which refers to communication (Mitchell 1991). Meta-communication involves signalling (or "framing") to one another regarding what is or is not play (also see Lorenz 1952; Amabile et al. 1994; Nachmanovitch 2009). Likewise, Henricks (2006) suggests that in order for play to happen, there needs to be an awareness by others that they are only *acting* as if some other world or set of rules exist (also see Shields 2015). He goes on to say that the play world needs the real world in order to exist, even though the real world does not need to be present in the play world, and so the latter can be understood in terms of an image. This is depicted through an analogy with nature: if a tree is situated near a lake, a reflection of the tree in the lake may be visible; the image of the tree in the reflection is like the play world, for without the tree (the real world), the image (the play world) would not exist, even though the tree does not need the image to exist (p. 28). The play world is acknowledged in contemporary literature as a "play space" (also see Larsen 2015) wherein imaginative and fantasy play operate and the player's abilities can transform and manipulate ideas and objects from the real world to suit their play.

9 The process of experiencing play has been conceived in different ways in previous research, including as dualistic (positive or negative) and rhythmic. For example, Eberle's (2014) spiral contains six (positive) "elements"—*anticipation*, *surprise*, *pleasure*, *understanding*, *strength* and *poise*—with opposing (negative) elements lying at the outer edges (which he defines as "non-play"). Henricks (2018) posits different colours to represent this dualism: "green play" (positive) is orderly,

7. Play is creative: it often lies within the realms of pretence and uses the imagination.[10]

The above characteristics have been used as criteria to determine whether an activity is or is not play; yet this approach is not without its problems. First, it relies upon the establishment of various artificial boundaries, such as between real ("ordinary") and play, work ("labour") and play, fun and seriousness. Second, the characteristics are not necessarily bulletproof. For example, according to Eberle (2014) if children engage in playing doctors and nurses, their play might be *purposeful* because it serves a wider preparatory purpose or even "rehearsal" for later life (p. 216). In the adult world, the purpose of engaging in play might be to experience something that is unlike work or ordinary daily activities, so the experiences it affords are its own purpose. As such, play might be regarded as *purposive* without purpose, similar to aesthetic experience or judgement, as explained by Kant [1790] (1988) among others. So, the assertion about the purposelessness of play is not straightforward. Likewise, there is a fine line between play and creativity, and it is difficult to determine if one is playing creatively or creatively playing. Nevertheless, even when researchers such as Eberle attempt to move away from defining characteristics by conceiving play as a flexible and self-organising process, the approach still lends itself to the formation of criteria.

To surmise, the phenomenon of play is multifaceted and is most usefully conceived as a set of characteristics: (1) play is voluntary; (2) it is purposeless (or rather, purposive without purpose); (3) it is special/set apart; (4) it is fun; (5) it has rules; (6) it is a process; and (7) it is creative. It is acknowledged, however, that the experience of play is highly complex because of its breadth and scope, which means that these characteristics need to be regarded flexibly, rather than rigidly: they may be interpreted as degrees of similarity within the context of any given instance or scenario of play whether that involves one or more individuals. The boundaries of play are thus very fluid and will be determined by numerous factors, including the individual(s) participating, the rules of an event, the type, time and place of the activity, the motivations of the player, their communicative signals and larger

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cooperative and self-reassuring and "red play" (negative) is disorderly, oppositional, destructive and counterproductive (pp. 164–66). Beyond this dualism, Karoff (2013) argues that play is inherently rhythmic because different "play moods" are produced and experienced during any one episode, which essentially involves new and/or familiar patterns of activity ("motions").

[10] Research indicates that creativity and play share common features because they involve using the imagination to "invent" or "transform" something (Gotlieb et al. 2019). According to Power (2011), there are cognitive similarities in being creative and being playful: "cognitive qualities of playfulness (such as fantasy, spontaneity, and ingenuity) are congruent with divergent thinking or ideation …, which are widely accepted phases of the creative process" (p. 289; also see Russ and Wallace 2013; Van Fleet and Feeney 2015).

cultural–historical practices and ideologies. Likewise, the relationship between "real" and "play" worlds is context dependent. The ensuing section looks more closely at existing conceptualisations of play in relation to the context of music performance.

3. Music Performance and Play

One of the first attempts to specifically address the relationship between music performance and play was Eleanor Stubley's (1993) philosophical account of performance activity.[11] Her approach draws upon field theory and attempts to describe what goes on "inside" the action: "musical performance can be understood to create a space [field] for play when the motivation to make music is driven by the dialectic interplay of feelings which initiate and sustain play" (p. 278). Stubley articulates three kinds of play spaces in this field: physical (through which the body moves); invisible (where thought takes place) and that of the will or spirit (which represents the self). She explains that the boundaries of the field are influenced by rituals, styles and other conditions. Musicians are encouraged to explore these different play spaces in order to promote self-exploration in music performance.[12] Stubley also acknowledges that play cannot be foretold by the musicians (that is, anything can happen in the moment-to-moment unfolding of a performance), but she indicates that play may become highly repetitive in rehearsals.[13] For Stubley, then, "play" in musical performance can and does happen (not necessarily all of the time), but it has to be motivated by an individual performer through their interaction with the music that they are performing.

It is interesting to consider Stubley's perspective in light of the (general) characteristics of play outlined previously. She suggests that music performance play is likely to be voluntary because it is motivated by the performer, but it is not without purpose if there is a deliberate exploration of play spaces. It may be set apart from "ordinary" music making (that is "playing music"), whether physically and/or invisibly (in the mind), and it has rules, which she defines as "boundaries". What is not clear is the extent to which music performance play might be experienced as fun and creative, or how the process is initiated and sustained.

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[11] For wider research perspectives on play and music making, such as in the context of children's education, see Schwardron (1972) and Swanwick (1988).

[12] Interestingly, both Eberle (2014) and Henricks (2018) highlight one of the internal qualities of play as being driven by a commitment to "self-realisation", or being aware of the self through fulfilment of one's own strength and potential (Eberle 2014, p. 226; Henricks 2018, p. 165).

[13] Contemporary research shows that music making in rehearsal environments can, in fact, be very varied and creative, such as in distributed collaborations (see Clarke and Doffman 2017 on "distributed creativity") or "musical play" (St. John 2015). Moreover, there is an epistemic shift from communication (in rehearsal) to interaction (in performance) according to recent conceptualisations of small group music-making practice (King and Gritten 2017).

In a similar vein to Stubley's invisible (thought) play space, Reichling (1997) argues that imagination is central to play experiences in music making. For example, in relation to the interpretation of music in performance, scores of the western classical tradition are seen to represent a "play of [musical] motives", thus providing a metaphorical playground for performers: there is "space" and "time" to interact with them in many different ways.[14] The symbols used within musical notation are seen to act like toys: each professional player knows what they are, but how you "play" with them depends on your personal traits and whims at the time, as well as the "rules" of cultural–historical practices and ideologies. The practice tradition of western art music performance is highly regulated and free play is discouraged, so the boundaries of this kind of play will be different to those in other traditions (see Leech-Wilkinson 2016). The conditions of play do not operate independently, then, but are bound up within a much larger cultural context (also see Addison 1991).[15] Reichling's characterisation of play in music performance suggests that it is both fun (because of the idea of toys) and creative (because it uses the imagination).

Building on Stubley's physical (bodily) play space, Csepregi (2013) considers how the creation of musical tones in performance produces tactile effects, such as bodily impulses, and argues that spontaneous bodily impulses arise through playful activity: "the body is able to resonate to a stream of impressions and respond to them with fine movements" (p. 105). Interestingly, Csepregi remarks that those in a group setting might look for "reciprocal interaction" (p. 100) in their bodily impulses, thus suggesting that (physical) playful activity can involve co-performers. Up to this point, the literature on music performance and play has placed little emphasis on the role of co-performers. Indeed, the above researchers focus on explaining how individual performers engage with musical scores (effectively "playing" with them by interpreting their musical motives), the sounds they produce and the physical sensations they experience in response to these sounds (as if a type of object play). All of these perspectives are limited insofar as they overlook the possibility of play experiences being influenced by co-performers (or even, by extension, audiences). It is plausible to suggest that a shared field space exists in ensemble music performance, including rehearsal, which involves social play. In addition, existing research lacks the first-hand insights of performing musicians. The purpose of the ensuing empirical enquiry is to address these shortfalls.

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[14] Reichling (1997) regards space and time as real (actual physical space or actual clock time) or imagined (that which is imaginatively perceived).

[15] This perhaps helps to explain why performers continue to seek fresh (or creative) ways to "play" with a piece of music and why audiences enjoy hearing or seeing the same musical work performed by the same or different performers on multiple occasions. Discussion of the overlap between imagination and creativity is beyond the scope of this chapter (for a starting point, see Hargreaves et al. 2011).

4. Chamber Performers' Perspectives on Play in Rehearsal

To date, much of the research on how musicians interact (socially and musically) has been absorbed within music psychological research on group music making, where insights into coordination, communication and other aspects of ensemble work are examined empirically (see, for example, Davidson and Good 2002; Keller 2008; Bayley 2011; Bishop 2018). It is helpful to provide a brief overview of this research to highlight the range of topics that have been addressed. A number of enquiries examine the social aspects of rehearsal and performance, including the ways in which co-performers develop interpersonal relationships (King 2013), trust (Gritten 2017) and empathy (Waddington 2017; Cho 2019).[16] From a cognitive perspective, Keller (2008) exposes the primary mechanisms underpinning "joint action" in ensemble work, referring specifically to "adapting" (to enable strict musical timekeeping and strong synchrony), "attending" (where musicians "prioritise" their own sounds above those produced by the rest of the ensemble) and "anticipating" (the musician's ability to plan and predict other musicians' behaviours). Other studies reveal the way in which physical interactions between co-performers, including gestures, eye contact and bodily movements, provide vital cues or signals that facilitate coordination and enable musicians to relay expressive ideas (King and Ginsborg 2011; McCaleb 2014). Many of these and other systematic enquiries in the field have been informed by the views of performing musicians (see Leech-Wilkinson and Prior 2018 on "shape"; King and Waddington-Jones 2018 on "feel").

In order to study professional performers' perspectives on play in chamber ensemble rehearsal, it is necessary to consider the way in which performance preparation has been researched empirically to date, as this influences the approach pursued in the case study reported below. Typically, ensemble music rehearsals in the western art tradition involve individual musicians working together on a selected repertoire in preparation for a live public performance. As such, rehearsals are considered to be goal-led because there is a shared purpose (Ginsborg 2017). Numerous studies on both solo and ensemble rehearsal have examined the structure of practice and, in group contexts, the distribution of so-called "talk" and "play" (in this case, "play" refers to "playing music"; see, for example, Chaffin et al. 2002; Williamon and Davidson 2002; Davidson and King 2004; Clarke et al. 2016; Wise et al. 2017).[17] Although styles of rehearsal vary, it is acknowledged that musicians

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[16] Empathy is prosocial behaviour and arises when musicians feel like they "click" together (Waddington 2017), allowing moments of spontaneity and flexibility in musical interpretation.

[17] Clarke et al. (2016) examined the distribution of different kinds of talk during a rehearsal with ensemble performers working in collaboration with a composer to prepare a new piece. They identified four different kinds of rehearsal talk: "composition-talk" (that is, talk about the new composition in collaboration with the composer); "playing-talk" (that is, talk about how to play the

tend to balance run-throughs or continuous portions of playing music with focused work on "chunks" of material during individual sessions (Goodman 2000; Cox 1989; Williamon et al. 2002; Chaffin et al. 2002; Gruson 1988). In ensemble settings, researchers have analysed musicians' verbal and non-verbal discourse using a variety of methods in order to determine how they communicate and coordinate ideas in rehearsal (Goodman 2000; King and Ginsborg 2011; Clarke et al. 2016).[18] Portions of playing music are normally considered in relation to points arising in rehearsal talk.[19] What merits closer attention, however, is the activity that is not talked about: the rehearsal of continuous portions of playing music. The ensuing case study reports post-rehearsal reflections by performers about such portions of their rehearsals. Two perspectives are explored: first, how the performers understand "play" in relation to their rehearsals; and second, how the performers describe their experiences of "play" during continuous portions of playing music. The data are drawn from part of a large-scale performance project on play in chamber ensemble rehearsal (Todd 2020). This is one of the first qualitative studies in the domain to focus on the phenomenon of play in ensemble rehearsal and to seek performers' perspectives on what they experience beyond what they talk about in the rehearsal arena. The enquiry is highly exploratory. It should be noted that none of the participating performers were familiar with the research perspectives in the field and they were not given any information about how play has been conceptualised in the literature. Consequently, their understandings were based purely on their own experiences.

The study involved a purposive sample of six professional chamber musicians who were recruited for their extensive performance careers. The performers formed two chamber ensembles, each with the first author of this chapter who was involved in the enquiry as a clarinettist-cum-researcher.[20] Ensemble 1 included four string performers who were already in a well-established London-based ensemble that had been performing together for a decade. Together with the first author, the ensemble

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piece in performance); "making-talk" (that is, talk about rehearsal practicalities); and "social-talk" (that is, general conversation). Different kinds of "play" have yet to be delineated in this body of research.

18 Methods of rehearsal analysis in solo and ensemble contexts include verbal protocol (e.g., Chaffin et al. 2002); retrospective video recall (e.g., Wise et al. 2017); observation (e.g., Williamon and Davidson 2002); event logging (e.g., King and Ginsborg 2011); and motion capture (e.g., for an overview of movement analysis of pianists, see Jabusch 2006).

19 It is suggested that the amount of "playing" and "talking" varies from group to group and is influenced by musicians' levels of expertise: even though some musicians are chattier than others, it is generally reported that more playing and less talking is achieved by professional musicians in a rehearsal session (Davidson and Good 2002; Williamon and Davidson 2002; King and Ginsborg 2011).

20 The first author's reflections on play in the rehearsals were recorded, analysed and reported as part of the wider artistic research parameters of the project (Todd 2020). This chapter focuses only on the data from the chamber performers who were not familiar with the literature or research agenda so as to highlight the inside perspectives of professional practitioners. The first author interviewed all of these participants.

formed a clarinet quintet (clarinet, violin I, violin II, viola, cello). Ensemble 2 involved two participants who had never performed with each other before, but had equal amounts of experience as professional chamber musicians. These musicians formed a newly established clarinet trio along with the first author (clarinet, cello, piano).

Both ensembles completed a rehearsal and public performance as part of the study. The rehearsal was approximately three hours in duration and split into two equal halves with a short break in between. The performance took place after the rehearsal on the same day. Ensemble 1 rehearsed and performed Mozart's Clarinet Quintet in A, K. 581 and Ensemble 2 practised Beethoven's Trio in Bb, Op. 11 and Brahms' Trio in A Minor, Op. 114. The rehearsals were video recorded and the footage was subsequently viewed in its entirety before selected clips involving continuous portions of play (that is, extended run-throughs or sections that did not feature rehearsal "talk") were extracted from the beginning, middle and ends of each half of the rehearsal.[21] Once the rehearsal clips were compiled, individual interviews were set up at mutually convenient times with each participant via Skype. These interviews took place approximately seven working days after each rehearsal–performance day. The clips were issued to each participant two days prior to their interview to allow them to review and reflect upon the footage.

The interview questions were semi-structured and covered two areas. One asked the performers to comment on the term "play" (as distinct from "playing music"), especially how they understood this term in the context of professional chamber ensemble music rehearsal. The other asked participants to detail their experiences of playing music in the video clips, such as what they were doing and/or thinking, with reference to "play" if relevant or appropriate. Prompting questions were used, such as "what were you experiencing in the video clip?", and "did anything in particular stick out to you?" Each of the interviews was recorded and transcribed by the first author. The transcriptions were coded by two independent researchers using NVivo 12. The data were analysed thematically according to the steps outlined by Ascenso et al. (2017, p. 17): (1) the transcripts were read numerous times and details recorded in notes; (2) the notes were re-evaluated and transformed into emergent themes with quote references; (3) the themes were organised into clusters to create subordinate and superordinate themes; (4) the themes were then placed into hierarchical order.

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[21] The distribution of "talk" and "playing music" in the rehearsals was examined as part of the wider study (Todd 2020): more than 50% of the rehearsal time was spent playing music for both Ensembles 1 and 2 (over 90 min in each rehearsal). The six clips represented up to one-third of this time (up to 30 min).

4.1. Performers' Understandings of "Play"

The performers understood play in varying ways and, not surprisingly, found it difficult to define. They distinguished the idea of play from playing music (discussed below) and offered general descriptions. There was sometimes slippage in their descriptions between "play" and "playing music". One performer described play as a purely physical act, which seemed to be more about playing music than play per se: "I think play in the very basic sense is just a physical thing. You know, you're making sounds out of your instrument" (Cellist, Ensemble 1). Alternatively, play was defined as a "musical offering", wherein "it means to contribute, so you are bringing something to the game or the situation; in a rehearsal, it's a musical offering" (Violinist, Ensemble 1). It was also felt that the use of the word implied freedom along with a sense of purpose in a rehearsal: "I do love the fact that we use the word play for music because … it's a freedom and a relaxation, but it's also with the aim of getting something done" (Cellist, Ensemble 2). Interestingly, one performer pointed out that they would not always use the term "play" in relation to their music-making activities: "I think for a more professional situation [for a concert or recording] I would use something like, perform, … so play is maybe a little bit more innocent" (Pianist, Ensemble 2). Beyond these general descriptions, the performers highlighted a number of characteristics in their understandings of rehearsal play. Six superordinate themes emerged, each with two or three subordinate themes (see Figure 1). The themes will be discussed in turn below.

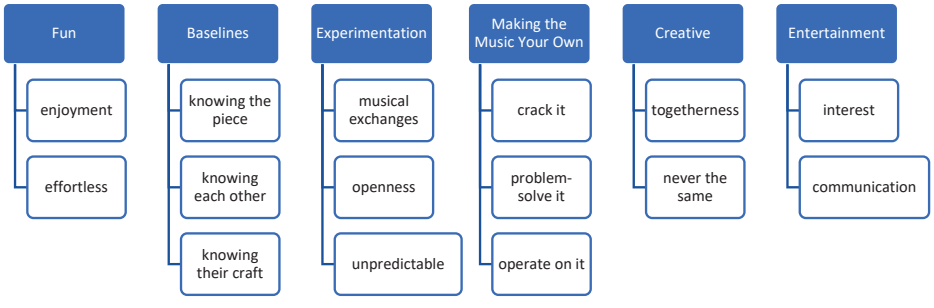

Figure 1. Performers' understandings of play in chamber ensemble rehearsal. Source: Graphic by authors.

4.1.1. Theme 1: Play Is Fun

The majority of the performers mentioned that play is about having fun, similar to the pervasive social and cultural experience of play: "playing is doing something fun" (Violinist, Ensemble 1); "it's about … interacting with something and having fun with something" (Pianist, Ensemble 2). They recognised that playing an instrument is different to the wider notion of play, but indicated that these two

kinds of play could merge in rehearsal activity: "if you combine the two, then you're having fun playing" (Violinist, Ensemble 1). It was also implied that rehearsing could be playful, rather than serious: "a playful rehearsal is going to be better than a serious, grindy one" (Violist, Ensemble 1). The performers indicated that if rehearsal activity is fun, then it is also "enjoyable" and happening for its own sake, hence effortless: "trying is less effective than just playing" (Violist, Ensemble 1). The same performer also suggested that playing with others is more fun ("even better") than playing around with something on your own.

4.1.2. Theme 2: Play Has Baselines

According to these performers, opportunities for play in rehearsal arise only when certain rules, or "baselines", are in place. Three main kinds of baseline were described: knowing the piece; knowing each other; and knowing their craft. In each case, the baseline is determined by familiarity. In relation to knowing the piece, it was reported that play could happen either through *becoming* familiar with the piece or *because of* familiarity with the piece: on the one hand *(play through becoming familiar)*, "I really enjoy the sense of listening out for what someone else is doing and not making too many decisions. So, I quite like getting to know a piece through the huge amount of possibilities that you have" (Cellist, Ensemble 2); on the other hand (*play because of familiarity*), "you know with something that you've lived with for a long time, we can play with it" (Violinist, Ensemble 1); and "I suppose it [play] is most likely to occur when it's a piece that we all know well and therefore you can change little things, little details spontaneously, without derailing anyone else" (Violist, Ensemble 1).

Similar points emerged in the interviews in relation to knowing each other, especially that play could happen *because of familiarity* with each other: "so, you kind of get to learn your repertoire of responses to the notation, and then on top of that you have flexibility with each other to kind of anticipate and respond to them in ways that are going to work. But, I definitely think [the chance to be playful] comes with knowing each other well" (Cellist, Ensemble 1); "I think there is a lot of space for [play] in the music and I think it comes much more easily when you've played together for a long time. I think that one of the things that long-term music partnerships enable you to do is to develop a baseline on top of which you can play" (Cellist, Ensemble 2). Since the second ensemble in this study was made up of musicians who had not played together before, the cellist's comment implies that play did not come to them easily.

The performers also mentioned that play relied upon solid craft; that is, knowing how to play one's instrument. Interestingly, developing craft was described as a challenging and continuous process of refinement which influenced opportunities to

play: "as a musician you never get to a fixed point where you can just do everything, you're always trying to refine what you do" (Cellist, Ensemble 1).

4.1.3. Theme 3: Play Involves Experimentation

The majority of the performers reported that play involved experimentation or "trying out" new musical ideas in rehearsal. Experimentation was described according to three features. First, it involved a musical exchange with another performer; that is, the performers implied that if there was no exchange, there was no experimentation, and thus no play: "experiment with a little ornament here [and] if someone responds, you know by echoing the same ornament, that definitely feels like playing" (Cellist, Ensemble 2). Second, experimenting was regarded as something unpredictable. One performer likened experimenting to playing with a ball—"you throw a ball to the other person and see if they throw it back" (Violinist, Ensemble 1)—while another also suggested that it was unpredictable because it resembled "throwing". "Everyone comes up with something kind of different to say and a lot of the time people will be playing with ideas during a rehearsal. They just sort of throw something and experiment" (Violinist, Ensemble 1). Third, it was pointed out that co-performers need to be open to one another in order for experimentation to happen: there should be a "willingness to be open; to receive other ideas or especially things that you haven't thought of before" (Cellist, Ensemble 2).

4.1.4. Theme 4: Play Involves "Making the Music Your Own"

Some of the performers reported a strong sense of responsibility towards interpreting music so as to "make it their own" (Cellist, Ensemble 1). They regarded "play" as a means to do this and likened the way in which they would "play with something" (in general) to how they would come to "own" a musical interpretation; for example, they suggested that they had to "crack it" or "operate on it" or "[problem] solve it", just as they would "turn something over" when playing with it (Violist, Ensemble 1).

4.1.5. Theme 5: Play Involves Being Creative

The majority of the performers described "play" as "being creative". They highlighted two features about this: first, that "being creative" is about doing things differently ("it's never the same"; Cellist, Ensemble 1); and second, that "being creative" feels like a "more generous kind of togetherness" (Cellist, Ensemble 2). To this end, the performers indicated that in order to be creative, they had to be open, willing and comfortable with one another so that they could "play" with new musical ideas. This perspective resonates very closely with references to having a baseline of knowing each other and ideas about experimentation.

4.1.6. Theme 6: Play Is Entertainment

A number of the performers suggested that play was important because it provided entertainment for both themselves and the audience. There were two motivations for using play to entertain. First, it provided interest when rehearsing familiar pieces: "if we know the parts super well … you know with something that you've lived with for a long time, we can play with it and entertain each other and the audience actually" (Violist, Ensemble 1). Second, it strengthened communication about the music: "[play] is all about the music and the communication that you're trying to create between the players and the audience as well" (Cellist, Ensemble 1).

4.2. Performers' Experiences of "Play"

In reviewing rehearsal footage during the interviews, the performers provided commentaries about what they were experiencing when playing through sections of the music. Interestingly, upon completing an interview, one of the performers remarked that the sections of playing through were particularly crucial in their rehearsal preparation: "you can get most of the rehearsal done by just communicating while you're playing" (Violinist, Ensemble 1). Within their reflections, the performers highlighted portions of the clips that they considered to represent play (as distinct from playing music). They were not asked to label such instances, nor to define their precise boundaries, but rather to discuss what they were thinking and doing at these points.[22] Three different ways of experiencing play emerged, as well as special "moments" of play (see Figure 2).

The first "way" of experiencing play was about *initiating play*. The performers identified instances in the video clips where they deliberately set out to play with their co-performers, such as by "misdirecting" or "surprising" them (Cellist, Ensemble 1). To do this, they indicated that their "intention" was to realise the music in a different way to how they had previously: for example, it was "a little bit different to how [I] played it before" (Cellist, Ensemble 1).

The second "way" of experiencing play was about *anticipating play*. The performers reflected that they were aware of "anticipating" different situations during specific passages, so they felt like they were "getting ready" for something to happen, including the possibility of play (Pianist, Ensemble 2). During these experiences, they described that they were "processing" lots of information and

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[22] We did not set out to determine the frequency or duration of play activity within the clips, nor the extent to which co-performers' experiences of play coincided, which may be scrutinised more closely in future research. Wider analysis of the performers' reflections provided insight into the rest of their experiences during the clips, where they revealed emphasis upon the self (e.g., evaluating tuning, matching sounds), the ensemble (e.g., communicating), the musical interpretation (e.g., shaping, expressing intentions) and the rehearsal dynamic (e.g., feeling positive) (see Todd 2020).

"different situations" in their minds (Pianist, Ensemble 2) as well as listening out for acoustic signals ("relying a lot on my ears"; Pianist, Ensemble 2) to hear changes, such as in bowing, breathing and timing, and watching out for physical signals, such as someone trying to communicate through "leaning into you" or by "being drawn to certain people" (Cellist, Ensemble 1).

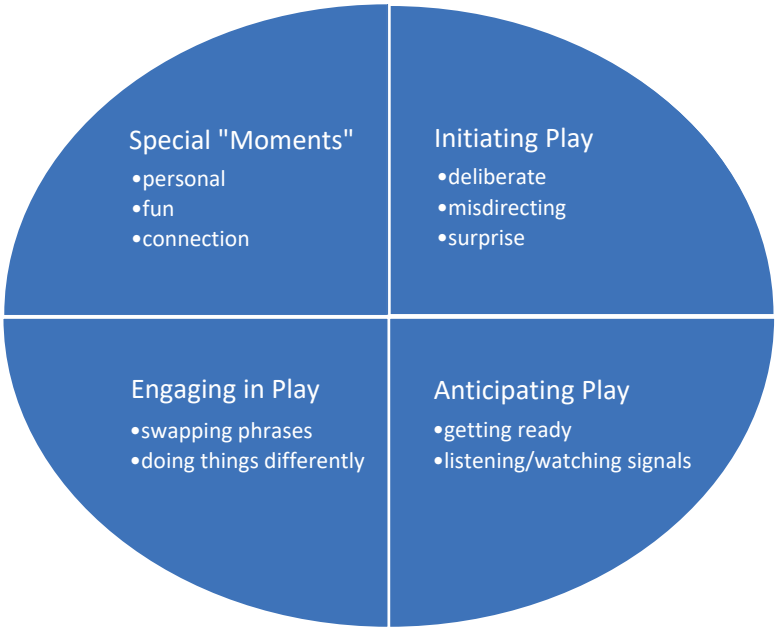

Figure 2. Performers' experiences of play in chamber ensemble rehearsal. Source: Graphic by authors.

The third "way" of experiencing play was about *engaging in play*. The performers in both ensembles indicated that they were playing about during certain musical interactions with co-performers, such as when "swapping over shapes and phrases" (Cellist, Ensemble 2) or "throwing" out ideas (Violinist, Ensemble 1). These experiences were described as particularly "satisfying" (Pianist, Ensemble 2), "nice" (Cellist, Ensemble 2) and "natural" (Violinist, Ensemble 1). Several other examples were identified during "dance-like" passages in the music, such as in relation to Mozart's Minuet movement (Ensemble 1) and Brahms's Trio section (Ensemble 2). In these sections, the performers indicated that they were being playful in their music making by doing things "a little bit different" (Violinist, Ensemble 1). According to this performer, playfulness was prompted by the experience of a build-up of energy in the music because of the repetition of phrases, as well as the idea of dancing with different co-performers: "you are dancing … you go off and do a variation

and then you come back and do the minuet; you've got a different partner, you trip over" (Violinist, Ensemble 1). Interestingly, several performers referred to the dance-like passages in similar ways, highlighting that they experienced a lot of "enjoyment" during them (Cellist, Ensemble 2). All of these experiences seemed to involve playful exchanges of music-interpretative ideas with co-performers across one or more phrases, typically by "swapping" or "doing things differently", and all of these experiences were considered to be highly positive.

The performers also detailed unique "moments" when they were engaging in play, which were fleeting but distinctive. For example, in Ensemble 1, the performers described a "little moment" of play that they depicted as "kinda fun" (Violist, Ensemble 1) and "personal" (Cellist, Ensemble 1). According to their reflections, this moment was triggered by a shared previous experience and arose because they exchanged physical information ("I catch the [cellist's] eye"; there was "a little giggle") as well as a musical idea ("we connect in the piece"). This particular moment of play, then, was characterised by a number of features: it was fun; it occurred spontaneously; it was fleeting; it involved co-performers overtly acknowledging each other's communicative signals; and it relied upon familiarity with each other (hence it was "personal") and the piece. One of the performers indicated that such moments provide "little touches of humanity" (Violist, Ensemble 1).

4.3. Cross-Comparing Empirical and Research Perspectives

Taken together, the majority of the performers' understandings and experiences of play in a professional chamber ensemble rehearsal overlap (albeit to varying degrees) with the characteristics identified in existing research perspectives on play. The performers, however, provided nuanced understandings and experiences within their specialist domain. For the purpose of cross-comparison, superordinate and subordinate themes from the empirical findings are aligned with related research perspectives and summarised in Table 1. The first three characteristics drawn from the research perspectives are the most difficult to align with the performers' understandings. Regarding the first characteristic, that play is voluntary, Stubley (1993) indicates that music performers play because they are motivated to do so (hence it is voluntary; Huizinga [1938] 2016); however, these performers suggested that they did so because it felt effortless or natural. Effortlessness is related to the activity of the will in an interesting way (indeed, does one feel more wilfully engaged when an activity is effortless?), so it has connections to voluntariness. Naturalness may also be linked to voluntariness through its connotations of spontaneity and free will. There is some degree of similarity between these characteristics then, although the connection is complex.

Table 1. Cross-comparison of characteristics of play according to (general) research perspectives and professional chamber performers' perspectives in the context of ensemble rehearsal. Characteristics are aligned to reflect degrees of similarity: red symbols denote alternative perspectives; blue arrows indicate some overlap.

Characteristics of Play		
Research Perspectives		**Performers' Perspectives**
1. Play is voluntary: people play because they want to and not because they have to.	⇔	Play is effortless: it is more effective than trying; it is natural.
2. Play is purposeless: it exists for its own sake; thus, players do not have a specific purpose or reason for engaging in it.	⊗	Play has two purposes: making the music your own and entertaining each other.
3. Play is special/set apart: it is recognised that play is not "ordinary" life, even though it might mimic it.	⇔	Play is special/set apart: it can be set apart from "playing music"; it can provide connection in special moments.
4. Play is fun: it is acknowledged that fun might involve a range of feelings, including enjoyment and tension.	⇔	Play is fun: it is enjoyable, positive, satisfying and/or personal.
5. Play has rules: rules, implied or explicit, which help to organise play and provide fixed boundaries for play in that they only apply in a certain time and/or place.	⇔	Play has baselines: it depends on how well you know the music; how well you know each other; and how well you know your craft (e.g., instrument; rehearsal strategies).
6. Play is a process: it involves experiencing different "elements" and patterns of "motion" and "mood".	⇔	Play is a process: it involves doing things differently by initiating surprises, being ready to anticipate changes and/or engaging with others through swapping or throwing musical ideas.
7. Play is creative: it often lies within the realms of pretence and uses the imagination.	⇔	Play is creative: it involves experimentation and openness.

Source: Table by authors.

The second characteristic, that play is purposeless, has already been challenged in previous research as mentioned above (Eberle 2014), as well as contradicted in Jane Ginsborg's (2017) stance on rehearsal as goal directed. What is interesting, however, is that the performers outlined two highly specific purposes about play in the context of their rehearsals: that it is about "making the music your own" as well

as "entertaining" each other. In this case, play is characterised as a mechanism to facilitate the musical distinctiveness and freshness of the ensemble: it is, in effect, the x-factor of the rehearsal (and, probably by extension, the performance too). The third characteristic distinguishes play from "ordinary" life, which, in the context of a chamber ensemble rehearsal, alludes to the more functional aspect of "playing music". There was a sense in the performers' interviews that the special "moments" of play that they identified in the video clips were somehow set apart from other activity because they provided "touches of humanity". In this case, then, whether regarded as "ordinary" or not, there was something different about these playful moments, so they represented an alternative side of being human to that otherwise experienced in the context of a professional chamber rehearsal, perhaps reflecting something of an artificial boundary between the "real world" (rehearsal) and "play world" (special moment) (see Henricks 2018).

The performers' perspectives strongly aligned with the fourth, fifth and seventh characteristics of play as defined in research, i.e., that play is fun, has rules and is creative. With regard to the fifth characteristic, the rules ("baselines") were implicit in the actual rehearsal even though they were made explicit in the interviews. The general "rule" among the performers was that they would not play until the music was learned or the parts secured. Interestingly, this "rule" influenced, to an extent, their experience of play as a process (the sixth characteristic), for this was regarded as essentially "doing things differently" via initiating, anticipating or engaging in (expressive) music-interpretative changes that presumably stemmed from a mental representation of "how the music goes". The performers' activity, then, centred on playing with the musical score along the lines suggested by Stubley (1993) and Reichling (1997); yet this was dependent upon their own and their co-performers' senses of stability about the interpretation of the score (musical) and familiarity with each other (social). Researchers provide a range of rich descriptions about the process of play, although these performers highlighted the first (initiating or anticipating) and last stages (engaging) in their experiences. Anticipating is the first "element" in Eberle's (2014) conceptualisation of the process of play and a key component of Peter E. Keller's (2008) cognitive analysis of "joint action". Keller's research indicates that anticipation is a continuous mechanism that is necessary to achieve synchrony all of the time in group work. It is not possible to determine from these data if or how performers' experiences of anticipation vary between playing music and play, but the anticipation of *being able to play* seemed to be important.

5. Conclusions

So, how do 21st-century professional chamber ensemble performers understand and experience play in their rehearsals? Based on the post-rehearsal reflections provided by the performers in this enquiry, it is evident that typical characteristics

of play as conceptualised in research are featured in the context of professional chamber ensemble practice during portions of rehearsal involving continuous music playing (see Table 1). Play is particularly important in this context because it serves as a mechanism to enable the performers to make the music their own. Professional performers indicated that play is set apart from the "ordinary" world of rehearsing—which effectively represents the workplace—into a realm that is effortless, special, fun, creative and even entertaining. It is the phenomenon that is experienced when co-performers go beyond their baseline and explore music-interpretative ideas and sounds together in order to make them different. Moreover, it allows professional performers to experience "touches of humanity" in their work. Indeed, as Sicart (2014) claims: "to play is to be in the world. Playing is a form of understanding what surrounds us and who we are, and a way of engaging with others. Play is a mode of being human" (p. 1). As such, play in professional chamber music rehearsal may be conceived as an aspiration for an ideal situation, and without it, performers may struggle to find fulfilment.

To conclude, this chapter has provided preliminary insight into the phenomenon of play within professional chamber ensemble music making, specifically in the context of rehearsals in the western art music tradition. The performers' post-rehearsal reflections provided valuable empirical perspectives on how they understood and experienced play, revealing shared characteristics with broader research conceptualisations of play. This study establishes a platform on which to build further research to examine and critique the parameters of play in group music-making contexts. It is important to recognise that play activity can and does exist within the relatively formal constraints of professional chamber ensemble rehearsal and that it occupies a vital place within the practice. Future research will need to establish the extent to which these behaviours translate or transform in performances (see Doğantan-Dack 2008) and, if so, whether or not they are consistent and retain their characteristics. Moreover, there is scope to investigate the ways in which performers of different ages, levels of experience and genre specialisms play in their music making. Such work has implications for performance studies, education, psychology and other disciplines where the analysis of people's play behaviours in small group work may contribute towards greater understanding of socio-cultural relationships and creative pursuits, especially where play may be at the heart of the activity. 21st-century chamber musicians can benefit socially, emotionally and musically through making play a regular part of ensemble rehearsal: it may be fun, enjoyable and entertaining, but is also highly creative and free in character, allowing group members to explore music-interpretative ideas and sounds within their ensemble and ultimately helping them to "make the music their own". Play may bring about different kinds of experiences for those participating in it, whether special playful moments forged through personal connections or feelings of "being

human" amid the hard graft that necessarily takes place in the rehearsal arena. So, we encourage chamber musicians to aspire to play as much as possible in order to enrich their music making, and we believe that this may lead to higher levels of satisfaction and fulfilment for those engaging in rehearsal activity.

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A "Naked Violin" and a "Mechanical Rabbit": Exploring Playing Relationships in Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello (1922)

Neil Heyde

1. Introduction

As much of the world was locked down during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, musicians began to explore new ways of making music "together". Although unable to play in the same spaces, unable to listen and interact in real time without latency, and without sufficient audio presence or fidelity to permit the kind of sonic interweaving that is the very basis of chamber music, a panoply of new approaches emerged. As this chapter was on my desk as the pandemic hit, I was struck by the notion that Ravel might have found himself very much at home in a world where freedoms of interaction that we usually take for granted are removed. In this chapter, we will see how Ravel's restriction of possibilities enables a special kind of performance "play".

Among the earliest of the collaborative lockdown videos was a shortened version of Ravel's Boléro (1929) made by musicians of the Orchestre National de France and posted on YouTube on 29 March 2020 (Orchestre National de France 2020).[1] The choice of *Boléro* is not mere happenstance, and many other videos of it appeared in the following weeks.[2] The repetition of the 16-bar theme presents an ideal platform for introducing specific players/instruments, both one by one and in groups; the clever "design" of the adjunction of instrumental colour across the piece means that enough remains intact for it to work effectively, even when truncated and without the players being able properly to listen to one another.

One could argue that what is missing in these lockdown *Boléros* is the very thing that Ravel's design facilitates: in a live performance, the players pay special attention to the *handing over* of the musical impetus from one section to the next. (The sharing of musical impetus is an important focus in Maria Krivenski's chapter, which explores technology-mediated music making in this volume.) This handing over of material requires the kind of listening and responding that we might expect in chamber music

[1] The whole video is under five minutes long (including the introductions from the players). The arrangement is by Didier Benetti, solo timpanist of the orchestra and also a composer.

[2] The constant percussion ostinato serves as an inbuilt "substitute" for the clicktrack that is usually used in multitracked performances, such as those on YouTube.

and is what most holds my attention when listening to a live performance. However, the evidence of the lockdown films indicates that Ravel has succeeded in creating a "game" for musicians in which the "rules" are so clearly established that there is sufficient inherent pleasure to be gained from participating in it, or observing it, even if certain critical aspects of its potential are left unrealised. Ravel's own sense of the "game" or "gamble" taken in *Boléro* can be gauged from his response to conductor Paul Paray's questioning of whether he would "like a go" during a visit to the casino in Monte Carlo: "I wrote *Boléro* and won. I'll stick there" (Nichols 2011, p. 302).

For Ravel, musical games seem to have been fundamentally important, as set out by Vladimir Jankélévitch in his influential and provocative monograph on the composer. At the beginning of a section entitled "Challenge", Jankélévitch writes that

> Ravel's audacity expresses itself in two ways—firstly in a liking for difficulties overcome and an obstinate search for effort, and secondly in the spirit of artifice. Roland-Manuel, who penetrated more deeply than anyone else into the secrets of Ravel's art spoke of the "aesthetics of imposture". It seems preferable to say "aesthetics of challenge", for a challenge implies a *tour de force* and an iron will. This side of the challenge is both Cornelian and Stoic. Having found that beautiful things are difficult, Ravel then played at creating artificially the exceptional, thankless and paradoxical conditions which re-establish the hardness that is beauty; since he did not experience the romantic conflict between vocation and destiny, he invented, for he had no natural difficulty in expressing himself, artificial obstacles which caused him a second type of clumsiness; he fabricated for his own use gratuitous prohibitions and arbitrary orders, voluntarily impoverished his own language and tried all types of limitations, distortion and stridency in order to prove with certainty how much an artist's effort can achieve .... Every composition by Ravel represents ... a certain problem to be solved, a game in which the player voluntarily makes the rules of the game more complicated. (Jankélévitch 1959, pp. 68–69)

What kinds of games has Ravel created in the Sonata for Violin and Cello (hereafter "the Duo"), and how do we as players interact with them? One of the drivers for writing this chapter was discovering violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange's *Ravel et nous*, in which she offers not only a first-hand account of Ravel as a person, but also detailed recollections of their work together on several pieces composed during the 1920s, including the Duo and the Sonata for Violin and Piano (1927)

(Jourdan-Morhange 1945).[3] Unlike most 20th-century texts on music published in journals or newspapers, her book focuses closely on personal experiences in ways that feel sharply prescient to a writer in the 21st century, given the recent swerve to first-person narratives in artistic research and a broader scholarly interest in self-reflexivity and auto-ethnography.[4]

In this chapter, I aim to use some of her observations as jumping-off points for exploring ways in which Ravel's Duo provides a window for revealing how listening and interaction can take shape in chamber music performance. A core idea is that some of the "restrictions" typical of Ravel's conceptual and notational precision are in fact centrally important to enabling play. In absolute terms, there may be fewer freedoms for the performer in this repertoire than in much other chamber music but, as we shall see, the restrictions enable a special kind of focus on highly refined inflections of timbre and intonation, thus heightening physical and listening awareness in the moment. For me, it is this access to a heightened sensibility that constitutes the greatest pleasure in playing Ravel's music. These heights are not easily attained, and scale of recognizing and addressing the challenge is part of the pleasure of any fleeting success in grappling with it.

Jourdan-Morhange opens her chapter discussing her work with Ravel on his chamber music with the following extended "cautionary note", containing an observation by the music critic Émile Vuillermoz that sets Ravel against Debussy in a way that, by 1945, would have become something of a commonplace:

> Having had the inestimable privilege to work in every detail on the *Sonata*, the *Duo* and the *Trio* with Ravel, I would like to pay tribute to his memory by indicating as faithfully as possible the wishes and preferences he expressed during the daily work on these pieces. Artists who have not been able to rehearse with the master will be grateful to me, I think, for pointing out the small errors which, from virtuoso to virtuoso, slip into performances; they risk losing the author's intentions, in addition to their integrity, [and] the velvetiness of their original freshness.
>
> I know that each performer must make a personal contribution to the interpretation of a masterpiece, but Ravel's music is a great exception.

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[3] The Sonata for Violin and Piano is dedicated to Jourdan-Morhange, but she was not able to premiere it, as she had the Duo, owing to early-onset arthritis.

[4] The growing importance of first-person narratives was captured in a conference attended by a large international audience in 2018, titled "Beyond 'mesearch': autoethnography, self-reflexivity, and personal experience as academic research in music studies" (Institute of Musical Research, Senate House, London).

> As Vuillermoz has aptly written: "There are many ways of performing [*d'éxecuter*] Debussy, but there is only one way of playing [*de jouer*] Ravel."[5]
>
> Ravel's focus is so perfect that the slightest "nudge" of the needle disturbs the entire mechanism of the watch. In general, Ravel found that the indications written on the score were not read scrupulously enough.
>
> —Is there a highlight? he asked, ironically, of "the bow" which lingered complacently on a voluptuous note.[6] (Jourdan-Morhange 1945, pp. 179–80)

The word choices in Vuillermoz's observation are interesting and important: "executing" (performing) vs. "playing". At first glance, perhaps these choices are also surprising to a contemporary reader: the "execution" he proposes for Debussy recalls for us Stravinsky's infamous use of the word in the last of his "Poetics" lectures in a way that is much more closely allied with what we might expect for Ravel (Stravinsky 1947b). Roy Howat, for example, contrasts Debussy's frequent profusions of instructions (as, for example, at the start of the prelude "*Des pas sur la neige*")[7] with Ravel's much more laconic approach, citing the most intense and hushed moment of "*Le gibet*" (bar 28) from *Gaspard de la nuit*, for which Ravel indicates *"sans expression"* (Howat 2009, p. 209). Howat also observes that many of Ravel's colleagues quoted his pleas to "play my music, not interpret it" (ibid., p. 210). Although all responses to musical scores necessarily require interactions that are effectively "interpretative", it seems clear that Ravel's expectations, or hopes, of musicians in this regard were quite distinctive. Whereas Debussy is often *explicatory*, aiming perhaps to engage us in aspects of the design process, Ravel tends towards the presentation of musical "facts" without explication, aiming perhaps more towards a process of *discovery* through

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5 Jourdan-Morhange notes that this quote is taken from *La Revue musicale*, 1925.

6 Translations of all the passages quoted from Jourdan-Morhange's book in this chapter are mine. "Ayant eu l'inestimable privilège de travailler dans leurs moindres détails la *Sonate*, le *Duo* et le *Trio* avec Ravel, je voudrais rendre hommage à sa mémoire en indiquant le plus fidèlement possible les volontés et les préférences qu'il exprima pendant le travail quotidien de ces morceaux. Les artistes qui n'ont pu répéter avec le maître me sauront gré, je pense, de leur signaler les petites erreurs qui, de virtuoses en virtuoses, se glissent dans les interprétations; elles risquent de faire perdre aux intentions de l'auteur, outre leur intégrité, le velouté de leur fraîcheur première.

Je sais que chaque exécutant doit apporter sa contribution personnelle à l'interprétation d'un chef-d'œuvre, mais la musique de Ravel est une grande exception. Comme l'a si justement écrit Vuillermoz: «Il y a plusieurs façons d'exécuter Debussy; il n'y en a qu'une de jouer du Ravel».

La mise au point chez Ravel est si parfaite que le moindre «coup de pouce» à l'aiguille dérange tout le mécanisme de la montre. De façon générale, Ravel trouvait qu'on ne lisait pas assez scrupuleusement les indications écrites sur la partition.

—Y a-t-il un point d'orgue? demandait-il, ironique, à «l'archet» qui s'attardait avec complaisance sur la note voluptueuse.»

7 The heading *Triste et lent* is followed by the following text accompanying the left-hand ostinato: "(*Ce rythme doit avoir la valeur sonore d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé*)". As Howat notes, "even the parentheses are a nuance in themselves, conveying an added aura of intimacy" (Howat 2009, p. 209).

"simply doing" what it says. Although it is possible that the audible "outcomes" of some of their instructions might have a lot in common, the process is critically different.

In a 21st-century context, it is possibly easier to see how Debussy is encouraging a kind of "co-creativity"—triggering the imagination of performers as they listen to and shape the music—than it is for Ravel. However, if I propose that Vuillermoz's "one way of playing Ravel" might be able to produce more than a single kind of musical outcome, and that Ravel's restriction of possibility establishes a kind of mindset for the *playing* of his games rather than strictly controlling the results, we may begin to draw out what is special about his games, why performers love playing them, and why Jourdan-Morhange might have thought it would be useful to share some of her experiences for other musicians. As Jankélévitch suggests above, the "game" does not belong only to the composer.

2. Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello

> [In] the *Sonate en Duo* for violin and cello, [there is] tortuous badinage in which two voices in counterpoint pursue each other, catch each other and lose each other again, without the support of any accompaniment; here, Ravel undertakes to "shape a whole symphony using only his thumb and first finger",[8] and he compensates for the rarity of the notes and the poverty of the chords by the mercurial mobility of the two parts which manage to be everywhere at the same time. (Jankélévitch 1959, p. 70)

Jankélévitch uses several phrases here that have potentially negative connotations: the *poverty* of the chords, the notion of a *tortuous* badinage, and the implication of the *absence of the support* of an accompaniment. Here, the piece is presented as an example of Ravel's compositional virtuosity in response to a self-imposed challenge. In contrast, the challenges Jourdan-Morhange identifies are both personal and instrumental, and belong "behind the scenes". Hers is, of course, the perspective of a player rather than a philosopher, and perhaps she would have agreed with Jankélévitch in grouping the sonata with *Tzigane* and the two piano concertos as pieces "dedicated to the glorification of display" (Jankélévitch 1959, p. 86):

> A rather rebarbative character at first meeting, the *Duo* hides its treasures, but it treats the violin rather harshly. The composer permits the instrument no charming, facile seduction: it is naked, the poor violin! Stripped of its halo of vibrations it seems stripped of decent attire. The "pure" violin is

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8 (Vuillermoz 1923, p. 160).

> not pleasant, it must hide the hardness of its open strings and the hollow of its chest under make-up; with the assistance of the artist it becomes tender or passionate . . . Dare I call the violin a great courtesan?
>
> In the *Trio* Ravel gave the violin the most cat-like manner, here he wanted it to be vindictive; whereas the cello is demonic. Ravel, who loved challenges, assigned it the most "tenorising" tessitura, and our poor cello climbs the treble scales like a little squirrel . . . .
>
> But all of this is the secret behind the scenes—good work should give the impression of ease, of gay abandon. (Jourdan-Morhange 1945, pp. 187–88)[9]

Given the sophistication, the difficulty, and the technical "finish" of the instrumental writing in the Duo—and the overriding need for the "impression of ease"—Jourdan-Morhange's characterisation of the violin as "naked" is worth exploring in detail. Why does this piece feel exposed, and what is being exposed? If the violin—the "instrument"—has been stripped of its clothing, or its make-up, what does this mean for the player?

Before attempting some answers to these questions, it is helpful to place the Duo in context.

The first movement of the Duo appeared in a collection of pieces published as part of a special Debussy memorial edition of *La Revue musicale* (1920). Whereas Stravinsky's offering[10] can be seen as a homage to Debussy's frequent use of juxtaposition and intercutting of structural layers, Ravel's Duo movement seems to point specifically to a short ostinato at the end of the second movement of Debussy's String Quartet (Debussy 1894) (Example 1). The Debussy connection is potentially revealing here. The picking out of this little ostinato is possibly a nod to Debussy's extraordinary and influential handling of repetition in that movement, which clearly prefigures some of Ravel's own music. Debussy's Quartet was also unquestionably a

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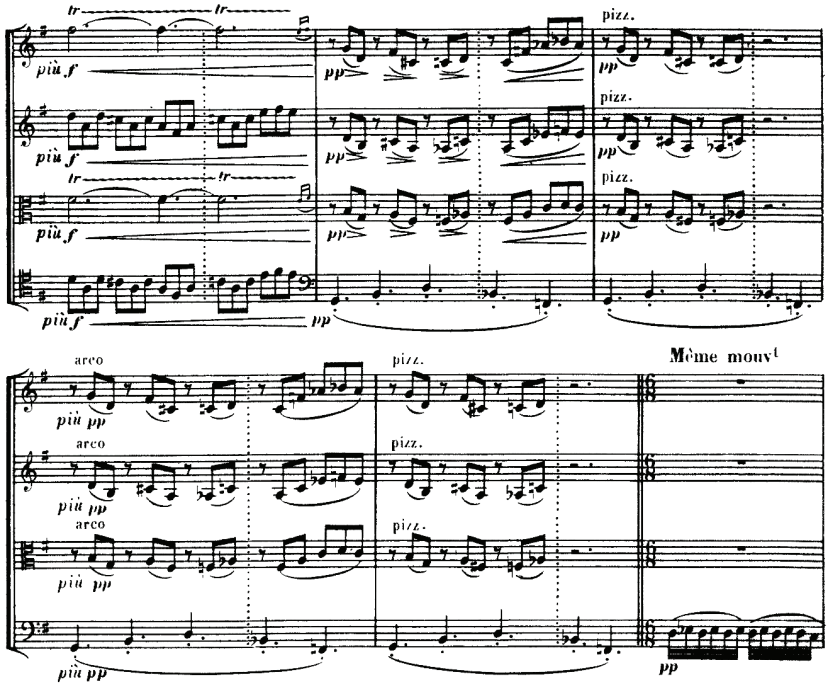
9 "Personnage un peu rébarbatif à la première rencontre, le *Duo* cache des trésors, mais il traite le violon assez durement. L'auteur ne lui permet aucune séduction au charme facile; il est nu, le pauvre violon! Dépouillé de son halo de vibrations, il semble dépouillé de ses décents atours. Le violon pur n'est pas plaisant, il lui faut cacher sous des fards la dureté de ses cordes à vide et le creux de sa poitrine; avec le secours de l'artiste il devient tendre ou passionné . . . Oserai-je traiter le violon de grande courtisane?

Ravel, qui dans le *Trio* a su lui donner les manières les plus chattes, a voulu qu'il demeurât, ici, vindicatif; quant au violoncelle, il est démoniaque. Ravel, qui aimait les gageures, lui a assigné les tessitures les plus «ténorisantes», et notre pauvre violoncelle, de monter à l'échelle de l'aigu comme un petit écureuil. . . .

Mais, tout cela, c'est le secret des coulisses, l'œuvre bien mise au point doit donner l'impression de facilité, de gaie désinvolture.

10 The chorale that concludes the *Symphonies d'instruments à vent* (Stravinsky 1947a) in a version for piano.

model for Ravel's Quartet (Ravel 1905b).[11] Perhaps more significantly, when the Duo was published in full in 1922, as the *Sonate pour violon et violoncelle* (and dedicated to the memory of Debussy), the choice of "Sonata" as a title seems to point specifically to Debussy's late music and his unfinished set of six sonatas for some rather recondite combinations: Debussy's violin sonata was originally to have included a cor anglais, and he had projected sonatas for "oboe, horn and harpsichord", and "trumpet, clarinet, bassoon and piano", as well as a large "Concert".[12]



Example 1. Debussy String Quartet (Debussy 1894) ii, bb. 163–168, Éditions Durand.

An especially prescient precursor for Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Piano (Ravel 1927) can be found in Debussy's Cello Sonata (1915), which is the first of the canonic string-piano sonatas to almost completely eschew shared musical material in the instrumental dialogue. Debussy gives very different music to the cello and piano

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11 The music critic Pierre Lalo, for example, (admittedly no supporter of Ravel) commented on the "incredible resemblance" between the two quartets in an early review (Orenstein [1975] 1991, pp. 39–40).

12 Debussy's autograph list of the proposed set is held in the Bibliothèque nationale: F-Pn, Rés. Vmc Ms 51.

right from the beginning, and although Ravel begins more traditionally in the Sonata for Violin and Piano, with the instruments exchanging material (as they appear to do in the Duo), the recapitulation of the first movement leaves the piano to do all of the thematic work on its own, freeing the violin to produce a long cantilena, unfolding from the bottom of the instrument gradually to its high treble. This melody is beautifully prefigured in the piano's bass before the recapitulation "proper" begins with the arrival of the tonic, at which point the melody passes to the violin.[13] For our understanding of the Duo, what is important to register is a very specific kind of sensitivity to instrumental character, played out in the assignation of *roles*.[14]

The version of the Duo's first movement published in 1920 (Example 2) reappears note for note in the final version of 1922, but this belies some important changes. Most of these are added instrumental details—the opening cello harmonic and violin up-bow, for example—but there is also a new large-scale acceleration and deceleration through the central part of the movement, returning to the opening tempo at the recapitulation, which is markedly different in expressive tenor in ways that recall Debussy's practice.[15] (Performers may find it helpful to note that the presence of the "*expressif*" indication for the reappearance of the cello's opening melody in the recapitulation was already in place in 1920.) However, the most telling change is that a radical decision was made to present two quite different parts rather than a shared performance score.[16] Kodály's Duo for the same instruments (written in 1918 but not published until 1922), typically reinforces the traditional hierarchy of the parts by presenting the violin above the cello in both instrumental parts, although the engraver has gone to considerable effort to produce small versions of the "second part" in each case (Kodály 1922). Ravel's Duo, by contrast, presents two very different parts with the "other" line *above* the main staff in both cases—and in smaller print.

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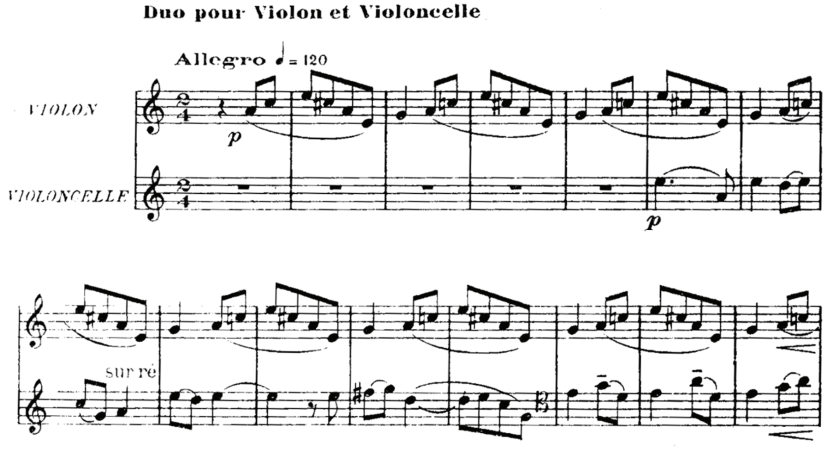
[13] This "handover" is very rarely managed as a quasi-seamless transition, and I hope the observations on gameplay later in this chapter might encourage further exploration of the possibilities here.

[14] It seems relatively common today to assume that the violin–cello duo was something a little unusual. In fact, there are well over 400 published examples from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, with Pleyel and Reicha making particularly important contributions, alongside a smaller number from great virtuosi, including Léonard, Romberg, Servais, and Vieuxtemps. However, Ravel's Duo radically reinvents the relationship between the violin and the cello.

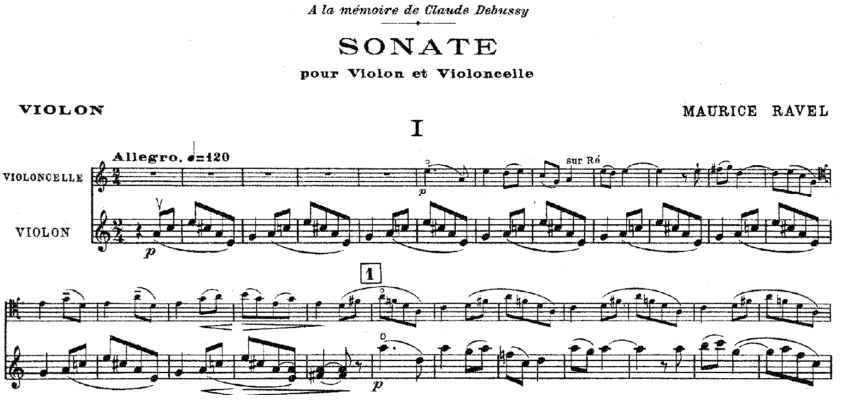
[15] Debussy was clearly attracted to Chopin's idiosyncratic handling of sonata forms, as, for example, in the first movement of the Cello Sonata op. 65, in which the harmonic and thematic elements of the recapitulation are not aligned. In *Monsieur Croche the Dilettante Hater*, he writes: "Chopin's nervous temperament was ill-adapted to the endurance needed for the construction of a sonata: he made elaborate 'first drafts'. Yet we may say that Chopin inaugurated a special method of treating this form, not to mention the charming artistry which he devised in this connection. He was fertile in ideas, which he often invested without demanding that hundred percent on the transaction, which is the brightest halo of some of our Masters" (Debussy [1921] 1962, pp. 6–7).

[16] This form of presentation is exclusive to the final published version. Manuscript sources are all laid out traditionally: violin staff on top of cello staff, and both parts the same size. See Bärenreiter BA9417 (2013) for a detailed discussion of sources.

The implication is clear: the traditional registral placement of the two instruments should not be read as indicating their musical relationship or hierarchy—or role. The opening of the violin part, which contains the more unusual presentation, is shown in Example 3. We begin to see here what Jankélévitch is pointing towards by noting the absence of the "support" of an accompaniment, and the "mercurial mobility" of the parts.



Example 2. Ravel *Duo pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1920) bb. 1–15, *La Revue musicale*.



Example 3. Ravel *Sonate pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1922a) i, bb. 1–24 (violin part), Éditions Durand.

Early in Ravel's life, his friend the poet Tristan Klingsor had noted that "This ambitious dreamer liked to give an initial impression of being occupied with the surface of things" (Nichols 1987, p. 13), recalling perhaps Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray:

> It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible. (Wilde 1890)

At a "superficial" level, Ravel often makes use of perhaps the most obvious instrumental feature of the violin–cello relationship: the cello can play every note the violin can—so material is frequently shared—but the cello can also play in places the violin cannot, so some material can never be shared. Ravel's recognition of what can be shared is coupled with an exceptional level of compositional artifice in relation to open strings, shared resonances and harmonics that can be seen as a *revelation* of "surface", or perhaps the kind of "medium specificity" that the modernist art critic Clement Greenberg and Enlightenment polymath Gotthold Lessing might have advocated[17] (Greenberg 1960 and Lessing 1984).

Ravel's "ear" for instrumental colour is well known. Jourdan-Morhange recounts a telling anecdote that foreshadows my discussion below:

> A single note [in the *Berceuse sur le nom de Fauré*] had "caught" him in passing and he said to me:
> —How do you get a G-string sonority on the high *f* [f^1?] on the *chanterelle* [E-string]?
> And I could have massacred the opening of the *Berceuse* without him noticing; at each new hearing he waited for the "note-demon" which represented for him the pinnacle of happiness: the revelation of an unknown sonority![18] (Jourdan-Morhange 1945, p. 183)

In writing for these two instruments in the Duo, Ravel appears to have seized on the idea of using the two instruments' open strings as the starting point for the design of the whole piece. The first movement begins with the resonance of the open A- and E-strings of the violin (coupled with the cello's natural harmonics at the same pitches) and works its way up and down the open strings of both instruments. The first and third movements end with harmonics: a high A-major ending in movement i, and a low modal ending with a bare *a*-e^1 fifth in movement iii. The second and

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[17] The pairing of these two figures indicates that the notion of "medium specificity" has a long history. Lessing's writing concerns the interpretation of the "Laocoön", a famous Hellenistic sculpture (*c.* 1st century BCE).

[18] "Une seule note l'avait «accroché» au passage et il me disait:

> —Comment faites-vous pour avoir une sonorité de quatrième corde sur ce fa aigu de la chanterelle?
> Et j'aurais pu massacrer le début de la *Berceuse* sans qu'il s'en aperçût; uniquement, à chaque nouvelle audition, il attendait la note-démon qui représentait pour lui le summum de la félicité: la révélation d'une sonorité inconnue!"

fourth movements end with the cello's low *C* providing the bass: clearly C-major at the end of movement iv, but rather less conclusive in the "surprise" ending to movement ii. In fact, the more one looks, the more obvious it becomes that the open strings provide the "frame" almost everywhere, and that Ravel inflects them with major/minor shadings (drawing on the Debussy ostinato) and other chromatic/bitonal passages to provide tonal and timbral contrast. I find being able to make use of all of these open sonorities strangely thrilling and exciting: they allow a kind of *immediate* contact with the instrument that is rarely extended for so long. This sense of immediacy comes from the need to respond much more directly to the instrument itself because the flesh of the left hand cannot be used to help "shape" the sound.

The cross-resonances of the fifth-tuned strings of the violin family are a fundamental part of the "raw" sound of these instruments, and it seems more than likely that it is their wide use here that lies at the heart of Jourdan-Morhange's observation that the violin is "naked" in the Duo. Like most string players, I was taught from an early age to find ways of avoiding open strings—except in special cases—because of the "harder" sound they produce, and the non-availability of left-hand "tools" (vibrato principally, but also point of contact with the flesh/bone of the fingers) for blending these harder colours with other notes. In high-level string playing, open strings can find a place almost everywhere, of course (as they do in historically informed performance practice), but balancing them with the surrounding material and developing a "knack" for using the different colours are crucial. This is where the "nakedness" turns towards the player, perhaps, rather than the instrument. Generic expressive tools ("clothing" or "make-up", in Jourdan-Morhange's language) cannot be used in melodic material around open strings without creating contrasts that could obstruct the melodic flow, so the player's expressive arsenal is sharply exposed.

The complex sympathetic resonances of the open strings with stopped pitches across the entire range provide an important basis for the "innate" sound of the instruments in the violin family. This is especially the case for the cello, because of the freer vibration of the lower/longer strings, made more palpable by the fact that many of the sympathetic vibrations are clearly visible at close range. (For example, playing a *c* on the G-string causes the C-string to vibrate visibly in two parts, as if it had been touched at the second harmonic.) It is perhaps surprising that we need to go back to earlier writings on string pedagogy to find this discussed in detail. The 20th-century preference for continuous vibrato has possibly obstructed players' awareness of the significance of these sympathetic vibrations and it has been less discussed in recent years, except, perhaps, in relation to microtonality (Benjamin 2019). Jean-Louis Duport's *Essai sur le doigté du violoncelle, et sur la conduit de l'archet*—the first core text for modern cello playing—has an extended chapter on "vibrations and their

coalition" (Duport 1852). It begins with a claim that understanding these is central to producing a "true" sound:

> The subject of this chapter is, I fear, beyond my powers; for, in order to treat it fully, a knowledge of natural philosophy and mathematics is required, while I simply understand music. But so thoroughly convinced am I, that an acquaintance with the relation existing between the vibrations is necessary *for obtaining a true intonation and producing a pure tone* [emphasis mine], that I shall state what I have learned through a long familiarity with the four strings of the Violoncello and endeavour to demonstrate, or rather, to make evident to anyone who may place his fingers on that instrument, whether the sounds he produces are true or false. (Duport 1852, p. 134)

To produce these resonances perceptibly, it is interesting to note the evenness the production must be given according to Duport (Example 4).[19]

The beginning of the Duo appears, on the surface, to be a typical "my turn–your turn" chamber music dialogue, but the relationship between the open string and harmonic colours, in the first statement in particular, points to a conception that the two parts work *almost as if they were one instrument*, assaying a material that gradually opens itself up to reveal different constituents.[20] The opening a^1–e^2 pairing across the two instruments allows a curious blending, despite the distinction of roles, and this exerts a provocative power in its closing down of certain instrumental possibilities—which are then opened up, by contrast, in the chromatic passages that appear as episodes. Jourdan-Morhange points to the challenges of balancing the different sonorities of the two instruments, which she curiously characterises as "tenor" and "bass":

> In general, Ravel never found the arabesque accompaniments of the cello sufficiently "projected" ["*en dehors*"]: the cello, always tempted to accompany, does not realise, in fact, that its modesty is detrimental to the whole if it attenuates the harmonies which most often form the pillars of the building. (Jourdan-Morhange 1945, p. 182)
>
> In the first *Allegro,* the violin first of all accompanies; its sound must remain "within" ["*en dedans*"] (remember that it sounds more than the cello, even in

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19 The notation here assumes the practice of the period of playing these notes an octave lower than notated.

20 For a player familiar with Debussy's String Quartet, there is also a sense that the beginning is not ab initio, but the picking up of a thread from somewhere else (the ostinato discussed above, slightly varied).

piano [dynamics]) to leave the cello the ability to present the theme without emphasis.[21] (ibid., p. 185)

The exposition's transpositions of the ostinato follow the pattern ea, ad, dg, gc—specifically picking up all of the open strings across the two instruments. The recapitulation goes one step further, adding a new modal inflection to the reprise of the opening to include an accompaniment on all four of the violin's open strings, with a brief unison between the two instruments on the violin's open *g* to effect the handover.[22] The chromatic insertions between these sections provide a kind of colour dialogue with the open-string pillars of the structure.

It would be possible to build a detailed picture of the whole piece showing the ways in which Ravel uses the natural resources of the instruments as the core elements of his structural design. In this chapter, I focus instead on the kinds of gameplay that some of these compositional decisions open up for the players.

In my chamber music teaching at the Royal Academy of Music, I find it useful to distinguish between two different kinds of "listening". I call these "monitoring", which is a kind of checking or confirmation that uses relatively little mental processing power but needs to be distributed quite widely, and "actual listening", which demands much more mental attention and is alive to colour and the potential for volatility in a quite different way. The need for the distinction emerged from improvisation classes I taught for undergraduates, mostly with no prior experience in improvisation, from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s. In these classes, it became clear that identifying different kinds of listening was essential to help musicians find ways of generating transitions to move from one note, section, or grouping to another. One could argue that part of the "secret" to effective chamber music making lies in developing strategies for distributing these two modes of attention. It seems fundamentally impossible to listen to everything, which raises the question of how to decide *where* to listen. I have written elsewhere about chamber music listening strategies, and the potentially central role of the instrument in this process (Heyde 2019), but it seems that Ravel activates some very specific games in the Duo, where "listening" and

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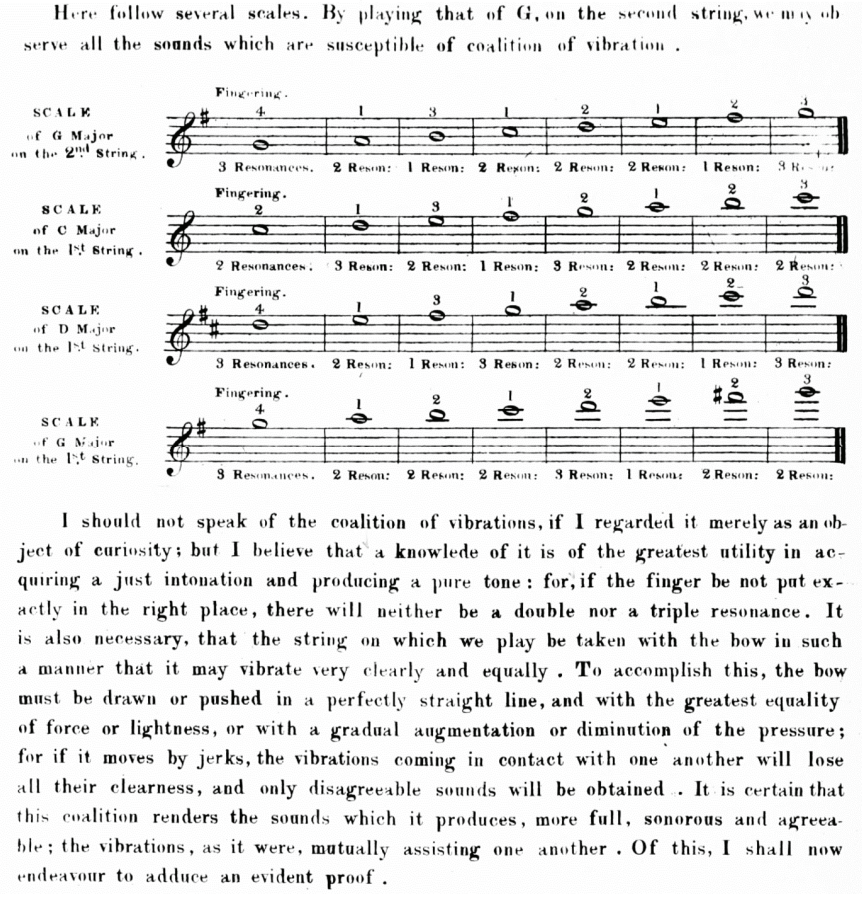
21 "En général, Ravel ne trouvait jamais assez «en dehors» les accompagnements en arabesques du violoncelle: celui-ci, toujours tenté d'accompagner, ne se rend pas compte, en effet, que sa modestie porte préjudice à l'ensemble s'il atténue les harmonies qui forment le plus souvent les piliers de l'édifice . . . . Dans le premier *Allegro*, le violon tout d'abord accompagne; sa sonorité doit rester «en dedans» (ne pas oublier qu'il sonne plus que le violoncelle, même dans le *piano)* pour laisser au violoncelle la faculté de présenter le thème sans emphase."

22 Although he does not even mention open strings, Elliott Antokoletz largely shares my reading and observes that the opening cello theme "initially belongs exclusively to the anhemitonic pentatonic framework (A–C–D–E–G)"; he later adds that the cyclic interval content is extended in the ostinato (at the recapitulation) to C–G–D–A–E, and that the exposition's transpositions of the ostinato follow the pattern EA, AD, DG, GC (Antokoletz 2011).

"monitoring" must be intermixed with a kind of predictive imagination. This need for prediction is perhaps why it feels more like gameplay than a lot of other chamber music.



Example 4. Duport *Essay on the Fingering of the Violoncello* (Duport 1852), p. 142.

3. Playing Games

I have selected just a few examples from the Duo where the open strings or shared sonorities that I have identified as especially important in this piece play a critical role. In thinking about how to explain the ways in which these games work, the way my dog Margot plays in our "ball walks" up and down the woodland hill in my local country park has provided some clues. Rather than focusing on goals (catching the ball, for example), my Parson Russell Terrier loves the scramble of the chase. The different topographies of the park have prompted a natural evolution of different kinds of kicking and throwing games, each associated with its own place:

"chasing" the ball along the long paths, "finding" it in the long grass, "marking" it closely to avoid it being kicked in the tight spaces, and "running with" the ball at the same pace down the hill.[23] In all of these games, the mapping of *predicted* to *actual* events in real time is clearly the most exciting element, and if I even reach towards the ball with the thrower, she will immediately start running in the direction of the predicted throw, monitoring from the corners of her vision the arrival of the ball from the rear, and adjusting her trajectory accordingly. The timeframe for the predicted arrival is surprisingly tight, and if the ball does not appear, the brakes are applied and the game has to be reinitiated. A throw or kick that is not within the parameters that have been established (unwritten "rules") does not count and may be ignored.

The reader is likely to be wondering at this point why or how this is relevant, and the answer goes back to Vuillermoz's notion of "playing" rather than "performing" Ravel. It is because Ravel's control of resource is so refined that we can engage in a kind of predictive imagination that allows us to "play" in quite specific ways. Often, we will fail, as I suggest below, but perhaps this is not as dangerous as it may sound: Lionel Messi also misses. Two elements of Roger Caillois's definition of the essence of play in his influential *Man, Play and Games* (first published in French in 1958) are critical here. The first is that it is *uncertain*: "the course of [the activity] cannot be determined, nor the result attained beforehand, and some latitude for innovations [is] left to the player's initiative" (Caillois [1958] 1961, p. 9). The second is that it is *governed by rules*: "under conventions that suspend ordinary laws, and for the moment establish new legislation, which alone counts" (Caillois [1958] 1961, p. 10).[24] Although I have selected a mid-century context, and picked out the elements of play that I see as most critical for the games Ravel enables, the notion of "rules" is critical in almost all definitions of play and is picked up in a more generic and contemporary context by Todd and King in their chapter in this volume: "Let's Play!..." Here it is the extreme specificity of what Todd and King call "baselines" that is most interesting.

Jourdan-Morhange warns the violinist to play "within" ("*en dedans*") at the very opening, noting that it will sound "louder" than the cello, even in a *piano* dynamic. Part of the challenge here comes from the implication of open strings in Ravel's writing. If the violin's a^1 and e^2 are played as open strings, there will be a brightness or "glint" to the sound, against which the cello's opening harmonic e^2 will naturally sound more veiled and distant: rather than "loudness", Jourdan-Morhange

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[23] My dog has been profoundly deaf since birth. We have a repertoire of mutually understood signs and gestures, but I have wondered during the writing of this chapter whether the "restriction of resource" has been a factor in the evolution of our games, even though they may look to all intents and purposes like the games "any dog" would play.

[24] Caillois does not address musical performance in *Man, Play and Games.* The play that is explored in this chapter straddles many of the categories introduced in his classification system: *ludus*, *agon, alea, mimicry,* and *illinx* (Caillois [1958] 1961, p. 36).

is describing "presence".[25] Where is the game? Firstly, the violin needs to "decide" whether to play the a^1 and e^2 as open strings after all. Even in first position, the violinist has a fourth finger to "cover" these pitches[26] and there is quite a natural fingering that would have the first note "open" but the e^2 stopped by the fourth finger. If this fingering were adopted, we would need to know to what extent the fingers are cautious of damping the E-string, which is free to vibrate sympathetically with the stopped e^2 *but only if it is left free—and if the stopped note is given with sufficient stability and bow travel to excite it*, as suggested by the quotation from Duport given earlier. The final g^1 of the ostinato looks as if it should be played on the D-string, and given the implication that three times as much bow length is needed for this note as for the three preceding crotchets, this will likely excite a sympathetic vibration with the open G-string at the second harmonic.[27]

For the cellist, waiting to begin an awkward and dangerous opening,[28] this game allows two attempts to "catch" what is happening before you have to "get on the bus".[29] Depending on the colour and volume of the various pitches in the violin's two statements of the ostinato, the cellist's first note might be picking up the sympathetic vibration of the E-string against a slightly vibrated fourth-finger e^2, or it could be set *against* the glint of the open e^2. To match that glint, the cellist might put some "top spin" on the bow (giving just a little more speed to the bow than strictly necessary, in order to bring out some upper partials and increase presence), or might instead try to establish a kind of inverse presence for the opening melody by exaggerating the *flautando* character of the harmonic and maintaining that through the line. As observed above, the relationship between ostinato and melody here raises interesting questions about figure and ground to which there are no straightforward answers. Although it is clear that the cello has the "melody" at the opening, characterizing the ostinato as an "accompaniment" (i.e., as ground to the cello's figure) is problematic. If we take Jourdan-Morhange's advice seriously, it seems important that the violin does not dominate the cello in the opening of the Duo, but beyond that, there are a large number of options to explore at the level of micro-detail. The violinist needs to "predictively imagine" the cellist's melody and provide a "counterpoint" for it.

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[25] Harmonics are often indicated *flautando*, and they naturally have fewer upper partials in the sound.

[26] Because of the greater distance between the notes on the cello, we are "missing" this fourth finger option in first position.

[27] The presence of the open g is developed as part of Ravel's reprise strategy.

[28] I think of the fingering approach here like a pianist, borrowing an analogy William Pleeth used to use in my cello lessons when he wanted to avoid certain natural cellistic habits, which caused loss of clarity at the beginnings and ends of notes.

[29] This rehearsal metaphor probably dates back to the use of the "Routemaster" double-decker buses in London. These double deckers had an open rear platform that allowed passengers to "hop on" or "hop off"—even when the bus was moving. The metaphor captures the notion that the cello's entry cannot disrupt what is already in progress but must adapt and "join in".

The cellist must listen to the violinist's ostinato and invent a colouristic "angle" in order to respond to it. Potentially, the opening is most interesting if the relationship between figure and ground is left suspended, suggesting Caillois's *illinx*, which he also describes as *vertigo* (Caillois [1958] 1961, p. 36).

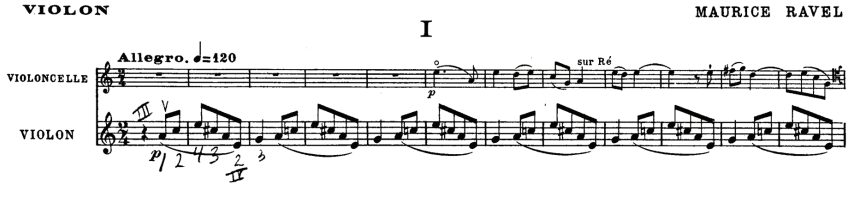
The cellist also has to find a way of balancing the opening harmonic with a transition to stopped notes which usually takes place on the third note (the second e^2). The final dynamic hairpin of this opening statement needs to be executed corporately, and the beginning of the cello's statement of the ostinato on d^1 also needs to be a neatly placed 9-8 resolution under the violin's open a^1 and stopped *f-sharp*^{1}. In this complex ecosystem of interactions and interrelationships, the balancing of the open sonorities and stopped ones is exceptionally difficult, and when Jourdan-Morhange describes the "violin" as naked, I hope it is now clear that this refers as much to the player as to the instrument. The ostinato requires the player to "commit" to what comes out of the instrument the first time, increasing the sense of unpredictability that is inherently part of the gameplay. I am always grateful to my regular violinist partner in this piece, Peter Sheppard Skærved, for being so willing to accommodate me in this opening—as he knows how difficult it is—and for being so generous in the ways he picks up the baton at bar 17, whatever form it takes!

Understanding the difficulty of walking this tightrope (Caillois's *illinx*) is perhaps impossible without actually playing it, but a feeling for the significance of the kinds of challenges it presents, and of Jourdan-Morhange's impression of "nakedness", can be illustrated by examining the fingering on a violin part scanned and uploaded to IMSLP (Example 5) (Ravel 1922b). The anonymous violinist who marked this part has refused to engage in the game described above, instead placing the ostinato on the D-string and G-string, which will have the effect of darkening the sound and making the balance with the cello "easy", at the price of losing sympathetic resonances and the "natural, hard" colours.[30] Critically, the cellist will have much less to "play" with here: the range of possibilities in that first harmonic is reduced rather than opened. By "clothing" the violin in this way, the danger of misspeaking, of unevenness, is mitigated, but so is the expressive potential and the opportunity to present a complex ground–figure relationship.

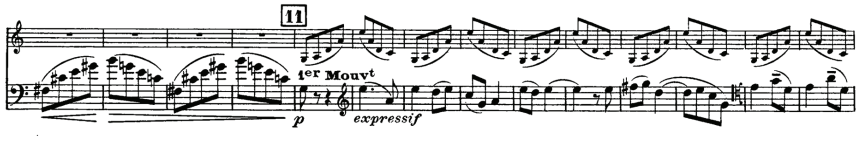
The recapitulation (Example 6) is initiated with a single-note handover which looks like it should help manage a seamless transition from the cello's quavers to the violin's replacement of the opening ostinato with a new one using all of the open strings. IMSLP's anonymous violinist "accepts" the lower three of these but places a fourth finger on the e^2s—perhaps a strategy for safety or protection. What Ravel

[30] Sympathetic resonances, although possible, will be very hard to excite audibly with this fingering—at least in a *piano* dynamic.

suggests in this single quaver is not easy. The cellist is usually in a high position (established four bars after Figure 10), and over the next eight bars, the tempo returns from *Assez Vif* to the opening *Allegro*. Colouristically, the violin's open strings at Figure 11 will be much brighter/harder than the preceding cello material, not least because of the cellist's high position, and the slowing of tempo also encourages a habitual defocusing of timbre or loss of high partials, when as much brightness as possible is needed to manage the transition (to avoid a sudden change of colour at the arrival of the open strings). Because the *g* is doubled, both players need to be very careful that it is not emphasised, but elided. In fact, most performances "fail" here (including my own!), but on the occasions that it really works, it is the most extraordinary effect and worth any number of slight mishandlings. Because of the increased presence of the violin at this reprise owing to the use of all of the open strings, the *expressif* indication in the cello is very welcome, as is the absence of a harmonic for the opening note, affording it an "easier" presence. This time, there is no moment of preparation for the cellist, who must predictively imagine the violinist's open E-string, with which the beginning of the melody is in unison.



Example 5. Ravel *Sonate pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1922b) bb. 1–12 (violin part), Éditions Durand.



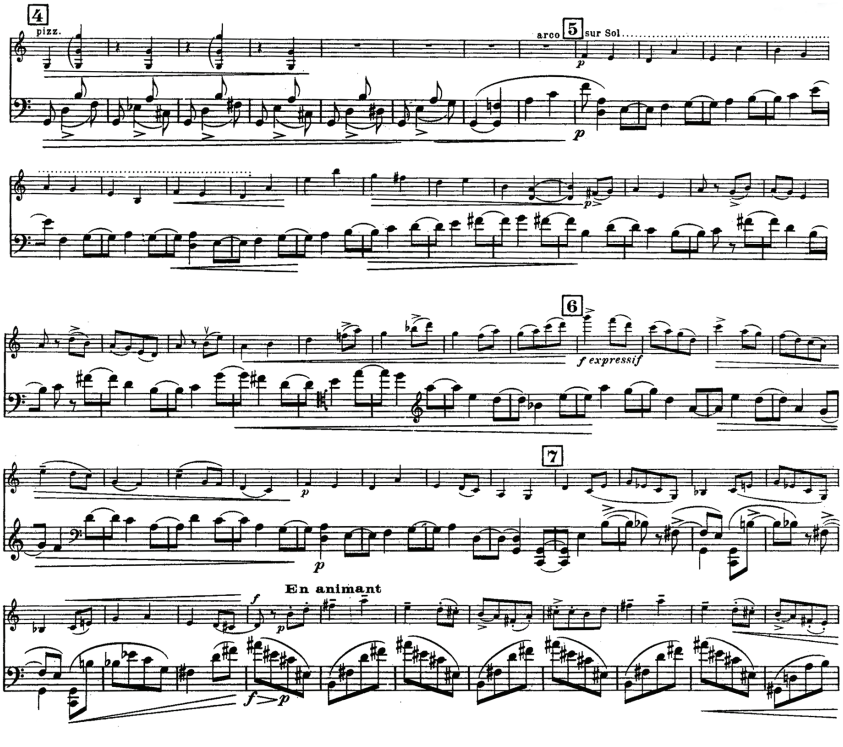
Example 6. Ravel *Sonate pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1922a) i, bb. 168–185 (cello part), Éditions Durand.

One of the core challenges that runs through much of the second movement is another variant of the "handover" game, usefully summarised by Jourdan-Morhange, who suggests that these two very different instruments must be able to be made to sound sufficiently similar so that the material can pass between the two without "gaps":

> The *spiccati* must be sufficiently equal in rhythm and sound to pass smoothly from violin to cello . . . . We were going crazy! Ravel did not admit the

slightest fissure between the dissimilar sonorities of the two instruments. So … we were arguing![31] (Jourdan-Morhange 1945, p. 180)

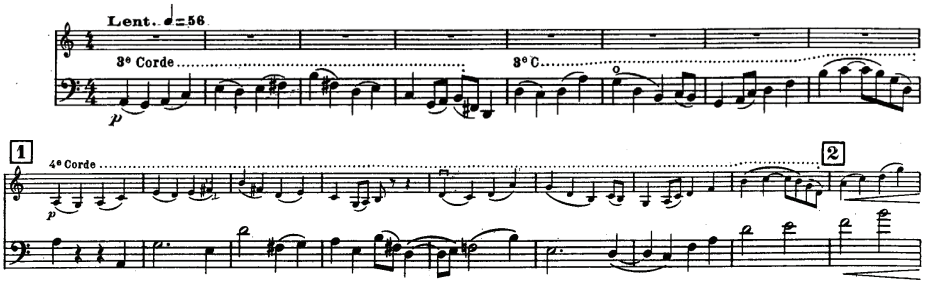
There is a kind of "quasi-hocketing" that recurs through the sonata in different forms that recalls, for me, my dog "running *with* the ball" (i.e., not catching or holding it, but matching pace with it, again recalling Caillois's *illinx*). In these games, the relationship between figure and ground is often in play, as we can see at Figure 5 of movement i (Example 7). It may seem obvious that the violin "leads" here, as it is initially given a single-string melody on the beat; however, playful voicing of the cello, which has the "bass" (naturally heard as a foundation), and real care to make the rhythmic relationship between the two instruments completely even can usefully create a feeling of suspension between the two instruments, and it is only after Figure 7 that this "running with" the material resolves into a stable relationship.



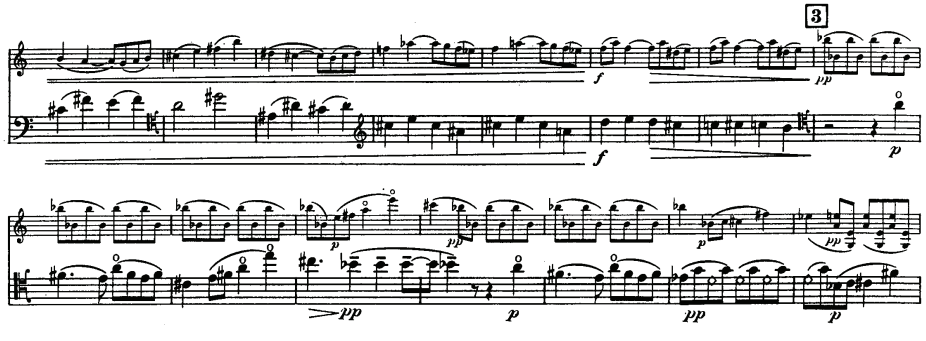
Example 7. Ravel *Sonate pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1922a) i, bb. 61–119 (cello part), Éditions Durand.

[31] "Il faut que les *spicatti* [sic.] soient assez égaux de rythme et de sonorité pour passer sans heurts du violon au violoncelle … . Nous devenions fous ! Ravel n'admettait pas la moindre petite fissure entre les sonorités pourtant si dissemblables des deux instruments. Alors … nous nous disputions!"

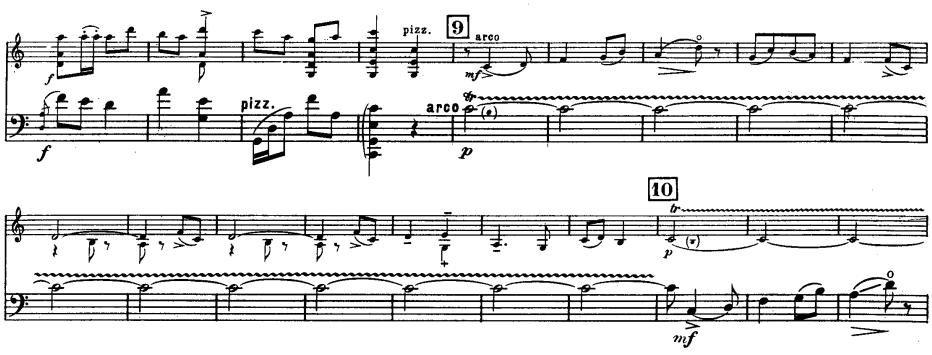
The third movement plays with a number of meeting points or handovers that need to be anticipated in order to avoid obstructing the beautiful long cantilenas, as, for example, in the passing of the melody from the cello to the violin at Figure 1—and, even more beautifully, in the use of the cello to complete the little interlude between the two halves of the violin melody in the fourth bar of Figure 1 (Example 8). At Figure 3, the two instruments are set "against" one another with the harmonic a^1 clash (a^2, e^3 in the violin) against the *b-flat*^{1}/*b-flat*^{2}, which passes from the violin to the cello almost seamlessly (Example 9). Additionally, Figure 10 in the last movement (Example 10) presents another handover that should be, it seems, almost imperceptible (note the dovetailing of the join).



Example 8. Ravel *Sonate pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1922a) iii, bb. 1–17 (cello part), Éditions Durand.



Example 9. Ravel *Sonate pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1922a) iii, bb. 18–32 (cello part), Éditions Durand.



Example 10. Ravel *Sonate pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1922a) iv, bb. 96–114 (cello part), Éditions Durand.

4. Harmonics and Intonation

Perhaps the most telling of the predictive listening games required of the players in the Duo can be found at the end of the third movement. Ravel's challenging handling of harmonics here will lead us to a wider discussion of how he uses instrumental colour and the different kinds of listening and prediction that are required. In the last bar (Example 11), the violin provides a stopped *a* (220 Hz) as the bottom of a perfect fifth with the cello's harmonic e^1, produced on the C-string. Even if one tunes the four strings of the instrument with equal temperament, this harmonic will be almost a "fifth-of-a-tone" flat.[32] I always assumed I tuned my instrument in "just" fifths in order to ensure perfect intervals between each of the strings (even when playing with piano, against which the lower strings will be progressively more and more out of tune) but upon checking this in detail on repeated occasions, I find that my natural tuning seems instead to be geared to maximise resonance across the instrument rather than to produce absolutely perfect fifths. Although my fifths are not quite "just", they are slightly wider than equal-tempered fifths, resulting in the C-string being (on average) between six and eight cents flat in relation to an A 440 Hz reference.[33] The e^2 produced by the fifth harmonic on the C-string is thus

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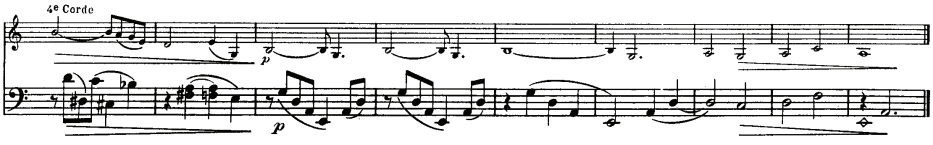
[32] On a stringed instrument, the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth natural harmonics are, for practical purposes, "in tune" with the fundamental (the first harmonic). The fifth harmonic is approximately one fifth of a tone flat, and the seventh harmonic is approximately one-third of a tone flat. Above the eighth harmonic, things become significantly stranger, especially on the cello's C-string, partly because of the innate physics of harmonic relationships, but also because of interactions with the thickness of the string and the fact that the nodal points have a "thickness" in themselves.

[33] To my ear, this tuning sounds simply "better in the instrument" than an equally tempered one, even when playing with piano, and the significant pitch difference between the piano and the cello on the open C-string can be "covered" (especially in louder dynamics) with a little extra "top spin" on the bow.

significantly *more* than a "fifth-of-a-tone" flat. The lower strings of the violin, if tuned similarly, will mitigate this a little, but not enough for it not to be a "problem"!



Example 11. Ravel *Sonate pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1922a) iii, bb. 74–82 (cello part), Éditions Durand.

In different contexts, this intonation discrepancy might not be important (as we will see later), but here there is an enormous challenge for both players to "pre-imagine" the last perfect fifth a good 20 cents flat: this is because of the parallel fifths between the cello and violin in the last three bars, some of which must be tuned "from" the upper note (the violin's G-string, which cannot be altered), and because the open string means that vibrato is not an option. The violinist needs to "guess" exactly how the cello's e^2 will sound, as adjusting the bass after the event would sound disastrous, and in any case, the cello then needs to confirm it an octave lower on the second beat. In order to avoid this ending simply sounding "wrong", the pair of fifths in the penultimate bar needs to be bent progressively downwards. I can think of little in the repertoire that is as exposing as this, but the satisfaction in having this extraordinary sonority appear is quite magical.[34]

With only two players and a lot of rehearsal time (as noted by Jourdan-Morhange), Ravel was clearly willing to gamble on a successful outcome here without giving any quarter to the players. The refinement of his awareness of what it might be possible for players to achieve in different circumstances, and his feeling for how many different ways a "harmonic game" could be played, can be demonstrated with a few other examples from the period. In the Piano Trio (Example 12), the cello climbs to its 10th harmonic on the C-string, carrying the listener with it along the way. There is no need to "predict" in this case, and the effect is quite natural. The seventh harmonic (*b-flat*^{1}), which will sound approximately a third-of-a-tone flat, is strategically supported with an augmented chord, leaving some room for latitude in intonation, and, although the cello's final e^2 will not agree with the piano's e^1 and e^2, we "accept" it because we hear it as the resting point at the end of a journey.[35]

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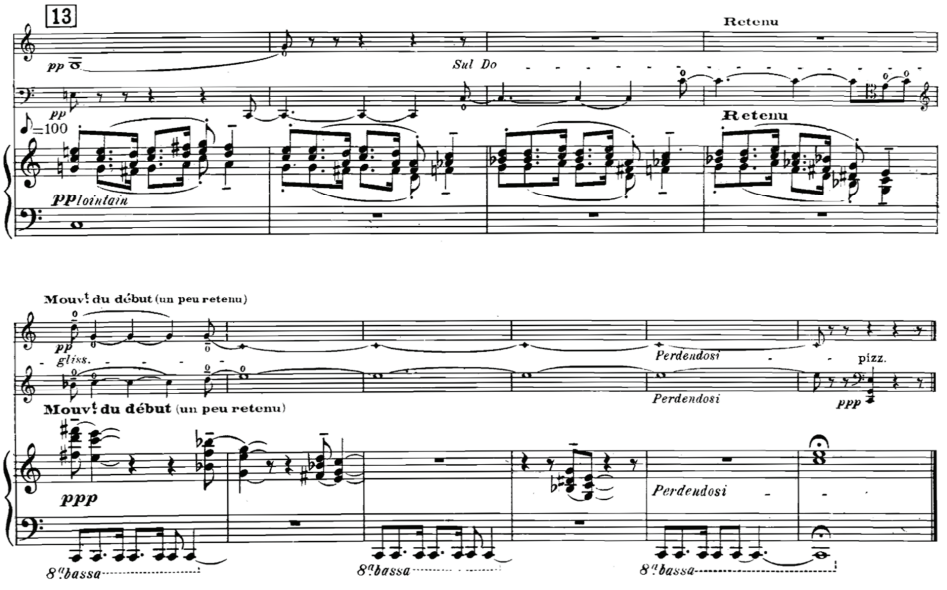
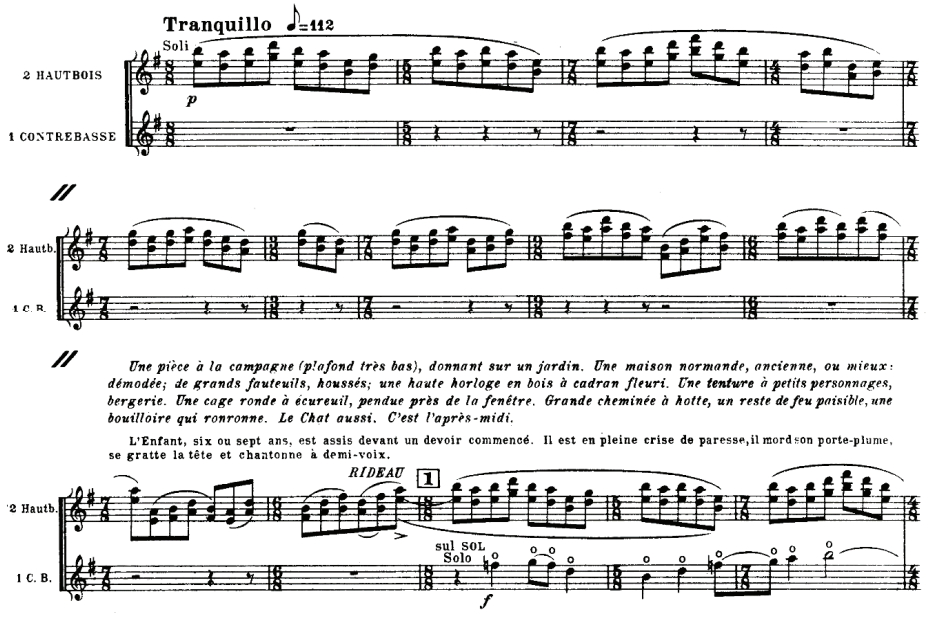
[34] In many recordings, it seems that players simply "cheat" by tuning the C-string a little higher at this point, which makes most of the "challenge" that I have described disappear. To my ears, that outcome sounds prosaic.

[35] The intonation discrepancy is also aided by the extra "distance" provided by the low piano C_1 which gives the impression of being the fundamental.



Example 12. Ravel Piano Trio (Ravel 1914) i, bb. 108–117, Éditions Durand.

Ravel's second opera *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (composed between 1917 and 1925, thus "on his desk" at the time of the creation of the Duo) presents a much more radical handling of high partial harmonics (Example 13). This is expressively extraordinary and vivid but lacks the "play" required in the chamber examples. Rather than leading the ear as in the Trio, or demanding the kind of predictive listening expected in the Duo, it seems Ravel takes full advantage of the "otherness" of the high string partials, both in timbre and intonation. In an orchestral context, the oboes and the solo double bass are well separated, and if there is a challenge to the individual musicians to "listen" here, it is so great that it cannot really be met. Following an intonation torture test in parallel perfect fifths and fourths in the two oboes (all but impossible to tune accurately, and, with the spare colour and potential "sourness" of the intonation, possibly a direct characterisation of the rebellious, "difficult" child), the double bass enters on the seventh harmonic, a full third-of-a-tone flat. The double bass's timbre here feels as if it belongs to an entirely different world. The f^1 does not belong to the oboes' modality, and, in every performance I have heard, the microtonal relationship between the two contrasted colours is bizarrely arresting. Whether we hear this as prefiguring the magical world that will shortly be revealed, or as a "sharpening" of the evocative impact of the oboes through contrast, I find it interesting that it is perhaps most effective when the intonation "gap" between the oboes and the double bass is *least sensitively managed*. It seems clear that Ravel has gauged what is likely to happen in an orchestral context with exceptional prescience.

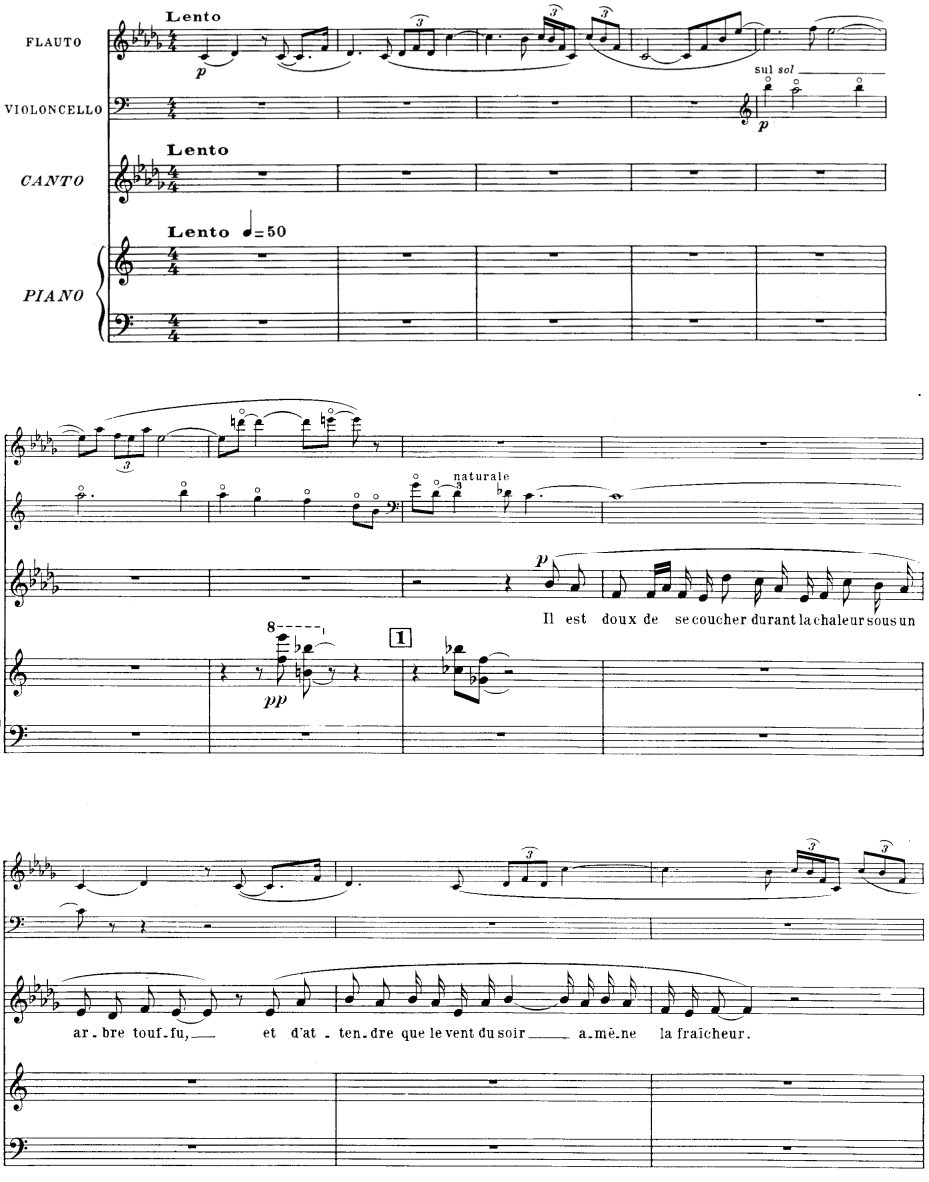


Example 13. Ravel *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Ravel 1925) bb. 1–14, Éditions Durand.

Just after the completion of *L'enfant*, in the *Chansons madécasses* for soprano, flute, cello, and piano, we find Ravel again exploring the partials from the 10th harmonic downwards on the cello, leading to a handover that absolutely depends on predictive listening (Example 14). I recall very clearly "my discovery", when first playing this piece as a teenager, that the c^1 in bar 9—the second of the stopped pitches in the cello, and implicitly on the G-string—can have almost exactly the same timbre as the flute's bottom c^1.[36] I remember asking the flautist to play this with me in alternation several times, just so that we could "feel" the potential. In this single-note handover, the initial bitonal dialogue between the two instruments is brought "around" in a kind of Möbius strip: the holding over of the cello to overlap with the flute in bar 10 is clearly designed to assist in blending the colours, but it requires quite a bit of "help" from the players. While writing this chapter, I listened to a number of recordings and was very disappointed to find that this particular "ball" seems very often to have been dropped, or possibly simply to have gone unnoticed—or that a sound edit has been made that breaks continuity. Without an extra bow sneaked in under the singer's entry, there is not enough "air" in the cello sound to make the illusion work,

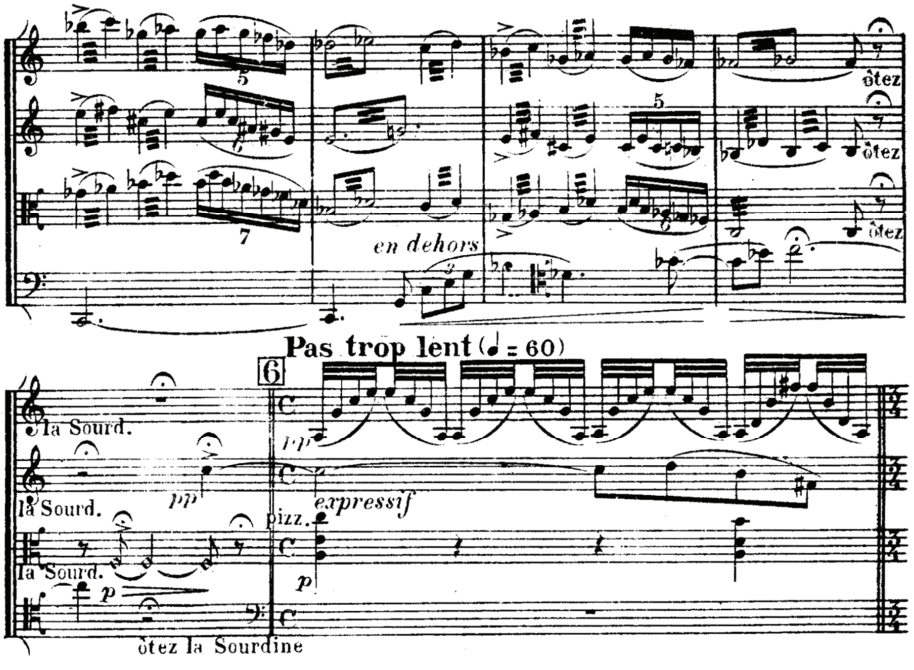
[36] It is interesting how vivid this recollection is, over 30 years later. This is partly because I recognised at the time that it was Ravel who must have "discovered" this relationship, but rather than "explaining" it for me, he had left the clues for me to discover it afresh.

and the flute needs to re-enter a little carefully to avoid the new entry feeling like a cinematic "cut" rather than a dissolve, or transition. Perhaps even more than the Duo example, this reveals how necessary it is that everyone "understands" the game if it is to play out.



Example 14. Ravel *Chansons madécasses* (Ravel 1926) iii, "Il est doux . . . ", bb. 1–12, Éditions Durand.

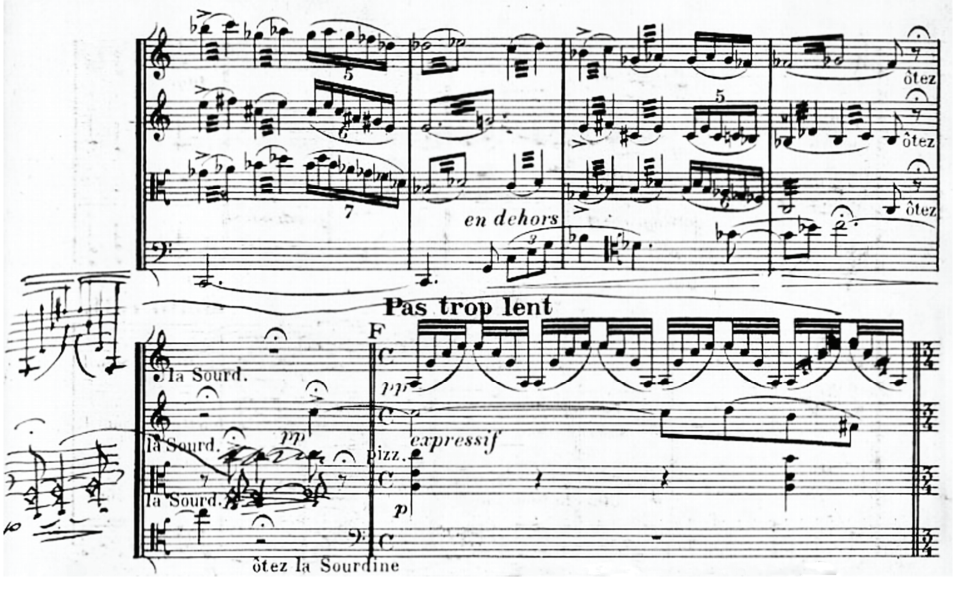
A relatively recent Kreutzer Quartet rehearsal discussion is instructive for drawing out how these kinds of very specialised games need to be "made" to work, and how we might "voluntarily" interact with them. Bars 61–63 of the third movement of Ravel's String Quartet have a little cello cadenza under the phasing out of the preceding material in the three upper strings (see Example 15a). The c^2 on which the cello ends—not the high point dynamically, which is already interesting—is passed to a natural harmonic c^2 on the viola's C-string and then to the second violin, at the same pitch, who carries this over as the beginning of the new melodic line at Figure 6. Our rehearsal stopped to explore the issues and ask questions: although it is quite obvious that this is, at root, a "simple" passing of the baton from the cello to the second violin, there are a few "obstructions" to it. What is the viola's role? Why are the viola and second violin entries accented?[37] Most importantly, why does the viola have a harmonic? To me, this seemed like a compositional miscalculation. My hunch was that the handover would work much more effectively with the viola stopped at the same pitch, thus effectively providing a "bridge" between the sounds of the cello and violin.



Example 15a. Ravel String Quartet (Ravel 1905a) iii, bb. 60–65, Éditions Durand.

[37] This is especially an issue as Ravel has otherwise helpfully overlapped each of the entries by a quaver.

It turned out that I was at least one step behind Ravel, who had tried exactly that at an earlier stage of the process. Example 15b presents the third set of editorial proofs, in which Ravel makes the change to the harmonic in the viola, but of course, there is no explanation of *why*. In fact, the cello and the violin are possibly closer in timbre on this particular pitch than the viola, which may have occurred to Ravel during rehearsals, so one strategy might have been to drop the viola entry altogether. What we are left with feels more like a kind of magic trick, in which the viola "ghosts" the cello's c^2 in a kind of sleight of hand, while the violin then ducks in, unexpectedly, to take over. This helps make sense of the little accents which draw attention to the various steps. Whether or not that is what Ravel intended, the insight offered by the proofs' revision was a trigger for significant creative license in finding a game that we could play effectively.



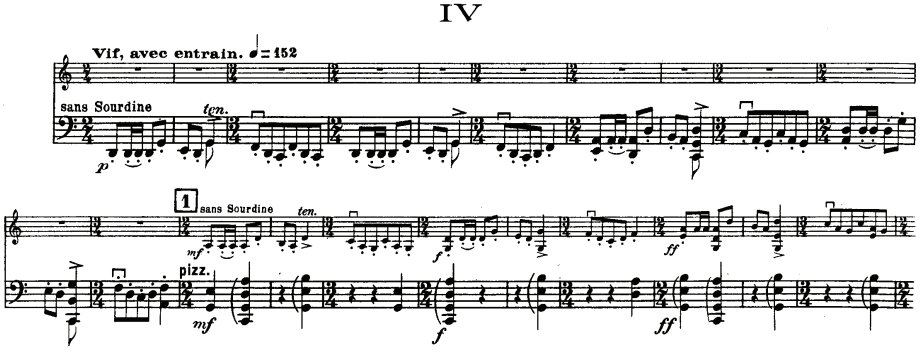
Example 15b. Ravel String Quartet, 3rd proofs (Jan 19, 1905) iii, 60–65, G. Astruc[38].

5. Discovery and Invention

I hope that the very different responses to these harmonic passages make it clear that there is a great deal that is not "indicated" in Ravel's notation. A necessity for scrupulousness may be all that is really behind Vuillermoz's "only one way of playing Ravel", but while a scrupulous approach to the notated text may get us through the door, once we are there, it is up to us to "recognise" the game, and then to find, or invent, ways of playing it. In this, Jankélévitch's observation that the

players "voluntarily make the rules of the game more complicated" seems especially perceptive (Jankélévitch 1959, p. 69).

Where, then, does Ravel's "mechanical rabbit" (Jourdan-Morhange 1945, p. 186) fit into the picture? This was the image he offered to cellist Maurice Maréchal for the beginning of the last movement (Example 16) in their work together leading up to the premiere of the Duo. It is an image that we might see as typical Ravelian, combining his love of toys and his fascination with mechanisms of all kinds, but it strikes me as a slightly odd choice for this movement which opens out very quickly to the full-blooded *ff* iteration in the violin in the seventh bar of Figure 1 (supported by all four open strings of the cello in block pizzicato). In many respects, this movement contains the most traditional chamber music of the whole piece, and the dialogue-like exchanges between the instruments are handled with extraordinary harmonic vividness and a textural density that, in Jourdan-Morhange's words, "often gives the impression of a genuine quartet" (ibid., p. 186).



Example 16. Ravel *Sonate pour Violon et Violoncelle* (Ravel 1922a) iv, bb. 1–21 (cello part), Éditions Durand.

Listening and viewing several performances of the Duo filmed or streamed in recent months, a likely reason for this whimsical description dawned on me: rather than being a goal in itself, it could have been a means for closing down something that Ravel did not want—recall the "*sans expression*" in "*Le gibet*" noted by Howat above. I have written elsewhere about the kinds of suggestions, provocations, and indeed "instructions" introduced by composers in rehearsals that they do not want to add to the score, concerned perhaps that their function is circumscribed by specificities of personnel, time, or context that would make them superfluous in the long run (Bayley and Heyde 2017, pp. 91–92, and Bayley and Heyde 2017, pp. 89–90). I found myself also recalling the kinds of "negative instructions" composers introduce with a view to forestalling certain "bad habits" that they expect, but which can become unhelpful when habitual practice changes. A "*sans presser*" indication, for example, in Debussy's *La cathédrale engloutie* is not observed by the composer himself in his

piano roll recording, suggesting that sometimes these indications are also even "notes to self" (Debussy 1913).

What struck me in the performances of the Duo filmed or streamed during the recent months was the danger of the cellist *over-playing* these opening bars, which are on the resonant lower strings, encouraging a rather full-blooded delivery. Ravel's stepped crescendo only begins with the violin's entry at Figure 1, so the opening seems to be expected to be kept in check. Not only did these performances begin too loudly, but there was a lot of agogic shaping of the material, which was made dramatic and interesting from bar to bar in ways that distracted from the emergence of the larger shape. Ravel's "mechanical rabbit" seems ideally judged to put a lid on both of those tendencies, and I was keenly aware that no player who had heard it would let the beginning grow so fast, or play so boldly. Its whimsy seems thus to be playfully judged as a personal game between the composer and a specific player, but one which could, perhaps usefully, be more widely shared.

What we see everywhere in the Duo—both in the notation of the score and in the evidence from the rehearsal work passed down to us by Jourdan-Morhange—is a special kind of appreciation of the instrumental–personal interactions that generate exciting chamber music, which can only come from really close listening, extensive "road testing", and a nuanced understanding of the ways in which people play with one another. Approximately a century after its composition, the kinds of games Ravel is proposing still seem fresh, and the rather quirky language that Jourdan-Morhange uses in her accounts of working with him seem strangely evocative of our own time. Throughout the writing of this chapter, I have been struck by the way that I have shifted gear, in ways that seem natural to me, between anthropomorphizing the instruments and instrumentalizing the players, which Jourdan-Morhange also does in ways not covered here. Ravel's games seem to be particularly interesting in the way that they engage personal "choices" with instrumental "facts".

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's famous letter to composer Carl Friedrich Zelter of 9 November 1829 introduces the frequently repeated idea, in reference to string quartet playing, of "four reasonable people conversing", which has often been taken as an archetype for chamber music. But I am always more struck by the end of his sentence, where he describes becoming acquainted with the "individuality" of the instruments (Irving 2001, p. 178).[39] For Ravel, this *individuality* seems to have been a kind of door that he was always seeking to unlock. In allowing us as players to open it, he provides material not only for some strangely thrilling gameplay but also for a

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[39] "Whenever I was in Berlin, I would seldom miss Möser's quartet evenings. For me, such artistic presentations were always the most intelligible forum for appreciating instrumental music, in which one heard four reasonable people conversing, as it were, believed their discourse to be profitable and became acquainted with the individuality of the instruments" (Irving 2001, p. 178).

heightened awareness of the curious intimacy we have with our instruments and instrumental selves.

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Asynchronous Small Group Ensemble: An Exploration of Technology-Mediated Chamber Music Making in Higher Education

Maria Krivenski

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses asynchronous small group ensemble music making, with a specific focus on virtual duets, and shares the findings of an exploratory practice-led study carried out at a university music department in the UK. In a higher education (HE) context, participation in chamber music activities is key to an understanding of classical music performance as a collaborative and inclusive practice as well as to the development of a positive musical identity (Krivenski 2018, pp. 171–72, 205). Additionally, HE music ensemble activities are central to performance students' engagement with deep learning (Burt-Perkins and Mills 2008) and the development of teamwork and "collective listening" skills (Slette 2019). Ensemble music making is generally understood as an activity "in which all components, including individual performers, their instruments, the audience, the performance space, are interdependent and dynamically interacting" (Bishop 2018, p. 4). In a classical chamber music context, there is an assumption that these musical interactions take place live and synchronously. However, are these conditions always necessary for ensemble music making to take place?

The relatively recent phenomenon of online virtual ensembles (Cayari 2015, 2018; O'Leary 2017) would suggest that is not the case. Thanks to the emergence and development of "digital, interactive, and participatory media" (Hartley 2012, p. 2), the practice of creating multitrack split-screen video recordings of ensemble performances and sharing them on social media platforms has become popular in recent years (Cayari 2020). To create these virtual ensemble performances, each musician video records their own part remotely and asynchronously, following a "reference recording" or "anchor" so that all parts can eventually be synchronised and displayed together with the help of video editing software (O'Leary 2017; Cayari 2020).

With the cancellation of musical events and the suspension of in-person music teaching as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic during parts of the academic year in 2020 and 2021, there was a veritable explosion of online virtual ensembles around the UK and other parts of the world (Daubney and Fautley 2020). Yet, virtual ensemble music making has not been unanimously welcomed by musicians, audiences

and educational institutions. This type of online collaborative music making has been criticised for being an inadequate replacement for live ensemble work. The labour-intensive and technologically mediated nature of virtual ensembles has been blamed for the poor performance quality of some of the virtual classical ensemble content created during the COVID-19 pandemic (Datta 2020). Additionally, in educational contexts, although some music teachers have continued to teach groups by combining "pre-recordings, resources and live teaching" (Daubney and Fautley 2020, p. 109), many performance-based ensemble teachers "have felt ill-prepared to facilitate meaningful musical experiences through online interactions" (Cayari 2020, p. 2).

During the spring and summer terms in 2020, I witnessed the same reticence towards virtual ensemble performances in the context of my activities as a music performance lecturer at a UK university. Following the mandatory shift to online teaching and learning in HE institutions in the UK and around the world brought about by COVID-19 social distancing requirements (Times Higher Education 2020; IHE Staff 2020), all ensemble performances in my Music Department were either cancelled or postponed till further notice. There seemed to be a general consensus among performance staff and students that technology-mediated ensemble music making would be too challenging—in terms of the equipment and technological know-how needed to make it possible—to adopt at such short notice. Most importantly, there was a widespread belief that because asynchronous virtual ensemble performance could not give musicians the same type of collaborative and creative experience that live, in-person ensemble music making does, adopting this practice would be too much of a compromise.

However, what affordances would virtual ensemble performance yield if we approached it with a spirit of curiosity and exploration, and viewed it as a *different mode* of ensemble music making, a technology-mediated collaborative practice that expands—rather than (unsuccessfully) replaces—traditional chamber music artistic and pedagogical practices and keeps them relevant in the 21st century (cf. Capulet and Zagorski-Thomas 2017, para. 15; Cayari 2016, p. 370)? Could such an approach to virtual ensemble afford HE classical performers a musically and pedagogically meaningful chamber music experience? Additionally, could it be adopted by performers who had no previous experience with this type of practice, using technology readily available to students and staff? The practice-led research project I discuss in the rest of this chapter explores these questions and suggests some possible answers.

2. The Research Study

The aim of the study was to capture my own (as practitioner-researcher) and other classical performers' experience of virtual ensemble music making while exploring the musical and pedagogical affordances of this form of technology-mediated chamber

music in the context of HE music studies. To gain an in-depth and multi-perspective understanding of this collaborative music practice and its potential affordances and constraints, I ran five parallel virtual duets for a period of six weeks in June–July 2020. All the performers participating in these projects were geographically distant from one another and could interact with one another exclusively through the mediation of technology.

I took part as one of the performers in three out of the five virtual ensembles, while in the remaining two, I contributed to the ensembles as a coaching tutor. For all of the ensembles, I also acted as editor and mixing engineer of the video recorded material. This entailed using video editing software to assemble the individual video tracks recorded for each duet to create a split screen video of a virtual ensemble performance. My active participation in the virtual ensembles' music making activities enabled me to take on the role of practitioner-researcher and, as such, "to make known the insider's expert perspective" (Doğantan-Dack 2015, p. 32) on virtual ensemble music making. At the same time, my subjective experience and understanding of the whole process were balanced and enriched by those of the other participants, providing multiple perspectives on the virtual ensemble music practice investigated.

To fulfil the research aim of the study, I adopted a qualitative multiple-case study design (Mills et al. 2012), which combined a range of auto-ethnographic (Chang 2008, pp. 89–102) and ethnographically informed (Leavy 2014, pp. 2–4) data construction strategies: audio-visual documentation of the various video recorded ensemble performance stages (from early "drafts" to final "products"); written (self-)feedback; practitioner-researcher's written memo that included activity descriptions, self-reflections and self-observations; participants' self-reports through written (self-)feedback and semi-structured interviews.

All the data were analysed through Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun and Clarke 2006). After familiarising myself with the data, I conducted initial coding, being careful to keep it grounded in the data. I gradually synthesised larger segments of the data into potential themes, which I then refined. Subsequently, I identified the main themes and sub-themes and how they fit together in the "overall story they tell about the data" (ibid., p. 92). The final phase of the analysis took place during the writing-up of the findings, in which I refined the themes and sub-themes further through a process of dialogue with relevant literature. During this phase, I also used data extracts to illustrate and support my analytical narrative while keeping it grounded in the data.

The participants who collaborated with me on this study were sought from a pool of performance students and staff from my institution, which helped me build a good rapport with them and created an atmosphere of trust during the research

process.[1] In order to represent a range of (traditional) ensemble performance abilities, participants were sampled so as to include undergraduate- and postgraduate-level students as well as performance staff.

A further sampling criterion was whether students and/or staff already knew one another and had collaborated together before the beginning of the study, based on the consideration that "[e]xisting relationships between musicians can help with the interaction, as performers trust, respect and support their fellow musicians while playing online" (Iorwerth and Knox 2019b, p. 10; see also King 2013). The participants joined the study on a voluntary basis and gave their verbal and written informed consent to their participation. I advised them that they could withdraw from the study at any point if they so wished and that if they decided to do so, there would be no negative consequences. This was a point which I felt was particularly important to highlight in the context of my own institution, where the existing power-relation dynamics between myself and potential participants might have been of concern and prevented students and/or staff either from participating or from leaving the study if they so desired (cf. Mercer 2007, p. 4). To protect my participants' anonymity, I have used pseudonyms when quoting or referring to them in this chapter (see Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of research participants.

Overview of Research Participants		
Participants *	**Type**	**Specialism**
Yuqi	1st year undergraduate	Piano
Minnie	2nd year undergraduate	Piano
Jeff	1st year postgraduate	Piano
Tim	2nd year postgraduate	Voice
Kat	2nd year postgraduate	Piano
Mel	Professional performer	Violin
Ellie	Professional performer	Piano
Maria	Practitioner-researcher	Piano

* Pseudonyms have been used for all participants, with the exception of the author (practitioner-researcher). Source: Table by author.

3. The Virtual Duets Project

When choosing the ensemble size for this study, I pragmatically opted for the smallest, the duet, given that all the participants had very little, if any, previous experience of virtual ensemble music making. As I designed the five virtual duets

[1] In a qualitative research context, where the researcher is the "instrument" through which data is gathered and interpreted (Lichtman 2014, pp. 12, 36–37), cultivating a relationship of trust between researcher and participants is key to an effective research process.

project, I aimed to put the focus on the music making and prevent the ensembles from becoming technology projects. I sought to avoid a situation in which the technology would be experienced as "the object of study" rather than "the means to an end" (Dack 1999, p. 4). Furthermore, I believed it was important that the virtual ensembles be as inclusive as possible from a technological perspective (cf. Daubney and Fautley 2020, pp. 8–9). Therefore, I designed the projects so that the performers could use "domestic" equipment and internet connections (Iorwerth and Knox 2019b, p. 8) already available to them. When inviting potential participants, I stressed this point and explained that performers would require a pair of headphones, a smartphone to video record their part and a laptop or tablet for playing-back purposes. The instrument combinations involved in these duets were: voice and piano, violin and piano, electric keyboard and piano and two pianos (Table 2).

Table 2. Type of duet project, participants and repertoire.

Type of Duet Project	Participants	Repertoire
Four-hands (2 grand pianos)	Yuqi and Minnie	Gabriel Fauré: Le jardin de Dolly, from Dolly op. 56
Four-hands (grand piano + electric keyboard	Kat and Maria	Claude Debussy: En bateau, from Petite Suite
Four-hands * (2 grand pianos)	Ellie and Maria	Claude Debussy: Menuet, from Petite Suite
Tenor-piano	Jeff and Tim	Franz Schubert, Auf dem Flusse from Winterreise D. 911
Violin-piano *	Mel and Maria	Lili Boulanger, Nocturne

* Newly formed ensemble. Source: Table by author.

Additionally, at the beginning of the study, I provided all performers with some basic guidelines on how to use a mobile phone to record their tracks to facilitate the best possible results. Firstly, I asked performers to ensure that the audio/video settings on their mobile phones (more specifically, video frame rates per second, audio sample rate, stereo/mono and video orientation settings) matched those of their ensemble partner's mobile phone. Secondly, considering that performers could not set the audio recording level on their phones, I invited them all to experiment with the positioning of their mobile device and find a distance from the sound source (their instruments) that would result in the best possible sound quality (i.e., minimal amount of noise, no distortion and an effective balance between direct and diffused sound) without compromising the image of the video.

To further help the performers focus on the music making, I also decided to take on the roles of video editor and mixing engineer for all the virtual ensembles, even though my know-how about editing and mixing were very limited at the beginning

of the study. For the post-production of all the duets' individual tracks, I used Adobe Premier Pro, which was freely available to me via my institution.

A key aspect of the virtual duets' design is that, contrary to what appears to be common practice in the creation of virtual ensembles (O'Leary 2017; Cayari 2020; Galván and Clauhs 2020), I did not provide the performers with an "anchor" track. Anchors are intended to help musicians stay in time and record their parts consistently so that the tracks can be easily synchronised in the resulting virtual ensemble video; but by providing a "guide", anchors also tend to lock performers into a specific interpretation of the piece (Cayari 2016, p. 372). In the case of the virtual duets project, I asked each performer to start the virtual ensemble process by recording their own part without any external "guide", giving them the opportunity to exercise their artistic freedom. I referred to this recorded performance as the "leading track". Subsequently, ensemble members swapped "leading tracks" and now each performer was asked to first listen to/rehearse with it, and subsequently video record their own part while listening to it, thus creating a "response track". At this stage of the project, ensemble members were invited to perform their own part so that it would sound musically coherent and convincing when put together with the leading track.

Throughout the duration of the virtual projects, I edited each pair of leading and response tracks to create draft versions of the ensembles' work in progress which performers could use to reflect on in order to further develop their performances. The additional leading and response tracks that emerged from this process were used to create virtual ensemble performances that the participating ensemble groups could share with a (virtual) audience. The reason for creating a virtual ensemble design with leading and response tracks was twofold. Firstly, through the process of recording a leading track (without a "guide"), I aimed to give each performer the opportunity to contribute with their own creative approach to the ensemble piece while maintaining an awareness of how their part would come together with their partner's part (Slette 2019, pp. 36–37). Secondly, through the process of recording a response track, I aimed to encourage each performer to be receptive and responsive to the musical intentions of their partner so that they could contribute to the creation of the whole ensemble in a musically effective and convincing manner. Thus, each duet member would (potentially) have equal opportunities to contribute to the shaping of the overall virtual ensemble.

When designing the virtual duets project, I also considered the fact that I would need to facilitate verbal interactions between performers. Even though recent investigations on collaborative music making have drawn more attention to embodied and pre-reflective forms of interaction between ensemble members (Bishop et al. 2019; Salice et al. 2019; Schiavio and Høffding 2015; Volpe et al. 2016), there is widespread evidence that verbal forms of communication—both oral (Burt-Perkins

and Mills 2008, p. 30; Seddon and Biasutti 2009; Cho 2019, p. 12) and written (Haddon and Hutchinson 2015)—play a key role during ensemble rehearsals. Given the asynchronous nature of the virtual ensembles, I adopted an online platform called Music Circle to enable asynchronous verbal communication. This platform allows users to upload media (such as audio and video recordings), share and discuss them with selected users via asynchronous, written comments left along a timeline (Yee-King et al. 2014, p. 245). A key feature of this platform is that comments are linked to whichever portion of the media one wishes to discuss. In the context of the study, this facilitated the performers' exchange of specific and detailed feedback on the multitrack videos of their work in progress and, eventually, of their "final performance". As the coaching tutor of two student duets, I used Music Circle to give students written feedback, which, together with the students' (self-)feedback, was used as the starting point of the online coaching sessions.

Even though synchronous music making was not an option for the type of classical chamber music repertoire performed by the virtual ensembles in this study[2] because of latency issues (Iorwerth and Knox 2019b), I was keen to facilitate some synchronous social and musical interactions as part of the ensemble process. Therefore, I invited the virtual duet performers to use a web-based video conferencing platform, Zoom, for their discussions with one another (and, in the case of the student ensembles, with me, their coaching tutor) about the repertoire being learnt and any aspects of their work in progress. While carrying out this study, Zoom was generally considered to be the best video conferencing option for musicians because of its "original sound"[3] and "computer sound" sharing[4] features (Timson 2020). Even though participants could not perform at the same time during Zoom meetings, these sound features allowed each participant to (verbally) share their interpretative ideas with their ensemble partner (and/or me, their coaching tutor)—as well as (musically) demonstrate them —in real-time, during what I referred to as "online live rehearsals" and "online live coaching sessions".

4. Discussion of the Findings: Key Themes

In this section, I discuss and illustrate the key themes that have emerged from the analysis of the data. The themes are organised according to the main components of the virtual duets process: the individual tracks (leading track and/or response

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2 See Table 2 for a breakdown of the repertoire.

3 The audio setting Original Sound disables Zoom's noise suppression and high pass filtering and removes automatic gain control.

4 During screen share, the Share Sound option allows the sound from a file with audio to be shared directly from one's computer with all remote attendees.

track) (Section 4.1); the overall virtual ensemble performance (Section 4.2); and the interactions (asynchronous and synchronous) via online platforms (Section 4.3).

4.1. The Individual Tracks

4.1.1. The Leading Track and the Absence of the Co-Performer

In spite of the artistic freedom that the lack of an anchor track (potentially) affords,[5] all performers found the early stage of the virtual ensemble process somewhat constraining. Findings indicate that during the initial drafts, the absence of the co-performer challenged the participants in two different ways. Some performers reported struggling to maintain a sense of ensemble, which led them to approach their leading track parts as if they were "solos". Others spoke of feeling lonely when engaging with the leading track stage and missing the social and interactive aspects of making music in a traditional chamber music context, which affected their musical confidence.

Maintaining a Sense of Ensemble

The participants who struggled to maintain a sense of ensemble when performing their part as leading track were, generally speaking, the least experienced (ensemble) performers. This was the case for the two undergraduate piano students. In spite of the fact that they had already done some work together on the very same four-hands piece before the 2020 lockdown, these participants reported that they found it challenging to maintain an awareness of their own part as co-constituent of the whole ensemble performance during the creation of the first leading track drafts. As a result, they approached this stage of the project as if they were performing a solo piece.

In an in-person ensemble context, musicians perform and listen to one another simultaneously, which allows them to have both "an individual (personal) and a collective (ensemble) focus" (Slette 2019, pp. 36–37) and, thus, maintain a sense of how all the parts come together to create the whole ensemble performance. During the leading track stage of the virtual duets, however, to achieve this type of collective focus participants had to learn to use what Bishop refers to as "musical imagination" (2018, pp. 5–6). In other words, they had to learn to listen to their own performance as it unfolded in time while actively imagining (i.e., listening with their mind's

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[5] In the context of western art music (WAM) performance (solo and ensemble), the concept of performers' artistic freedom is relative. As Daniel Leech-Wilkinson has eloquently argued (Leech-Wilkinson 2020), WAM "gatekeepers" (such as teachers, examiners, musicologists, concert managers, critics, etc.) (ibid., chp. 7) tend to strongly limit the potential creativity of classical music performers by upholding and/or enforcing norms which strictly regulate musical practices and behaviour (2020, chp. 10). In the current study, although the elimination of guide tracks from the virtual duets project did not in itself free up co-performers from such musical norms, it aimed to prevent the addition of a further normative layer.

ear to) their co-performer's part, with an understanding of how the two parts would come together to form the whole performance. This is illustrated by the two participants' words:

> I [would play] thinking . . . I was soloing. And then I would start imagining what my partner would play . . . . I felt like I was very present in that moment when I was imagining I was playing with Yuqi right beside me. (Minnie)

> In the beginning it felt like I was working alone . . . . [But in the following stages of the project] I [would] sing the main melody—that is, Minnie's part—in my mind. (Yuqi)

Findings indicate that the shift in the musical experience of these participants—from solo to ensemble music making—was promoted by the synchronous/asynchronous verbal dialogue (see Section 4.3) that performers started engaging with after their first draft was completed. Listening to the early multitrack drafts of their ensemble project and reflecting together on their musical intentions allowed these participants to gradually develop and refine their "musical imagination" skills, pointing to the key role that verbal communication has in facilitating the creative process of ensemble members.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of One's Leading Track

Although more experienced performers did not struggle to maintain a sense of ensemble, some reported feeling lonely when engaging with the creation of the early leading track drafts. They found themselves missing the social and interactive aspects of participating in an in-person chamber music project:

> It's always the leading that feels lonely, definitely . . . it's just me alone in a room, throwing my musical ideas out into space. (Ellie)

This feeling of loneliness could have far-reaching consequences on the performer's musical confidence. In Ellie's case, the lack of immediate musical feedback from me, her co-performer, fostered in her concern regarding how I would receive and "judge" her leading track performance from an artistic perspective. This concern with "musical appropriateness" appeared to be exacerbated by the fact that Ellie was working in the context of a newly formed ensemble, within which she and I had not yet had the opportunity to get to know one another on a musical and personal level. Haddon and Hutchinson's study (2015) on the link between co-performers' interactions and musical creativity in ensemble performance has highlighted the importance of trust-building and empathy for facilitating spontaneity, risk-taking and for "open[ing] up interpretative possibilities which might otherwise stay closed

off" (ibid., p. 150). The findings in this study complement Haddon and Hutchinson's in that they show how the lack of an established personal and musical relationship can result in fear of being judged negatively and, thus, prevent the performer from projecting their musical intentions freely. Ellie's words illustrate this clearly:

> [W]hen you're leading [in a virtual ensemble], you're not responding to anything at all and so you might be presenting musical ideas which somebody else thinks are really rubbish, but you've got no way of knowing that . . . . I think what happened for me . . . [was that] the first recording [was] a bit tentative, a bit inhibited, because there hadn't been an opportunity for that trust to build up yet. (Ellie)

My experience as co-performer echoed Ellie's. My musical confidence was affected, too, during early drafts of my leading tracks, although in a slightly different way. My discomfort was due to my inability to evaluate the extent to which my video-recorded communication efforts were coming across and were intelligible to my co-performers. Thus, at the beginning of the study, I found myself overly concerned with making my musical intentions as clear as possible. For example, in my first leading track draft of Lili Boulanger's Nocturne for violin and piano, even though Mel, my co-performer, had given me carte blanche in terms of tempo flexibility, I became excessively focused on clarity of pulse, which resulted in my staying quite close to the tempo changes that Boulanger herself indicates in the score. As such, this first draft of my part was somewhat less imaginative and engaging than I would have liked it to be.

Other participants in this study reported experiencing similar concerns with communication clarity. For example, Tim, a postgraduate student performer, reflected that in his early leading track drafts his uncertainty about how his own musical ideas would come across to his partner led him to take an "overly expressive" approach, which (in his own evaluation) made his recorded performance sound "forced":

> Obviously, the first time doing this kind of project I wanted [to send] something really clear to Jeff . . . . I felt like I was trying too hard to be very clear in what I was trying to express. And I think it came across a little awkward in singing style, watching it back now. I think I was trying to be too expressive: it was a bit forced. (Tim)

A possible reason for the performers' lack of musical confidence in the early stage of the virtual duet projects can be inferred by considering the interactions that take place among musicians in live, in-person ensemble performances. In this context, musicians always get (some degree of) real-time aural and visual feedback on their own music making. This feedback takes the form of the co-performers' immediate response "through playing and through gesture, [as well as] facial expressions"

(Haddon and Hutchinson 2015, p. 149), which immediately feeds into their own performance (cf. Bishop et al. 2019, p. 3) and, in turn, allows them to respond to their co-performers' music making. As a result of these simultaneous musical interactions, ensemble musicians are able to produce a coherent musical performance (Iorwerth and Knox 2019a, p. 289). On the other hand, in the context of a video recorded performance, there are no simultaneous interactions, but rather two separate music-making stages—leading and responding—that take place one after the other. As such, when creating the leading tracks performers could not immediately gauge whether what they did would make sense to their co-performers and enable them to provide a coherent and effective musical response.

Interestingly, the feeling of loneliness and lack of confidence that some participants experienced when creating the first draft of their leading tracks was overcome once co-performers had the opportunity to watch the early drafts of the multitrack split screen virtual performances and share (self-)feedback with their co-performers. I will discuss this phenomenon later (Section 4.3).

4.1.2. The Response Track and the Mediated Presence of the Co-Performer

Being Receptive to the Co-Performer's Musical Ideas

All performers reported that the creation of the response track was a more enjoyable musical experience than working on the leading track, especially in the early stages of their virtual duet project. This is because they felt most connected to their ensemble partners while working on the response track. Some student participants described this experience as being "easier" and more "relaxing" due to the fact that listening to their partner's leading track while performing their own part helped them get a better overall understanding of the piece from rhythmic and harmonic perspectives. This, in turn, facilitated the creation of their own response track. On the other hand, advanced performers reported that the enjoyment they experienced during this component of the virtual ensemble came from responding to a performance that had been "fixed" by the recording process, something they found artistically stimulating:

> I appreciate constraint. Always. [. . .] [C]onstraint is creative and fun [. . .] it's like, "Okay, I'm just going to do [. . .] this version this time", you know? So, I don't get any say in it, but I get to put myself in somebody else's version. And that's fun. (Mel)

My own experience as co-performer echoed Mel's. My aim during this stage of the project was to create a response that would best "complement" my partners' leading tracks and, thus, contribute to the creation of virtual ensemble performances that could be perceived as musically coherent and effective. To fulfil this aim, I had to leave all my musical preconceptions to one side and, at times, even ignore some

aspects of the musical score—such as dynamic markings and shaping—so that I could fully tune into my partners' performance and be entirely receptive and fully responsive to their musical ideas. This was a creative process that, artistically speaking, both stretched and fulfilled me. Bishop (2018, p. 6) argues that in a traditional ensemble context, listening to one's co-performer(s) with "open ears", being open to new musical ideas and ready to change one's interpretation is key to achieving a creative performance. The findings in the current study indicate that this is also the case in the context of virtual ensemble music making.

Developing Sound- and Image-Monitoring Skills

Although this component of the virtual duets project was generally experienced as being very enjoyable and artistically fulfilling, creating the response track was not without its own challenges. This is because it required all participants to learn a different way of tuning into their co-performers' musical intentions.

In an in-person ensemble context, co-performers share the same space and, thus, they can communicate their musical intentions directly via their sound and physical gestures. Ensemble performers are immersed in each other's sound, and not only do they have the opportunity to listen to one another simultaneously, but they can also *feel* each other's sound and experience what Salice et al. refer to as an "intercorporeal dimension of playing together" (2019, p. 204). Furthermore, in an in-person context, the musical interactions of ensemble members are supported by visual communication. This enables co-performers to continuously adapt to each other's musically meaningful gestures, and (potentially) promotes "creative thinking and risk-taking" (Bishop 2018, p. 19). Additionally, visual communication fosters a sense of cohesion between co-performers (Haddon and Hutchinson 2015, p. 141).

In a virtual ensemble context, however, co-performers' sound and body language are mediated by technology. As two recent studies (Rofe et al. 2017; Iorwerth and Knox 2019a) on synchronous networked music performance (NMP) indicate, the use of sound- and image-monitoring devices requires musicians to go through a process of adaptation to the new way of perceiving their co-performers' musical intentions. Findings in the current study indicate that this is also the case for asynchronous virtual ensembles, particularly in terms of the use of headphones and screens to listen to and watch co-performers' leading tracks.

All participants reported that they had to learn how to listen to their co-performer and monitor their own sound at the same time to be able to create effective response tracks:

> I tested both these in-ear ones and over-ear [headphones]. I found over-ear headphones work better for me. I felt like I couldn't monitor myself as well with the in-ear [headphones]. (Tim)

> I find it almost impossible to play with headphones on. It's very hard. The earbuds are better [than over-ear headphones] because they don't block your entire ear. I really do need both of my ears to play in tune. (Mel)

My experience as co-performer echoed that of other participants. I, too, had to explore using different types of headphones (over-ear and in-ear) and ways of wearing them (on one ear only or on both ears) "rehearsing" with my partners' leading tracks so that I could obtain the most effective volume balance between the sound of my partner's track and my own. In some particularly delicate passages of Debussy's Menuet from Petite Suite (which required the synchronisation of semiquaver triplets between the two parts as well as attention to balance and shaping), I even resorted to rehearsing my own part one hand at a time to ensure I could clearly hear every little detail of both my partner's part and mine.

Interestingly, one of my co-performers prioritised listening to my leading track over monitoring herself, as she relied on her embodied knowledge of her own part to create her response performance:

> I had a pair of noise-cancelling headphones so I could hear you really clearly and I just played by feel actually, pretty much. (Ellie)

As a result, however, Ellie found that her response tracks were a bit too loud in relation to my leading tracks. This resulted in the balance between the two tracks needing to be adjusted during the multitrack editing process.

Most significantly, findings show that this component of the virtual duets had a profound impact on student participants, as the process of exploring technology-mediated ways of listening to their co-performer's leading track fostered in them a deeper understanding of the role of active listening skills in an ensemble context. Minnie, a second-year undergraduate performance student who had already participated in several in-person chamber music projects, reported that:

> I've learned so much about active listening compared to when I was playing with Yuqi live . . . . I don't think I was really listening . . . [one] hundred percent. [Now] I think listening is a really big part in ensemble and I was missing out on that. (Minnie)

From a pedagogical perspective, this suggests that virtual ensemble projects (that do not make use of anchor tracks) can provide HE performance students with an effective music-making context for developing their listening skills further and with greater awareness.

Even though recent studies suggest that visual cues can facilitate ensemble synchronisation (Schiavio and Benedek 2020, para. 28) and that, because of the multi-modal nature of perception, musicians hear their co-performers better if they are able to see their physical gestures (Zagorski-Thomas 2020), the extent to which

participants in the current study relied on screens during the creation of response tracks varied considerably:

> I absolutely relied on the image and I felt frustrated that I wasn't able to see it bigger and in front of me. (Ellie)

> I had the video there. I didn't use it tremendously. (Mel)

> I've got to say that in the first [virtual] performances, I didn't really watch [my partner]. (Tim)

Findings indicate that during the early drafts of the response tracks, student participants in particular tended to ignore the image of their co-performer's leading track video and relied mostly on the audio for co-ordination purposes. From my perspective as their coaching tutor, I believe this was due to the fact that these students had not yet internalised the score sufficiently and, as such, did not feel comfortable when looking away from it. Interestingly, Iorwerth and Knox (2019a) report that even in the case of professional classical musicians playing together while physically separated, musicians tend to keep their eyes mostly on the score instead of looking at their co-performer via the video monitors. The authors suggest this is because in an in-person ensemble context, musicians mostly use their peripheral vision to keep track of one another's physical gestures, thus "feeling" each other's presence rather than looking at one another directly, something which is not possible with a two-dimensional screen. Findings in the current study show, however, that as student participants progressed through the virtual duets project, they increasingly paid explicit attention to their co-performer's video recorded image. The participants reported that this made a qualitative difference to their music-making experience, particularly in terms of synchronisation during rubatos or whenever the co-performer was leading at the beginning/end of a phrase or section:

> That [visual] interaction definitely helped because I think there were some musical cues I wasn't picking up before, like Tim's breathing in before coming in. And that really helped, that awareness through the progression of this project. (Jeff)

> [As] the project went on, I got used to this concept of a [co-performer] on video . . . . I think it ended up becoming more real, as if Jeff were actually in the same room . . . . I made a conscious effort to watch Jeff . . . so I could take my breath with Jeff and then come in together . . . . [The ensemble] was more successful when I consciously thought like that. (Tim)

In my experience as co-performer, getting used to watching the two-dimensional moving image of my partner felt like learning a new skill. Initially, I struggled to find

the right balance between watching my partners—which undoubtedly helped me with the synchronisation of entrances and rubato passages—and listening intently to the expressive qualities of their sound. Two things helped me gradually adapt to the mediated nature of my partners' sound and body language and achieve a balance between image- and sound-monitoring that worked for me: full internalisation of my own part, to the point that I could perform it from memory; and in-depth knowledge of my partners' musical intentions through a process of rehearsal with the leading tracks and of synchronous/asynchronous dialogue with my partners.

A surprising finding related to the recording of the response track is that participants reported experiencing their performance as being "spontaneous" and "in the moment" even though they would record multiple takes of their part to achieve a response track they were satisfied with:

> I feel like it was a creative process. I would be in the moment . . . . I was still experiencing "music", if that makes sense, like you would in a live performance. (Kat)

In Kat's experience, having the opportunity to record multiple takes meant that she could take more risks than in an in-person ensemble performance. This was because if she "messed it up", she had the option to make a new recording.

A key finding from this component of the virtual ensembles is that the only reliable way for the participants to evaluate the effectiveness of their response tracks (and of their use of the relevant technology) was to watch the multitrack split screen video that resulted from combining the leading and response tracks together. As such, the video editing and mixing processes were a necessary precursor to participants' (self)-reflection on their overall work in progress.

4.2. The Overall Virtual Ensemble Performance

4.2.1. The Creative Role of Postproduction

As mentioned in the section about the design of the virtual duets project (3), I took on the role of video editor and mixing engineer for all the virtual ensembles to facilitate the participants' focus on the music making. The process of editing/mixing the multitrack split screen videos, however, highlighted the fact that postproduction is very much a creative activity that significantly contributes to an ensemble's overall creative process (cf. Zagorski-Thomas 2020). Several musical aspects of the virtual ensembles were finalised during this stage of the duet projects: the overall sense of ensemble (through the synchronisation of the tracks), the balance between parts and overall texture (through volume adjustment of the individual tracks), as well as the ensembles' visual communication (through the creation and positioning of the split screens).

An important finding emerging from this stage of the project is that for the "final product" (the multitrack split-screen video) to reflect the performers' musical intentions successfully, the performers themselves need to be closely involved in the postproduction process. This means that, if the performers are not editing/mixing their own tracks, they need to take on the role of producers, thus directly shaping the outcome of the video recording (McIntyre 2012). I enabled the participants to shape the postproduction process by discussing the editing and mixing of each multitrack video draft with them and asking them for feedback on the musical effectiveness of the virtual ensemble. This feedback process helped me adjust aspects of the multitrack videos so they would best represent the performers' musical intentions. It also helped the musicians themselves to reflect on whether they would need to change any aspects of their individual (leading and/or response) tracks in later drafts in order to achieve the desired ensemble performance "feel".

One of the postproduction aspects I found most challenging was the synchronisation of the leading and response tracks for projects in which I was not performing and for versions of virtual ensembles for which I had created the leading (rather than the response) track. In these instances, the difficulty I came up against was that I could not immediately tell whether some minor ensemble issues I could hear while editing the multitrack video were due to timing issues in the response performance (in other words, to the fact that the musician had not performed their own part consistently together with the leading track during the recording of their response track) or to a slight misalignment of the tracks on the timeline of the video editing software.

When I edited videos for which I had created the response track, I could rely on my recording experience to diagnose the reason for the issue. If I had experienced particular moments of my performance as being very well co-ordinated with my partner's recorded performance, but this was not reflected in the multitrack version, then I knew that I had to keep adjusting the alignment of the tracks further. When editing all the other multitrack videos, however, I had no such reference points. Thus, to find the most "organic" fit between parts I had to adopt a painstakingly slow process of trial and error during which I would check the synchronisation of the two tracks at different points of the performance, tweaking the alignment one frame at a time until the overall sense of ensemble became convincing. I would then "seek verification" (McIntyre 2012, p. 158) of my editing work from the performers, to make sure it reflected a sense of ensemble with which they were satisfied. Ideally, to speed up the postproduction process, the synchronisation of tracks should be carried out by the co-performer creating the response track.

As one of the goals in the current study was to find out whether it would be possible to create musically effective virtual ensembles with minimal technology and editing know-how, I intentionally did not do any sound editing beyond adjusting

the volume levels of the leading and response tracks. I adopted this approach even though there were some clear differences in sound quality between tracks. These were primarily due to the differences from co-performer to co-performer in recording conditions (such as the size/shape of the recording space, the type of recording device used, its distance from the sound source). In the case of the four-hand duets, there was also the additional condition of the co-performers using two different instruments. A unique characteristic of this type of duet is that in an in-person context, the musicians share the same instrument. This, however, was not the case for the pianists participating in this study. As such, the differences in timbre and volume between the instruments used by the co-performers were noticeable, especially in the case of the grand piano-electric keyboard duet.

In spite of the lack of extensive sound editing, the findings indicate that the virtual ensembles "worked well as performances" (see Krivenski 2018, pp. 205–6, 239–40), in the sense that the multitrack video recordings created an enjoyable and effective musical experience. This is illustrated by participants' comments on their experience of watching the final drafts of their own and/or other participants' virtual ensembles:

> I was totally immersed in [the video]. I wasn't thinking about the technological stuff . . . . I was just enjoying that performance. (Minnie)

> I think [the video] works well as an ensemble and there are really lovely moments where we are together and have a good dialogue. (Kat)

> The experience of watching [the multi-track video] is really pleasing. (Ellie)

Even if the use of domestic technology and limited editing know-how allowed the creation of effective virtual ensembles in the case of this study, the professional performers who participated stated that, if they were to engage with virtual ensembles regularly as part of their professional activities, they would upgrade their recording equipment and refine their recording techniques. On the other hand, by the end of the study both professional and student performers reported that, in their opinion, the type of technology and editing process used for this study would be highly effective from a pedagogical perspective in the context of HE musical performance, particularly at undergraduate levels. However, they also pointed out that there might be limitations to the types of repertoire that could work for HE virtual ensemble performances due to the fact that colour nuances in sound could not be effectively captured without professional equipment.

4.2.2. Co-Performers' Creative Collaboration

In spite of the mediated and asynchronous nature of the ensemble music making, participants reported that they experienced the overall virtual ensemble process

and outcomes (i.e., the multitrack split-screen videos) as a creative collaboration. Findings in this study indicate that what enabled this experience was the fact that co-performers took turns to create drafts of both leading and response tracks. This turn-taking process allowed participants to share creative ideas that were generated while working on their own part by themselves, and to develop them together with their co-performer through successive leading/response track drafts and ongoing (synchronous and asynchronous) dialogue, thus supporting Slayton et al.'s (2019) hypothesis regarding the key role of an "iterative, interactive feedback loop" in group creativity:

> Jeff got ideas from me. I got ideas from Jeff. As the project went on, we ended up implementing both of each other's ideas in our [leading track] versions. I think the shared creativity was huge. (Tim)

Tim's words resonate with my own experience as co-performer in three virtual duets. As the virtual collaborations progressed, I found that my ensemble partners' leading tracks, and our conversations about musical intentions, encouraged me to explore different musical approaches in subsequent versions of my own leading tracks. Additionally, vice versa, my leading tracks fostered a similar reaction in them. Personally, I enjoyed being inspired by my co-performers' creative ideas and embraced the opportunity to take my own leading track performances in different directions compared to my earlier drafts. Thus, the process of creating leading tracks as experienced by myself and other participants in this study supports Schiavio and Benedek's (2020) conception that "solo" creative activities can be "inherently participatory" because they often involve "a felt presence of others based on the creative re-enactment of a shared repertoire of practices or an anticipated experience of music making in context" (ibid., para. 30).

A further consideration is that taking turns in creating leading and response tracks facilitated the participants' adoption of "decentring". Seddon and Biasutti (2009) describe "decentring" as musicians' ability to see musical ideas and approaches from their co-performers' perspectives, which the authors correlate to co-performers' ability to interact creatively in an in-person ensemble context. Interestingly, the findings in this study indicate that, in a virtual context, decentring coupled with the turn-taking process described above can lead co-performers to create "divergent" virtual ensembles. In other words, multiple virtual performances (each one "led" by a different ensemble member) may reflect different interpretative approaches to the same piece. This was the case for one of my four-hand duet projects, as my co-performer's words illustrate:

> So [our final multitrack videos] turned out very differently and both of them—and this is the interesting thing—they are both convincing. They both have a feeling of validity about it [sic.]. (Ellie)

This suggests that a virtual ensemble performance can be a fruitful context for co-performers to explore the effectiveness and validity of different interpretative approaches to the same piece(s).

4.3. Online Asynchronous and Synchronous Interactions

The virtual duets project was supported by two technology-mediated communication modes: asynchronous, in the form of written comments, via Music Circle; and synchronous, in the form of face-to-face conversations and musical demonstrations, via Zoom. Findings indicate that both communication modes facilitated a dialogue between co-performers about their understandings of the piece they were working on together and their musical intentions. Additionally, both online platforms enabled co-performers to construct a "shared conceptual space" (Slette 2019, pp. 35–36) where they could negotiate musical meaning and engage in collaborative problem solving. Each communication mode (and associated platform), however, offered different interactional and learning affordances, something which I discuss and illustrate in the following section.

4.3.1. Asynchronous Interactions and Critical Listening Skills

While watching their multitrack video drafts on Music Circle, participants had the opportunity to post written (self-)feedback (shared with their co-performers) on how leading and response tracks "interacted" together and whether the overall virtual ensemble sounded coherent and musically convincing. In my role as coaching tutor of the student virtual ensembles, I facilitated the (self-)feedback process through questions addressed to both co-performers (such as, "How do you find … ?", "What do you think of … ?") and also offered my own thoughts on the progress of the virtual duets.

Comments that participants posted on Music Circle were wide-ranging and covered both technical and musical aspects of the ensemble performance, such as pitch/rhythmic accuracy, intonation, phrasing, dynamics, use of rubato, balance between parts, etc. Analysis of these written comments and of participants' self-reports about their experience with Music Circle shows that this type of verbal communication facilitated both "cooperative" interactions ("related to activities facilitating cohesive performance of the music") and "collaborative" interactions ("related to activities facilitating creative developments in the interpretation of the music") (Seddon and Biasutti 2009, p. 10) between co-performers. In other words, the (self-)feedback that co-performers shared with one another enabled an in-depth dialogue around observable ensemble issues (and how to overcome them in later video drafts) related to both cohesive and creative aspects of their virtual ensemble music making, as illustrated by the following two extracts from Music Circle:

(Example of written comments promoting cooperative interaction)

Maria: Was the pulse clear enough for you? Our two parts don't sit together as comfortably as they do in the first section.

Kat: I was not quite sure of the pulse in this section … perhaps it was the rubato in places? Although your part plays on every semiquaver, so it shouldn't have been a problem for me to follow.

(Example of written comments promoting collaborative interaction)

Tim: I like the suddenness of [the pp] as the words read "my heart". I just feel that the sense of reflection is elevated a little more with the "subito".

Jeff: I think if we're going to subito [pp], it should be better defined.

Most significantly, the majority of student participants reported that the asynchronous written nature of the (self-)feedback process encouraged them to exercise their critical listening skills and jointly reflect on their musical choices to a much greater extent than they had previously experienced in an ensemble music making context:

> I absolutely love the amount of detail we've gone in through this [asynchronous approach] […] we could think about [the feedback] in a different way, which is not sometimes achieved in a normal in-person rehearsal; in a live [in-person context] […] that type of detail gets lost. (Jeff)

Thus, findings in this study provide new evidence to support the idea that asynchronous forms of interactions in the context of virtual ensembles can afford "unique pedagogical advantages" (O'Leary 2017, p. 11) that may not be (as easily) available to (student) performers in a "typical" in-person rehearsal.

4.3.2. Synchronous Interactions for a Positive Interpersonal Relationship

The Zoom synchronous sessions constituted a key complement to the asynchronous interactions discussed above. These online live sessions provided co-performers with the "multimodal features such as posture, gesture" (Ezen-Can and Can 2018, p. 162) and "sense of immediacy" which lack in written communication and are fundamental to establishing online interpersonal relationships that feel safe and supportive (Garrison 2016, p. 26).

Findings indicate that, particularly in the case of newly formed duets, these online face-to-face interactions enabled co-performers to build a sense of trust that helped them feel at ease when sharing their own musical ideas with one another. This was the case for me and Ellie, the professional pianist I collaborated with. Although we were colleagues, we had never performed together or socialised outside of work. As such, our Zoom meeting (during which we shared with one another metaphors

that captured our understandings of the four-hand piece we were working on) helped us feel more closely connected on a personal and artistic level. The impact of our face-to-face synchronous interactions on the virtual ensemble music making that followed our Zoom meeting is clearly illustrated by Ellie's words:

> [F]or me . . . the first recordings were a bit tentative, a bit inhibited, because there hadn't been an opportunity for that trust to build-up yet . . . . [Thanks to] the conversation we had on [Zoom], there was an opportunity to build-up a musical relationship that was more spontaneous. For that reason, the second time through, [recording the leading and response tracks] felt completely different for me because I felt I knew you better personally as well as musically. (Ellie)

The online synchronous sessions also afforded participants the opportunity to share and negotiate their musical ideas through live music making, thus further supporting a positive relationship between co-performers. Although the standard internet connection available to participants did not allow for synchronous ensemble music making, co-performers were able to strengthen their musical relationship by clarifying their own written (self-)feedback posted on Music Circle through brief musical demonstrations. This enabled co-performers to jointly refine their musical goals for the following version of their leading/response tracks:

> [W]e could really consolidate what we wanted to do and really try and get a mutual understanding of each other's leading and response [tracks]. (Tim)

Thus, findings in this study provide further evidence for the importance of high-quality personal and artistic interactions between ensemble members for achieving successful and fulfilling artistic collaborations (Gaunt and Treacy 2020, pp. 17–18). Most importantly, they show that virtual ensembles do afford high-quality interactions between co-performers when they are supported by regular online synchronous face-to-face interactions.

5. Conclusions

The practice-led study discussed in this chapter aimed to explore the creative and pedagogical affordances of asynchronous small group ensemble in a HE context. Moreover, it aimed to facilitate a more in-depth and multifaceted understanding of this form of technology-mediated collaborative music making, one that transcends the narrow view of a virtual ensemble as "just" a response to the social-distancing measures triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within the limitations of this study, findings indicate that the "virtual ensemble model" proposed and discussed here (with no "guide" and in which co-performers take turns to create leading and response tracks with the support of

asynchronous/synchronous dialogue) is an artistically meaningful and pedagogically valuable form of chamber music. It affords unique opportunities for deep learning, joint creativity and artistic fulfilment. Additionally, it promotes the development of musical and technological literacies that can facilitate (student and professional) performers' participation in online music communities and access to online collaborative music-making opportunities. The most important practical implication of this study for HE music programmes is that the inclusion of virtual performance in post-pandemic curricular activities can play an important role in enabling performance students to acquire the experience, skills and mindset they need to embrace the evolving roles and identities of the 21st-century classical musician and, thus, build sustainable and fulfilling careers.

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Amateur Chamber Music: Repertoire and Experience

Mary Hunter

1. Introduction

The word "amateur", as sociologist Robert Stebbins notes, only makes sense in relation to an established professional version of the same activity. You can be an amateur golfer or actor but not an "amateur match-book collector" (Stebbins 1992, p. 71). Amateur chamber musicians of the sort I examine here are often thoroughly linked in with the professional world of classical music. They attend professional concerts and listen to professional recordings; they take lessons, receive coaching, and can form an active and enthusiastic ecosystem around the professionals. Additionally, in the other direction, professionals may join amateur groups for reading, and to earn some income from coaching amateurs (Keene and Green 2017). However, professionalism as the necessary condition for amateurism produces two opposite, equally strongly felt, connotations for the word. One relies on the Latin root of the word, "amare" (to love) and contrasts with the supposed grim "duty" of the professional. The other suggests "amateurishness," connoting a less-than-rigorous attitude and a relatively low level of competence, which contrasts with reliable professionalism. Both these connotations are emotionally and socially loaded, and individuals may strongly identify with one or the other in particular circumstances. Chamber music seems to be a world where, at least among amateurs, "amateur" has more positive than negative connotations; most of the musicians I discuss here describe themselves that way, at least in part. They identify as such despite the fact that many of them are technically and musically advanced and perform at least the occasional paid gig, and a good proportion of them have some kind of professional connection with music, though not necessarily as performers. Stebbins describes self-conception as "still one of the most valid and practicable of operational measures," (Stebbins 1992, p. 53) so I will use the term "amateur" here while recognising its baggage. My central argument is that, despite some differences, these amateur musicians have generally similar attitudes about both their repertoire and the overall experience, by which I mean the ways in which they process the combination of social, emotional, musical, and haptic factors that go into their music making. However, despite the social, financial, and musical interdependence and the many continuities between professional and amateur chamber music worlds, some amateur attitudes—especially toward the role of personal taste in relation to professional norms about both repertory and interpretation—do differ, at least to

some extent, from those of professional musicians. Finally, I would suggest that the specifics of the attitudes more common among amateurs might be useful to professionals, as well as offering clues to the continuation of amateur chamber music in a changing world.

2. Previous Writing on Amateur Chamber Music

Amateurs have always been part of classical chamber music, and because of its flexibility, the relatively low cost of personnel and equipment, and its capacity to resist institutionalisation, chamber music has always been a pursuit that has welcomed amateurs. Indeed, domestic music making has existed as long as people have made music, and the vast majority of domestic music makers have always been non-professional. The idea of the commercially professional chamber group arose in the early 19th century along with the idea of a canon of great works by revered composers, and this could be understood as the point at which our modern understanding of amateurism in music making begins to make sense (Bashford 2007; Sumner Lott 2015; November 2018; Morabito 2020). Be that as it may, amateur chamber music as it is practiced today, at least in the English-speaking world, is distinctly under-represented in scholarly studies of music making. As a musicological topic, chamber music overall has typically been treated more as repertoire than activity, with all the emphasis on composers and works, and a concomitant sidelining of performers in general and amateurs in particular. A small number of musicological studies have addressed the role of performers in the creation and subsequent shaping of chamber works, but with the works themselves as the principal focus, and the performers studied typically being high-level professionals (e.g., Gingerich 2010; Morabito 2016; Bayley and Heyde 2017). Relatively recently, historical musicologists have started seriously to investigate the relationships between, and meanings of, chamber repertories and their institutions. These studies, almost exclusively focusing on the 19th century, have typically located amateur performance in domestic settings; they have, also typically, used gender and sexuality as a primary lens, leaving the larger notions of what it means to be non-professional, or how the repertoire shapes the experience, either very much in the background or as non-issues (Brett 1997). Non-musicological social scientists have found chamber groups (especially string quartets) to be useful laboratories for studying group dynamics and organisational behaviour, but such studies typically do not pay much, if any, attention to the music being played, and they have, not surprisingly, concentrated on professional groups (Murnighan and Conlon 1991; Seddon and Biasutti 2009). Amateur music making, overall, has received some attention in the education studies, and in community-music circles, but these studies generally do not spend much time on chamber music, possibly because it is an activity that tends to occur relatively informally and among friends, making it harder to find subjects for sustained study. Such studies often have a

practical purpose: focused on the potential of musical activities to improve the lives of people who do not make a living from music, they concern themselves with the efficaciousness of certain kinds or structures of musical activities (e.g., Pitts 2009). The overall conclusions of such studies tend to be that music making is, physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally beneficial for its participants (Coffman 2007; Dabback et al. 2018; Goodrich 2016, 2019). Furthermore, this more sociologically based literature pays practically no attention to the contents of the repertoire.

The classic study of amateur music making as an element of civil society is anthropologist Ruth Finnegan's The Hidden Musicians of 1989, which looks at the plethora of amateur musical opportunities in Milton Keynes, UK. Finnegan does not address classical chamber playing at all, and the study describes a social world somewhat different from today. Nevertheless, many of her insights about the centrality of these organisations to the lives of the participants, the particular kind of sociability they represent, and the social significance of broadly engaged-in aesthetic enterprises are relevant to, and underpin, this essay (Pitts 2020).

A genre of writing about amateur music making that takes a much more experiential and individual approach is the amateur memoir (Booth 1999; Rees 2008; Rusbridger 2013). Wayne Booth's For the Love of It is the only such book to focus on chamber playing, but it shares with other such memoirs the idea of classical music playing as a kind of utopian world of beauty and disinterestedness. This image of the amateur classical music world is not unusual. Even Stebbins, in his 1978 essay "Creating High Culture," which is mostly a coolly descriptive study of then-current amateur classical music-making behaviour in the US, quotes Whit Burnett's 1957 encomium to that activity, even while calling it "fanciful": "here ... among the treasures of the spirit, the players seemed to have been created for the sake of the music, and in this sphere, a realm of sounds, four lone men, with no allegiance other than to this, were lost to the world" (Stebbins 1978, p. 624). In his own voice, Stebbins adds that amateur classical chamber music, especially in pickup groups, is an occasion where "the spirit of the love of music making is least often adulterated by such motives as the desire to see old friends, the obligation to attend rehearsals, the need to perfect a program for a concert, and the like" (ibid.). Burnett and Stebbins use the string quartet as a paradigmatic example, thus conflating the sacred status and cultural capital of the string quartet repertoire with the social pleasures of the activity, whatever the instrumentation.

What is missing in the literature about amateur chamber playing, then, is a study of current chamber music activity that takes an essentially ethnographic perspective, meaning that it gives serious attention to how people's relation to the chamber repertoire shapes their sense of the activity, relies on the voices of the people performing it, and puts these questions in a larger theoretical context.

3. My Position in the Research

In many respects, I am the kind of amateur chamber player that I write about here. I have played the violin since childhood, play regularly with my pianist husband, and, at various times, have had more or less regular ensembles, mostly including piano. I play in a community orchestra, attend a summer adult music camp, and have taken lessons as an adult. I perform the occasional paid gig. Music making is central to my life. As a musicologist, I have also written about the ways in which the emergence of the (largely Germanic) canon at the beginning of the 19th century shaped (and still shapes) the ways performers relate to the music they play (Hunter 2005, 2012, 2017). Indeed, it is the confluence of my academic interests and my amateur music making that has sparked this essay. However, as a violinist, my sense of the repertoire is more skewed towards the standard canonic works than is that of people whose instruments have a smaller repertoire of "great works," and one of my initial hypotheses was that the culture of wind and brass chamber music might be rather different from that of strings and pianists. The questionnaire whose responses form the basis for the rest of this chapter was thus designed to reach out beyond my own experience; at the same time, that experience inevitably shapes both the questions and my readings of the answers.

4. Questionnaire: Demographics of the Respondents

Appendix A outlines the questionnaire. I sent it to my northern New England community orchestra and to the adult chamber music camp I attend. In addition, I allowed respondents to send it out to their own chamber music colleagues or acquaintances. I then conducted seven follow-up semi-structured interviews and received eight more detailed written responses from participants willing to spend extra time on the subject. The questionnaire yielded 55 usable forms, split almost evenly between wind/brass players and string/piano players. Two-thirds were female. I am personally (though not closely) acquainted with 38 of the 55. The group was overwhelmingly white (87%) and middle-aged to old (52% over 65, almost everyone else between 40 and 65). The relative uniformity of age among my respondents was echoed in a relative uniformity of educational level and social status. J. Murphy McCaleb (McCaleb, this volume) makes a similar point about the preconditions required to participate in a repertory lauded for its internal democracy. Almost all my respondents held positions or had retired from professions requiring a higher education degree, particularly in medicine, engineering, law, and education. In total, 11 respondents were, or had been, professionally involved with music as instrumental teachers, school music teachers, or music administrators. Almost everyone (46/52) had "some" or "advanced" training in their youth; only a couple were adult beginners. Half the group (27/52) had never stopped playing; about 40% of those who began in their youth had stopped in earlier adulthood but found time

or energy for it later in life. For almost every respondent, chamber playing involved some kind of public performance, in venues ranging from churches to formal recital halls. Many performed the occasional paid gig. More than half my respondents were either currently, or had recently been, members of at least one regularly meeting chamber ensemble; such ensembles were overwhelmingly either all-string (or strings and piano), all-wind, or wind and brass; ensembles mixing winds and strings were rare. The couple of pianists who answered the survey played with both winds and strings. Overall, then, this sample of amateur chamber players represents an older, privileged, highly accomplished, and seriously committed subset of the amateur chamber music world.

5. Repertoire

Contents of the Repertoire

For string players and pianists, about three-quarters of their repertoire is from the 18th and 19th centuries and is heavily weighted towards music they consider masterworks. In contrast, only about half of what wind and brass players play is from this period, with about three-quarters of that being music they consider "masterworks". Wind and brass players play much more music from the 20th century—about a third overall, with slightly more than half of that counting as masterworks. Only 15% of string players' and pianists' repertoires are from the 20th century and, of that, three-quarters count as masterworks. Thus, while string players report that three-quarters of their repertoires are masterworks, that proportion is only about half for wind and brass players. Neither group plays much music they categorise as "new". The largest difference between the groups' repertories besides the string players' much heavier reliance on 18th- and 19th-century masterworks is that noticeably more wind and brass players play non-classical or "early" music; overall, 12% of their repertoire counts as "other," while for string players, that portion is only 5%. None of this is startling: it mirrors the relative undervaluing of wind and brass ensembles as vehicles for the most "serious" music, especially in the mid- and later 19th century (Adams 1994) and the renewal of interest in such ensembles in the 20th century, as well as the greater likelihood that wind and brass players will have grown up playing in ensembles, such as marching bands, whose repertoire is not entirely (or at all) classical (see Table 1).

Table 1. Proportion of repertoire by period and perceived greatness.

Instruments	18th–19th Century All Repertoire	18th–19th Century Masterworks	20th Century All Repertoire	20th Century Masterworks	Total Masterworks in the Repertoire
Strings/piano	73% of all repertoires	90% of 18th–19th century repertoires	24% of all repertoires	54% of 20th century repertoires	79.00%
Wind/brass	43% of all repertoires	83% of 18th–19th century repertoires	30% of all repertoires	56% of 20th century repertoires	49.00%

Source: Table by author.

6. Importance of Canonicity

My own experience of string and string-and-piano ensembles is that the "brush with greatness" that results when amateurs hurl themselves against the only somewhat-pregnable walls of canonic works is inseparable from the experience. Comments such as "Only Beethoven/Brahms/Debussy could have written that" regularly follow our read-throughs of standard classical and Romantic pieces, often followed by sighs of satisfaction and discussions of how various adult chamber music camp coaches have elucidated a certain corner of the work. However, when I asked (Q24)[1] whether it mattered to my respondents that a piece was or was not considered a masterwork and part of a great tradition, the answers ranged from strong positives (5/48: "Essential" "Primary") to strong negatives (1/48: "Not at all important"; and 8/48: "Not very important"). People defined "masterwork" differently, at my invitation; nonetheless, string players and pianists gave very similar answers to those of wind and brass players, even though the proportion of indisputably canonic works in the string and piano repertoire is noticeably higher than that for winds or brass. The most common response to this question (18/48) was that the tradition per se meant little, but that the quality or likeableness of an individual piece was important: "What matters is that the music is great—to me. I don't care at all about tradition when it comes to enjoyment of chamber music" (Q24/P23). I expected from at least some string players some language invoking awe or worship, or the canonic repertoire, particularly given the kinds of remarks that I have personally heard over the years, but that was largely lacking. This stands in contrast to the discourse of worship and

[1] "Q" for "question", and "P" for "participant".

ineffability that underpinned Stebbins' comments about amateur chamber music (1978) and is still such a large part of pre-professional classical pedagogy and some professional discourse (see Hunter 2017 and Waddington-Jones, this volume.)

The answers to my question about the importance of masterwork status were also striking because of the importance my interlocutors—both winds and strings—placed on their own taste: participant 23's response (above) about the music needing to be "great—to me" exemplifies this. Respondents noted that they indeed played pieces they were not especially fond of, but typically this was to please other members of their groups or fulfil the expectations of a gig rather than to try to come to grips with a thorny cultural monument or to carve a niche for themselves in a cutthroat professional world. Thus, one can say that amateurs view works as what we might call units of personal experience more than as either examples of a period style or parts of a standard repertoire; this is an attitude that pertained as much to non-masterworks as to the canonic repertoire. In answer to a question about whether they tend to compare non-masterworks to masterworks (Q26), 19/46 responses, equally divided between strings and winds, gave an answer such as "I really take them in for their own merits" (Q26/P21). Additionally, 15 responses, slightly weighted towards winds and brass (9 to 6), gave an answer suggesting that their own taste was more important than a work's reputation as a masterwork: "The only thing that matters is if I like them" (Q26/P24). Only six responses said that their evaluation of non-masterworks was in relation to masterworks, and these, unsurprisingly, were weighted toward string players (four to two).

Respondents who in fact considered masterwork status also tended to mention the way that status demands particular attention to stylistic propriety in performance and seemed to conceptualise the standard canonic repertoire as more about a lineage of performances than about compositional "style history": "I appreciate the masters and try to play them in the style I think they had in mind" (wind player, Q26/P27); "Being coached in learning these pieces by instructors familiar with what those traditions entail and require of the performance is helpful" (string player, Q26/P45). These answers connect with colleagues' comments in my own chamber playing experience. They also connect with answers to a survey and interviews I conducted some years ago about (mostly) amateurs' sense of the composer figure as a presence in the experience of playing music. In general, even though those amateurs (a different group of people than in the present study) were entirely aware of composers as famous names, sometimes had pictures of favourite composers on their walls, and knew some biographical anecdotes, they generally felt that their experience in the course of playing was in a different realm from the world of divining "the composer's intentions", which occupies so much energy for many professional players. One amateur string player in that earlier set of respondents put it particularly memorably:

> the more famous, the further away the composer gets, like back to Bach, I feel like I'm on, you know, you know that he's on such a different level, . . . and I'm quietly playing Bach and hoping he's so dead he can't be anywhere near me to listen, and I just feel no connection to Bach the person, because I think of him as like an office tower or something—he's not a living breathing person. (Personal Interview, Summer 2014)

Part of this sense of distance from the idea of the composer as a set of intentions behind a work is the feeling that as an amateur one cannot come close to those intentions, so there is not much point in worrying about it; the human relationship aspect of playing is largely or entirely connected to one's real, living colleagues more than to biographical and psychological constructions of the composer. The feeling of separation noted in this quote, which, of course, not all amateurs feel all the time with every composer, acknowledges the cultural capital and aura of greatness around masterworks and canonic composers, and allows for some pride or pleasure in an association with that cultural capital but diminishes, or even removes, the quasi-moral sense of obligation to the greatness that forms such a noticeable part of professional classical players' discourse (Hunter 2017, earlier version).

The question about whether my respondents felt that their amateur chamber playing connected to the wider world of classical music making (Q28) allowed for answers that could link their own repertoire to a larger tradition of playing and perpetuating masterworks. The question overall garnered a relatively low 41 answers, of which seven essentially revealed that they felt no such connection—and a further four said they did not understand the question. However, 11 expressed strong positives. Among both these and the more varied answers (34 in all), only six people (four strings, two winds) spoke of helping to keep the classical repertoire alive. Nearly the same number (five) mentioned the term "keeping alive" in reference to active domestic or quasi-domestic engagement in music making rather than repertoire per se. Four thought of the repertoire and the playing activity together, as part of a larger "tapestry" (one respondent's word) of classical music, and a further six described how playing chamber music felt different from playing orchestral or band music. However, the most striking overall message of these answers is that they present the "wider world" of classical music making as a series of communities rather than a series of institutions or repertoires. These communities are sometimes described as the chamber ensembles themselves, in which people "listen and create something together" (Q28/P52), developing skills that carry outwards to other types of music making, or as social networks of professionals and amateurs where adult amateurs "help support the work of teaching and performing by professional musicians" (Q28/P40). Such "wider world" communities can also involve audiences of friends and neighbours who "would otherwise not hear any live chamber music" (Q28/P53). These answers again paint a vivid picture of the classical repertoire as a series of

occasions for personal experiences at least as much as, and probably more than, a body of works waiting to be "approached". McCaleb and Waddington-Jones (this volume) also indicate that the experience of collaboration and joint music making is central to chamber-music professionals, but, at least on the evidence of their answers, the amateurs' focus on the experience rather than the greatness of the repertory is, at least somewhat, distinct from that of the professionals.

7. Happiness—Effect of the Repertoire

Overall, all but two of the 49 respondents to my question about how happy they are with the music they play (Q21) were either "absolutely" or "mostly" content; nonetheless, while 17/24 string players and pianists were "absolutely" happy, 12/25 wind and brass players indicated that they were only "mostly" so. One person in each group said they were only "partly" happy. Relatively few respondents (25) offered suggestions about what would make them even happier, but among those who provided suggestions, there was a wide range of answers, from practical wishes (e.g., more violinists, more people at their own level, etc.) to desires to play specific pieces or composers ("more Shostakovich" Q21/P45); laments about the restricted repertoire for their (non-string) instrument and yearning for a repertoire perhaps more like that for strings ("A repertory that does not exist" Q21/P27), or wanting to break out of the genre or period of repertoire they mostly played ("I would love to study some non-western or non-classical chamber repertoire" Q21/P26).

The masterwork status of their repertory affected my interlocutors' happiness less than I expected; indeed, only three respondents mentioned it. For Q25, simply asking what music makes people happiest to play, "It is a transcendent experience to play the music of the great composers" (Q25/P34) was a much rarer answer than I had hypothesised. Additionally, three respondents (one pianist and two wind players) suggested that masterwork status actually contributed to unhappiness, as these very familiar works allowed them no room for their own voices: "There is comparatively little I can bring to, say, a performance of the Schubert B-flat Piano Trio" (pianist: Q24/P14); "I have nothing new to offer by way of interpretation, so why bother" (wind player: Q24/P7); "I do like the opportunity to work on a 'new' work without any strong preconceptions of how it should be played or how it has been played in the past" (Q24/P47). These musicians were much more excited by playing repertoire that was both less canonical and less familiar to them. At the same time, in the follow-up conversations and written responses, several respondents who did not spontaneously mention masterworks in relation to happiness were at pains to associate themselves either with the canonic standard repertoire or at least "serious" aesthetic sensibilities: "We only play frivolous music for gigs" (wind player, P41/follow-up interview); "It feels more special when you really adore the music, you know, those 'classical giants'" (string player, P40/follow-up interview).

The question of which music, in general, made my respondents happiest to play (Q25) received 49 responses—one of the highest among all the free-prose questions. More than half of the answers (29) mentioned a particular period or genre of music, even though the prompt encouraged a variety of kinds of answers. String players and pianists mentioned Romantic period music more than any other (9/14 answers referred to this period), while wind and brass players only referred to Romantic music in three of their 15 answers. Brass players, in particular, were happier with Baroque music, and the remainder of the answers from wind and brass players included Dixieland, jazz, and Brazilian music, as well as the "variety" type in and of itself. One string player said that "all kinds" made her happy, but none of the string players or pianists specifically invoked the idea of variety in the repertoire. 13 answers included references to aspects of either the sound of the music or their reaction to the sound. These included answers such as "larger groups with more parts to listen to," (Q25/P13) or "where everyone has something to do," (Q25/P23) "a tune I can hum," (Q25/P28), or "music that has something to say" (Q25/P33). There was no significant distinction between winds and strings in the kinds of musical features mentioned. These answers as a whole were, however, striking for the way they elicited immediately and openly personal reactions such as "tune I can hum" (Q25/P28) or "everyone has something to do" (Q25/P23) as features of (what used to be called) the music "itself". 14 answers included purely personal or social criteria for happiness: "music from my childhood" (Q25/P20); "more important to me who I play with than what I play" (Q25/P25); and "we can communicate with each other through the music" (Q25/P52). Such answers were also equally distributed among strings and winds.

8. Repertoire and Familiarity

Even if masterworks' "transcendent" reputations do not universally produce happiness, perhaps their sheer familiarity has something of that effect. There may be a hint of this in the fact that wind and brass players are slightly less satisfied with the repertory they play than are string players (see above), in that they spend less time with works that garner widespread recognition and admiration. However, the proportion of personally familiar music was the same for winds and strings; that is, both groups had either played, or already knew, 68% of their repertoire on average, and for both groups, about 20% of the remaining repertoire (somewhat more for strings than for winds) was "of a familiar sort" (Q20). At the same time, a number of respondents, with no real differences between winds and strings, were at pains to let me know in my follow-up interviews how much it meant to them to explore a new repertoire. One wind player, who has spent extraordinary amounts of time researching and playing lesser-known works for his instrument, even serves as a resource for professional players. My intuition is that a more detailed exploration of

exactly what counted as "familiar" or "new" might produce some telling differences between winds and strings, but at the level of the questions I asked, the two groups offered very similar results. Wind players are forced to be more exploratory, but once they have discovered (or arranged) unfamiliar music, it seems quickly to become "standard repertory" for them. For both groups, an average of 10% of their repertoire was "of an unfamiliar sort," but this similarity masks two significant differences. Firstly, engagement with "unfamiliar" repertoire was more evenly distributed among wind players than strings. Secondly, the repertoire that counts as "of a familiar sort" to wind and brass players is often stylistically broader than is the case for string players. The relevance of familiarity to happiness, however, is more likely due to the fact that music, in a truly unfamiliar style (whatever that is), often cannot just be played through; its technical and emotional demands may be different from what players are used to, and the tried-and-true amateur methods of rehearsal (which are heavy on reading through) may not work. In an activity in which interpersonal bonds are entirely voluntary and, thus, perhaps capable of less stress than professional ones, disturbances to existing social habits and pleasures may be less tolerable.

The broad conclusions about amateurs and repertoire, then, seem to be that while there are differences in the content of wind and brass vs. string and piano repertoire, and while wind and brass players may both need and want to be somewhat more exploratory than string and piano players, the overall experience of the music is more similar than different, particularly with respect to questions of familiarity and a sense of satisfaction with the music played. Some degree of familiarity (whether with a particular work or musical style) seems necessary to the vast majority of players; masterwork status is variably important, more to string players than wind or brass, but in any case, is often not important in the way that it may be for many professionals. Finally, among all players, personal taste reigns supreme in the selection and enjoyment of, as well as the commitment to, repertorial choices.

9. Experience

The Pleasures of Chamber Playing

It does not need to be pointed out that chamber music amateurs overwhelmingly engage in this activity because it makes them happy. Every answer to Q18 included at least one positive emotional word or phrase: "love," "happy," "personally rewarding," "total pleasure" "enjoyment", etc. These words showed very little difference between wind or brass players, and string or piano players, though it might be worth noting that none of the string players used the word "fun," and that none of the string players wind or brass players used the word "joy". More wind and brass players than string or piano (20 vs. 14) mentioned the social connections engendered, and more strings and pianists than wind or brass players (nine vs. four) talked in terms of

transcendence or soul satisfaction. Some (more winds than strings) spoke of pleasing audiences. This overall enthusiastic positivity is entirely in tune with the benefits that the literature on the subject ascribes to non-professional adult music making. It also connects with the notion of "serious leisure," which involves the idea that happiness is also associated with striving, learning, and a sense of accomplishment (Stebbins 1992, pp. 6–7). Similarly, one of David A. Camlin's participants noted that in their community choir, the "amateur people really wanted to be good," and thus were eager to follow the director's instructions (Camlin, this volume). Indeed, when asked what mattered most to them about the people they played with (Q27), over a third (18/47) included something about the importance of being at a similar level as the other players (or playing with people slightly more skilled than themselves), and having the same willingness to work. About a quarter (12/46) of my respondents specifically referred to a shared interest in working.

However, to this list of largely individual pleasures and benefits, amateur chamber music adds a specifically group-oriented set of pleasures, and indeed, a few respondents framed their peak chamber music experiences (Q23) as all about group interaction (see below). A majority of answers to the question of what mattered most to them about their music-making colleagues (Q27) indicated that satisfying music making and meaningful social connections were impossible to disentangle. However, the vast majority of respondents represented, in one way or another, the satisfactoriness of the music making as more salient to them than friendship in the usual sense: "I care most that they are passionate about the music they are performing—great friends or perfect strangers can perform just as well as long as the musicians are paying attention to each other while performing" (Q27/P51). Further, in many of these answers, there is the sense that satisfying music making serves as a sort of proxy for meaningful social connection: "The music and the 'playing together' in a group that is listening to itself is what matters first and foremost" (Q27/P13); "I think the best is when you can connect musically with an ensemble to the point that it doesn't necessarily matter whether you know them or are friends with them. You can have a very intimate musical experience with somebody and not even know their name" (Q27/P26).

Both the tone and the content of the answers to this question support Finnegan's (1989) observation about the distinct nature of the social bonds within the (mostly large) amateur musical groups that she studied: that despite intense feelings of identity deriving from belonging to these groups, people were not necessarily "friends" in the usual sense:

> There was also an element of anonymity even within musical groups. My original expectation had been that choirs, music clubs, instrumental groups, rock bands and so on would be made up of people who knew each other well and that their shared musical interest would be complemented by

> some rounded knowledge of other aspects of each others' lives. I came to realise that this could not be assumed either for all groups or for all individuals within them. (Finnegan 1989, p. 302)

Finnegan's concern in these passages is primarily with larger groups such as choirs, orchestras, and brass bands, where a sense of anonymity or impersonality is perhaps not surprising given the music-focused structure of most rehearsals. However, chamber groups differ from larger groups partly in their rehearsal structures, which are often more focused on socialising, but also by virtue of their social selectivity; people choose whom they play with in chamber ensembles but usually do not in orchestras, for example. Thus, the "anonymity" of non-verbal social connection in chamber groups might more accurately be described as "virtual sociability".

This "virtual sociability" (not a term used by any of my interlocutors) also plays a significant role in the answers to my question about peak experiences playing chamber music (Q23). Half of the 49 answers I received about peak experiences included some description of group compatibility or synchronisation (see Camlin, this volume) on entrainment; some of these wrapped a feeling about interpersonal connection into a description of playing challenging or long-admired music, or playing with superior players: "... the joy of both preparation and culmination of two works that have transcendent emotional meaning for me [and] the group, with whom I had developed a long-standing personal bond" (Q23/P34); "Playing and performing very difficult music with two professionals... I felt challenged yet supported" (Q23/P33). Some answers included the audience in the virtual sociability: " . . . a Grange supper in [a small Maine town] . . . the audience was SO appreciative and thankful for performance" (Q23/P50); "Performing a work for an audience where the performance was the best that we could play and where the choice of music surprised the audience with a piece they probably had not heard before" (Q23/P39). In all these quotations, the respondents suggest that musical activity forges social feelings or bonds that may or may not overlap with "real-life" friendships, but that nonetheless have their own power. To borrow McCaleb's use of "chamber" as a verb, one of the joys of chamber-musicking for these amateurs, then, is precisely the "chambering" that occurs with an audience who are probably there as much for their social connections with the players and other audience members as for the music "itself." Other answers to this question describe perhaps a more purely virtual sort of sociability—namely, an intimate connection formed in the moment of playing:

> I was lucky enough to be in a trio with two superior players, playing a beautiful 20th century piece, and somehow, in a lyrical part, I was able to lock into sync with the other player with whom I was trading or embellishing the melody. It was a synergy I felt. (Q23/P29)

It is fair to say that this sense of socio-musical intimacy and "flow" is what every chamber player, whether professional or amateur, hopes for, but the ingredients that constitute it may be slightly different for amateurs than those for professionals, particularly the sense of being carried along by more skilled players.

10. Themes

My respondents' generously-given comments offer a finely-grained sense of the place and nature of the actual music making in amateur chamber music. Three themes emerge from their comments: virtual sociability, works as units of experience, and embeddedness in community. Virtual sociability clearly plays a large role in the chamber music experience of most of my respondents. This seems to take several forms, as noted above, from an intimation of the possibility of "real-life" friendship with musical colleagues to a more or less impersonal, but nonetheless intense moment of musical communion, to a temporary sense of belonging among the pros or at least fitting into a group of superior skill and experience. In all these cases, the virtuality of the experience is the direct opposite of the virtual sociability offered by video-conferencing (a technology with which many of us have become all too familiar in 2020). Unlike the video-conference, which, for all its virtues, often ends up leaving its participants with a sense of loss—of touch and smell, of the ability to read body language, of the natural rhythms of social intercourse—the virtual sociability of music often offers an idealised version of the real-life sociability it either presages or simulates. Whether this is as true for professional chamber musicians as it is for amateurs is a topic for further study, but certainly for many if not all amateurs, it is a significant part of the point of engaging in this kind of music making. These social pleasures may be preserved in amateur situations by mostly not digging very deep into interpretative questions, perhaps because such digging can involve deep disagreements among the players, as well as requiring potentially socially awkward or embarrassing rehearsal techniques. It is striking that my respondents' descriptions of being pushed beyond their norm in either understanding or rehearsing music typically involve professional coaches. The obvious and perhaps main reason for this is that many amateurs are not equipped with either the playing technique or the vocabulary for such "dismemberment" of the music, and also partly because, as noted, the audiences for amateur performances are usually there for the sociability as much as for the perfection of the playing. However, more pertinently here, if such professional-like interventions add tension or awkwardness to the real-life social fabric of the group, they may then create a greater distance between the promise of virtual sociability and the real-life social situation. Professionals often have to learn to separate these realms to a greater or lesser extent, especially if a successful ensemble is not socially compatible (Mann, loc. 684). However, for amateurs, such a separation may be counterproductive (see Camlin, this volume, on both the difficulty

and reward for conservatoire students of valuing the social nexus of musicking over the perfection of the performance).

In addition to the importance of virtual sociability, a view of musical works as units of personal experience underlies many of my respondents' answers. By using this formulation for amateurs, I do not mean that works are not units of personal experience for professionals—other chapters in this book testify that they are. However, my sense from my respondents is that they are much more candidly and overtly driven by tastes they feel to be absolutely their own than by a more culturally mediated sense of what they "ought" to like or "should" be able to play. In a masterclass for amateurs, professional pianist Victor Rosenbaum also notes the ways in which they frankly make the music "their own". After hearing a "communicative, emotion-filled" (Rosenbaum's words) performance of Brahms Op. 118 no. 2 (Rosenbaum 2006), he notes that when people play "for pleasure," that is, "the way [they] naturally play," they can be "cavalier" about following the expression marks in the score and thus lose the opportunity to "feel different things," and to explore the "freedom" offered by the "constraints" of the written score. He then goes on to point out how many "not particularly subtle" dynamic markings the amateur pianist has been "cavalier" is missing. Although Rosenbaum tries hard to frame adherence to the letter of the score as an opportunity to "feel more things" than amateurs might when left to their own devices, it is difficult not to hear some condescension for the non-professional frame of mind in his comments and an implication that this pianist has thought of himself before he thought of Brahms. Nevertheless, a closer look at what my respondents repeatedly and clearly say suggests that their own preferences, or pleasures, are precisely the point. My argument here is not that amateurs are or should be obdurate about trying other ways of playing, or that they should not take the advice of professional coaches, but rather that the feeling of "owning" the music in an immediate way is really important to the experience of making chamber music as an amateur, and that may take precedence over believing—as many professionals do—that the essence of playing classical music is simultaneously respecting the composer's "intentions" and communicating something more or less natural to oneself.

Finally, although almost all my respondents report playing for audiences, not many mentioned audience reactions per se. However, those that indeed typically described their social connections with those audiences defined them as friends, family, and local communities. This sense of reciprocity between audiences who root for the players, and the players who provide both an aesthetic and social service for those audiences connects with the sense, noted above, that the repertoire is the occasion for a series of communities to come into being. As Small (1998) put it more than two decades ago, musicking—the web of relationships that is woven through and around the activity—is the reason for "the music", rather than vice versa.

11. Conclusions

It is easy to view amateur classical chamber playing—particularly at the high level at which most of my respondents operate—as essentially a diluted (and therefore inferior) version of professional chamber playing. The repertoires overlap considerably, and amateurs are often extremely aware of how professionals play and seek to emulate professional standards, in part by taking lessons and coaching sessions from those professionals, and sometimes even performing with them. However, psychologically and socially, as well as musically, amateur and professional chamber music playing are distinguishable activities. The interesting distinctions (that is, those beyond being part (or not) of the commercial professional chamber music world) partly deal with attitude, especially concerning the difference between the amateurs' relative sense of interpretative autonomy versus the professionals' more pressing sense of obligation to both performance and repertorial norms (Juniu et al. 1996). These distinctions also address how the community for this activity is defined (see McCaleb, this volume).

In my own experience of attending coaching sessions with professional musicians, I have noticed, on more than one occasion, that these professionals can display a kind of wistfulness about the apparent uncomplicatedness of the experience of amateur music making. Noticing this wistfulness might easily lead to well-trodden but incomplete conclusions about the difference between working "for love" and "for money" (Stebbins 1992, p. 44). To be sure, there is more than a grain of truth in the idea that working for love is the essence of the amateur experience, and that it is, in many ways, enviable. However, it would be presumptuous and unrealistic simply to recommend that professionals who may be disillusioned or dissatisfied with the very real difficulties and pressures of the professional scene in classical music simply adopt the discourse of pleasure that suffuses the discourse of amateurs, perhaps especially in the economically straitened world described by Waddington-Jones's participants (Waddington-Jones, this volume). For example, the frequent overlaps among amateurs between friendship and musical connections, while obviously not impossible in the professional world, cannot always be central in the way that they can be among amateurs; thus, the emotional resonance of the amateur "virtual sociability" I described above is not always replicable in many professional situations, though of course, it is not impossible.

Nonetheless, there are, I think, some aspects of amateur pleasure that may be translatable to professional music making. Above, I have identified two of the themes in my respondents' comments. The first is probably more about discourse than phenomenology,—though one obviously affects the other— and it is the notion of frankly conceiving of the repertoire as made up of units of personal experience. Such descriptions are obviously easier when a musician has a smaller number and narrower range of experience with any given work, which offers a particularity and

intensity that may be harder to find when one has played a given work hundreds of times. It also may be easier to represent works to yourself in this way when learning to play them accurately feels like a monumental task. Nevertheless, the feeling that a piece is more yours than that of the composer's, and that your version of it, however imperfect, is central to your sense of yourself as a musician, can be empowering. Waddington-Jones (this volume) identifies "ownership" as one of the pleasures of chamber music for professionals, but this is more about the absence of a conductor or other players on the same part than about interpretative freedom in relation to the composer. Perhaps more importantly, the frank acknowledgment of the centrality of one's own experience puts performance on a more equal footing with composition (see McCaleb, this volume, on the value of seeing music as object and music as activity as part of a larger continuum rather than being opposed to each other). The second aspect of the amateur experience that may offer something to professionals is the idea that both the repertoire and the activity are in some deep sense about communities of family, friends, acquaintances, and local institutions. That is partly a consequence of most amateur activity occurring in fairly confined geographical areas—less is the case with much of professional chamber music making. This allows amateurs to think of their performances less as challenges to their skills and position in life and more as "simple gifts" to people they know and (sometimes) love. I have been struck that the 2020 pandemic-induced outpouring of online performances from professional musicians, often from their own living rooms or back yards, complete with verbal introductions and stuffed animals on the piano, (e.g., De la Salle 2020) have had something of that spirit; they have a kind of warmth and generosity that stems from being explicitly gifts to a hungering public.

Both Camlin's powerful description of engaging conservatoire students in participatory musicking situations and McCaleb's discussion of "chambering" professional musicking bring up amateurs' sense of connection to specific communities, whether of otherwise inexperienced musickers or of small groups of highly engaged and knowledgeable interlocutors. In both these essays, the power of face-to-face interaction around the music is shown to be central. This kind of face-to-face power is built into most amateur classical chamber playing, and is clearly the source of much of its joy, and particularly as young professionals are forced to be inventive about their careers, could stimulate fruitful and rewarding opportunities.

Many things will inevitably change about the amateur chamber music scene as the century progresses and my "aging fleet" of amateurs passes on. If music educators and others in a position to set people on a path towards non-professional chamber playing not only, as Waddington-Jones suggests, provide all young people with the skills that could equip them to participate in small-ensemble musicking, but reinforce the validity of the personal experience of the classical repertoire if that is the repertoire they choose, appreciate the various forms that virtual sociability can take,

and validate the importance of the interlocking communities that make chamber music possible, then there is every reason to believe that this activity will endure, even if in different forms and with different repertoire than what my interlocutors have described.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions.

- All questions were optional.
- Most answers simply offered blank boxes for the respondents to write whatever and however much, they wanted.
- Multiple choice or other "check the box" questions are marked with asterisks, and the choices listed.
- Numbers of responses are indicated in parentheses at the end of each entry.

1. Name
2. Contact info for possible follow up
3. *Age (Below 40/40–65/ above 65)
4. Gender
5. Ethnic Identity
6. Day job or pre-retirement job
7. *What kind of place do you live in? (Urban/Suburban/Small Town/Rural /Dedicated community)
8. *How would you describe yourself as a musician (Completely amateur/Mostly professional but not as a chamber player/Partly professional/Other (55)
9. Instrument (44)
10. *Musical Training (Advanced training when young, continuous playing since then/Advanced training when young, came back to it as an adult/Some training when young, continuous playing since then/Some training when young, came back to it as an adult/Started as an adult/Other (52)
11. *How long have you been playing chamber music? (52)
12. *About how often do you play chamber music? (52) Once a week or more/between once a week and once a month/less often than once a month but several times a year/twice a year or less.

13. What kinds of groups do you usually play with (e.g., piano trio, wind quintet, duets) (53)
14. Do you have a more or less regular group? (54)
15. * Do you play chamber music in public? (i.e., to any kind of audience beyond others in the rehearsal room) (51) Yes/ No
16. In what kinds of venues do you play?
17. *Chamber music is... Essential to me/Nice when I can manage it/I do it when asked/Other (51)
18. Why do you do it? What does it offer you? (54)
19. *About what proportion of the following kinds of music do you play? Use your own definition of "masterwork" and "obscure". 18th-19th-century masterworks/obscure-ish 18th-19th century works/20th century masterworks/lesser-known 20th-century music/New Music/Other (51)
20. *How well do you know the music you play? Pieces I have played before/Pieces I have heard but not played before/Pieces of a sort I recognise, but haven't heard or played before/Pieces I don't know at all, in a style not familiar to me (51)
21. *Are you happy with the repertory you mostly play (Absolutely/Mostly/Partly/Not really (49)
22. If you would prefer to do different repertory, what would it be? (25)
23. Describe a peak chamber music experience. What was best about it? (49)
24. When you play works acknowledged to be masterworks, how important to your overall experience is your sense of a great tradition, or your sense that individual works are great? (48)
25. What kinds of music make you the happiest to play? Can you say why? ("Kinds of music" can be genres, styles, or the relation of the music to your life or experience. "Piano trios," "Late Romantic" and "Music I played as a student" are all good answers. You are not limited to one kind) (49)
26. When you play works not generally acknowledged as masterworks, do you measure them against masterworks, or do you use other criteria to think about your experience of them? If so, what criteria? (47)
27. What matters to you most about other people you play with? (Do you care most about your friendships with them or their musical compatibility, or both equally, or something else?) (47)
28. Do you think of your chamber music activities as playing a part in the wider world of classical music? If so, can you say something about that part? (42)
29. Is there anything else you want to communicate about your attitude to, or the culture around, the repertory or repertories that you play? (36)

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